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## Music and Political Space in Ancient Egypt

### Summary

In Ancient Egypt, music was an important element of the public space, structuring military parades, royal festivals and religious processions. At the same time, all these settings can be understood as political space, inasmuch as they always served political communication as well. The present paper investigates how music and musical instruments were employed to this effect and how political realities and their changes are reflected in the choices involved.

Keywords: ritual; symbolism; political change; ceremony; dance; instruments; Hyksos; Tutankhamun (tomb)

Im alten Ägypten nahm Musik durch die Strukturierung von militärischen Paraden, königlichen Festen und religiösen Prozessionen eine wichtige Rolle im öffentlichen Raum ein. Alle diese Situationen können gleichzeitig auch als politische Räume verstanden werden, da sie immer auch zur politischen Kommunikation dienten. Der vorliegende Artikel untersucht, wie Musik und Musikinstrumente zu diesem Zweck verwendet wurden und wie politische Wirklichkeit sowie ihre Veränderungen sich in deren Auswahl widerspiegeln.

Keywords: Ritual; Symbolismus; politische Veränderungen; Zeremonie; Tanz; Instrumente; Hyksos; Tutanchamun (Grab)

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To paraphrase the famous Chinese author Lü Bu We in his Spring and Autumn Annals I.VI.3, knowing the music of a country means knowing its customs and its ways of thinking.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, he asserts, the type of music practised indicates whether a state is in good order or has become decadent. At the same time, with harmonious music it is possible to incite the populace to righteousness. Thus, in Lü Bu We's opinion, political and social change is intimately linked to music and musical change, pertaining both to the effects and to the causes of this change.

As Lü Bu We's text was a major inspiration for the workshop *Sound, Political Space and Political Condition*, which in turn formed the starting-point for this volume, it seems appropriate to wonder what the Ancient Egyptians would have thought about this relationship. Unfortunately, texts like this are not known from Ancient Egypt. However, sources on Egyptian music are amply represented, and these do show certain links with the political sphere. This paper will explore some of these links.

The first and foremost instance in which music played a major role in political space was royal representation, more especially in the context of military music. Most of the sources for this date from the New Kingdom, because in this period it was customary to decorate temples with scenes of victorious battles<sup>2</sup> as well as processions and military parades.<sup>3</sup> Other such scenes come from the tombs of high officials. The instruments that dominate in this context are, perhaps not surprisingly, trumpets and large barrel-shaped drums.<sup>4</sup> The character of these instruments certainly fits a military setting because of the large volumes of sound that they can produce and which make them ideal for communication on a battle field. Also, the sounds, particularly of drums, can easily be imagined stimulating the aggressiveness of one's own troops while at the same time inspiring fear in the enemy.<sup>5</sup> But while drums are shown in processions of soldiers, they do not actually figure on the battlefield.<sup>6</sup> Therefore the sentence "I spent (three?) years striking as a drummer every day" in the famous inscription of Emhab of Edfu,<sup>7</sup> describing his military exploits as a follower of one of the kings of the 17th dynasty, is just a poetic way to describe a hard and continuous struggle,<sup>8</sup> but it does not mean that Emhab himself actually was a drummer. As his titles *ir̄-p' t ḥ3.tl-'w* and *im.ṯ-r' pr wr* indicate, Emhab was

1 Wilhelm 2006 [1928], 92–93.

2 Heinz 2001.

3 A good example would be the depiction of the Opet Feast in Luxor Temple, see Survey 1994.

4 Hickmann 1946; Hickmann 1961b, 75; Manniche 1975, 6–9, 31–35.

5 On the importance of drumming in cross-cultural comparison, see Störk 1993.

6 Importantly remarked by Klotz 2010, 233.

7 Text: Černý 1969; Helck 1975, 97–98; the correct interpretation of the crucial passage first in Grimm 1989, most recently Morenz 2005; Klotz 2010, esp. 231–233 (the latter, with new photos, epigraphic drawing and complete bibliography in note 1, can be considered the definitive edition).

8 As proposed by Grimm, *contra* Störk. On the details of the reading see Klotz 2010, 231–232.

in fact a nomarch<sup>9</sup> of Edfu and also a great steward of the residence, i. e., a member of the uppermost elite, not simply a military musician.

## 1 Music and political change

In terms of musical change, it is unfortunate that only tiny remains of battle scenes are preserved from the time before the New Kingdom,<sup>10</sup> so few, in fact, that sometimes it is even assumed that this type of scene did not exist in the older periods. While battle scenes certainly did exist, the surviving remnants are so meagre that it is impossible to know whether they also would have shown musicians, and if so, which types of instruments they would have played. In the New Kingdom, significantly, not only are Egyptian soldiers shown, but Nubian battalions can also be seen integrated into the imperial army of Egypt. Some types of large sub-Saharan drums might even have been introduced together with these persons,<sup>11</sup> but that cannot be proven.

