

## **Orient-Archäologie Band 20**

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**Studien zur  
Musikarchäologie V**

# An Egyptian Lyre in Leiden

Lise Manniche/Jürgen Osing

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

*Eine antike ägyptische Leier im Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, die um 1500 v. Chr. gebaut wurde, ist aufgrund der Einzelheiten ihrer modernen Geschichte sowie ihrer Umbauten und Reparaturen im 19. Jh. von Interesse. Zudem trägt der Resonanzkörper eine bedeutende hieratische Inschrift. Es handelt sich um ein bislang unbekanntes Gedicht, das im Zusammenhang mit den „Liedern zur Harfe“ des Neuen Reiches steht.*

## 1. THE INSTRUMENT

Lise Manniche

For some 175 years an ancient Egyptian lyre has spent an uneventful life in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden (Fig. 1a,b). Recent examination by a number of scholars has proven it to be well worth a closer study<sup>1</sup>.

This type of lyre<sup>2</sup> first appears in Egypt at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty ca. 1550 BC, and it continues down to the end of the reign of Amenophis III (c. 1353 BC) and with minor alterations until the end of the Amarna period (c. 1335 BC). In the following Ramessid period, substantial changes take place in the construction, size, decoration and method of playing of the lyre. These Ramessid lyres are omitted from the present discussion, as also are those of the Amarna period.

## REPRESENTATIONS OF THE LYRE

The lyre is represented about 18 times in all<sup>3</sup>, mostly on the walls of the tombs of high officials in the necropolis of Thebes, opposite modern Luxor in Upper Egypt (Fig. 2). It is shown being played by women in ensembles performing at banquets<sup>4</sup>. It has a rectangular sound-box and arms of uneven length. The yoke is parallel to the sound-box or at a slight angle. The number of strings varies between 6 and 10 with 7 being the most fre-

quent. They are fastened to a metal hook at the lower end and tied to the yoke with pieces of fabric. The upper edge of the sound-box is sometimes

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Dr Maarten Raven of the Museum van Oudheden for permission to publish the instrument and for access to it in September 2004, and for welcoming Prof. Dr. Jürgen Osing from *Freie Universität Berlin* and Paul and Barbara Reichlin-Moser from Switzerland on separate visits. The report submitted by Paul and Barbara Reichlin was not included in my presentation at Michaelstein in September 2004 as they were at that time unaware of the special features of this lyre. – The lyre was mentioned in Manniche 1975, 81 and in Manniche 1991, 47, but with an incorrect statement as to its inscription and date. A photograph of the uninscribed face of the lyre was published in Lawergren 1984, 161, Fig. 25. I am indebted to Bo Lawergren for providing me with photographs of the lyre during the early stages of the investigation and for allowing me access to his replica of the instrument in New York. Recently, this replica was used in a BBC documentary on the Old Testament, relating to the music played by king David. In the recording made in Pennsylvania on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2003 it was emphasised by Lawergren that nothing is known about the actual tuning of ancient Egyptian lyres. – A preliminary report on the Leiden lyre by the present writer was published in Danish in Papyrus 2004/1 (Newsletter of the Danish Egyptological Society), 16–21.

<sup>2</sup> Sometimes called 'thin' lyre. Some 500 years earlier there is a single example of a somewhat similar lyre depicted in the hands of a Palestinian beduin on the walls of a tomb at Beni Hasan in Upper Egypt. The lyre clearly came to Egypt from the Levant.

<sup>3</sup> Theban tombs nos. 22, 38, 39, 75, 79, 80, 85, 92, 109, 129, 161, 179, 251, 254, 318, 367. To judge from the more recent publication by Dziobek 1994, 96, the lyre reported from TT 131 (Manniche 1991, 84) appears to have been a portable boatshaped harp. – A lyre player drawn by Wilkinson 1878 I, no. 242,2 and all previous editions does not come from TT 85 as alleged. Compared with the photograph in Hickmann 1956, Pl. XLVIc, just about all the details are incorrect, including the direction (which could have been an engraver's error). Wilkinson copied only one other scene in TT 85 which was close to his house at Thebes – in his MSS II 23, the same page as the drawing of the lyre player. This needs further investigation. – It also occurs in a tomb at Giza (sic) from the Amarna period, the blocks in question being now in the Cairo Museum (the owner was goldsmith of the Aten at Memphis; see Zivie 1975, 285–310); on a bronze stand found at Aniba in Nubia; see Steindorff, 1937, Pl. 96a; and presumably on a kohl-tube in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; see Hayes, 1959, 192, Fig. 108 (the lyre is not visible in the photograph).

