

LISTENING TO THE ARTIFACTS

Music Culture in Ancient Palestine

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SEX AND GENDER IN MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

WHO WERE THE MUSICIANS IN ANCIENT ISRAEL AND THE SURROUNDING NEAR EAST?

Musicians in ancient Israel/Palestine were often men, women, and children who lived within the local communities. They performed with lyres, harps, frame drums, and human voices at spontaneous celebrations and organized events, such as childbirths and funerals, and for entertainment. Many scholars suggest that men played most of the instruments, and that women were for the most part frame drummers and singers.¹ However, the sex and gender of musicians presented in ancient writings—particularly the biblical text—and depicted in iconography and figurines is often ambiguous. Previous scholarship has assumed or glossed over the sex and gender identification of musicians depicted in artifacts and texts; with little to no discussion, male and female musicians have either been associated with specific instruments, or sex and gender are not considered at all. These types of suppositions reveal little about musical performance and paint a biased picture of an ancient culture that is not completely understood. The sex and gender identification of musicians

1. See O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of the Psalms* (New York: A Crossroads Book, The Seabury Press, 1978), 336–38; E. Werner, "Jewish Music," in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 9 (London: MacMillan Publishers, 1980), 619; B. Bayer, "The Finds That Could Not Be," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 8, no. 1 (January/February 1982): 26; J. Pritchard, *Palestinian Figurines in Relation to Certain Goddesses Known through Literature* (American Oriental Series 24; New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 1943).

needs to be examined in order to understand better how, when, and why men and women participated in the music culture of Israel/Palestine.

Theory is imperative to the research of sex and gender in antiquity, and a brief discussion of it is in order at this point. Sex and gender issues are primarily postprocessualist and are often dismissed by processualists.² Nevertheless, both processual and postprocessual theoretical approaches help in comprehending how ancient and modern cultures interpret sex and gender. When studying ancient cultures, sex and gender should not be passed over casually, interpreted through blanket assumptions or through modern interpretations or misconceptions projected upon the past.³ Feminist scholarship has been aware of these concerns for some time, and this study considers their theoretical views along with theory and method from other disciplines.⁴

Some scholars have interpreted this approach of revisiting the archaeological and textual data with new questions about sex and gender as the "add women and stir" method. In other words, the argument is that women are conveniently added to research methodologies to study old data.⁵ However, adding women to research and theoretical discussions is not a matter of convenience; it is a matter of necessity. Although they were a part of ancient societies, women, other sexes and genders (e.g., hermaphrodites, homosexuals), and ethnic groups have not been a significant part of

2. I. Hodder, *Archaeology of Contextual Meanings* (New York: Cambridge, 1987); L. Binford, "Archaeological Perspectives," in *New Perspectives in Archaeology* (ed. S. R. Binford and L. Binford; Chicago: Adeline, 1983), 5–32; and C. Tilley, *Interpretative Archaeology* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1993). Processual archaeology, methodology, theory, etc. studies the environment, models of how societies work, and the testing of hypotheses against empirical data in order to investigate the past. See P. Bahn, *Archaeologies: Theories, Methods, and Practice* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 289–90. Postprocessual approaches take a more interdisciplinary approach and search for meaning and relationships between cultures and sites.

3. G. Cowgill, "Distinguished Lecture in Archaeology: Beyond Criticizing New Archaeology," *American Anthropologist* 95, no. 3 (1993): 551.

4. For example, see M. Z. Rosaldo, "Women, Culture, and Society: A Theoretical Overview," in *Women, Culture, and Society* (ed. M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere; Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1989), 17–42; A. Wylie, "Gender Theory and the Archaeological Record: Why Is There Archaeology of Gender?" in *Engendering Archaeology* (ed. J. Gero and M. Conkey; Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, Ltd., 1991), 31–54; E. Koskoff, "An Introduction to Women, Music, and Culture," in *Women in Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1985), 1–23; J. Blacking, *Music, Culture, and Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); S. Feld and C. Keil, "Communication, Music, and Speech About Music" in *Music Grooves: Essays and Dialogues* (ed. S. Feld and C. Keil; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); A. Moortgat, *The Ancient Art of Mesopotamia: The Classical Art of the Near East* (London: Phaidon, 1969); P. Amiet, *The Art of the Ancient Near East* (trans. J. Shepley and C. Choppet; New York: Harry N. Adams, 1980).

5. B. Knapp, "Boys Will Be Boys: Masculinist Approaches to a Gendered Archaeology," in *Reader in Gender Archaeology* (ed. K. Hays-Gilpin and D. Whitley; London: Routledge, 1998), 368–69; A. Wylie, "Gender Theory and the Archaeological Record: Why Is There No Archaeology of Gender?" in *Engendering Archaeology* (ed. J. Gero and M. Conkey; Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, Ltd., 1991), 34.

previous research questions and scholarship for some time. In order to study the whole of ancient cultures, these groups should be included in methodological frameworks that are employed. The exclusion of women, sex, and gender in the discussion of anthropological and archaeological theory has been the catalyst for the development of theories such as feminist, womanist, and queer.⁶ In turn, feminism and anthropology have produced masculinist theory.⁷ Race, class, and society—elements that have been incorporated in most of these theories—help to understand that there is no single masculinity or feminism, and that these issues must be considered when studying past cultures.⁸ Nevertheless, how researchers introduce questions of sex and gender and their accompanying theories is important to archaeological and textual research.

Anthropologist Alison Wylie correctly explains that before initiating research on sex or gender, feminists and other theorists who work in areas that differ from many of the prominent approaches in archaeology first have to challenge the broad, field-defining framework assumptions (e.g., the casual efficacy of variables other than sex or gender and, implicitly, the inefficacy of sex and gender) that underlie long-established traditions of research.⁹ However, although it is important to maintain investigation and research of the archaeological traditions, this dialogue never ends. In other words, at no point will the discussion stop and permit those who wish to do so to introduce sex and gender. Thus, I suggest that the introduction of sex and gender theory and inquiries should parallel challenges to the traditional framework. Approaches to the field-defining traditions can and should be diverse, and scholars can continue them while exploring sex and gender.

“Sex” and “gender” are common terms used to describe differences between men and women. Daily conversations demonstrate how these terms are tossed about freely to categorize or describe human physical characteristics, but sex and gender are not the same.¹⁰ Interestingly, most

6. L. Phillips and B. McCaskill, “Who’s Schooling Who? Black Women and the Bringing of Everyday into Academe, or Why We Started the Womanist,” *Signs* 20 (1989): 1007–18; A. Walker, *Temple of My Familiar* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1989).

7. V. Seidler, *Rediscovering Masculinity: Reason, Language, and Sexuality* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

8. L. Meskell, *Archaeologies of Social Life: Age, Sex, Class, etc., in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 61; R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1995).

9. Wylie, “Gender Theory and the Archaeological Record,” 34. Also see M. Conkey and J. Specator, “Archaeology and the Study of Gender,” in *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 7 (1984): 1–38.

10. There is much literature regarding the definitions of these terms, but these deliberations of defining sex and gender are not the focus of this study.

dictionaries define gender simply as sex, while sex is typically expressed as either of two divisions of organisms distinguished respectively as male or female. These simplistic definitions fail to address fundamental issues regarding what establishes organisms as male or female. The terms must at least consider social constructs of biological sex and instances in which individuals choose to define sexual identities and themselves within that spectrum.¹¹ This is an essential factor as it is possible that transvestites, hermaphrodites, and homosexuals, considered to be anomalies by some, existed within ancient cultures and were part of the musical segment of society; thus, we must consider how and where these persons fit in sex/gender taxonomies.

While “sex” refers to physical features, “gender” does not merely comprise biological characteristics or differences. Gender derives from a set of cultural roles and learned behavior. It explains that men and women are taught to exhibit conduct suitable to the culture in which they live.¹² Several scholars have expounded upon defining and interpreting gender, but consider the following definition:

Gender is the cultural definition of behavior defined as appropriate to the sexes in a given society at a given time. Gender is a set of cultural roles. It is a costume, a mask, a straitjacket in which men and women dance their unequal dance. Unfortunately, the term is used both in academic discourse and in the media as interchangeable with “sex.” In fact, its widespread public use probably is due to it sounding a bit more “refined” than the plain word “sex” with its “nasty” connotations. Such usage is unfortunate, because it hides and mystifies the difference between the biological given—sex—and the culturally created—gender.¹³

Gender is a construct developed in each culture—ancient or modern. Cultures have differing views on understanding and interpreting the bodily features, conduct, and relations between men and women, and gender roles. The task for those who study the past is to comprehend views of sex and gender in cultures that no longer exist, so researchers must attempt to comprehend how members of ancient cultures interpreted aspects such as

11. B. Knapp and L. Meskell, “Bodies of Evidence on Prehistoric Cyprus,” *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 7, no. 2 (1997): 187.

12. Also for further discussion of sex/gender identification, see R. Gilchrist, *Gender and Archaeology* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

13. G. Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford, 1986), 238. Also see Gilchrist, *Gender and Archaeology*; and de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 295.

bodily features, what might be considered effeminate or masculine behavior, and dress.¹⁴ Even when conducting research of past cultures, sex/gender must be inclusive of what some societies consider abnormalities or aberrations. Attempting to reconstruct such aspects of past cultures is extremely difficult as historians, textual scholars, archaeologists, and others are writing the past in the present.¹⁵

The focus of this study is not to debate the intricacies in defining sex and gender, but clarity is imperative when discussing these terms. Investigation of sex and gender in the ancient cultures of Israel/Palestine and the surrounding Near East, cultures that we are still attempting to understand, must be approached with an open mind and probing questions.

As the search for clues regarding how, when, and why men and women took part in the music culture continues, there must be thorough investigation, while realizing the limits of the data. However, all of these perimeters are unknown until they are tested. For this reason, I have developed a working exploration model for the study of sex and gender in ancient musical performance. The model implements the following in order to study ancient music culture (Figure 3.1):

1. inquiries regarding the musicians/musical performance (e.g., people involved in performance, instruments used; type of musical performance)
2. investigation of the archaeological data (e.g., figurines with instruments, iconographic depictions displaying musical activity)
3. textual data (e.g., ancient texts that discuss people in musical performance)
4. ethnographic and ethnomusicological analysis: (e.g., study of modern cultures and their interpretation of sex and gender and musical performance)

The cultures considered throughout this study come primarily from ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Cypro-Phoenecia, with primary focus on Israel/Palestine. Many of the cultures provide artifactual and textual examples of clarity and ambiguity in Near Eastern musical performance and sex and gender representations. As mentioned, several musical instruments and customs present in the Late Bronze Age (1550–1200 BCE) continued throughout the Iron Age and into the subsequent Persian and

Sex and Gender Model

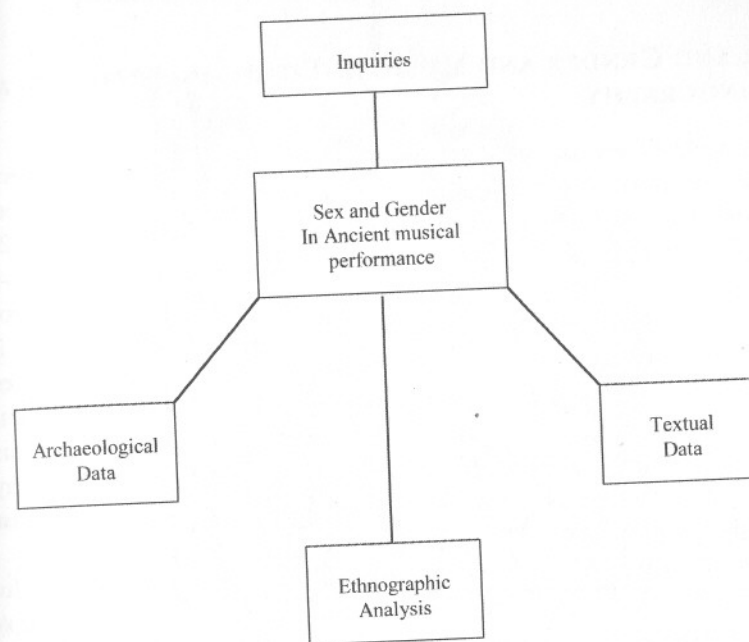


Figure 3.1 Sex and Gender in Musical Performance Model

Hellenistic periods. These neighboring Near Eastern cultures mentioned also shared several similarities in their performance of music, and influences between them are evident archaeologically and textually. There is, however, some paucity in the number of Egyptian artifacts dating precisely to the Iron Age (Egyptian Dynasties 20–21), but the general musical instrumentation remained consistent from the Late Bronze Age forward. This is the case with each culture discussed; thus, there are select examples of music and sex and gender discussed from periods immediately preceding and following the Iron Age. Texts and artifacts supply descriptions and representations of the types of musical activity known during the periods studied. Unfortunately, precise archaeological information regarding where some artifacts were found is not always available. The investigation of sex and gender in ancient music culture centers on the following questions:

1. Can we consistently identify sex and gender in musical activity displayed in figurines, iconographic depictions, and texts?

14. Meskell, *Archaeologies of Social Life*, 9–12.

15. *Ibid.*, 1; E. Petrie, *A History of Egypt* (London: British School of Archaeology, 1923).

2. Did men or women play instruments primarily?
3. Did men and women participate together in musical activities?

SEX AND GENDER AND MUSIC IN EGYPTIAN ARTIFACTS AND ICONOGRAPHY

This study of sex and gender identification in Egyptian artifacts focuses on items from New Kingdom Egypt (1570–1070 BCE, Eighteenth through Twentieth Dynasties, primarily the later part of the period, 1200–1070; and the Third Intermediate Period, 1069–525 BCE, Twenty-first through Twenty-fifth Dynasties).¹⁶ Both periods overlap the Late Bronze and Iron Ages in Israel/Palestine, and the Third Intermediate extends into the Persian period (586–333 BCE). There are no significant differences in musical representation or instrument types in the chronological span. In comparison to objects from other surrounding Near Eastern cultures, sex and gender identification in Egyptian artifacts and iconography is not as difficult to analyze because distinguishing physical characteristics are typically present.

Following are analyses and discussions of examples of music culture from ancient Egypt represented in three iconographic depictions and two figurines dating to the above-mentioned periods. Pictorial representations are categorized under the headings of iconography and figurines under artifacts. This will be the format for all objects discussed. There are numerous Egyptian iconographic depictions displaying musical activity, but figurines are few in comparison to surrounding ancient Near Eastern cultures. Future excavations may produce more, but presently iconographic representations outnumber artifacts.

Musician with Aerophone from Deir el-Medina

Deir el-Medina, located in a valley on the west bank across from Luxor, is a village where local workmen who built the royal tombs resided. Excavations at the site have produced an iconographic depiction dating to the Ramesside Dynasty (thirteenth to twelfth centuries) that shows a female figure with an oboe or *nay*-like aerophone (Figure 3.2).¹⁷ The figure

16. H. Hickmann, *Musikgeschichte in Bildern. Ägypten* (Leipzig: Halle, 1961); K. Kitchen "History of Egypt Chronology," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. D. Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 329–30; also see P. Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 9–13.

17. *Nay* is the generic Arabic term for simple open-end reed instruments which usually have six holes in front and a thumb hole in back.