In terms of music reflecting political change, the classic example from Ancient Egypt would be the introduction by the Hyksos of the lute and the lyre from the Near East to Egypt in the Second Intermediate Period. The Hyksos, i. e., the *ḥkꜣ-ḥꜣ.wt* “rulers of the foreign countries” were the descendants of immigrants and prisoners of war from Palestine who had come to Egypt in the Middle Kingdom. When the power of the native Egyptian 13th dynasty waned, they assumed control and ruled the country for almost a century, from their capital Auaris in the delta.<sup>12</sup> When they were finally defeated by Ahmose, the first ruler of the 18th dynasty and thus the founder of the New Kingdom, the Egyptians were happy to retain many of the goods and manners introduced by them.<sup>13</sup> This is true for useful commodities like the horse and chariot but also for more, so to speak, pleasurable things like the lute and the lyre. While there is no way to prove it conclusively, it is to be expected that, by then, not only would the foreign instruments have made their way into mainstream Egyptian culture, but also foreign music including, of course, any rhythms and melodies associated with them.<sup>14</sup> Yet, despite the change, there is no ancient text bemoaning a loss of true Egyptian music. Ironically, this gap is filled

9 I. e. the ruler of a *nome*, one of the 42 or so (the number varies over time) counties into which Egypt was divided for administrative reasons. Next to the king and the vizier, a *nomarch* would thus have been among the most powerful persons within Egyptian society.

10 Schulz 2002.

11 Compare Manniche 1975, 7–8; Brack and Brack 1980, pl. 47, 51.

12 Modern Tell el-Dab'a, which has been excavated since 1966 by the Österreichisches Archäologisches

Institut under M. Bietak (and since 2010, I. Forstner-Müller).

13 Most probably most of the foreign population stayed in Egypt and all that happened was the execution of the Hyksos ruler and, at most, a few other high-ranking officials. From the archaeological evidence, it seems rather unlikely that the whole population was expelled, as some publications have assumed.

14 The whole problem is treated in von Lieven 2008.

by Curt Sachs in his 1921 study on Ancient Egyptian music. He moralizes about it in a way rather reminiscent of Lü Bu We:

When the curtain that falls over Egyptian life at the end of the 12th dynasty rises again towards the beginning of the New Kingdom, the picture has changed. The immense wave of Asiatic culture that floods Egypt at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom has swept away the old national instrumentarium, and with it native musical tastes. The calmness, mildness and simplicity of the old Tonkunst [musical aesthetic] are gone. [...] Full, shrill and noisy, the music surges. [...] The heady, sensual music of the Asians has taken possession of the Egyptian soul.<sup>15</sup>

While Sachs' assessment implies that this Asian influence is utterly decadent and that the Egyptians had succumbed to some alien force polluting and destroying their national character, the Ancient Egyptians themselves may have felt quite otherwise: that by parading foreign musicians during Egyptian festivals they proved their dominance over all foreign countries. Elsewhere musicians and their precious instruments figure in royal lists of war booty<sup>16</sup> and are mentioned in religious texts praising the power of Egyptian deities over other countries.<sup>17</sup> While the booty lists are preserved for states in Palestine, the prominent role of foreigners and foreign music in the cult is particularly visible for Nubia. The reason for this is probably religious and symbolic rather than political. It is true that Nubia always had close ties to Egypt, but recent finds like the Elkab inscription which speaks of a Nubian invasion of Egypt up to Elkab,<sup>18</sup> and the Franco-Swiss mission's findings in Kerma,<sup>19</sup> seem to make it clear that Nubia before the New Kingdom was no less a sovereign state with a strong culture of its own than were the Palestinian city-states which were also strongly influenced by Egypt as early as the Middle Kingdom.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the reason for the dominance of Nubia in certain religious contexts is rather to be found in its geographical position. Nubia was apparently

15 Sachs 1921, 9–10: „Wenn der Vorhang, der mit dem Ende der 12. Dynastie über das ägyptische Leben fällt, gegen den Anfang des Neuen Reiches wieder aufgeht, hat sich das Bild geändert. Die gewaltige Woge asiatischer Kultur, die im Ausgange des Mittleren Reiches Ägypten überflutet, hat das alte nationale Instrumentarium, und damit die volkseigene Musik fortgeschwemmt. Ruhe, Milde und Einfachheit der alten Tonkunst sind dahin. [...] Voll, schrill und lärmend rauscht die Musik. [...] Von der Seele des Ägypters hat die aufpeitschende, sinnentrunkene Tonkunst des Asiaten Besitz ergriffen“ (translation A. von Lieven).

16 Helck 1955, 1305; Helck 1961, 38.

17 Gauthier 1931, 189–190; Survey 1940, pl. 203 (Medinet Habu), 213 (Ramesseum); Maher-Taha and Loyrette 1979, pl. VI; Verhoeven and Derchain 1985, 16, 22, D, M, pl. 2, 5; Darnell 1995, 64; von Lieven 2002a, 501, note 40; von Lieven 2008, 157–158.