<sup>4</sup> For an interpretation of these 'banquet scenes' see Manniche 2003.



provided with an incision to accommodate the player's wrist. The colour of the instrument is red, suggesting wood, occasionally with decoration in white.

In the representations there is a certain amount of variation in the angle of the yoke. In the clearest and best published representation of all, from TT 38, copied in facsimile by Nina de Garis Davis, the yoke is virtually parallel to the sound-box (Fig. 2)<sup>5</sup>. Yet another facsimile drawing by the same artist, from TT 22, shows the yoke at a pronounced angle<sup>6</sup>. From a comparison of thirteen of the lyres represented, it would seem that there is a tendency for the yoke to go from being oblique to more parallel. This would confirm that extant lyres with their yoke at an angle are from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, though it must be remembered that the evidence is seen through the eyes of a third party, the artist, who may not necessarily have had a specialised knowledge of musical instruments, the lyre being a very small part of the artistic whole of any tomb decoration.

## 1.2 EXTANT INSTRUMENTS

Including the Leiden example, six lyres have survived to provide more details of the construction of the instrument<sup>7</sup>. Those lyres that have an excavation record would appear to date from the earlier half of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty. Where the wood has been analysed it was identified as tamarisk, a tree native to Egypt. The sound-box is made of one block of wood, hollowed out from below to form a thin shell. Arms of unequal length are inserted through holes in the upper edge, being further secured by the tension of the strings. At the time of discovery pieces of fabric occasionally remained at the yoke which in the surviving instruments is always at an angle to the sound-box. Where they have survived, the strings are 5 or 6 in number. The metal suspension hook remains in some instances. On the Leiden lyre it has been hammered right through and appears on the other side. The cavity at the upper edge shows traces of use. The total height of this type of lyre is 40 cm or slightly more (see below).

Although two instruments were found in the tomb of a man, the lyre is shown being played by women. In every instance it is held with the longer arm uppermost. The strings and string-holder are usually visible. Because of the peculiarities of Egyptian representation, only those figures facing right are correctly depicted (unless a lyre was specifically strung for a left-handed player!). The player would hold the fingers of her left hand as a fan behind the strings, striking all strings at once with a plectrum in her right. This method of play-

ing is still practised by Nubian musicians in Upper Egypt and the Sudan.

## 1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE LEIDEN LYRE

The lyre is 45 cm tall, 32 cm wide and 3,7 cm deep. It was mentioned briefly in the 1840 catalogue of the museum<sup>8</sup>, and a photograph was published in the catalogue of 1910 by Boeser<sup>9</sup> (Fig. 3). By then the lyre had been around for nearly eighty years. An earlier drawing, also mentioned by Boeser, had been made by J. Gardner Wilkinson for his *Manners & Customs* first published in 1837 and in subsequent editions (Fig. 4)<sup>10</sup>. Drawings had also, however, been made by the Scotsman Robert Hay in the 1820s. These remained unpublished, being bound in the same folio volume among the Hay manuscripts in the British Library, until they were discovered and identified by the present writer<sup>11</sup>. One of the drawings (Fig. 5), done with the aid known as a camera lucida, renders the lyre as it appears today, whereas the other (Fig. 6), a hand copy, looks rather different in respect of the proportions of the arms and body, the angle of the yoke and the decoration on the sound-box. Hay is usually a fairly accurate draughtsman, even in his sketches and hand-copies, and an explanation for this discrepancy has to be sought.

In his description Boeser had already suggested that the lyre had undergone some repair following breakages which are clearly visible at the upper and lower parts of both arms:

"The upper part, according to specialists made of wood of the same kind and belonging to the

<sup>5</sup> Davies 1936, 1, Pl. xxxvii.

<sup>6</sup> Davies 1936, 1, Pl. xxvi.

<sup>7</sup> The earliest occurrence appears to be a lyre found at Thebes during the Metropolitan Museum of Art excavations near Asasif or Dra' Abu'l Naga' in 1915-16 (Hayes 1959 II, 24, Fig. 9) of late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty date. With this one was found another said to be in Cairo. Three lyres were found in contexts related to Tuthmosis III at Deir el-Medina. Two of these are now in the Louvre; see Ziegler 1979, no. 126 and 127, and for a colour photograph of the former Ziegler 1990, 63. The third is in Cairo (CCG 69418). Another lyre in Cairo, CCG 69418, has no provenance (could this be the one found by the MMA?). For the lyres from Deir el-Medina see also Bruyère 1934, 16, Fig. 14; Bruyère 1937, pt. 2, 112, Fig. 54.

