THE SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUE AND FUNCTION OF MUSIC

On musical instruments and their performances in Mesopotamia of the 3rd millennium BCE from an archaeological, iconographical and philological perspective

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Cover Image

Lapis lazuli cylinder seal found against the right arm of Puabi in PG 800B in the Royal Cemetery of Ur
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The theoretical conception and practical performance of music are a central component of cultural achievements. Music is a universal feature of human societies and is a carrier of culture-specific contents and expressions (Shehata 2009, 1). What makes music so important in society? What is the role, the function, and the position of music?

Music is often conceived as an autonomous form of art which acts freely from social, political, technological, and cultural developments. However, music does not simply passively represent society and its values. Rather, it is an active and dynamic entity which is influenced by and influences these trajectories simultaneously. Music is a universal and omnipresent feature of human life and a carrier of culture-specific contents and expression. It is appreciated consciously during concerts or accompanies traveling, sports, and work activities. It fulfills multiple functions, such as to communicate, to silence, to influence and calm emotions, and thus provides parameters which may shape experiences, perceptions, feelings, and behavior.

Bearing this in mind, music can be understood as a reflection of its socio-cultural and historical context. Questions concerning the origin and function of musical instruments as well as different roles and positions of music are the main concern of this thesis. The heartland of ancient Mesopotamia had certainly been a significant center of musical development. In the 4th and 3rd millennia BCE, music had been a medium which carried social and culture specific identities in form of epics, myths, prayers, lamentations, and hymns. Various musicians and an extensive number of instruments are mentioned in documents, lexical list, literary works and catalogues. These textual sources document that instruments were regarded as sacred cultic devices and received offering. Music had been the appropriate way to get in contact with the gods (see ch. V. 7. 1.). It was performed at various events, for example during banquets, special celebrations such as the beginning of the new year, laying of the foundation stone or the dedication of a temple, during ritual processions, various cultic practices, or burial ceremonies.

Apart from written evidence, the most substantial source for exploring the Mesopotamian musical culture are visual representations of musical scenes on various objects of art, as well as the exceptional archaeological instrument remains discovered in the Royal Cemetery in Ur which visualize the extent of the Mesopotamian instrumentarium. In images, instruments are embedded in scenes portraying subjective stories which are deliberately chosen to exemplarily

display the idea an artist or commissioner has of a certain event. Iconographic attestations appear on seals, votive plaques, as reliefs on steles, painted decoration on vessels, and in inlay works. All of them can be considered works of "major art" which were intended to enhance the roles or capacities of a limited number of people through stereotypical renderings. They most often show people involved in ritual scenes that were deemed worthy enough to be depicted. Their purpose was to immortalize the most spectacular and exceptional events of a small part of the society (Otto 2016, 113). For this reason, the high development of the Sumerian music culture is most often explained by its importance in cultic acts.

This study aims to shed light on the value and function of music in the society and culture of the Mesopotamian heartland in the late 4th and 3rd millennium BCE by defining and analyzing various contexts of musical performances. It presents an interdisciplinary approach which compares and combines complementary evidence provided by iconographic sources, archaeological remains and literary texts.

I. 1. Research problems, questions and methods

The archaeological and iconographical material from the 4th and 3rd millennium BCE is vast and versatile. The history and development of individual types of musical instruments, especially their organological and technical aspects, have been at the center of attention in music archaeology (see ch. II. 1.). Yet only few studies address the entirety of the Mesopotamian instrumentarium (e.g., Rashid 1984; Rimmer 1969). It is essential to understand and analyze this corpus as a whole since instruments are inexplicitly interrelated in the course of performance. The socio-cultural value and function of music and instruments is primarily accessible though their performative contexts. However, context-sensitive aspects have not received the attention they clearly merit. In visual representations, the social and cultural setting in which music had been performed has often been neglected and remains rather assumed than investigated. This study aims to fill this gap by making the development and meaning of performative contexts the subject of analyzation.

Furthermore, despite the popularity of ancient Mesopotamian music as a research topic and possibly because of the vast range of sources available (see ch. II. 1.), studies have mostly been conducted in disciplines isolated from each other. Even though archaeological, iconographical, and textual sources provide complementary evidence, hardly any comparative research has been conducted. Among studies, which elaborate on music as an aspect of Mesopotamia's cultural history, H. Hartmann's publication *Die Musik der Sumerischen Kultur* (1960) is hitherto the only comprehensive work which encompasses documentary and literary texts, as well as iconographical and archaeological evidence. Since the amount of material and studies concerning music in the ancient Near East considerably increased since the 60s, many of her conclusions are in need of revision. The contemporary corpus of textual material provides valuable complementary information, such as the names and function of instruments and musicians. Moreover, literary compositions are of primary importance since they incorporate information on the context of musical performances, such as cult ceremonies, rituals or feasts in which musicians were involved. Most importantly, Mesopotamian's literary corpus is inextricably linked to musical performances since it can be assumed that numerous compositions had been performed before an audience. Music thus acted as a medium which as carried socio-cultural contents and expressions. Therefore, it is integral to incorporate written accounts into the study of the impact and use of music. The chronological development of

performative contexts is investigated by means of a descriptive and interpretative analyzes of the archaeological and iconographical material as well as complementary evidence provided by literary sources. The creation of a communication channel between the disciplines enables this research to grasp a more complete picture of ancient Mesopotamian music by defining and investigating various contexts of musical performances in the late 4th and 3rd millennium BCE. An interdisciplinary approach has several essential benefits: many aspects and phenomena of the history and development of ancient Mesopotamian music can only be understood when viewed through the lenses of different sources, others can be reinsured and corrected.

This main research is concerned with the development of musical entertainment and the socio-cultural value and function of music in ancient Mesopotamia in the late 4th and 3rd millennium BCE. It also addresses changes to the form, venue and occasion of performances which are continuously affected by factors such as the period, religion, politics, technology, and style. This issue can only be addressed after having investigated several other multilayered questions concerned with the structure of musical performances:

- Which types had been part of the ancient Mesopotamian instrumentarium on the basis of archaeological in iconographical evidence?
- Which information can be gained from textual sources referring to the names of instruments?
- Is it possible to combine this evidence in order to identify certain instruments by name?
- Were musical performances conducted by soloists, choral or orchestral groups, or ensembles?
- Is it possible to grasp established instrumental combinations in images and / or textual sources?
- Who is performing music (esp. the occupational profile of professional musicians)?
- And for which audience did they do so?
- Where did musical performances take place (e.g., in a certain area within a building or outside, in a specific city or region, etc.)?
- When was music performed (e.g., during a specific daytime, date, season, year, historical period, etc.)?

I. 1. 1. Corpus of data

The research presents a database which incorporates all thus far known iconographic attestations and archaeological finds depicting musical instruments from the 4th and 3rd millennium BCE. The historical and geographical frame of this thesis is determined by the earliest representations of musical instruments dating to the Archaic period until the end of the Ur III period (tab. 2) in the Mesopotamia heartland (fig. 1) and neighboring regions. This period has been chosen in order to investigate the origin and rise of Mesopotamia's musical culture. Furthermore, this timeframe coincides with the appearance of the Sumerian script which is most likely initially attested in the Archaic texts from Uruk and Jemdet Naṣr (JN), and lasted until the end of the 3rd millennium BCE. The number of literary sources is assessable for this time period, and is incorporated into this thesis. The text corpus of this thesis is primarily composed of Sumerian compositions mentioning instrumental groups, such as hymns, songs of praise, lament and prayers. The written sources focus on questions concerning the performance context of music. This concerns the possible presentation framework (e.g., royal prizes or god feasts), the event, time and place, audience and performers, as well as the form, whether as pure singing, soloistic or choral, or with instrumental accompaniment. Hereby, the study relies mostly on texts published in the *Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* (ETCSL) (http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/). The project, initiated by the Oriental Institute of the University of Oxford, encompasses ca. 400 literary texts dating to the late 3rd and early 2nd millennia BCE. It presents Sumerian compositions in transliteration, English prose translations, as well as bibliographical references for each text (see also Black *et al.* 2004; Ebeling and Cunningham 2007).

I. 1. 2. Organization of the study

In general, this thesis is structured in the following way: theory, methods and background knowledge, the classification of ancient instrument according to modern types on the basis of iconographical and archaeological materiel, the identification of the most important instrument names in textual sources, the contexts of musical performances, and the analyzation and interpretation of the collected evidence.

Chapter II begins with an overview of previous research in music archaeology, philology, and theory. Furthermore, it provides a short introduction into theoretical conceptions and difficulties of modern and ancient classification schemes applied on musical instruments, including contemporary assumptions about the ancient Mesopotamian concept of structuring instruments. The succeeding subchapter presents background knowledge on the late 4th and 3rd millennium BCE in Mesopotamia – its region, inhabitants and the time frame. In addition, stages of religious development are discussed since religion immensely influenced the value and function of music in ancient Mesopotamia. This is followed by a brief introduction into the Sumerian literary corpus and a chronological overview of Sumerian literature in order to familiarize the reader with this field of research. Afterwards, definitions of modern instrument types are provided according to the Hornbostel-Sachs system which is employed in this study to integrate ancient instruments into the present-day knowledge of classification systems and the perception of instruments.

The Mesopotamian instrumentarium known in the late 4th and 3rd millennium BCE is addressed in chapter III. This is done on the basis of iconographical and archaeological material. The subchapters are concerned with organology – artistic, morphological and technological developments of types – including information about their initial occurrence, distribution, function and value.

Chapter IV aims to summarize and contribute to the correct identification of the most important instrument names and provides information on professional musicians attested in textual sources. This is dealt with in alphabetical order.

The main part of the thesis, chapter V, is concerned with different contexts of musical performance. A survey of depicted scenes has led to the definition of various topics which are structured in a rough chronological order according to their initial appearance. They are explained on the basis of archaeological, iconographical and / or literary evidence. This scholar-imposed scheme allows to examine instruments in their performative function. Thus, it is

possible to investigate the socio-cultural role of music in certain historical periods from different perspectives and provides information about characteristics of political, intellectual or religious life. Furthermore, an attempt is made to relate groups of instruments mentioned in literary sources to depictions of instrumental (and vocal) ensembles.

The final chapter VI addresses the research questions of this thesis, and thus analyzes, interprets, and summarizes the evidence which has been collected previously.

A catalogue of the all iconographic and archaeological attestations featuring musical instruments dating to the late 4^{th} and 3^{rd} millennium BCE is provided in the appendix (ch. IX).

CHAPTER II

Previous Research, the Classification of Instruments & Background Knowledge

II. 1. An overview of previous work in music archaeology, philology, and theory

Studies concerning ancient Mesopotamian music unify in a complex field of interdisciplinary research, demanding a fair knowledge of archaeology, philology, musicology (the scholarly analysis of and research on music), and organology (the science of musical instruments and their classification). An overview of ancient Mesopotamian music, as well as an extensive bibliography on the topic can be found in the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 8 (Kilmer 1995–1997, 463–482). The following paragraphs provide an introduction into music archaeology, philology, and theory.

Music archaeology or "archaeomusicology" has been defined as "interdisciplinary research that attempts to survey, describe, and interpret music and practice of music in prehistoric and historic epochs" (Hickmann and Lund 1984 in Hickmann 2011, 115). It is primarily concerned with the study of ancient musical instruments and their remains, as well as with the iconographic evidence such as images of instruments and musicians. The systematical documentation and description of artifacts are the foundation of interpretive investigations, including the chronological development, manufacture, and use of instruments. The main objective is to get close to the object's reconstruction and its sound, as well as to enrich the understanding of ancient cultures by the interpretation of the function of music, the investigation of social status and importance of musicians, as well as of the reception of music and its impact on the society (Schumacher 2002, 539). Pioneering work concerning music archaeology had been carried out by the musicologists F. W. Galpin in *The music of the Sumerians and their immediate successors the Babylonians and Assyrians* (1937), and C. Sachs in *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World. East and West* (1943, esp. 57–63). The chronological development and history of Mesopotamian instruments has been studied in detail by J. Rimmer in *Ancient Musical Instruments of Western Asia in the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities, British Museum* in 1969, and by S. A. Rashid in the series *Musikgeschichte in Bildern* in 1984. Ever since, numerous articles discuss diverse aspects of the ancient Mesopotamian

instrumentarium such as specific types, certain peculiarities in images, specific find spots, regional similarities or interregional diversities, reconstruction attempts, etcetera.

Music philology, labeled as such in parallelism with music archaeology by A. von Lieven (2004), draws conclusion on the basis of Sumerian and Akkadian inscriptions on clay tablets. Musical terminology encompasses the names of instruments and musicians, musical intervals, and other related terms and aspects. In lexical lists, objects had been arranged in related categories. They reveal valuable information such as an instrument's function, the materials it was made of, its shape, size, and sound, and the context in which an object or a person was specified. Furthermore, they name different professions which provide information concerning the thematic and hierarchical structures among musicians, and inform about the ancient Mesopotamian classification system of songs structured into genres, rubrics, etcetera (e.g., Kilmer 2004). Documents, such as certificates, contracts, letters, lists concerning the staff or sacrifices, delivery notes or receipts, contain information concerning instruments, musicians, and their families or institutions. It is possible to gain insight into the social status, duties, and wealth of individuals, as well as into the composition of a musical ensemble. Literary texts and catalogues encompass mythological and epic tales, lyric songs and hymns, lamentations and prayers, saying, as well as dialogues documenting discussions and lectures. Literary compositions are of primary importance since it incorporates evidence on the context of musical performances. These texts, for instance, describe cult ceremonies and rituals in which musicians were involved or the sounds of instruments are mentioned (for Sumerian literature see Wilcke 1975, esp. 252–292 for hymns, laments, and songs; c.f., Kilmer 1995–1997; an overview of genres, rubrics, and titles of songs has been provided by Rubio 2009, 22–25; 62–70).

Among many philologists (e.g., Gurney 1994; Gurney and Lawergren 1988; Gurney and West 1998; Kümmel 1970; Lawergren and Gurney 1987;), especially A. D. Kilmer has contributed to the understanding of musical terminology (Kilmer 1960; 1965; 1971; 1974; 1980; Kilmer and Civil 1986; Kilmer and Tinney 1996; 1997; see also Heimpel and Frantz-Szabó 2011). In 1960, she published the Neo-Babylonian (NB) tablet found near Nippur (CBS 10996). It contained seven among nine string names of a chordophone, as well as the tuning instruction for paired constants. The tuning instruction can be interpreted as seven heptachords, by means of perfect fifths and perfect fourths, followed by a refinement in the tuning of thirds and sixths (for a recent study on the notation of CBS 10996, see Smith and Kilmer 2000). Kilmer was thus the first who

draw attention to ancient theoretical texts concerning music and tonal systems, the latter being the point of departure and the foundation of musical theory.

Music theory is primarily concerned with the reconstruction of ancient sound. It is understood as musical craftsmanship, a specific guideline of compositional practices, or a comprehensive contemplation of music on the basis of culture-specific systems and categories (Schumacher 2002, 539). It primarily addresses theoretical musical aspects such as tuning and tonal systems, scales, composition methods, musical notations, rhythmic relationships, etcetera. Furthermore, it is concerned with practical aspects, for instance, the performance. Music theory therefore draws upon written sources providing related information as well as reconstructions of ancient instruments.

In 1976, Kilmer discovered and deciphered the notation of a Hurrian cult hymn from 1400 B.C., and reconstructed an ancient Sumerian lyre along with the musicologist R. L. Crocker and the instrument builder R. R. Brown, providing an impression of the kind of sounds once familiar to the ancient Mesopotamian culture (Brown et al. 1976). Their work was presented at the conference of International Musicological Society at Berkeley in 1977. This event lay at the foundation for the International Study Group of Music Archaeology (ISGMA) which has published a large number of articles concerning the identification of various instruments, music theory, as well as concepts and functions of musical performances. An overview of the Mesopotamian music theory since 1977 has recently been provided by Kilmer (2014; similar Bayer 2014; Michalowski 2010). Other pioneering scholars who worked out numerical systems of tuning tablets to conjecture scales and elements of ancient musical theory are R. L. Crocker (e.g., 1978; Crocker and Kilmer 1984), M. Duchesne-Guillemin (e.g., 1963; 1966; 1969; 1984), O. Gurney (e.g., 1994), H. M. Kümmel (1970), and D. Wulstan (1968; 1971a; 1971b; 1974). In summary, it can be stated that ancient Mesopotamian musical theory had rested upon the strings of a lyre. The strings and string combinations can be identified by their names. Their etymologies provide information about the original stringing of the lyre, tuning techniques, and reveal relations to other instruments (Krispijn 2002; for a critical point of view see Shehata 2002). Among the most recent and extensive studies combining music theory and organology is R. Dumbrill's *The Archaeomusicology of the Ancient Near East* published in 2005.

In contrast to music archaeology and philology, music theory is not directly linked to the main question addressed in this thesis, and thus will not be discussed any further.

II. 2. Classification systems of musical instruments – then and now

In order to study musical instruments in their performative contexts, it is necessary to initially establish a theoretical framework. The following subchapter addresses the perception and definition of "music" and refers to ethnographical examples. Afterwards, it will be discussed how diverse cultures have created classification schemes for musical instruments, including a short summery of the current knowledge of the ancient Mesopotamian system. The succeeding subchapters provide an overview of the region, the people and the time frame of Mesopotamia in the 3rd millennium BCE. In addition, an introduction into the Sumerian literary corpus and a chronological overview of Sumerian literature will be provided in order to familiarize the reader with the textual evidence discussed in this thesis. The final subchapter is concerned with the Hornbostel-Sachs system which is the most widely accepted system of musical instrument classification used nowadays, and is also applied in chapter III on the ancient Mesopotamian instrumentarium.

II. 2. 1. The perception and definition of "music"

Music can be defined as the process of creative organization of sound (Wade 2009, 6). A musical note is the result of a steady oscillation and is perceived when an interior part of the listener's ears is shocked correspondingly into oscillation as well. There are three basic ordering systems: the rhythm regulates the movement of music in time; the melody consists of the linear succession of musical tones; and the harmony comes into being when different sound occurs simultaneously. Further important elements are for example timbre and structure (Sadie and Latham 1994, 16).

However, having a word for a particular aesthetic category of organized sound which an individual may recognize as "music" is by no means universal. Its concept is context specific. Instead of a uniform category called "music", instrumental and vocal ensembles are named according to and associated with certain functions which they fulfill (Wade 2009, 25). The recitation of the Qur'ān, for instance, which non-Muslim listeners tend to perceive as 'music', is not considered *musiqa*. The conceptual categorization which distinguishes between music and forms of melodic religious expression is based on the imperative to avoid inappropriate associations with secular musical practices (Marcus 2007, 94). Interestingly, music can also be

thought of as a kind of activity. None of the First Nation Native American group, for instance, has a term for "music": the word as a noun creates an isolated category and thus fails to convey the process of social interaction, the integration of traditional and modern knowledge, or the relationship between singing and drumming (Wade 2009, 27). Music can therefore also be understood as a performative social event. Modern research on contemporary performances has distinguished the following functions which provide interesting suggestions for interpretations:

Tab. 1: Interrelated functions of performances

- entertainment
- creation of art [the instrument or medium itself, the music played, the performance, modern value]
- to mark or change identity
- to establish or foster community
- to teach, persuade, convince, or influence
- to deal with the sacred or demonic
- to heal

(After Schechner 2002, 38, fig. 2.12.
The given order does not relate to the importance nor is the list complete.)

II. 2. 2. Culture-emerging vs. scholar-imposed classification schemes

Every culture has developed its own formal and informal way of classifying instruments or ensembles. The characteristics chosen to conduct a scheme depend mainly on the assumptions and the purpose of the classifier or the classifying culture. In other words, the way of structuring instruments and their assessment is depended on which aspects a certain culture perceived as important for the instrumentarium, and the status a single instrument was given (Stauder 1974, 9). In fact, so-called culture-emerging or natural classification schemes may often be seen as an abstraction of ideas which are held about social, musical and other functions of instruments at a particular point in time. These ideas may in turn reflect the identity of a specific culture, and be part of broader concepts such as the nature of music, science, art, knowledge, society or the cosmos. In some cases, the concept of classification of instruments may illustrate universality, in others the particularity of an individual culture and its social structures. Different elements are selected from the total concept of instruments to serve as criteria of division. Some emphasize specific elements of performance practice, the way sound is produced, others reflect more general religious or social ideas, art or philosophy, while others combine both general, social and /or musical aspects.

For millennia, several ancient civilizations in China, India and Mesopotamia have considered musical instruments important items of culture associated with a specific function and meaning. Diverse classification schemes have been developed in order to systematically structure different types. The ancient Chinese system, for instance, is based upon the culture's value of nature. Instruments were structured according to the main sound-producing material. The "eight tones" (**ba yin**) consisted of metal, stone, skin, vegetable gourd, bamboo, wood, silk, and earth (e.g., pottery). In addition, these sounds resonated with cardinal directions and seasons. In the course of musical performances, the **ba yin** were integrated into rituals in order to facilitate a connection to nature, rather than to generate musical diversity (Wade 2009, 38).

The Indian classification system, dating from the early centuries of the common era until the present, identifies four basic types according to the primary sound-producing medium: the vibrating body of the instrument itself, a membrane, string or column of air (Wade 2009, 38 | c.f., ch. II. 2. 4.).

The contemporary knowledge about the theoretical conception of music and musical instruments in the 3rd millennium BCE in Mesopotamia remains rather fragmentary and uninvestigated. Certain clues to the classification of instruments are provided by pictographic signs designating their names. They can be refined by determinatives referring to the main construction material, such as **ĝiš** "wood", **gi** "reed", **kuš** "skin / leather", **uruda** "copper / metal", and **zabar** "bronze" (Krispijn 2008, 125). However, most instruments consist of more than one material, and it is unclear for which reasons a certain material was considered to be most descriptive of an instrument. It is quite likely that form and material were not the primary characteristics of classification. Rather, instruments could have been structured in relation to the character, function and meaning they adopted in a certain context: they may have been perceived differently when performed solo or as part an ensemble. Furthermore, instruments were defined according to their use and significance in ritual and cult, in relation to the musical genres they accompanied (e.g., hymnic composition, lamentations, liturgical prayers), and their relationship to deities and the cosmological order. The religious status of instruments is attested in written sources. Most obvious is the marking of an object with the determinatives **diĝir**, "divine", **kug$_3$**/**kug**, "holy; pure" or **maḫ**, "great" (Shehata 2014, 103). The issue of instrument classification and their correct identification will be further addressed in chapter IV.

In general, the knowledge about the world's classifications of instruments is very fragmentary and incomplete, and scholars are ingrained to apply western schemes to non-western

instrumentaria. The main problem is the discrepancy between the modern subjective assumptions made about the classification of instruments, and how they were actually perceived (culture-emerging vs. scholar-imposed schemes). The chosen scheme affects how the body of data is perceived and understood. In the case of musical instruments, it includes the way in which music is created and responded to itself. It is important to keep in mind that the perception and classification of music and musical instruments in ancient Mesopotamia differs from our modern concepts.

II. 3. The 3rd millennium BCE in Mesopotamia

II. 3. 1. An introduction into the region, the people and the time frame

The urban revolution emerging towards the end of the 4th millennium BCE saw the formation of the first cities in southern Mesopotamia (fig. 1). These complex centers of civilization have often been regarded as driven by the development of important innovations (esp. writing and irrigation), economic specialization, increasing social organization, and interregional conflicts in order to defend resources or to secure trade networks (e.g., Nissen 1995; Postgate 1992). The following paragraphs present a short introduction into the region, its inhabitants and the time frame.

The heartland of Mesopotamia, literary "the land between the rivers" Euphrates and Tigris, known as Sumer and Akkad in the 3rd millennium BCE, comprises the eastern tip of the Fertile Crescent characterized by alluvial plains and cast marshlands in the delta at the head of the gulf. The praised fertility, however, is not the natural state of this region where human survival would seem to be difficult (Nissen 2003, 11). The environment is shaped by extreme seasons and little precipitation but an abundance of surface water in the form of rivers and swamps. Permanent occupation in this environment was mostly possible due to the invention of artificial irrigation to overcome the unfavorable climate characterized by unpredictable rainfall and damaging floods (e.g., Pollock 1999, 29–34). Nevertheless, the geography had been an important factor which fostered cultural and technological development since plains and river channels enabled unification and communication among people (Aruz 2003, 4). Eventually, increasing dependence on agriculture and experience in food production made it possible to occupy larger areas. In addition, the scarce availability of building materials demanded secure ways to acquire further resources. The increasingly high level of organization implies the existence of social institutions (Nissen 2003, 11). The nature of these can be grasped in written sources describing the practical functions of temples and palaces which controlled most of the economic and political life of the cities (Aruz 2003, 6). Architectural ruins and works of art illustrate their majesty and wealth. The early city-states consisted of a capital surrounded by villages. Living in lager communities offered a number of advantages, such as the specialization of labor, availability of goods, physical and material security, and not least, entertainment (Nissen 2003, 11). According to the official ideology propagandized by the king and court poets, cities had been

the property of the deities who granted the ruler with the ability to provide wealth and harmony to the land and his subjects (Aruz 2003, 6).

The identification of the people inhabiting the area of southern Mesopotamia primarily rests upon the survival of languages, writing systems and references in texts to certain sites and cultural complexes. The citizens of Sumer, who called themselves **sag giga** ("the black-headed ones"), had probably already lived in the area prior to the emergence of the cities since there is little evidence hinting at a breakdown of development or a great migration from other regions (Aruz 2003, 4). According to literary evidence, these people were introduced by the deities who supported the ruler's authority: seven wise men, who had been attendants of the god Enki and ministers to kings, promoted architecture, poetry and other arts and crafts of civilization before the great flood (Hallo and Simpson 1971, 28–29)

The system employed in this study to establish a relative chronology for the 3rd millennium BCE uses terms which refer to developments in Mesopotamian history and political dominance (tab. 2). Early Dynastic I, II and III designate the period of Sumerian city states, which is characterized by an abundance of text written in the Sumerian language. Around 2350 BCE, a time of conquest followed and the Sargonic empire came to power, evident in a vast majority of royal inscriptions and documents written in Akkadian. The succeeding phase is named after prominent city states – Lagash II and Ur III – during which cities had been unified into bureaucratic states. The last era of the 3rd millennium BCE, the "Neo-Sumerian", is characterized by the reuse of the Sumerian language and culture (Aruz 2003, 5).

The 3rd millennium BCE has often been associated with a pattern of ethnic alternation in political dominance. It is necessary to point out, however, that this kind of ethnically based history creates the impression of a dichotomy between speakers of Sumerian versus speakers of Akkadian. Rubio (2009, 15–18) argues that Sumerian as a foremost linguistic ethnicity does not imply a period supposedly dominated by "Sumerian ethnicity" or "culture". According to him, the random and partial nature of available textual evidence has created a false image of ethnic corollaries concerning Sumerian South versus Akkadian/Semitic North. In spite of the presence of two different languages, it is important to keep in mind that Mesopotamian history and culture need to be understood as one single tapestry featuring many patchworks.

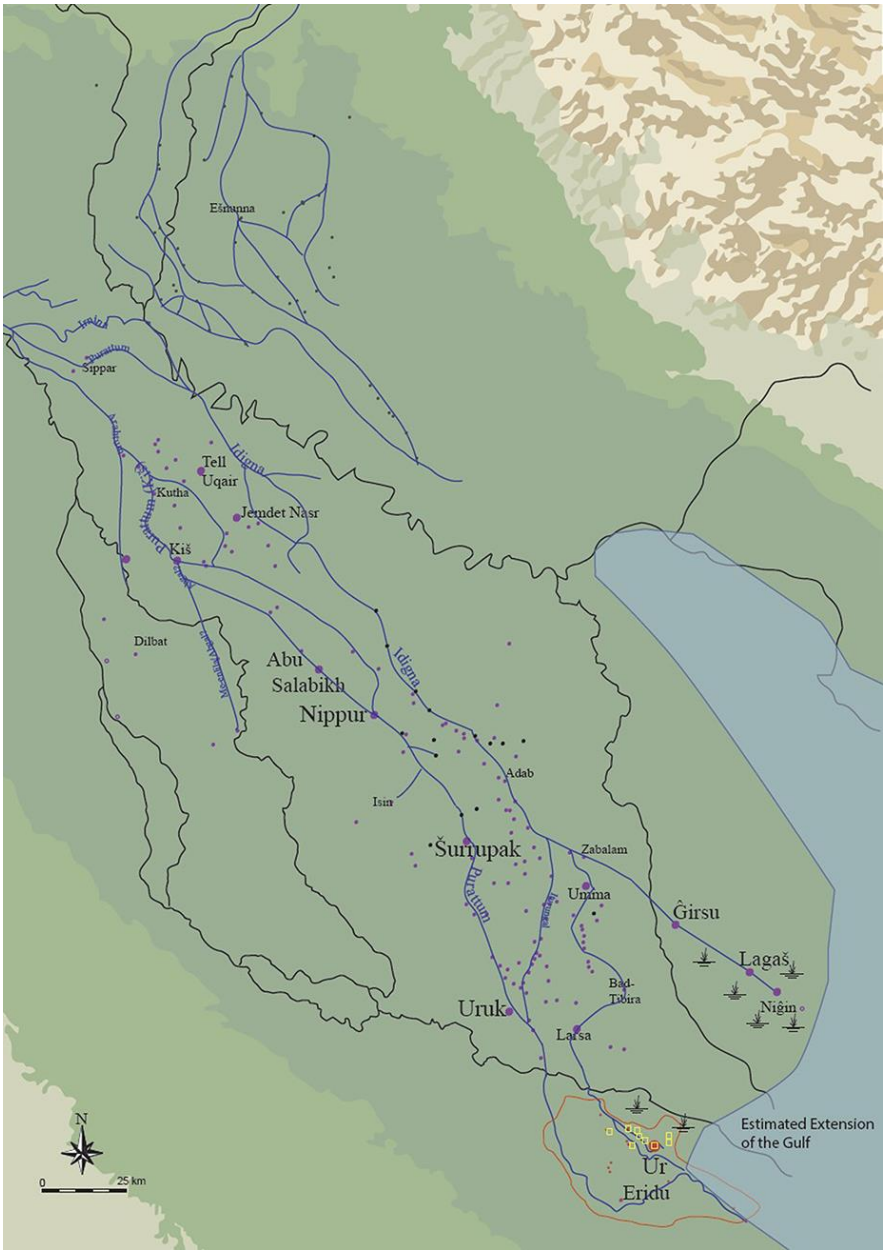


Fig. 1: Map of Mesopotamia in the 3rd millennium BCE showing main watercourses and settlements (Benati 2015, fig. 1, in cdli.ucla.edu).

Tab. 2: The Sumerian chronology (after Rubio 2009, 19)

	Archaic Period	
4000 – 3500	Early Uruk	Numerical tablets
3500 – 3200	Late Uruk (Uruk IV)	Archaic texts from Uruk
3200 – 2900	Late Uruk (Uruk III, Jemdet Naṣr)	
2900 – 2700	Early Dynastic I	Legendary rulers (Enmerkar, Lugalbanda, Gilgamesh)
2700 – 2600	Early Dynastic II	Archaic texts from Ur
	Early Dynastic Period III	
2600 – 2500	Early Dynastic IIIa	
	Fāra, Abū Ṣalābīḫ, Telloh	Mesilim (king of Kish)
		Dynasty of Lagaš: Ur-Nanshe,
2500 – 2340	Early Dynastic IIIb	Akurgal, Eannatum, Eannatum I,
	Ebla (Tell Mardīḫ) (2450 – 2350)	Eametena ... Urukagina.
		Lugalzagesi of Umma and Uruk
	Sargonic Period (Old Akkadian)	
2350	**Sargonic Dynasty** (Akkad)	Sargon, Rimush, Manushtushu, Naram-Sin, Sharkalisharri ...
2150	**Gutians** Utu-hegal of Umma & Uruk	Gudea of Lagaš
	Ur III	
	Utu-hegal of Umma & Uruk	Gudea of Lagaš
2100	3rd Dynasty of Ur	Ur-Namma, Šulgi, Amar-Sin, Shu.Sin, Ibbi-Sin

II. 3. 2. Stages of religious development

Previous studies have emphasized that religion immensely influenced the development of music (e.g., Hartmann 1960). In ancient Mesopotamia, the meaning of life was to live in concert with the gods. According to Jacobson (2016), religion, "As the only available intellectual framework that could provide a comprehensive understanding of the forces governing existence and also guidance for right conduct in life [...], conditioned all aspects of ancient Mesopotamian civilization. It yielded the forms in which [...] social, economic, legal, political, and military institutions were [...] to be understood, and it provided the significant symbols for poetry and art."

In the 4th millennium BCE and possibly even earlier, worship circulated around forces in nature, in particular those which had been of primary importance to essential economic pursuits. The forces were presumably mainly visualized in a nonhuman form (Jacobsen 2016). The subsequent 3rd millennium BCE was characterized by the visualization of deities in the shape of humans, especially during the Akkadian period. Theist religions maintained that the universe is ruled by a group or family of great gods, of which each member occupied certain offices and functions (Jacobsen 2016). Mesopotamian art had primarily been concerned with the relationship between the mundane and divine realm. Deities were visualized in human form, distinguishable due to horned crowns, tufted fleecy, flounced garments, and certain attributes and animals.

Initially, theist religions were agricultural enterprises. Theology, mythology and liturgy revolved around the relationship between humans, domesticated plants and farm animals. Most of its commandments dealt with farming and village life, and its major holidays were (seeding and) harvest festivals. In theist religions, humans and gods were the main characters, while plants, animals and natural phenomena transformed into silent décor. Men became the central hero around which the entire cosmos revolved. The gods' role was to explain the extraordinary nature of human kind and why men should dominate and explode all other organisms. Furthermore, it was their duty to mediate between humans and the ecosystem. All non-human entities were to be addressed through the gods. They promised to supply rain, fertility and protection, and in exchange humans had to share the produce with the gods in the form of sacrifices (Harari 2016, 100–154).

II. 3. 3. An introduction into the Sumerian literary corpus

The earliest representations of musical instruments coincide with the appearance of the Sumerian script which is initially attested in the archaic text from Uruk and Jemdet Naṣr. In the course of the 3rd millennium BCE, evidence of music as a medium which carried social and culture specific identities in the form of epics, myths, prayers, lamentations, and hymns becomes more and more abundant.

Music had been subject in scribal schools since it was important for the composition of literature (Krispijn 2002). The majority of Sumerian literary corpus had probably been scribal artifacts, thoroughly scholastic from conception to transmission. Most narrative, mythological, wisdom, and even a number of hymnic works appear to be detached from performative goals (Rubio 2009, 26). In fact, many Sumerian literary compositions were probably exclusively accessible to scribes, especially within a social and cultural institution known as the **edubba** (**e2-dub-ba** or **e2-dubba-a** "school," literally "tablet house"; Veldhuis 2004, 58-59). However, this does not imply that all Sumerian literary texts are merely the result of scribal activities. Many hymnic compositions were most likely performed by musicians and specialized priests (Hartmann 1960; Wilcke 1975; see also overviews by Kilmer 1995–1997 and Rubio 2009). It can be assumed, for instance, that many royal hymns devoted to the kings of the Ur III and Isin dynasties were recited in front of an audience at court. In some cases, both the performance and extracurricular nature of some compositions were inherent in their genres, as is the case of many cultic compositions, especially canonical lamentations, dirges, and songs (e.g., Balags and Eršemmas).

The generic names usually assigned to Sumerian compositions, such as epic, myth and lamentation, are the result of the modern taxonomic approach to the literary corpus which is grounded in the classical Greco-Roman classification and theory of genres. Mesopotamian scribes had their own labels for compositions that were intended to be performed, e.g. for hymns, laments, and songs (Kilmer 1995–1997; Wilcke 1975, 252–292). These labels normally concern hymnic compositions as a whole (subscripts), as well as various musical annotations regarding sections of these compositions (rubrics)[1].

[1] This thesis does not pay attention to the question if the included Sumerian compositions were indeed vocally recited and possibly instrumentally accompanied. An identification like this is based on the assumption already established in earlier studies that technical terms, such as subscripts and rubrics within texts, have at any time testified an actual performance-oriented background, whether musical or liturgical.

II. 3. 4. A chronological overview of Sumerian literature

The Early Dynastic (ED) III period marks the beginning of Sumerian literature (Semitic as well as Akkadian). Literary texts in Sumer mainly originate from ancient Shuruppak (Fāra) and Abū Ṣalābḫ, as well as Lagaš (Tell al-Hibā), Girsu (Telloh or Tellō), Bismāya (Adab), and Nippur (Niffar or Atlāl Nufar). The Early Dynastic corpus includes earlier versions of compositions well known in later periods, especially in the Old Babylonian (OB) period, such as the *Keš Temple Hymn* (Kth | Biggs 1971; Krebernik 1998, 313–315; Wilcke 2006). Nonetheless, most compositions found at Abū Ṣalābḫ are unique, such as the *Self-Praise of Inanna* (IAS 329, 388, and two other small fragments; Krebernik 1998, 366).

In the following periods only few literary works are attested. The situation is particularly difficult for the Old Akkadian (Akk.) period to which no evidence can securely be dated to (Brisch 2010, 160).

The 3rd Dynasty of Ur (Ur III) plays an important role in the stream of tradition of Sumerian literature from the Early Dynastic to the Old Babylonian period (for UR III literary catalogues, see Civil 1975, 145, no. 36; Hallo 1963). Ten thousands of texts are attested for this period in various centers in Southern Mesopotamia. The predominantly administrative documents were found in state archives of Ur and Puzriš-Dagān (Drehem), in the provincial archives of governors in Umma and Girsu in the province of Lagaš, as well as in the private temple archives of Nippur (Pruzsinszky 2013). The two cylinders of Gudea of Lagaŝ (GC) constitute a rather unique case: the hymn concerns the rebuilding and dedication of the E-Ninnu temple complex in Lagaš and is the longest literary text known from the 3rd millennium (Edzard 1997; Jacobsen 1987, 386–444; Suter 2000). Furthermore, there are other Ur III literary texts found in the debris of the temple of Inanna in the city of Nippur, for instance, the fragments of the *Curse of Akkade* (CA) and the *Temple hymns* (TH).