18 N. d. G. Davies 2003; W. V. Davies 2003; W. V. Davies 2010, 223–240.

19 Bonnet 1986; Bonnet 2000.

20 Helck 1971; von Lieven 2006a; especially on music, Hickmann 1961a.

seen as an extension of Punt<sup>21</sup> in the south-east, which in itself was thought to be the land of the gods because of its products as well as because it lies in the direction of the rising sun and stars.

This is certainly the reason why Nubian dance and music figure prominently in, for example, a song from the Mut Ritual.<sup>22</sup> Still, the ability to procure such musicians for the performances would also have been a political statement. One also needs to keep in mind that in Ancient Egypt, religion and politics were always closely linked, in so far as rituals are always presumed to help the king maintain his power. This will be explored further below.

A particularly striking case needs to be mentioned; the presence of so-called ‘Giant Lyres’ during the Amarna Period, in scenes from the temple of the then new ‘monotheistic’ god Aton.<sup>23</sup> They are always shown played by what appear to be male musicians in peculiar dresses, possibly foreigners and/or transvestites. Their eyes are always blindfolded with a piece of cloth.<sup>24</sup> Not only is the attire of the musicians unique to this period, but so also is their instrument. While the deeper significance of this is as mysterious as almost every other aspect of the Amarna period, it is certainly a good example of a particular type of music being intimately associated with a particular political and religious situation. Was this association so strong that the Giant Lyre was shunned by later periods; that is, shunned because it represented the music of the despised Amarna period? After all, all the other musical instruments found in Amarna-period depictions already existed in Egypt before, and survived later. Only the Giant Lyre was newly introduced to Egypt under Akhenaten, and it disappears immediately thereafter.

At any rate, the increase in foreign musical elements can certainly be regarded as a sign of the expansion of the Egyptian empire, particularly in the New Kingdom. However, similar trends are to be seen in later periods, when Egypt herself came once again under the dominance of foreigners. This is particularly clear for the Graeco-Roman period, when, again, a huge influx of new instruments is attested. Moreover, from this time even some of the music itself is known, from Greek papyri with musical notation.<sup>25</sup>

This shows that it is not safe to equate the presence of foreign musical elements with either a weak position of the nation (or at least of its native population) or, to the contrary, with a strong expansionist empire. Of course, no-one would assume Lü Bu We’s criteria to be valid tools for cultural studies today. Yet, the quote from Sachs shows that, at least in the early 20th century, this same way of thinking was indeed being applied, even if unwittingly.

21 Probably to be located in the region of modern Somalia, see Meeks 2003.

22 Verhoeven and Derchain 1985, 16, 22, D, M, pl. 2, 5; Quack 2010b, 351–353 (and 357 for the date of the composition).

23 Manniche 1975, 88–91; Manniche 2000, esp. 234–235.

24 Manniche 1978.

25 Pöhlmann 1970; Neubecker 1977, 153; von Lieven 2002a, 501–502.

Of course, there is little to be gained from ridiculing our scholarly predecessor's work either. It seems much more interesting to consider where else in the political sphere the Egyptians themselves might have used music, in perhaps less obvious and uncharacteristic ways.

## 2 Music and political meaning: the instruments of Tutankhamun

A good point of departure for such an approach seems to be the tomb of Tutankhamun,<sup>26</sup> one of the few royal tombs to have been almost completely preserved, without the loss of too many objects to either tomb robbers or the effects of humidity in the ground. Indeed, in this tomb some musical instruments have been found (Fig. 1). In the preface to her comprehensive publication within the framework of the Griffith Institute's Tutankhamun Tomb Series, Lise Manniche writes concerning their selection "The choice appears to be arbitrary."<sup>27</sup> But is that really so? And if it is not arbitrary, why were just these few types of instruments chosen?

As it happens, all of the instruments in the tomb occur in pairs. Most famous are the two trumpets, of bronze and silver, which are decorated on the bell with scenes showing the king together with three gods.<sup>28</sup> On both trumpets it is the same gods that figure, namely Amun, Re-Harakhte and Ptah. On the bronze trumpet, Tutankhamun is shown standing between them; on the silver trumpet, the gods alone are depicted, while the king is represented merely by his cartouches placed elsewhere on the bell. Now, these three gods are the most important gods of the Egyptian state religion in the 18th dynasty, and in fact throughout the entire New Kingdom. For example, they are represented together with the king a little later, under Ramses II, in the sanctuary of Abu Simbel in Nubia. It is also known that three of the four divisions of the Egyptian army during the Ramesside Period were named after these gods, who are moreover the classical Imperial Triad of the time.<sup>29</sup> The fourth division, named after Seth, may in fact be an addition of the 19th dynasty, which especially venerated this god. If so, under Tutankhamun in the late 18th dynasty, there might very well have been three divisions with similar names.<sup>30</sup>

26 For an authoritative account of its discovery see Carter and Mace 1923–1932. The study and detailed publication of the different kinds of objects is still under way. For a complete database of the finds see <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4tut.html> (visited on 19/07/2019).