<sup>8</sup> Inv. no. AH. 218, Leemans 1840 I, 132 no. 472.

<sup>9</sup> Boeser 1910, III, no. 69, 7-8, Fig. 18, Pl. XXII.

<sup>10</sup> Wilkinson 1847, Fig. 220, with the caption "Lyre of the Leyden Collection". Wilkinson drew the verso of the instrument, but without the inscription and copying the shape of the stringholder from the recto.

<sup>11</sup> MSS 29816, 187 verso and 193 verso, a large bound folio volume with drawings of varying sizes held in The British Library. The drawings are on small slips of paper now glued to a larger page. I am indebted to the British Library for access to the Hay MSS and for permission to publish the relevant pages.



same period as that of the sound-box, is no doubt a modern assemblage. Arm b derives from a smaller lyre and the lower part has been added to it by means of gypsum, the gypsum being subsequently stained the same colour as the wood. Arm f apparently comes from yet another lyre. Furthermore the end of arm f is too large for the hole at the end of g into which it should fit; hence it has been partly filled with gypsum and the outermost gypsum has been painted the same colour as the wood. The lower section of arm f is of a different kind of wood and has been added later<sup>12</sup>. The description is not very lucid, and we are none the wiser about when these repairs may have taken place. The reason why Boeser thought that arm b derived from a smaller lyre may be that he does not appear to have seen any extant lyres with a slanting yoke. In the 1820s this may well have been the first actual lyre to come to hand; spare parts would not have been available, as Boeser seems to imply. The use of plaster and paint points to a cosmetic restoration – the kind that would make the object interesting to a dealer. This would have been done in the 1820s at the latest, as the lyre has not changed its appearance since then.

According to notes to the drawings, made by Hay between the years 1825 and 1827<sup>13</sup>, the lyre had been found (no doubt in a tomb) by Piccinini, a man of Italian extraction who is well known in contemporary literature for having worked for a number of foreigners who had taken a commercial interest in antiquities. By comparison with what other lyres looked like when first discovered it seems evident that the piece underwent some cleaning and restoration before Piccinini sold it on to G. Anastasi, consul-general in Egypt 1828-57, who then took it to Leiden. This may be reflected in Hay's two drawings. Contrary to Boeser, it is also possible that the lyre was restored using its own bits. Following discussions at the 4<sup>th</sup> symposium of the International Study Group on Music Archaeology at Kloster Michaelstein, the Swiss violin maker Paul Reichlin-Moser and his wife Barbara paid a visit to Leiden to examine the lyre especially with regard to the fractures, the wood, and the age of possible spare parts added in the 1820s. A drawing was made of the lyre in its present state (cf. Fig. 8). In their opinion, all the different components of the lyre could "very possibly" be from the same period and belong together. It is made of two different kinds of wood from subtropical, deciduous trees, the sound-box being possibly mulberry, the arms and possibly the yoke being of another kind. This could be determined by further analysis.

The shorter arm "b" is noticeably shorter than on other lyres, extant or depicted, and this had already suggested that part of it was actually miss-

ing. The Reichlin-Mosers found that the upper and lower sections showed slightly different directions in the grain of the wood. If the sections were re-aligned the result would be that a section of the arm would indeed be missing. The upper part of the arm was glued back to the yoke as before. As a consequence of the alterations, the longer arm "f" had also to be adapted. A piece was broken off at the top and replaced upside down in a rather rough way. It appears to be the same kind of wood as the rest of the arm. The Reichlin-Mosers further noted that the surfaces of the ends of the yoke had been treated differently, maybe because it was shortened(?).

If we look at the dimensions of the other known lyres (Fig. 7), it is apparent that the Leiden instrument has rather short arms as compared to the size of the sound-box. A restoration back to what was probably its original shape would bring it more in line with the others (Fig. 8)<sup>14</sup>. It would also bring it closer to Hay's hand-copy. The main differences in Hay's two drawings are the length of the arms as compared to the sound-box; the slope of the yoke; and the lines of decoration along the edges of the sound-box. One solution that would fit the evidence would be to visualise a scenario in which Hay came back to his house after paying a visit to Piccinini where he had seen the lyre, very likely with the arms broken off. He would then have drawn it from memory adding features he had seen in TT 38: the longer arms and the lines at the edge of the sound-box. At a later stage he (and Wilkinson) would have drawn the lyre again when it had been repaired and was ready for a prospective buyer.