The Old Babylonian period is commonly regarded as the “renaissance” of Sumerian literature due to the textual canonization which took place at scribal schools in Southern Mesopotamia (Vanstiphout 2003). It has been proposed that the majority of Sumerian literary compositions attested in Old Babylonian copies were originally composed not later than the Ur III period (Falkenstein 1951). Three Old Babylonian catalogues are particularly important: the Philadelphia catalogue from Nippur, the Louvre catalogue, and the Ur catalogue at the Iraq Museum in Baghdad (Vanstiphout 2003). According to G. Rubio (2009, 27), they mainly focus on five groups

of compositions: "(a) narratives, such as the cycles of Aratta and the stories about Gilgamesh; (b) compositions of ideological or theo-political importance, especially the collection of *Temple Hymns* and *the Sumerian King List*; (c) royal and divine hymns; (d) city laments, including the *Curse of Akkade*; and (e) compositions closely related to the scribal milieu, such as debates, dialogues, and compositions set at the *edubba* itself."

II. 4. The Hornbostel-Sachs system

In order to integrate ancient Mesopotamian instruments into the present-day knowledge of classification systems and the perception of instruments, the Hornbostel-Sachs typology is employed in this study. This chapter provides an overview of this system and its technical terms.

European cultures traditionally classified instruments according to orchestral instrument families: strings, winds (brass and woodwind), percussion, and keyboard. This system mixes different criteria for classification: strings and winds pertain the sound producing medium, percussion and keyboard instruments refer to the playing technique, and brass and woodwind name to the material of construction (Sadie and Latham 1994, 37).

In the 19th century, under the flagship of the interest in science but to a large extent due to imperialistic colonialism, instruments were gathered from around the world and deposited in museum collections where they were documented as physical objects rather than cultural items (Wade 2009, 39). The task of cataloguing these instruments presented a challenge: while efficient in their own musical contexts, the basic European criteria were too inconsistent to be useful for scientific classifications since they did not cover the wide variety of instruments and playing styles found worldwide. In the late 19th century, the Belgian curator V. Mahillon therefore turned to the ancient Indian classification system for musical instruments, dating from the early centuries of the common era until present. It identifies four basic types, according to the primary sound-producing medium: the vibration body of the instrument itself, a vibrating membrane, a string, or a column of air (Wade 2009, 38).

The Hornbostel-Sachs system, which is based on Mahillon's scheme, was introduced by the musicologists E. M. von Hornbostel (1877 - 1935) and C. Sachs (1881 - 1959) in the early 20th century, and is nowadays the most widely accepted system of musical instrument classification used. It consists of five categories: aerophones, chordophones, idiophones, membranophones, and electrophones.

Aerophones create sound by the vibration of air. Woodwind and brass instruments are the two main families, as well as some keyboard instruments.

1. Most **woodwinds** use the air and reeds to vibrate. On reed instruments, a stream of air stream has access to the column of air which vibrates due to a thin reed placed at head of the instrument. These instruments are subdivided into double reeds on which a double layer of reed vibrates against itself (e.g., bassoon, oboe), single reeds which vibrate against a plane (e.g., saxophone, clarinet), and free reeds where a reed secured inside vibrates freely (e.g., accordion). In reedless woodwinds (e.g. flute), the air is blown into the edge of a mouthpiece in order to produce sound.
2. **Brass instruments** use the air which passes from the player's lips to make the air column inside vibrate (e.g., trombone, trumpet, tuba | Wade 2009, 42–43).

Chordophones are part of the stringed instrument family, and create sound due to stretched vibrating strings. The resonator picks up that vibration and amplifies it when the strings vibrate. These instruments are subdivided on the basis of construction criteria, mainly the strings' relation to the sound body. The main types are the following:

1. **Lyres** are characterized by a yoke which consists of two arms attached to the resonator and crossbar. The strings diverge vertically from the sound body towards the crossbar. The instrument may either be bowed or plucked.
2. The strings of a **harp** are positioned at a right angle to the resonator, and a line joining the strings' lower ends points towards the neck. They are plucked.
3. The strings of a **lute** are parallel, and run vertically across the sound body and along the instrument's neck. They are bowed or plucked.
4. The **zither**, also known as simple chordophone, consist solely of a string bearer (sound board without neck). The stings are stretched parallelly across the resonator, occupying almost its entire length. They are either plucked or struck.
5. **Composite chordophones** (musical bows) can function with or without a sound body. The strings are attached and stretched over a wooden bow.

a: lyre b: harp c: lute d: zither e: musical bow

Fig. 2: Examples of the five main types of chordophones
(a: Kilmer 1998, 16, fig. 8; b: Kilmer 1998, 17, fig 10a; c: www.metmuseum.org; d: www.vam.ac.uk; e: www.mfa.org).

Chordophones can be subdivided according to playing techniques, such as bowed (e.g., double bass, violin, viola), plucked (e.g., banjo, guitar, harp, mandolin, ukulele), and struck (e.g., piano, dulcimer, clavichord). This is done by a plectrum, a bow or the musician's hand (Wade 2009, 43–44).

Idiophones produce sound by the vibration of solid material such as stone, wood or metal, and belong to the percussion family. They are differentiated according to their playing techniques:

1. **Concussion**: A pair of instruments which is struck together or against each other (e.g., castanets, clappers, cymbals).
2. **Friction**: Instruments which produce sound when rubbed (e.g., musical glasses).
3. **Percussion**: Instruments which create sound by striking or using a striker (e.g., bell, gong, triangle, steel drum, xylophone).
4. **Plucked** (e.g., Jew's harp).
5. **Scraped** (e.g., cog rattle, washboard).
6. **Shaken** (e.g., sistrum, maracas).
7. **Stamping**: Instruments which create sound when stamped on a hard surface (e.g., tap shoes).
8. **Stamped**: Material which creates sound when being stamped on (Wade 2009, 43).

Membranophones belong to the percussion family, and produce sound when stretched skin is made to vibrate. They are made from various materials, including wood, metal or ceramics. They are classified according to their playing techniques (e.g., struck, plucked, friction, singing membranes). Furthermore, they are subdivided by shape:

1. **Kettle or vessel drums** are rounded at the bottom and can be tunable or non-tunable. The membrane is either laced, nailed or glued to the body. They are played by hands or a striker.
2. **Tubular drums** are structured according to their shape into barrel, cylindrical, conical, double conical, goblet, hourglass and shallow instruments. Their playing technique and construction criteria are similar to kettle drums.
3. **Friction drums** produce sound when there is friction on the stretched membrane. They are non-tunable and are played by a cord or stick.
4. Other membranophones are called **frame drums** on which the membrane is stretched over a frame (e.g., tambourines) (Wade 2009, 43).

CHAPTER III

The Ancient Mesopotamian Instrumentarium

This chapter provides an overview of the ancient Mesopotamian instrumentarium in the 4th and 3rd millennium BCE. All known types of instruments are classified according to the Hornbostel-Sachs system and in alphabetical order. It must be pointed out, however, that some of the main categorical distinctions employed in this study are of limited application in order to understand how the ancient early Mesopotamian instrumentarium was perceived by its contemporaries. As outlined above (ch. II. 2. 2.), the generic categories are the result of modern ideas about classification which are grounded in the classical European scheme and theory of genres, and do not reflect the ancient concept of instrument classification. However, the scholar-imposed classification scheme makes it possible to systematically investigate the morphological development, history, value and popularity of the entire spectrum of instrument types.

III. 1. Aerophones

Aerophones are rarely found in the Sumerian instrumental repertoire. However, texts, original finds and pictorial representations attest the existence of reed instruments, flutes, trumpets and horns.

A vessel-shaped flute from Nimrud has been designated as the oldest of Sumerian origin (Hickmann 1951 in Rashid 1984, 46). A contemporary fragment of a wind instrument from Uruk was dated to the late Uruk period (Nissen 1970, 148–149, tab. 37a in Rashid 1984, 46). It was made out of clay and has two holes. Unfortunately, the upper covers of the wind tunnel and the labium are broken off. Another clay flute was discovered in Yarim Tepe (Rashid 1984, 46 | cat. no. 1). The cylindrically shaped instrument has several holes. The lower end is closed and ends in one seat while the top is decorated with a ram's head.

Furthermore, a pair of silver pipes was found in a private grave (PG 333) in the Royal Cemetery of Ur dating ca. 2550–2400 BCE (Lawergren 2000 | cat. no. 62 a–b). Each pipe had deliberately been made unplayable when “buried”, having been bent into three segments of nearly equal lengths and crunched into a compact bundle. According to a reconstruction undertaken by Lawergren (2000, 122–123 | cat. no. 62 b), both pipes are 24 cm long with an outer diameter of 4–5 mm. The finger holes are distinctly cut; one pipe has four finger holes, the other three. Two

parallel lines encircle the instruments near the middle. Each pipe would have had a mouthpiece possessing a single or double vibrating tongue, however, their reconstruction remains hypothetical.

Tubes with finger holes – either flutes or reed instruments – appear only a few times in iconographic sources. A stele fragment from Khafajeh dating to the Early Dynastic IIIa (Mesilim) period (ca. 2700–2550 BCE) shows a male musician holding a tube horizontally to his mouth (cat. no. 39). The instrument widens towards its bottom end, resembling a modern trumpet. Five indentations along the upper edge indicate finger holes. Another image is depicted on a cylinder seal found in PG 1054 in the Royal Cemetery in Ur (cat. no. 45). In the scene, a small monkey-like figure is seated beneath a tree in front of several large animals. He appears to be playing music by means of a diagonally held woodwind instrument (c.f., Rashid 1984, 50). A similar image is provided by an Akkadian cylinder seal which depicts a small seated musician with cocked legs playing in front of a deity (cat. no. 65).

In all these images, the wind or brass instrument is never placed in polyphonic contexts[2]. One exception is possibly provided by a cylinder seal from the Great Death Pit (PG 1237) in Ur which shows a wind instrument being played vertically by a standing musician who is part of a large ensemble performing during a banquet (cat. no. 49).

[2] In an archaeomusicological contexts, polyphony is understood to be an ensemble composed of different instruments sometimes including singing and dancing (Dumbrill 2010, 128, fn. 11).

III. 2. Chordophones

III. 2. 1. Harps

The harp is the oldest form of stringed instruments and had probably evolved out of the archer's bow. Several strings, originally made of gut (Sum. Logogram SA, Akk. *pitnu*), were stretched on a crescent-shaped frame leaving space between them in order to allow the fingers to pluck each one individually. Initially, no more than five strings would have been able to fit on the frame (Dumbrill 2005, 179).

One of the earliest attestations of a harp is depicted on a cylinder seal impression from Choga Mish dating to the late 4th millennium BCE (Uruk III – JN, ca. 3100 BCE | cat. no. 3). The image shows an instrumental ensemble performing during a feast. The large harp with four strings is positioned vertically and stabilized on the ground. The crescent-shaped bow is not evenly rounded but curves where the strings are attached to the body. The frame is wider in the lower half, indicating the sound box, and narrows towards the tip. According to Dumbrill, this constitutes the first step towards a structural specialization. He notes "as the yoke acquired more density in order to resist the increase of tension from the growing number of strings, the sound box expanded to provide with the appropriate amplification" (2005, 195).

The harp had been most popular in the Early Dynastic period and commonly appears on votive plaques and seal impression (cat. no. 5–7; 17; 23–26). The form of the monostructural arched harp stays roughly the same but the number of strings increases up to seven (Stauder 1957, 10). Its size varies from small and portable to large and stabilized on the ground. Furthermore, some images depict instruments with a pedestal (cat. no. 6–7; 48–49). The purpose of the foot was to adjust the instrument at an appropriate height for the player as is the case with the modern cello and bass (Dumbrill 2005, 192–193, pl. 15–18). The pictorial attestations on seal impressions do not hint at any specific link between gender and instrument type. The harp is being played by seated or standing men and women. On the standardized images on votive plaques dating to the Early Dynastic II and the first half of the IIIa period (ca. 2700–2550 BCE), however, a uniform portable, medium-sized, arched harp is exclusively played by standing men (cat. no. 32–35; 37–38). The instrument's frame is seemingly leaning on the upper body or shoulder of the musician. Normally, depictions show a person playing on an instrument positioned vertically and with its bow-side facing the musician. The exception of the rule is attested on a low relief on a vessel fragment found in the earlier temple on mound five in ancient Adab (modern Bismaya) dating

to the Early Dynastic I period (ca. 2800–2700 BCE | cat. no. 27 a–b). The scene presents a cultic procession accompanied by two harpists and other musicians. In contrast to the harps described above, the instruments are not held vertically but horizontally. The sound box is clamped under the musicians' left arm. The string side is turned towards the player who appears to be playing the instrument with plectrum. Furthermore, this image is the first to show hanging tuning tassels which occur later on angular types of Elamite and Assyrian harps. It is possible that these tuning devices were inherited from the lute which is seen as early as the Uruk period (Dumbrill 2005, 199). Due to the peculiar depiction of the stringed instrument, Rashid (1984, 58; cf., Stauder 1957, 17–18) assumed that the vessel had probably been imported from the Indus culture.

Several stringed instruments (nine lyres and two harps) were found in the Royal Cemetery of Ur. The so-called Queen's Harp was recovered in the antechamber of Puabi's tomb, presumably a queen of Ur (cat. no. 53 a–c). The latest reconstruction of the object was undertaken in 1971–1972 on the basis of visual representations on seals and according sketches made during the excavation. The harp (l. 63 cm; h. 108.5 cm; w. 15 cm) has a bow-shaped sound body and a vertical yoke arm attached to one side. 13 strings run vertically from the yoke to the flat top side of the resonator. Golden pegs were used in order to evenly space the strings along the yoke and possibly for their tuning.

Furthermore, the harp is the only musical instrument which also occurs as part of a figurine in the 3rd millennium BCE (cat. no. 44). A pair of male musicians in fringed robes was found in the Ishtar temple in Mari (city II, ca. 2500–2400 BCE). Each one carries a small arched harp with the left hand, while plucking the strings with the right hand.

Only one attestation of a harp is known from the Akkadian period (cat. no. 66). The cylinder seal shows a belligerent god who is accompanied by minor deities. Two female musicians stand before him; while one is striking a pair of clappers, the other woman is playing on a medium arched harp with six strings. The upper part of the wooden frame, onto which the strings are attached, is extremely prolonged, while the lower part is depicted slightly thicker indicating the resonator.

There is no iconographic evidence of the instrument in the Ur III period. In the early 2nd millennium, many terracottae depict seated male musicians playing on harps which are positioned on their knees with a triangular or boat-shaped or sound box placed vertically against the chest (c.f., Collon 2013, 25, fig. 11; Dumbrill 2005, 204–208, pl. 33–40).

III. 2. 2. Lyres

Complex musical instruments appear in the late 4th millennium in the context of increasingly developed social systems (Eichmann 2000, 62). During this period, writing as a sign of a complex economic organization and metallurgy gained in importance. The use of metal provided a new sound potential and at the same time created durable instruments. Metals were mainly used for the production of aerophones and idiophones (see ch. II. 2. 1., and II. 2. 4.), as well as constructive details and artistic applications on other instruments, such as the harps and lyres.

Type A: Large Zoomorphic Lyre

The majority of lyres dating to the 3rd millennium BCE are monumental, standing on the floor and played by a seated musician with both hands. Generally, the strings run over a resonating chamber to the crossbar held by two parallel or diverging yoke arms. The shape of the trapezoid or rectangular sound box often resembles the schematic image of a recumbent or standing bovine with a realistic head attached to its front. In fact, the zoomorphic type is the most common among stringed instruments (Kilmer 1998, 13).

The oldest known representations of the lyre are attested on fragmentary seal impressions from Šuruppak (modern Fara) and date to the transition from the Jemdet Naṣr to Mesilim period (ca. 2900–2500; Rashid 1984, 50, fig. 19–22; c.f., Hartmann 1960, 27, fig. 18–21). In two among five cases, the instruments correspond to the description given above (cat. nos. 18–19), while two images are too fragmentary to judge upon the size (cat. nos. 21–22), and one probably shows the portable zoomorphic type (cat. no. 20; see below). The large zoomorphic lyre is also depicted in several cylinder seals dating to the Early Dynastic period (cat. nos. 8–10), and on a scarlet ware vessel decorated with red and black paint from Khafajeh (ED I/II, ca. 2700 BCE | cat. no. 28).

Due to the discovery of several chordophones in the Royal Graves of Ur the lyre's morphology is well known. All instruments date around 2500 BCE, and it is estimated that the time between the earliest and the latest burial was no more than 100 years (Lawergren 2010, 83). The outstanding craftsmanship of these instruments suggests that they have succeed a long development phase (Rashid 1984, 30). The lyres range in size from small examples which would have been hand-held to large standing ones. Since they were mainly made of wood, they only left their mark when the wooden parts had been covered with stone mosaics, inlays, gold or

silver plates. Due on such remains, five of a total of nine lyres could be reconstructed (c.f., cat. 56–60). Three of the most beautiful specimens were found in the Great Death Pit, PG 1237 (Woolley 1934, 252–256). These instruments are known as the so-called Golden Lyre, the Silver Lyre and the Boat-shaped Lyre. According to Stauder (1970, 181; cf., Hartmann 1960, 33), the reconstruction of the latter is faulty and consists of two different instruments, a lyre and a harp (cat. no. 56). Therefore, it will not be discussed any further.

The largest and best-preserved instrument is the "Golden Lyre" (h. 120 cm; crossbar l. 140 cm; sound box l. 65 cm, h. 33 cm, w. 8 cm. Rashid 1984, 30 | cat. no. 54). By means of a cloth moistened with liquid wax, the individual parts of each side could be recovered during the excavation (Woolley 1934, 252–253). The instrument is named after a bull's head covered in plates of gold and a beard made out of lapis lazuli. The front side below the head is decorated with an inlay panel of shells and bitumen showing four superimposed animal scenes. Along the edge of the trapezoidal sound box runs a mosaic border of different stones. The back half of the resonator's upper side has an elliptical cavity which is either a technical characteristic of the instrument, or imitates the rounding of a bull's back (Rashid 1984, 30). The yoke arms are decorated with stone mosaics and gold plates. The front half of the crossbar is covered in a silver tube. The strings are fastened to the bare wood in the back half. They presumably ran over a ridge on the left side wall of the resonator below the elliptical cavity to the bottom of the box. At this point, the mosaic border is interrupted by seven red and eight white vertical lines above a horizontal recess. Through this opening the strings are led into the interior of the sound body. The vertical lines gave L. Woolley (1934, 253) reason to believe that it must have been an eighth-stringed instrument.

The "Silver Lyre" (l. 69 cm; h. 97.5 cm; w. 5.5 cm; crossbar l. 103 cm) owes its name to a silver bull's head and thin silver plates originally covering the entire sound body (cat. no. 55). The instrument was also decorated with inlays of shell, red limestone and lapis lazuli. The panel on the front of the lyre depicts several animal scenes. The sound body is trapezoidal and has an elliptical indentation in the back half of its upper side. Eleven silver-coated wooden tuning rods are attached to the back half of the crossbar. From these, the strings presumably converged over a bridge on the left side wall of the sound body. Woolley (1934, 254) assumed that the strings were fixed to the bottom of the box.

Furthermore, a lyre is depicted on an inlay panel at the front of a lyre found in PG 789 of the Royal Cemetery (cat. no. 59). It is part of the so-called Animal Chapel: an equid plays a lyre

shaped like a recumbent bull. Eight strings are attached to tuning pegs at regular intervals to the entire crossbar. From there, the strings diverge downwards over a bridge on the side of the resonance body and end just above the center of the box. Apparently, they are led into the interior by a horizontal opening (Hartmann 1960, 29; Rashid 1984, 44).

The large zoomorphic lyre is also depicted on a cylinder seal made of bitumen covered with a thin golden plate which was found in PG 1054 in the Royal Cemetery (cat. no. 46 a–b). It shows a banquet entertained by a musical ensemble. A seated musician plays on a large lyre. The sound box has the shape of a standing bull, rendered with a certain anatomical reality, such as the slope of its neck and back, and the curve of the belly. The instrument has five strings, which run divergently up to the top crossbar onto which they are attached by five tuning pegs. The lyre's sound is accompanied by the rhythmic sound of two pairs of clappers, and a person clapping hands. Even on the tiny depictions, the artists perceived it as important to render the instruments in close resembles to the instrument finds.

A unique representation of a lyre is attested from Nippur and dating to the Ur III period (cat. no. 87). It represents the only known example of a terracotta model in the form of an instrument from the 3rd millennium BCE (Rashid 1984, 66). The body is shaped like a standing bull. On its side are seven vertical scratches which could represent the strings. From the shoulders and hindquarters of the bull emerge two yoke arms. They are connected above by a crossbar which is decorated with eleven oblique lines indicating tuning rods.

Type B: Portable zoomorphic lyre

The portable version of the zoomorphic lyre initially occurs on an Early Dynastic I (-II) cylinder seal impression from Šuruppak (cat. no. 20). A standing musician is holding the instrument with both hands in front of the upper body. The animal's legs at the bottom side of the square sound box might serve as stands. The diverging yoke arms and three strings are connected by a horizontal crossbar.

The so-called piece side of the mosaic standard of Ur (PG 779) features a similar representation of the lyre (cat. no. 61 a–c). In the right corner of the upper register a male musician is carrying a portable zoomorphic instrument with a trapezoidal sound body. The animal's feet are reduced to short stumps. Two diverging joke arms at the front and back are joined by the crossbar which is parallel to the resonator. Eleven strings are attached by six round thickenings and ten tuning rods to the bar's back half. They converged over a central horizontal bridge on the right side wall

of the sound body into its interior. This would require a ridge above the opening. A triangle on the front of the resonator may provide an aperture for sound enhancement. In this case, it would be the oldest depiction of a sound hole (Rashid 1984, 44). Furthermore, the image indicates that the musician was carrying the instrument with a decorated strap around his shoulders and the anterior part of the sound body (Hartmann 1960, 29–30; Rashid 1984, 44). A similar depiction is attested in the form of an Early Dynastic IIIa shell inlay fragment found in the Ninni-zaza temple in Mari (cat. no. 42).

The portable zoomorphic instrument is also part of a large musical ensemble entertaining a symposium which is depicted on a cylinder seal from the Great Death Pit (PG 1237 | cat. no. 47). The instrument is being played by a woman and rests upon the heads of two diminutive figures. Their bodies appear to be in wild movement indicating that they are dancing (e.g., Collon 1987, 152–153, fig. 668; Rashid 1984, 50, fig. 24).

The instrument is only depicted once on a votive plaque which was found in the Inanna Temple in Nippur dating to the Early Dynastic IIIa (Mesilim) period (ca. 2700-2550 BCE | cat. no. 36). A female musician is playing the instrument during a banquet. She is holding it in front of her upper body and is playing it with the right hand. The resonator in the shape of a stylized bull has an indentation located at its upper edge. In contrast to the representations on seal impressions, the instrument is elongated and square. The eight strings extend parallel to the vertical yoke arms and occupy the entire space between them. On the crossbar, beaded thickenings and tuning rods can be seen.

Furthermore, the zoomorphic lyre is attested on one Akkadian cylinder seal (cat. no. 67). The scene shows a symposium accompanied by music. The male musician is seated opposite a male banqueter and is resting the medium-sized instrument on his lap. The sound body has the shape of a recumbent bull. The anterior yoke arm is longer than the posterior one causing the crossbar to slope to the front. The number of strings cannot be determined.

Type C: Large double-bull lyre

There are only very few depictions showing a double-bull lyre. The earliest can be seen on a triangular lump of clay found in the Inanna temple in Nippur (Level XI, room IT 391) which has been dated to the Early Dynastic I period (2900-2750 BCE. Zettler 2011 | cat. no. 16 a–b). The banquet scene is divided into two registers, however without a clear boarder between them. The upper half shows a musical performance, including a large lyre in the form of a recumbent bull

and a large standing bull positioned on the back of the zoomorphic sound box. A kneeling woman to the right plays the instrument from behind.

This type of lyre reoccurs after a long time period on one stele fragment found in Telloh (ancient Girsu) dating to the reign of Gudea (ca. 2100–2000 BCE | cat. no. 74 a–b). The so-called Stele of Music shows a seated musician playing on a large standing lyre in its lower register. The square sound box has a rounded rear and a flat angled front decorated with a bull's head. The back half of the resonator's top has a diagonal indentation at the point where the strings are aligned, while the raised flat front provides a base for a (second) freely striding bull with decorative function. The back-joke arm is anchored to the sound body, and the front one to the bull figure's back. The instrument has eleven strings which are attached to tuning pegs at the back half of the crossbar. From there, they converge downwards over a bridge on the side wall of the resonance body and end just below. This seems to indicate that the strings are passed through a horizontal gap into the inside of the box.

Similar representations are depicted on two stamp seals from Failaka (Dilmun) dating to the last century of the 3rd millennium BCE (cat. nos. 84–85). In both cases, the lyre consists of a zoomorphic sound box in the form of a standing horned animal, which is surmounted by a second, slightly smaller, standing animal. The back-yoke arm is anchored to the lower sound box, while the front one is attached to the back of the upper animal. The depictions differ from each other in the following way: in one case, four vertical strings run parallel from the crossbar to the back of the upper animal (cat. no. 85). In the other case, three strings converge downwards to the back of the lower animal, while the smaller upper one is a decorative strut supporting the front upright (cat. no. 84).

Type D: Lyre without zoomorphic rendering

Lyres without any zoomorphic rendering initially occur in the Early Dynastic period on several cylinder seal impressions showing diverse banquet scenes (cat. nos. 11–15). In most cases, the small to medium-sized instrument is positioned on the musician's lap who is seated opposite another seated person drinking though a tube from a large vessel on a table. The instrument's shape is often asymmetric. In general, the images appear to be of lesser quality; the arraignment of figures is confusing, misshaped and unstructured.

An exceptional attestation, however, is provided on TH 97–35, a cylinder seal impression found in Mari (e.g., Beyer 2007, 237–240; Collon 2013, 18–19; Marcetteau 2010, 67–73 | cat. no. 41).

The scene shows a banquet entertained by a large instrumental ensemble. It is set in three registers, an atypical and rare setting at all periods (Marcetteau 2010, 67 and fn. 6). In the middle register, a female musician is playing on a portable lyre with a trapezoid sound body without any zoomorphic features.

Images providing information about the morphology of this type of lyre are attested from the Akkadian period onwards. The depiction on a cylinder seal shows a symposium scene attended by a lyricist is seated opposite a male banqueter (cat. no. 69). The hair is tied in a long knot at the back of the head which indicates that the musician is probably female. The medium-sized instrument is positioned on her lap. It has a trapezoid sound body with rounded edges. Two arms extend divergently from its upper side, curving outwards and bending inwards below the connecting crossbar which slightly tilts forward. Four strings are attached to it by pegs. They run parallel towards the top side of the resonator. The shape of the lyre differs greatly from the appearance of earlier periods, and can be considered an innovation of the Akkadian period (Rashid 1984, 64, fig. 43).

This roundish lyre form is comparable to several fragmentary terracotta figures from Tell el-Der dating to the transition from the Ur III to Old Babylonian period (cat. nos. 88–89). They represent a musician holding a lyre horizontally. The sound body of the small instrument is flat and trapezoid. Two rounded yoke arms are connected by a crossbar.

III. 2. 3. Lutes

The following description of the modern long lute certainly also applies to the ancient instrument:

> "Long lutes wary more in size, shape, name and function than any other type of instrument. [...] In form long lutes may still have the small bodies and long thin necks which pierce the sound-box of the ancient ones. They may be unfretted, but more commonly have frets which may be fixed or movable, and are sometimes raise; the neck may be narrow or wide; the resonator may be round or oval, flat or deep or bulbous; the soundboard may be wood or skin; the strings, which vary widely in number, may be fixed with a leather thong or, more frequently, with either rear or side pegs. Some are tiny, while others have necks as long as the player's arm, and he may use his fingers

> or a plectrum to pluck or strike either gut or wire strings. This enormous diversity of for is rivalled by that of the names of the instrument." (Jenkins and Olsen 1976, 22)

During the Akkadian period, often associated with a belligerent attitude, several innovations and developments in instrument types arose nevertheless. Among them, the lute is probably the most important. The earliest attestation of the instrument, however, is attested on a cylinder seal dating to the Uruk period (ca. 3100 BCE | cat. no. 4 a–b). The instrument has a small round sound body and a long neck. A seated musician is holding the instrument diagonally in front of the upper body. The musician's left hand is active on the finger-board whilst the right plucks the strings. It is unknown if the person was using any type of plectrum. According to Dumbrill (2005, 321), this technique is typical for the later Akkadian period. On the cylinder seal of "Ur-Ur, the singer" (cat. no. 71) and another Akkadian seal (cat. no. 72), a musician is depicted playing on a lute in a similar manner. Dumbrill notes (2005, 321) that it is impossible to determine the tuning system (e.g., pegs) or the number of strings. The lapicide does not show any frets or any other details of organological importance. Regarding the materials used for the making of an instrument, it is reasonable to assume that naturally shaped resources would have been used. The round sound box could have been made from one half of a dried calabash or a tortoise shell (Dumbrill 2005, 325–326), of wood or gourds. The soundboard probably consisted of animal skin, the strings would have been made from gut, and knotting cords with decorative tassels were probably of flax (for more information in the manufacture, stringing and tuning of the ancient lute, see Collon and Kilmer 1980, 17–19).

There is no indication which supports the assumption that the lute had been introduced to Mesopotamia by highland foreigners (Stauder 1961, 15). This view was based on the fact that many depictions dating the early 2nd millennium show the instrument in the hands of the so-called bow-legged dwarfs. They are mostly naked or merely dressed in a loincloth, and were probably aiming for humorous entertainment. The vast number of representation – over seventy were found in Susa (Spycket 1972, 191) – illustrate the popularity of the versatile lute. The evidence of the Akkadian cylinder seals might tentatively be interpreted as an indication that the instrument was invented by temple musicians and therefore had a certain prestige. By the 2nd millennium, however, the instrument appears to have gained a status comparable to the present-day guitar (Collon and Kilmer 1980, 14; c.f., Krispijn 2011). Lutenists were arguably segregated from the upper classes of the Mesopotamian. The instrument was more akin to the pastoral than to the court (Dumbrill 2005, 326). Probably also due to its portable nature, it had

been favored by shepherds. The terracotta plaques of the early 2nd millennium BCE depict what were probably itinerant musicians who moved from one festival to another, often accompanied by monkeys, some of which are seen playing the flute (Collon 2013, 21–22, fig. 6–7).

III. 3. Membranophones

III. 3. 1. Large cylindrical frame drums

Iconographic evidence for large cylindrical drums dating to the 3rd millennium BCE occurs in the Mesopotamian heartland and along its periphery. Since the instruments where most likely mainly made of organic material (e.g., leather, gut, wood), no remains outlasted from ancient Mesopotamia.

The earliest evidence of a large frame drum might be depicted on a recently published stele fragment, apparently found close to Ur, which probably dates to the Jemdet Naṣr period (Gailani-Werr 2013, 393 according to Otto 2017, personal comment | cat. no. 2). A standing man is shown next to a large round object with two handles on its horizontal axes, and is arguably beating the instrument with the flat of his hands. He is accompanied by a musician with clappers and possibly a singer seated on the ground to the left of the drum.

Similar images can be seen on an Early Dynastic II (ca. 2700 BCE) Scarlet-Ware vase from Khafajeh (cat. no. 28 a–b), and on a cylinder seal found in Ur and dating to the Early Dynastic IIIb period (cat. no. 52). Both show two figures standing on each side of a large round object. In the case of the latter, the men seem to be beating the drum alternately (Amiet 1980, 208; Rashid 1971, 101–102; 1984, 50; Schmidt-Colinet 1981, 17; contr. Mirelman 2014, 150 fn. 5, who believes it to represent a round bundle of agricultural produce). Furthermore, the instrument is rendered in the same way as the drum on the so-called Bedreh Stele dating to around 2700–2500 BCE (cat. no. 40 a–b).

According to Stauder (1970, 185), the giant drums represented on the Gudea (cat. nos. 75–78) and Ur-Namma Stelae (cat. no. 83 a + c) are double-membraned since the musicians are depicted with one hand behind the instrument while the other one is raised. The vase fragment from Telloh (cat. no. 82) supports Stauder's assumption as it clearly shows an alternating beating of the instrument with both hands by two musicians. Depictions dating to the late 3rd millennium BCE show ridges along the drum's circumference which fixed the membrane in position. According to Schmidt-Colinet (1981, 16; followed by Mirelman, 2014, 151–152), these might have made a jangling noise.

III. 3. 2. Small frame drums

Small frame drums, similar to the modern tambour, are rarely attested in visual sources of the 3rd millennium BCE. One image is found on the vessel fragment from Adab dating which has been discussed earlier (see ch. II. 2. 2. 1. Harps | cat. no. 27 a–b). Among the procession of musicians, one carries a drum under the left arm and is beating the membrane with the flat of his right hand. Another image on a painted vessel from Tell Agrab (cat. no. 73) shows a row of schematically depicted, standing musicians (naked females?) playing on small frame drums. They are holding the instruments in the raised right hand in front of their heads.

The instrument reoccurs on many terracotta plaques dating to the early 2nd millennium BCE which often depict heavy-weight naked women playing the tambour against their chests (c.f., Dumbrill 2005, 373 – 382, pl. 20a, 21–74). According to Collon (2013, 21), the rendering hints at an explicitly sexual performance.

III. 4. Idiophones

III. 4. 1. Clappers

A clapper is a basic form of a percussion instrument. It consists of two long solid pieces that are clapped together to produce sound. Clappers can take a number of shapes and be made of a wide variety of material (e.g., wood, metal, ivory). The instrument occurs frequently on works of small art such as seal impression and inlay works, and always in the company of other instruments. It is almost exclusively attested in the Early Dynastic period. Several depictions on seal impressions from Ur (cat. nos. 42; 49; 51) and one from Mari (cat. no. 41), for instance, show clappers accompanying the sound of string and other percussion instruments.

The earliest attestations are depicted on a cylindrical seal impression from Choga-Mish (cat. no. 3) and possibly on the stele fragment found close to Ur (cat. no. 2) both dating to the late 4th millennium BCE. Alongside other musicians, a seated figure is holding a pair of crescentic objects identifiable as clappers above his/her head. This way of playing the instrument is unparalleled. Normally, clappers are held in front of the upper body, as seen on a shell inlay fragment found in room 61 in palace A in Kish (ED II–IIIa, ca. 2650–2550 BCE | cat. no. 30). It shows the upper body of a female musician holding a pair of flat crescentic clappers with one pointy end each. One tip is pointing upwards, while the other one is directed downwards.

That clappers are not restricted to small works of art is evident on the Bedreh Stele (ED IIIa [Ur I], ca. 2550 BCE | cat. no. 40 a–b). A person is depicted playing a pair of clappers in the background behind the drummer.

Remains of clappers were found in ten graves of cemetery A at Kish (Early Dynastic I/II, ca. 2700 BCE. Rashid 1984, 48 | cat. no. 29). The thin copper strips occurred in pairs in all cases except one (Mackay 1929, 160–162, pl. 39, no. 6 and 61, fig. 2–4, 10–11). Most of them are slightly curved at one end, while the other end is straight and thinner, evidently embodying the handle which had been covered in a wood (Rashid 1984, 48, fig. 15). Similar pairs of instruments were found in the Royal Cemetery of Ur in PG 1332 next to the remains of a lyre. They consisted of flat copper plates of ca. 30 cm length and 4 cm width. One end was cut off squarely, the other was bulbous and had a nail driven through the metal atop it (Wooley 1934, 126–128).

The youngest attestation of clappers is provided by a cylinder seal dating to the Akkadian period (cat. no. 66). The depiction shows a belligerent god, equipped with bow and quiver who is accompanied by two minor deities. Two female musicians stand before him; one is playing on a

medium arched harp, while the other one is accompanying the melody with the rhythmic sound of clappers.

Clappers are normally played in pairs by a single musician. The only exception is depicted on a sealing found in Mari (TH 97–35 | cat. no. 41). In the lower register, the scene shows two female figures facing one another, each one holding on clave and seeming playing them together. In the middle register, a seated individual appears to be paring up with a person standing behind her. Her upper body is turned to the left, while she is actually seated opposite another figure to her right. This rendering is unparalleled in all periods.

III. 4. 2. Cymbals

Several pairs of cymbals, commonly made out of metal, were found in the Royal Cemetery of Ur (cat. no. 64). The instrument is only attested three times in iconographic sources. On two stele fragments belonging to the Ur-Namma Stele (cat. no. 83 a–b), a male musician is holding a pair of overlapping round objects in height of his head. In both cases, the instruments accompany the sound of a large cylindrical frame drum. A similar attestation is depicted on a stele fragment from Telloh (ancient Girsu) dating to the reign of Gudea (cat. no. 75). Only the instrument remains, the musician is not preserved.

III. 4. 3. Sistrum

The sistrum is an idiophone made out of brass or bronze. It consists of a handle and a U-shaped frame. When shaken, small loops or rings of thin metal on its movable crossbars produce a sound ranging from a soft clank to a loud jangling. In contrast to ancient Egypt, where the sistrum is had been very common and is known form iconographic, textual, and archaeological sources (e.g., Hickmann 1961), the instrument is rarely attested in Mesopotamia. There are no archaeological finds, and only few iconographic representations.

The earliest known depiction of a sistrum is known from the so-called Animal Chapel belonging to an inlay panel attached to the front of a lyre from the Royal Cemetery in Ur (PG 789 | cat. no. 59 b). A seated jackal-like animal holds the instrument in its right hand which possibly consists of several flat boards struck together when rattled. A flat percussion instrument (a drum or

soundboard?) is positioned on the animal's cocked legs. The music is accompanied by the sound of a zoomorphic lyre played by an equid.

A similar scene is found on an Akkadian cylinder seal impression (cat. no. 68). Two musicians are seated in front of a deity. The first man plays on a large lyre without zoomorphic rendering, while the second one holds a sistrum in the left hand and touches a flat percussion instrument positioned on his lap with the right.

Furthermore, the instrument is possibly depicted on an abstract cylinder seal impression found in Susa dating to the first half of the 3rd millennium (cat. no. 8) which also features a large zoomorphic lyre.

III. 4. 4. Rattles

Rattles made of clay are initially attested during the Akkadian period. The oldest example known, was found in Nippur (level XI) (Rashid 1984, 64). There is no convenient evidence for the instruments in iconographic sources.