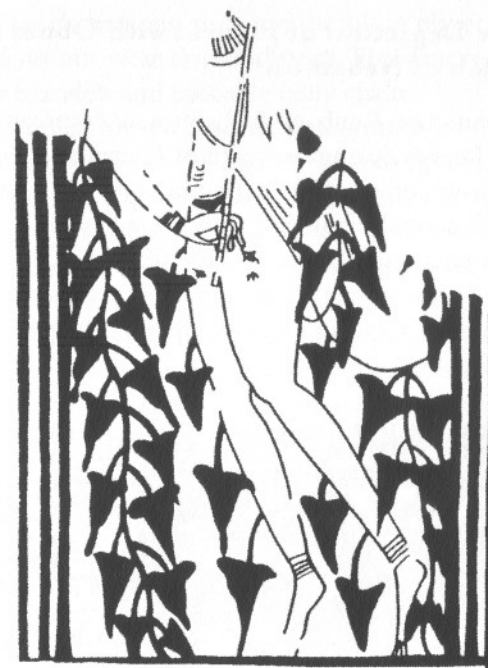


Figure 3.2 Figure with Aerophone from Deir el-Medina (Copyright the Trustees of The British Museum)

depicted on the Turin scroll appears to be nude and partly enveloped in foliage.¹⁸ Stratigraphic information regarding the artifact is uncertain, and the context is unclear. There are tattoos of Bes, the musical dwarf god who was the protector of women on the intimate occasions of conception and delivery, on the upper thighs of the performer.¹⁹ The artist has presented the right hand in an awkward manner for playing, but its position on the instrument is functional. It appears that the figure is performing with the aerophone as a solo instrument. To date, there is no information (textual or archaeological) indicating that aerophones were not exclusively associated with men or women in Egypt during this time.

18. The depiction is located at the Turin Egyptian Museum in Turin, Italy.

19. Representations of the Egyptian god Bes are found in many Near Eastern depictions. The dual nature of the god is reflected in its various images. He is usually portrayed as a dwarf with a huge bearded head, protruding tongue, flat nose, shaggy eyebrows and hair, large projecting ears, long thick arms, and bowed legs. Around his body he wears an animal skin whose tail hangs down, usually touching the ground behind him. Bes sometimes wears a tiara of feathers. The god is frequently portrayed on steles, vases, and amulets, often in ithyphallic form. His image was hung over headrests as a charm to keep away evil spirits. His female counterpart was the goddess Beset. See A. Mercatante, *Who's Who in Egyptian Mythology* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter Publishers, 1978), 22–23, and L. Manniche, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press, 1991), 109.

Iconographic Depiction of Figures with Oboes and Dancers from the Tomb of Nebamun

A depiction from the Tomb of Nebamun, a commander of the state police force of Thebes during the reign of Thutmosis IV and Amenhotep III, shows a group of six female figures: one with an aerophone or oboe/double-pipe, two clapping, and two dancing; four of the six figures are seated, and two are apparently dancing (Figure 3.3).²⁰ Physical characteristics of the dancers and musicians indicate that all of the participants in this scene are female, but it is unknown whether the performance context is secular or religious.²¹

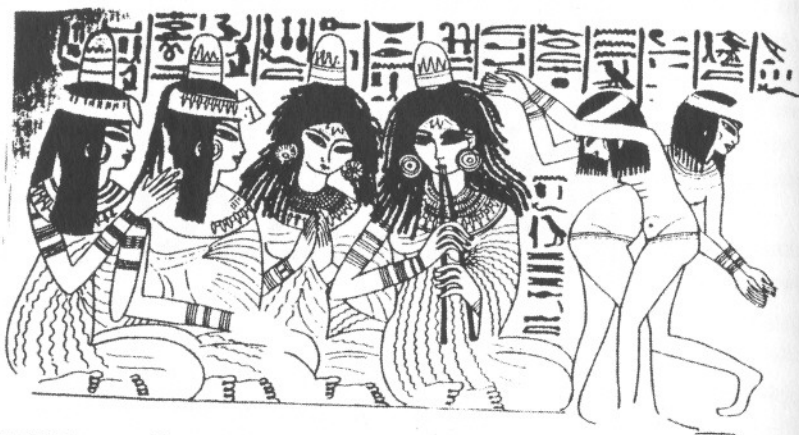


Figure 3.3 Figures with Oboes and Dancers from the Tomb of Nebamun
(Copyright the Trustees of The British Museum)

The seated figures wear similar attire, but there are notable differences in the necklines of the garments. The two figures on the right do not have as much ornamentation as the others, but this may be a result of physical wear or damage to the depiction. A perfume cone sits atop the head of each figure.²² The two figures on the right and the dancers wear

headbands with tassels hanging in front; the oboe player and the figure seated to the left do not wear the headbands. The dancers are nude with the exception of bracelets and probably belly chains.

Hairstyles are similar but show some variations. It is not clear whether the performers wear wigs, but the hair of the two figures to the right of the second is curly. The dancers wear a similar but shorter hairstyle; the others also have curly hair, but the style is freer flowing.

Jewelry decorates the body of each figure. Each wears arm or wrist bracelets and earrings of various designs. Makeup emphasized by the artist darkens and lengthens the width of the eyes of the figures.²³

The artist's attention to detail suggests the significance of the musical ensemble and the dancers to this scene. This detail indicates that this is probably a special event rather than a daily occurrence. Perfume cones, dress, and ornamentation were a part of the attire worn by female musicians performing for special activities. Note that the only instrument present in this elaborate depiction of music and dance is an aerophone, specifically the double pipe. Some of the individuals may also use their voices by singing, humming, or whistling, but these actions are not easily assessed in a line drawing. The two clapping figures may provide rhythm for the aerophone players and dancers.

Iconographic Depiction of Figures with Instruments from Theban Tomb 113 of Kynebu

Six figures presented in an iconographic depiction from the tomb of the priest Kynebu participate in a musical ensemble or orchestra (Figure 3.4).²⁴ The group is a mixed sex/gender ensemble: two figures possibly dancing and vocalizing, a woman with lyre, another with a double-pipe or oboe, a man with a harp, and possibly a male vocalist. The first four figures are female, and their sex is identified by physical features; the final two are male. Egyptologist Lise Manniche provides additional information that is not prevalent in the depiction, as she explains that the two girls, who are not playing instruments, make alluring gestures with their hands, and to their right a dark-skinned Nubian girl plays a splendid lyre.²⁵ According to Manniche, in addition to a mixed-sex ensemble in

20. Hickmann, *Musikgeschichte in Bildern*, 68, illust. 39; Manniche, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Egypt*, 46, 49.

21. A discussion of the terms "religious" and "secular" follows in the next chapter.

22. At parties or other social events, people wore these cones of perfumed grease on the heads, and as the grease melted, it ran down their hair and face, giving a pleasing cooling effect. The cones were probably made of animal fat impregnated with myrrh or lotus oil. For further discussion of perfumed cones, see J. Defrates, *What Do We Know about the Egyptians?* (New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1991); L. Fruen, *The Real World of Chemistry* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall and Hunt, 1998); Z. Hawass, *Silent Images: Women in Pharaonic Egypt* (Cairo: American University, 1998), 133.

23. See Manniche, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Egypt*, 46, fig. 25.

24. Kynebu was a priest who served during the reign of Thutmosis IV (New Kingdom 1550–1070 BCE). See T. James, *An Introduction to Ancient Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), plate 11.

25. Manniche, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Egypt*, 52.



Figure 3.4 Figures with Instruments from Theban Tomb 113 of Kynebu
(Copyright the Trustees of The British Museum)

the Kynebu scene the figures are also a combination of light- and dark-skinned peoples. Nubians, typically dark-skinned, were neighbors of Egypt during this period, and the cultures interacted and sustained intricate relationships with each other for some time.²⁶

Clothing worn by the figures is minimal and simple in design. The women appear to wear a type of transparent garment that is accessorized with foliage in a fashion similar to the figure with aerophone from Deir el-Medina (Figure 3.2). The neckline of the robes has a design that is present on each; the males wear skirts, and their upper bodies appear to be bare, yet there is a design around the men's necks, which may be some kind of necklace.

Female figures of the ensemble wear similar short hairstyles—neck or shoulder length. The lyre and harp players wear headbands, and the headbands display some type of decoration, which may be small tassels; the male figures are bald.

Other than the possible necklace depicted on one of the males, jewelry is not presented on any of the figures. Hair (probably wigs) covers the ears of the females; thus, it is unknown if they are wearing earrings.

Note the instrumentation: lyre and harp (chordophones), pipe (aerophone), and possible voice(s). The third figure plays a lyre, and is followed

26. D. O'Connor explains, "The two earliest known African civilizations are those of Egypt and Nubia. Over a very long span of time, the two civilizations interacted in many ways, sometimes collaborating, for example, in trading relationships, but often competing with each other for territory or other advantages. Despite these interrelationships, Egyptian civilizations and Nubian civilization differed from each other in many important ways, each showing a strong vitality of its own." See D. O'Connor, *Ancient Nubia: Egypt's Rival Africa* (Philadelphia: The University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology University of Pennsylvania, 1993), viii.

by a pipe player, male harpist, and apparent vocalist. The group appears to be in a line or processional, but this may be a result of stylization. The harp's height and construction may make it difficult to move while playing without assistance (the precise weight of instrument is unknown), so it is possible that the group performs in one place while the dancers and others execute various dance movements. Like many Egyptian representations, the figures are shown in three-quarter side view. Although there are two men depicted, women dominate the group in stature and number, and may be the leader(s) of the ensemble.

Men and women in ancient Egypt also practiced chironomy (Figures 3.5a and 3.5b). Chironomy is interpreted as a method of conducting or giving an instrumentalist or vocalist instruction regarding how to play or sing certain notes, or musical pieces. People practicing this activity appeared



Figures 3.5a and 3.5b Men and women practicing chironomy
(Copyright the Trustees of The British Museum)

initially in depictions from the Old Kingdom Period (2695–2160 BCE). The chironomist was a person kneeling (sometimes on one knee) who made specific gestures (orally or with the hands) to an individual or group. Men and women were chironomists, which further demonstrates

that both played leadership roles in Egyptian music culture even during its earliest periods.²⁷ Depictions are unclear whether women chironomists conducted male performers and vice versa, but the archaeological data clearly show that both men and women served in this capacity. The interaction of women and men in musical performance suggests that the relationships possibly had some level of equality in this aspect of Egyptian culture. The roles and relationships may have changed through time and space, but the data show males and females interacting in this musical activity during the Old and New Kingdoms.²⁸

Women musicians were also the subjects of several scenes and musical performance in ancient Egypt. For example, there are several iconographic depictions on a papyrus scroll dating to the New Kingdom period showing women with instruments involved in erotic encounters with men (Figures 3.6a and 3.6b).²⁹ The instruments presented in most instances are the lyre and lute.³⁰ Note that the chordophones and aerophone (oboe) are depicted or discussed in scenes and texts that involve music and sexual intercourse, but they are not exclusive to any particular area of Egyptian culture. All three instruments are presented in depictions showing what appear to be religious activities in the Old and New Kingdoms.³¹



Figures 3.6a and 3.6b Sexual encounters involving musical instruments (chordophones) from New Kingdom Egypt (Copyright the Trustees of The British Museum)

27. Cf. Hickmann, *Musikgeschichte in Bildern*, 84–92; Manniche, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Egypt*, 14, 19.

28. See additional illustrations and photos in Hickmann, *Musikgeschichte in Bildern*, and Manniche, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Egypt*.

29. See L. Manniche, *City of the Dead: Thebes in Egypt* (London: British Museum Press, 1987).

30. The lute falls under S-H 321 of the Sachs-Hornbostel classification system.

31. For further discussion, see Manniche, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Egypt*, 108–19.

Figurine of Bes

A New Kingdom ceramic figurine shows the god Bes with his arms outstretched, possibly dancing, and in his left hand is a frame drum (Figure 3.7).³² Small round dots decorate the body, and there is a rectangular shape around the chest and neck with circles, dots, and crosses. The bearded flat head is a standard characteristic of many Bes figures.

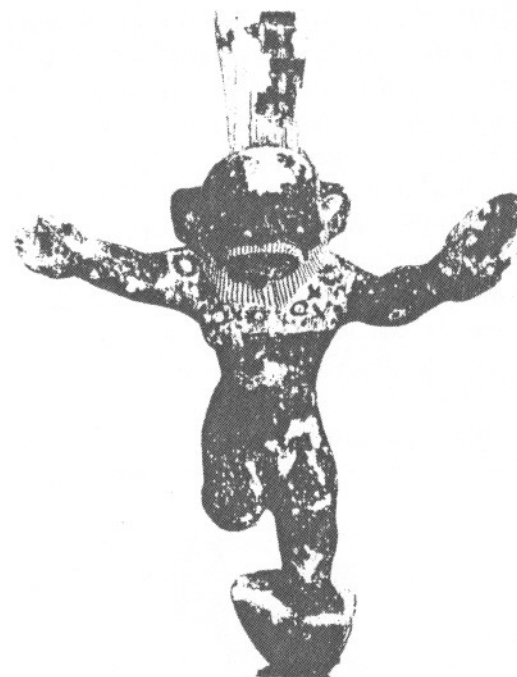


Figure 3.7 Egyptian deity Bes with frame drum (Copyright the Trustees of The British Museum)

This figurine is important in that it displays a male, identified as a god, with a frame drum, an instrument many associate with women throughout the Near East. If Bes, a figure known throughout the Near East, is depicted performing with the instrument, this is an example of the frame drum played by a male figure, possibly a deity, as a solo instrument. It is highly unlikely that Bes's playing the frame drum was considered effeminate in Egyptian culture. However, these seemingly different views of frame drums and males in the ancient Near East may reveal undetected cultural

32. The frame drum falls under S-H 211.3 of the Sachs-Hornbostel classification system.

differences. For example, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Israelite cultures may each have had diverse views regarding males and females performing with frame drums in religious as well as secular contexts. For instance, perhaps frame drums in the hands of men in Egypt and Mesopotamia were not taboo in any performance context, but in Israel/Palestine, this practice was only acceptable in certain aspects of the culture.

Furthermore, as with the lyre and harp, it is possible that solo performers also played and sang with frame drums in various facets of Egyptian culture (e.g., religious contexts, victorious battles or entertainment). Numerous depictions of women in Egyptian culture appear to include performance with frame drums (e.g., scaring of birds, street entertainers), but the appearance of a male (deity) playing the instrument and presented by the artist in a beautifully carved figurine forces second thoughts in considering the frame drum's identification as a "woman's" instrument in the Near East, or an instrument played primarily by women, particularly in Egypt. Women may have often played frame drums throughout the Near East, but seemingly it was not uncommon for men to play them as well.

Figurine of Harpist

A wooden female figure playing a harp dates to the Ramesside period (Figure 3.8). The nude body of the figure is decorated with distinct designs



Figure 3.8 New Kingdom female figure with harp (Copyright the Trustees of The British Museum)

that ornament the neck and eyes. Dots adorn the chest area. Circles around the ankles suggest ankle bracelets. The figure appears to wear a wig.

The angular harp held by the woman has six strings and appears as a solo instrument like the drum held by the Bes statue.³³ The iconographic scene from the Theban Tomb 113 of Kynebu discussed earlier (Figure 3.4) displays a bow-shaped harp, but a man who is part of a mixed-sex ensemble plays it. Harps have appeared as solo instruments and in musical groups, and women and men performed on the instruments in various Egyptian contexts. The example of a female harpist and the iconographic depiction of the harp player from Kynebu's tomb place the instrument in the hands of a man and woman.