27 Manniche 1976, 1.

28 Manniche 1976, 7–13, pl. V–XII.

29 For 18th dynasty forerunners of the Ramesside Im-

perial Triad see Wiese 1990, 109–111. The reference to Wiese is due to J. Quack; references relating to the names of the divisions were provided by M. Müller. I would like to thank both of them very much.

30 As there is no explicit record from Tutankhamun's short reign, circumstantial evidence is all that is available. Schulman 1964, 59, note 67, names six divisions under Akhenaton (with the Atenist names to

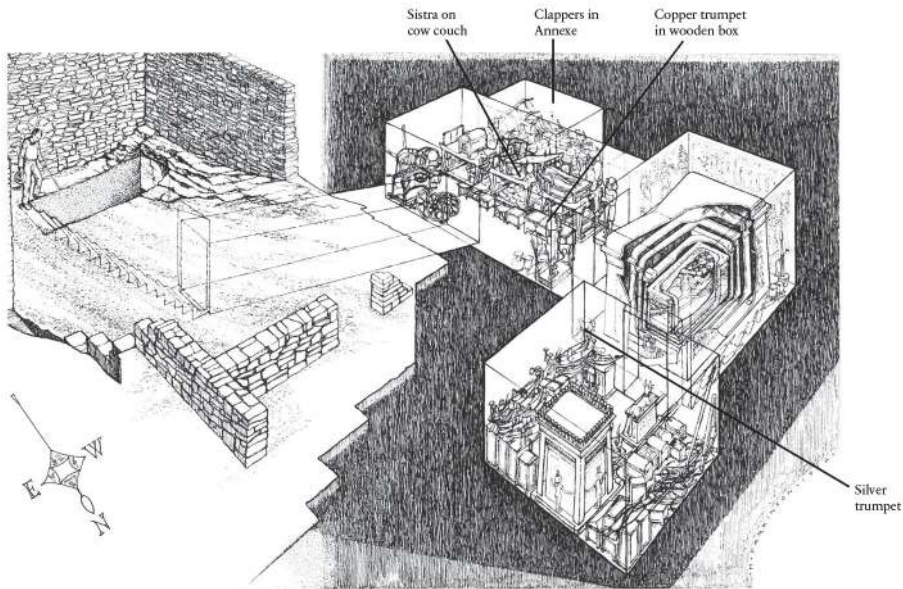


Fig. 1 Position of musical instruments in the tomb of Tutankhamun (based on a drawing by H. Parkinson).

The close linkage between trumpets and the military sphere and, more generally, the representation of royal power, has been noted earlier, thus it is unsurprising to find these instruments also in the royal tomb. Interestingly, the silver trumpet was found next to the entrance in the south-eastern corner of the king's burial chamber. It was thus situated very close to the sarcophagus, which was inside a nest of four shrines. To be precise, between the outermost and second shrines, as well as between the second and third, were twenty bows, ten arrows,<sup>31</sup> staves and other signs of authority, while between the third and fourth were two large fans adorned with ostrich feathers.<sup>32</sup> From pictorial representations it is well established that the king was always accompanied by such fans

be expected). For Seti I, the Beth Shean Stela names three divisions (Amun, Re and Seth): Kitchen 1975, 12 (text); Kitchen 1993, 10 (translation); Spalinger 2005, 189–190; Quack 2010a, 155–158; while for Ramses II in Qadesh, it is the well-known four (Amun, Re, Ptah and Seth), see e.g. Kitchen 1979, 21–23 (text); Kitchen 1996, 4 (translation). However, just because Ptah is not named in Beth Shean does not necessarily imply that there were only three divisions under Seti I. They might just have been deployed elsewhere. By the same token, it is even less plausible to extrapolate to the reign of

Tutankhamun. Still, the fact that the precise gods attested to in the Ramesside Period as patrons of military divisions (except Seth, who is a Ramesside favourite) are also attested on the trumpets of Tutankhamun makes it very likely that they were the patrons of the divisions already in the late 18th dynasty; compare Hornung 1971, 215–216.

31 McLeod 1982, 3.

32 Nos. 242 and 245 in Carter's list of finds; see <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/200-249.html> (visited on 19/07/2019).

as a sign of his rank. In fact, ‘fan-bearer to the king’s right’ was a high-ranking court title and its holders were influential officials.<sup>33</sup> The less precious copper or bronze trumpet was found inside a box in the antechamber, again associated with a great number of arrows and close to still more archery equipment.<sup>34</sup> This ensemble was positioned next to the sealed entrance of the burial chamber. Thus, for the trumpets it can already be concluded that neither their choice as such, nor their exact placement within the tomb was arbitrary,<sup>35</sup> but rather a deliberate recreation of the situation in the audience-hall in the palace during the king’s lifetime, or on an expedition somewhere in the country.

