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Joan Goodnick Westenholz, Yossi Maurey, Edwin Seroussi (eds.), *Music in Antiquity: the Near East and the Mediterranean*, De Gruyter, Oldenbourg, Studies of the Jewish Music Research Centre, 2014. Pp. xi & 375. £97.99. ISBN 978-3-11-034026-6 (Hbk).

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This volume, the proceedings of a 2008 conference which aimed 'to examine the formation and function of ancient musical instruments, their sources and their place and purpose in the lives of the diverse peoples in the ancient Near East and Mediterranean worlds' (p.2), comprises thirteen essays on music theory and instruments in Biblical and post-Biblical societies. It places them within the context of music archaeology as a discipline (Prologue) and the teaching of this subject today (Epilogue), and aims not only to identify instruments in texts, but also to gain a better understanding of Israeli and Jewish music in antiquity.

The largest article is that of Bathja Bayer, a posthumous publication re-examining textual sources evidencing the theory of music and Ugarit notation. Her systematic approach, including historiography and definitions, represents an artful handling of music theory and Mesopotamian textual sources. It expects, however, a significant amount of the reader, particularly that they have substantial familiarity with Mesopotamian texts and languages, mathematics, and music theory, including a solid grounding in mediaeval music theory, several terms of which are given no definition. It was surprising, therefore, to see a 'note to non-musicologists' (p.74), for a reader with little musicological experience might struggle to follow much of the paper itself. Because the original paper was written several decades before publication, it is complemented by a short article by Anne Draffkorn Kilmer on advances in the understanding of Mesopotamian music theory and new material published since 1977.

The other articles are arranged by culture (broadly: Mesopotamian, Ugaritic and Anatolian; Cypriot and Greek; and Roman) and to some extent also thematically: identifying instruments and ensembles, investigating ritual uses and social implications of music, and analysing texts (particularly Greek). Dahlia Shehata's

chapter on the use of two instrumental ensembles in religious contexts in Mesopotamia leads well into the following two chapters by Uri Gabbay and Sam Mirelman on the identification and role of the *balaĝ*-instrument and the *ala*-instrument respectively. Given that Gabbay's paper focuses on the changing use of the word *balaĝ* from a stringed instrument to a drum, it felt like a lost opportunity for comparison by Mirelman, who notes the potential confusion between the strings used to secure the membrane of an *ala*-drum and those of a stringed instrument, in that the same word is used for both. Shehata herself discusses the *balaĝ*'s significance but makes no mention of the fact that it could denote a stringed instrument in certain periods. As a result, although these chapters are suitably grouped, there were possibilities for further cohesion and interaction between researchers.

Annie Caubet's short contribution provides the evidence for practices in Late Bronze Age Ugarit, with some comparisons with Hebrew terms. This is one of the papers (relatively few in number) that makes direct links between Near Eastern music, and Israeli and Jewish practices. Ora Brison's investigation of the role of music in eroticism, love and marriage, including mythological occurrences, is a good introduction to the evidence for further study into the social function of music, but has only limited discussion of her own. It appears to act mostly as a means to increase awareness of this specific aspect, although this is no bad thing.

Michael Lesley's reassessment of Daniel 3 necessarily deals with Jewish presence in the Near East, although not in order to compare musical practices. This article is particularly effective in challenging the accuracy and reliability of Biblical sources and encouraging new approaches. Whilst Lesley acknowledges that most scholars do not take everything in the Bible to be true, the authenticity of some details (here the example used is the orchestra in Nebuchadnezzar's court) go unquestioned, and he argued convincingly against this.

The following two papers focus less on the instruments and more on textual sources. John Curtis Franklin considers the Cypriot epic tradition, investigating potential influences on and from Aegean traditions. Marielle de Simone analyses Aristophanes' portrait of tragic poet Phrynichos and his musical styles, countering

the previously-held notion that the former has a primarily positive opinion towards the latter and recommending a more complex interpretation. These articles are unified through their consideration of Greek identity, particularly the ways in which it is contrasted with and influenced by non-Greek cultures. They thereby add an important ethno-cultural facet to this volume, even as they are distinguished from the other articles through their less musicological approach.