## 2. THE INSCRIPTION

The lyre appears to have been handled over quite a long time in antiquity. Hay had noticed an inscription on the sound-box, but was of course unable to read it. The hieroglyphs were only just being deciphered at that time, and the hieratic (cursive) writing made it difficult to distinguish the signs (Fig. 9). Even Boeser called it "an unintelligible hieratic inscription". Today, this is fortunately no longer the case. The text throws light on the long history of this lyre.

<sup>12</sup> I am indebted to Maarten Raven and Birte Schoen for help in translating the Dutch text.

<sup>13</sup> Hay and his team were at Thebes from October 1825 to February 1825 and from 15<sup>th</sup> May 1826 to January 1827, as well as on several other occasions that year. Wilkinson left Thebes in 1833.

<sup>14</sup> I am indebted to Elin Rand Nielsen for combining electronically the two drawings by P. and B. Reichlin-Moser.



## 2.1 THE TEXT


Jürgen Osing<sup>15</sup>

The body of the lyre is inscribed on one side with a hieratic text of eight short lines covering a rectangular space of ca. 8 x 10.9 cm. Written in black ink, the text is rather well preserved, but some parts are more or less effaced and difficult to read (Fig. 10). The repetition of ll. 3 and 6 in ll. 7 and 8 has proved very helpful for the reading.




Oh ye who are anointed with *jbr*-ointment,  
great and young!  
Rejoice!


Come, follow a fortunate day!  
There is no fate of (someone?) coming back,  
and no (one?) living again.  
Kiss much – again, again, and again!

Rejoice!  
Kiss much – again, again, and again!




L. 1: A form of *wrḥ* “anoint” or its later variant *mrḥ* attested only from the Late Period and the Roman period<sup>16</sup> is required between *n3* and *jbr*<sup>17</sup>. The traces  after *n3* do not suit a reading *ḫwr* (as in the beginning of l. 2), but only *ḫmr*, so that *mrḥy* has to be read. *ḫ* is overlapping at the tip and opening wide at the left side – as is often attested in late hieratic from the Persian to the Roman period<sup>18</sup>.






L. 2: Both *wr* “great one” and *ḫdd* “young man” seem to be written in an unusual manner. The initial *ḫ* of *ḫdd* is omitted, perhaps due to a haplography with the final *ḫ* of the preceding *ḫnḫ* as well as the influence of the common formula *ḫnḫ ḫdd*.

In  *wr*, the determinative is evidently not the regular standing man, but the seated one <sup>19</sup>. The diagonal stroke after *wr* might be interpreted as a writing of *ḫ*, but this has a different form elsewhere in our text (ll. 1.2.5: *mrwḥy*, <ḫ>*ddw*, *jw*) and is written at the bottom of the line and not above. It is therefore rather part of the determinative of , which actually requires a diagonal stroke in front of the two vertical lines. The form of this determinative is different from that of the New Kingdom and suits the later forms, in particular one from the Roman period<sup>20</sup>.




The group for  (l. 2) has parallels already in the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, but also in Demotic<sup>21</sup>.




Ll. 3 and 7: *ḫ3y* “rejoice; rejoicing” is attested since the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty; the writing *ḫ3y* and the determinative of the lotus flower are, however, characteristic of the Graeco-Roman period (Edfu and Dendara)<sup>22</sup>. I cannot cite a parallel for *jḫj ḫ3y* “make rejoicing”.


L. 4: In  *mj šms*, the hieratic group for  resembles the late forms more than those of the New Kingdom<sup>23</sup>, for  it is *vice versa*<sup>24</sup>.

The hieratic sign above  looks like , but in the Ptolemaic period the same form is found for <sup>25</sup>. The context favours a reading  *hrw* “day” rather than  *pr(.t)* “winter”.

*šms hrw mḫr* seems to be equivalent to the common appeal *jḫ hrw nfr*<sup>26</sup>. *mḫr* is written without a determinative.

At the end of the line the negation *nm* is written <sup>27</sup> or, if a dot is lost above the upper horizontal stroke, the usual . In the following line, the same negation is written only .

L. 5: I first attempted to read  or , the latter as a close parallel to a passage in the refrain of the Antef song (see below), but the collation disproved these readings and led to the present transcription (facsimile: ) – with *š3w* “fate” in a writing of the Graeco-Roman period at the beginning<sup>28</sup>. The forms *jw* and *ḫnḫ* could be either infinitives (with *jw* instead of the correct *jwt*) or participles.