The next pair of instruments to be considered was found in the antechamber of the tomb, lying on top of the ‘cow couch.’ It is a pair of *sistra*.<sup>36</sup> From wear-marks it seems likely that they were actually used and were not merely models, although they are of an unusual undecorated shape and consist of gilded wood instead of metal. As Manniche has stated, *sistra* are most often played by women. However, as Tutankhamun seems very unlikely to have blown the trumpets himself, the presence of the *sistra* seems to the present author much less troubling than it apparently is to Manniche. While it is true that usually *sistra* are cult instruments used to appease the wrath of a deity, most often a form of the Dangerous Goddess, there is one source which adds vital interpretive information to the present case. This is the Middle-Kingdom tale of Sinuhe.<sup>37</sup> In this tale, a high courtier by the name of Sinuhe overhears, by chance, that King Amenemhat I has been murdered, and flees helter-skelter to Syria. Following some adventures there, and after he grows old, he receives a letter from the king’s successor, King Sesostris I, asking him to return home. Sinuhe is very happy, but also slightly afraid, because of the circumstances of his flight. When he reaches the court and is allowed an audience with the king, he almost faints with awe. During the time of Amenemhat I he had been an attendant to Sesostris’s queen, so the queen and the princesses first come to see him:<sup>38</sup> “She uttered a very great cry, and the royal daughters shrieked all together. They said to his majesty: ‘Is it really he, oh King, our lord?’ Said his Majesty: ‘It is really he!’ Now having brought with them their necklaces, rattles and *sistra*, they held them out to his majesty.” They then speak or sing a hymn to the king, finally asking him to pardon Sinuhe: “[...] Slacken your bow, lay down your arrow, give breath to him who gasps for breath! [...] He made the flight in fear of you, he left the land in dread of you! A face that sees you shall not pale, eyes that see you shall not fear!” As a consequence the king

33 Pomorska 1987.

34 McLeod 1982, 2. In the antechamber were also found most of the chariots, from which, according to contemporaneous depictions, the arrows would have been shot; see Littauer and Crowell 1985. In pl. I the authors give a good general impression of the spatial arrangement within the tomb.

35 It may be noted that Chérif 1988 comes to a similar conclusion for some of the staves placed in the tomb.

36 Manniche 1976, 5–6, pl. II–IV.

37 Synoptic text edition: Koch 1990; translation Lichtheim 1975, 222–235.

38 Koch 1990, 76–79; Lichtheim 1975, 231–232.



commands Sinuhe to be made a high courtier again and be given every luxury befitting his rank.

Of course, because Sinuhe is an old acquaintance of the queen and the princesses, it is hardly surprising to see them speak in his favour. It is remarkable, however, to see how, in doing this, they also use their *sistra* and other rattle instruments to appease the king in a way similar to appeasing the Dangerous Goddess. Elsewhere in the hymn the link between the king and this Goddess is made explicit.<sup>39</sup> Even Sinuhe himself had earlier compared the king to the Goddess, when praising him to the Syrian ruler who hosted him on his arrival there.<sup>40</sup> Actually, this ruler had already made the same comparison in reference to the king's father Amenemhet.<sup>41</sup> Still, the use of *sistra* and *meniu*<sup>42</sup> to appease human beings is not only restricted to this case or even to the king. Pictures from the tombs of high officials of the early 18th dynasty evidence this practice within their households also.<sup>43</sup>

At the same time, other textual and pictorial sources suggest that in the royal sphere, the presence of at least the queen, if not the princesses, during audiences with other persons is at the least a factor to be reckoned with. For example, in the tale of Wenamun,<sup>44</sup> when the pharaoh Smendes sends him off on his expedition to the Lebanon, once again the queen is also present, even though her presence would not have been necessary for the flow of the story. A good impression of what a really grand audience would have looked like may be gained from the depictions of rows of Ramses' II children in certain temples<sup>45</sup> – usually close to depictions of his military exploits. These typically show the sons holding a particular type of fan or a flower arrangement (*Stabstrauß*) in their hands while the daughters hold *sistra* and *meniu*. While these may be conventional depictions, it is still reasonable to assume that they were based in, and represent, some aspect of reality.

If so, then the 'appeasing' intervention of these female members of the royal family, to the accompaniment of the *sistrum*, could have been an established part of the protocol of such court meetings. This might well account for the presence of *sistra* in Tutankhamun's tomb. They would then have been used by his wife Ankhnesenamun or by other female family members. The fact that there are two instruments need not be a problem, as there are also occasional depictions of queens shaking two *sistra*.<sup>46</sup> The lo-

39 Koch 1990, 77; Lichtheim 1975, 232.

40 Koch 1990, 36; Lichtheim 1975, 226.

41 Koch 1990, 30–31; Lichtheim 1975, 225.

42 A type of necklace with a handle-like counterpoise typically used as a rattle instrument to appease the Goddess; for a picture of its use see Manniche 1991, 63–64.