Figurine of Cymbal Player

Musicologist Hans Hickmann provides a line drawing (Figure 3.9) of a figure with cymbals, an instrument not often depicted in Egyptian musical scenes or figurines.³⁴ The bronze cymbal player dates to ca. 1200 BCE and is shown standing on a box. The figure appears to be nude, and the physical characteristics indicate that it is male. The arms are bent at an



Figure 3.9 Drawing of New Kingdom Egyptian Cymbal Player (Copyright the Trustees of The British Museum)

33. The angular harp falls under S-H 322.12 of the Sachs-Hornbostel classification system.

34. Hickmann, *Musikgeschichte in Bildern*.

awkward angle, parallel to the ground, and are attached to cymbals; the discs appear to be clasped together.³⁵ As seen in the frame drum and harp figures, the cymbal player is presented as a solo instrument. It is uncertain whether musicians performed alone with cymbals in Egyptian culture, but this interpretation is plausible and not unknown in other Near Eastern cultures. For example, in the Hebrew text writers describe temple musicians performing with cymbals and prophesying (1 Chr 25:1). Moreover, there are Iron Age representations from Mesopotamia of men performing with cymbals, but they are part of a larger ensemble. Remember that a solo performance with an instrument—in this case, cymbals—may have also included singing or chanting by the player.

SEX AND GENDER IN MUSIC IN EGYPTIAN TEXTS

Egyptian texts, like many ancient writings, have not yet provided sufficient information regarding sex and gender identification to make conclusive interpretations regarding musicians in Egyptian music culture during this period. Texts describe and discuss some musical activity, but they often lack necessary details or descriptions to draw solid conclusions. However, some passages do provide insight into certain perspectives of Egyptian culture that involved particular musical instruments and performance.

Although this text dates to the fifth century BCE, the Persian period, note Herodotus's description of an encounter with men and women, musical instruments, and Egyptian culture:

When the people are on their way to Bubastis they go by river, *men and women together*, a great number of each in every boat. Some of the women make a noise with *krotala* [clappers], others play *auloi* [double oboe] all the way, while the rest of the women, and the men, sing and clap their hands. As they journey down to Bubastis, whenever they come near any other town, they bring their boat near the bank; then some of the women do as I have said, some shout mockery of the women of the town, others dance, and others stand up and expose their sex. This they do whenever they come beside any river-side town. But when they have reached Bubastis they make a festival with great sacrifices, and more wine is drunk at this feast than in the whole year besides. (Herodotus II.60, trans. A. D. Godley, Loeb edition 1946, emphasis mine)

35. See *ibid.*, 55, fig. 14a.

This writer presents a sizeable group of Egyptian men and women celebrating together with musical instruments as they travel to the city of Bubastis.³⁶ The melodic instruments mentioned are an aerophone (*auloi* or double-pipe), *krotala* (clappers, percussion/idiophone), and singing voices. In the boat party Herodotus describes, the *krotala* and clapping by the women and men act as noisemakers or possibly to keep time. Also, he does not view the people, particularly the women, and their actions favorably, which may reflect how some factions of the local cultures interpreted *krotala* and *auloi* and persons that performed with them, particularly in certain cultural contexts.

In another textual example we again find an aerophone, but the second instrument is a chordophone. This description also presents combinations of women and specific musical instruments in a negative light. In this instance, a writer of a scribal school text dating to the Nineteenth Dynasty (ca. 1200 BCE) provides advice for male students:

Among other things the student is advised never to touch wine, for it leads to drunkenness and the company of women of dubious reputation, who would even teach him to sing to the oboe and chant to the lyre.³⁷

What does this Egyptian scribal teaching say about how some view these instruments in combination with certain women? Did some consider males who sang to the oboe or chanted to the lyre effeminate, or does the writer attempt to express a degree of machismo? Did factions of society understand the oboe and lyre as women's instruments or instruments associated with "dubious reputations"? Assessing the available data, the first two views/questions appear plausible. There may have been people within Egyptian culture who interpreted the oboe and lyre as "women's" instruments, and some may have considered men who played them effeminate. In American society there are groups of people that consider aerophones such as the flute and piccolo to be feminine or "women's" instruments, and as a result, those who play them may be viewed as effeminate.³⁸ In addition, factions of American society also view

36. According to Herodotus, this boat trip was part of the Festival of Bast, at which time people visited the Temple of Bubastis (Tell-Basta, Tell Batash), home of the cat deity Bastet. The goddess is often shown with a *sistrum*, a rattlelike instrument classified as an idiophone. For further discussion, see A. Lloyd, *Herodotus: Book II. Introduction (I) and Commentary (II, III)*, 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1988).

37. See Manniche, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Egypt*, 108–9. The author does not provide additional information regarding the scribal text.

38. I have experienced this personally. I began playing flute and piccolo at an early age, and many references were made toward me and other males who played these aerophones. The comments identified us and the instruments as effeminate, and considered our sexuality dubious.

the saxophone, particularly the alto, tenor, and soprano, as sensual or “sexy” instruments. Moreover, in Egyptian culture perhaps some people associated the oboe and lyre with sexually illicit or taboo behavior, particularly when played by specific individuals (e.g., a woman blowing an aerophone). Interestingly, both instruments have appeared in iconography throughout Egypt’s existence, but in musical scenes dating after the Fifth Dynasty (2563–2423 BCE) women are often depicted playing double-pipes in various contexts.

The data for Egyptian music culture provide clear visual examples of women and men in musical performance, and there are depictions of mixed-sex ensembles, sex-specific groups, and soloists.³⁹ Egyptian texts also reflect music and aspects of daily life (e.g., temple worship, social events, childbirth), and many provide hymns and song lyrics.⁴⁰ Through these sources we are able to gain some insight to sex and gender roles and relationships in the music culture of ancient Egypt.

SEX AND GENDER IN MESOPOTAMIAN MUSICAL ARTIFACTS AND ICONOGRAPHY

Mesopotamia, “the land between the two rivers,” the Tigris and Euphrates, has produced many musical artifacts and depictions. Objects from this area vary in design, but have early origins. For example, the well-known musical find from the Ur graves has provided the famous bull-headed lyre, which dates to ca. 2100 BCE.⁴¹

As we have seen in Egyptian iconography and artifacts displaying musical activity, sex and gender identification are often seen in physical characteristics. However, there are instances in texts and other objects that require closer examination and discussion.

39. For example, see J. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, vol. 1: *An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1958), 467.

40. For example, “The Hymn of Aton,” in *ibid.*, 226–30.

41. The eleven chordophones recovered at Ur (two harps, nine lyres) have added to understanding harp and lyre construction. A pair of silver aerophones and other miscellaneous instruments were among the discovery. A gold cylinder seal from the Ur grave depicts figures performing with clappers (instruments known also in Egypt), a dancer, and a seated figure playing a bovine lyre. The find dates to the third millennium BCE. For further discussion, see A. Kilmer, “The Musical Instruments from Ur and Ancient Mesopotamian Music” *Expedition* 40, no. 2 (1998): 12, figs. 1–4. Also see J. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia* (London: Routledge, 1995), 23–26; D. Van Buren, *Clay Figurines of Babylonia and Assyria* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978); S. A. Rashid, *Mesopotamien. Musikgeschichte in Bildern* (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1984).

Iconographic Depiction of Four Musicians from Nineveh

The city of Nineveh once sat on the east bank of the Tigris River near Mogul, and was the capital of the Assyrian Empire from 705 to 612 BCE. A bas-relief from this site dating to approximately 680 BCE displays four musicians along with a frame drum, two lyres, and cymbals (Figure 3.10).⁴² The musicians face each other and are paired chordophone and aerophone on each side. All of the figures are male, and the performers’



Figure 3.10 Depiction of Four Musicians (Courtesy of the Louvre)

clothing suggests that there was uniformity in certain musical ensembles and/or musical performances during this period, possibly throughout the geographical area. Each wears a robe, but the garments differ slightly in design. The lyre and cymbal player on the right wear a decorated belt or sash, while those worn by the drummer and lyre player on the left have

42. A. Sendrey, *Music in Ancient Israel* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1969), 48; A. Spycket, “La musique instrumentale Mesopotamienne,” *Journal des savants* (Juillet-Septembre 1969): 153–209.

little to no ornamentation; each has the same hem. Artists' rendering of the men's hairstyles may indicate braids, which may shed light on the types of hair textures of the peoples residing there. In sum, the depiction of the Nineveh ensemble reflects an organized musical system with select instruments and, in this instance, possibly specialized male personnel.

As with many depictions such as this, there is a possibility that the activity displayed is religious, and the performers are connected in various ways with this aspect of the culture. For instance, Black and Green explain that there were at least two types of priests that were also musicians. First, there were the *gala* or (*kalu*); these priests/musicians specialized in performance of the *balag* and other cult songs.⁴³ Second, there were the (*naku*) or *nar*, who worked in the same capacity and specialized in solo performance of praise songs.⁴⁴ These performers may have accompanied themselves on stringed instruments, but generally they were singers.⁴⁵ In the Nineveh depiction, it is possible that they are singing while playing their instruments. The musicians appear to be moving toward each other, but they may also be executing other movements (e.g., dance, marking time) while occupying a specific area.⁴⁶

Iconographic Depiction from Relief from Sennacherib's Palace, Renovated by Assurbanipal: Assurbanipal's Conquest of Elam (Nineveh)

This ninth-century BCE depiction (668–630 BCE) from Sennacherib's palace displays twenty-six people (men, women, and children [dwarfs?]) in

43. *balag*=*balaggu* harps and drummable resonators and other harps. Kilmer also explains that proper names are attached to a few stringed instruments in Sumerian texts: "Great Dragon of the Land" pertains to a *balag* harp in Gudea (Cyl. A vi 24; vii 24; Cyl. B xv 21), its construction being noted in Gudea year name (SAK 227c). Gudea fashioned another *balag* called 'Lady as Exalted Heaven' (Statue E9v 12–15)." See A. Kilmer, "Leier," in *Relaxikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen*, vol. 6 (ed. E. Weidner and W. von Soden; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1983), 512–17.

44. J. Black and A. Green, *Gods, Demons, and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 149.

45. *Ibid.* Other known types of singers also include *sahiru*, a professional mourner, and the *zameru/zammertu* and *sirtu*—singers who were expert in specific types of nonliturgical performance.

46. A very similar piece comes from the palace of King Bar-rakib at Sam'al [Sinjirli, Zincirili], modern-day Turkey. The artifact is an eighth-century BCE bas-relief of four male musicians: two frame drummers, lyre, and harp. Chordophones (lyres and harps) and membranophones (drums) are grouped together. The hairstyles of each are the same, but the artist has indicated different hair textures or styles. The musicians wear like robes: decorated sashes and tassels ornament the waist. See R. D. Barnett, *A Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories* (London: British Museum, 1957); A. Sendrey, *Music of the Jews in the Diaspora* (London: Thomas Yoseloff, 1969b); M. Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East* (1990), 76–78.

an apparent processional (Figure 3.11).⁴⁷ There are seven harpists, two double-pipes, dulcimer (S–H 311), drummer, clappers, and possible singers. The figures are males and females who appear to vary in age and physical stature. The first five players, three harpists, a dulcimer, and double-pipe player, have beards; none of the figures following the initial five have facial hair. Four additional harpists, a double-pipe player, and drummer conclude the line of musicians. Following the last harpist is a group of fifteen figures: six adults and nine children (possibly young adults or dwarfs?). Most of the adults and all of the children clap, and may sing or chant as well. One figure has a hand to the throat, possibly performing a vocal technique known in the Middle East.⁴⁸



Figure 3.11 Depiction from Relief from Sennacherib's Palace, Renovated by Assurbanipal: Assurbanipal's Conquest of Elam (Nineveh) (Copyright the Trustees of The British Museum)

Sex and gender identification is uncertain in the group of fifteen persons without musical instruments and in the last six musicians. The lack of facial hair in the six musicians requires a closer look. They perform on harps identical to the males ahead of them. The beardless harpists are depicted as the same height as the bearded. There are at least two possible interpretations: (1) The harpists are all male, including those without facial hair; (2) the harpists are a mixed group of men and women. Although the artist has depicted some persons at the end of the group as slightly shorter

47. See Sendrey, *Music in Ancient Israel* (1969), 45, and Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East*, 283, fig. 120. The scene consists of three tiers, which Amiet interprets in the following manner. Bottom: Ulain River carries away wreckage of Elamite army, defeated at Til Tuba (653); center: defeated Elamites prostrate themselves, while others advance from city of Der, playing music to greet victorious Assyrians (653); top: Assyrian general leads Ummanigash, the new king imposed on the Elamites, by the hand (653).

48. In the Kuyundchick depiction, Sendrey interprets a participant with a hand to the throat as performing a vocal technique. He states, "We see six singing [women], one of them applying pressure to her throat and cheeks, a procedure used in the orient to produce a shrill tone" (Sendrey, *Music in Ancient Israel*, 45. Also for further discussion, see A. Shiloah, *Music and the World of Islam* (London: Scolar Press, 1995), 132–33; Barnett, *Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories*; Redmond, *When the Drummers Were Women* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997), 18; Pritchard, *Ancient Near East*; D. Van Buren, *Clay Figurines of Babylonia and Assyria* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978).

than those with the musicians, many of them can be identified as male or female. One possible exception could be the figure with a hand to the throat. However, the height of the “children” may indicate their youth.

Clothing is similar in all of the figures: robes with a belt or sash. With the exception of the children and three of the adults in the final group, all wear headbands. There is no indication of jewelry. The lack of facial hair, the headbands, and the belt or sash may indicate musical or social status, but the precise definitions regarding the cultural elements are unknown as this time. The group, for example, may be a musical guild consisting of family members similar to activities described in the Hebrew text’s books of the Chronicler.

Plaque Figurine with Drum from Mesopotamia (possibly found at Diqdiqqeh)

A Mesopotamian terra-cotta figurine from the site of Diqdiqqeh is slightly earlier than our period of discussion as it dates to around 2000 BCE, but is very similar to plaque figurines from Iron Age Israel/Palestine (Figure 3.12a).⁴⁹ Physical characteristics indicate that the figure is female. The figure holds a frame drum in the center of the torso, just below the breasts. The hair is worn straight down just past the ears; it is curled under at the end, and small bangs extend from under a headband. A two- or three-tiered necklace with an ornament in the center adorns the neck of the drummer.

Plaque Figurine with Drum from Mesopotamia. Unknown Provenance

A similar terra-cotta figurine from Mesopotamia shows a figure holding a frame drum in the center of the chest (Figure 3.12b).⁵⁰ The hand position is similar to the figurine discussed previously, but the drum is held lower on the body than the one from Diqdiqqeh. A mark resembling an upside-down “V” is in the middle of the torso just below the drum, but the significance of this marking is unknown. The hair of the figure extends to the shoulder, has a tight curl at the bottom, or there is a headdress. There are

49. Although these are earlier than the period of focus (Iron Age, 1200–586 BCE), their construction and subject matter is important to this study. They parallel the Iron Age plaque figures with discs from sites in Israel/Palestine. Both show nude or partially nude females posing or performing with discs. The position of the instrument in the center of the torso may be unique to Mesopotamia.