In  *ḫn*, the *n* has been forgotten. *ḫ* is written with a short diagonal stroke at the left side – as was usual in the Graeco-Roman period<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those to whom I am indebted for this contribution: Dr. Lise Manniche, who entrusted the study of this unusual text to me and kindly provided me with a first photograph; Dr. Maarten J. Raven, Curator of the Egyptian Department at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden, who allowed me to collate the original in August 2004; Mr. Peter Jan Bomhof, photographer of the Rijksmuseum, who provided new photographs for the present publication; and Mr. Paul O. Ford, Berlin, who revised the English text.

<sup>16</sup> Wb II 111,11-12: Sauneron 1993, 2, 22 and 8, 23 (of early Roman date: Sauneron 1993, XIII); and pap. Salt 825- 18,3 (Derchain 1965, 144 and 19\*; dated to the 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty by Verhoeven 2001, 280-289).

<sup>17</sup> *wḫ jbr*: Wb I 63 and 334-335.

<sup>18</sup> Möller 1927-1936, II and III, no. 465; Verhoeven 2001, no. U 7.

<sup>19</sup> Even when the late hieratic form without the long staff is taken into consideration: Jacquet-Gordon 1979 I, 169-171; and Jacquet-Gordon 2003, 55, Pl. 55 (no. 145).

<sup>20</sup> Möller 1927-1936, Pal. III, no. 26; Verhoeven 2001, no. A 51 – as compared to older forms (Möller 1927-1936, Pal. II, no. 26).

<sup>21</sup> Pap. Berlin 10463, ll. 3.4.7 and vs. 1 (Caminos 1963, 29-37, Pl. VI); Erichsen 1959, 312-313.

<sup>22</sup> Wb I 166,10 and 168,16; and Wilson 1997, 134.

<sup>23</sup> Möller 1927-1936, Pal. II, no. XII and III, no. VI.

<sup>24</sup> Möller 1927-1936, Pal. II and III, no. 443; and Verhoeven 2001, no. T 18.

<sup>25</sup> Verhoeven 2001, 166-167 (O 1.4), 242; Möller 1927-1936, Pal. II and III, nos. 340 and 342.

<sup>26</sup> *šms hrw nfr* is known from pap. Berlin 3024 (Lebensmüder), l. 68. For *mḫr* “successful, fortunate”, see Wb II 48-49; and Wilson 1997, 415-416.

<sup>27</sup> See Gunn 1924, 88-92.

<sup>28</sup> Wb IV 403-404.; Quaegebeur 1975, 49-57, especially 56.

<sup>29</sup> Möller 1927-1936, Pal. III, no. 121; Verhoeven 2001, no. D 55; Erichsen 1959, 61-62.



In ll. 6 and 8, several meanings must be considered for *sn* (in different spellings): “smell, breathe; kiss; adore”. According to Wb IV 153f., the determinative  $\text{𓂏}$  is not found for “smell, breathe”, but only for “kiss” and “adore”; and the meaning “adore” is excluded by the context.

The writing of (r) *wr* “greatly, much” with the sign  $\times$  is extremely common in the Graeco-Roman period and not known from earlier texts<sup>30</sup>. The threefold *sp* 2 is found already in the New Kingdom<sup>31</sup>.

The text is evidently a little couplet which was meant to entertain the guests of a festivity, probably a banquet, as well as to animate them into convivial pleasures.

The eight lines evidently correspond to eight verses. Only one verse (l. 5) is a bit longer and begins already in the preceding line. The eight verses are grouped into three sections (3-3-2).

The first section begins necessarily with an address to the audience (ll. 1-2), the second with a *carpe diem* and *memento mori* (ll. 4-5), characteristic elements of the harpist songs<sup>32</sup>, here with a variation of the refrain at the end of the famous Antef song<sup>33</sup>:

M3W.T jr hrw nfr m wrd jm.f

REFRAIN: Make holiday, do not be tired in it!

mk nn rd(y) n<f> jtt ht.f hn<f>

Lo, no one may take his belongings with him!

mk nn wn šm jw n

Lo, no one has gone and come back again!<sup>34</sup>

Each of the two sections concludes with an imperative (in plural form): “Make rejoicing”! and “Kiss – again, again, and again”!

The third section is no more than a repetition of these two appeals, a kind of refrain similar to the *m3w.t*-refrains of the Antef song and the London medical papyrus<sup>35</sup>. It emphasizes the gist of the whole text.

Our little text is evidently linked with the tradition of the harpist songs, although it is much shorter and, like Antef’s refrain, reduced to the very essence. A difference of greater importance is the setting and the audience: The harpist songs appear on tomb walls and are addressed to the tomb owner, the present couplet is found on a lyre and is addressed to the guests of a merry banquet.