43 N. d. G. Davies 1943, pl. LXX–LXXI.

44 Text edition: Gardiner 1931, 61–76, esp. 61; transla-

tion Lichtheim 1976, 224–230, esp. 224.

45 Fisher 2001, I, 33–41, pl. 1–63, II, 1–58.

46 Queens: Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz 1968, pl. LIII, LIV (Nefertari); Dewachter, Aly and Abdel-Hamid 1967, G 1–6 (Tausret); Naguib 1990, pl. VI, fig. 15, pl. VII, fig. 17 (the Divine Adoratress Kamaatre); similarly goddesses: Ziegler 1979, 36 (according to the inscription, the goddess Isis, not

cation of Tutankhamun's sistra in the ante-chamber might suggest that they were not a necessary part of the royal representation like the fans and trumpets, but could be used by the queen when standing in front of the king, as she is shown in some pictures.<sup>47</sup> Manniche's observation that the sistra lack the usual religious decoration could either be explained by their production during the Amarna period, when traditional symbolism would not have been welcome, or could be related to the very fact of their being used in court for political and day-to-day purposes which somehow excluded religious ritual.

The final instrument to be considered from the tomb of Tutankhamun is a pair of clappers in the shape of hands.<sup>48</sup> These were found in the annexe, lying on the ground together with other, miscellaneous objects. As clappers need to be in pairs to sound, naturally, this is actually only one instrument. However, its interpretation is a lot less straightforward. While hand-shaped clappers are not such a rare category of objects in museums,<sup>49</sup> depictions of them actually being played are not easily found.<sup>50</sup> Strangely enough though, there are a good many representations of other types of clappers being played, some without any decoration,<sup>51</sup> others with heads of male Egyptians or Semitic foreigners,<sup>52</sup> of gazelles, in rare cases calves<sup>53</sup> or even more rarely, hawks.<sup>54</sup> From these depictions, it seems that those without decoration,<sup>55</sup> with male heads or with hawks' heads, were played by men, while those with gazelle heads were played by women. The hand-shaped clappers from the tomb of Tutankhamun are inscribed with the names of queen Tiye and princess Meritaton in a way that raises interesting questions about

the owner, the songstress Henuttaui, as Manniche claims: Manniche 1991, 126; Anderson 1976, 43 (the Meret goddesses). While these are all attestations from the 19th dynasty onward, one of the daughters of the vizier Rekhmire who served under Thutmose III five generations before Tutankhamun (N. d. G. Davies 1943, pl. LXXI) already shakes two sistra in front of her father.

- 47 Compare the scenes on Tutankhamun's small golden shrine, where Ankhnesenamun is shown several times standing in front of the king, although always just with one sistrum and one other object (flowers, a menit) in the other hand (Eaton-Krauss and Graefe 1985, pl. VIII, IX, XI and especially XVI).
- 48 Manniche 1976, 3–4; pl. I.
- 49 Sachs 1921, 17–19; pl. 1; Hickmann 1949, pl. I–X, XVII; Hickmann 1956a, XCI–XCII; Hickmann 1961b, 51, 103; Anderson 1976, 9–22, 86; Ziegler 1979, 24–29. Some of the hand-shaped pieces also have Hathor heads. A most interesting case can be seen in the two pairs which were found buried in a miniature coffin in a pit in the royal magazines

in Amarna; see Pendlebury 1951, 90, 92, 188; pl. LXXIV, CIV. On the whole subject compare the extensive study by Hickmann 1956b.

- 50 These clappers, which always come in pairs, are not to be confused with the arm-shaped wands present in some scenes (examples mentioned in Wentz 1969, 86–87), which are perhaps a sign of authority and always come as a single object carried by one person.
- 51 Sachs 1921, 12–15; Hickmann 1949, pl. XVI; Hickmann 1961b, 43, 75; Ziegler 1979, 22–23.
- 52 Sachs 1921, 16; Hickmann 1949, pl. XIV; Hickmann 1961b, 103. On page 55 these seem rather to be Egyptian men's heads.
- 53 Sachs 1921, 15–16; Hickmann 1949, pl. XI, XIV, XV; Hickmann 1961b, 103; Ziegler 1979, 22–23.
- 54 N. d. G. Davies 1920, pl. XXVIII, XXIIIb (three types: with hawks' heads, with male human heads and without special decoration).
- 55 The undecorated examples seem typically to have been used in parades; see the scenes in Survey 1994, where they occur passing along *inter alia* the trumpet and drum, for which see above.

possible genealogical implications. Without wanting to go into the tedious business of Amarna family matters, suffice it to say that both women were very close relatives of Tutankhamun. The names suggest that at least one of these two had once owned and played the instrument in question. But why did the clappers end up in the boy-king's tomb?