50. See Van Buren, *Clay Figurines*; Redmond, *When Drummers Were Women*, 74.



Figure 3.12a Figurine with drum possibly found at Diqdiqqeh



Figure 3.12b Figurine with drum from Unknown Provenance (Yale Babylonian Collection)

similar terra-cotta figurines from Nippur, but their chronology is uncertain. The Nippur figures hold the drum on the left side of the upper body versus the center.⁵¹

Both figures (Figures 3.12a and 3.12b) may be representations of actual musicians known during the period and location. Note that none of the plaque figurines of this type found in Israel/Palestine and throughout the Near East are identical. This nonuniformity strongly suggests that each creation is of a particular person posing or performing with a frame drum in a fashion similar to a portrait. Although the provenance is sometimes uncertain, some would identify them as votive offerings that stood in place of an actual person for deity worship, as well as ornamentation that possibly may have been found in households. This may be the case, but I would also add that the plaques could have served a dual purpose in artists capturing persons in clay for the purpose of posterity.

SEX AND GENDER IN MUSIC IN MESOPOTAMIAN TEXTS

Mesopotamian texts reveal that music was a part of magic rites, royal ceremonies, weddings, circuslike performances, religious festivals (e.g.,

51. See L. Legrain, *Terra Cottas from Nippur* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930), 18, figs. 75–77, 80–82.

Inanna/Ishtar), and sexually explicit activities, which involved males and females.⁵² There were also transvestite performers bearing the titles *kurgarru* or *assinnu*, who performed and entertained musically.⁵³

Transvestism is known in some Middle East societies in ancient and modern times. For example, ethnographic data reveal that a group of women bearing the title *Ghawazee* entertained men through music and prostitution in nineteenth-century CE Egypt and earlier. The *Khawals*, a male ensemble, paralleled the *Ghawazee*, and these men dressed and performed musically and sexually in the same manner.⁵⁴ These transvestites played with cymbals and danced to flutes and tambourines. Their dress consisted of a tight vest, girdle, and petticoat. Members plucked facial hair, grew their hair long, and applied *kohl* and henna to the eyes and hands. Their stage was primarily the street, but groups also performed at marriages, childbirths, circumcisions, and other public festivals.⁵⁵

Also consider the master musicians of Jajouka and their display of transvestism. Skilled musicians from Jajouka, a small village in Morocco, have toured the United States and Canada, and performed with notable musical figures such as jazz great Ornette Coleman (1973), the Rolling Stones (1989), and the Klezmatics (1996). Interestingly, there is an element of transvestism in aspects of annual Jajouka musical performances:

Bou Jeloud, a dancer dressed in goatskins, is the central character in a masquerade produced annually in Jajouka in the week following the feast of 'Aid el-Kabir. The other characters in Jajouka festival include an old man, known as "Al-Haj" (pilgrim), and 'Aisha Hamqa (Crazy Aisha), a local manifestation of 'Aisha Qandisha, the well-known Moroccan she-devil. 'Aisha is always danced by a boy in drag, and was once danced by a dozen transvestites, in tribute to her multiple identities and great powers. According to my observations in the 1970s, members of masquerade teams elsewhere in Morocco included other transvestites, pseudo-Jews,

52. Some of the terms used for musicians include *nartu* (female musician), *nargallu* (chief musician), *nar-tur* (junior musician), *kalu* (cantor/lamentation singer). See Kilmer, "Leier," 467-69.

53. Kessler states that "an *assinnu*, a character who appears in a variety of Mesopotamian sources, is a performer in an Istar cult and is distinguished by dress, hairstyle, and female accoutrement. Various a transvestite, a hermaphrodite, or eunuch, the *assinnu* is a transgressive figure of ambiguous or, perhaps, even mutable gender and overt sexual display." "The Sex Omens of Mesopotamia," in *Gender and the Body in the Ancient Mediterranean* (ed. M. Wyke; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 45.

54. The term *hijra* in Indian culture is used to describe transvestites, eunuchs, etc., who participate in similar activity. See S. Nanda, *Neither Man nor Woman: The Hijra of India* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1990).

55. F. Henriques, *Prostitution and Society: A Survey* (New York: Citadel Press, 1959), 341.

boys posing as old men, amateur musicians pretending to be professionals, and kids wearing Halloween masks imported from Taiwan.⁵⁶

Ethnographic and textual evidence demonstrate that transvestism has been and continues to be a part of musical performance in various music cultures throughout the world.⁵⁷ In the cultures discussed, it appears to have been an aspect of the group's lifeways and cultural practices.

In addition to transvestism, it appears that homosexuality was practiced in antiquity and permeated dimensions of music cultures. For example, in what Bottero and Petschow call "professionals of passive homosexuality," they explain that ancient texts reveal that homosexuality was a part of Mesopotamian culture during this period, including musical performance:

The majority of individuals, whose way of life constituted a veritable "state of being" (*assinnutu, kulu'utu*), or a profession or art (*kurgarrutu*), the object of an apprenticeship agreement, may have had a role to play in the liturgy: they . . . played music, sang, and danced or perhaps performed some kinds of drama or pantomime. Most often these were ceremonies in honor of Ishtar, to whom by all evidence these "officiants" were very closely linked, or of her various hypostases. In this regard, and given the character of this goddess and her cult, their role was already inevitably ambiguous: not only this transvestism and dancing give us cause to wonder, but certain texts as well, by revealing their "erotic" character, to use today's terms.⁵⁸

It is uncertain if homosexual behavior or transvestism was considered taboo in any aspect of Mesopotamian society. Nevertheless, these individuals took part in sociocultural activities. Although this may not have been a normative part of most lifeways at this time, these sexual lifestyles appear to have been a part of the music culture in Iron Age Mesopotamian society.

56. P. Schuyler, "Joujouka/Jajouka/Zahjoukah: Moroccan Music and Euro-American Imagination," in *Mass Meditations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 152.

57. Ancient Mesopotamian texts describe transvestism in musical performance. For examples, see J. Bottero and B. Petschow, "Homosexualitat," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archaeologie* (ed. W. Gruyter; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1976); D. Collon, "Musik," in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archaeologie*, vol. 8 (ed. E. Weidner and W. von Soden; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996); and R. Henshaw, *Male and Female. The Cultic Personnel: The Bible and the Rest of the Ancient Near East* (Allison Park, Pa.: Pickwick Publications, 1995).

58. Bottero and Petschow, "Homosexualitat," 463.

Although texts express that several types of sex and gender were a part of Mesopotamian music culture, their roles in musical performance remain ambiguous. Like Egyptian writings, ancient Mesopotamian texts contain hymns, some descriptions of musical instruments, and composition, but sex and gender identification of many performers is uncertain. Textual data do, however, mention legendary musical performers known in Mesopotamian music culture. For example, Shulgi, King of Ur (2095–2048 BCE), left behind a self-proclaimed, but highly respected legacy of superior musicianship and compositions. Shulgi was deified as a result of his accomplishments.⁵⁹ Mesopotamia texts do mention other musical performers, but Shulgi is one of the most prominent.⁶⁰

SEX AND GENDER AND MUSIC IN CYPRO-PHOENECIAN AND PHILISTINE ICONOGRAPHY AND ARTIFACTS

The geography of Cypro-Phoenecia includes the island of Cyprus, Phoenecia, the coastal sites of Achzib, Shikmona, and Philistia, and locations in the Mediterranean and Aegean. There are Cypro-Phoenecian chronological subdivisions, and those pertaining to this research include the Cypro-Geometric Age (ca. 1050–750 BCE) and the Cypro-Achaic Period (ca. 750–475 BCE). Some of the artifacts are from unknown provenances and are not dated precisely, but none are later than the sixth century BCE. As mentioned, artifacts from unknown provenances will be used primarily for comparative purposes.

The employment of three instruments—*aerophone-chordophone-membranophone* (a-m-c)—is a common ensemble combination in several musical depictions presented in iconographic representations from these Near Eastern regions (Figure 3.13).⁶¹ The order of the a-m-c instruments

59. See G. Castellino, *Tivo Shulgi Hymns* (Istituto di Studi del vicino oriente: Universita di Roma, 1972), and J. Klein, "Shulgi of Ur: King of a Neo-Sumerian Empire," in *Civilisations of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 2 (ed. J. Sasson; London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), 843–57.

60. For example, there is a praise text that discusses the adroit musical skills of Shulgi. See J. A. Black, G. Cunningham, G. Flückiger-Hawker, E. Robson, and G. Zolyomi, "The Electronic Corpus of Sumerian Literature," <http://www-etcls.orinet.ox.ac.uk/> (1978). Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East*, 125, fig. 40, displays a photograph of Ur-Nina, a prominent female vocalist known in the Mari during the Early Dynastic period, ca. 2400 BCE.

61. As mentioned previously the chordophone-aerophone-membranophone was popular throughout the ancient Near East. Karageorghis gives a suggestion of the effect of the trio on Cyprus: "It may be suggested that the use of the instrument (double-pipe/flute) in Cyprus, and the occurrence of the motif in Cypriote iconography may have resulted from contacts with the Near East." See V. Karageorghis, *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus*, vol. 2: *Late Cypriote II—Cypriote Geometric III* (Nicosia: Leventis Foundation, 1993), 38.

varies in many scenes, but artists show *aerophone*, *chordophone*, or *membranophone* as the lead, middle, or last instrument on several Cypro-Phoenecian and Mediterranean bowls and platters; a chief instrument or musical leader is not clearly indicated.⁶² Bowls and platters from these cultures typically contain one large frieze that may circle the rim, which displays activity, or there are several smaller, windowlike friezes that show snapshots of action.⁶³ The activities show musicians performing with dancers, persons presenting offerings, erotica, or combinations of each.⁶⁴ In most cases, however, the musicians are presented as an ensemble.

Sex and gender identification of the musicians remains a question. In a fashion similar to many Near Eastern representations, most of the figures wear robes, hats or some type of headdress, and jewelry. There are no texts from Cypro-Phoenecian and Mediterranean cultures during this period that reveal information regarding sex and gender identification or roles and relationships at this time. Nevertheless, the available data provide some insight regarding these aspects of their music cultures.

Idalion Bowl

An 1849 excavation at Amberlliri, the western acropolis of Idalion, Cyprus, produced a shallow bowl dating to the eighth century BCE (Figure 3.13). The bowl, discovered near an altar in the northeast end of the temenos, has an elaborate scene circling its rim.⁶⁵ The frieze contains an iconographic scene of an apparent processional toward a seated figure.⁶⁶ Eleven figures are present: a seated person; six dancers holding hands; three musicians with instruments (a-m-c); and a figure presenting two objects (possibly offerings) while standing in front of a table before the

62. G. Markoe, *Phoenecian Bronze and Silver Bowls from Cyprus and the Mediterranean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), and *Phoenecians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 148–50; V. Karageorghis, *Salamis in Cyprus: Homeric Hellenistic, and Roman* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), plate 104.

63. The bowls and platters come from a collection discussed primarily by Markoe, *Phoenecian Bronze*. The bowls are numerated in the same fashion cataloged by Markoe, and artifacts are presented in the same manner. He presents detailed discussion and descriptions of bowls and platters from Cypriote, Phoenecian, Mediterranean, and Aegean contexts. Several artifacts are from unknown provenances, and some are badly damaged. He also compares the bowls in structure, composition, and artistic depiction.

64. V. Karageorghis, "Erotica from Salamis," *Rivista di Studi Fenici* 21 (1993): 7–13.

65. E. Gjerstad, "Supplementary Notes on Finds from Ajia Irini in Cyprus," *Medelhavsmusset Bulletin* 3 (1963): 4. The bowl is currently housed in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. A temenos is an open-air courtyard.

66. The seated figure has been identified by some as an enthroned goddess. See Markoe, *Phoenecian Bronze*, 56; Barnett, *Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories*, 78.



Figure 3.13 Figures on Idalion Bowl (Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum)

seated person. The last dancer in the line is next to the frame drummer, but they face opposite directions. The positions of these figures may be the result of artistic stylization as they are linked to create the circle. The first dancer of the line reaches forward with unknown objects in his or her hands.

Because of the sex and gender ambiguities, it has been suggested that clothing, hairstyle, or jewelry could be indicators when physical characteristics

of figures are not easily recognized.⁶⁷ Consequently, some scholars have identified the Idalion figures as women because of their clothing, but are these observations correct?⁶⁸

Each of the figures in the Idalion bowl wears essentially the same wardrobe, but there are subtle differences. The second, fourth, and sixth dancers and the lyre player wear garments that differ at the bottom from the others; the robes of the first, third, and fifth dancers and frame drummer have the same wavy stripe design. The figure holding unidentified objects, the seated deity, and the double-pipe player each wear similar attire. The figure with the objects also has a robe similar to the first dancer, but a belt or sash hangs from the waist. The dress of the seated figure contains straight versus wavy lines in the design of the robe, which is a contrast to the others, and the double-pipe player wears vesture over the robe. Although the dress of the figures differs, the hats and hairstyles are the same.⁶⁹ The seated figure is the only figure who wears a completely different hat and robe.

I suggest that the difference in clothing indicates that there was a specific manner of dress or uniform for dancers, musicians, and others participating in the depicted activity. The artist made distinct differences in the clothing, and the presence of these slight variations are not unimportant, although we are not aware of any precise meanings or symbolism. Although each musician wears different attire, the variance in clothing does not indicate anything conclusive regarding sex or gender identification. However, I offer that the distinctions reveal information regarding roles and relationships among the performers. A lack of data from Cypro-Phoenician cultures prevents making conclusive statements regarding clothing as a factor of hierarchical structure (with the exception of the seated figure) or identifying men and women, but the uniformity of the individuals forces us to consider the possibility of uniformity within the group, which helps to identify a mixed-sex or -gender ensemble in the Idalion scene. Many military organizations and marching bands, for

67. Cypriote archaeologist Dr. Louise Steele from the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem (1998–99) and I discussed the possibilities of clothing, jewelry, and hairstyles being indicators of gender. Steele and I also investigated and reviewed these items in several depictions and artifacts, but were unable to find any conclusive data regarding gender identification.

68. For example, Markoe identifies all of the musicians as female, *Phoenician Bronze*, 171.

69. See T. Webster and J. Davis, *Cesnola Terracotta in the Stanford University Museum* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, 1878), and E. Gjerstad, "Supplementary Note." There is a parallel Palaepaphos-Skales, Tomb 67, ca. tenth to ninth century BCE. It is a gold rectangular plate with folded edges displaying a figure wearing a hat (crown?) similar to the Idalion bowl performers. The robe is also similar; however, the gender of this figure is also ambiguous. See V. Karageorghis, *Ancient Cyprus: 7000 Years of Art and Archaeology* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 119.

example, strive for homogeneity (e.g., in hairstyles, hair length, facial hair or clean shaven, sameness in attire, etc.), but various ranks in the groups are often displayed in clothing differences, symbols, and insignia. The garments worn by members may be similar, but can also have distinguishing features that explain hierarchical positions, roles, and the relationships to others in the organization. This may be the case in the Idalion depiction and many others as well.