III. 4. 5. Singing gestures, hand clapping and dancing

Several pictorial representations attest singers accompanying instrumental performances. Among the musicians depicted on the cylinder seal impression from Choga Mish, the person seated at the left side is having his hands raised to his mouth (cat. no. 3). This gesture has been interpreted as singing (e.g., Collon 2010, 47). The same representation can be seen on a stele fragment apparently found close to Ur (cat. no. 2).

Furthermore, there are a number of images showing men and women who are seemingly clapping their hands. This gesture is depicted on a shell inlay panel, originally attached to the frontal side of a lyre found in PG 1332, which shows two men clapping their hands in the lower of two registers (cat. no. 60). It is also attested on two cylinder seals from the Royal Cemetery showing banquets entertained by large musical ensembles. In one case, a woman clapping her hands is depicted between two other female musicians playing clappers, accompanied by a male lyrist (cat. no. 46). The other image shows three women clapping their hands in an instrumental ensemble composed of a lyre, a wind instrument and a sistrum (cat. no 47). The lyre is stabilized

on the heads of two diminutive figures whose bodies appear to be in wild movement indicating that they are dancing. These men resemble the "bow-legged dwarf" appearing on seals and terracottae in the early 2nd millennium BCE (c.f., Dumbrill 2005, 332–336, pl. 28–30, 32–35, 37). A similar figure, a diminutive naked man, seems to be dancing on top of the large drum depicted on the Bedreh Stele (cat. no. 40 a–b). The vessel fragment from Telloh also shows a small figure standing on top of the instrument, however motionless, with hands folded in front of the chest, and possibly singing prayers (cat. no. 82). On two of Gudea's stele fragments, one (or two) females clapping their hands can be seen (cat. nos. 80–81).

CHAPTER IV

Terminology of Ancient Mesopotamian Musical Instruments

Research on musical instruments is generally directed towards the accurate assignment of Sumerian names to instruments depicted or excavated (e.g., Krispijn 2010). However, a precise identification has often remained unclear. Written information on shape, sound and material are rare and vague. Furthermore, the number of attested names surmounts the number of instrument types. One reason leading to diverse modern interpretations is inherent in the ancient system of music terminology. For instance, one musical term could have several meanings, referring to a musical instrument, a type of song or a musician (e.g., **balaĝ**). Furthermore, morphological differences which nowadays distinguish between instrument types (e.g., harp vs. lyre) may have been less significant than, for example, performative functions. Another methodological problem lies in the fact that the meaning of instrument names and musical terms are subject to constant change (Shehata 2014, 102). The following chapter provides an overview of terms for musical instruments documented in literary texts of the 3rd millennium BCE.

IV. 1. The gala and nar musician

With the increasing social division and specialization of labor, the professional musician is attested in textual sources of the 3rd millennium BCE, initially in the Fara period (2600 BCE. Gadotti 2010, 52; 55). Two main types of musicians of different positions and functions existed side by side, the **gala** (Akk. *kalû*) and the **nar** (Akk. *nâru*).

The **gala**, known as the lamentation priest, had been a performer of prayers in Emesal form of Sumerian from the 3rd to the end of the 1st millennium BCE. These prayers played an important role in the ancient Mesopotamian religion. The song genres of the Emesal prayers were closely associated with their musical accompaniment which is evident in the genre names of Balaĝ and Eršema (Gabbay 2008, 24). The **gala**'s instrumental repertoire consisted mainly of the **balaĝ**, **lilis**, **meze**, **šem**, and **ub** (Gabbay 2008, 24; 2014). These instruments are listed together in a passage from a Balaĝ prayer describing the musical performance of the **gala** (Cohen 1988, 37–41, no. 420a).

According to Hartmann (1960, 131; 150), the task of the **gala** was primarily the execution of dirges in the course of the funerary festivities, as well as lamentations in temples which were intended to appease the wrath of the gods. This relates to a unique Balaĝ composition (Kramer 1981) which recounts that the gala was specifically created by Enki in order to smooth Inanna's angry heart and to participate in cultic laments (for the goddess). Franklin (2015, 29–30) further notes that institutionalized lamentations were performed periodically as well as on special occasions. The latter could be either prophylactic or corrective, and even be composed for a fortunate event such as a victory in war. Laments which were conducted regularly according to the cultic calendar were performed in front of the god's statue or within a temple area. Moreover, they were carried out during dangerous transitions such as eclipses and the construction or renovation of temples, cult objects and statues. In these events, for instance, a deity (in form of his/her statue) was moved from its old living space into a new one. During the transition, the so-called "twilight-zone", priests were supposed to be prevented potential danger (Shehata 2009, 250–251). Parades halted at cultic shrines of deities or at various gates and border transitions, at which the defense evil powers and enemies was particularly important. A song section could also be accompanied by the offering of gifts (Cohen 1988, 26).

Among terms designating musicians, the word **nar** is the most widely varied[3]. It is especially used in literary texts which provide a rather broad picture of the occupations and range of actions of the nar. It is seemingly a general term given to musicians with various vocal and instrumental skills. The **nar** performed in various occasions and places: in temples (e.g., GC B 10.9–14; Nanše A 39–44), in palaces (e.g., DI C 27–28;) and during banquets there (e.g., Š A 79–83; IdD A 206–209), outdoors (e.g., GSt L 4.3–7, at a river; EN 62–67; Kth 116–119), during processions (e.g., GC B 15.18–21), journeys by boat (e.g., Š D 368–370), or in different places outside the city. He is clearly connected to the king and the royal court (Gadotti 2010, 52–55; c.f., Pruzsinszky 2007, 329–352). According to the literary composition *Enlil and Ninmah*, the blind (?) man, "the one whom the light surrounds [...] was established as the chief[-musician] [**nam-nar**] at the place of honor before the king" (l. 62–65, in Gadotti 2010, 53). The connection between the **nar** and ruler had apparently been so strong that Mesopotamian scribes provided an ontological reason for it, and conceptualized the destiny of the **nar** to be of service to the king

[3] For the status and organization of **nar** in general, including the elite offices of "chief singers" (**nar-gal**, a substantially administrative position) and "singer before the king" (**nar lugal**, associated esp. with the Ur III period), see Pruzsinszky 2010; 2013.

(Gadotti 2009, 55). This image is supported by royal hymns which were recited by the **nar** in order to glorify the ruler (esp., Š B 308–313; Š E 20; 252–257; c.f., ch. V. 8. 1.).
Songs performed by the **nar** are normally designated with the general terms **en$_3$-du** or **šir$_3$** which include the praise to deities (e.g., IAS) and royal hymns. He is rarely exhibited as an instrumentalist. In a few documents, however, a versatile set of instruments is assigned to him. In *Gudea Cylinder* B (10, 9–14) and in the *Keš temple hymn* (118–119), the **nar** plays the **ala**, **alĝar**, **miritum** and **tigi** during sacred festivals and to the deities' delight. Furthermore, the **nar** and **nar-gal** were able to play on the stringed instrument **zamin** as well as the wind instrument **adara** (**a$_2$ taraḫ**), the so-called ibex horn, used to accompany sacrifices (Nanše A, 38–46).

Only three iconographic attestations exist which provide the name of the depicted musician. Inscriptions on two statues found in the temple of Nini-Zaza in Mari designate the person as "Ur-Nanshe, the great singer before Nini-Zaza" (cat. no. 43). He is effeminate and beardless, with long-dark hair hanging down his back. He is dressed in a fleece skirt, and is depicted sitting cross-legged on a straw cushion, apparently holding a harp judging from the position of his arms and remains of attachments (Collon 2013, 23, fig. 9 a–b; Parrot 1967, 89–93, no. 68, pl. XLV-XLVI). The other known musician is "Ur.ur the (male) singer" (LÚ.NAR), according to an inscription on an Akkadian cylinder seal, showing a man playing a long necked lute (e.g., Collon 1995, 226, pl. 194a; Rimmer 1969, 22–23, 45, 94, Pl. IV c | cat. no. 71).

IV. 2. Adab

The **adab** (**a-da-ab**; **a-dab$_6$**) can be identified as a percussion instrument, possibly clappers, according to the translation "standing beside or on top of each other" (Krispijn 2010, 144; contr. Rubio 2009, 23: identification as a kind of drum). It belongs to the repertoire of the **nar** (Gabbay 2008, 25), and is neither written with a determinative indicating the material nor is it ever considered as holy or divine (**kug**). From the 2nd millennium BCE onwards, Adab exclusively indicates a type of song (e.g., Kilmer 1995–1997, 470; Krecher 1966, 28; Krispijn 1990, 3–4; 2008, 144; Wilcke 1975, 254; 262; 266–73;). Adab songs are normally devoted to praise a single god and to hymnic prayers on behalf of rulers (e.g., Š G; Shehata 2009, 252; c.f., Krispijn 1990, 3; Wilcke 1975, 262;).

IV. 3. Ala

The **ala** (**a$_6$-la$_6$**; **á-lá**; Akk. *alû*), an instrument "fastened to/suspended from the arm" (Krispijn 2010, 144) has recently been identified as large, double-membraned, cylindrical, struck drum (Mirleman 2014) as seen on the Gudea and Ur-Namma Stelae, and on a vase fragment from Telloh (see ch. II. 2. 3. | cat. nos. 75–78, 82, 83 a+c). The giant drum has already been identified as **ala** by Galpin (1937, 6–7), mainly based on the descriptions of the instrument's sound as impressive and comparable to storms and thunder (e.g., GC B, 18.22–19.1; followed by Gabbay 2007, 59; Hartmann 1960, 79–82; Marcuse 1975, 131; Picken 1975, 103; Sachs 1940, 74; Shehata 2006, 369; Spycket 1972, 179–180; Ziegler 2007, 74). It is frequently written with the determinative **kuš** (skin), sometimes with **giš** (wood) or **uruda** (copper) (Mirelman 2014, 150). The skin presumably refers to the membrane and the wood to the frame of the drum. Textual evidence dating to the Ur III period states that two hides of oxen skin were needed for the construction of a giant drum, one for each side of the body (e.g., Hackmann 1937, 130: 1–3 in Mirelman 2014, 152–153). The use of oxen hints at the huge size of the instrument since a durable membrane needed to be made out of a single piece. The membrane can be secured to the frame in various ways (e.g., it can be glued, laced, wedged, and/or fastened with a hoop or nails/pegs). Written sources indicate that in the construction process, the skin had been stretched over the body and fastened by wool before nails or pegs were driven into the frame's circumference (Mirelman 2014, 153–154). As an alternative to wool, tendon/gut/sinew (Sum. SA) is mentioned as material which could have been applied as snares suspended on the back of the membrane to create a rattling effect (Mirelman 2014, 155). Additionally, administrative texts from Ur dating to the early 2nd millennium BCE provide information concerning oil ratios dedicated to **ala** instruments in temples. These offerings possibly present necessary utensils to treat the membrane in order to keep it from drying out (e.g., Martin 1953, 787 in Shehata 2014, 109, incl. fn. 33–35; similar evidence is attested in OB documents from Mari. C.f., Shehata 2014, 109, incl. fn. 36). Furthermore, the **ala** is often described as holy (**kug**), underlining its religious importance. The context in which the instrument had been performed is almost exclusively cultic. Its high status is evident in *Inana and Enki* which mentions the **ala** in an extensive list of **me** (properties/powers) which Inana took from Enki alongside (**tigi**), **lilis**, **ub** and **meze** (/**tigi**\ **kug li-li-is$_3$ kug ub$_3$ me-ze$_2$ ^{kuš}a$_2$-la$_2$ ba-<e-de$_6$>**; IE 99). Besides **balaĝ** and **lilis**, the **ala** is the only instrument mentioned in Old Babylonian year names, and it was dedicated to gods and set

up in temples. While the former instruments are associated with the repertoire of the **gala**, the **ala** only appears to accompany the **nar** musician (e.g., Kth 118).

The instrument appears remarkably often in the company of **šem** and **tigi** in literary texts. The **tigi-šem-ala** can thus be identified as a standard instrumental ensemble in Mesopotamian temples played during festive occasions and associated with joy and wellbeing (see ch. III. 11.).

In a passage from the *Temple Hymns*, **šem** and **ala** are performed in a place called **unu$_2$**. Even though the translation is debated, Mirelman (2014, 163) interprets it as "holy place of food offering". It refers to an area where gods dine on a mythological level, or receive food offering on the mundane, both accompanied by music:

> **e$_2$ ^{d}suen igi-zu-še$_3$ nun a-ga-zu-še$_3$ barag**
> **ĝišbun-zu a-da-ab unu$_2$ gal-zu kug šem$_5$ ^{kuš}a$_2$-la$_2$**
> "O house of Suen, at your front a prince, at your back a ruler, your dining hall with adab songs, your great, holy banqueting hall [holy place of food offering] with šem and ala drums!"
> (TH 106–107)

IV. 4. Alĝar

The **alĝar** (**al.ĝar**), an instrument "placed down", is listed in Ur III to early Old Babylonian administrative texts from Isin among stringed musical instruments (Krispijn 2010, 144). An identification as chordophone is also supported by its playing technique **aga.šu.si** "fingering" (e.g., Š B 164; Krispijn 1990, 10–11). It is frequently written with the determinative **ĝiš** (wood), and rarely described as holy (**kug**) (e.g., EN 66). Several literary texts mention the **alĝar** as an instrument of the temple (e.g., GC B 10.11; ID 207; EN 62, 66).

IV. 5. Balaĝ

The Sumerian pictograph **balaĝ** is initially attested in the Archaic period (Dumbrill 2005, 224) and thus among the earliest musical instruments depicted in writing. Its characteristic shape had been purposely designed to pictorialize a stringed instrument standing upright, indicating two strings from the square resonator to a horizontal bridge. The identification of the **balaĝ** as a lyre (e.g., Gabbay 2014) or a harp (e.g., Krispijn 2008, 144) remains debated, however, the presence of the bridge dissociates the **balaĝ** from the harp family in favor of that of the lyre

(Dumbrill 2005, 224–225). Meanwhile, it is unwise to project modern organological distinctions onto ancient perceptions; the morphological difference between lyre and harp, for instance, may have been less significant than its performative function, religious importance, etcetera. Consequently, an identification of the **balaĝ** does not stand or fall with one or another. Nevertheless, the correct identification of the term **balaĝ** has been subject of much scholarly dispute. While some insist on a stringed instrument (e.g., Krispijn 1990, 6–7; 2002, 468), others argue in favor of a drum (e.g., Mirelman 2014; Shehata 2009, esp. 72–74). It has also been suggested that the term had been used as a general word for musical instruments (Hartmann 1960, 57). Another opinion states that originally the **balaĝ** was a stringed instrument whose sound box could have been used as a drumable resonator, and thus its name eventually became associated with a percussion instrument (Kilmer 1995–1997, 465).

Gabbay (2014) has recently shed light on the matter by providing evidence that the term **balaĝ** originally designated a stringed instrument, and began to include a drum in the early 2nd millennium BCE due to its cultic environment: The **balaĝ** stringed instrument was the main instrument to accompany a certain genre of Sumerian prayers. The association between the instrument and the genre was so close that these prayers were named after the instrument (Balaĝ). However, in the beginning of the 2nd millennium, other instruments, especially the kettledrum **lilis** (see ch. III. 7.), began to replace the chordophone as the most important instrument. Gabbay assumes that with a change from stringed instrument to kettledrum in cultic performances of Balaĝ prayers, the meaning of the word **balaĝ** changed as well (2014, 134–135). Since the prayers, now associated with the **lilis** instrument were still called Balaĝ, the term began to designate the kettledrum that accompanied them. This is supported by the 2nd millennium BCE writing of the sign BALAG with the determinative **kuš** (leather), as opposed to the regular **giš** (wood), found in administrative texts and lexical lists from the 3rd millennium BCE (Gabbay 2014, 136).

The **balaĝ** was usually attributed to the **gala**. In the lament for Urim, it is testified as a solo instrument of lamentation:

> **munus-e ad-a-ni balaĝ er$_2$-ra ki al-ĝar-ra-ba**
>
> **i-lu ma sig$_9$-ga tur-tur-bi ni$_2$-te-na mi-ni-ib-be$_2$**
>
> "The woman, after she had composed her song (?) for the tearful balaĝ instrument, herself utters softly a lamentation for the silent house."
>
> (LU 85–86)

The religious and political importance of **balaĝ** is documented in several official year names referring to their construction and dedications to major temples, the earliest dating to the reign of Gudea. "The year in which the balaĝ Ušumgalkalama was fashioned" (Falkenstein 1966, 8), for instance, is the name of the year in which Ninĝirsu's temple had been completed. Furthermore, in *Gudea Cylinder* B (10.9–14), the ruler offers the **balaĝ** instrument Ušumgal-kalama as a votive gift to Ninĝirsu in the courtyard of the E-ninnu to the joyful sound of **tigi**, **alĝar** and **miritum** (for personalized divine instruments see ch. V. 7. 1.).

IV. 6. Gisug

The **gisug** (**gi.su$_{13}$**; **gi.sù** = **malîlu**) is translated as an "empty/hollow reed" (Krispijn 1990, 15–17; 2008, 145), indicating a type of reed instrument.

IV. 7. Gudi

According to Collon and Kilmer (1980, 15–17), the **gudi** (**$^{(ĝiš)}$gù.di/dè**; Akk. *inu*), a "loudly sounding wood" or "wooden noise -producer", is a likely candidate for the lute (contr. Krispijn 2010, 146: epithet of various instruments, probably chordophones). This has already been proposed by Landsberger (1956, 21) since the word occurred in a list of long, pole-like wooden objects in a Sumero-Akkadian lexical text. Additional evidence is provided by *A praise poem of Šulgi* B in which the king is boasting with his ability to play all known instruments (Š B, 154–174) even those he had not known before referring to the **gudi** (Š B, 167–168). It seems plausible to assert that the **gudi** differentiated from the other instruments named in the passage. The lute would be a logical choice to have mentioned as a new and different instrument in his repertoire due to its unique playing technique: the strings are made to change pitch by stopping them against a neck. Furthermore, the **gudi** is described as a seven-type, perhaps referring to the possibility of playing all seven notes of the heptatonic scale (Collon and Kilmer 1980, 16, incl. fn.27). It is clearly associated with a joyful atmosphere, and capable of making a loud sound (Collon and Kilmer 1980, 16, incl. fn. 28).

IV. 8. Lilis

The **lilis** (**li.le.èš**; **li.li.is**; AB_2xBALAĜ; Akk. *lilissu*) can be securely identified as kettledrum through an image depicted on a Seleucid ritual tablet describing cultic acts during the covering of a bronze sound box (Linssen 2004, 92–100; Rashid 1984, 149). Information referring to its material and weight are provided in Ur III and Old Babylonian administrative texts (e.g., "One copper lilis; its weight 20 minas" [ca. 10 kg.], in Shehata 2014, 116, fn. 77). The logographic writing AB_2-BALAĜ underlines its religious importance. **Lilis** were constructed for and dedicated to various deities, attested in Old Babylonian year names. Notably, this is only known in middle and northern Babylonian dynasties and never from Sumerian rulers. Shehata suggests that this might hint at the regional origin of the **lilis** as a word and/or a musical instrument (2014, 115–116).

IV. 9. Meze

The **meze** (**me.zé**; Akk. *manzû*) is either a sistrum or a flat percussion instrument as seen on the "Animal Chapel" (cat. no. 59) or on an Akkadian cylinder seal (cat. no. 68). On the basis of the identical word **me-zé**, meaning "jaw", Volk (1989, 101) suggested that the instrument was a sound stick resembling the shape of a jawbone (cf., Gabbay 2008, 25). The characteristic U-shape of the instrument may resemble the arched shape of the bottom jaw of an animal. Therefore, it can cautiously be assumed that the **meze** was a sistrum (Gabbay 2008, 25).

IV. 10. Miritum

The **miritum** / **maritum** (**mi.rí.tum; ma.rí.tum**) is an instrument "from Mari'. It is frequently written with the determinative **ĝiš** (wood) and is associated with **ĝišgú** (wooden neck) referring to the instrument's neck (Krispijn 2010, 146). It could therefore be identifiable as a lute.

IV. 11. Šem

In most cases, the **šem** / **sim** (**šem**$_5$; **šem**$_3$; Akk. *ḫalḫallatu*) is associated with the determinative copper (**uruda**) and bronze (**zabar**) (Shehata 2014, 108, fn. 25; 114, fn. 64). Ur III and Old Babylonian documents from Ur and Uruk mention the instruments made of or decorated with silver and gold (Shehata 2014, 108, fn. 26). Only rarely it is written with **kuš** (skin, leather). The **šem** is therefore possibly identifiable as metallic idiophone, e.g., cymbals or a sistrum, though it might also be a membranophone.

The **šem** is part of the instrumental repertoire of both the **gala** and the **nar** since the character of its music depends on whether it is played solo or in an ensemble. It is a characteristic solo instrument for lamenting which accompanied the Eršema genre (e.g., EWO 446). As part of the **gala**'s repertoire, the **šem** is closely associated with **ub** and **meze**, since they frequently occur together in cuneiform texts (cf., Oppenheim and Reiner 1977, 239). It may be assumed that these terms are associated with very similar (or even identical) instruments which is mainly based on the shape of the cuneiform signs denoting them (AB_2, "cow"). Furthermore, a passage from *Inanna's descent to the netherworld* connects the instrument to the performance of death rituals (e.g., INW 35; 177; 317).

In Sumerian literary compositions, the **šem** is often attested alongside the **ala** with a seemingly traditional position in Mesopotamian temples (e.g., GC A 28.17–18; GC B 15.20, incl. **balaĝ**; LN 38; LUg H. 16-17, incl. **tigi** and **zamzam**; WS 236, incl. **tigi** and **zamzam**; LE 62; TH 107, incl. recital of Adab songs; HP 28). In these combinations, instruments were probably played by **nar** musicians. Due to the common pairing of **šem** and **ala**, it has been suggested that the cymbals depicted next to the large drum in the Gudea and Ur-Namma Stelae can be identified as the **šem** instrument (Gabbay 2007, 81; followed by Mirelman 2014, 165). This is supported by the occurrence of the **šem** in pairs in texts dating to the Ur III and later periods (Mirleman 2014, 165). The **šem** could also be identified as sistrum (cf., ch. III. 8.). This is supported by the etymology of the Akkadian *ḫalḫallatu*, related to the verb *ḫiālu*, "to tremble, writhe", and the noun *ḥalḥālāh*, "shaking, trembling".

IV. 12. Tigi

The term **tigi** (Akk. *tigû*) designates a profession, a song genre and a musical instrument (Shehata 2009, 41). The logographic writing is a combination of balaĝ and nar (**tigi** = NAR.BALAĜ; **tigi$_2$** = BALAĜ.NAR; "[instrument] of the singer"). It therefore almost certainly refers to a stringed instrument similar to or identical with the **balaĝ**. According to Gabbay (2014, 103), **tigi** and b**alaĝ** originally were the same type of instrument, the difference between them being their cultic context: the **balaĝ** was associated with the repertoire of the **gala**, and the **tigi** with the repertoire of the **nar**. This assumption is supported by Shehata (2014, 108) who believes that the **tigi** might be an instrument of similar form or status, which was played by the **nar** during joyful events:

> **iri^{ki} tigi-da u$_3$ nu-ku-ku-za**
> **šag$_4$ ḫul$_2$-la-da nu-nu$_2$-za**
> "In your [Inanna] city [Agade] that could not sleep because of the tigi instruments, that could not rest from its joy."
> (CA 260–261)

Representing praise and hymnic music, the **tigi** was opposed to lamenting and to the music made by instruments accompanying them:

> **^{d}inana niĝ$_2$ nu-gul-u$_3$ ḫe$_2$-mu-e-gul niĝ$_2$ nu-sig$_{10}$-ge$_5$ ḫe$_2$-mu-e-sig$_{10}$**
> **šem$_3$ a-nir-ra-da tug$_2$ ḫe$_2$-em-mi-si-ig**
> **ki-sikil ^{d}inana tigi a-da-ab e$_2$-ba ḫe$_2$-em-mi-gi$_4$**
> "Inanna, you destroy what should not be destroyed; you create what should not be created. You remove the cover from the šem of lamentations, Maiden Inanna, while shutting up tigi and adab in their homes."
> (EWO 446–448)

The connection of **tigi** and **adab** in this passage results from their secondary meaning as two similar genres of hymns. Their content is devoted to the praise of a single god which is sometimes associated with an individual king (e.g., GC A = a Tigi song to Bau; Ur-Namma B = a Tigi song to Enlil). Nevertheless, the ambiguity of these words either indicating an instrument

or a type of song may hinder a correct interpretation (e.g., LUS 436–437: **tigi** appears twice but only once with the determinative **giš**).

The **tigi** is documented in literary compositions as solo and choral instrument (e.g., CA 36; LSU 437; LN 83; TH 6–7. In EN 125 and Š A 81, groups of seven **tigi** instruments are attested), but frequently occurs in combination with other instruments. Most notably is the combination of **tigi-šem-ala** which occurs remarkably often in literary texts (e.g., ID A 81; IE H 245–246; LSU 436; LU 356; Š A 53–54; Š D 366–367). From these examples and other textual sources, it can be concluded that the group was a standard instrumental ensemble in Mesopotamian temples. Without exception, it is played during festive occasions and associated with joy and wellbeing. Its music was primarily devoted to praise the gods and to accompany ritual offerings, especially animal sacrifices (Shehata 2014, 106, incl. fn. 15). Since the **ala** is identifiable as large drum and the **šem** presumably as a metallic idiophone, it is quite likely that the trio was completed by a stringed instrument which provided the music's melody.

Additionally, the *Marriage of Martu* (MM) presents a special case, since the ruler of Inab himself was named Tigi-Šem-Ala (**ensi$_2$ i$_3$-na-ab^{ki} -a tigi-šem$_5^{kuš}$-a$_2$-la$_2$-a** [Shehata 2014, 105 fn. 13]).

IV. 13. Ub

The **ub** ("cylinder") (**ùb**; **ub$_3$**; **ub$_5$**; Akk. *uppu*) is often written with **kuš** (leather), and can be identified as a membranophone. The variant **ub$_5$** is only attested in the 3rd millennium (Selz 1997, 195, fn. 154). In Early Dynastic administrative texts from Lagaŝ, the instrument is described as divine and holy (**kug**) and receives offerings (Selz 1997, 172–173). According to texts from Girsu, it was played or tended to by aids and a special functionary probably acting as their foreman (Selz 1997, 176, 198 n. 187). For the Ur III period, there is one text from Girsu which mentions seven holy **ub** instruments receiving a bull's hide each (Shehata 2014, 113, fn. 56 [HSS 4, 52]). In several other literary texts, the **ub** is testified as a solo lamentation instrument:

> **gaba-ni ub$_3$ kug-ga-am$_3$ i$_3$-sag$_3$-ge a uru$_2$-ĝu$_{10}$ im-me** (LU 300)
> "The woman (Ningal) tears at her hair as if it were rushes. She beats the holy ub drum at her chest, she cries 'Alas, my city'. Her eyes well with tears, she weeps bitterly: 'Woe is me, my city which no longer exists – I am not its queen.'"
> (LU 299–302)

The beating of the chest is a typical gesture associated with lamenting and mourning (Shehata 2014, 113). The playing technique of the **ub** leads to the identification as a small frame drum mainly played by women holding the instrument in front of their chest.

IV. 14. Zami

The **zami** (**$^{giš/kuš}$za$_3$-mi$_2$**; **zà.(me)**; **zà.mí**; Akk. *sammû*) is believed to be the term for a stringed instrument. Arguments supporting this statement are grounded in several translations of **zami**: the Akk. *sammû* is translated as "wide side" (Krispijn 1990, 6–7) and as "to be praised" (cf., **zà.me** = *wâdium* "praising"). According to Kilmer (1980–1983; c.f., Krispijn 2010, 148), many Akkadian technical terms refer to the zoomorphic shape of the lyre such as:

- **áb.zàmí** = *apsammiku*, "cow of the zami"; the Akkadian *appu* "nose" describes the concave sided tetragon (572 §1)
- **gán.zàmí** = *eqel sammîm,* "plane of the zami"; a trapezoid shape?
- **geštu.zàmí** = *ḫasis sammîm*, "ear of the zami"; a geometric shape, possibly the sound hole
- **gán geštu.zàmí** "plane of the ear of the zami"; another geometric shape (574, §5)

IV. 15. Zamzam

The **zamzam** (**za.am.(za.am)**; Akk. *samsammu)* is a percussion instrument or a type of song often connected with the **gisug**, some kind of wind instrument (e.g., CA 36; Ur-Namma A 3, 187; Š E 38, 56), or **tigi** (e.g., Š B 273, 276; Š E 34) (Krispijn 2010, 148).

IV. 16. Concluding remarks

The religious status of musical instruments in evident through its occurrences in the written sources consisting of literary texts, lexical lists and administrative documents. Sometimes, objects are marked with the determinative **diĝir** in order to designate them as divine, or described with adjectives such as **kug**, "holy", or **maḫ**, "great". However, such classifiers and attributes are not regularly used. Information on the religious status of a musical instrument is more easily inferred from the context in which it appears, whether it is mentioned in mythology, kept in a temple, received offerings, was tended to through special rituals, dedicated to deities, or worshipped itself (Shehata 2014, 103). The **ala**, **alĝar**, **balaĝ**, **lilis**, **meze**, **šem**, **tigi,** and **ub** were considered to be holy or divine. A list of most of these instruments is presented in a passage of *Inanna and Enki* (IE). The myth tells about Inanna taking over mankind's cultural norms (Sum. **me**) from her father Enki in order to bring them to her cultic center Uruk for the benefits of its inhabitants:

> **/tigi\ kug li-li-is$_3$ kug ub$_3$ me-ze$_2$ ^{kuš}a$_2$-la$_2$ ba-<e-de$_6$>**
> "You have brought with you the holy tigi, holy lilis, ub, meze and ala drums"
> (IE 99)

Other musical instruments did not gain a comparable religious status as far as known.

In context and function, there is a clear division between praise music, and lamentations and liturgical prayers. The former is defined by an overly joyful and prosperous environment in which music is performed loudly in open air spaces, probably mainly by the **nar** musicians. **Tigi**, **šem** and **ala** are the main instrumental ensemble accompanying festivities during which animal and libation sacrifices were conducted. During lamination and liturgical prayers, solo instrumental performances were conducted by the **gala** priest, sometimes supported by several choirs. The purpose of this music was to influence the gods' moods and to ward off evil from mankind.

The role definition for each instrument remains inconsistent. It appears that the character and function depends on the ensemble and the performative context in which it was played. The **šem**, for instance, demonstrates a positive festive character in combination with **tigi** and **ala**, but is an instrument for lamenting when played solo (Shehata 2014, 121).

Tab. 3: Overview of instrument names and their identification according to evidence collected in ch. III.

Instr. name	Sum. (& Akk.) translation	Type	Identification
adab	**a-da-ab**; **a-dab$_6$**	I	clappers?
ala	**a$_6$-la$_6$**; **á-lá**; Akk. *alû*	M	large, double-membraned, cylindrical, struck drum
alĝar	**al.ĝar**	C	?
balaĝ	BALAĜ	C	zoomorphic lyre
gisug	**gi.su$_{13}$**; **gi.sù** = **malîlu**	A	reed instrument
lilis	**li.le.èš**; **li.li.is**; AB$_2$xBALAĜ; Akk. *lilissu*	M	kettledrum
meze	**me.zé** = Akk. *manzû*	I	sistrum? (flat percussion instrument?)
miritum / maritum	**mi.rí.tum; ma.rí.tum**	C	lute?
šem / sim	**šem$_5$**; **šem$_3$**; Akk. *ḫalḫallatu*	I	cymbals? (sistum?)
tigi	**tigi** = NAR.BALAĜ; **tigi$_2$** = BALAĜ.NAR; Akk. *tigû*	C	lyre (?)
ub	**ùb**; **ub$_3$**; **ub$_5$**; Akk. *Uppu*	M	small frame drum
zami	**$^{giš/kuš}$za$_3$-mi$_2$**; **zà.(me)**; **zà.mí** = Akk. *sammû*	C	zoomorphic lyre (?)
zamzam	**za.am.(za.am)** = Akk. *samsammu*	P	?

CHAPTER V

Contexts of Musical Performances

This chapter defines and interprets various contexts of musical performances attested in iconographic, archaeological and textual sources. The subchapters are structured chronologically according to the initial occurrence of the defined category.

V. 1. The earliest attestations of musical performance

A cylindrical seal impression from Choga-Mish dating to the late 4th millennium BCE (Late Uruk [Uruk III, JN], ca. 3100 BCE) is among the oldest attestations of musical performances (cat. no. 3). At the same time, it is the first known depiction of a "musical orchestra" (Collon 2010, 47). The image on a clay door sealing shows a group of musicians sitting on the ground, seemingly each with one knee raised. Except for one figure, all face a person in the same posture but with different hairstyle seated on what appears to be a large cushion. A naked male servant standing in front of him or her is offering a large triple vessel and a small spouted one. Between them, small jars are positioned on a square object functioning as a table. The "feasting character" of the scene is further emphasized by the presence of various kinds of dishes depicted in the upper half of the impression: a small jar with a pointed base, a large amphora, a circular dish with handles, a large vessel with upright loop-handles, and two small cups. Among the musicians, the person seated to the left is raising the hands to the mouth which has been interpreted as a singing gesture (e.g., Collon 2013, 47). The next figure is probably holding a pair crescentic clappers above his head. Facing him is a person before a low drum who is beating the rhythm for the group with the flat of his hand. The upper row probably shows the earliest depiction of a harpist. The musician is playing on a large arched instrument with four strings which is positioned vertically and stabilized on the ground (Collon 2010, 47).

The identity and gender of the musicians are not clear. Furthermore, there is no hint whether the feast is religious or secular, institutional or private. It can be assumed, however, that the banquet's commissioner had the means to call upon and employ an ensemble composed of different instrumentalists (Collon 2013, 47). The members of this must have had a certain degree of professionalism and status. This is based on the observation that the combination of musicians the artist chose to depict is composed of wind, percussion and stringed instrument performers.

The choice therefore attests an understanding of rhythm (provided by the drum and clappers), melody (by the harp), and harmony (by the singer).

This seal impression can be compared to a recently published stele fragment found close to Ur (cat. no. 2). One register depicts a similar combination of people: two figures to the left are seated in a similar posture with one knee raised. The left one is holding a pair of clappers above the head, while the other on is raising his hands to the mouth in a singing gesture. The musicians face a large round object with two handles on its horizontal axes. The depiction can be interpreted as a large frame drum which is beaten by a man standing to its right. The register below shows four seated figures apparently occupied in some kind of manufacturing process of foodstuff. They are depicted above three rows of conical vessels. This accumulation of pottery and the artistic rendering indicates that the stele is dating to the Late Uruk, more specifically the Jemdet Naṣr period (Otto 2017, personal comment).

It is possible that music had been performed during the production of food. However, it is more likely that the imagery shows a succession of events meaning that the performance took place during the consumption of food. Unfortunately, the stele fragment is too badly preserved to show any such scenery.

V. 2. Musical performances during feasts and banquets

In view of the collected evidences it can be stated that the majority of images depicting musical performances are part of a complex of scenes which can be identified as feasts or banquets, characterized by the consumption of an elaborate meal often accompanied by entertainment.
Feasts as the focus of cultural and social identity have long been a popular research topic (e.g., Bray 2003; Dietler and Hayden 2001; Pollock 2012). The depiction of participants who gather in special places in- and outside the settlements can provide clues about the social hierarchy. By approaching banquet scenes as real practices, norms and behavior patterns can be analyzed. The investigation of gestures, the relation between figures, and the act of drinking, presents information about the political organization which appears to be one of intra-elite interaction. Furthermore, festive events in the 3rd millennium in Mesopotamia are the venue of the most important religious rites. The best food and drinks are served and consumed, sacrifices are conducted, art and music are presented and athletic competitions are carried out. Feasts were conducted for various reasons, such as paying debts, displaying opulence, gaining alliances, frightening enemies, negotiating war and peace, celebrating rites, communicating with the gods and honoring the dead.
An interesting point of view on the character of a feast is provided in the following table:

Tab. 4: Paradigms of ceremonial meals (after Milano 2017, personal comment)

	Scenario I	Scenario II
Social interaction	inclusiveness	selectiveness / exclusiveness
Participants (tendency)	many	few
Performance	emphasis on social dynamics	emphasis on rules / rituals
Gestures	aimed at maintaining status and balance among participants	aimed at functional solidity among participants
Nature	gathering	one-on-one conversations

The term “banquet scene” refers to a figurative motif in which one or more seated figures are represented either holding a small cup in their hand, sometimes in the presence of loaded tables, or drinking through tubes from a big jar in their midst. Frequently these people are accompanied to by servants who bring objects related to the development of the feast, or attendants devoted

their service (Pinnock 1990, 16). Pairs of banqueters may be facing each other; in this case they are mostly male and female.

The banquet scenes in its proper shape emerges during the Early Dynastic periods (esp. ED II) on seals, votive plaques and inlays. It is related to a plurality of ceremonies. According to Pinnock (1990, 17), the most frequent association on cylinder seal impressions is with mythological figures, especially with wild and domestic animals in so-called contest scenes. There may also be herds of domestic animals or scenes related to the proceeding of a feast, such as musical entertainment, bearers of offerings and gifts, boats, chariots, combat scenes or sportive competitions.

The meaning of the banquet scene has been subject to scholarly debate: What was the role of banquets within the socio-political context of Mesopotamian societies? And why did these banquets become such an important subject in art during the Early Dynastic period? Do these images depict particular events, e.g. the New Year Festival, or do they represent the act of feasting in general?

V. 2. 1. Musical performance on Early Dynastic votive plaques

One major source of iconographic attestations depicting banquets are votive plaques (c.f., Pinnock 1990; Selz 1983) which occur from Susa in the East to Ebla in the West in the Early Dynastic II and the first half of the IIIa period (ca. 2700–2550 BCE | cat. nos. 31–38). These bas-reliefs on square slaps with a central perforation follow a standardized design which served to commemorate the most important religious, political and social events. The scenes are usually arranged in three horizontal registers. The main protagonists are sitting and drinking men and women in the upper register. In most cases, it seems as if no individual rendering of specific people was conducted, although the objects were dedicated to temples by individuals. Rather, this was probably meant as pars pro toto for a larger number of banqueters since occasionally more than one couple can be seen.