A possible explanation can be found in a papyrus published recently, pBrooklyn 47.218.84, a Late Period Mythological Manual of the Delta region.<sup>56</sup> While the manuscript itself dates to the time of Psammetich I (664 to 610 BCE), it clearly draws upon much older sources. In one instance it is even possible to catch the author in the act of quoting almost verbatim from another text without actually admitting that this is what he is doing.<sup>57</sup>

At any rate, there can be little doubt that the relevant passage reflects practices that were already current in the 18th dynasty as well. The text explains *inter alia* some mythological story involving the Golden One, i. e. Hathor, the Hand of the sun god Re.<sup>58</sup> The background to the tale is the creation by masturbation of the Goddess identified with the Hand. The text goes on to state that four of the fingers of the Hand eventually changed into the snake-shaped "Children of Tiredness", who then rebelled against the creator and the Hand. Because of this, at the beginning of the first month of the season of Shemu a feast of commemoration is celebrated in which hand-shaped clappers are beaten for the Goddess. In the time of Tutankhamun, the feast would have fallen around the beginning of March (according to our modern calendar). Fortunately for us, Tutankhamun's mummy was adorned with wreaths of flowers, while the rest of his tomb was amply provided with other flowers and fruits. From their remains it is possible to pinpoint the season of burial.<sup>59</sup> This evidently occurred some time between around mid-March and late April.

Thus, the ritual in which the clapper was last played by its owner was likely celebrated shortly before Tutankhamun's burial, during the period when the king was being mummified. As the ritual remembered, and in a way magically reenacted, the quelling of a rebellion against the solar creator god and first king, Re, the inclusion of a physical part of the ritual in the grave makes sense.<sup>60</sup> After all, a king's death was a time of danger, both literally and symbolically. The ascension of a new king, to the contrary, marked a renewal of creation and restoration of political stability. While this must have been the case at every transition of power, it would have been particularly so during the crisis that marked the end of the Amarna period.

56 Meeks 2006.

57 Von Lieven 2007, 455–463.

58 pBrooklyn 47.218.84 3,8–5,4; see Meeks 2006, 9–12.

59 Krauss 1996, 227–254.

60 In fact, this symbolic function of the hand-shaped clapper might have made it relevant to a royal tomb even without the suggestive calendrical coincidence.

Thus, one can reasonably conclude that none of the musical instruments included in Tutankhamun's grave was chosen arbitrarily, as Manniche has suggested. Rather, they were all carefully chosen and, in one way or another, linked to the political sphere; and thus relevant to the present subject. In fact, none of them serves an entertainment function, although of course, a fair amount of music must also have been played at the royal court simply for pleasure. Still, none of the instruments that characterize the music of pleasure were put into the king's grave, even though depictions of scenes from the royal harem at Amarna do show the rooms full of harps, lutes and lyres.<sup>61</sup>

Unfortunately, it is not known whether stringed instruments would also have been present in other kings' tombs. One possible hint to that effect is furnished by the two famous depictions of harpists in the tomb of Ramses III.<sup>62</sup> Yet, once again, they are absolutely unique, as are many of the scenes from his tomb showing equipment and the production of goods in a way that is completely unusual for a royal tomb of the New Kingdom. Still, the inscriptions accompanying them also point to a particular function within the context of the grave, namely a link to Maat, the goddess of truth, and Osiris, the lord of the dead.<sup>63</sup> Harpists of course also recall the literary genre of Harper's songs expressing either praise for the hereafter or often the complete opposite, namely a *carpe diem* in view of the insecurity of fate in the hereafter.<sup>64</sup> As Ramses III was murdered by an intrigue in the harem, one could imagine those harpists depicted in his tomb to sing to the divine judges an eternal complaint about the lawlessness of his opponents. While this can just be guessed, in the tomb of his successor Ramses IV there is surely one subtle hint as to the political actions taken by him against the murderers of his father, although in that case it is a thoroughly non-musical one. He has inserted a significant addition to his 'negative confession' from the Book of the Dead spell 125. Usually this passage simply states "NN has not killed or commanded to kill." But here he has added an important final word, "King Ramses has not killed or commanded to kill *unjustly*."<sup>65</sup>

The case of the clappers in Tutankhamun's grave has already introduced the aspect of religious ritual. As stated earlier, the religious sphere cannot and should not be separated too strictly from the political sphere, although it far transcends it of course. Most rituals would have included music in one way or another, often in a vital role. For example, ritual appeasement of the Dangerous Goddess relied heavily on music. Without

61 N. d. G. Davies 1908, pl. XXVIII, XXXVI.

62 Hickmann 1950.

63 Both would have been present during the judgement of the dead as described in Book of the Dead chapter 125, being in fact the most important participants: Maat the truth against which the dead

person's heart is weighed, Osiris the supreme judge.

64 Lichtheim 1945; Wente 1962, 118–128; Assmann 1977; Osing 1992, 11–24; Kákosy and Fábán 1995, 211–225; El-Noubi 1998, 251–255; von Lieven 2002b, esp. 530–531.