The concerns are the same regarding hairstyles of the figures. Each person not only wears a hat and has hair extending past the shoulders, but all appear to have the same hairstyle and length. If the artist's depiction is not overstylized, this uniformity suggests that the figures may have worn wigs (a common practice in Egypt whose influences permeate the Near East and this may have been one of them), or it was possibly a requirement of the participants to wear their hair in this manner. Artifacts and texts from Near Eastern cultures indicate that at times throughout antiquity both men and women wore long hairstyles.⁷⁰

Jewelry is not clearly depicted on the Idalion figures. Dancers wear two circular objects at the end of the hair strands and at the top of the robes, which may be jewelry, but it is not clear what the objects are. The objects may be ornaments of the garment or a type of bow for the hair. They are too close together and too high on the clothing to be female breasts, as some scholars suggest.⁷¹ The figures have bands around the wrists and one of the ankles, but it is difficult to determine if these are actually bracelets or cuffs that are part of an undergarment of the ensemble, or ankle rattles.⁷² Because of the detail provided by the artist in the robes and hats of the figures, there would be more of an indication of shells or bells on the bands if they were rattles, although, because of artistic stylization, I would not rule out this possibility (Figure 3.13).

70. For example, the Hebrew Bible gives examples of nazirites as, "Men and women who enthroned a consecrated state upon their own or a parent's vow (Num 6:1-21; 1 Sam 1:1-11; Judg 13:1-7). There were three main conditions for entering and remaining in this holy state: refrain from the fruit of the vine and other toxicants, not allow a razor to touch one's hair." This example of the nazirites demonstrates that both men and women with long hair participated in cultic activities. In this case, unless there were distinctive hairstyles for men and women, and we can determine them, it would be difficult to tell them apart. See J. Gammie, "Nazirites," in *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (ed. P. Achtemeier; San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishing Co., 1985), 689.

71. See Markoe, *Phoenician Bronze*, 171.

72. D. Edwards, "Dress and Ornamentation," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 232-38.

Bowl from Olympia

A bronze bowl from an unknown provenance in Olympia presents a frieze circling the rim (Figure 3.14). The bowl has been damaged, and parts of the scene are not visible.⁷³ The iconographic depictions and construction of the bowl are similar to the one from Idalion. There is Egyptian influence in the figures and symbols.

The Olympia bowl displays four different scenes in the frieze, and three of them depict the following: (a) A seated figure holding a lotus in one hand and a bowl in the other; a figure stands in front of the seated figure holding an *ankh* and possibly a fly whisk; (b) two figures slaying a griffin;



Figure 3.14 Bowl from Olympia (Courtesy of National Archaeological Museum in Athens)

73. The bowl is now housed in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. For further discussion regarding this bowl see Markoe, *Phoenician Bronze*, 204.

(c) a scene displaying a seated female suckling a baby before a table; another figure raises a cup in one hand while holding an *ankh* in the other. A nude female figure clutching her breasts and a nude bearded male flank each scene on both sides. The fourth scene contains a variation of the a-m-c instrumentation. Here, the lyre is first, followed by a frame drum, and finally a double pipe.⁷⁴

The clothing of the figures is the same. Each wears a robe that is ankle length, but has no collar. The only ornamentation shown on or with the robe is a sash or belt around the waist, and it appears that the figures are barefoot. Again, the uniformity of the musicians in the scene presents the possibility of a mixed-sex/gender ensemble, and the possibility should be considered in the same manner as the Idalion scene.

The hairstyles are difficult to decipher as it is hard to determine whether the figures are wearing distinct hairstyles or hats. The lyre player wears a style similar to the apparent seated figure in scene (a), and both hairstyles have the same form. There are markings on the surface that may indicate the texture of hair, wig, hat, or headdress. The frame drummer displays unique style in the headdress. However, this may not have been an intention of the artist as there are possible markings that may indicate texture. The shape of the headdress worn by the double-pipe player is also different. It is somewhat similar to the seated figure—the lyre player—but it has unique features and potential texture markings. Other than the bracelets on the arms and wrists of the nude males and females, the figures wear no jewelry.

Bowl from Sparta

The Sparta bowl, housed at the Louvre in Paris, is from an undetermined provenance (Figure 3.15).⁷⁵ The bowl is also bronze, but badly corroded. A band circles the border, a rosette enclosed in another band decorates the center, and outside of the rosette are six bulls surrounded by another band. The subject matter is similar to the Idalion bowl. There are seven dancers, and the last dancer is behind a lyre player. The figures are difficult to decipher due to the corrosion.

The instrumentation of the Sparta bowl scene is a contrast to that of the two portrayals previously discussed. The Sparta depiction shows four musicians involved in an apparent processional: three lyres and a frame



Figure 3.15 Bowl from Sparta (Courtesy of the Louvre)

drum. A lyre heads the ensemble, followed by the frame drummer, and then two more lyres. The first and last lyres are similar in design, but the third is different. Two small areas of negative space indicate a type of special design on the third lyre. There is no decoration shown on the frame drum.

Each player has different clothing. They all wear robes, but the designs of each vary. One of the lyre players and the frame drummer have stripes in their robes; the others have no ornamentation. The hats and hairstyles appear to be the same, and they bear some resemblance to those worn by the figures on the Idalion bowl. There are lines on the hat of the first lyre player, but they may be attributed to shading. The figures do not appear to wear any jewelry, although it must be considered that corrosion damage to the bowl may obstruct some of the details. Some scholars have identified all of the figures as female, but given the bowl's damaged condition and the ambiguity of its details, it is difficult to understand how this conclusion can be reached.⁷⁶ In a manner similar to the Idalion and

74. The lyre falls under S-H 321.22 of the Sachs-Hornbostel classification system; the frame drum under S-H 211.3; the double-pipe under S-H 42.

75. Markoe, 207; Gjerstad, "Supplementary Note," plate II.

76. Markoe, *Phoenician Bronze*, 207.

Sparta depictions, the uniformity of the figures presents a strong argument for a mixed-sex/gender musical ensemble.

CYPRO-PHOENECIAN AND MEDITERRANEAN FIGURINES

An assortment of figurines playing aerophones and membranophones comes from Iron Age Cypro-Phoenecian and Mediterranean contexts. These artifacts have cylindrical or conical bodies and concave bases. Conical bodies are typically hollow, while cylindrical ones are solid with a concave base. The arms usually bend forward in front of the body to hold the instrument. The origin of these figurine types is uncertain, but some scholars contend that they originated in the Near East and were introduced to Cyprus some time in the seventh century BCE.⁷⁷ The figurines discussed in the following section are categorized by instrument: membranophones (drums), aerophones (double-pipes), and chordophones (lyres), and are also from known and unknown provenances in Cypro-Phoenecian and Mediterranean cultures.⁷⁸

Figurine from Temple of Hera

The Hera drummer dates to ca. 660 BCE (Figure 3.16). Egyptian influence is present in the hair and molded face of the 18.2cm figurine. The hair has



Figure 3.16 **Figurine from Temple of Hera** (Courtesy Cyprus Museum with the permission of the Director of the Department of Antiquities)

77. A. Bisi, "Les sources syro-palestiniennes et chypriotes de l'art punique," *Antiquities Africaines* 14 (1979): 39.

78. Each of the figurines discussed in the following section can be seen in Karageorghis, *Coroplastic Art*, 30–33, 67–75, plates XLV, XLVII.

grooves resembling an Egyptian wig; the full lips, ridged eyelids, rounded cheeks, and the chin are the result of the mould. The body is bell shaped, wheel made, and hollow. Both arms are bent and hold a frame drum at an oblique angle against the chest. The left hand is broken off; the right is in the center of the drum. There is no detail in the figure's hand or the drum.

Cypriot scholar Karageorghis identifies the figurine as female, and his interpretation derives from a contrast to similar bearded frame drummers that are identified as male. The lack of facial hair and the facial characteristics of the figures are enough evidence for him to conclude that the Hera drummer and similar others are female. While the Hera figurine has no facial hair and the roundness and softness of the face suggests it is a woman, one must consider this information cautiously.⁷⁹ Male performers can display these physical features as well.

Figurine from Unknown Provenance

This Cypro-Phoenecian style figurine dates to around the seventh century BCE, but the provenance is unknown (Figure 3.17). Its cylindrical, wheel-made, hollow torso splays at the base. The head of the figurine is larger than

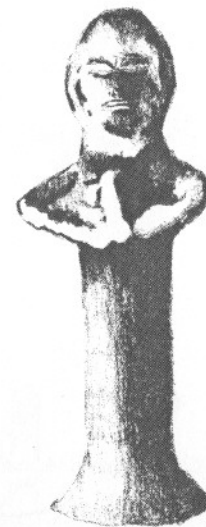


Figure 3.17 **Figurine from Unknown Provenance** (Drawing by author)

79. Also see Figure 4a from A. Caubet, "Ateliers de Figurines a Kiton," in *Cyprus and the Mediterranean in the Iron Age* (ed. V.T. Brown; London: British Museum, Ltd., 1989), 28–44.

the body, and the face is also molded but flattened; the back of the head is also flat, and the neck is thick. Curvature of the lips gives an impression of a frown, but the expression of the figure is difficult to determine. As demonstrated in the Hera drummer, the ridged lips and eyelids come from the mould. Also, the figurine appears to wear a headdress or wig.

Both arms are bent to hold a small frame drum at the bottom against the chest with the left hand, and the right is in the middle of the drum-head. There are traces of red and black paint on the arms, drum, and body. The drum is held at a slightly oblique angle, almost vertically.

Determining the sex/gender of this figurine must be approached with the same concerns as the Hera drummer. The figurine wears a headdress and displays facial characteristics similar to other female frame drummers, but this identification is not conclusive. Although the lack of high-quality craftsmanship creates problems in sex/gender identification, the figurine appears to be female.

Figurine with Double-Pipe

The 1997 Nicosia Collection contains an excellent example of a terracotta solo double-pipe player (Figure 3.18).⁸⁰ The figurine stands 7.5cm



Figure 3.18 Figurine with Double-pipe (Courtesy Cyprus Museum with the permission of the Director of the Department)

80. The Nicosia collection has other flute players from periods much later than that which this research addresses. Each figurine has the same difficulties in sex and gender identification. Scholars describe the shape, construction, and instruments, but never address sex/gender identification. In the solo depictions of flute players from Cyprus, there are no distinctive indicators of sex/gender. The collection is housed at the Cyprus Museum.

high, and although the base has been broken, it probably stood alone. The instrumentalist holds the aerophone at the mouth as if playing. The conical headdress is a noticeable contrast to the headdresses of the previous figurines. There are no physical characteristics to indicate sex or gender, yet some identify the figures as male with no explanation.⁸¹ Musical data throughout the Near East have presented depictions of women performing with double-pipes, particularly in Egyptian contexts. Nevertheless, we are unaware of the hierarchical status of this instrument in Cypro-Phoenecian and Mediterranean contexts.

MUSIC AND SEX AND GENDER IN PHILISTINE ARTIFACTS

One of the figurines from the Ashdod musicians' stand discussed earlier has generated some controversy in its sex/gender identification (Figure 3.19). The vessel displays five figures: figure with aerophone (possibly a double-pipe); figure with membranophone (lyre); figure with chordophone (lyre); figure with membranophone (drum); a figure, larger than the others, that has been identified as an

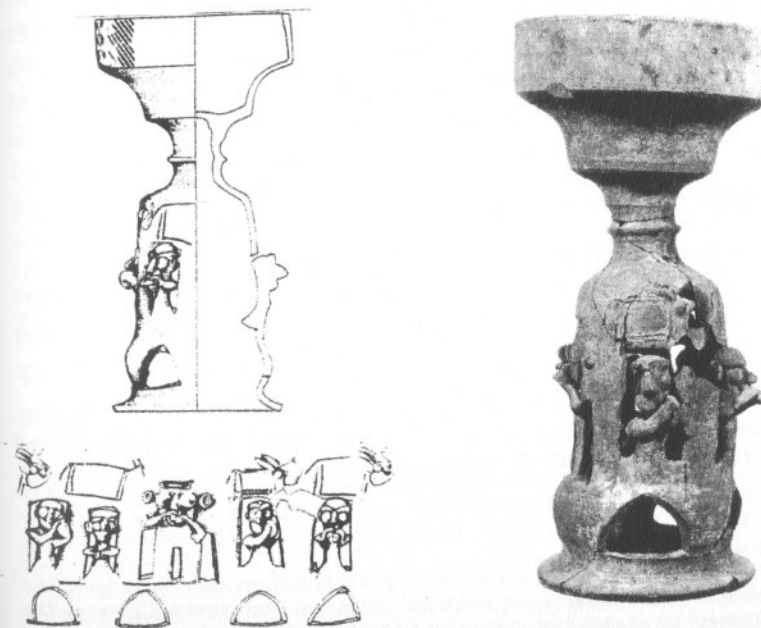


Figure 3.19 Ashdod Musicians' Stand (Courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority)

81. D. Christou and P. Flourentzos, *Highlights of Ancient Cypriote Ceramic Art from the Collection of the Cyprus Museum, Nicosia* (Tel Aviv: Eretz Israel Museum, 1997), 56.

apparent singer/leader or possible double-pipe player,⁸² and the controversial figure. All vary in size, but the larger figure has also been described as a “holler” or singer.⁸³

The figure in question has been identified in two ways: a cymbal player or a woman holding her breasts.⁸⁴ Looking straight ahead, the figure’s arms are across the center of its chest; the hands are broken off or absent from the figurine, or were not important details to the artist. Both arms are parallel to the ground, the elbows point outward. Its height is equivalent to the others, with the exception being the possible singer/holler, leader, or double-pipe player.

Close study of the figurine reveals a beard. Its construction shows that the artisan used the snowman construction technique in which parts of it were added as the clay dried; these objects include the nose, eyes, hat, ears, and a beard.⁸⁵ There is no detail in the beard, nor hatches or lines indicating hair, but the artisan clearly presents the shape of the beard. This style of facial hair is present in other Near Eastern depictions (e.g., lyre player from Beni Hasan, illustration 5.13 in Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000–586 BCE*). The figure displays no moustache, and the beard runs under the jaw line. The lyre player on the Ashdod stand wears a similar beard. It is possible that other players on the vessel may be female, which would display a mixed-sex musical ensemble on the Ashdod musicians stand.

Figure with Chordophone

The site of Ashdod also produced an eighth-century-BCE terra-cotta figure with a lyre that was discussed in the previous chapter (Figure 3.20).⁸⁶ A lyre sits in the figure’s left arm; the number of strings is unclear. The

82. T. Dothan, *The People of the Sea* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992), 176, states that “The central figure is notable for [his] size, construction, and the fact that [he] has legs. [His] protruding eyes and ears add to [his] general grotesquerie. The double pipe [he] is playing is broken at the end.” Bayer states that the large figure “is a large man who is either playing a wind instrument or ‘hollering.’” “The Finds That Could Not Be,” 32.

83. M. Dothan et al., “Ashdod II–III,” in *Atiqot IX–X* (Jerusalem: Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums, 1971).

84. Bayer interprets the following in the Ashdod figures: “Five figures appear at the base of the stand. In the bottom left photograph is the double pipe player, then a lyre player and a woman. The lyre player’s instrument is intact and the woman’s hands have not survived. Her hands were pressed to her breast, in the pose of many cultic figurines of the period.” “The Finds That Could Not Be,” 32.