The harpist songs flourished in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasties. For our text, the hieratic writing by itself as well as the palaeography and orthography of many signs and words would also suit that period, and so would the grammar.

Ll. 4-5 make use of the Middle Egyptian enclitic particle  $\text{𓂏}$  and the Middle Egyptian nega-

tion  $\text{𓂏}$ ,  $\text{𓂏}$ , not the Late Egyptian equivalent *bn*, while the article *n3* in l. 1 and the initial *j* of the imperatives in ll. 4, 7, and 8 are all characteristic of Late Egyptian. As so often occurs in Late Egyptian texts, a superfluous  $\text{𓂏}$  is written in *mrwby* and  $\text{𓂏}ddww$  (ll. 1-2).

Containing elements of both Middle and Late Egyptian, the text might date back to the early Ramessid period or even the late 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, the transition period of those two stages of the Egyptian language when such mixtures were quite common. But it could also be that ll. 4-5, a variation of the refrain at the end of the Antef song, follow a tradition which, both in phrasing and in language, is older than the rest of the couplet, for which no direct parallels are known.

However, one must not forget that texts of a similar kind are known even from the end of the Ptolemaic period<sup>36</sup>, and that the hieratic script was written until the Roman period and in orthographical and palaeographical forms which resemble those of the New Kingdom. Many details already indicated above do in fact favour a late date, more specifically the Graeco-Roman period, for our text: The use of *mrh* “anoint”, the writings of *wr* “great”,  $\text{𓂏}$  “rejoicing” and  $\text{𓂏}w$  “fate”, and the characteristic forms of several hieratic signs. It may be added that  $\text{𓂏}$  is written in a full form (l. 5), but also abbreviated to  $\text{𓂏}$  (l. 8) and in the group  $\text{𓂏}$  (ll. 3.7.8:  $\text{𓂏}$ ,  $\text{𓂏}$ ,  $\text{𓂏}$ ) even to a mere vertical stroke already quite similar to the most abbreviated form of this group in Demotic<sup>37</sup>.  $\text{𓂏}$  (ll. 1.2.4) and  $\text{𓂏}$  (ll. 1.3.7) are written with long horizontal downstrokes, in  $\text{𓂏}$  ( $\text{𓂏}$ ,  $\text{𓂏}$  in ll. 3.7) even in a long turn to the left which is quite exceptional. The closest parallels, though with a much shorter turn downwards or to the left, are attested from the Roman period<sup>38</sup>.

All these details indicate that the text on the lyre, even if composed already in the New Kingdom, was copied in the Ptolemaic or even the Roman period.

<sup>30</sup> Wb I 326 ff.; Wilson 1997, 241-243.

<sup>31</sup> See Wb III 436,8; and 437,10; and Schott 1954, 54-65.

<sup>32</sup> See Lichtheim 1945, 178-212 with pls. I-VII; and Assmann 1977, 972-982.

<sup>33</sup> Pap. Harris 500 - 7,1-3.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. also *n wn jtt n* “There is no coming back” in Neferhotep I, l. 24.

<sup>35</sup> “Beautiful is Amun, beautiful is Amun”, and “Lower Egypt belongs to you in fear – twice”. Cf. Wb II 27,15.

<sup>36</sup> Stela of *T3-Jj-m-htp* (BM 147): Reymond 1981, 165-177, in part. 171 and 177. Cf. also Lloyd 1976, 335-337 (with further lit.). Convivial pleasures are evoked also in the spells on late wine jars: Jansen-Winkel 1989, 143-153.

<sup>37</sup> Möller 1927-1936, Pal. III, no. 35 (A-B); Verhoeven 2001, no. A 2-2a; Erichsen 1959, 15-16.

<sup>38</sup> Möller 1927-1936, Pal. III, no. 562; Verhoeven 2001, no. Z 3a.



## 3. EPILOGUE

*Lise Manniche*

It would seem that the text on the lyre was written down no earlier than the Ptolemaic period some 200–300 BC. At this time high officials no longer had decorated tomb chapels in the Theban necropolis. The city of Thebes had declined, and its importance had been taken over by Memphis and Alexandria. But people still lived and died there, and a fine little temple had been built near the necropolis at Deir el-Medina (the village of the craftsmen where, incidentally, two of the lyres mentioned above had been found). So someone must have found this 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty lyre, already more than 1000 years old, scribbled the poem on it, and perhaps had it buried with him in his tomb shaft when he died.