Although it is quite likely that these feasts were conducted in temples, the question, where the depicted banquets took place, cannot be answered for certain. Except for being dedicated to and found in temples, the images do not show any religious link. The modern image of ancient temples, where priests in snow-white robs welcome devoted pilgrims and melodious choirs sang

songs, is certainly false. In reality, Mesopotamian temples were economic institutions. Their courtyards and the surrounding rooms provided installations to slaughter animals, prepare and conduct feasts for the gods. Devoted citizens brought with them sheep, goats, and other animals which were sacrificed at the gods' altar and then cooked and eaten.

The role of musical entertainment during banquets is evident on eight votive plaques which show soloists performing on stringed instruments. They will function as connecting links between the following chapters which describe various contexts of musical performances.

V. 2. 2. Ritual celebrations featuring chariots

Three votive plaques, one found in the Shara Temple in Tell Agrab (cat. no. 37) and two in layer I of the temple oval in Khafajeh (cat. nos. 33–34), show rather identical scenes in three registers. In every image, a standing male musician in the center of the upper register is holding a medium sized arched harp between two servants tending to a man and woman on the right and left respectively. In each case, the musician faces the main male character. He is holding the instrument vertically in front of his head and upper body with the bow turned towards him. The central register shows servants carrying a large vessel on the left side, while a (bovid?) animal is depicted to the right which is accompanied by a male figure in two cases. In the bottom register, several men are depicted guiding a two-wheeled chariot which is being pulled by two or three equids. The hen is held by a man standing behind the wagon. Another man with a stick is walking in front of it. The chariot is always depicted empty on votive plaques, and is evidently in the spotlight of a procession.

A comparable depiction showing the same content is attested on a scarlet ware vessel also found in Khafajeh (ca. 2700 BCE; cat. no. 28 a–b). The imagery is divided in several square panels. To the right of the drawing (cat. no. 28 b), a four-wheeled chariot is depicted which is being pulled by four equids connected by a hen. In contrast to the images on votive plaques, however, the chariot carries two human figures of different sizes hinting at a hierarchical difference. The adjacent scene shows a pair of banqueters drinking through straws from a large vessel standing on the floor in their midst. This is another difference to votive plaques where the banqueters are usually depicted drinking from small cups in their hands. It is unclear whether the ways of consuming drinks are referring to an actual difference in the way feasts were conducted – on

the one hand, drinking closely together from a shared vessel, on the other hand from an individual small cup (cf., tab. 4). It could also merely indicate another form of consumption, possibly related to a different kind of drink, or could be depended on the medium on which the scene is depicted. It appears as if drinking from small cups is tendentially attested more often on larger works of art, e.g. votive plaques or steles, and drinking though tubes from a large vessel on smaller objects, such as seals.

Below the banquet scene, a human figure – frequently dubbed "the master of animals" (e.g., Pinnock 1990, 17) – is holding onto raising goats on either side. The presence of a kid indicates that the animals are inoffensive and domesticated. In the upper square panel to the left, a human figure is sitting in front of a large boar, on the back of which several birds are depicted. The human figure is holding unidentifiable objects in each hand, possibly a knife or a spindle (Otto 2017, personal comment). To the left, two people are standing on either side of a large round object on top of a scorpion. This could possibly be a drum since the depiction is similar to other attestations of the instrument (c.f., ch. II. 2. 3.). However, this interpretation does not seem to match the context of the panel (e.g., the scorpion usually refers to fertility or death). The rest of the square fields is either taken up by geometrical shapes, floral motives, or depictions of equids, birds or other animals.

The musical scene is composed of a large free-standing bull lyre played by a seated musician which is perhaps the earliest representation of the zoomorphic instrument (Collon 2013, 18). The axis where the crossbar and frontal joke arm meet is being held by a standing figure in front of the instrument. Below the bull's head, a triangular object, possibly a conical drum, is depicted. Behind the lyrist, another seated figure is holding a branch-like instrument which can be identified as a sistrum.

The combination of these elements – large zoomorphic lyre played by a seated musician, a sistrum player, a drum below or in front of the lyre, and an individual holding the cross-bar and joke arm – can be found on several other iconographic attestations dating to different periods: two seal impressions dating to the Early Dynastic period (ca. 2900–2350 BCE) (cat. nos. 8–9), the so-called Animal Chapel depicted on an inlay panel attached to the front of a lyre from the Royal Cemetery in Ur (cat. no. 59 a–b), and an Akkadian cylinder seal impression (cat. no. 68). On the one hand, it appears to be a common composition, on the other hand, it could represent an established combination of instruments. The context in which these instruments are played – if divinable that is – are, however, different from each other: The mosaic panel shows the

ensemble in a (mythological) funerary banquet, while on the Akkadian seal the sistrum and lyre are played in front of a deity (possibly the goddess Ištar [Ward 1910, 155]).

Returning to the depiction on the vessel from Khafajeh (cat. no. 28 a–b), an interpretation combining all these images and scenes is rather difficult, since it is unclear how and if the individual scenes are related to each other. The imagery evidently shows most subjects related to a banquet. The panel showing the manned chariot appears to be the main image, since it takes up an entire quarter of the vessel's surface and is at least twice as large as the other squares. The chariot is moving away from the other scenes, possibly racing into battle.

A well-known example, in which victory in warfare is the occasion for conducting a large feast is the "Standard of Ur" (cat. no. 61 a–c). The so-called war page shows a victorious campaign of the ruler of Ur with four-wheeled battle chariots carrying two warriors over a battlefield, as well as armed foot soldiers who bring captive opponents with them. In the upper fries to the left, an empty chariot is depicted. It had already been assumed by Woolley (1934, 376–377) and Frankfort (1939, 44–45) that the banquet scene depicted on the "piece side" could celebrate a victorious military campaign. The empty chariot possibly either belongs to the victorious ruler or his defeated opponent. In any case, it somehow symbolizes a victory which provides the occasion for conducting a large feast. Animals, food and other gifts are brought by servants to the feast in the lower and middle fries. In the upper register, the ruler dressed in a fringed garment is seated on a stool and raising his cup to six slightly smaller men, possibly his generals, who join him in the banquet. Two servants are present between the king and his guests. Behind the banqueters, in the right corner, a musician is playing on a zoomorphic harp which he is carrying with a decorated strap around his shoulders and the anterior part of the sound body (Hartmann 1960, 29-30, Rashid 1984, 44). A second figure with long black hair and his hands folded in front of the chest is following him. In analogy to the statuettes of the singer Ur-Nanshe found in the Ninni-zaza temple in Mari (Mari city II, ca. 2500 BCE | cat. no. 43), it can be assumed that the musician depicted here is probably a male singer.

V. 2. 3. Musical performances associated with journeys by boat

A votive plaque of unknown origin (cat. no. 38), shows a banquet scene closely resembling the depictions discussed earlier: a male harpist is positioned in the middle of the upper register, between two servants who tend to a female to the left and a male to the right. The middle register shows two recumbent animals on either side of the perforation hole. In the bottom register, a large can be seen. It is steered by three male oarsmen through prosperous waters filled with fish and water birds. A fourth person is standing among the men on the boat and is holding a drinking vessel in his right hand.

Concerning the identity of the main participants of the banquet, the following interpretation has been given: since fish are depicted beneath the feet of the dining man, his identity has been associated with the Sumerian Enki, the god of wisdom and patron of musicians and craftsmen (e.g., Dumbrill 2005, 188). The female opposite him is wearing a dander-like garment, and could possibly be Enki's divine consort, Ninhursag. The identity of the main character in the boat remains obscure, even though he could possibly be identical with the man dining in the upper register.

Journeys by boat play a significant role in several myths featuring Enki, such as *Enki's Journey to Nibru* (EN) and *Inanna and Enki & the transfer of the arts of civilization from Eridu to Uruk* (IE). In the former case, the god is loosening his boat from its moorings after loading it with food, drinks and musical instruments, and is setting sail for Nippur in order to assure the power of the "Sea House" (presumably his temple in Eridu). In the **giguna** (**gi-gun$_4$-na** [97], "divine dining hall" / "temple terrace" / "shrine") in Nippur, Enki prepares a banquet, slaughters animals and installs **ala** (large, double-membraned, cylindrical, struck drum) and **ub** (cylindrical small frame drum) for the assembly of gods. The climax is Enlil's eulogizing Enki's Abzu temple, especially as a house fit to be in charge of man's arts and crafts.

> **^{d}en-ki-ke$_4$ gud im-ma-ab-gaz-e udu im-ma-ab-šar$_2$-re**
>
> **^{kuš}a$_2$-la$_2$ nu-ĝal$_2$-la ki-bi-še$_3$ sa$_2$ im-dug$_4$**
>
> **ub$_3$ zabar nu-ĝal$_2$-la ki-bi-še$_3$ im-mi-in-e$_3$**
>
> "Enki had oxen slaughtered, and had sheep offered there lavishly. Where there were no ala drums, he installed some in their places; where there were no bronze ub drums, he dispatched some to their places."
>
> (EN 93–95, in al-Fouadi 1969, 74)

In *Inanna and Enki,* the goddess returns to Uruk on her divine boat, the "Boat of Heaven", after having received the **me** from the drunken Enki during a symposium in the Abzu in Eridu. The king conducts a festive welcome including prayers, animal sacrifices and musical entertainment by **tigi**, **šem** and **ala**.

> **X-ta ma_2 an-na ezen X [...]**
> **$sizkur_2$ gal-gal ḫu-mu-un-[...-e]**
> **lugal-e gud $ḫe_2$-em-ma-ab-gaz-e /udu\ [$ḫe_2$-em-ma-ab-$šar_2$-re]**
> **kaš bur-ra $ḫe_2$-em-/de_2\-[e]**
> **$šem_3$ $^{kuš}a_2$-la_2-e $šeg_{11}$ ḫa-ba-[gi_4-gi_4]**
> **tigi niĝ$_2$ dug_3-ge si $ḫe_2$-em-mi-[ib-sa_2-sa_2]**
> "..... festival ..... the Boat of Heaven. He shall recite great prayers. The king shall slaughter bulls, shall sacrifice sheep. He shall pour beer from a bowl. He shall have the šem and ala [instruments re-]sound, and have the sweet-sounding tigi instruments play."
> (IE 241–246, in Farber-Flügge 1973, 52, l. 43–48)

Similarly, king Šulgi enjoys the joyful sound of the **tigi-šem-ala** ensemble while resting on a throne on "his brilliant royal barge" on the Tigris on his way to Enlil's temple in Nippur after having defeated neighboring enemies.

> **si-im a_2-la_2-e $šeg_{12}$ mu-na-ab-gi_4**
> **tigi $šir_3$-[re-$eš_2$] mu-na-ab-[dug_4]**
> (Š D 366–367)
> "After carrying out a noble revenge in the foreign lands, the hero had his brilliant royal barge caulked. [...] he took his seat on a throne of ... The sim and ala drums resounded for him, and the tigi drums played music for him."
> (Š D 354–367)

Related evidence is attested in an inscription on *Gudea Statue* L. The passage describes an inauguration ceremony of a boat during which the **ala** was played and animals were slaughtered.

> **é-ᶠmaḫᵀ-bi kar-ká-sur-ra-ka i_7-da a-a-su-su-da-bé nar-á-lá igi-šè ba-DU 1 gu_4 4 udu 1 máš ba-$ša_6$ mí ì-e bur-gi_4-a-bé 1 gu_4 4 udu 1 máš má-GÍN-ga[l?-x(?)]**
> "...am Kai von Kasurra tritt zu des Flusses bewässernden Fluten der Musikant der ala-Trommel hervor. 1 Rind, 4 Schafe (und) 1 Zicklein wurden geschlachtet, wobei man peinlich acht gab. Beim Burgia (-Opfer) ([haben]) 1 Rind, 4 Schafe (und) 1 Zicklein die (/der) Oberschiffverpicher (?)"
> (Steible 1991, 226–229)

It can be concluded that travel or processions by boat are integral parts of certain festive events. This is also evident in other pictorial attestations. A cylinder seal impression from Ur dating to the Early Dynastic III period, for instance, shows a pair of banqueters sitting in a schematically depicted boat, and drinking though tubes, from a large vessel in their midst (fig. 2).

Fig. 3: A cylinder seal impression from Ur showing a pair of banqueters on a boat (ED III period, ca. 2600–2500 BCE. U. 11401 | Woolley 1934, pl. 200, no. 94).

Attestations of musical performances on boats are rather rare, however. The only known example is a cylinder seal from southern Mesopotamia which shows the schematic rendering of a boat transporting three human figures and a bovid (cat. no. 4 a–b). On either side of the boat, the outline of a temple façade is depicted. A musician is sitting on the left side of the boat, leaning against its back wall. He or she is holding a lute diagonally in front of the upper body and is playing it right-handedly. In front of the musician, a horned bovid is facing left, and is carrying a stepped altar on its back. Opposite him, a standing deity with a horned crown is depicted. To his right, a human figure is steering the boat. This cylinder seal, dating to the Late Uruk period (ca. 3100 BCE) is the only known example of a lute prior to the Akkadian period (see. ch. V. 6.).

V. 2. 4. Feasts entertained by sportive competition

Banquets provided an occasion to showcase performances such as **sportive competitions**. In the course of festivities, contests had been conducted in order to entertain the attendants. The following paragraphs discuss all known images which testify the involvement of music in these acts.

A votive plaque from Khafajeh (cat. no. 35 a–b) depicts a male musician who plays on a portable arched harp in the left corner of the bottom register. He forms a duo with another male singer who is facing him with his arms crossed in front of his chest. Interestingly, it is the only example among votive plaques in which the musician is not depicted in the center of the upper register between a dining couple. Instead, the musical performance is linked to a sportive contest: the bottom register is completed by a piece now in the Iraq Museum (cat. no. 35 b). A clean-shaven referee (Mirelman 2014, 160; Rashid 1984, 68) in the center of the register holds a staff and watches two men, both with long hair and beads, and nude except for a belt and codpiece, involved in a sportive competition, possibly a wresting or boxing match.

This image represents the only evidence of a stringed instrument being performed during a sportive combat. More common is the depiction of a large frame drum as seen on the so-called Bedreh Stele (cat. no. 40 a–b). The stele is proof that the complex of themes attested on votive plaques is not exclusive for small works of art but can also be seen on monumental pieces. The upper register on the broad sides of the stele shows two pairs of male wrestlers wearing wraps around the lumber region in different phases of the competition, as well as three men in kneeling position and raised hands. They are dressed in the same clothing as the wrestlers, and thus are possibly cheering, praying or awaiting their turn. Furthermore, two men holding long sticks are depicted on one thin side, identifiable as referees (Rashid 1984, 68; Mirelman 2014, 160). On the other thin side, a bearded man is shown dressed in a fringed skirt who strikes a large round drum with his bare left hand. On top of it, a diminutive naked male figure is presumably dancing. Another person is playing clappers in the background behind the drummer. In the register below, sheep and a large vessel are being presented as offerings.

Similarly, in Canby's reconstruction of the Ur-Namma Stele (2001), the men next to a drum on the fourth register of the "poor face" are likely to represent wrestlers (cat. no. 83 c). The large, double-membraned instrument is being struck by two men alternately using the flat of their hands.

Complementary evidence concerning wrestling or boxing competitions accompanied by music is provided in several text passages. The *Marriage of Martu* describes such a performance accompanied by **šem** and **ala** instruments during a festival for Numušda in the wrestling house in the temple of Inab. The identification of **šem** is uncertain, but it might refer to a small percussion instrument, maybe cymbals or another metallic idiophone which are also depicted on the Ur-Namma stele.

> **uru-a šem$_5$ zabar zi-ig-za-ag [...-za]**
> **^{kuš}a$_2$-la$_2$ /7\-e šeg$_{11}$ mu-da-an-[gi$_4$]**
> **nitaḫ [X]-ne en íb-lái-[ne]**
> **é-ĝešpu-šè mu-na-da-an-kur$_9$-kur$_9$**
> **é i$_3$-na-abki-a-ka-ḫu-mu-na-/ab\-sa$_2$-e**
> "In the city, bronze šem-instruments were clanging, and [seven] ala-instruments were resounding, as strong men, girdled champions, entered the wrestling house to compete with each other for Numušda in the temple of Inab."
> (Klein 1997, 11, 1: 60–64)

Similar evidence is attested in a bilingual hymn to Ninurta. **Ala** and **šem** were played during boxing / wrestling competition accompanied by animal sacrifices, while Ninurta's cult statue was brought into the Ešumeša temple in Nippur (in Mirelman 2014, 160–161).
Furthermore, there are receipts confirming the association between wrestling/boxing and music on a professional level dating to the late 3rd millennium BCE:

> **1 ḫar kù-babbar 10 gín ^{d}Šulgi- gal-zu dumu Al-la nar-ke$_4$ mu gešbá in-TAG.TAG-a-šè in-ba...**
> "Šulgigalzu, the son of Ala the nar-musician, received a 10 shekel silver ring as payment for wrestling/boxing"
> (in Mirelman 2014, 160)

In conclusion, iconographic and textual sources frequently directly linke sportive competitions to musical performances, especially by the **ala** drum. Interestingly, this correlates to modern research on the scientific application of music in sport and exercise: the rhythmic sound not only structures the competitions but also testifies the physical effect of music. The drum produces a

fast, load and a regular, high-pitched sound. A wynchronous sound which enables the sportsmen to consciously move in time to the beat has ergogenic and psychological effects. The level of arousal before a competition is increased, it gets the body moving and the blood flowing, regulates the heartbeat and the uptake of oxygen, supports the rhythmicity of movement, and reduces the perception of effort and fatigue (Terry and Karageorghis 2011, 359–380). This accumulates in a higher-than-expected level of endurance, power, efficiency and strength and thus improves performances (Karageorghis 2008, 120) Additionally, it distracts the sportsman from the audience and enhances motivation and excitement among all.

V. 2. 5. Female musicians and feasts for women

The performance of certain music was surely subject to gender norms. In the previous subchapters, male soloists have been dominating the scenes. Indeed, individual men and groups of male musicians are attested considerably more often than female soloists and ensembles (that is in those cases in which the gender can be distinguished with certainty). This imbalance appears to be even greater in written accounts. The **nar** and **gala** – the most prominent titles of professional musicians – are considered to be masculine. However, female singers and musicians are frequently attested in iconography and a few times in texts. It is known that female choirs and temple musicians existed (esp. for lamentations, e.g. CA 203), and that members of the royal harems, for instance, were often educated as musicians (e.g., the **bīt tegêtim** in Mari has been interpreted as some kind of music conservatory for young women by Ziegler [2007, 79]).

Returning to Early Dynastic votive plaques, it can be stated that in all eight cases, a single instrumentalist is playing on a stringed instrument (cat. nos. 31–38). In six cases, the musician is male and playing on a medium-sized arched harp (cat. nos. 32–35; 37–38). Normally, he is standing in the center of the upper fries, facing the main banqueter to the right. Only in one example, the musician is depicted in another spot and is accompanied by a male singer (cat. no. 35). The only exception of the male harpist can be seen on a votive plaque found in the Inanna Temple in Nippur which shows a female musician playing on a portable zoomorphic lyre in the center of the upper fries (cat. no. 36). Another major difference is that the female banqueter is in this case the main receiver of the musical performance. This could hint at a connection between the gender of the musician and their focused-on audience.

The role of female musicians is also evident in several seals which were found in the Royal Cemetery of Ur. A large number of them, especially those which were found among the larger groups of court people, depict banquets and various musical ensembles (cat. nos. 46–51). Most of them are divided into superimposed registers. Compositional schemes such as these were initially introduced in the Early Dynastic period to indicate different levels, depths and realities. Three seals be discussed in the following.

An exceptional seal, inscribed **dumu-kisal** ("son or daughter of the court"), was found beneath the skeleton of a female (no. 7.) which lay close to three large stringed instruments in PG 1237, the so-called Great Death Pit (cat. no. 47 a–b). The image shows a symposium attended by two men and a woman which is approached by a second female figure. In the lower register, a group of nine musicians and singers can be seen: a woman is playing on a bullheaded lyre in the center. Two diminutive figures in wild movement stabilize the instrument on their heads. To the right, three females are depicted clapping their hands. Their lower bodies appear to be in motion which creates the impression that the women are swinging their hips and raising one foot off the ground. This is likely to be a representation of dancing and possibly singing women. To the left, two female figures behind the lyrist play a flute and shake a sistrum. They are followed by a man with a staff, possibly a musical conductor, who is overseeing the ensemble solemnly composed of women.

Another cylinder seal from PG 1054 shows a similar image (cat. no. 46 a–b). In the upper register, a symmetrical banquet scene is depicted. A man and a woman are seated facing each other both holding a cup in one raised hand. Each one is tended to by a male servant standing in front of them. In their midst, a temple façade (?) can be seen. The lower fries shows a musical ensemble composed of a seated lyrist playing on a large zoomorphic lyre. The melody is accompanied by the rhythmic sound of two pairs of clappers, held by two individuals in front of the lyre. Even on the tiny depiction, it is visible that the crescentic instruments have one wider and one narrow end pointing upwards and downwards respectively. Between them, a third person with raised hands is clapping hands and possibly singing. These three musicians can be identified as female due to their hairstyle, while the harpist is male.

The third seal was found against the right arm of Queen Puabi in her grave chamber PG 800B (cat. no. 48 a–b). The scene depicts a banquet apparently attended only by women and their servants. The feast is accompanied by a group of four female musicians: to the left, a woman is carrying a vertical thin object which divides into three parts at the tip (possibly a sistrum). In

front of her, another musician is holding a pair of clappers. They are faced by a female playing on a large-sized arched harp. Back to back with her, another musician is holding some kind of idiophone, possibly a triangle.

Another sealing which also almost entirely shows women (except for a lonely figure in the top right corner separated by an inscription) was found in Mari, impressed several times around a damaged clay bulla (TH 97-35. Beyer 2007, 237–240, no. 4; Collon 2013, 18-19, fig. 3; Marcetteau 2010, 67-73, fig. 1 | cat. no. 41). The scene is set in three registers, an atypical and rare setting in all periods (Marcetteau 2010, 67 and fn. 6). In the top fries, an inscription identifies the owner of the seal as "wife of ..., EN of Mari". Among various representations of banquet scenes, it is the only one in which the identity of the figure in the center is known. The queen is depicted in the upper register, holding a vessel in one hand and a branch in the other. She is sitting opposite another person who could be the king or another high-ranking woman. In the middle and lower registers, a group of 13 female figures is shown, among them several musicians in the course of performance. The ensemble encompasses at least eight instruments: two large arched harps, a portable lyre, five sets of clappers, as well as two individuals clapping their hands. Both harps are depicted with five strings. While a pedestal is attached to the instrument in the middle register, the lower one shows a spherical tip. In both cases, the musician is standing behind the arched yoke arm, and appears to be plucking the strings with both hands. Marcetteau (2010, 68) identifies them as *sammû* instruments. The portable lyre has a trapezoid sound box without any zoomorphic rendering. It can possibly be equated to the Akkadian *kinnārum* since it appears to correspond to the definition provided in texts from Mari (Marcetteau 2010, 69; c.f., Dumbrill 2005, 427). Another peculiarity is that clappers are normally played in pairs by the same musician. In this case, however, the lower register shows two women who are holding one clave each and seeming playing them together. In the middle register, a seated individual appears to be paring up with a person standing behind her. The woman's upper body is turned to the left, while she is actually seated opposite another figure to her right.

The large number of musicians is unparalleled in the 3rd and 2nd millennium BCE. Furthermore, the concept of two different types of chordophones playing simultaneously has not been encountered before, and remains explicitly rare in all periods (Marcetteau 2010, 68).

Ziegler's study (2007) on music at Mari has prompted the hypothesis that the image is comparable to the definition she gives of the *šitrum* orchestra, an instrumental and /or vocal ensemble in the Old Babylonian period composed of *šitrêtum*, known as female musicians.

Written evidence from the city attests that a large number of female musicians were members of the harem who could possibly be playing here in an event conducted by the queen. In this case, the banquet scene would represent a royal event in the harem of Mari with the queen as the main participant (Beyer 2007, 237-240; Collon 2013, 18). In general, it can be assumed that female musicians were either servants or members of the harem who received a musical education from an early age onwards in order to be able to entertain the king and the court (c.f., Lion and Michel 2016, 360).

V. 2. 6. Contest scenes & animal and libation sacrifices

This chapter addresses two topics which are frequently attested in visual representations and texts. Contest scenes had been a popular subject in ancient Mesopotamian art in all periods and can be associated with music only in a few cases. Animal and libation sacrifices, on the other hand, are hardly ever depicted, but are often attested in written sources according to which they had commonly been accompanied by the musical performances. The content of both topics addresses human actors in control over animals which have been a subject of entertainment for millennia. In the first place, however, they had been an essential source of nutritious food. The struggle between human actors and predators in order to protect domesticated herds had been among the most common topics in visual art during the 3rd millennium BCE. Over time, hunting had developed into a form of entertainment.

A votive plaque found in the Ninhursanga temple in Susa dating to the Early Dynastic II period (ca. 2700–2600 BCE) differs considerably from its Mesopotamian contemporaries (cat. no. 31). For once, it is divided into two, not three, horizontal registers. The banquet scene in the upper half shows two people, evidently a man and a woman according to their dress, who are seated opposite each other on low-backed seats. Two nude attendants stand between them. The depiction of the female figure is very peculiar: she is holding a cup in her raised left hand, while the other one is pulling the strings of a harp-like instrument. The rectangular sound box and the joke are turned away from her. Furthermore, the position of the head, which is facing upwards in a weird angle, is positioned above the neck. Instead, it is placed to the right, above the point where the instrument's strings are attached to its joke. Meanwhile, the joke extends in what could be interpreted as a second right arm, curving upwards at the tip. It is therefore unclear

whether the head belongs to the instrument or the woman. In the bottom register, a man (possibly nude) is stabbing the head of a lion with a weapon as the predator attacks a bull kneeling beneath it. This example of the so-called contest scene (c.f., Collon 1987, 193–197) depicts the struggle between wild and domestic animals in which man intervenes. These scenes acquired a profound symbolic meaning and became one of the principal subjects of Mesopotamian art from the late 4th millennium onwards and are frequently attested with banquets (Pinnock 1990, 17). However, the votive plaque from Susa is the only example which provides a clear link between contest and musical performance.

It is unknown if contest scenes are in any way related to animal or libation sacrifices which are frequently described in texts, but never clearly depicted on images. The immense importance of sacrifices is attested, for instance, in the story of the great deluge which became a founding myth of the agricultural world: when the gods sent a flood to destroy the world, almost all humans and animals perished. Only then did the gods realize that no one remained to make any offering to them. Thus, they become crazed with hunger and distress. Fortunately, one human family survived thanks to the foresight of the god Enki who had instructed his devotee Utnapishtim to take shelter in a large wooden ark along with his family, craftsmen of his village, animals and grains. When the deluge subsided, the Mesopotamian Noah emerged from his ark and sacrificed animals to the gods (Rosenberg 1994, 196–200).

On a mundane level, not only sacrifices to please the gods but also the preparation for elaborate banquets goes hand in hand with the slaughter of animals and libations (e.g., EN 93–95, in al-Fouadi 1969, 74; GC B 18.18–19.1; HP 24–28; IE 241–246, in Farber-Flügge 1973, 52, l. 43–48). One example of music involving praise and sacrifice is attested in *Šulgi A* to Nanna/Suen in his temple in Ur. The common ensemble accompanying these rituals is the **tigi-šem-ala**.

e$_2$ ^{d}suen-na tur$_3$ i$_3$ gal-gal-la ḫe$_2$-ĝal$_2$-la ḫe$_2$-bi$_2$-du$_8$
gud ḫa-ba-ni-gaz udu ḫa-ba-ni-šar$_2$
šem$_5$ a$_2$-la$_2$-e šeg$_{11}$ ḫa-ba-gi$_4$
tigi niĝ$_2$ dug$_3$-ge si ḫa-ba-ni-sa$_2$
^{d}šul-gi lu$_2$ niĝ$_2$ lu-lu-me-en ninda ĝiš ḫa-ba-ni-tag
piriĝ-gin$_7$ KI.LUGAL.GUB-ta ni$_2$ il$_2$-la-ĝu$_{10}$-ne
e$_2$-gal-maḫ ^{d}nin-e$_2$-gal-la-ka-kam
dub$_3$ ḫe$_2$-ni-dub$_2$ a zal-le ḫe$_2$-ni-tu$_5$
dub$_3$ ḫe$_2$-ni-gam ninda ḫu-mu-ni-gu$_7$

“I filled with abundance the temple of Suen, a cow-pen which yields plenty of fat. I had oxen slaughtered there; I had sheep offered there lavishly. I had šem and ala drums resound roar there and caused tigi drums play there sweetly. I, Šulgi, who makes everything abundant, presented food-offerings there and, like a lion, spreading fearsomeness from (?) the royal offering-place, I bent down (?) and bathed in flowing water; I knelt down and feasted in the Egal-maḫ of Ninegala.”

(Š A 48–59)

V. 3. Seeding and harvest festivals

Another context of musical performances are ritual celebrations during seeding and harvest events. They were conducted regularly in the corresponding season in order to appeal to the gods for a prosperous growth of plants, rain, fertility and protection, or to thank them for a high profit of agricultural produce. During these occasions, temples and royal courts which were essentially agricultural enterprises, offered sacrifices to the deities or shared their harvest with them in exchange for their benevolence.

A single cylinder seal found in Ur dating to the middle of the 3rd millennium (ca. 2450 BCE) testifies one of these festivities. It carries the image of a seeding event in two superimposed registers (cat. no. 52). In the lower one, two bulls are guided by a man behind them who holds a hen which runs over the animals' backs. The bulls are used to fulfill an agricultural task, possibly for ploughing the fields. In the upper fries, a seated figure is offered an object which could be a bundle of grain by another person. To the right, two figures are depicted on each side of a large frontally depicted drum which they seem to beat with their flat hands. If this interpretation is correct, the cylinder seal is the only visual attestation of the 3rd millennium BCE which shows musical performances during an agricultural task.

The depiction can be compared to a passage from the literary composition *The Debate between Hoe and Plough* (HB), attested in Old Babylonian catalogues from Nippur and Ur. The personalized plough describes a celebration conducted by the king in the fields in the seeding month during which animal and libation sacrifices were conducted to the sound of **ub** and **ala** instruments.

ĝe$_{26}$-e ^{ĝiš}apin-e a$_2$ gal-e dim$_2$-ma šu gal-e keše$_2$-da

saĝ-tun$_3$ maḫ a-a ^{d}en-lil$_2$-la$_2$-me-en

engar zid nam-lu$_2$-ulu$_3$-me-en

ezen-ĝu$_{10}$ itid šu-numun-a a-šag$_4$-ga ak-da-bi

lugal-e gud im-ma-ab-gaz-e udu im-ma-ab-šar$_2$-re

kaš bur-ra-am$_3$ mu-e-de$_2$

lugal-e a ur4-a mu-e-de$_6$

^{kuš}ub$_3$ ^{kuš}a$_2$-la$_2$-e šeg$_{11}$ ši-im-ma-gi$_4$-gi$_4$

"I am the Plough, fashioned by great strength, assembled by great hands, the mighty registrar of Father Enlil. I am mankind's faithful farmer. To perform my festival in the fields in the seeding month, the king slaughters cattle and sacrifices sheep, and he pours beer into a bowl. The king offers the gathered (?) libation. The ub and ala instruments resound."
(HP 21–28)

V. 4. Music accompanying cultic and festive processions

A context which certainly played an important role in the life of Mesopotamian urbanists were processions. Festive parades were conducted regularly and due to a variety of occasions. According to their public nature, they were intended to attract attention, entertain and to create an inclusive atmosphere among a large audience. People attended cautiously or become part of the event by happenstance. In general, parades were aimed to impress and delight. They had been conducted to commemorate and celebrate, as well as due to serious purposes, such as military campaigns possibly intended to intimidate. An essential occasion which provided reason to conduct a parade had been triumphs – grand and sensational displays of triumphant rulers, as well as foreign treasures and spoils of war. One example visualizing such an event is the "Standard of Ur" (cat. no. 61).

Moreover, numerous religious festivals incorporated public entertainment into cultic performances in order to make the divine concept more understandable and visible to the community and to hold secular and sacred purposes in balance. In order to secure the city and its inhabitants, for instance, processions halted at various locations within the city such as cultic shrines of deities or protection figures which guarded gates and border transitions where the defense against evil powers and enemies of all kinds was most important. Priests conducted rituals and sacrifices, and were occasionally accompanied by musical performances (Cohen 1988, 26). Especially important were events during which a deity in the form of a statue was moved or "traveled", for instance, from its old "living space" into a new one or in order to visit a fellow god. The transition, the so-called "twilight-zone", was particularly dangerous, and priests were supposed to prevent evil by prayers and songs (Shehata 2009, 250–251).

In contrast to abundant textual evidence related to cultic or festive processions, however, this context of musical performances is rarely attested in ancient iconography. The only example is provided by a relief on a vessel fragment found in the earlier temple on mound 5 in ancient Adab (modern Bismaya) dating to the Early Dynastic I period (ca. 2800–2700 BCE | cat. no. 27 a–b). Along the bottom of the vessel, seven male figures are depicted in motion. All of them wear knee-length skirts and flat caps decorated with vertical incisions and different decorations (feathers and/or ribbons). Two men of which one is holding a spring of vegetation are depicted moving away from an elaborately decorated façade. The pair is being approached by a procession of five

musicians led by two men carrying horizontal harps with hanging tuning tassels. They are followed by a person with a small frame drum under his left arm, a smaller figure (possibly a child?) and a trumpeter. Above this scene, five men are depicted facing right. One is kneeling while the other figures stride along. The lowest of these men appears to grasp the foot of the person in front of him which may be intended to suggest the involvement in some kind of sportive competition (Wilson 2003, 333–334; c.f., ch. V. 3. 4.).

The scene can be interpreted as a festive event, a cultic procession or parade outdoors within the city. The two men standing in front of the temple façade may be identified as priests awaiting the approaching musicians. Thus, the scene probably depicts a religious ceremony. It must be pointed out, however, that this vessel does not originate from the Mesopotamian heartland, but is considered to be an import from the Indus culture (Rashid 1984, 58; cf., Stauder 1957, 17–18).

Processions were thus – for an obscure reason – no subject of ancient Mesopotamian visual art in the 3rd millennium BCE, and their nature needs to be grasped nearly entirely on the basis of written evidence. Several literary texts mention festive parades accompanied by music, such as *The building of Ninĝirsu's temple*. In one text passage towards the end of cylinder B, **sim**, **ala** and **balaĝ** are played during a procession celebrating the inauguration of the E-ninnu temple complex in Girsu which is led by the personalized **balaĝ** instrument Ušumgal-kalama.

[...] /GI\ EN ĝar-e si /sa$_2$\-a-da
kisal e$_2$-ninnu-/ke$_4$\ ḫul2-la si-a-da
si-im-da a$_2$-la$_2$ balaĝ nam-nar šu du$_7$-a
balaĝ ki aĝ$_2$-ni ušumgal kalam-ma
saĝ-ba ĝen-na-da
ensi$_2$ e$_2$-ninnu mu-du$_3$-a
gu$_3$-de$_2$-a en ^{d}nin-ĝir$_2$-su-ra
mu-na-da-ku$_4$-ku$_4$

"[...] to see that the courtyard of the E-ninnu will be filled with joy; to see that the ala and balaĝ instruments will sound in perfect concert with the sim, and to see that his beloved Ušumgal-kalama will walk in front of the procession, the ruler who had built the E-ninnu, Gudea, himself entered before Lord Ninĝirsu."
(GC B 15.18–16.2)

This kind of festive procession facilitates the appropriate frame to celebrate the temple complex's inauguration and the enhancement of positive emotions during this joyful event. Gudea, the ruler who had commissioned the rebuilding, appears as the central human agent at the head of the parade and enters before the highest god of the pantheon, Ninĝirsu, in order to receive his approval and appreciation.

V. 5. Music accompanying death and the afterlife – the Royal Cemetery of Ur

The ancient Mesopotamian's attitude towards death is well attested in various sources. It was shared by and reflected in beliefs about the nature of the spirit and the afterlife. At death, the spirit (Sum. **gidim**) traveled to the underworld, ruled by Ereškigal and her consort Nergal. It was the responsibility of the living to provide sustenance for the deceased. An existence after death was depended on an appropriate burial and properly performed mourning rites. These rituals, such as the ones for the god Dumuzi, as well as the instructions for the expulsion or propitiation of unfriendly ghosts are described in several texts (Scurlock 1995, 1883). The dead needed personal possessions, foodstuff, provisions for the journey to the netherworld, as well as gifts for the divinities residing there (c.f., Geld et al. 1991, 99–103).

Many literary compositions such as the city laments or the Epic of Gilgamesh address the meaning of death and ideas about the afterlife. *The Death of Gilgamesh* (G), for instance, describes laments conducted on behalf of the ruler's death, the offering of sacrifices for the deities of the netherworld, and mention members of the royal court which follow the king into death, including a **nar**, "his beloved musician" (G 3). The literary composition *The Death of Ur-Namma* (Ur-Namma A) confirms and expands this account. The text describes mourning rituals conducted in the course of ten days after the ruler's death. After Ur-Namma's corpse has been laid on his deathbed, a high priestess carries out a dirge which is answered by the gods of the living. The following passages describe the king's journey to the netherworld by chariot and boat. After having offered gifts to the gatekeepers, he prepares a banquet for the divinities and kings of the netherworld, including Gilgamesh and Dumuzi, because he knows the food is "bitter" and its water "brackish" (Ur-Namma A, 83). He presents offerings to the gods such as vessels and garments to Ereškigal and weapons to Nergal. After these divine ceremonies which correspond perfectly to the earthly cult for the gods, Ereškigal assigns Ur-Nama the rule over warriors killed in battle and convicted criminals. In the meantime, laments have been carried out in Sumer for ten days which finally reach Ur-Namma and are answered by him. Unfortunately, the text is fragmentary at this point so that the following mention of musical instruments – **tigi**, **adab**, **gigid** and **zamzam** – cannot be clearly associated with the rest of the text (Ur-Namma A 187). It is unclear whether the instruments were played in the underworld or on earth, and how this music is to be placed in the performance of the rites during or after the funeral of the king.

The existence in the netherworld appears to be a grey and gloomy reflection of the living world. Otherwise, living conditions are similar to those on earth. Music must have had a similar significance: musicians and instruments were the same as during life, and were brought along to the netherworld upon death. Instead of performing in temples or in the royal palace, they now directed their play towards the divinities of the underworld and lamented the ruler's death (Hartmann 1960, 283).