85. After completing the sketches, Braun and I reviewed them. I explained to him that I had discovered a beard on the controversial figure. After reviewing my sketches Braun explained that this was first time he had observed this also. Conversation with J. Braun (February 17, 1999).

86. See chap. 2, note 23, p. 18.



Figure 3.20 Ashdod Figurine with Lyre (Courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority)

right hand and the bottom of the figure are broken. A black band encircles the bottom of the figurine. Added clay make up the nose and mouth, and the eyes are painted with large circles. Interestingly, there is a painted band that extends from the bottom of both eyes and under the chin. This line under the chin is similar and possibly akin to the beard worn by the lyre player in the Ashdod stand. This, however, is not certain. There are no physical defining characteristics regarding sex or gender in the figurine, although Dothan has interpreted it without discussion as male.⁸⁷

Figurine with Drum from Tel Shikmona

The Tel Shikmona figurine was also discussed briefly in the chapter on musical instruments.⁸⁸ The figure holds the drum at an oblique angle; the left hand is on the rim of the drum, and the right hand is inside on the drumhead.⁸⁹ The hair is braided and hangs well past the shoulders, and details in the face are clear.⁹⁰ The hairstyle and facial features suggest that

87. Dothan, *People of the Sea*, 140.

88. J. Elgavish, “Tel Shikmona,” in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, vol. 4 (ed. E. Stern; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 1370; C. Meyers, “Miriam the Musician,” in *The Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy* (ed. A. Brenner; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 212.

89. Elgavish, “Tel Shikmona,” 1375.

90. Bayer, “The Finds That Could Not Be,” 26; Braun, *Die Musikkultur Altisraels/Palastinas*, 250; Elgavish, “Tel Shikmona,” 1374.

the Shikmona figure is a woman. This figure and others like it help possibly to envision the Hebrew Bible description of women with frame drums in performance (e.g., Exod 15:20). Like many of these types of figurines, it is individualistic in its creation. It was found in a burial, which further suggests that the figurine is representative of a person who played the frame drum and possibly lived in the community.

Figurines with Membranophones from Achzib

This figure, also discussed earlier, has a hole approximately .5cm wide on the right side of the rear of the head. Mazar understood that it was made while the figurine was drying in order to extract material inside the head used in construction of the figurine.⁹¹ Braun, however, suggested that the hole was made later and may have been made for hanging the object.⁹² Neither of these observations has been confirmed, but the former is plausible according to potters and sculptors with whom I spoke.

The physical features of both the Shikmona and Achzib figurines indicate they are women playing or posing with drums. There are several representations of women with drums like this, and they are often found in burials. Some notable figurines of this type are part of the Cesnola, Dayan, and Harvard Semitic collections, and the site of Amathus has also produced a beautiful example.

SEX AND GENDER IN MUSIC IN ANCIENT ISRAEL/PALESTINE ARTIFACTS AND ICONOGRAPHY

In order to research sex and gender and music in Iron Age Israel/Palestine it is necessary to examine artifacts and depictions that date to the period of transition from the Late Bronze Age (1500–1200 BCE) to the Iron Age (1200–586 BCE). The end of the Late Bronze Age brought the collapse of dynasties, ushered in the Dark Age of Greece, and witnessed the termination of East-West international trade.⁹³ The cause of the demise of this period is still uncertain.

Although this span of interaction between many city-states came to an end, forms of the lyre, double-pipe, and frame drum—instruments common throughout Near East in general and Israel/Palestine in particular during the Late Bronze Age—continued into the Iron Age and much

91. Personal communication with author, E. Mazar (November 12, 1998).

92. Personal communication with author, Braun (October 29, 1998).

93. A. Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000–586 BCE* (New York: Doubleday), 287.

later. Artifacts and depictions displaying musical activity which date to the Iron Age in Israel/Palestine are few, but because the most prominent instruments overlap the Late Bronze and Iron Ages and extend well into the Hellenistic period, inclusion of sources from both periods strengthens the data to explore sex and gender identification as well as other aspects of the music culture of Israel/Palestine. (Several of the artifacts were discussed in the chapter on musical instruments of Israel/Palestine.)

Plaque figurines from Beth Shean, Tel Taanach, and Tel el-Farah N and other sites further demonstrate the frame drum's popularity in the music culture of Israel/Palestine, and women represented in these figurines may reveal more about sex and gender roles and relationships in musical performance within the culture (Figures 3.21, 3.22, and 3.23).⁹⁴ As discussed



Figures 3.21, 3.22, 3.23 Plaque Figurines from Tel 'Ira (3.21), Tel Taanach (3.22), and Tel el-Farah N (3.23) (Courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority)

earlier, these figurines were found in what appear to be religious areas, which suggests a connection with the activities practiced there. Details of what took place are unknown at this time, but it is plausible that these objects were used as some types of votives. Again, I offer that the figurines were representative of persons who were part of the local community, who were noted for their musical ability, and who were held in high esteem by the residents. These individuals were possibly recognized as skillful musicians, and clay representations of them may have been used to worship deities (perpetually) in their absence. However, I hesitate to limit frame drummers to the realm of religious musical performance within

94. D. Hillers, "The Goddess with the Tambourine," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 41 (1970): 606–19.

the culture. As discussed, textual data explain that women drummers also serenaded soldiers returning from battle and assisted in annual cultural celebrations (e.g., 1 Sam 18:6–7; Exod 15:20).⁹⁵ Thus, these membranophone players may have had prominence in the local communities beyond religious performances.⁹⁶ Again, although the figurines are created from moulds, no two are identical, and archaeological data do not indicate that they were mass-produced.

Sexual identification factors in plaque figurines with drums derive from presented physical characteristics (i.e., breasts or genitalia), but there is something unique in the Tel 'Ira plaque figurine (Figure 3.21).⁹⁷ Like many of these figurine types, most scholars have identified this eighth-century figure as a woman or female, but close examination reveals male genitalia and possibly a beard.⁹⁸ P. Beck also examines the figurine's enigmatic physical features and consequently interprets the figurine as a hermaphrodite "tambourine" player.⁹⁹ I have some reservation in identifying the figure as a hermaphrodite as breasts are not clear in the depiction, but Beck introduces an important point: everything may not be what it appears. This keen observation forces us to consider and investigate the possible hermaphrodite interpretation and the possibility of men performing with an instrument identified as one played primarily by women in Iron Age Israel/Palestine. This type of figurine may shed new light on sex and gender constructs in Israel/Palestine during this period.

Because of the ambiguities of the physical features in the Tel 'Ira figurine, I cautiously identify it as male, which poses some perplexing questions. If the Tel 'Ira figurine is male, possibly a religious figure or figurine, and the frame drum is a "woman's instrument," what does this say about men who possibly performed with drums, and more specifically, men

playing drums in Israel/Palestine religious musical contexts?¹⁰⁰ Were they effeminate? Did they hold some eunuchlike status or position as discussed in Mesopotamian texts?

A word is in order here about eunuchs. There is some confusion and controversy in how to define and interpret the term "eunuch" within ancient Near Eastern contexts. Eunuchs were not simply castrated men, but may have included those maimed or born with sexual deformities, and those who had no sexual interest in women (i.e., homosexual men) or in sex at all.¹⁰¹ In Mesopotamian texts eunuchs bear the titles *kurgarru*, *kalaturru*, *assinnu*, and *kulu'u*. Some of the definitions of these terms include actor, religious performer, and musician.¹⁰² Thus, it is possible that male drummers occupied an exclusive or "special" position in the religious musical and sociocultural systems of Mesopotamia and other Near Eastern cultures.

In view of the fact that many scholars have identified the frame drum as a "woman's instrument" throughout the Ancient Near East, we have seen that the neighboring country of Egypt presents the Egyptian male deity Bes "performing," dancing, or posing with a frame drum. This figure was a part of the earlier discussion regarding musical instruments.¹⁰³ Also consider the Mesopotamian plaque figurines discussed earlier in this chapter (Figures 3.12a and 3.12b).¹⁰⁴ Both figures have been identified as female, but they may very easily be men dressed as women.¹⁰⁵

Tel el-Farah South: Engraved Ivory Panel

Tel el-Farah South panel was also discussed earlier. The scene displays an apparent processional toward a seated figure.¹⁰⁶ Five figures participate in this activity: a person (male) stands behind the seated figure that holds a bowl and (lotus) flower; in front of the seated figure is a person presenting a vase; following the figure with the vase is a dancer and double-pipe

95. E. Poethig, *The Victory Song Tradition of the Women of Israel* (Ph.D. dissertation, New York, Union Theological Seminary, 1985), discusses the victory celebration motif further.

96. Redmond, *When the Drummers Were Women*.

97. See I. Beit-Arieh, *Tel 'Ira: A Stronghold in the Biblical Negev* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1999), 386–87. The locus information for the Tel 'Ira figurine does not reveal information regarding sex or gender identification or its use at the site.

98. I discussed this style of beard in the sex or gender identification of musicians in a previous paper presented at the 1999 ASOR meetings entitled, "Let the Music Play," and additional discussion can be found in my forthcoming article entitled "Who's the Man?" to be published with *Near Eastern Archaeology*. As discussed, this style of beard has been found on the lyre and cymbal player of the "Musicians of Ashdod" stand (see Dothan, "Ashdod II–III") and the Late Bronze Age/Egyptian Middle Kingdom of Beni Hasan Asiatic lyre player. For an example illustration, see Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, 171. Moreover, at times, beards were a symbol of prestige, power, and so forth. Queen Hatshepsut, for example, wore a fake beard to demonstrate her power to rule.

99. See P. Beck, "Human Figure with Tambourine," in *Tel 'Ira: A Stronghold in the Biblical Negev* (ed. I. Beit-Arieh; Tel Aviv: Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute for Archaeology, 1999), 387, and Meskell, *Archaeologies of Social Life*, 63–64.

100. Braun, *Die Musikkultur Altisraels/Palastinas*; C. Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

101. Bottero and Petschow, "Homosexualitat."

102. Ibid., 459–68; H. Saggs, *The Greatness That Was Babylon* (New York: Hawthorn, Inc., 1962), 348.

103. The Bes statue dates to the New Kingdom period (ca. 1520–1070 BCE). See Manniche, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Egypt*, plate 7.

104. See Van Buren, *Clay Figurines*.

105. An additional example of men playing drums in Mesopotamian iconography includes a depiction of a male drummer, cymbalist, and lyre players are part of the alabaster relief in North Temple of Assurbanipal (ca. 668–627 BCE). See Rashid, *Mesopotamien*, 134–35. The identifying factors are that each figure wears a beard.

106. Bayer, "The Finds That Could Not Be," 30.

player.¹⁰⁷ The dancing figure appears to be a woman. Some scholars have concluded that the seated figure and presenter are also women, but identify the double-pipe player as male.¹⁰⁸ It appears that the aerophone is the only instrument in the procession, but the area following the musician is damaged and may have shown more figures with instruments.

Clothing in three of the figures is similar, and reflects Egyptian influence. The seated figure, the person standing before the seated figure, and the musician wear comparable robes, as the patterns in the collars and the garments are identical. The bottom of the musician's robe appears a little different, as it has tassels or fringes along the hem. The robe of the official appears fuller and flowing, but this may be a result of the stylization. Also, the figure behind the official wears attire that is completely different from the others. The nudity of the female figure and the identification of the male standing behind the seated figure demonstrate that this is a mixed-sex activity. However, none of the garments serve as specific sex or gender identification markers.¹⁰⁹

The heads of three of the figures are missing due to the damage to the panel. It is not clear whether the seated figure wears a wig or headdress, but it is certain that the attendant behind the seated figure wears a helmet or type of headdress. Jewelry adorns the bodies of two of the figures on the panel. The person standing before the seated figure wears bracelets on both wrists, while the left ear of the musician has an earring. Again, jewelry reveals no conclusive information about sex or gender identification (Figure 3.24).

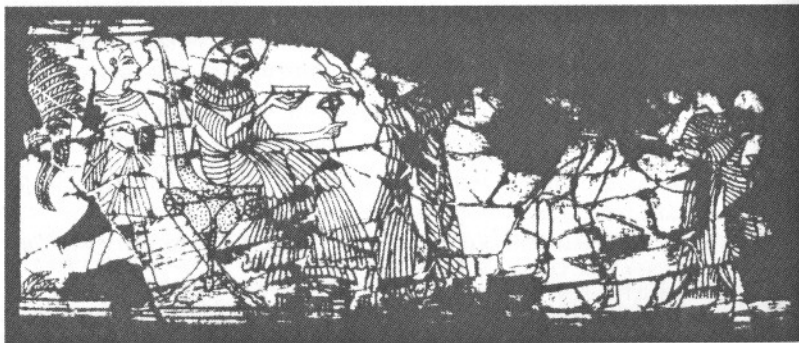


Figure 3.24 Tel el-Farah South Ivory Panel Scene with Double-Pipe Player
(Courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority)

107. Ibid.

108. Ibid.

109. P. Albenda, "Western Asiatic Women in the Iron Age: Their Image Revealed," *Biblical Archaeologist* 46 (1983): 82–88; Edwards, "Dress and Ornamentation," 232–38.

Megiddo: Engraved Ivory Panel

Like many of the artifacts in this chapter, this panel from Megiddo was also mentioned previously. The depiction is possibly the scene of a victorious battle and the presentation of booty.¹¹⁰ The artist shows the lyrist from the left side, and it appears that the figure may awkwardly strum the nine strings with the left hand.¹¹¹ Again, artistic stylization plays a major role here, and may affect the interpretation of sex/gender characteristics. Bayer and others identify the player as male with no explanation. Braun states that the figure is female with no real discussion, while others do not mention sex or gender identification at all.¹¹²

The dress of the lyre player is identical to the figure standing before the seated person. A stripe on the sleeve aligns with a stripe that flows down the robes worn by both. The hems of the garments are also the same in form, but the musician's garment lacks the geometric pattern. Identification of the sex or gender of the musician by clothing remains ambiguous.

Contrasting differences appear in the hats. The figure in front of the throne wears a hat with stripes, and this design is the same as those in the footstool of the throne. The headdress or hat of the musician is difficult to decipher. The top of the headpiece is similar to those worn by the attendants behind the seated figure and the figure seated on the throne, but the lower part of the piece is problematic. It is difficult to determine whether the lines extending across are part of the headpiece or the hair of the musician.

Several of the figures have facial hair (seated figure, figure behind the seated figure, the naked "prisoners," the figure with the shield and spear, and the chariot driver); the two figures in front of the seated figure are beardless.

Men and women played the lyre throughout the Near East, including Israel/Palestine. In this scene, however, sex or gender identification is

110. G. Loud, *The Megiddo Ivories* (Oriental Institute Publications 52; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

111. As discussed in the previous chapter, deciphering playing positions and techniques are problematic. Bayer, "The Finds That Could Not Be," 30, explains the difficulty and possible interpretation of the Megiddo lyre player: "Lyres are sounded with the right hand fingered with the left, like stringed instruments everywhere. In this procession the player had to be placed with his left side in view. Thus, we see the back of his instrument. A front view of such an instrument would show the strings continuing over the face of the soundbox so as to activate resonance. Replicas have been built of the Megiddo instrument but the strings do not pass over the soundbox." Also see Kilmer, "Leier"; B. Lawergren, "Distinctions among Canaanite, Philistine, and Israelite Lyres, and Their Global Contexts," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 309 (1998).