65 Hornung 1990, pl. 56, left part.

these rituals, supposedly, the goddess would have killed the Egyptian population by her arrows of pestilence.<sup>66</sup>

While this can be inferred from some of the hymns to her, for the cult of Osiris and his particular mysteries there is even an Egyptian source preserved, making clear the religious as well as political importance of the rites. As was shown a few years ago,<sup>67</sup> in the mysteries of Osiris music, particularly percussion music, played a crucial role in warding off dangerous enemies. Thus one can safely adduce this document as further evidence for political significance of ritual music as seen by the Egyptians. The text in question is the so-called 'Texte de propagande' from the papyrus Jumilhac, a monograph on the myths and associated rites of the nome of Cynopolis.<sup>68</sup> It contains a chapter on the supreme importance of celebrating the Osirian mysteries regularly and in the correct way. This is indispensable for the well-being of the whole country, because

If one neglects all the rites of Osiris in their time in this, there will be no more order for the masses. Horus-Hekenu, the son of Bastet, the slaughterer-demons and the wandering demons armed with knives will circulate everywhere under the command of Anubis. If one does not accomplish all the rituals of Osiris in their time in this district and all his feasts of the seasons, this country will be bereft of its laws, the populace will abandon its master, there will be a year of epidemics in the South and North, the slaughterer-demons will take away everything in Egypt [...] If one does not decapitate the enemy in front of oneself in the form of wax or on new papyrus or in wood of acacia or wood of *hm* according to all the ritual prescriptions, the desert dwellers will revolt against Egypt and there will be war and rebellion in the entire country. The king will no longer be obeyed in his palace, and the country will be bereft of defenders. Open the books, look at the god's words, and you will be knowing, according to the plans of the gods [...] Also do not cease to do what is necessary in the presence of the god so that the god is content because of it. [...] Proclaim his feast list, read his books without ceasing to venerate him. Do not be lazy, do not be ignorant, guard yourself against being forgetful at heart: it is thus that one avoids a premature death on earth; it is life or death. It is he who gives life's time and it is he who shortens it very much: if he is content, the years are long for him, but if he is angry, there are no more years. As for the servant who follows his master, Bastet has no power over him, because as much as every god lives from their offering cake, Osiris lives from the Powers of Re [i.e., the sacred scriptures, A. v. L.]. And as they are useful for Osiris, so are they useful for those

66 Von Lieven 2003, 47–55, esp. on music 50–51; von Lieven 2006b, 33–35.

67 Von Lieven 2006b, esp. 22–33.

68 Vandier 1961; for the passage in question see 129–131, pl. XVII, 14–XVIII, 21.

who recite them, they are useful for those who perform them on earth, and likewise in the hereafter.

### 3 Conclusions

It therefore becomes obvious that the Egyptians did hold views that were quite similar to those of Lü Bu We. Although the cited passage from pJumilhac does not mention music explicitly, it nevertheless clearly states that maintaining the correct rites is vital for the wellbeing of the nation, both in terms of the health and safety of the population and in terms of political stability. It is this very same view to which Lü Bu We subscribed when he posited that a change of music and other customs would immediately affect the state of a country and of its people:

When impure and morally corrupting music arises, it gives birth to spiritual impurity and wicked sentiments. From this, all kinds of vices and wickedness follow. Therefore the noble-minded will turn back to the right path and cultivate his virtue. From pure virtue flows pure music. Through the harmony of music he creates Order. If the music is harmonious, the population increases in righteousness.<sup>69</sup>

Thus, both Lü Bu We and the ‘Texte de propagande’ from pJumilhac share the concept of a direct relation of cause and effect between rites including music on the one hand and the political, if not cosmic sphere on the other. By coincidence, the actual manuscript of pJumilhac (approximately 4th to 3rd century BCE) may have been written at around the time that Lü Bu We was alive, in the 3rd century BCE. However, pJumilhac is clearly a compilation of older material of different dates and origins; and on linguistic as well as intertextual grounds<sup>70</sup> a much earlier composition is most likely for the ‘Texte de propagande’ itself: namely in the 2nd millennium BCE, between the 12th and the 18th dynasties.

69 Wilhelm 2006 [1928], 92–93: “Wenn unreine und sittenverderbende Musik aufkommt, so bewirkt sie unreinen Geist und schlechte Gesinnungen. Durch diese Wirkung werden alle Arten von Lastern und Schlechtigkeiten geboren. Darum kehrt der Edle zum rechten Weg zurück und pflegt seine Tugend. Aus reiner Tugend entströmt reine Musik. Durch

die Harmonie der Musik bewirkt er Ordnung. Ist die Musik harmonisch, so schätzt das Volk das Rechte” (translation A. von Lieven).

70 Quack 2008, esp. 219–220. For further arguments for an earlier date of some of the texts of pJumilhac in general see Lippert 2012, 221, 225.

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## Illustration credits

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