In addition to textual sources, there is a rich archaeological record. The Royal Cemetery of Ur is still the most important testimony of cultic burial acts in the 3rd millennium BCE. They represent a grander version of the ordinary Sumerian graves (Reade 2003, 95). The wealth of objects found in the cemetery may have been gifts for underworld deities even though it is uncertain if the earlier Sumerians shared their successors' beliefs in such offerings in order to court favor with the gods. The discovery of the physical remains of several musical instruments (nine lyres, two harps, a pair of silver flutes, chopper clappers, and possibly cymbals) is by far the most informative source providing knowledge about the ancient instruments' morphology (see ch. III. 2. 1.–2. and III. 4. 1.). They were discovered in four mass graves and two individual tombs (PG 789, 800, 1130, 1151, 1237, and 1332). In most cases, esp. in the larger burial chambers, the instruments were found close to female skeletons alongside the walls. The instrumental performance during burial ceremonies was thus exercised by women during this time period. Judging upon their head and neck jewelry, they might have been of higher social status (e.g., Hartmann 1960, 278). The cultic acts conducted during the burial ceremony in the Royal Cemetery remains obscure. It can be assumed, however, that music had been performed until the very last moment before death, since the find context attests that a female musician found in PG 800 had her hands at the point where the original stings of the lyre had once run (Hartmann 1960, 284).

The Great Death Pit (PG 1237) was the most spectacular of the royal tombs (cat. no. 54 c). It included six men and 68 women. The armed men were found close to the tomb's entrance, while most women lay in rows of four along the southwestern wall. Another six were found under a canopy in its southern corner, and six near three large lyres close the southeastern wall ("Golden Lyre", "Silver Lyre", and "Boat-shaped Lyre" | cat. nos. 54–56). The find circumstance indicates that music had been performed during the funeral ceremony. Half the women had cups or jars, suggestive of banqueting. The neat arrangement of bodies convinced Woolley (1934, 42) that the people had not been murdered, but had gone voluntarily to their deaths by drinking a deadly

poison. Various theories have been proposed which sought to clarify the question why such a great number of court members had accompanied the late ruler or high-ranking person into death. Woolley assumed that in so doing they were assured a "less nebulous and miserable existence" than ordinary men and women. Furthermore, he proposed that "the members of the king's court who went down with music into his grave did so more or less voluntarily, that it was a privilege rather than a doom pronounced on them. [...] [They] were translated to a higher sphere of service." Moortgat, on the other hand, saw in these funeral rites a connection to the Tammuz cult. According to him, the ruler was regarded as the god Tammuz, who after death entered the underworld accompanied by his entourage. After a certain time, the king celebrated his resurrection which was executed symbolically by removing the mortal remains from the grave. Moortgat based his assumption on the fact that the skeleton was missing in PG 789, the chamber of the king, while valuable objects were left behind (Moortgart, in Hartmann 1960, 280).

V. 5. 1. The intermingling of music in mythology in the context of death

A significant part of Early Mesopotamian funerary rites is visualized in the imagery of the zoomorphic lyre. The instrument can be identified as **balaĝ** (at least in the 2nd half of the 3rd millennium BCE) which belonged to the repertoire of the lamentation priest. The bull's head attached to the front of the sound body represents the sun god Šamaš, the divine judge who shines light on all things and the only being which repeatedly descends into the underworld and emerges again at sunrise (e.g., cat. no. 57). Additionally, the front panel of a lyre found in PG 789 tells the story of a mythological funeral ritual conducted by otherworldly actors (c.f., Hansen 2003, 105 – 107 | cat. no. 59). The upmost panel shows a nude hero wrestling with two rampant human-headed bulls. This scene symbolizes men's control over nature. In the image below, a hyena carries butchered meat on a table and a lion holds a jar and a pouring vessel resembling the ones discovered in the tombs (Woolley 1934, 280). The next register shows an equid playing on a zoomorphic lyre shaped like a recumbent bull. A bear either holds onto the cross section of the instrument's frontal joke and cross bar or possibly claps his hand. On top of the bear's right foot sits a jackal-like animal which is playing a sistrum and a flat percussion instrument. The bottom panel depicts the scorpion man, the guardian of the entrance to the underworld, and

thus presumably represents the phase of the ritual during which the deceased is believed to arrive at the doors of the netherworld.

It is noteworthy that the inlay panel depicts animals, such as the bear, which are not native to the Mesopotamian plain, as well as instruments, such as the sistrum and the flat percussion object, which do not occur in the Sumerian instrumentarium of this time. It can be assumed that the representation of thus far unknown musical instruments as well as animals had been introduced from another culture (Hartmann 1960, 270).

Representations of animals which perform human actions are in general extremely rare in ancient Mesopotamian art (other examples are possibly cat. nos. 8 and 15). Another image on a cylinder seal from Ur dating to the middle of the 3rd millennium BCE shows a number of animals involved in a symposium scene: a capricorn and a donkey offer sacrifices, followed by two donkeys playing on a portable harp and clappers. Between these larger animals, there are three smaller ones which may also play instruments. The whole group walks towards a lion on a throne holding a drinking vessel. According to Hartmann (1960, 273), it is possible to associate this scene with the ideational complex of death and the afterlife: the lion may represent thoughts of death (in connection with the motif of the struggle between man and lion which is frequently attested in iconography) or the god of the underworld. Thus, the animal symposium is interpreted as a feast in the underworld.

Animals had been a subject of entertainment for millennia (c.f., ch. V. 2. 6.). They have been hunted for entertainment or displayed while they hunt for prey. Furthermore, violent competitions involving wild beasts and acts performed by trained animals, such as the flute playing monkey seen on Old Babylonian terracotta plaques (e.g., Rashid 1984, fig. 86, 90, 119), become increasingly prominent during the 2nd millennium BCE.

Another intermingling of music and mythology is evident in the case of two silver pipes found in the Royal Tombs (PG 333 | cat. no. 62). The instruments which had once been two straight pipes (cat. no. 62 b) had been twisted, broken and crushed into a bundle before the burial, and thus had deliberately been made unplayable. Their destruction contrast with the nondestructive burial of the string instruments. An explanation for this is provided in Mesopotamian mythology (Lawergren 2010, 88). The literary composition *Inanna's descent to the nether world* (INW) tells the story of the goddess's death and her desire to return to the world of the living. She is able to rise when her archetypical lover Dumuzi takes her place, an exchange they repeat periodically.

The shepherd-god Dumuzi is closely associated with pipes. Thus, Lawergren (2010, 88) speculates that "The pipes fell silent when he descended to the underworld, but when he returned the pipes played again and the living rejoiced. It might be that the destruction of the silver pipes had been an act in reverence of Dumuzi's in the underworld."

V. 6. Banquet and presentation scenes during the Akkadian Period

The Akkadian period, often associated with a belligerent attitude, introduced several innovations and new developments to the Mesopotamia musical culture and tradition. The banquet scene, for instance, which had been favored in the Early Dynastic period was frequently replaced by iconographic attestations showing musicians playing in the presence of deities in so-called presentation scenes (Collon 1987, 33–35). The following paragraphs investigate all known images from this time period. Interestingly, the evidence is quite abundant and diverse, and therefore, it can be concluded that the theory postulated in previous studies that the Akkadian period initiated a simplification of musical culture and the reduction of the instrumental repertoire (e.g., Hartmann 1960, 265–265) can be confound.

The cylinder seal of "Ur-Ur the singer" depicts a presentation scene in front of the Akkadian god Ea, Sumerian Enki, the keeper of Eridu who also happened to be the god of wisdom and patron of musicians and craftsmen (cat. no. 71). The water god was popular during the Akkadian period, and occurs frequently in iconography. He is recognizable by streams of water flowing from his shoulders, often with fish swimming up them (Collon 1987, 35). The seated Ea is accompanied by a minor god standing behind him, and approached by a doubled-faced servant, probably Isimud. The latter raises his left arm in an expression of eloquence or praise while the right hand holds a mace. He is followed by another armed deity who seems to prod a captive mythical hybrid figure in the back with a dart, probably the Anzû, who stole the Tablet of Destinies ("**Zu**-bird" in Collon 2013, 23). A small musician is depicted sitting on the floor behind the deities and below the inscription (LÚ.NAR) designating him as the owner of the seal. On a mythological level, the lutenist possibly accompanied the event celebrating the successful capture of the thief and its presentation before Ea. On the mundane, it is evident that the owner of the seal (possibly also another commissioner or the artist) had deliberately chosen to represent the singer in the context of this specific myth. This connection between singer and composition can have several explanations, one of them being that Ur-Ur had been famous for performing this song.

A second Akkadian cylinder seal shows a banquet scene attended by two gods (cat. no. 72). To the right, the seated Ea is depicted with streams of water erupting from his shoulders and a vessel behind him. The deity opposite Ea is identifiable as Nana, the god of the new moon and the keeper of Ur, due to a crescent symbol next to his head (Dumbrill 2005, 323, pl. 9-10; Rimmer 1969, 22–23; 45; 94). He raises his left arm symmetry to Ea's right one, indicating an expression

of a dialogue. The doubled-faced servant Isimud and a seated lutenist are depicted between the gods. The musician directs his play towards Nana. The composition suggests that Ea is the commissioner of the banquet who prepared food, drinks and entertainment for his guest.

Interestingly, the lute has arguably been introduced to the Mesopotamian instrumentarium in the Akkadian period. The images described above are the only attestations of the instrument during this period, and in both cases the instrument is associated with Ea.

Several other cylinder seal impressions feature diverse musical performances before gods. One of them depicts a small seated musician with cocked legs playing the flute in front of a deity. The image differs from its contemporaries due to the dense quantity of filling motives and their unstructured arrangement (cat. no. 65). On an impression from Urkeš (modern Tell Mozan) a dining deity is surrounded by minor gods or servants and entertained by two musicians, a female lyrist and a singer (cat. no. 70). The belligerent attitude associated with the Akkadian period is evident in the following two images: the first one shows two female musicians, a harpist and a woman playing clappers, before a god equipped with bow and quiver who is accompanied by two minor deities (cat. no. 66). On the second seal impression, the goddess Ištar sits on a lion throne (Ward 1910, 155, Fig. 410; c.f., Boehmer 1965, 119 | cat. no. 68). In front of her, separated by a table shaped like an hourglass, are two seated musicians, a bearded lyricist to left and a man with a sistrum and a flat percussion instrument to the right (e.g., Hartmann 1960, 329, fig. 33; Rashid 1984, 64, fig. 42). Gabbay (2008, 24) assumes that the context of these musical performances is connected to the repertoire of the **gala**: the deity is front of whom the musicians are playing is the goddess of war. The music is therefore intended to appease the deity's heart which corresponds to the role of the performance of the Emesal prayers in their musical context. The lyre can be identified as **balaĝ**, while the sistrum and flat percussion instrument, are likely to be **šem** and **meze**, even though it is uncertain which one is which (Gabbay 2008, 25).

Furthermore, there are two images on cylinder seals which show banquet scenes attended by a male human and two servants. In one case, the man is entertained by lyricist seated opposite him who is playing on a portable zoomorphic instrument on his lap (cat. no. 67). The other image shows a woman playing on a medium-sized lyre without zoomorphic sound body (cat. no. 69). Its shape differs greatly from the appearance of earlier periods, and can be viewed as innovation of the Akkadian period. It is remarkable that the musicians evidently enjoy a comparable or even equal social status to the main person of the banquet since they are depicted in on a par with him.

V. 7. Construction activities and inauguration ceremonies – *The building of Ninĝirsu's temple*

The Akkadian period is superseded by the 3rd Dynasty of Ur during which Mesopotamian cities were unified into bureaucratic states. The last era of the 3rd millennium BCE, the "Neo-Sumerian", is characterized by the reuse of the Sumerian language and culture (Aruz 2003, 5). Evidence concerning music is comparably rich in this century, mainly due to complementary textual and iconographical evidence during the reign of Gudea of Lagaš (ca. 2100-2000 BCE). On the one hand, there is a series of fragments belonging to steles which were dedicated to temples in ancient Girsu (Telloh), including several scenes of musical performance (cat. nos. 74–81). On the other hand, the literary composition *The building of Ninĝirsu's temple* memorializes the ruler's building activities and the inauguration ceremony of the E-Ninnu temple complex in the city. The praise hymn (**zà.mí**) is inscribed on two large clay cylinders (GC A and B). It was composed by Gudea himself, shortly before the rise of the Ur III Dynasty, in a time of economic and social prosperity (Heimple 2015, 119). The text presents a sequence of narratives from the procurement of raw materials for the construction to the conduction of rituals and the reinsurance of kingship (Rubio 2009, 52; Suter 2000). Several passages mention instruments which were played in a variety of contexts. Moreover, it can be assumed that the praise hymn had been performed on several occasions since there the text refers to the performance of various songs during the construction process (Suter 2000,157; 278).

The stele fragments show three different types of instruments and musicians: the large, double-membraned, cylindrical frame drum identified as **ala** (cat. nos. 75–88), a pair of cymbals (**sim**?) (cat. no. 75), and women clapping their hands (cat. no. 80–81). The most interesting among the fragments is the so-called Stele of Music (cat. no. 74 a–b). The image shows two superimposed registers. In the lower one, a seated male musician plays on a large double-bull lyre. A second person in front of the instrument faces right and has his hands folded in front of his chest. The upper register shows four bald-headed and beardless man walking towards the right. Their body height increases from the left to the right, hinting at a social differentiation.

Among several interpretations (e.g., Börker-Klähn 1982, 33–34, no. 91; Rashid 1984, 66), the following appears to be the most plausible: the fragment shows a cultic ceremony conducted during the foundation of Ninĝirsu's temple in the E-Ninnu (André-Salvini 1994, 10–11). The scene in the upper register represents measuring or construction work. This observation is

based on the objects carried by the two people to the right which can be identified as a roll of rope, a peg/plow/hammer (right), and a hoe (left) (Suter 2000, 184–185). The man leading the procession could represent Gudea himself, presumably followed by his son Ur-Ninĝirsu and two priests. The ceremony is accompanied by music in the lower register. The person standing in front of the lyre might be a singer. The instrument itself can be identified as **balaĝ** according to the following description:

> **a-ga balaĝ-a-bi gud gu$_3$ nun di**
>
> "The hall of the balaĝ is a roaring bull"
>
> (GC A 28.17)

This interpretation is supported by two text passages early in *Gudea Cylinder A* (6.24; 7.24): the personalized **balaĝ** instrument Ušumgal-kalama is introduced as divine consoler. As such, it is acting as a communication medium between Gudea and Ninĝirsu in order to receive approval and instruction for the building program (see ch. V. 7. 1.).

Furthermore, varying instrumental ensembles are attested in several performative contexts in the text:

- **Adab**, **sim** and **ala** are initially mentioned in a ritual during which their music accompanies a libation ceremony conducted by Gudea during the preparation of brick-molds for the construction of the temple (A 18.18). Thus, the images of large frame drums (**ala**) and cymbals (**sim**?) on stele fragments are likely to attest the instruments as part of the construction work (Mirelman 2014, 159 | c.f., Ur-Namma Stele cat. no. 83) rather than the bestowal of gifts during the temple's inauguration (Suter 2000, 190–195).
- In another passage, **sim** and **ala** sound loudly in holy praise of prosperity in "its balaĝ hall" (**balaĝ-a-bi**), which "is a roaring bull" (A 28.17–18). It is unclear if the **balaĝ** is merely indicating a place or was played alongside **sim** and **ala**.
- On Cylinder B, Gudea offers the **balaĝ** instrument Ušumgal-kalama as a votive gift to Ninĝirsu in the courtyard of the E-ninnu to the joyful sound of **tigi**, **alĝar** and **miritum** (B 10.9–14).
- Furthermore, **sim**, **ala** and **balaĝ** are played during a procession celebrating the inauguration of the temple complex led by Ušumgal-kalama (B 15.20–21 | c.f., ch. V. 4.).
- At last, the "roaring" instruments **tigi** and **ala** accompany Ušumgal-kalama during animal and libation sacrifices conducted by Gudea in the shrine of the E-ninnu for a banquet for Ninĝirsu (B 18.22–19.1).

Alĝar, **balaĝ**, **miritum** and **tigi** can be identified as chordophones, **adab**, **ala** and **sim** as percussion instruments (Krispijn 2010, 126).

Tab. 5: Instruments mentioned in the *Gudea Cylinders*

	A 6.24–25 / A 7.24–25	A 18.18	A 28.17–18	B 10.9, 11, 14	B 15. 20–21	B 18.22–19.1
alĝar				al-ĝar		
balaĝ			(balaĝ-a-bi "balaĝ hall")		balaĝ	
balaĝ Ušumgal-kalama	balaĝ [...] ušumgal kalam-ma, ĝiš-gu$_3$-di			nar [...] ušumgal kalam-ma	balaĝ [...] ušumgal kalam-ma	ušumgal kalam-ma
miritum				mi-ri$_2$-tum		
tigi				ti-gi$_4$		ti-gi$_4$-a
adab		a-dab$_6$				
ala		a$_2$-la$_2$	a$_2$-la$_2$		a$_2$-la$_2$	a$_2$-la$_2$
šim		si-im	si-im		si-im-da	

The corpus of stele fragments from Telloh has many parallels to the stele of the Ur-Namma, the king of Ur around 2000 BCE (cat. no. 83). The resemblance of the artistic rendering is indeed so close that one might wonder if Ur-Namma's sculptors might have copied from the works of ancient Girsu. This is most obvious when comparing the depictions of the large frame drums, cymbals and musicians which are virtually identical (c.f., ch. II. 2. 3. and II. 2. 4. 2.). Moreover, the steles seem to show comparable scenes since in both cases the construction of temples and their dedication to the pantheon's highest deities appear to be the main topics. Similar to Gudea on the "Stele of Music", Ur-Namma also presents himself as being devoted to build great monuments for the gods. In the third register on the front side, he is depicted walking behind a deity and shouldering an axe. He is accompanied by a servant who is carrying a wood plane and dividers (Börker-Klähn 1982, 41 | fig. 4).

Fig. 4: Fragment of the Ur-Namma Stele showing the ruler as an architect in the 3rd register. University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (B16676.14) (www.penn.museum).

V. 7. 1. The divinized balaĝ instrument – the concept of transcendental communication by means of musical instruments

One among Gudea's many instruments deserves special attention: the **balaĝ**, which is also is known as a song genre. As an instrument, it belonged to the repertoire of the lamentation priest and had been entrusted to the care of the **gala-maḫ** (chief lamentation priest; Sallaberger 1993, 298 for Ur III; Shehata 2009, 66–93 for OB). According to the ancient terminology, Balaĝ songs were regarded as prayers (**šud**$_3$) addressed to the main deities of the pantheon (Cohen 1988, 29–31; Shehata 2009, 247). The name of the deity is stated by "Balaĝ of the deity DN" in subscripts at the end of the text. The content of the compositions is formulated as a lament, but sometimes also contains narrative elements (e.g., Inanna mourning over the loss of her husband Dumuzi). Their function is to appease the addressed deity. The cultic playing of the **balaĝ** instrument during Balaĝ prayers connects the mythological and the concrete realm. The performance, conducted in front of a divine statue, functions as a counsel in favor of humanity asking for the appeasement of the god (Gabbay 2014, 142). It is based on the conception that a

restless, homeless, angry or sad deity is a danger to the preservation of the secular order. This is evident in the following example of the GU_4.BALAG deity of Ninĝirsu:

> **ḏu$_{11}$-ga-lugal-a-ni-ša-ḫuĝ-ĝe$_{26}$**
> "He appeases his master with speech"
> (Litke 1998, 177)

The logogram GU_4.BALAG ("balaĝ-bull") identifies minor deities in god lists dating to the 1st millennium BCE (e.g., AN = ^{d}Anum) and is translated into Akk. *mundalku* which means "counselor" or "advisor". Several GU_4.BALAG are associated with the activity **ad-gi$_4$-gi$_4$**, ("return a sound", "answer" or "advise") which describes advice or responses from the divine realm (Gabbay 2014, 138–142). The word is, for instance, applied to Ušumgalkalama (GC A 6.24–A 6.25; A 7.24–7.25) and Lugalsisa (GC B 8.20–8.21), "counselors" of Ninĝirsu in the *Gudea Cylinders*. These minor deities performed regular prayers on behalf of the city-state Lagaš, its ruler, and the inhabitants.

This conception was not merely a metaphor since the instruments' power to communicate with the divine realm was considered to be real. A concrete image is found in a Balaĝ prayer which provides a reference to the appearance of the **balaĝ** identifiable as a zoomorphic lyre:

> "My small balaĝ my roaring wild bull! May holy balaĝ my spouse, my lapis-lazuli (instrument)! My ad-gi$_4$-gi$_4$, my sur$_9$-gal instrument! My ad-gi$_4$-gi$_4$, Gašanibizibara (=Ninigizibara)!"
> (Volk 2006, 94–95)

Ninigizibara of Inanna is initially attested in the reign of Šulgi (Heimpel 1998–2001, 382–383). Offerings for the divinized instrument are attested in administrative texts from Umma and Uruk dating to the Ur III period (Sallaberger 1993, 220, tab. 72). In the Old Babylonian period, a regular cult had developed in Isin, Larsa, Sippar, Mari, and Tuttul (e.g., Heimpel 1998–2001, 384; Richter 2004, 212–213, 373–374). In general, evidence for ritual offerings, such as animal sacrifices, herbal products and libations presented to the **balaĝ**, are documented from the Early Dynastic to the Old Babylonian period (Sallaberger 1993, 297–298; Shehata 2014, 117 and fn. 81).

The building of Ninĝirsu's temple is essential in order to understand the concept of divinized instruments and how the performance of ritual music was believed to affect the gods (Franklin 2015, 27). In the beginning of the texts, the goddess Nanše interprets Gudea's dream who seeks Ninĝirsu approval and guidance for the architectural plans for the temple's construction. In order to make Ninĝirsu well-disposed towards the Gudea, she advises him to dedicate a magnificent chariot and other gifts to the god. The king is further told to make his request through the medium of the **balaĝ** instrument. It passes Gudea's wish on to Ninĝirsu whose obedience it will compel. Thus, it possessed the power to create a communication channel between the divine and mundane realm. As a herald and translator, it addresses the deity directly with a special hermeneutic language otherwise inaccessible for men.

> "Enter before the warrior who loves gifts, before your master Lord Ninĝirsu in [his temple] E-ninnu-the-white-Anzud-bird, together with his beloved balaĝ, Ušumgal-kalama, his famous instrument, his tool of counsel (nîĝ-ad-gi4-gi4). Your requests will then be taken as if they were commands; and the balaĝ will make the inclination of the lord – which is as inconceivable as the heavens – will make the inclination of Ninĝirsu, the son of Enlil, favorable for you so that he will reveal the design of his house to you in every detail. With his powers, which are the greatest, the warrior will make the house thrive (?) for you."
>
> (GC A 6.24–7.8)

It is quite likely that these passages relate to the "Stele of Music" described above. The double-bull lyre depicted on the fragment can therefore be identified as Ušumgal-kalama, the material personification of Ninĝirsu's divine consoler, who receives approval and instruction for the construction of the temple complex.

This **balaĝ**'s function is also mentioned in another passage:

> "With his divine duties, namely to soothe the heart, to soothe the spirits; to dry weeping eyes; to banish mourning from the mourning heart; to ... the heart of the lord that rises like the sea, that washes away like the Euphrates, that hits like a flood storm, that has overflowed with joy after inundating a land which is Enlil's enemy, Gudea introduced his balaĝ, Lugal-igi-ḫuš, to Lord Ninĝirsu."
>
> (GC B 16.10–11.2)

This creates the circular conception that the **balaĝ** gods Ušumgal-kalama and Lugal-igi-ḫuš perform on the instruments of which they are considered the spirit. The musical counsels were in fact conducted by the temple personnel which seemingly instantiated the **balaĝ** gods whose epiphanies were synchronous to the ritual (Franklin 2015, 32). The **balaĝ** instrument was usually attributed to the **gala**. The description "his beloved musician Ušumgalkalama", **nar ki aĝ2-a-ni ušumgal kalam-ma** (B10.14), suggests, however, that the instrument had also been played by the **nar**, at least during the reign of Gudea (Gabbay 2014, 140, fn. 31).

The king's relationship to the divinized instrument is described in the following passage in which a future inauguration ritual is imagined:

> "to see that his beloved Ušumgal-kalama will walk in front of the procession, the ruler who had built the E-ninnu, Gudea, himself entered before Lord Ninĝirsu."
> (GC B 15.21–16.2; c.f., ch. V. 4.)

Gudea appears as the sole human actor who escorts the **balaĝ** god at the front of the parade. Metaphorically, this evokes a scene of the king alongside Ušumgal-kalama indicating some kind of "guardian angel relationship" between Gudea and the deity in analogy to presentation scenes on cylinder seals of the Akkadian and Ur III periods (Franklin 2015, 33; c.f., Asher-Greve and Westenholz 2013, 199–202; Collon 1987, 36).

V. 8. Šulgi, the divine king as musician

The image of the king who personally performs during events accompanied by divinized instruments is related to the figure of the musician king. The issue is associated with the phenomenon of divine kingship in Mesopotamia (Michalowski 2008, 41–42). Following in the footsteps of Naram-Sîn, the concept of the king as a portrait of a living god is next seen flourishing under Šulgi, the second king of the 3rd Dynasty of Ur. He idealizes himself as the link between humans and gods, and the embodiment of civilization and all its achievements (Franklin 2015, 33). As Pruzsinszky noted (2009b, 32): "Arts always have been a tool for a monarch's ostentation of power and glory". One aspect of Šulgi's universal perfection was his absolute mastery of music. This is illustrated in a passage from one of his royal praise hymns, a new genre which presumably arose during this time period in connection with the divine kingship:

> "I, Šulgi, king of Urim, have also devoted myself to the art of music. Nothing is too complicated for me; I know the full extent of the tigi and the adab, the perfection of the art of music. When I fix the frets on the lute (giššukarak), which enraptures my heart, I never damage its neck; I have devised rules for raising and lowering its intervals. On the [sc. instrument with] eleven tuning-pegs, the lyre (zami), I know the melodious tuning. I am familiar with the sa-eš and with drumming on its musical soundbox. I can take in my hands the miritum, which brings the house [sc. astonished] silence. I know the finger technique of the alĝar and sabitum, royal creations. In the same way I can produce sounds from the [King-of-Kish instrument] urzababitum, the ḫarḫar, the zan(n)aru, the ur-gula and the dim-lu-magura. Even if they bring to me, as one might to a skilled musician, a musical instrument (gudi) that I have not heard before, when I strike it up I make its true sound known; I am able to handle it just like something that has been in my hands before. If in tuning I tighten, loosen or set [sc. the strings], they do not slip from my hand. I never make the double-pipe sound like a shepherd's instrument, and on my own initiative I can wail a sumunša or make a lament as well as anyone who does it regularly."
>
> (Š B 154–174; trans. partially adapted on the basis of text and commentary in Krispijn 1990, esp. 8–12 for miritum, sabitum, urzababitum, and zan(n)aru)

Notably, the hymn names at least four instruments of foreign provenance and/or association (**miritum** = "instrument from Mari"; **sabitum** = "instrument of Sabu"; **urzababitum**; **zan[n]aru**).

The **urzababitum** is an exceptional case of the interaction between the divinized instrument and the god-like king as a musician: it refers to Ur-Zababa, the historical king of Kish whose throne was seized by Sargon. The name is also attested in the Old Babylonian / Middle Assyrian god list AN = ᵈAnum as a **balaĝ** deity of Ninurta (Franklin 2015, 35, fn. 114). Thus, a multilayered image is created, of the divine king Šulgi who plays an instrument named after another ruler, who as the instrument's god is in turn advisor to the main deity, Ninurta, himself the paragon of the warrior king (Franklin 2015, 36, incl. fn. 116).

Moreover, the mention of foreign instruments, such as **miritum** and **sabitum** which also occur side-by-side within a larger instrumentarium in other Ur III hymns (e.g., EN 63), suggests that ensembles were deliberately cosmopolitan. Kings and their royal courts are known to have been the seats of cultural diversity. In order to display power and glory in an exotic and prestigious manner, the contemporary court had been filled with professional and talented musicians (Pruzsinszky 2009b, 31). The cultural horizon is thus visualized by the spectrum of instruments. Šulgi's claim of absolute knowledge of instruments creates an image of musical exotica sent as tribute or gifts, and introduced by musicians from beyond the kingdom's periphery. Thus, his international musical vision can be seen as an expression of political power and cultural prestige. It insinuates the harmonious peace created under his reign and creates an image of the ruler at rest from his expeditions who enjoys the musical delights he has assembled (Franklin 2015, 36–37).

The king's authority over and use of court musicians for his own glorification and propaganda is an interesting topic which will be discussed in the following subchapter.

V. 8. 1. Musicians as instruments of political propaganda

In his royal hymns, Šulgi presents himself as a supporter of the education of musicians in the **edubba** and academies (**ki umum**) (Pruzsinszky 2010a, 100). Textual sources confirm the close association between the **nar** and the king (see ch. III. 1; c.f., Gadotti 2010, 52–55; Pruzsinszky 2007, 329–352). Musicians and singers employed by the court were commissioned to entertain the king and his guests. They performed epics and myths (Jacobsen 1987, xiii) and thus played a central role in the oral transmission of Mesopotamian literature and culture. Moreover, their performance was intended to propagate the royal ideology and the king's reputation in society.

According to Pruzsinszky (2010a, 96–97), ancient oriental music cannot be proven as pure and purposeless art. Rather, it is always observed in conjunction with a targeted use: music serves as an instrument for the imparting of knowledge and the awakening of emotions during events. Textual evidence dating to the Ur III period suggests that the royal singers were more than servants of the king. They belonged to the elite and enjoyed the patronage of the court, for instance, in the form of high and regular payment or gifts. Administrative texts dating to the Ur III period, for instance, attest that **nar** musicians received presents from the king (Pruzsinszky 2010b, 33). This privilege underlines their reputation: the ruler rewarded members of the elite and those who served to anchor his esteem and reputation within society. An explicit reason for these gifts is never clearly stated. It can be assumed, however, that the musicians were remunerated for their performance on special occasions, such as cultic and festive events (Pruzsinszky 210b, 34). According to Ziegler's work on texts from Mari (2007), the **nar** was responsible for education and diplomatic relationships. Furthermore, he played an important role in the creation of opinion. Singers and musicians functioned as a medium to formulate and propagandize political, cultural and religious contents of the court (Pruzsinszky 2010a, 109). The singer therefore becomes an instrument of legitimization and glorification of the king, the shaping of opinion and propaganda. *Pruzsi*nszky further nots that the exchange of foreign musicians and instruments as gifts among the great courts belonged to the diplomatic exchange which played an eminent role in the interplay of political powers (2009, 32).

Individual singers or groups of musicians of different social status have been known to travel throughout the land of ancient Mesopotamia in the course of the 3rd millennium BCE, and thus promoted intra- and intercultural exchange of art and knowledge. The earliest evidence of travelling musicians dates to the 26th century BCE: a document from Fara mentions a **nar** from Uruk among visitors from Uruk and Nippur who temporarily resided at Šuruppak and received rations of barley. These individuals were presumably foreign officials who were remunerated by the city while fulfilling their duties there (Pruzsinszky 2010b, 32). Other examples are administrative sources from Ebla, Mari, Alalaḫ and Niniveh dating to the 24th century BCE which attest singers who traveled alongside notables and kings to the main centers of Upper Mesopotamia, such as Nagar, Emar, Kiš, Tuttul and Ibal, and performed during special occasions, such as military campaigns, cultic rituals and festivities including marriage celebrations (Pruzsinszky 2010b, 32). In the Ur III period, the most prestigious musicians, the **nar lugal**, accompanied the royal family on voyages to distant city, such as Susa, in order to

organize the royal cult (Pruzsinszky 2010b, 33). Also, singers and musicians belonging to the temple travelled to other cities to attend ceremonies (Pruzsinszky 2010b, 37).
In an article on the mobility of musicians and singers in the Ur III period, Pruzsinszky (2009b, 37–38) concludes the following purposes for travel: (1) they accompanied delegations and acted as messengers of the royal court. (2) they were responsible for the organization and performance of cultic or festive ceremonies, presumably entertained by music, and were thus accountable for the tradition of musical, religious and political matters.

The question of the authorship of the literary works performed by the musicians remains a debated issue (e.g., Black et al. 2004, xlv; Sallaberger 2004, 133). Klein (1981, 21) noted the following: "Accordingly, the scribal schools were charged with the task of trading these hymns, while the temple and palace singers were charged with having them recited quite regularly in the cult and in the courtly ceremonial and entertainment." Black, on the other hand, is of the opinion that the musicians themselves had been the authors of compositions, and thus calls the **nar** "performer-composer" or "court poet" (1983–1984, 112–113). Generally, it has been assumed that the compositions were done by the **um-mi-a** or **ummānu**, specially educated scribes (Edzard 2004, 571). In any case, the authors had been supervised in order to fulfill a certain esthetic, cultural, religious or political function.

V. 9. Music in times of tragedy

In contrast to the cosmopolitan and harmonious image created by Šulgi, catastrophic situations are often characterized by the silencing of music. When his predecessor, Ur-Namma, was killed in battle, a long hymn was composed for him, known as *The Death of Ur-Namma* (see ch. V. 5). One passage reads as follows:

> "My tigi, adab, flute (gi-gid$_2$) and zamzam songs have been turned into laments because of me. The instruments of the house of music have been propped against the wall."
> (Ur-Namma A 187–188)

The breakdown of the cultic routine and the silencing of instruments is described in several city laments. This genre as well as the lamentations and dirges associated with the gala priests (Balaĝ and Eršemma) are initially attested during the Old Babylonian period. Several examples are provided below:
The Lament for Urim implies that the **šem**, **ala** and **tigi** were no longer performed in Ur:

> **a-u$_3$-a e$_2$ ezem-ma-za ezen nu-mu-ni-in-dug$_3$-ge-eš**
> **šem$_3$ ^{kuš}a$_2$-la$_2$-e niĝ$_2$ šag$_4$ ḫul$_2$-le-da tigi-a nu-mu-ra-an-du$_{12}$-uš**
> "The aua priests do not celebrate the festivals in your house of festivals. They do not play for you the šem and ala instruments which gladden the heart, nor the tigi."
> (LU 355–356)

The Lament for Sumer and Urim, mentions the silencing of **tigi**, **šem** and **ala**, as well as the **balaĝ** instrument a few lines below in a different context:

> **ki$^{?}$ kug-ba tigi$_2$ šem$_5$ ^{kuš}a$_2$-la$_2$-e gu$_3$ nun nu-mu-ni-ib-be$_2$**
> **^{ĝiš}tigi$_2$ maḫ-ba er$_2^{?}$ X [...]-si-a šir$_3$ kug nu-mu-na-ab-be$_2$ [...]**
> **a$_2$-nu$_2$-da kug ^{d}nanna-ka balaĝ na-mu-un-tag-ge-ne**
> „In its sacred place (?) the tigi, šem and ala instruments did not sound. Its mighty tigi ... did not perform its sacred song. [...] In the sacred bedchamber of Nanna musicians no longer played the balaĝ."
> (LSU 436–437 and 441, in Michalowski 1989, 64)

A similar description is provided in *The Lament for Nibru* in which the **šem** and **ala** are listed, this time without the **tigi**:

> **^{kuš}šem$_5$ ^{kuš}a$_2$-la$_2$ mu-un-du$_{12}$-a re**
> **i-lu gig-ga-a a-na-še$_3$ ud mi-ni-ib$_2$-zal**
> "Why were those who once played the šem and ala spending their time in bitter lamenting?"
> (LN 38–39, in Tinney 1996, 98)

Another disastrous event is described in *The Curse of Akkade*. The text shares several features and motifs typical of the genre of city laments (Cooper 1983, 20–26), and has been among the most studied and copied in scribal school in the Old Babylonian period. However, it ends with a **zami** doxology which is attested in narrative compositions, wisdom literature, and some hymns (Wilcke 1975, 258). *The Curse of Akkade* already occurs in Ur III manuscripts and therefore predates the genre of city laments. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that an earlier tradition of lamentations existed with which *The Curse of Akkade* would have interacted (Cooper 2006). It has been assumed that the composition provided the basic structural and thematic concept for *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* (Michałowski 1989, 8–9). This would postulate that *The Curse of Akkade* is the first of the city laments known today (Vanstiphout 1986, 7–8). A passage from the text lists all known musical instruments belonging to the **gala**'s repertoire, as well as choirs:

> "At that time, Enlil rebuilt his great sanctuaries into small reed (?) sanctuaries and from east to west he reduced their storehouses. The old women who survived those days, the old men who survived those days and the chief lamentation singer [gala-maḫ] who survived those years set up seven balaĝ [instruments], as if they stood at the horizon, and together with [?] ub, meze, and lilis (Var. ub, šem, and lilis // ub and bronze šem) made them resound to Enlil like Iškur for seven days and seven nights. The old women did not restrain the cry "Alas for my city!". The old men did not restrain the cry "Alas for its people!". The lamentation singer did not restrain the cry "Alas for the E-kur!"
> (CA 193–205, in Cooper 1983, 59, 61)

The passage describes the performance of an extensive ritual lamentation conducted due to the cursing and destruction which befell the city on Enlil's command. In order to appease the god, the **gala-maḫ** is playing his instruments. Seven **balaĝ** instruments are opposed to **ub**, **šem**,

meze and **lilis**, which occur in three different combinations in various transcripts[4]. Whether the **balaĝ** instruments were actually played, or had rather been the object of lamentation is not made clear. The text implies that they were the focus of the ritual without actually sounding. They remained passive recipients while **ub**, **meze**, und **lilis** were played by the **gala-maḫ**. The orchestra is accompanied by choral singing of old men and women as well as gala priests.

[4] **ub$_3$ {me-ze$_2$ li-li-is$_3$} {(some mss. have instead:) šem$_3$ li-li-is$_3$} {(1 ms. has instead:) šem$_3$ zabar}** (ETCSL 2.1.5, 201; cf. Cooper 1983, 201).