112. For example, see Bayer, "The Finds That Could Not Be," and J. Braun, *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

uncertain in the lyre player. The musician is taller than the “guard,” prisoners, chariot driver, and the figures behind the seated figure, but again this may be due to artistic stylization. However, the scene provides information for at least three possible interpretations aside from the sex and gender identification quandary: (1) The lyre player is part of war booty being presented to the seated figure, and the bound figures and lyre player may be part of the booty collected from the enemy; (2) the person with the lyre is presenting the instrument to the seated figure; (3) the lyre player is serenading the seated figure or providing music for the event that is taking place (Figure 3.25).



Figure 3.25 Megiddo Ivory with Lyre (Courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority)

Kuntillet 'Ajrud: Seated Lyre Player

The Kuntillet 'Ajrud scene was also discussed previously with attention focused on the chordophone. This depiction presents a seated figure with a lyre, and physical characteristics suggest that the figure is female. In this instance, it is possible that the scene displays a deity performing with a chordophone. An instrument in the hands of a female deity (in this case, possibly the goddess Asherah) shows its importance and status in the music culture of Israel/Palestine. For example, YHWH divinely commissions the construction of trumpets (Num 10:2). In addition, YHWH gives specific instruction regarding when they are to be blown, but more importantly, they are played before the presence of the Ark of the Covenant, the most sacred object of Israel/Palestine (e.g., 1 Chr 16:6). If

the interpretation of Asherah is correct in the Kuntillet 'Ajrud scene, then in both instances, there are specific instruments associated with male and female deities: Asherah = lyre; YHWH = trumpet. The fact that a chordophone is associated with a goddess and an aerophone with a male deity may hold symbolic significance, but these interpretations must be investigated further (Figure 3.26).

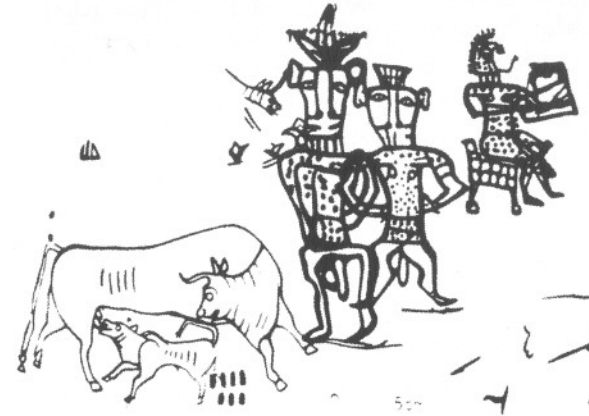


Figure 3.26 Scene from Kuntillet 'Ajrud with Lyre (Courtesy of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University)

SEX AND GENDER AND MUSIC PASSAGES FROM THE HEBREW BIBLE

Artifacts provide physical characteristics of performers, instruments, and some indicators of the type of musical activities that took place. Textual data, however, supply additional perspectives of types of instruments, musicians, and performance contexts. Following are examples from the Hebrew Bible that discuss sex and gender in various scenarios of musical performance.

Genesis 4:21

And the name of his brother was Jubal. He was the father of all skillful on the (*kinnor*) lyre and (*ugav*) pipe.

This biblical passage in which the writer introduces an etiology of music and instruments in ancient Israel first mentions sex identification

and music. As discussed previously, it is what would be considered a secular context, and gives a cultural "explanation" regarding the initial generation of persons in Israel/Palestine who played lyres (chordophones) and pipes (aerophones). The passage states that Jubal bears the title of the ancestor of "all who play the *kinnor*, and *ugav*."¹¹³ There is no discussion of other instruments such as membranophones or chordophones, or the use of music in general. No other men or women are mentioned in the origin or performance of the lyre and pipe.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, as has been mentioned, the Pentateuch writer introduced an aerophone-membranophone combination duo that is known throughout Israel and the Near East. The dating of Genesis is ambiguous, as with many parts of the Hebrew Bible. Furthermore, the author may have been influenced by the musical activity and instruments prominent or popular at the time of the composition.

Exodus 15:20

And Miriam the prophetess, sister of Aaron, took the drum in her hand, and all of the women went out after her with drums and dancing.

This is the first appearance of women and musical performance. Miriam, who is identified as a prophetess (*nebi'ah*) and the sister of Aaron, went out with a *tof* (frame drum), and all of the women (i.e., a large group) went out after her.¹¹⁵ According to the text, each had a frame drum, and together they sang to YHWH in celebration of their victory over the Pharaoh and Egyptians (cf. Judg 11:30–40; 1 Sam 18:6). Notice that the Genesis writer proclaimed Jubal as the ancestor of select musical instruments in the genealogies of Genesis (4:21), but it does not appear that men are involved with musical performance in this description, nor are the lyre or pipe mentioned. Does the lack of males performing indicate the sex/gender status of the frame drum in a musical instrument

113. G. Wenham, *Genesis: Word Bible Commentary*, vol. 1 (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1982), 113.

114. M. Dods, *An Exposition of the Bible*, vol. 1: Genesis–Ruth (Hartford, Conn.: The S. S. Scranton Co., 1910), 16; T. Fretheim, "The Book of Genesis," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 375; S. Niditch, "Genesis," in *The Women's Bible Commentary* (ed. C. Newsome and S. Ringe; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 14.

115. Other female prophets mentioned in the Hebrew Bible include Deborah (Judg 4:4–16), Huldah (2 Kgs 22:14–20), and Noadiah (Neh 6:14). See P. Bird, *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 41–43; D. Seitel, "Exodus," in *The Women's Bible Commentary* (ed. C. Newsome and S. Ringe; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 32.

hierarchy at some point in Israelite culture/history (e.g., aerophones and lyres at the top)? Is the writer further demonstrating that the frame drum was an instrument played primarily by women? The context is considered religious and celebratory, as Miriam and the women sing praises of deliverance to YHWH. As mentioned, the figurines in the round with drum examples from the Harvard Semitic and Dayan Collections and those from Achzib and Shikmona provide visual forms regarding the performance of women with drums and may help to shed light on these types of events in antiquity.¹¹⁶ Although these types of figurines are found in the coastal regions (plaque figurines have appeared more often in southern Israel; a good number of both types have no provenance), they present a window into the use and performance(s) with frame drums in Israelite culture.

Judges 5:1

And Deborah and Barak, son of Abinoam, sang on that day saying . . .

This passage presents what appears to be a male and female vocal duet of Deborah and Barak after a cunning defeat of Sisera.¹¹⁷ This is the second victory celebration in the Hebrew text involving a woman singing praises to YHWH (cf. Exod 15:20). In the Exodus instance, Miriam sings, and she and the other women play frame drums. In the Judges scene, however, the writer mentions only the human voice.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, both passages describe women lifting their voices in celebration to YHWH.

Although Deborah the prophetess and Jael are primarily responsible for the victorious battle against Sisera, the writer presents Deborah as a co-star with the military commander Barak as they sing a duet commemorating this conquest in Judges 5:1–31. However, there is an interesting

116. W. Propp, *The Anchor Bible: Exodus 1–18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 547–54. See W. Brueggemann, "The Book of Exodus," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (ed. L. Keck; Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 802. Cf. 1 Sam 18:6–7. We should also consider the Iron Age plaques and figurines in the round with drums discovered in Israel/Palestine in the presentation of this passage.

117. W. Albright, "Song of Deborah," *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 2 (1922): 69–86; 284–85; R. Boling, "Judges," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1975), 105.

118. G. Moore, "Judges," in *The International Critical Commentary* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 138–43; Boling, "Judges," 101–6; J. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 64. Blenkinsopp views the female seer (*kahina*) among the pre-Islamic tribes as a close parallel to the Hebrew prophetess.

dynamic in this passage. The Hebrew regarding the musical performance is *wattashar* (and she sang), which is the third-person feminine singular of *shir*. Yet both Deborah and Barak are subjects of the sentence and appear to sing together. Poethig explains, "Barak may be a secondary addition to the line, though it is normal Hebrew usage for a singular verb to express the action of a compound subject."¹¹⁹ Freedman argues, however, that it is a misinterpretation of Deborah's role to attribute the poem/song to her.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, the combining of Deborah and Barak in the Hebrew passage suggests that at some point in Israelite culture and history, possibly during the Iron Age, it was acceptable for some members of the society for men and women to sing together in a victory song tradition. The writer's description of this blending of male and female voices is the first textual example from the Hebrew Bible that presents men and women making music together in a religious context. At this point, no iconographic depictions or figurines from ancient Israel/Palestine of people portrayed in the act of singing have surfaced, but the textual data strongly suggest that both women and men participated together, possibly in singing during some religious and other cultural activities (e.g., Num 21:17; 2 Sam 19:36 [35]; 2 Chr 20:22; 23:12–13).

Judges 11:30–40—Jephthah's Vow (v. 34)

Then Jephthah came to his home in Mizpah, and behold his daughter came out to meet him with drums (*tofim*) and dancing. She was his only child. He had no other son or daughter.¹²¹

This textual description gives another example of females with drums dancing and playing to celebrate a victory in battle. The writer explains that Jephthah made a vow to YHWH, and in return for victory in battle over the Ammonites, he vowed to sacrifice "whoever/whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return" (Judg 11:30–32).¹²² Jephthah was successful in his battle with the Ammonites, but when he returned home from Mizpah his only daughter came out to

meet him playing frame drums and dancing in celebration of his victory. As expected, Jephthah is distraught, but he reluctantly consents to sacrifice his daughter to fulfill his vow to YHWH.¹²³

Notice the description of the young woman's musical performance. It appears that she comes out alone to greet her father, but according to the writer the woman plays more than one drum while dancing. The description may demonstrate a known adroit musical ability at that time or the requirements for some performing dances pertaining to the celebration of victorious battles, and may shed more light on what musicians did in instances such as this. For example, this passage is also very similar to the performance of women with drums described in 1 Sam 18:6–7: "all of the women came out of the towns of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with frame drums."¹²⁴ It is possible that all or some performers used more than one drum while dancing and singing.

Although the text demonstrates clearly that the frame drum and other instruments were vital for these types of performances, careful translations of musical terms is a must. If not, ambiguities in musical descriptions presented by ancient writers cannot be clarified. Biblical scholar Boling's translation of the woman's performance in the Jephthah story, for example, eliminates a key word that alters understanding and interpretation of the act which takes place in the passage.¹²⁵ Note his translation of v. 34: "At the moment Jephthah arrived home at Mizpah his daughter came out to meet him *with music and dancing*."¹²⁶ It appears that Boling translates *tofim* as music. Interestingly, he mentions other passages that describe women performing with drums and dancing, but avoids any discussion of drums when he states, "The story involves a calculated inversion of the traditional role of *singing* women on the evening after victory (Exod 15:20–21) or welcoming the heroes home (1 Sam 18:6–7). Cf. 5:28–30 and the entire Song of Deborah and Baraq in its narrative setting."¹²⁷ Boling's discussion and interpretation of women involved in ancient Israelite music culture paints an ambiguous, vague, and limited view.

119. Poethig, "The Victory Song Tradition," 131.

120. D. Freedman, "Yahweh of Samaria and His Asherah," *Biblical Archaeologist* 50 (1987): 241–49.

121. Regarding the folklore of Jephthah's vow, see P. Day, *Gender Difference in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 67 n. 1.

122. See D. Olson, "The Book of Judges," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 831–33.

123. See C. Olson, *The Book of the Goddess Past and Present* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994).

124. See 1 Sam 21:11; 29:5; Ps 68:26; 150:4; and W. Morton, "Judges," in *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, vol. 2 (ed. C. Allen; Nashville: Broadman Press, 1969), 436.

125. Boling, "Judges," 206.

126. *Ibid.*

127. *Ibid.*, 208.

First Samuel 10:5

After that you will come to Gibeath-elohim at the place where the Philistine garrison is. And it will come to pass that as you come in the city, you will meet a band of prophets coming down from the *bamah* with harp, drum, pipe, and lyre in front of them. They will be prophesying in a frenzy.

The passage displays interaction between prophets, prophetic activity, and music. The writer describes a band of prophets coming down from a *bamah* with a group of musicians playing in front of them. The musical instruments mentioned include chordophone/harp (*nebel*), membranophone/drum (*tof*), aerophone/pipe (*chalil*), and chordophone/lyre (*kinnor*).¹²⁸

A very important factor to consider regarding this described performance is the unmentioned sex or gender identification of the musical performers. The frame drum is a part of the ensemble. As discussed previously, many scholars consider the frame drum to be a "woman's" instrument or one played predominantly by women in ancient and modern Near Eastern cultures. If this is the case, I suggest that the ensemble performance described by the writer of Samuel and others like it could have included a woman (or women), and perhaps in this case a prophetess (e.g., Exod 15:20). I have presented several figurine examples of women depicted with frame drums from sites throughout the Near East, including Israel/Palestine, dating to the Iron Age and earlier and later periods. Furthermore, there are also textual data that describe transvestism in musical performance, particularly in Mesopotamia. It is not clear what specific instruments if any that transvestites played, but if men were cross-dressers and participated in musical activities like this, it is not out of the question that they would have performed with an instrument played predominantly by women or ones that may have been considered effeminate by some. Considering at the least the numerous Near Eastern figurines with frame drums from the archaeological record, the above-mentioned passage from the biblical text (1 Sam 10:5), and additional Near Eastern textual data, I offer the following possible interpretations of frame drums in musical performances and sex and gender in Iron Age culture of Israel/Palestine:

128. R. Klein, "I Samuel," in *Word Bible Commentary* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983), 91–92. Dothan parallels this textual description with the Ashdod stand discussed in chap. 2.

1. Women performed with the instrument in various aspects of the cultural activity which would have included what are considered secular as well as religious events.
2. Men played what some consider a "woman's" instrument with or without stigmas or taboos
3. There may have been some practice of transvestism, although this is not yet clear¹²⁹ (e.g., Tel 'Ira figurine).
4. Men possibly played the frame drum more than previously thought, and it was a practice accepted by many.

As the musicians perform in 1 Sam 10:5, the writer states that the prophets are "in a prophetic frenzy." Smith compares the described prophetic activity to Middle Eastern whirling dervishes: "It must be evident that we have here a company of dervishes engaged in their religious exercises. The enthusiastic nature of these exercises is evident from the later narrative and from the parallel account, 19:18–24."¹³⁰ The prophetic frenzy actions mentioned by the biblical writer are unclear, but another noted biblical scholar P. K. McCarter also compares the activity with that of the whirling dervishes of the Middle East. He explains that the prophets described in 1 Samuel are recipients of divine inspiration, and expressions of possession by the spirit of God must have included singing and dancing to the accompaniment of such musical instruments as those listed. Furthermore, McCarter suggests that we also consider that some of the prophetic practices may have involved self-flagellation or mutilation as well (cf. 1 Kgs 18:28).¹³¹

Both these scholars present interesting assessments and comparisons, but at this point I hesitate to make the connections between whirling dervishes and the prophets of Israel/Palestine. The primary reasons for not taking this leap are that the text is unclear in details concerning the prophetic activity, particularly "prophetic frenzy," and more information regarding dervishes and their origins and development should be explored for comparative analysis. Prophetic actions such as this alluded to in the

129. Deut 22:5. Was this ordinance generated as a reaction to activity taking place within the culture?

130. H. Smith, "The Books of Samuel," in *The International Critical Commentary* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), 68. Also see B. Metzger, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 368 n. 19, 18–24; and P. McCarter, "I Samuel," in *The Anchor Bible Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 182. For further discussion of dervishes see E. Waugh, *The Munshioin of Egypt* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1989), 188–207, and A. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200–1550* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994).