The article provided by Mira Waner most successfully achieves the overall aim of contextualising Jewish music. Using the case study of Sepphoris, she explores Hellenistic, Roman and Late Antique sources and demonstrates that in spite of the cultural fusions seen in other aspects of life, music culture appears to diverge. As with the previous two articles, Waner emphasises the idea of the 'Other', prompting the reader to consider the broader ethnic and cultural features of music.

Antonietta Provenza follows with a study on the use of music as a therapy and a teaching tool (these functions, it is argued, are linked) as explained in textual sources, with a particular focus on the lyre. She highlights similarities in practice between Near Eastern, Greek and Biblical sources (primarily David). The final article, by Roberto Melini, considers music from the Vesuvian region, primarily concentrating on its cultic function. This chapter is not much more than a summary of the evidence, and the style is, on occasion, unnecessarily poetic and dramatic (for example, comparing the activities of the Bacchic cult to an erupting volcano (p.351)). Only nearing the end of the paper is an indication of Melini's aim given: 'enabling us to tie together the musical strings that connect present-day culture with the civilizations of the past' (p.356). This is, of course, an encapsulation of one purpose of this book as a whole, and is particularly apposite preceding the Epilogue.

As a general point, the book itself is very nicely presented, with only a small number of typographical errors, and with attractive colour images in four of the articles. The volume may have benefited from a proper summary of the contents and their contribution to the overall aims of the conference, highlighting common themes across the disciplines; the Preface does only little in this regard, and thus it is not entirely clear how all the papers offer greater comprehension of Israeli and Jewish music. Moreover, in spite of the note that one session of the conference was devoted

entirely to Israeli music, this was not proportionally represented in the volume itself. This reviewer, coming from an Egyptological background, was also a little disappointed by the lack of Egypt-based articles (though perhaps this is hardly fair criticism of a conference proceedings). Interaction with the Egyptian evidence may have provided further avenues for comparison. For example Shehata hinted at gender roles (p.112-113) in cultic music, and this reviewer is aware of clear differentiations between male and female musicians in the Egyptian cultic sphere. Similarly, the use of music to soothe angry gods (Gabbay, p.139) has parallels in Egypt, particularly in the use of the *sistrum* in the cult of the volatile goddess Hathor. With regard to the *sistrum*, Melini notes their existence in the Pompeii corpus (p.357-359), and this reviewer did notice a minor discrepancy between the description he gave of the rattle and the image provided. The cross-bars of some *sistra* do indeed end in snake heads (p.358), but the one pictured arguably has duck heads (ducks potentially having erotic symbolism in Egypt,[1] as befits the cult of Hathor, a goddess of music, drunkenness, love and motherhood). *Sistra* are associated less with the concepts of life and death, as Melini states (p.358), and more with communication with and placation of deities, particularly female ones. The regenerative aspect of the *sistrum* is not its primary function.[2] It is acknowledged in this review, however, that the Graeco-Roman concept of the *sistrum* (as outlined by Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 376d-f, part-quoted by Melini) is likely different from that of Egypt.

Only one author extended their comparisons outside of the Near East and Mediterranean. Mirelman drew, albeit briefly, upon evidence for drum construction from Japan and Scandinavia (p.152). Nevertheless, the range and interdisciplinary nature of the papers is commendable, and their synthesis and organisation is generally successful. The authors for the most part provided clear methodologies, achieved their aims, and demonstrated good awareness of the issues in ancient musicology. One of these issues is summarised in the Epilogue (Yossi Maurey), in that the study of ancient music is often hindered by a Western-centric and anachronistic approach, and this reviewer agrees with the implication that this leads to the unnecessary distinction between ‘musicology’ and ‘ethnomusicology’. Maurey

[1] Manniche 1997: 40.
[2] An introduction to the sistrum and its symbolism: Ziegler 1984.

further believes that the study of Greek music inordinately dominates archaeomusicology because Greek culture is entrenched in European culture, and notes the wide-ranging skills required of a researcher of ancient Near Eastern music (language, philology, art history and organology, for example). Although some of the papers included in this volume are far less accessible to the non-specialist than others, it certainly does much to draw attention to the varied subjects within and applications of the study of music in the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean world.

Bibliography

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