V. 10. Music in love and marriage

The last contexts discussed in this thesis is likely to have been accompanied by music throughout time. The celebration of marriages goes hand in hand with joyful emotions which were emphasized by musical performances. Several textual sources attest the ritual unification of a man and a woman, however, these events cannot be identified with certainty in iconographic representations. Various banquet scenes have been interpreted as depictions of marriage rituals (e.g., Cooper 1975, 259–269). The banquet in its proper shape is mostly attested in the Early Dynastic II and II periods on seals, votive plaques and inlays. It is associated with a plurality of scenes, such as herds of domestic animals, bearers of offerings and gifts, boats, chariots, musical entertainment, combats or sportive competition. Arguably, this complex could just as easily represent any other festive occasion than marriages. However, most elements are recalled in the so-called New Year's Festival, as recorded in the hymns of Šulgi or Iddin-Dagan. In these royal hymns, the king's position as the goddess's favorite is celebrated in a wedding ceremony as the climax of the feast. They contain many literary reflections of Inanna as the protectress of the king who is assuming the figure of Dumuzi, the goddess's ancient archetypal lover. This is testified, for instance, in a praise poem for Šulgi (Š X, esp. 14–41) in which Inanna sings an erotic song for the king, declaring him her "good shepherd". Furthermore, the goddess is represented as a sort of muse in *Šulgi* B in which the king claims that "Inanna, the queen of the gods, the protective deity of my power, has perfected the songs of my might" (Š B, 381–382).

The concept of the king as the goddess's husband follows a long tradition. Eannatum I of Lagaš describes himself as "the beloved husband of Inanna", Mesanepada of Ur as "the husband of the nu.gig (= Inanna)", and Naram-Sîn of Akkad as the "husband of Inanna-Annunitum" (Cooper 1993, 83). According to Cooper (1993, 91–92), it is "the marriage relationship that is being reinforced; this is no random copulation intended to encourage fertility, but rather a sexual relationship in a carefully circumscribed context that entails a whole network of obligations between the partners and their kin". The celebration was intended to reconstitute the moral and social order as well as to consolidate religious belief, and served as a podium for the royal ideology. In *Šulgi* A, it touches upon the realities of (ritual) performance, while simultaneously removing the king into the divine realm. The king is honored with music performed by his royal musicians playing **tigi** instruments while he enjoys a banquet with his goddess wife, probably embodied by a priestess or possibly by the royal consort.

nar-ĝu$_{10}$ tigi 7-e šir$_3$-re-eš ḫa-ma-an-ne-eš

nitalam-ĝu$_{10}$ ki-sikil ^{d}inana nin ḫi-li an ki-a

gu$_7$ naĝ-bi-a ḫu-mu-da-an-tuš-am$_3$

"My singers praised me with songs accompanied by seven tigi instruments. My spouse, the maiden Inanna, the lady, the joy of heaven and earth, sat with me at the banquet."

(Š A, 81–83)

An Old Babylonian wedding song (CT 58, 12) in the Sumerian language has recently been examined by Mirelman and Salllaberger (2010). The unknown couple is presented as Inanna and Dumuzi. The alternation between phrases in Emesal and the main Sumerian dialect in the text emphasizes a dialogue between male and female participants: the female voice is represented by the bride and (probably) her female companions, while the groom addresses Inanna and her attractive appearance, and is sometimes accompanied by a male choir. Mirelman and Sallaberger (2010, 194) conclude that "The reference to the mythological marriage of Dumuzi and Inanna, the musical performance by men and women, and the correlation with marriage procedures in Early Mesopotamia point to the actual use of this song in a wedding ceremony".

CHAPTER VI

Analyzation and Interpretation

In this chapter, the research questions of this thesis will be discussed on the basis of the collected evidence. The main question is concerned with the development of musical entertainment and the socio-cultural value and function of music in ancient Mesopotamia in the late 4^{th} and 3^{rd} millennium BCE. It also investigates changes in the form, venue and occasion of performances which are continuously affected by trajectories such as the period, religion, politics, technology, and style. Beforehand, the sub research questions address the structure of musical performances:

- Which types had been part of the ancient Mesopotamian instrumentarium on the basis of archaeological in iconographical evidence?
- Which information can be gained from textual sources referring to the names of instruments?
- Is it possible to combine this evidence in order to identify certain instruments by name?
- Were musical performances conducted by soloists, choral or orchestral groups, or ensembles?
- Is it possible to grasp established instrumental combinations in images and / or textual sources?
- Who is performing music (esp. the occupational profile of professional musicians)?
- And for which audience did they do so?
- Where did musical performances take place (e.g., in a certain area within a building or outside, in a specific city or region, etc.)?
- When was music performed (e.g., during a specific daytime, date, season, year, historical period, etc.)?

Answers to these issues have been provided in the previous chapters (esp. ch. III and IV). The collected evidence will be summarized and analyzes in the following. Thereafter, the main research question will be addressed in chapter VI.5..

VI. 1. The instruments

Chapter III has answered the question which types of instruments had existed in the late 4th and 3rd millennium BCE on the basis of archaeological in iconographical evidence. The ancient Mesopotamian instrumentarium had been vast and versatile. It can be concluded that nearly the entire spectrum of modern types according to the Hornbostel-Sachs classification scheme is presented by ancient Mesopotamian predecessors, featuring stringed instruments, membranophone, aerophones, and a vast number of ideophones. It can be assumed that all types of instruments can be attributed to one prototype. Some technological peculiarities or similar instruments may have appeared independently in different parts of the Mesopotamian plain and its periphery, while others developed due to political relationships or under the influence of cultural exchange in the course of the millennium. A continuous effort to improve and enhance from an artistic and technological point of view is characteristic of the entire evolution of musical instruments.

Contemporary methods to classify musical instruments differs from the ancient Mesopotamian system. The contemporary knowledge about the theoretical conception of music and musical instruments in the 3rd millennium BCE in Mesopotamia remains rather fragmentary. Inherent in textual sources are determinatives referring to the main construction material. However, it is quite likely that form and material were not the primary characteristics of classification. Rather, instruments had been structured in relation to the character, function and meaning they adopted in a certain context: they may have been perceived differently when performed solo or as part an ensemble (e.g., the **šem** demonstrates a positive festive character in combination with **tigi** and **ala**, but is an instrument for lamenting when played solo). Furthermore, instruments were defined according to their use and significance in ritual and cult, in relation to the musical genres they accompanied (e.g., hymnic composition, lamentations, liturgical prayers), their relationship to deities and the cosmological order (e.g., divinized **balaĝ** instruments), and according to a certain city (e.g., **miritum** = "instrument from Mari"; **sabitum** = "instrument of Sabu"). Moreover, the classification of literary compositions took place mainly according to musical (instead of textual) considerations. The texts of most of genres are named after musical instruments. In this way, the musical performance of these compositions was determined by the instrument in question. In context and function, there is a clear division between praise music, as well as lamentations and liturgical prayers. The former is defined by an overly joyful and

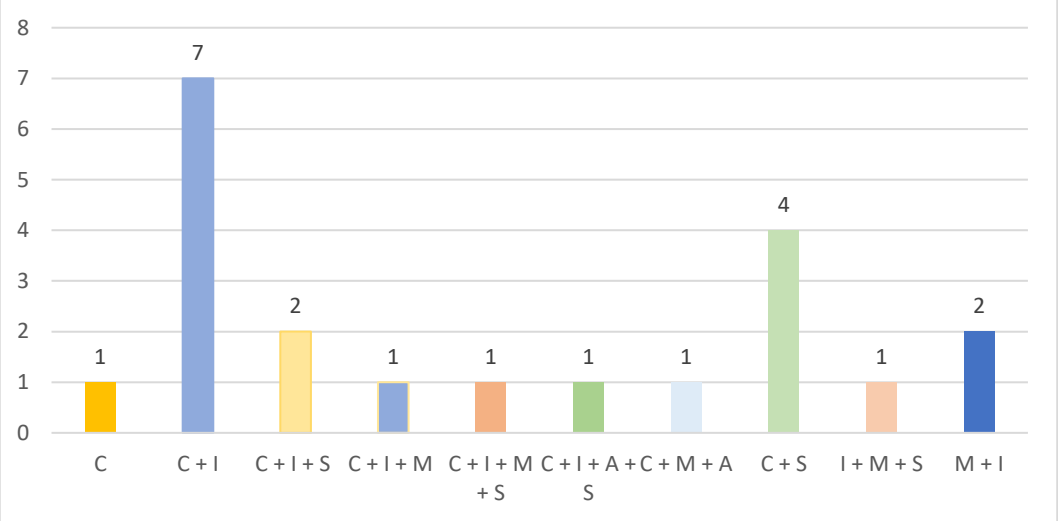
prosperous environment in which music is performed loudly in open air spaces, probably mainly by the **nar** musicians. Lamination and liturgical prayers, on the other hand, were conducted by the **gala** in solo instrumental performances, sometimes supported by choirs.

Due to extensive research on instrument names it is possible to identify several instruments by name with varying certainly (tab. 3). Furthermore, textual evidence provides information on the value and function of individual types of instruments. According to ancient Mesopotamian mythology, music was a gift given by the gods as part of the **me** (= mankind's cultural norms) and was therefore a means of fulfilling divine needs (e.g., IE 99). Moreover, music was given to men not only in order to delight the gods in the form of praise hymns, but also to remind about the might of divine powers in laments as an expression of everlasting worship. The religious status of instruments is evident due to various written sources. Most obvious is the marking of an object with the determinatives **diĝir**, "divine", **kug$_3$**/**kug**, "holy; pure" or **maḫ**, "great". Furthermore, information can be inferred from the context in which an instrument is mentioned, whether it appears in mythology, kept in temples, received offerings, was tended to through special rituals, dedicated to deities, or worshipped itself. The **ala**, **alĝar**, **balaĝ**, **lilis**, **meze**, **šem**, **tigi,** and **ub** were considered to be holy or divine. Other musical instruments did not gain a comparable religious status as far as known.

Iconographic representation, archaeological find circumstances, as well as textual evidence provides information if instruments had been performed solo, in choral or orchestral groups, or ensembles. Established instrumental ensembles can be grasped in textual sources. Most notably is the combination of **tigi-šem-ala** which occurs remarkably often in literary texts (e.g., ID A 81; IE H 245–246; LSU 436; LU 356; Š A 53–54; Š D 366–367). From these examples and other textual sources, it can be concluded that the group was a standard instrumental ensemble in Mesopotamian temples. Without exception, it is played during festive occasions and associated with joy and wellbeing. Its music was primarily devoted to praise the gods and to accompany ritual offerings, especially animal and libation sacrifices. Iconographic attestations, on the hand, provide only limited accountable information on the question whether instruments were played solo or in an ensemble, since musicians depicted in images are likely to represent a larger group of performers. They do, however, account for types of instruments which had been played together. Concerning instrumental ensembles, it can be stated that iconographic attestations show an understanding of basic musical concepts, such as rhythm, harmony and melody, by

depicting different types of instruments mostly including one string- and several percussion instruments, as well as one or more singers. Otherwise, there are few clear patterns of instruments occurring together in pictures (e.g., the sistrum and the large zoomorphic harp [and a percussion instrument?]. C.f., cat. nos. 8, [9?], 28, 59, 68) which might be due to the corpus of available evidence. Even fewer relate clearly to instrumental groups mentioned in texts (e.g., **ala** and **šem**. C.f., cat. nos. 75 and 83). These issues are visualized in the following table which shows various combinations of instrument types in iconographic depictions (tab. 6). In summary, images prove that diverse and organized orchestras had an integral function in various occasions. That seemingly no standardized ensemble is depicted, can be due to several reasons, but the diversity is definite proof of the ancient Mesopotamians' musical ability.

Tab. 6: Ensemble divided in instrument type combinations on the basis of visual representations (C = chordophones [big lyre; small lyre; vertical harp; horizontal harp]; I = ideophones [cymbals; claves; rattles; sistrum; triangle]; A = aerophones [flute; oboe]; M = Membranophones [big drum; small drum]; S = singers and hand clapping)

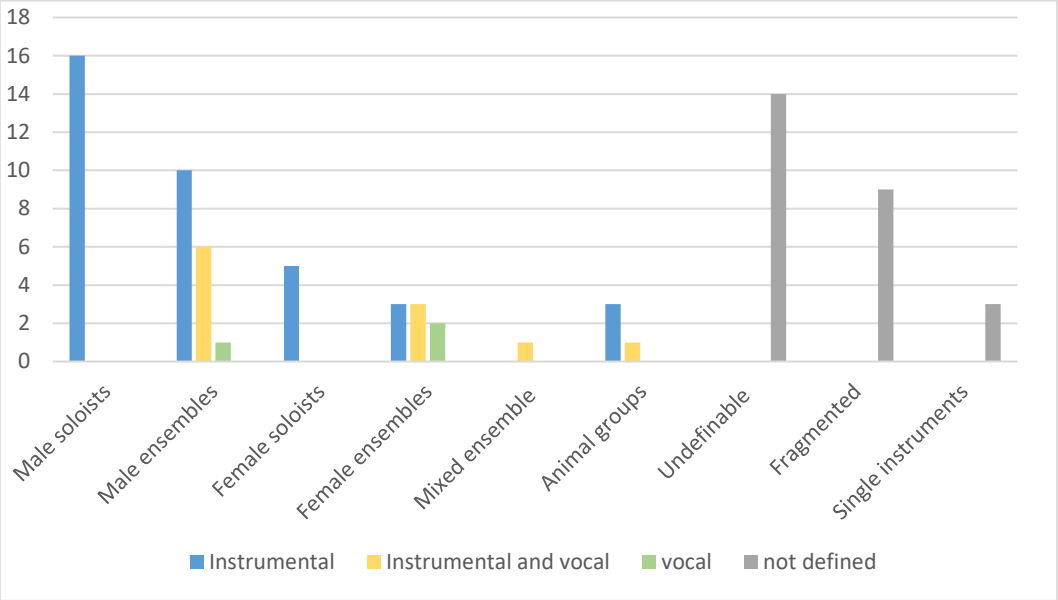


VI. 2. The musicians

Musical performances consist either exclusively of the human voice, an instrumental sound, or a combination of both. In general, singing is accompanied by instruments although this cannot be proven on the basis of written accounts. The performer may be a soloist or part of a small or large group, and entertains an audience which might be individual, small or large.

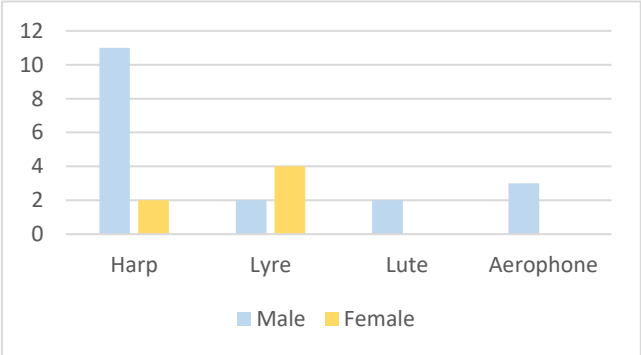
The investigation of solo and polyphonic instrumental performances makes it possible to draw several broad conclusions concerning the depicted musicians. Summarizing all pictorial attestations in which the gender can be distinguished with certainty, it can be stated that male soloists are most often depicted, followed by groups of male musicians (tab. 7). Female soloist and ensembles occur less frequently. However, groups of women are evidently larger than male ones with up to nine musicians (cat. no. 41). The instrumentalists of these large ensembles are frequently accompanied by women who are clapping their hands and possible dance and sing. This function is initially attested in the Early Dynastic III period, and is mostly taken by women (exception cat. no. 60, as well as depictions of the "bow-legged dwarf"). Furthermore, musical groups combining both genders are explicitly rare (cat. no. 46), even though examples of an interplay of men and women are attested in textual sources, such as in lamentations (c.f., ch. V. 9.) or wedding songs (c.f., ch. V. 10.).

Tab. 7: Soloists and musical groups divided by gender on the basis of visual representations (solemnly referring to complete scenes in which the gender in clearly evident)[5]



In all cases, soloist play on stringed instruments or, less frequently, on aerophones (tab. 8). It appears that mostly men play the vertical harp, while females are more often seen playing on zoomorphic lyres.

Tab. 8: Solo instruments divided by gender on the basis of visual representations (solemnly referring to complete scenes in which the gender in clearly evident)



[5] Male soloists: cat. nos. 6; 7; 24?; 32–34; 37–38; 43; 45; 65; 67; 71–72; 88–89.
Male ensembles: cat. nos. 2; 3?; 27; 35; 40; 44, 52; 60–61; 74–79; 82–83.
Female soloists: cat. nos. 17?; 23; 31; 36; 69.
Female ensembles: cat. nos. 16; 41; 47–48; 66; 70; 80–81.
Mixed ensembles: cat. no. 46.
Animal groups: cat. nos. 8?; 15?; 51; 59.
Undefinable: cat. nos. 4; 11–12; 14; 20; 25–26; 28; 49–50; 68; 73; 84–85.
Fragmented: cat. nos.9–10; 18–19; 21–22; 30; 39, 42.
Single instruments: cat. nos. 5; 13; 87.

Furthermore, only male musicians are depicted in context divining categories such as sportive competitions (cat. nos. 35, 40, 83), scenes involving chariots (cat. nos. [28?], 33–34, 37, 61) or boats (cat. nos. [4?], 38), and cultic processions (cat. no. 27). Men also appear to dominate musical entertainment conducted during building ceremonies and inauguration festivities which can be seen on the Gudea (cat. nos. 74–79) and Ur-Namma stelae (cat. no. 83). Two fragments from Girsu which show hand clapping and possibly singing women attest their involvement in the performances (cat. nos. 80–81). However, it is remarkable that women are never depicted playing any instruments in this period. Indeed, there are several instruments which are continuously solemnly played by male musicians, such as the **ala** drum, until the end of the 3rd Dynasty of Ur.

Female musicians, on the other hand, mainly occur in images which exclusively show banquet scenes, sometimes entertaining an entirely female audience (c.f., ch. V. 2. 5.). This is evident in several seals which were found in the Royal Cemetery of Ur (cat. nos. 46–48). The cylinder seals of Puabi (cat. no. 48) and the queen of Mari (cat. no. 41) belonged to high ranking women who chose to be depicted as hosts of elaborate feasts entertained by large female ensembles composed of instrumentalists as well as women who are clapping their hands and possible dance and sing. Thus, there seems to be a connection between the gender of the musicians and the focused-on audience. Texts from Mari attest that hundreds of female musicians were members of the harem (Ziegler 2007) who are possibly depicted on the Queen's seal. In this case, the banquet scene would represent a royal event in the harem of Mari with the queen as the main participant. The large gathering of people creates the impression of an inclusive event, however only attended by female members of the royal harem and guests chosen by the queen, which emphasized the social dynamics of the group and was aimed at maintaining status and balance among participants.

In general, it can be assumed that female musicians were either servants or members of the harem who received a musical education from an early age onwards in order to be able to entertain the king, the queen and the royal court (e.g., the **bīt tegêtim** in Mari has been interpreted as some kind of music conservatory for young women by Ziegler [2007, 79]). Due to the connection to the harem, female musicians have often been attributed a sexual profession. However, according to Shehata's study on groups of female musicians in the Old Babylonian

period, the limitation to prostitution does not do justice to the actual scale of their activities (2009, 103). Despite the small amount of textual evidence referring to female musicians and singers, it is known that female choirs and temple musicians existed (esp. for lamentations, e.g., CA 203), and participated in cultic practices. Moreover, they were possibly trained as professional beauticians and entertainers, and were employed by the court of the king, as well as in private areas. Their purpose was to entertain, to create art, but also to deal with the sacred and divine. Furthermore, the role of woman in musical performances is evident in death ceremonies conducted in the Royal Cemetery of Ur (c.f., ch. V. 5.). The musicians who were found in the tombs among the larger groups of court people were unexceptionally women. The image of a large female ensemble correlates with the evidence from the Great Death Pit, where skeletons of women are associated with the Golden, Silver and Boat-shaped lyre (cat. nos. 54–56). Due to their precious jewelry, it is likely that the women were members of the royal harem. Overall, images create the strong impression that the performance of music was subject to gender norms. The imbalance of male and female musicians appears to be even greater in written accounts. The **gala** (Akk. *kalû*) and the **nar** (Akk. *nâru*) – the most common titles of professional musicians – are considered to be men, who had occupied different positions and functions (c.f., ch. IV. 1.). The **gala**, known as the lamentation priest employed by temple institutions, had been a performer of dirges in the course of the funerary festivities, as well as lamentations in temples which were intended to appease the wrath of the gods. This relates to a unique Balaĝ composition (Kramer 1981) which recounts that the **gala** was specifically created by Enki in order to smooth Inanna's angry heart and to ward off evil from mankind. The **gala**'s instrumental repertoire consisted mainly of the **balaĝ**, **lilis**, **meze**, **šem**, and **ub**, which were performed solo, sometimes supported by choirs.

While the occupation of the **gala** is rather clearly definable, the **nar** is seemingly a general term given to musicians with various vocal and instrumental skills. His performance is associated with a joyful and prosperous atmosphere. Songs performed by the **nar** are normally designated with the general terms **en$_3$-du** or **šir$_3$** which include songs of praise to deities (e.g., IAS) and royal hymns. He is rarely exhibited as an instrumentalist. In a few documents, however, a versatile set of instruments is assigned to him (e.g., **ala**, **alĝar**, **miritum** and **tigi** [GC 10, 9–14; Kth 118–119]; **zamin** and **adara**, the so-called ibex horn [Nanše A, 38–46]). Alongside the **nar**'s function in the performance of joyous praiseworthy music in cultic acts, he is clearly connected to the king and the royal court (see ch. V. 8. 1.). This image is, for instance, supported by royal

hymns which were recited by the **nar** in order to glorify the ruler (esp., Š B 308–313; Š E 20 and 252–257). The performance was intended to propagate the royal ideology and the king's reputation in society. In addition, musicians employed by the court were commissioned to perform epics and myths and thus played a central role in the oral transmission of Mesopotamian literature and culture. In conclusion, singers and musicians functioned as a medium to formulate and propagandize political, cultural and religious contents of the court (Pruzsinszky 2010a, 109), and thus became an instrument of legitimization and glorification of the king, the creation of opinion and propaganda.

VI. 3. The audience

In the vast majority of cases, music was directed towards humans and gods. Audiences have different expectations of the performers as well as of their own role in the performance. The wide variety of musical performances provide entertainment irrespective of whether they use diverse venues which might be small or large, sacred or secular, inclusive or exclusive.

VI. 3. 1. The mundane realm

In general, the **human audience** rendered in images mostly consists of anonymous men and women as main participants of feasts. The depicted event can relate to any scale, ranging from an individual who chooses a private entertainment, to a small banquet, or a large festivity. In general, it can be assumed that the people are pars pro toto for a larger number of banqueters. At the same time, the depicted attendants can be interpreted as the commissioners of the banquet, as high ranking social elite, and as owner or donors of the artwork in question. The scenes portray subjective stories which were deliberately chosen to display the idea an artist or commissioner had of a certain event. All iconographic attestations can be considered works of "major art" which were intended to enhance the roles or capacities of a limited number of people through stereotypical renderings. Their purpose was to immortalize the most spectacular and exceptional events of a small part of the society (Otto 2016, 113). Court ceremonies, palace banquets and spectacles associated with them, have been used not only to entertain but also to highlight the political power and reinforce the relationship between the monarch and his subjects. Elaborate festivities were conducted on behalf of the ruler for the pleasure of local and visiting dignitaries. The number of people attending certain events cannot be judged upon on the basis of iconographic evidence. However, administrative texts dating to the Ur III period, attest for a diverse and often high number of guest. The festival for the goddess Bau, wife of Ningîrsu, in Presargonic Girsu, for instance, had presumably been attended by circa 500 participants, including several singers and musicians (Sallaberger 2017, personal communication).

VI. 3. 2. The divine realm

Gods have been the subject of musical performances since the beginning of recorded history and beyond. In mythologies worldwide, for instance, the origin of music is inextricably linked to cosmological or religious beliefs. In ancient Greece, the lyre was believed to have been invented in the cradle of the infant Hermes. This phenomenon has led some scholars to belief that the original instrumentarium had primarily been developed for religious purposes. This statement cannot be confirmed on the basis of the preserved evidence. However, it attests that religion immensely influenced the development of music and emphasized its value for society.

In ancient Mesopotamia, the meaning of life was to live in concert with the gods. Religion conditioned most aspects of civilization since it had been the intellectual framework which facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the forces controlling existence and the guidance for the right conduct in life (Jacobson 2016; c.f., ch. II. 3. 2.). One of the primary aims of Mesopotamian art was to capture the relationship between the mundane and divine realms. This had also been the central topic of vocally recited or sung texts. Music had been a medium which carried social and culture specific identities in the form of epics, myths, prayers, hymns, and lamentations. Gods and their interaction with humans are the main subject to each of these groups. The performance of city laments, for instance, had been conducted in order to inform about the cursing and destruction which befell the cities due to the gods' command.

Cultic music which had been performed alongside sacrifices and prayers formed an integral part of the expression of worship and had been regarded as the appropriate way to communicate with the gods (see ch. V. 7. 1.). Interestingly, only view iconographic attestations featuring musical performances prior to the Akkadian period can be placed in a direct religious context (exceptions are cat. nos. 4, 27, 38, 50) since gods are generally not distinguishable from humans and scenes do not hint at any religious link. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that religion had been an integral part of most events. This hypothesis is supported by several pieces of art depicting musicians which had been found in temples (cat. nos. 16, 42–44). Early Dynastic votive plaques, for instances, had been dedicated to temples (cat. nos. 31–38). Even though the location of the rendered feast remains obscure, it is quite likely that they were conducted in these locations and thus had a sacred meaning.

The subsequent Akkadian period was characterized by the visualization of deities. They are distinguishable from humans due to their headdresses, garments, or specific attributes. Deities

are thus clearly rendered as being superior to men, hinting at a new, more segregated cosmological order. The veneration of and respect for the gods seems to take on new features and dimensions during this period. Individual humans appear to imitate the gods by being portrayed in the same way, such as Naram-Sîn who introduced the concept of divine kingship in Mesopotamia.

Iconographic attestations show individual or pairs of male and female musicians playing mostly on stringed instrument in the presence of deities in so-called presentation scenes (c.f., cat. nos. 65–72). These scenes became a rather common motive in visual art, and frequently replaced the banquet scene which had been favored in the Early Dynastic periods. An interesting phenomenon which goes hand in hand with this development are face to face performances in front of humans and gods which enjoy music in the same manner. This vis-à-vis rendering goes against the stereotype of a music-free period associated with this period (c.f., ch. VI. 5. 4.). On the contrary, musicians apparently enjoyed a comparably or even equally high social status as their opponents. Furthermore, the Akkadian period initially attests for the association of musical performances with warfare since at least two images show musicians performing in front of armed deities (cat. nos. 66 and 68). Their performance had most likely been intended to gain the god's supports in battle.

In contrast, the function of musical performances in cultic acts during the Ur III (and Old Babylonian) period had generally been intended to please and propitiate the gods. This is based on the idea that a restless, homeless, angry or sad deity is a danger to the preservation of the secular order. The importance of ritual music is based on the concept that music functions as the communication medium which creates a sensible bridge between the mundane and divine realm (Franklin 2015, 27). The cultic playing of the **balaĝ** instrument, for instance, connects the mythological and the concrete realm. The performance for the deities conducted in front of a divine statue, functions as counsel in favor of humanity asking for the appeasement of the god (Gabbay 2014, 142). The instruments' ability to communicate with the divine realm was perceived as real. The sound of divinized and personalized instruments like the **balaĝ** were believed to affect the gods through performance. As a herald and translator, it spoke directly to the deities with a special hermeneutic language otherwise inaccessible for men (e.g., GC B 16.10–11.2).

VI. 4. Time and place

Information concerning the time and place of musical performances rests mostly upon textual evidence and archaeological find circumstances. Iconographic attestations hardly ever provide clues about a certain time, for instance, only rare cases hint at a season of the year (e.g., cat. no. 52). Places are vaguely indicated by renderings such as temple facades, indoor furniture, floral motives and boats on flowing water.

According to textual evidence, the performance of music took places in various places: in temples (e.g., GC B 10.9–14; Nanše A 39–44), palaces (e.g., DI C 27–28;) and during banquets there (e.g., Š A 79–83; IdD A 206–209), in the course of sacrifices (e.g., EN 93–95; GC B 18.18–19.1; HP 24–28; IE 241–246; Nanše A, 38–46; Š A 53–54), outdoors (e.g., GSt L 4.3–7, at a river; EN 62–67; Kth 116–119), during processions (e.g., GC B 15.18–21), and journeys by boat (e.g., Š D 368–370). Temples and palaces are purpose-built structures and the most important venues for entertainment. Their architecture is a reflection of their value to the community, made apparent in their monumentality, in the ability to accommodate a large audience, as well as the arraignment of rooms which structure the places into public and private, inclusive and exclusive areas. The courtyards and the surrounding rooms provided space and installations to prepare and hold extensive feasts for the gods and the royal court.

These large events were conducted regularly according to the cultic calendar, such as the New Year, seeding and harvest festivals, as well as on special occasions, such as the building and inauguration of temples, unexpected catastrophes, events of deaths, marriages, etcetera. In addition, music had been performed on a daily basis in temples. Institutionalized lamentations and songs of praise were performed periodically as well as on special occasions. The former was performed in front of the god's statue or within a temple area. The latter could be either prophylactic or corrective, and even be composed for a fortunate event such as a victory in war (Franklin 2015, 29–30).

The importance of music in death rituals is evident in various textual sources. The **gala** had primarily functioned in the execution of dirges in the course of the funerary festivities. Thus, he took an integral part in the implementation of an appropriate burial and properly performed mourning rites on which an existence after death was depended on. Many literary compositions attest for ceremonies conducted on behalf of the ruler's death. *The Death of Ur-Namma*, for instance, describes mourning rituals conducted in the following ten days in Ur. According to this

text, laments conducted by the living might have been answered by musical performances in the netherworld (Ur-Namma A 187). This indicates that musical performances were believed to take place after death and in another sphere as well.

VI. 5. The development of musical performances and the socio-cultural value and function of music

The previous subchapters have concluded the collected evidence on the structure of musical performances, and thus provided the foundation for the study of the chronological development of performative contexts, the value and function of music in the society and culture, as well as changes in the form, venue and occasion of performances. In the following, the most important results of the context defining chapter V will be interpreted and joint in a comprehensive summery.

VI. 5. 1. The emergence of musical performances

The earliest evidence of musical performances dating to the Late Uruk period appears to emerge suddenly and without any known predecessors. The seal impression from Choga Mish shows the first known depiction of a "musical orchestra" (cat. no. 3). The identity and gender of the musicians are not clear. Furthermore, there is no hint whether the feast is religious or secular, institutional or private. It can be assumed, however, that the banquet's commissioner had the means to call upon and employ an ensemble composed of different instrumentalists. Furthermore, the members of this must have had a certain degree of professionalism and status since the group is composed of wind, percussion and stringed instrument performers. The choice therefore attests an understanding of rhythm, melody and harmony. The same statements can be made about the stele fragment found close to Ur (cat. no. 2). Both renderings prompt the hypothesis the earliest evidence of professional musical performances was to a considerable degree coherent to the production and/or consumption of food and drinks.

VI. 5. 2. The importance of feasting and festivities

The attentions from Choga Mish and Ur appear to mark the beginning of a long tradition of banquet scenes accompanied by musical entertainment. In the Early Dynastic period, banquets have been among the most popular venues for musical entertainment. The depiction of musical performances became almost inextricably linked to banquet scenes which were most popular in Mesopotamian art until the Akkadian period. The vast majority of images which depict musical performances are part of a complex of scenes characterized by the consumption of an elaborate meal often accompanied by various ritual and forms of entertainment, such as sportive competitions (c.f., ch. V. 2. 4). The images commemorate the most important religious, political and social events, even though it remains uncertain whether they depict particular events, e.g. the New Year Festival, or represent the act of feasting in general.

Feasts were conducted for various reasons: in order to impress important guests, to gain alliances, to negotiate war and peace, to emphasize hospitality, to pay debts, to display opulence. They were important components of celebrations such as coronations, weddings, civic or political achievements, military engagements or victories, the frightening enemies, as well as cultic acts, the communication with the gods and the honoring of the dead. The meaning of the banquet scene has been subject to scholarly debate. Their role within the socio-political context of Mesopotamian societies can to some extend be explained due to the dominance of temples and palaces as agricultural enterprises. Theology, mythology and liturgy revolved around the relationship between humans, domesticated plants and farm animals. Most of its commandments dealt with farming and village life, and its major holidays were **seeding** and **harvest festivals**. They were conducted regularly in the corresponding season in order to appeal to the gods for a prosperous growth of plants, rain, fertility and protection, or to thank them for a high profit of agricultural produce. During these occasions, temples and royal courts offered sacrifices to the deities or shared their harvest with them in exchange for their benevolence.

On a mundane level, the preparation for elaborate feasts goes hand in hand with the slaughter of animals and libations (e.g., EN 93–95; GC B 18.18–19.1; HP 24–28; IE 241–246). These rituals were often conducted in the presence of praise music, most notably performed by the **tigi-šem-ala** ensemble (e.g., Š A 48–59). Indeed, music is mentioned so frequently in the course of sacrifices that it appears to have been a necessity for their proper execution. Music in this context creates a working rhythm, evokes a ceremonial and devotional atmosphere, facilitates

entertainment and the impression of grandeur and dignity. In addition, banquet scenes are commonly associated with herds of domestic animals or scenes related to the proceeding of a feast, such as bearers of offerings, food and large vessels. Complementary evidence in textual sources describe **animal** and **libation sacrifices** as an integral part of the daily routine in temples during the so-called feeding of the gods whose statues were symbolically provided with food and drinks. The immense importance of sacrifices is attested, for instance, in the story of the great flood which addresses the might and magnitude of the divine will, but also the mutual relationship between humans and gods as well as their dependence on sacrifice provided by men (c.f., ch. V. 2. 6.).

Iconographic attestations provide rather limited information concerning the occasion which gave reason to conduct a banquet. Only a few motifs, such as chariots and boats, give rise to interpretations.

Chariots are commonly associated with banquets (cat. nos. 28, 33–34, 37, 61). The interpretation of images featuring chariots dating to the Early Dynastic periods (ca. 2700–2400 BCE) gives reason to believe that it is an allegory for a victorious military campaign. The pompous chariot is most often depicted empty, making the object itself the center of attention of the procession. It either belongs to the victorious king, or his defeated opponent. Another possibility is provided by evidence dating several hundred year later: Gudea offers a chariot to Ninĝirsu in order to receive his approval and instruction for the building of his temple. This considerate gift functions as a transportation medium for the god (or rather his statue) to travel from the old living place to his new one. It is thus the property of the god and is considered a divine object itself.

In contrast to chariots, **boats** are rarely depicted in the contexts of musical performances (cat. nos. 4 and 38). One image shows a musical performance on a boat in front of a deity, the other in the course of a banquet while the boat is depicted in a register below. The latter rendering is associated with the god Enki, the patron of musicians and craftsmen. Journeys by boat play a significant role in several myths featuring Enki, such as *Enki's Journey to Nibru*: after having transported food, drinks and musical instruments to the city by boat, he prepares a banquet, slaughters animals and installs instruments for the assembly of gods. In *Inanna and Enki* the goddess returns to Uruk on her divine boat, and receives a festive welcome initiated by the king including prayers, animal sacrifices and musical entertainment. Similarly, Šulgi enjoys musical

performances on his barge while returning from a successful military campaign (Š D 366–367). Related evidence is attested in an inscription on *Gudea Statue* L, which describes the inauguration ceremony of a boat, including music and animal sacrifices (Steible 1991, 226–229). It can be concluded that, despite the lack of evidence in iconographic sources, travel or processions by boat can be associated with musical performances and took part in festive events.

Festive **parades** certainly played an important role in Mesopotamian societies. They were conducted regularly and due for a variety of purposes. According to their public nature, they were intended to attract attention, entertain and to create an inclusive atmosphere among a large audience. People attended deliberately or become part of the event by happenstance. In general, parades were aimed to impress and delight. They had been conducted to commemorate and celebrate, as well as due to serious purposes, such as military campaigns possibly intended to intimidate. An essential occasion which provided reason for parades had been triumphs – grand and sensational displays of triumphant rulers, as well as foreign treasures and spoils of war. One example visualizing such an event is the "Standard of Ur" (cat. no. 61). Moreover, numerous religious festivals incorporated public entertainment into cultic performances in order to make the divine concept more understandable and visible to the community and to hold secular and sacred purposes in balance. In order to secure the city and its inhabitants, for instance, parades halted at various locations in the city such as cultic shrines of deities or protection figures which guarded gates and border transitions. Priests conducted rituals and sacrifices, and were occasionally accompanied by musical performances (Cohen 1988, 26). Especially important were events which symbolize travelling deities to fellow gods in other temples or cities by wagons or boats or moved from old "living spaces" into new ones (e.g., GC B 15.18–16.2).

VI. 5. 3. The importance of music in funerary ceremonies

The importance of music is particularly prominent in the context of cultic acts concerning death rituals. Dirges, laments and prayers were an essential part of an appropriate burial and properly performed mourning rites which were essential to secure that the spirit (Sum. **gidim**) arrived safely in the netherworld. According to the ancient Mesopotamian conception, the existence after death appears to be a grey and gloomy reflection of the living world. Otherwise, living conditions are comparable to those on earth. Music must have had a comparable significance: musicians and instruments had the same value und similar functions, and were brought along to the netherworld upon death by kings and other prominent persons. Instead of performing in temples or in the royal palace, they now directed their play towards the divinities of the underworld and lamented the ruler's death (Hartmann 1960, 283). In addition to textual sources, there is a rich archaeological record. The Royal Cemetery of Ur is still the most important testimony of cultic burial acts in the 3rd millennium BCE. It testifies that music had been performed by female court musicians who played on stringed instruments until the very last moment before death, presumably guiding the spirit on its journey. At the same time, the sound of the lyres and harps provided emotional comfort and a devotional atmosphere. According to Woolley (1934, 42), the people in the tombs had gone willingly to their deaths since it had been considered a "privilege" to be "translated to a higher sphere of service".

VI. 5. 4. The Akkadian period

Despite the belligerent attitude often associated with this Akkadian period, it introduced several innovations (e.g., lutes and rattles) as well as new developments to the Mesopotamia musical culture and tradition. Most notably are rendering which show musical performance composed of one or two musicians in the presence of deities which have been discussed above (c.f., ch. VI. 3. 2.) The iconographic evidence is quite abundant and diverse, and therefore, it can be concluded that the theory postulated in previous studies that the Akkadian period initiated a simplification of musical culture and the reduction of the instrumental repertoire (e.g., Hartmann 1960, 265–265) can be confound. Rather, musical entertainment might have evolved into different forms and expressions as a result of cultural change and social upheavals.