At that time lyres were still in use in Egypt. In the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty it had changed its shape, and it was played with the strings in an upright position. That the tradition of poetry was carried on from New Kingdom Egypt to Greeks of a much later period is proved by a poem written in Greek in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, found in Egypt, and being very close to New Kingdom love poetry<sup>39</sup>.

Inscribed musical instruments are exceedingly rare in Egypt, the only other example being an 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty harp in the Louvre<sup>40</sup>. The inscription may not have had anything to do with the lyre's being a musical instrument. We would like to think so; but maybe to the author it was just another useful piece of wood to write on.

<sup>39</sup> Preisendanz 1912, 19.

<sup>40</sup> Ziegler 1979, 7 (colour ill.), 108–110.

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a



b

Fig. 1a,b The Leiden lyre front and back. Photo Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden.





Fig. 2 Lyre in Theban Tomb no. 38 (from Davies, *Ancient Egyptian Painting*, pl. XXXVII).

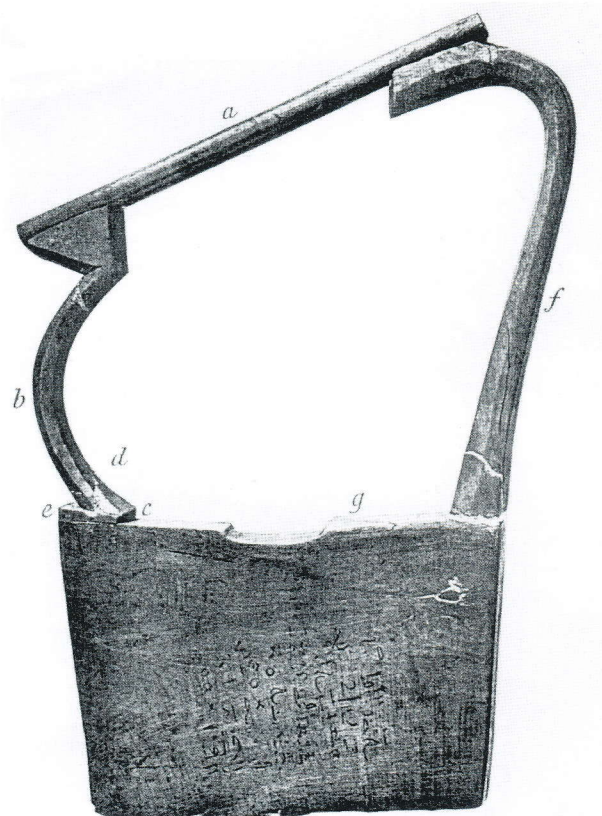


Fig. 3 The lyre as published by Boeser 1910.



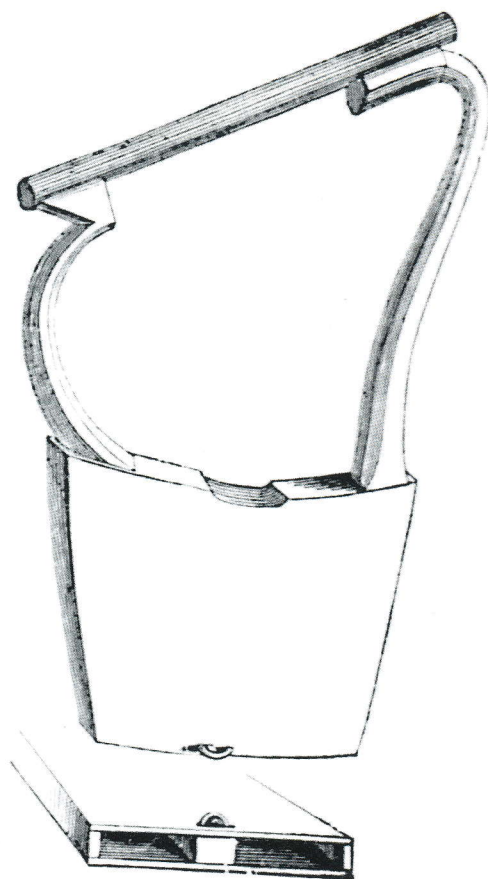


Fig. 4 The lyre as published by Wilkinson 1847.