131. McCarter, "I Samuel," 182. Also see Metzger, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 368.

text can be interpreted in a number of ways. For instance, the prophets may have been vocal (i.e., yelling, screaming, chanting coherently or incoherently), danced ecstatically in an improvised manner (not whirling), or shook uncontrollably while standing on or lying on the ground. The account in 1 Sam 19:18–24 does describe prophetic activity similar to that in 1 Sam 10:5, but it does not mention musical performance specifically, which is an activity that played a major role in the event described in 10:5–6. Also, Saul “stripped off his clothes” in 1 Sam 19:24, and it is not clear whether all the prophets did the same thing. This, of course, would add another interesting dynamic to the religious practices of ancient Israel/Palestine during this time if women or prophetesses participated (possibly with men) in this activity as well. Note also that the act of stripping off one’s clothes is not mentioned in the other passages that discuss prophetic frenzy. It is possible that an act such as the one described did not require music, but if the two passages describe similar accounts, music, in some capacity, would have more than likely been a part of both.

First Samuel 16:16, 18, 23

v. 16 Let our lord now command your servants before you to seek a *man skillful in playing the lyre* and when the evil spirit from God is upon you, he will play and you will feel better.

v. 18 And one of his servants answered saying, “Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is *skillful in playing*, a man of valor and strength, a man of battle, intelligent speech, and a man of good presence, and God is with him.”

v. 23 And when the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, *David took the lyre and played with his hand*, and Saul felt good. The evil spirit from God departed from him.

In these passages the writer speaks of an evil spirit sent from YHWH that torments Saul, and his servants send out a request for someone who is skilled in playing the lyre, because they understand that skillful playing of the chordophone will make the king feel better.¹³² The search conducted

132. McCarter, “I Samuel,” 279–81. One could view this action as early musical therapy. Musical therapy is defined as a “systematic process of intervention wherein the therapist helps the client (listener/participant) to achieve health, using musical experiences and the relationships that develop through them as dynamic forces of change” (word additions mine). Also see L. Blunt, *Music Therapy: An Art beyond Words* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 8.

by Saul’s servants for a lyre player indicates that they want a male to perform this service, although women as well as men may have played this instrument in Iron Age Israel.¹³³

The lyre player is to perform alone in order to ease the king’s illness. Depending upon the skill level, a performer could have possibly sung with self-accompaniment, but the text explains specifically that the music of the lyre would subdue the menacing spirit. Here, the writer may provide a glimpse of a faction of the culture’s preference for the sounds of the lyre during this period or the time the text was composed, or a desire for its use in instances such as this. The performance context can be interpreted as religious, as there is a battle between “good” and “evil,” the involvement of YHWH, and temporary exorcism of a spirit (cf. 2 Kgs 3:15).

First Samuel 18:6–7

And it came to pass as they returned when David killed the Philistine, the women came out from all of the towns of Israel singing and dancing to meet King Saul with drums, gladness, and musical instruments.

In this example, the writer describes another celebration following victory in battle (cf. Exod 15:20; 1 Sam 21:11; 29:5; Ps 68:26; 150:4). Both Saul and David have been successful, and upon their return, women come out of the towns of Israel to celebrate their accomplishments with singing and dancing, typically with frame drums.¹³⁴ In this instance the women perform with drums and *shalishim*, a term some translate as “additional musical instruments” or “three-stringed musical instrument.” This could possibly indicate a *sistrum*, triangle, or I would add lute.¹³⁵ Although Braun states that the lute disappears from Israelite culture during the Late Bronze Age, the biblical writer may possibly describe it here.¹³⁶ Moreover, because images of the lute have not yet appeared in the Israelite archaeological record dating to the Iron Age does not mean that it was not a part of the culture’s instrumentation during that time. The structure of the women’s celebratory musical performance is not clear, at least from the available data, but the performance was a known practice at least in the local Israelite culture. At a minimum, there would have probably been

133. Smith, “The Books of Samuel,” 148; McCarter, “I Samuel,” 280. Also cf. R. Klein, “I Samuel,” 165.

134. Smith, “The Books of Samuel”; McCarter, “I Samuel”; R. Klein, “I Samuel,” 186.

135. F. Brown, et al., “A Three Stringed Musical Instrument?” *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishing, 2000).

136. Braun, *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine*, 80–85.

a short musical repertoire that all of the female performers and possibly most local townsfolk knew.

Second Samuel 6:5

Jerusalem is now the capital of the United Monarchy. As the people came up from Baal-judah with the ark, the text states as follows:

David and all the house of Israel danced before God with all their might, with songs, lyres, harps, drums, musical instruments, and cymbals.

There is no specification regarding sex or gender and instruments in this performance. However, the musical activity appears to be inclusive of males and females, as this is indicated by the term "all of Israel." This phrase suggests that a large group participated in the celebration with lyres, harps, drums, and cymbals. Furthermore, the term "musical instruments" may include instruments that were part of the music culture of Israel/Palestine that have not yet been discovered or remain unknown to us. The other instruments mentioned in this passage were discussed in the chapter on musical instruments of Israel/Palestine.

First Kings 1:40

All the people went up after him, playing on pipes rejoicing with great joy, and the earth broke open at their sound.

Zadok the priest anointed Solomon with a horn of oil to signify his ascent to the throne, and the people celebrated (1 Kgs 1:39). The author does not distinguish sex or gender in those who were playing on pipes. As mentioned, it is possible that people played on simple single pipes fashioned from reeds or clay in the same manner that people blow noise-makers at parties and other celebrations. The instruments may have had holes to change the sound or alter pitches, but the author is not stating that participants in events like this were adroitly skillful at playing the pipes/double-pipes, nor does the mention of the instruments provide information regarding the sex or gender of the performers.¹³⁷

137. J. Montgomery, *The Book of Kings. The International Critical Commentary* (ed. H. Gehman; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951); DeVries gives an explanation for the "all the people," but does not discuss gender: "'All the people,' vv. 39, 40: a technical designation for the common people; obviously it does not mean 'the total population' because at last the Adonijah party is absent." See S. DeVries, "1 Kings," in *The Word Bible Commentary* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983), 18.

First Chronicles 9:33-34

The Chronicler describes the service of vocalists and musicians performing in the Temple of Israel/Palestine:

Now these are the singers, the heads of ancestral houses of the Levites, living in the chambers of the temple free from other service, for they were on duty day and night. These were heads of ancestral houses of the Levites, according to their generations; these leaders lived in Jerusalem.

Although the author does not discuss the sex or gender of the singers or musicians, there are some necessary inquiries regarding this issue in the passage from Chronicles: First, were the singers and musicians all male or female, or was the group mixed? This description of musical performance is similar to 2 Sam 6:5 and 1 Kgs 1:40 in their use of "all the house of Israel" or "all of the people," which suggests that singers and musicians included men and women who participated in the described Temple musical activities.¹³⁸

Not everyone agrees, however. Curtis, one of the few biblical scholars who remotely discusses these issues, states that v. 33 is incorrect in its placement as he views the verse as a subscription out of place. Because the singers and musicians are not mentioned in the following verses, he argues that it was written in reference to vv. 14-16, which relate principally to singers, or it completed a list of singers who dwelt in the Temple chambers and were freed from other service. According to Curtis this passage has been omitted from the text. Moreover, he suggests that the singers and musicians being at their work "day and night" is the reason that they were freed from other service.¹³⁹

Second, if the men and women singers literally reside in the Temple area and perform "all day and all night," is this their only occupation? The text suggests that this is a full-time job for the musicians and vocalists, as they are "living in the chambers of the temple free from other service."¹⁴⁰

138. Note the explanation given by R. Patterson and H. Auster, "1 and 2 Kings" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 4 (ed. F. Gaebel; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 367: "The musicians mentioned here are the leaders named in vv. 14-16." This designation is not clear. Also see R. Braun, "1 Chronicles," in *Word Bible Commentary* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1982), 142.

139. E. Curtis, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of the Chronicles* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 178.

140. For further discussion, see L. Allen, "1 and 2 Chronicles" in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (ed. L. Keck; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 363.

Myers offers that the writer may have wanted to point out with this description that singers and musicians were favored and were free from menial responsibilities.¹⁴¹ The author's presentation and description of musicians involved in Temple services indicate that they held a special place within the local socio-culture and particularly in the music culture of Israel/Palestine. Temple personnel appear to have been selected from families within the community, had specific duties in the most sacred edifice which touched the lives of most Israelites in some way, and possessed special skills that others in the society did not. If singers and musicians lived near the Temple there would have probably been specific designations for male and female living quarters and maybe even performance areas. These subjects are still under research and will hopefully become clearer through future study of temple construction in Israel and the ancient Near East.

I would also offer that it is not implausible that during this period women and men worked as Temple singers and musicians in the same manner as priests. The text explains that some priests served in both capacities (e.g., 1 Chr 16:1-7). It also is possible that singers and musicians may have been required to perform for Temple activities that took place at different times during the day or night. Questions still remain regarding how, when, and why some rituals were performed, and it is possible that they happened in the evening, morning, or middle of the day, or other designated times. According to the Chronicler, religious duties of the Temple such as sacrifices, preparation of sacred materials, and processions were sometimes choreographed with music. Oftentimes however, the Chronicler and other biblical writers do not discuss the time these events happened, but this is an important factor to consider when attempting to comprehend how and why Temple activities took place.

First Chronicles 25:1, 5-8

The Chronicler also explains that David organizes the musicians in twenty-four divisions of priests (ch. 24). He carefully arranges them under the leadership of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, and explains that the personnel of the groups should prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals.¹⁴²

141. J. Myers, "I Chronicles," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965), 73; also see M. Tate, *Word Biblical Commentaries: Psalms 51-100* (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 358. Ps 84:4 mentions persons living in the house of God singing praises, but this passage may be metaphorical.

142. Braun, "I Chronicles," 246-47.

Heman receives some specific attention from the Chronicler as the writer provides elements about the musical leader's personal life:

All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer, according to the promise of God to exalt him; for God had given Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. They were all under the direction of their father for the music in the house of the LORD with cymbals, harps, and lyres for the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under the order of the king. They and their kindred, who were trained in singing to the LORD, all of whom were skilled, numbered two hundred eighty-eight. And they cast lots for their duties, small and great, teacher and pupil alike. (1 Chr 25:5-8)

Per the Chronicler, Heman has fourteen sons and three daughters, all of whom participated in the religious musical performance and duties of the Temple. Later in the passage the writer presents a list of names of religious personnel, but none of them are women. Why doesn't the Chronicler mention Heman's daughters specifically with the others? Some suggest that the lack of women's names in the list indicates that they were not involved in Temple activities and do not discuss any aspects of their participation in them.¹⁴³ However, many lists of names in the Hebrew text are corrupt or have been redacted in some way.¹⁴⁴ Notice also that in the Chronicler's description there is no indication that the women had duties that differed from their male counterparts, and more importantly, the writer includes them in the presentation of Heman's family, which is identified as a blessing from YHWH. Furthermore, I would suggest that the passage may provide insight regarding the relationship between men and women in Temple activities. Although the positions associated with Temple duties may not have been completely egalitarian, textual and archaeological data strongly suggest that at some points women held prominent positions as performers and possibly teachers in this faction of Israelite music culture (also consider Ps 68, the numerous female figurines, etc.). Moreover, as we have seen, it is possible that frame drums were a part of religious musical performance of Temple activities during this period. If women played this instrument primarily,

143. R. J. Coggins, *The First and Second Book of Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1976), 126.

144. S. Japhet, *I and II Chronicles: A Commentary* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 444-45.

it would be very difficult to exclude them from this aspect of performance in Israelite culture.

Psalm 68:24–25

This psalm of celebration describes processions of musicians and singers making their way into the Temple.¹⁴⁵ Frame drummers are named specifically:

Your solemn processions are seen, O God, the processions of my God, my King, into the sanctuary—the singers in front, the musicians last, between them girls playing frame drums.

Scholarship has demonstrated clearly that psalms from Hebrew text are difficult to date. Nevertheless, they are part of the available data and may help to understand Israelite music culture. The psalmist of 68 distinguishes the sex of the musicians by stating specifically that “young women” played drums between singers and musicians.¹⁴⁶ Both the Hebrew terms “singers” and “musicians” are masculine, and should indicate that at least one of the members of the two groups were male. This would appear to be the case due to the psalmist’s distinction of females playing drums, but is not conclusive. Moreover, it must be considered that although the group of drummers is female, the others may have consisted of mixed sex/gender. As mentioned, this male and female collaboration may also be evident in the musicians’ performance in 1 Sam 10:5.¹⁴⁷

Preconceived ideas about past cultures, combined with androcentric views of the Hebrew Bible and misconceptions of modern Middle East customs, contribute to skewed interpretations of lifeways in ancient Israel. In the Islamic Middle East, for example, men have traditionally been viewed particularly by outsiders as dominant in nearly every aspect of society, and this androcentric bias is entrenched in cultural conventions. While there are aspects of male dominance in Islamic society, we must be mindful of how we incorporate analysis of those cultural practices when

145. Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien*.

146. Brown-Driver-Briggs (1979) also defines the term *tuppwt tuml* as: ripe sexually; maid or newly married; p761b #5959. It is possible that the “young women” may have been virgins. This may have been a qualification for this particular group.

147. C. Briggs, “The Book of Psalms,” in *The International Critical Commentary* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1907), 103; M. Dahood, “Psalm 51–100,” in *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), 147.

investigating the ancient world.¹⁴⁸ Projecting the sometimes misunderstood views of today onto ancient data may cause reading the present in the past.¹⁴⁹ Meyers eloquently explains that it is not appropriate to generalize authoritative or dominant behavior from one category of interaction to all categories or even to assume that the concept of dominance always existed and meant the same as it does in our modern world.¹⁵⁰ This study echoes Meyers’s statement and has attempted to demonstrate that it is necessary that sex and gender identification of musicians be a part of the study of ancient music culture in order to understand better the roles and relationships of men and women.

148. Doubleday explains that in some Islamic customs men could take up to four wives, and had preferential rights with regard to divorce and patrilineal descent, and through concepts relating to honor, male heads of families exerted control over female sexuality and all aspects of women’s behavior, including musical performance. See V. Doubleday, “The Frame Drum in the Middle East: Women, Musical Instruments, and Power,” *Ethnomusicology* 43, no. 1 (1997): 101–35. Also for further discussion of family in ancient Israel, see L. Stager, “The Archaeology of Family in Ancient Israel,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 260 (1985): 1–35.

149. See Rosaldo, “Women, Culture, and Society,” 41; Koskoff, “An Introduction to Women, Music and Culture”; C. Meyers, “Of Drums and Damsels: Women’s Performance in Ancient Israel,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 3 (1991): 31; and “Everyday Life: Women in the Period of the Hebrew Bible,” in *The Women’s Bible Commentary* (ed. C. Newsom and S. Ringe; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 1–8.

150. Meyers, “Of Drums and Damsels,” 38–41, 155, 183–87.