VI. 5. 5. The last century of the 3rd millennium BCE

The last era of the 3rd millennium BCE is characterized by the reemergence of old Sumerian traditions and language. Most of the literary compositions discussed in this thesis are initially attested during this period. The iconographic evidence primarily rests upon bas-relief fragments from Girsu, the Ur-Namma stele and few local and foreign examples.

The period is shaped by extensive **building programs** of Gudea and Ur-Namma who were devoted to create great monuments for the gods. The construction of temples and their dedication to the main deities of the pantheon appear as the main topics in which musical performances are attested. Complementary evidence of the use and function of instruments is provided in several text passages in *The Building of Ninĝirsu's temple*, such as during brick making ceremonies, processions, the offering of gifts, animal and libation sacrifices, and as praise in temples (tab. 5). The large number of instruments, as well as their frequent occurrence in various contexts underlines the ritual importance of music. Furthermore, Gudea's literary composition introduces the concept of divinized instruments: the **balaĝ** functions as a communication channel with the divine realm in a hermeneutic language otherwise inaccessible for men. The instrument is depicted on a stele fragment as a double bull lyre (cat. no. 74). The same type is attested on two stamps seal found in Failaka (Dilmun | cat. nos. 84–85) which suggests the existence of prosperous intercultural contact to foreign lands.

This atmosphere of cosmopolitanism is most evident during the reign of **Šulgi** who boasts with his universal perfection and absolute mastery of all known instruments (Š B 154–174). This international musical vision can be seen as an expression of political power and prestige. The cultural horizon of the contemporary court is visualized by the diversity of instruments. In order to display power and glory in an exotic and prestigious manner, the contemporary court had been filled with professional and talented musicians (Pruzsinszky 2009b, 31). As a promoter of their education, the ruler ensured that their performance was intended to propagate the royal ideology and his reputation in society. Thus, singers and musicians functioned as a medium to formulate and spread political, cultural and religious contents of the court (Pruzsinszky 2010a, 109). The exchange of foreign artists and instruments as gifts among rulers and influential families belonged to the diplomatic exchange inherent in political interactions (Pruzsinszky 2009, 32). Furthermore, music had been spread throughout the land of ancient Mesopotamia by travelling singers or groups of musicians employed by the court. Evidence dating to the Ur

III period attests for mobile musicians who accompanied delegations and acted as messengers of the royal court. They were responsible for the organization and performance of cultic or festive ceremonies in various places throughout the kingdom, and were thus accountable for the tradition of musical, religious and political matters (Pruzsinszky 2009b, 37–38).

CHAPTER VII

Concluding Remarks

It has become clear that music had played an important role in many aspects of life in ancient Mesopotamia. Music developed to become a universal and popular medium of entertainment. It may constitute an independent act of which its sound is the main focus of attention, for instance, in the form of vis-à-vis performances in front of humans and gods, or in funerary ceremonies in order to influence emotions. In most cases, however, music is a supporting component of performances, such as dance and storytelling. The latter is an ancient form of entertainment which has influenced almost all kinds of art. Most importantly, stories do not merely function to entertain but also to encourage thinking, creativity, philosophy, the exchange of knowledge, cultural values and traditions, etcetera. The Mesopotamian's literary corpus is inextricably linked to musical performances since numerous compositions had been recited or sung in front of an audience. Thus, music functioned as a medium which carried socio-cultural contents and expressions in the form of epics, myths, prayers, lamentations, and hymns across and beyond Mesopotamia's periphery. It embraces a fundamental community-building function and had been the ultimate form of entertainment, prior to hunting and sports. This is testified by the enormous diversity of contexts in which music had been performed – banquets, large celebrations, sportive competitions, cultic processions, festive parades, and funerary ceremonies – irrespective of whether they had been small or large, sacred or secular, inclusive or exclusive. The importance of music is emphasized by its capacity to create and influence opinions of political, cultural and religious contents. The indispensable function of musical performances in cultic acts and its ability to communicate with the divine sphere is the most distinct proof of its value in society.

CHAPTER VIII

Directories

VIII. 1. Bibliography

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VIII. 2. Abbreviations

VIII. 2. 1. General abbreviations

Akk.	(old) Akkadian period
BCE	before the Common Era
c.f.	Latin: *confer*, meaning “compare”
ch.	chapter
contr.	contrary
DN	deity name
ED	Early Dynastic (period)
e.g.	Latin: *exempli gratia*, meaning “for example”
esp.	especially
ETCSL	Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature
fig.	figure
fn.	footnote
GSt	Gudea stelae
GS	Gudea statue
HS	von Hornbostel and Sachs classification system
IL	Isin-Larsa (period)
ill.	illustration
incl.	including
ISGMA	International Study Group on Music Archaeology
JN	Jemdet Naṣr
no.	number
NS	Neo Sumerian (period)
l.	line
OB	Old Babylonian (period)

pl.	plate
Sum.	Sumerian
tab.	Table
Ur III	3rd Dynasty of Ur

VIII. 2. 2. Names and titles

CA		The cursing of Agade (ETCSL 2.1.5)
DI		Dumuzid-Inana (text corpus)
	DI C	Dumuzid-Inana C: A balbale to Inana (ETCSL C.4.08.03)
EN		Enki's journey to Nibru (ETCSL 1.1.4)
EWO		Enki and the world order (ETCSL 1.1.3)
G		The death of Gilgameš (ETCSL 1.8.1.3)
GC		Gudea cylinders A and B: The building of Ninĝirsu's temple (ETCSL 2.1.7)
HP		The Debate between Hoe and Plough (ETCSL 5.3.1)
IAS		Self-Praise of Inanna (Krebernik 1998)
IdD		Iddin-Dagan
	IdD A	Iddin-Dagan A: A šir-namursaĝa to Ninsiana for Iddin-Dagan (ETCSL 2.5.3.1)
INW		Inanna's descent to the nether world (ETCSL 1.4.1)
IE		Inanna and Enki (ETCSL 1.3.1)
Kth		The Keš temple hymn (ETCSL 4.80.2)
MM		The marriage of Martu (ETCSL 1.7.1)
LE		The lament of Eridug (ETCSL 2.2.6)
LN		The lament for Nibru (ETCSL 2.2.4)
LSU		The lament for Sumer and Urim (ETCSL 2.2.3)
LU		The lament for Urim (ETCSL 2.2.2)
LUg		The lament for Unug (ETCSL 2.2.5)

Š		Šulgi
	Š A	Šulgi A: A praise poem of Šulgi (ETCSL 2.4.2.01)
	Š B	Šulgi B: A praise poem of Šulgi (ETCSL 2.4.2.02)
	Š D	Šulgi D: A praise poem of Šulgi (ETCSL 2.4.2.04)
	Š E	Šulgi E: A praise poem of Šulgi (ETCSL 2.4.2.05)
	Š G	Šulgi G: An adab to Enlil for Šulgi (ETCSL 2.4.2.07)
	Š X	Šulgi X: A praise poem of Šulgi (ETCSL 2.4.2.24)
TH		The Temple Hymns (ETCSL 4.80.1)
Ur-Namma A		The death of Ur-Namma (ETCSL 2.4.1.1; a version from Nibru)
WS		The debate between winter and summer (ETCSL 5.3.3)

VIII. 3. List of figures

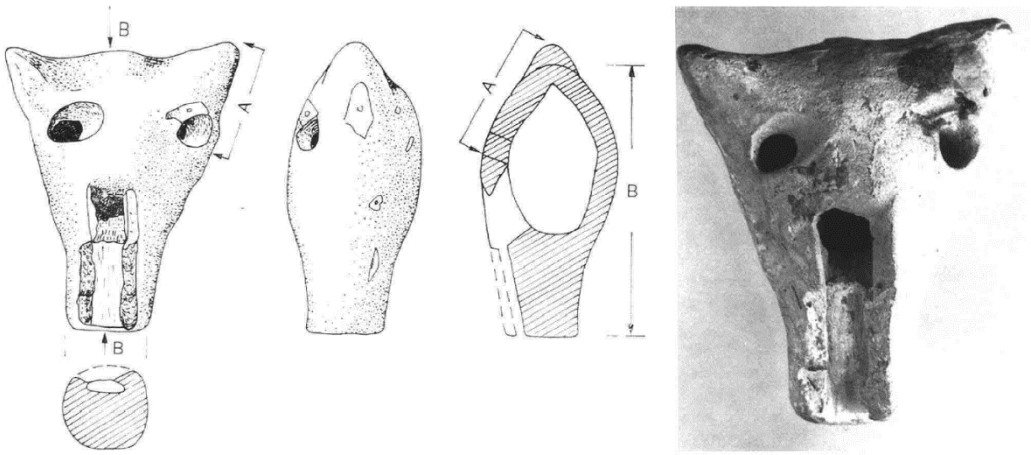
VIII. 4. List of tables

CHAPTER IX

Appendix

IX. 1. Catalogue

The catalogue includes all thus far known iconographic and archaeological material concerning musical instruments from the second half of the 4th and the 3rd millennium BCE in the heartland of Mesopotamia, and partly of its periphery included as supplementary evidence. The images are structured chronologically, according to the type of object and their find spot. The time period to which an object has been dated to corresponds to the source providing the image.



No. 1
Top of a clay flute in the shape of a ram's head
Yarim Tepe
Late Uruk period, ca. 3500–2900 BCE
Rashid 1984, 46, text ill.

No. 2
Stone stele fragment
Close to Ur?
Late Uruk period (Uruk III, Jemdet Naṣr), ca. 3200–2900 BCE
Iraq Museum, Baghdad
Gailani-Werr 2013, 393. Extended by Oto 2007, personal communication

No. 3
Cylinder seal impression
Choga-Mish
Late Uruk period (Uruk III, Jemdet Naṣr), ca. 3100 BCE
Collon 2010, 47, fig. 1

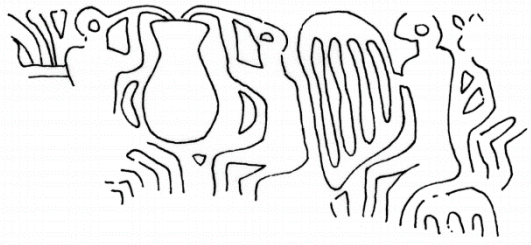
a

b

No. 4 a–b
Dark grey stone cylinder seal
Southern Mesopotamia
Late Uruk period (Uruk III, Jemdet Naṣr), ca. 3100 BCE
British Museum, London (BM 141623)
a: http://britishmuseum.org/ ; b: Dumbrill 1998, 321, pl. 4

No. 5
Cylinder seal impression
Nippur, level IX b
Early Dynastic period, ca. 2900–2350 BCE
Collon 1987, 194, no. 942

No. 6
Cylinder seal impression
Tell Chuera
National Museum of Damascus
Early Dynastic period, ca. 2900–2350 BCE
Collon 1987, 152, no. 662



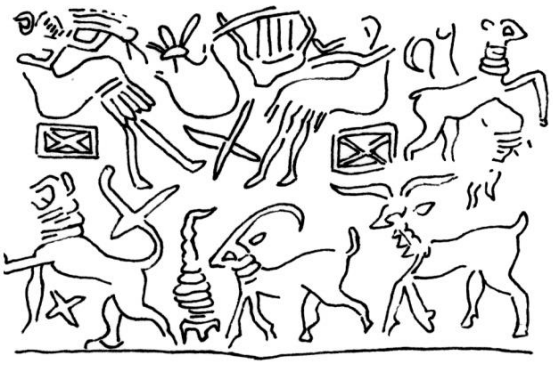
No. 7
Cylinder seal with shell core
Tell Chuera
Early Dynastic period, ca. 2900–2350 BCE
National Museum of Damascus
Collon 1987, 152, no. 663

No. 8
Cylinder seal impression
Susa
Early Dynastic period, ca. 2900–2350 BCE
Collon 1987, 152, no. 667

No. 9
Seal impression
Province unknown
Early Dynastic period, ca. 2900–2350 BCE
Amiet 1980, no. 1200

No. 10
Seal impression
Province unknown
Early Dynastic period, ca. 2900–2350 BCE
Amiet 1980, no. 1198

No. 11
Cylinder seal
Olyum Hüyük
Early Dynastic period, ca. 2900–2350 BCE
Dumbrill 1998, 253, pl. 40

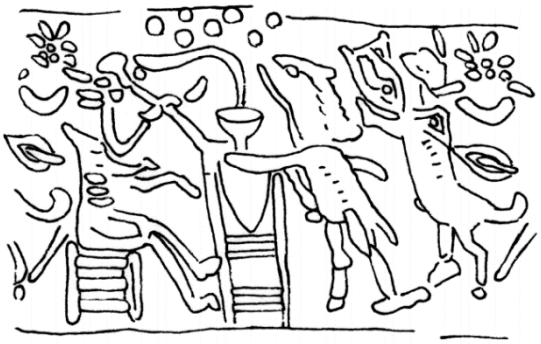


No. 12
Cylinder seal
Province unknown
Early Dynastic period, ca. 2900–2350 BCE
Amiet 1980, 75, fig 28

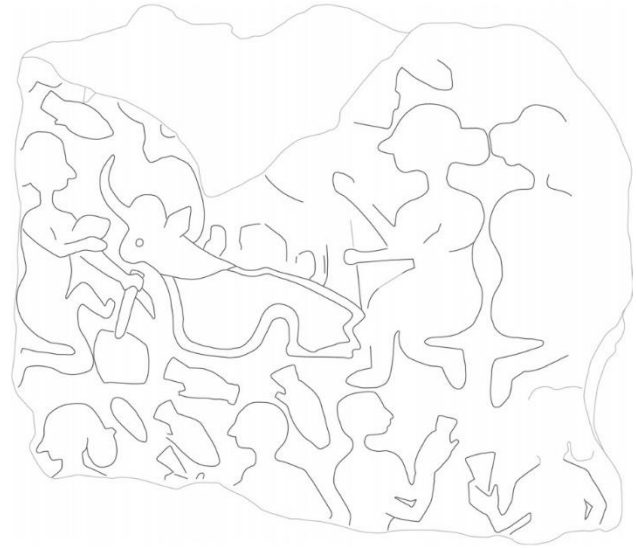
No. 13
Cylinder seal
Province unknown
Early Dynastic period, ca. 2900–2350 BCE
Dumbrill 1998, 254, pl. 42

No. 14
Cylinder seal
Syria?
Early Dynastic period, ca. 2900–2350 BCE
Dumbrill 1998, 254, pl. 41

No. 15
Cylinder seal
Province unknown
Early Dynastic period, ca. 2900–2350 BCE
Dumbrill 1998, 253, pl. 38



a



b

No. 16 a–b
Cylinder seal impression
Nippur, Inanna temple, level XI, room IT 391
Early Dynastic I, ca. 2900–2750 BCE
Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (8 N 186 | A32241)
Zettler 2011, 277–278, fig. 1–2

No. 17
Cylinder seal impression
Ur
Early Dynastic I (–II)
ca. 2900–2700 (–2600) BCE
Dumbrill 1998, 203, Pl. 31

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No. 18 a–b
Two impressions of the same cylinder seal
Šuruppak (modern Fara)
Early Dynastic II–IIIa, ca. 2700–2500 BCE
Vorderasiatisches Museum, Staatliche Museen, Berlin (VA 6598 | 6639)
Photographs taken by the author

IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE DUE TO COPYRIGHT

No. 19
Cylinder seal impression
Šuruppak (modern Fara)
Early Dynastic II–IIIa, ca. 2700–2500 BCE
Vorderasiatisches Museum, Staatliche Museen, Berlin (VA 8629)
Photograph taken by the author

IMAGES NOT AVAILABLE DUE TO COPYRIGHT

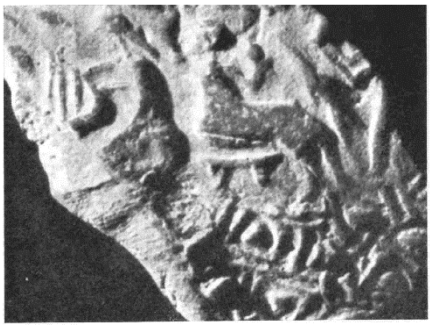
No. 20 a–d
Four impressions of the same cylinder seal
Šuruppak (modern Fara)
Early Dynastic I (–II), ca. 2900–2700 (–2600) BCE
Vorderasiatisches Museum, Staatliche Museen, Berlin (VA 6408)
Photographs taken by the author

IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE DUE TO COPYRIGHT

No. 21
Cylinder seal impression
Šuruppak (modern Fara)
Early Dynastic II–IIIa, ca. 2700–2500 BCE
Vorderasiatisches Museum, Staatliche Museen, Berlin (VA 6665)
Photograph taken by the author

IMAGES NOT AVAILABLE DUE TO COPYRIGHT

No. 22 a–b
Two impressions of the same cylinder seal
Šuruppak (modern Fara)
Early Dynastic II–IIIa, ca. 2700–2500 BCE
Vorderasiatisches Museum, Staatliche Museen, Berlin (VA 8655.1|2)
Photographs taken by the author



a

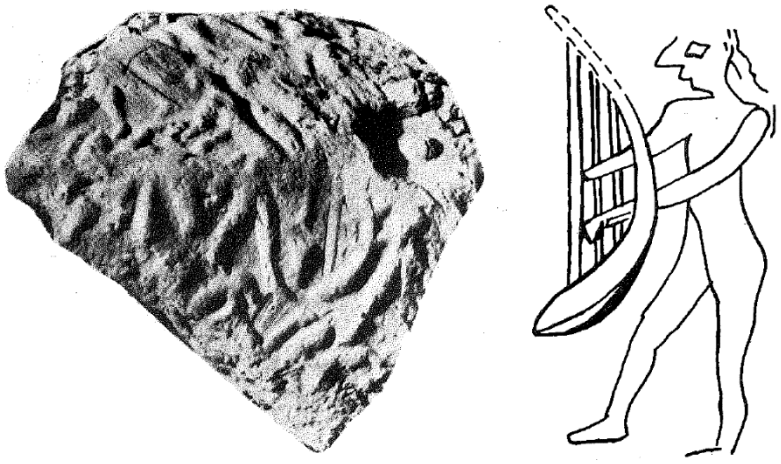
b

No. 23 a–b
Cylinder seal impression
Ur
Early Dynastic II, ca. 2650 BCE
University of Pennsylvania University Museum, Philadelphia (33-35-252 | U. 18397, 18400, 18413)
a: Rashid 1984, 53, fig. 31; b: Collon 1987, 152, fig. 66

No. 24
Cylinder seal
Province unknown
Early Dynastic IIIa (Mesilim period), ca 2600 BCE
British Museum, London (BM 129600)
http://www.britishmuseum.org/

No. 25
Seal impression
Ur
Early Dynastic IIIa (Mesilim period),
ca. 2600–2550 BCE
Hartmann 1960, 298, fig. 2a

No. 26
Seal impression
Ur
Early Dynastic IIIa
(Mesilim period),
ca. 2600–2550 BCE
Hartmann 1960, 299, fig. 3 a–b

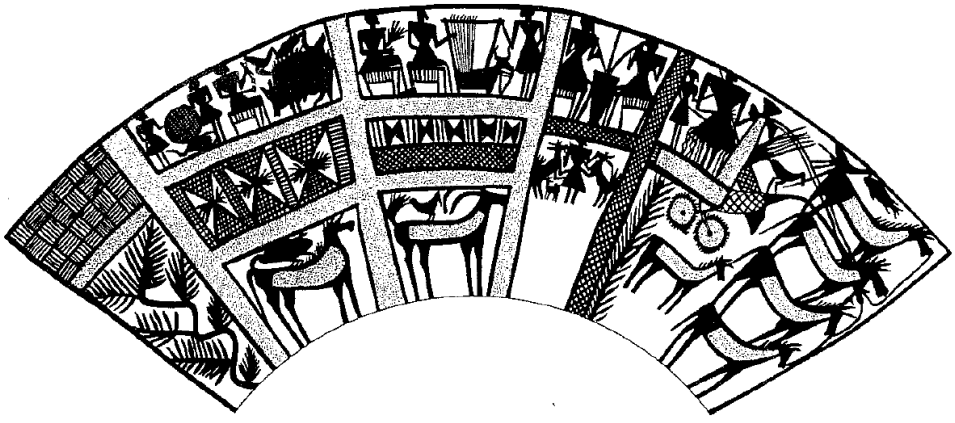


a

b

No. 27 a–b
Chlorite vessel fragment with limestone or marble inlay (and possibly lapis lazuli)
Adab (modern Bismaya), mound V, earlier temple
Early Dynastic I, ca. 2800–2700 BCE
Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (A 195 A+C) & Istanbul Arch. Museum (B)
http://www.uchicago.edu/

a



b

No. 28 a–b
Scarlet ware vessel with red and black paint
Khafajeh
Early Dynastic I/II, ca. 2700 BCE
British Museum, London (123293)
a: http://britishmuseum.org/; b: Collon 2013, 18, fig. 2

No. 29
Several pairs of copper clappers
Kish, cemetery A
Early Dynastic I/II, ca. 2700 BCE
Rashid 1984, 49, fig. 16

No. 30
Shell inlay fragment
Kish, Palace A, room 61
Early Dynastic II–IIIa, ca. 2650–2550 BCE
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
(AN 1924.712)
Collins 2010, 91, no. 50

No. 31
Alabaster votive plaque
Susa, Acropolis, Ninhursanga temple
Early Dynastic II, ca. 2700–2600 BCE
Musée du Louvre, Paris
Benoit 2003, 300, no. 200

No. 32
Votive plaque fragment made of limestone
Šuruppak (modern Fara)
Early Dynastic II–IIIa (Mesilim period), ca. 2700–2550 BCE
Dumbrill 1998, 187, pl. 7

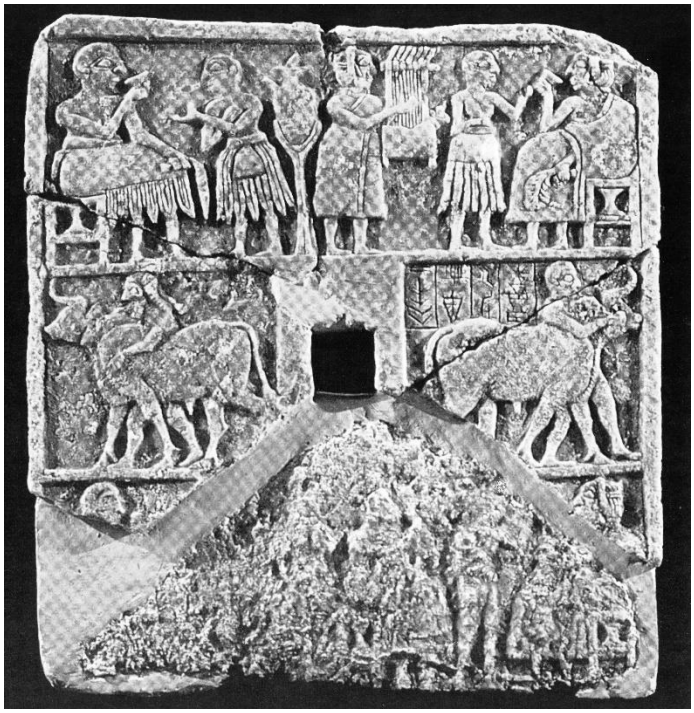
No. 33
Votive plaque made of limestone
Khafajeh, temple oval, layer I
Early Dynastic II–IIIa (Mesilim period), ca. 2700–2550 BCE
Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 14661)
Rashid 1984, 55, fig. 33

No. 34
Votive plaque made of limestone
Khafajeh, temple oval, layer I
Early Dynastic II–IIIa (Mesilim period),
ca. 2700–2550 BCE
Rashid 1984, 54, text ill.

a

b

No. 35 a–b
Votive plaque made of limestone
Khafajeh, Sin temple, level IX
Early Dynastic II–IIIa (Mesilim period), ca. 2700–2550 BCE
Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (A 12417) & Iraq Museum, Bagdad (IM 9012)
a: http://www.uchicago.edu/; b: Rashid 1984, 58, text ill.



No. 36
Votive plaque made of limestone
Nippur, Inanna Temple
Early Dynastic II–IIIa (Mesilim period), ca. 2700–2550 BCE
Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 66157)
Rashid 1984, 57, fig. 34

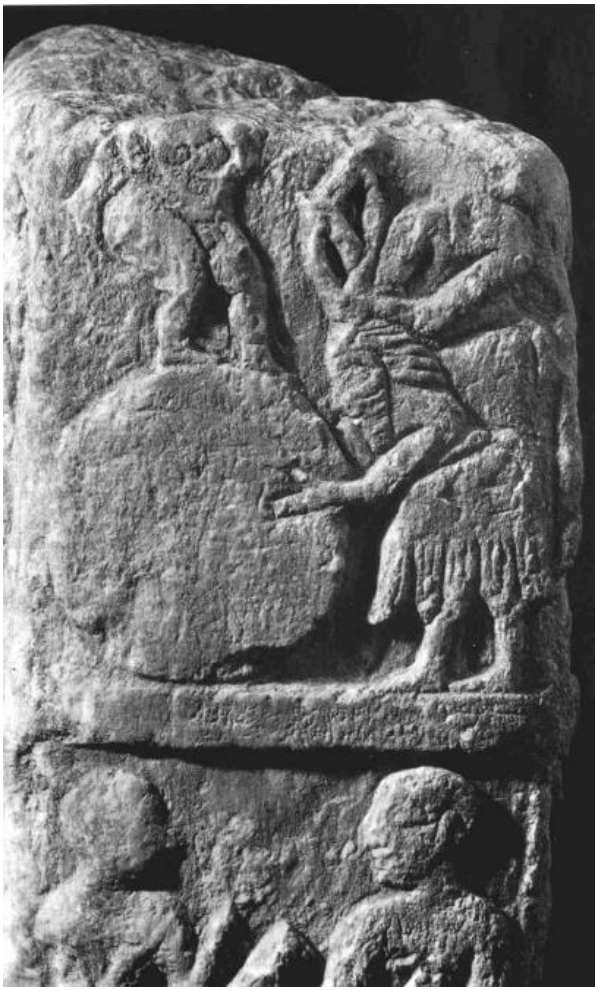
No. 37
Votive plaque made of limestone
Tell Agrab, Shara temple
Early Dynastic II–IIIa (Mesilim period), ca. 2700–2550 BCE
Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
(A 18073)
http://www.uchicago.edu/

No. 38
Votive plaque made of limestone
Province unknown
Early Dynastic II–IIIa (Mesilim period), ca. 2700–2550 BCE
Erlenmeyer Collection, Basel
Boese 1971, tab. XXXVII, K2

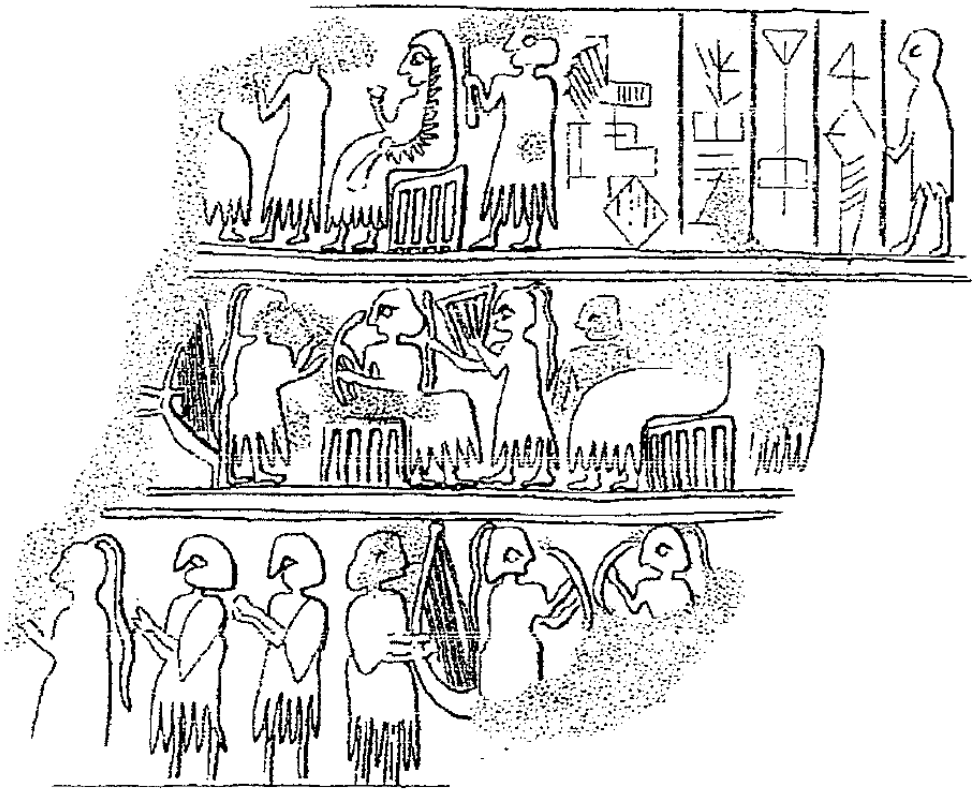
No. 39
Stone stele fragment
Khafajeh
Early Dynastic II–IIIa (Mesilim period), ca. 2700–2550 BCE
Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (A 9273)
Rashid 1984, 61, fig. 37

No. 40 a–b
"Bedreh Stele"
Marble stele fragment
Bedreh
Early Dynastic IIIa (Ur I), ca. 2550 BCE
a: Rashid 1984, 69, fig. 50;
b: Börker-Klähn 1987, fig. 12 a–d

a



b



No. 41
Cylinder seal impression of the "wife of ..., En of Mari"
Mari
Mari City I/II, ca. 2550 BCE
Beyer 2007, 237–240, no. 4

No. 42
Shell inlay fragment
Mari, Ninni-zaza temple, room 13
Mari City II, ca. 2550–2250 BCE
National Museum, Damascus (M. 2459)
Collins 2010, 160, no. 102

No. 43
Ur-Nanše statuette
Mari, Ninni-zaza temple
Mari City II, ca. 2500 BCE
Damascus Museum
http://www.louvre.fr/

No. 44
Alabaster statuette
Mari, Ištar temple
Mari City II, ca. 2500–2400 BCE
Musée du Louvre, Paris (AO 17568)
http://www.louvre.fr/

No. 45
Lapis-lazuli cylinder seal
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 1054
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 14314)
Rashid 1987, 51, fig. 25


a


b

No. 46 a –b
Bitumen cylinder seal covered with thin gold
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 1054
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 14597)
Rashid 1984, 51, fig. 23


a

b

No. 47 a–b
Lapis-lazuli cylinder seal inscribed **dumu-kisal** (“son or daughter of the court”)
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 1237 = Great Death Pit, found close to the three stringed instruments (cf., cat. no. 56 c)
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (3012.3 | U.12374)
https://www.penn.museum/

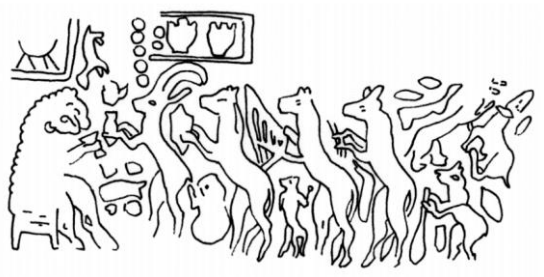

a

b

No. 48
"Puabi' seal"
Lapis lazuli cylinder seal
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 800B, found against the right arm of Puabi (cf. cat. no. 55 b)
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (B 16728 | U.10872)
https://www.penn.museum/

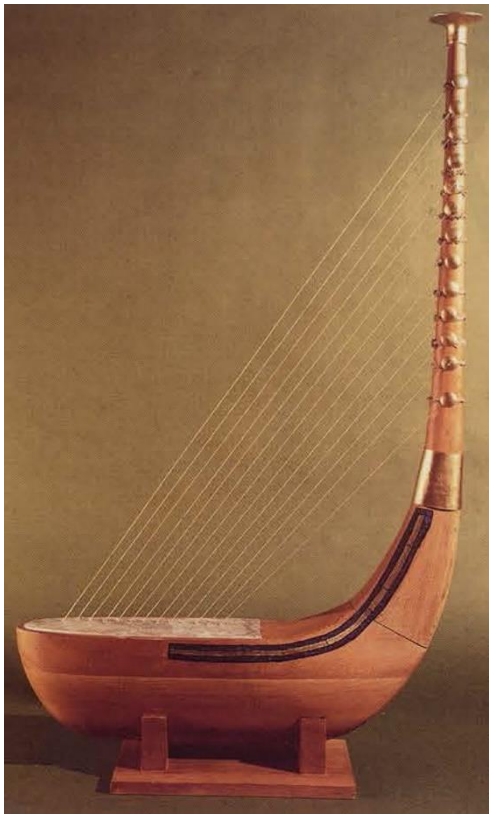
No. 49
Cylinder seal impression
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 800 = Puabi's tomb
(cf., cat. no. 55 b)
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
Dumbrill 1998, 192, pl. 16

No. 50
Cylinder seal impression
Ur, Royal Cemetery
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
Amiet 1981, no. 1770

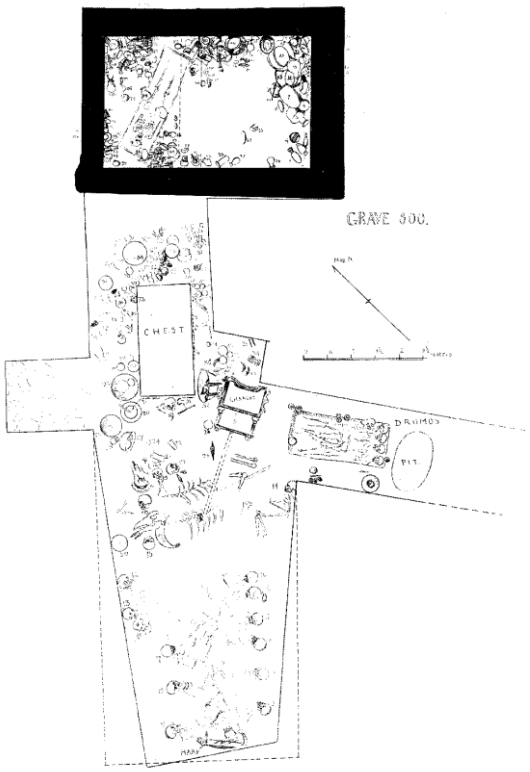


No. 51
"Banquet in fableland"
Cylinder seal impression
Ur (U. 14595; U. 14585; U. 18397; U. 18406; U. 18408 [three fragments]; U. 18413)
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
Collon 1987, 192, no. 935

No. 52
Cylinder seal
Ur
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2450 BCE
Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 60313)
Rashid 1984, 51, fig. 26



a



b

No. 53 a
Instrument reconstruction of the "Queen's harp"
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 800 = Puabi's tomb
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
British Museum, London (121198 b + c | U.10412)
http://britishmuseum.org/

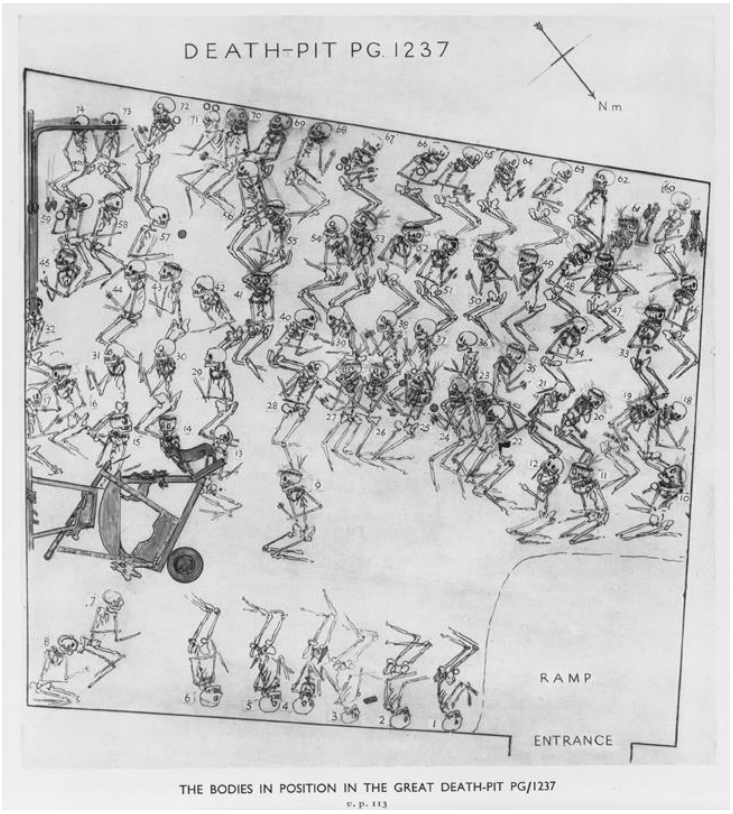
No. 53 b
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 800 = Puabi's tomb
https://www.penn.museum/

No. 53 c
Faulty instrument reconstruction prior to 1971–1972
British Museum, London (121198 a | U.10412)
Hartmann 1960, 310, fig. 14a

c

No. 54 a
Instrument reconstruction of the "Golden Lyre"
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 1237 = Great Death Pit
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 8694 | U.12353)
Rashid 1984, 31, fig. 2

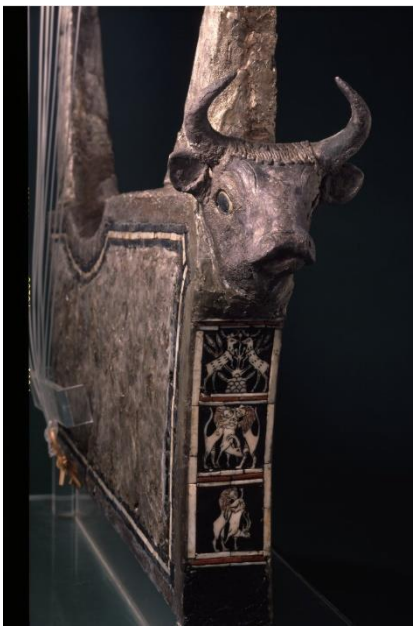
No. 54 b
Excavation photograph of the “Golden”, “Silver”, and “Boat-shaped Lyre”
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 1237 = Great Death Pit
https://www.penn.museum/



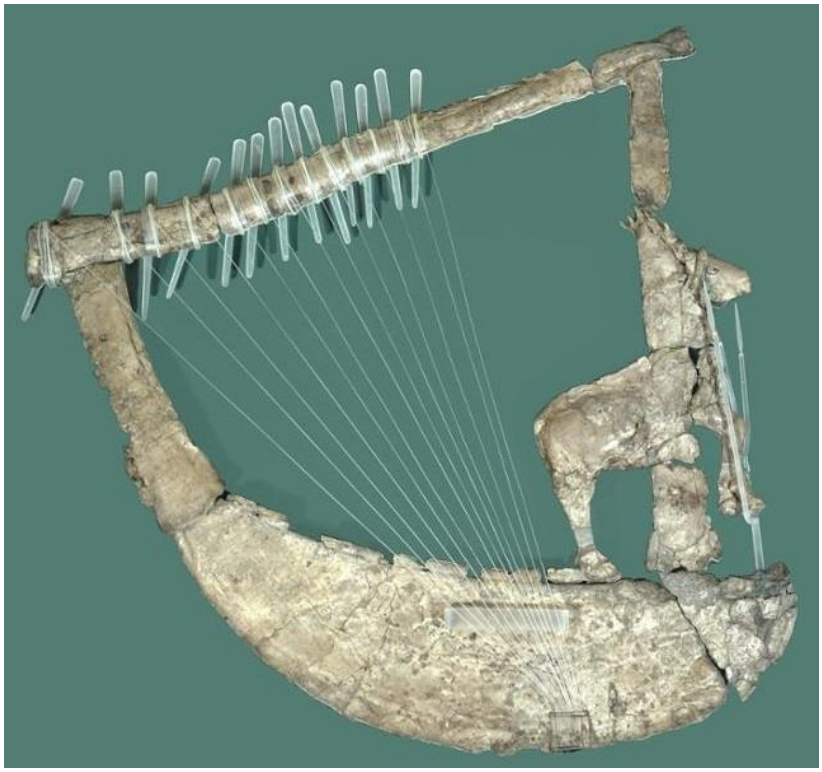
No. 54 c
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 1237 = Great Death Pit
https://www.penn.museum/

a

No. 55 a–b
Instrument reconstruction of the "Silver Lyre" (cf., cat. no. 56 b)
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 1237 = Great Death Pit (cf., cat. no. 56 c)
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
British Museum, London (12199 | U.12354)
http://britishmuseum.org/



b



No. 56 a
Faulty instrument reconstruction of the "Boat-shaped Lyre"
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 1237 = Great Death Pit (cf., cat. no. 56 c)
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (3012253 | U.12355)
https://www.penn.museum/

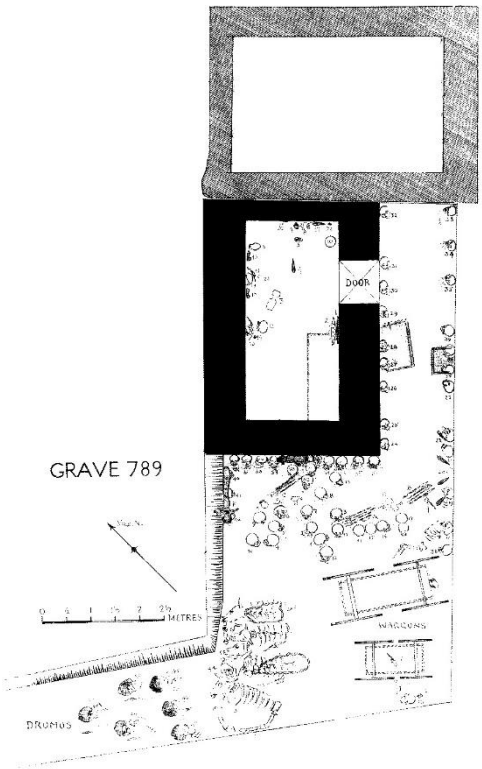
No. 56 b
Excavation photograph of the “Boat-shaped Lyre”
https://www.penn.museum/


a

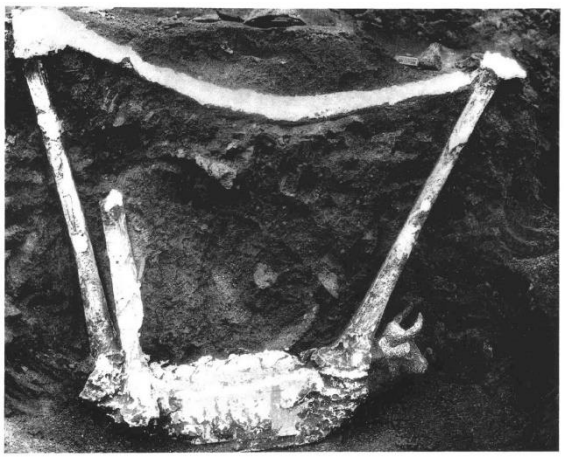

b

No. 57 a–d
Bull's head & instrument reconstruction of the "King's Lyre"
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 789
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (B 17694 B | U.10556)
https://www.penn.museum/


c



d



a: In situ

b: Woolley having lifted the instrument

c: Reconstruction by Lawergren in 1988

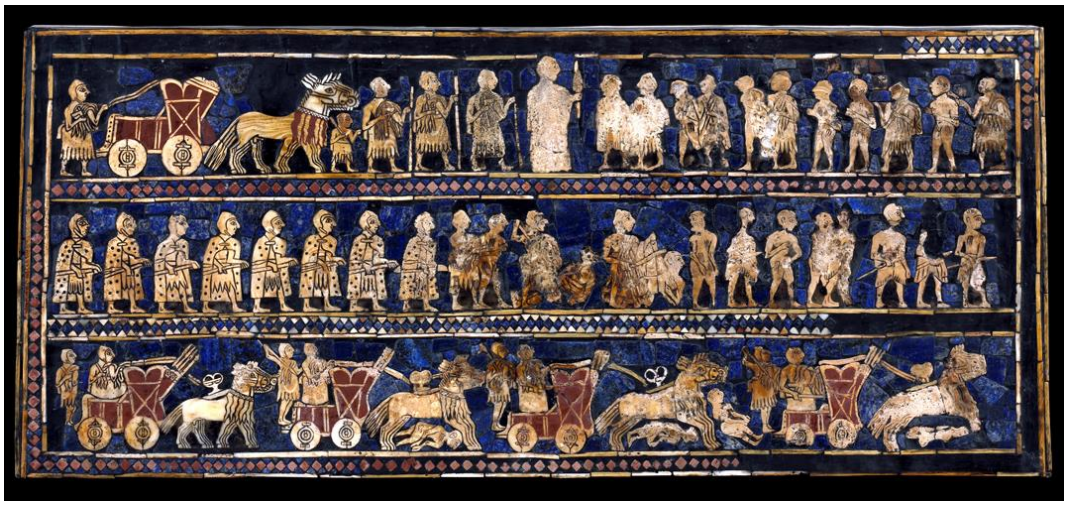
No. 58 a–c
"Gipsum Lyre"
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 1151
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
Iraq Museum, Bagdad (IM 8695 | U.12351)
a: Rashid 1984, 39, fig. 6–7; b: Lawergren 2010, 85, fig. 11; c: Lawergren 2010, 86, fig. 16

a

b

No. 59 a–b
"Animal chapel"
Inlay panel at the front of a lyre made of shell and bitumen
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 789 (cf. cat. no. 59 d)
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (B 17694 A | U.10556)
https://www.penn.museum/

No. 60
Inlay panel made of shell, lapis lazuli and bitumen
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 1332
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (30-12-481)
https://www.penn.museum/

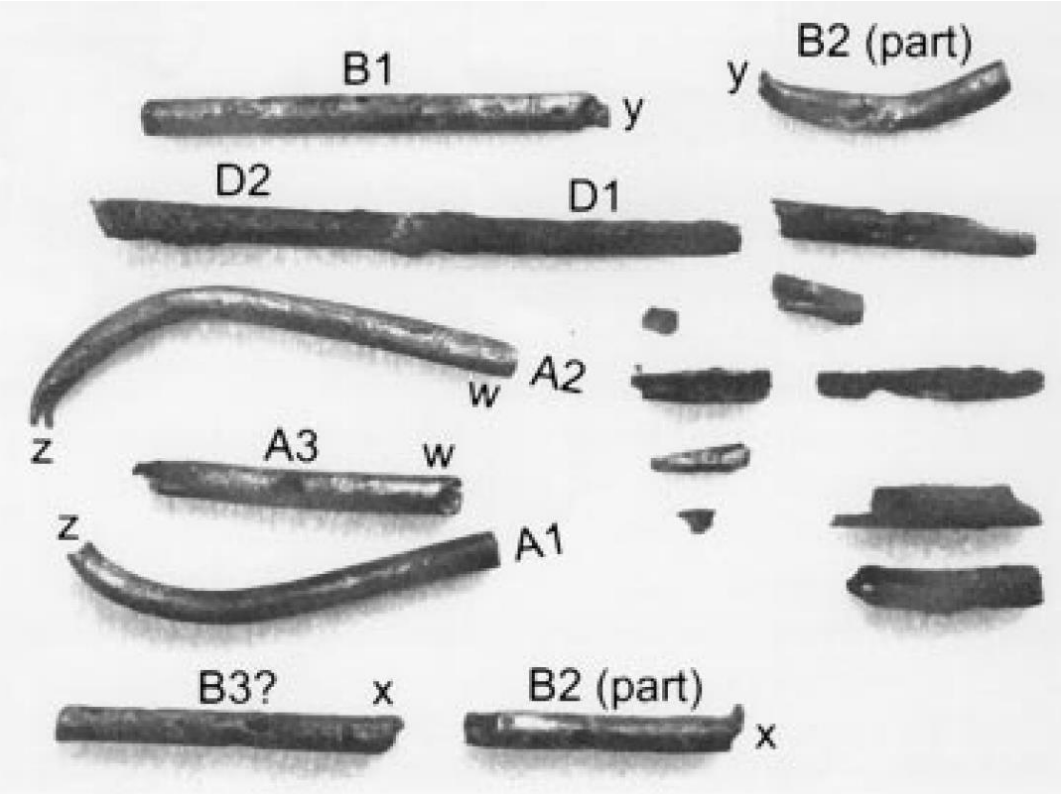


a

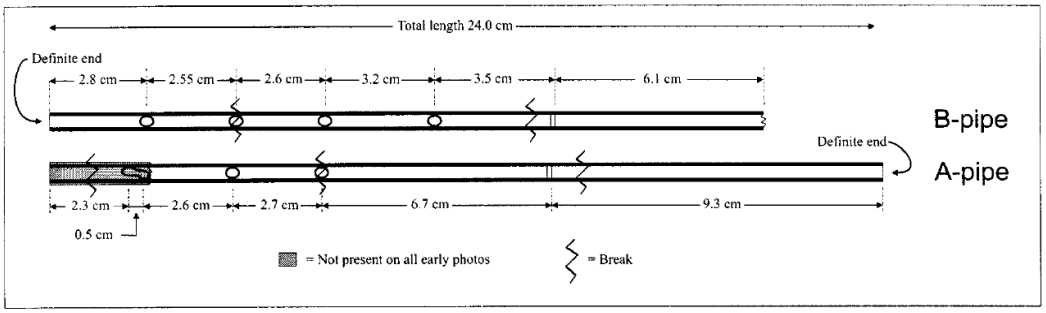
b

c

No. 61 a–c
The Standard of Ur
Inlay on a wooden box made of shell, limestone, lapis lazuli, and bitumen
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 779
Early Dynastic III (Ur I),
ca. 2550–2400 BCE
British Museum, London (1212.01)
http://britishmuseum.org/



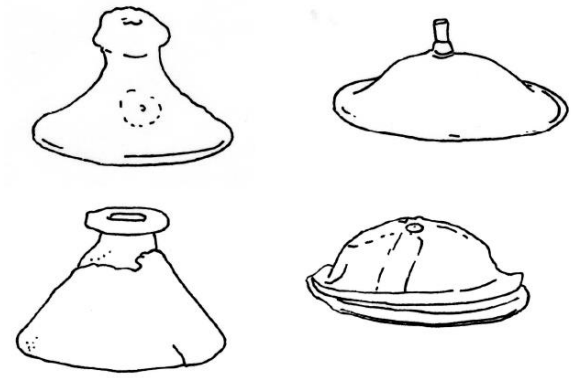
a. All pipe fragments in their condition in 1997



b. Lawergren reconstruction 1998

No. 62 a–b
Two silver pipes
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 333
Early Dynastic III (Ur I), ca. 2550–2400 BCE
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (CBS 17554)
a: Lawergren 2000, 127–126, fig. 1; b: Lawergren 2000, 127–126, fig. 3

No. 63
Bull' head application
Bronze, silver, conus, lapis lazuli, mollusk shell, bitumen core
Ur, Royal Cemetery, PG 1332
Akkadian period, ca. 2350–2150 BCE
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology
(30-12-696)
https://www.penn.museum/

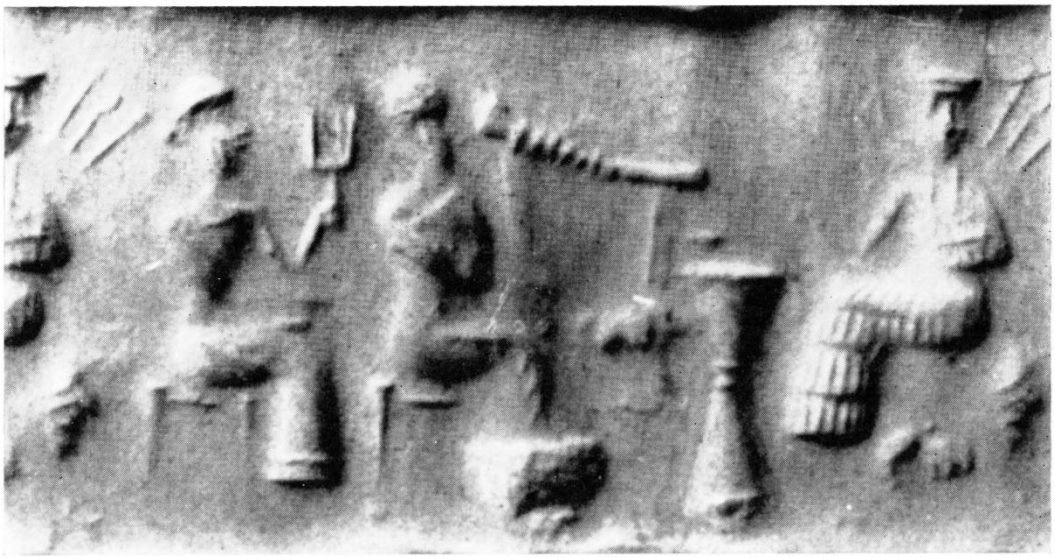


No. 64
Several metal cymbals
Ur, Royal Cemetery
Akkadian period, ca. 2350–2150 BCE
Dumbrill 1998, 385, pl. 81–84

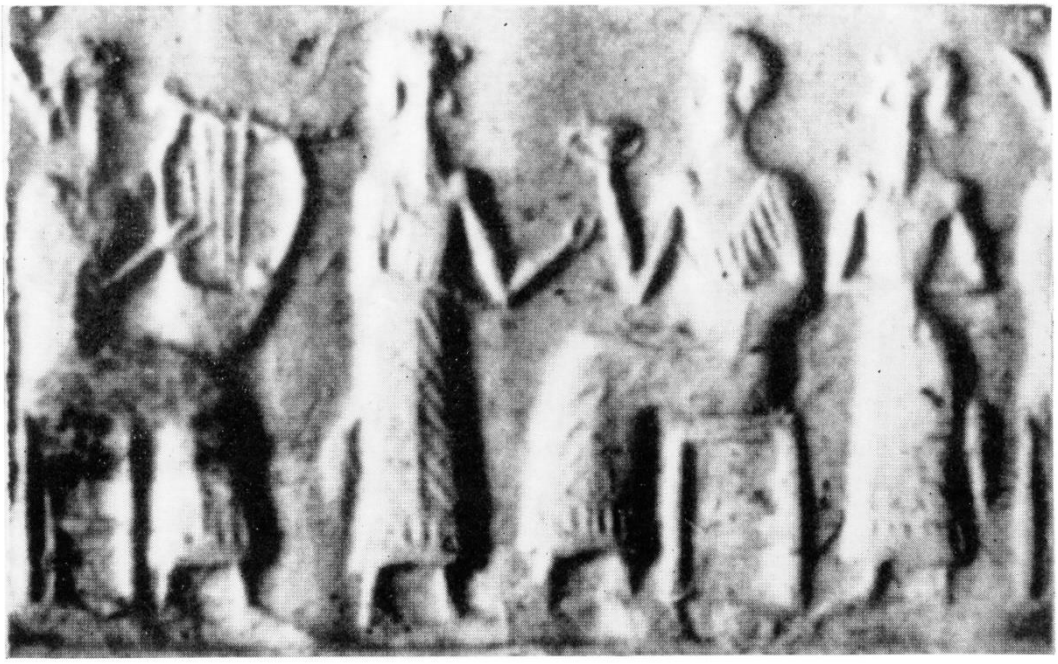
No. 65
Brown calcite (limestone) cylinder seal
Province unknown
Akkadian period, ca. 2350–2150 BCE
British Museum, London (BM 102417)
Rashid 1984, 63, fig. 40

No. 66
Cylinder seal
Province unknown
Akkadian period, ca. 2350–2150 BCE
Private Collection, New York (B 390)
Rashid 1984, 63, fig. 44

No. 67
Cylinder seal
Province unknown
Akkadian period, ca. 2350–2150 BCE
Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 33287)
Rashid 1984, 63, fig. 41



No. 68
Cylinder seal impression
Province unknown
Akkadian period, ca. 2350–2150 BCE
Musée du Louvre, Paris (AO 2371)
Rashid 1984, 63, fig. 42



No. 69
Cylinder seal
Province unknown
Akkadian period, ca. 2350–2150 BCE
Sammlung Erlenmeyer, Basel
Rashid 1984, 63, fig. 43

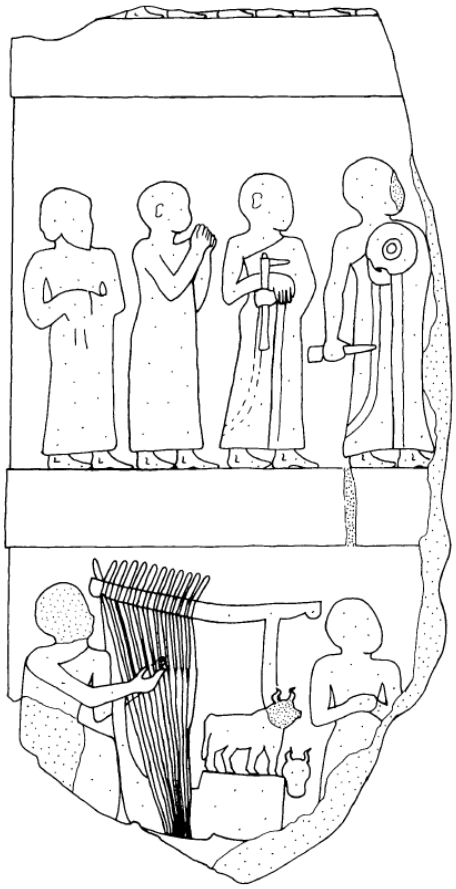
No. 70
Cylinder seal
Urkeš (modern Tell Mozan)
Akkadian period / Ur III, ca. 2350–2000 BCE
Dumbrill 1998, 256, pl. 48

No. 71
Diorite cylinder seal of "Ur-Ur, the singer"
Province unknown
Akkadian period, ca. 2350–2150 BCE
British Museum, London (BM 89096)
http://www.britishmuseum.org/

No. 72
Serpentine cylinder seal
Province unknown
Akkadian period, ca. 2350–2150 BCE
British Museum, London (BM 28806)
http://www.britishmuseum.org/

No. 73
Vessel
Tell Agrab
Akkadian period, ca. 2350–2150 BCE
Hartmann 1960, 351, fig. 35

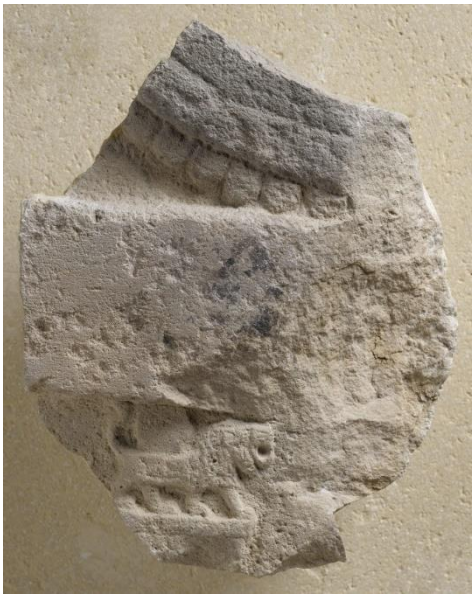
a



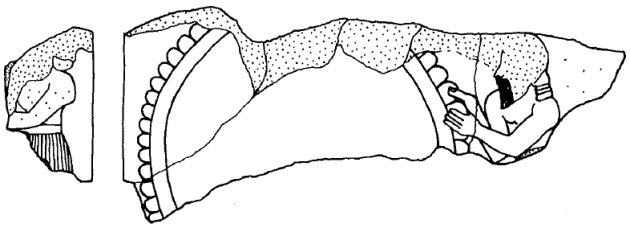
b

No. 74 a–b
“Stele of Music”
Stele fragment
Girsu (modern Tello), Tell A, close to gate M
Second dynasty of Lagaŝ, reign of Gudea, ca. 2100–2000 BCE
Musée du Louvre, Paris (AO 52)
a: http://www.louvre.fr/; b: Suter 2000, 352, ST. 10

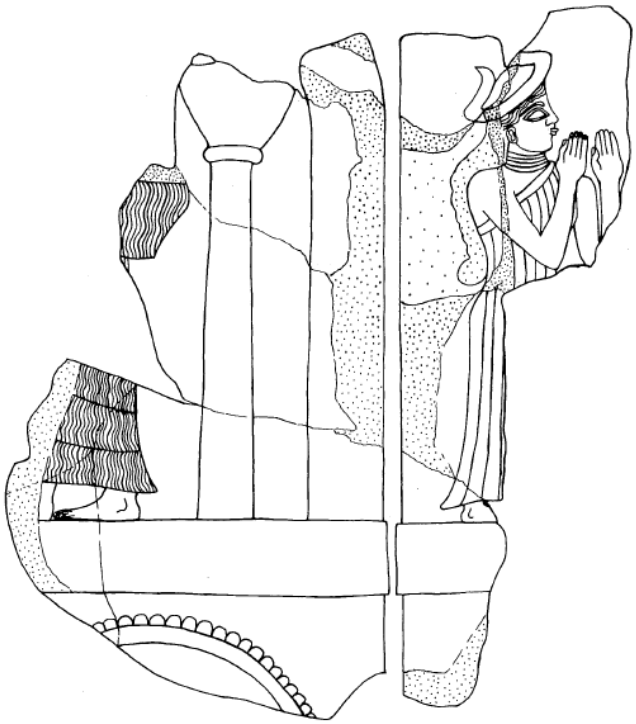
No. 75
Stele fragment
Girsu (modern Tello), Tell A/B
Second dynasty of Lagaŝ, reign of Gudea, ca. 2100–2000 BCE
Musée du Louvre, Paris (AO 4578)
http://www.louvre.fr/



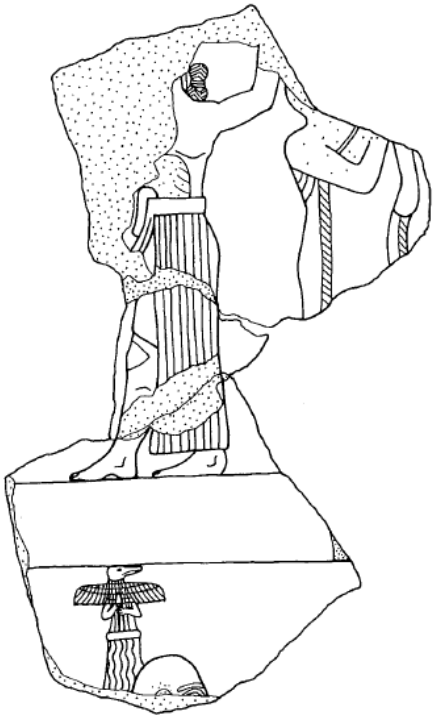
No. 76
Stele fragment
Girsu (modern Tello), Tell A/B
Second dynasty of Lagaŝ, reign of Gudea,
ca. 2100–2000 BCE
Musée du Louvre, Paris (AO 4577)
http://www.louvre.fr/



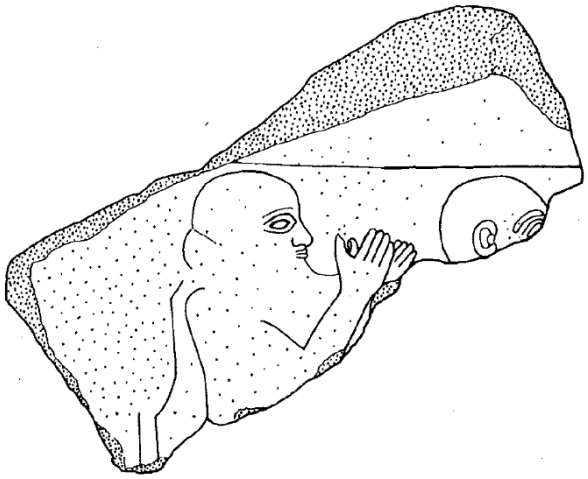
No. 77
Stele fragment
Girsu (modern Tello), Tell A/B
Second dynasty of Lagaŝ, reign of Gudea, ca. 2100–2000 BCE
Musée du Louvre, Paris (AO 4579 | EŞEM 5805)
Suter 2000, 358, ST. 13



No. 78
Stele fragment
Girsu (modern Tello), Tell A/B
Second dynasty of Lagaŝ, reign of Gudea, ca. 2100–2000 BCE
Musée du Louvre, Paris
(AO 4573 | EŞEM 5837 + 6117)
Suter 2000, 350, ST. 9



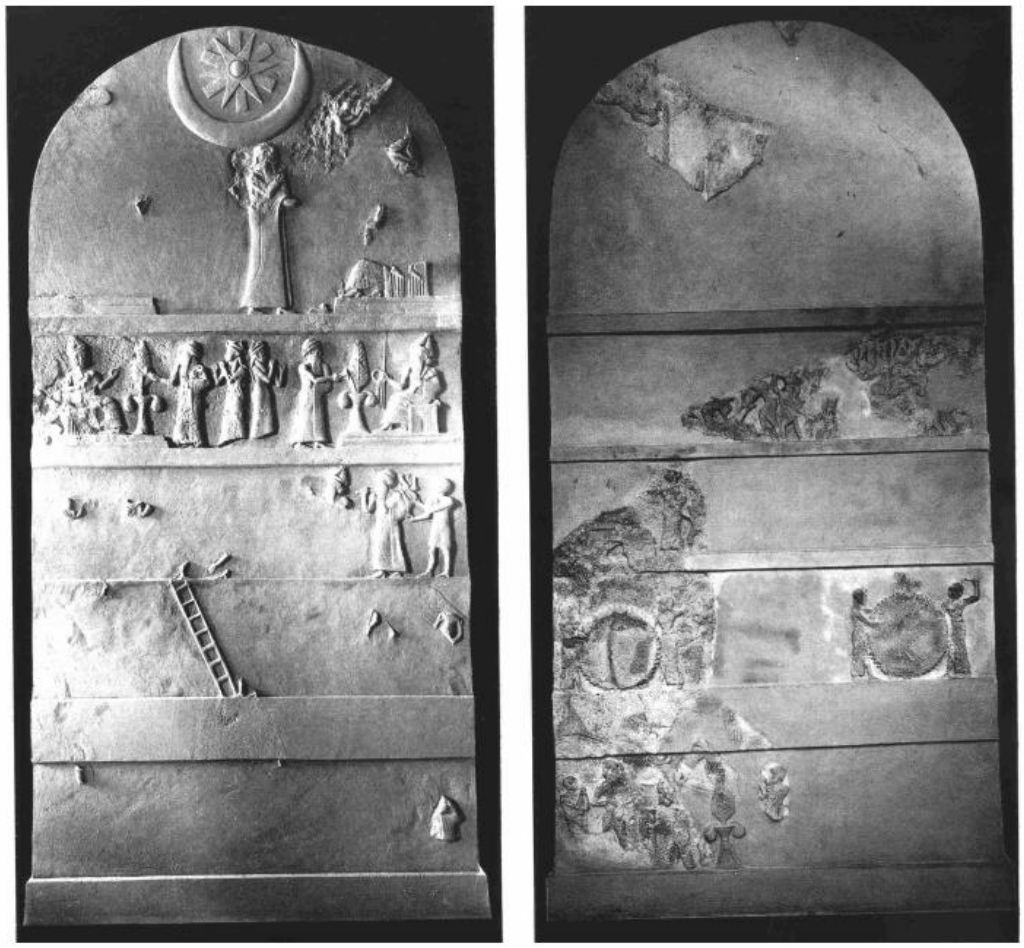
No. 79
Stele fragment
Girsu (modern Tello), Tell A/B
Second dynasty of Lagaŝ, reign of Gudea, ca. 2100–2000 BCE
Musée du Louvre, Paris (EŞEM 5811)
Suter 2000, 366, ST. 23



No. 80
Stele fragment
Girsu (modern Tello), Tell A, entrance of palace
Second dynasty of Lagaŝ, reign of Gudea, ca. 2100–2000 BCE
Musée du Louvre, Paris (AO 55)
Suter 2000, 384, ST. 53

No. 81
Stele fragment
Province unknown; most likely from Girsu (modern Tello)
Second dynasty of Lagaŝ, reign of Gudea, ca. 2100–2000 BCE
Musée du Louvre, Paris (AO 10235)
http://www.louvre.fr/

No. 82
Vessel fragment
Girsu (modern Tello)
Ur III period,
ca. 2100–2000 BCE
Musée du Louvre, Paris (AO 5682)
Rashid 1984, 69, fig. 49

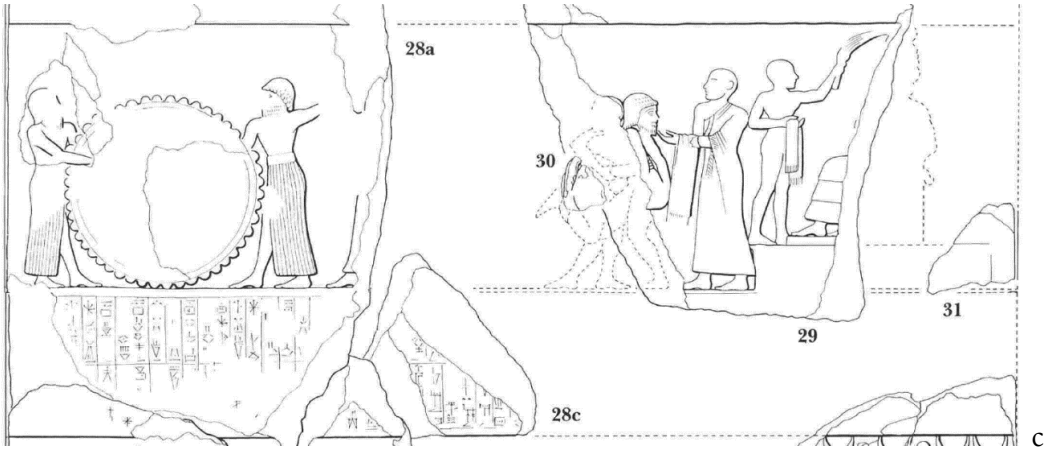


a

No. 83 a
"Ur-Nammu stele"
Stone relief
Ur
Ur III period, ca. 2100–2000 BCE
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (B16676)
https://www.penn.museum/

No. 83 b
Fragment of the "Ur-Nammu stele"
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (950.7.3)
Rashid 1984, 73, fig. 56

b



c

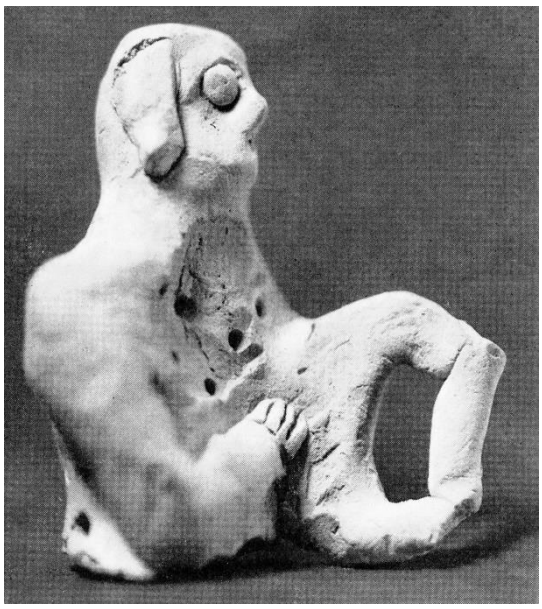
No. 83 c
Reconstruction of the 4th register of the poor side
Canby 2001, pl. 11 and 43

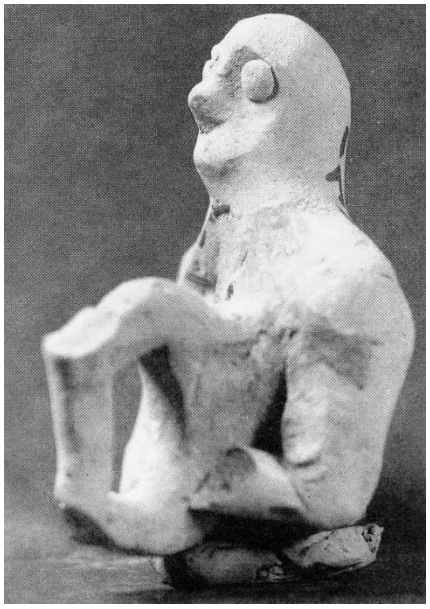
No. 84
Stamp seal
Failaka, Dilmun
Ca. 2100–2000 BCE
Goodarzi 2003, 321, fig. 220 f

No. 85
Stamp seal
Failaka, Dilmun
Ca. 2100–2000 BCE
Zettler 2011, 281, fig. 6

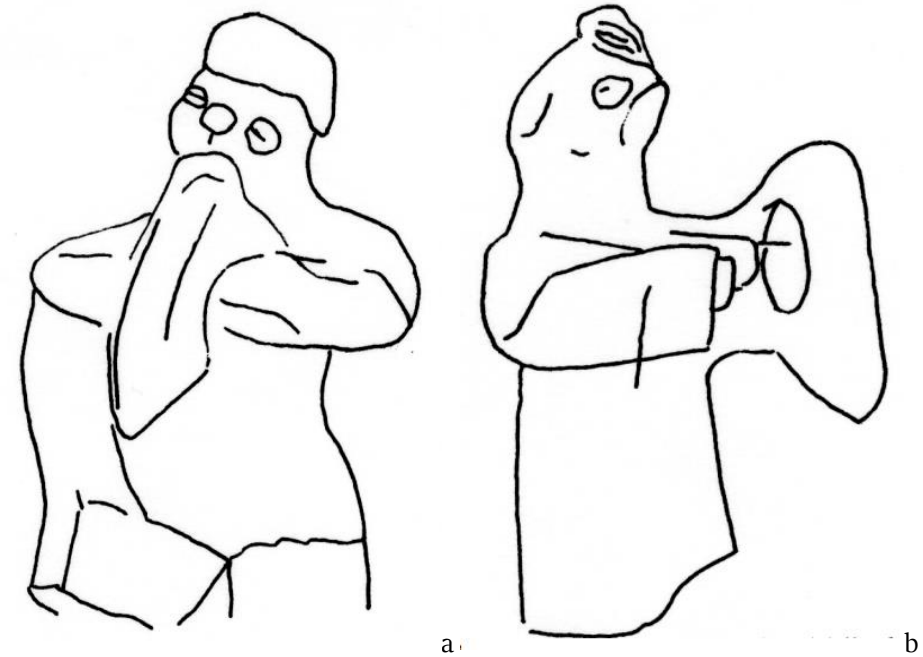
No. 86
Bull head application
Copper alloy
Bahrain, Barbar temple IIA
Ca. 2000 BCE
Bahrain National Museum, Manama (517.FJ)
Collins 2003, 311, no. 206

No. 87
Terracotta model of a zoomorphic lyre
Nippur, Locus TB 245 VI-1
Ur III period, ca. 2050–1950 BCE
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (53-11-103)
https://www.penn.museum/


a


b

No. 88 a–b
Terracotta figurines
Tell ed-Der
Ur III period, ca. 2050–1950 BCE
Iraq Museum, Baghdad (IM 49487)
Rashid 1984, 67, 47–48


a b

No. 89 a–b
Two terracotta figurines
Tell ed-Der
Ur III period, ca. 2050–1950 BCE
Dumbrill 1998, 280, pl. 114 and 116

IX. 2. List of figures in the catalogue

CHAPTER X

Abstract

This thesis is present an interdisciplinary study including archaeological and philological evidence. It is concerned with the development of musical entertainment and the socio-cultural value and function of music in ancient Mesopotamia in the late 4th and 3rd millennium BCE. It also investigates changes in the form, venue and occasion of performances which are continuously affected by trajectories such as the period, religion, politics, technology, and style. It includes the classification of ancient instrument according to modern types on the basis of iconographical and archaeological materiel, as well as the identification of the most important instrument names in ancient Sumerian literary texts. Moreover, it concerned with different contexts of musical performance. A survey of depicted scenes has led to the definition of various topics which are structured in a rough chronological order according to their initial appearance. They are explained on the basis of archaeological, iconographical and / or literary evidence. This scholar-imposed scheme allows to examine instruments in their performative function. Thus, it is possible to investigate the socio-cultural role of music in certain historical periods from different perspectives and provides information about characteristics of political, intellectual or religious life. A catalogue of the all iconographic and archaeological attestations featuring musical instruments dating to the late 4th and 3rd millennium BCE as well as a survey of the Sumerian literary text corpus referring to musical performances are the foundation of this study.