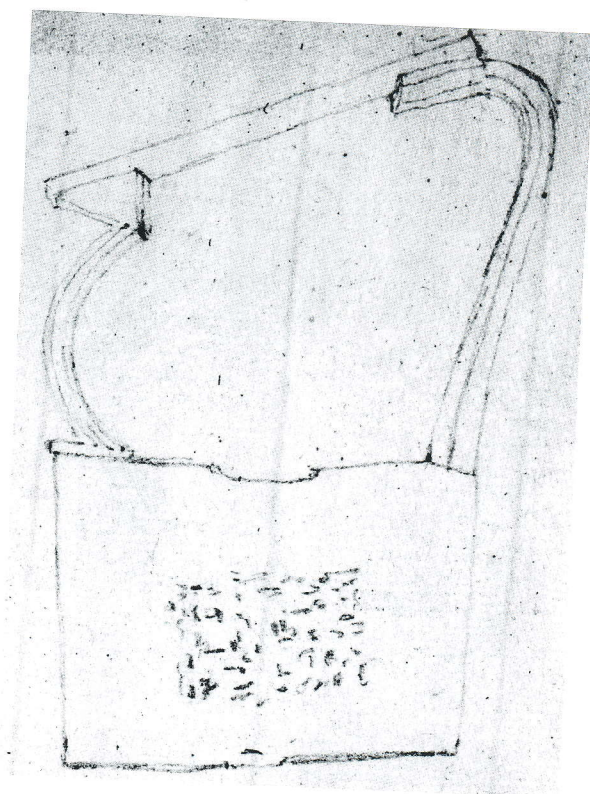


Fig. 5 The lyre drawn by Hay with a camera lucida. Photo The British Library.



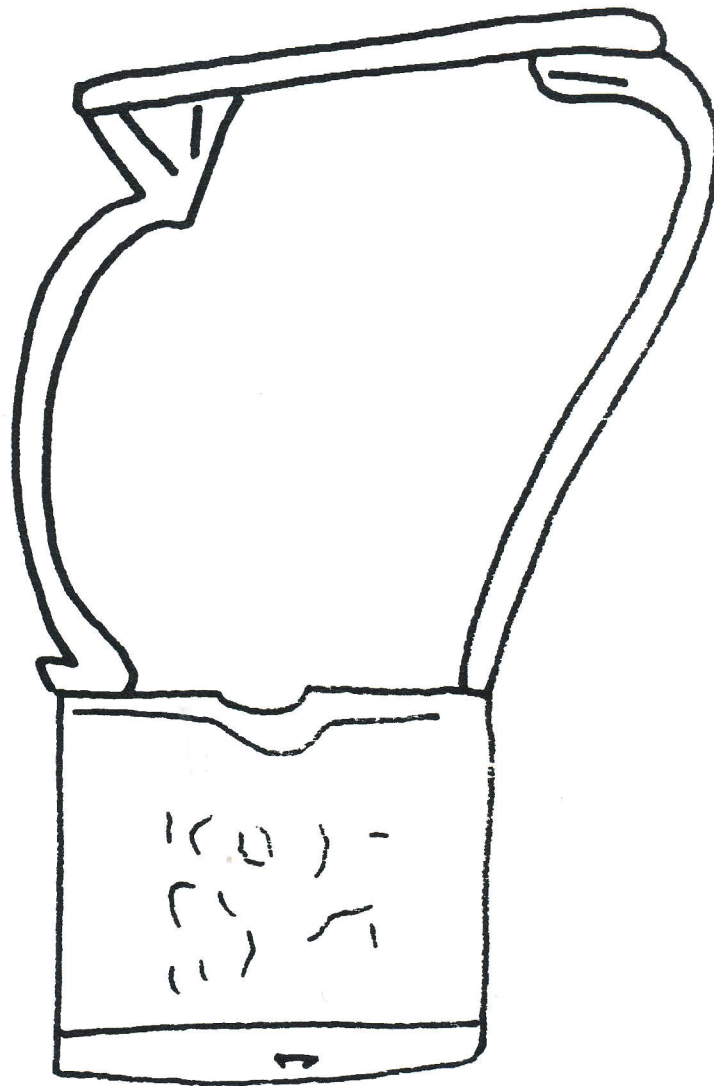


Fig. 6 The lyre in Hay's hand-copy. Re-drawn by LM from Hay.

	<i>height</i>	<i>width</i>	<i>thickness</i>	<i>strings</i>
MMA *	33–43.8			(6)
Louvre E 14470	max. 49.7	27.5	3.85	5
Louvre E 14471	max. 52	27.5		8
Cairo 69417	42.5–52	29.5–29.7	2.5–2.8	6
Cairo 69418	37–44	23–26.7		
Leiden	max. 45	32	3.7	
* this lyre has been extensively restored				

Fig. 7 Lyre measurements.



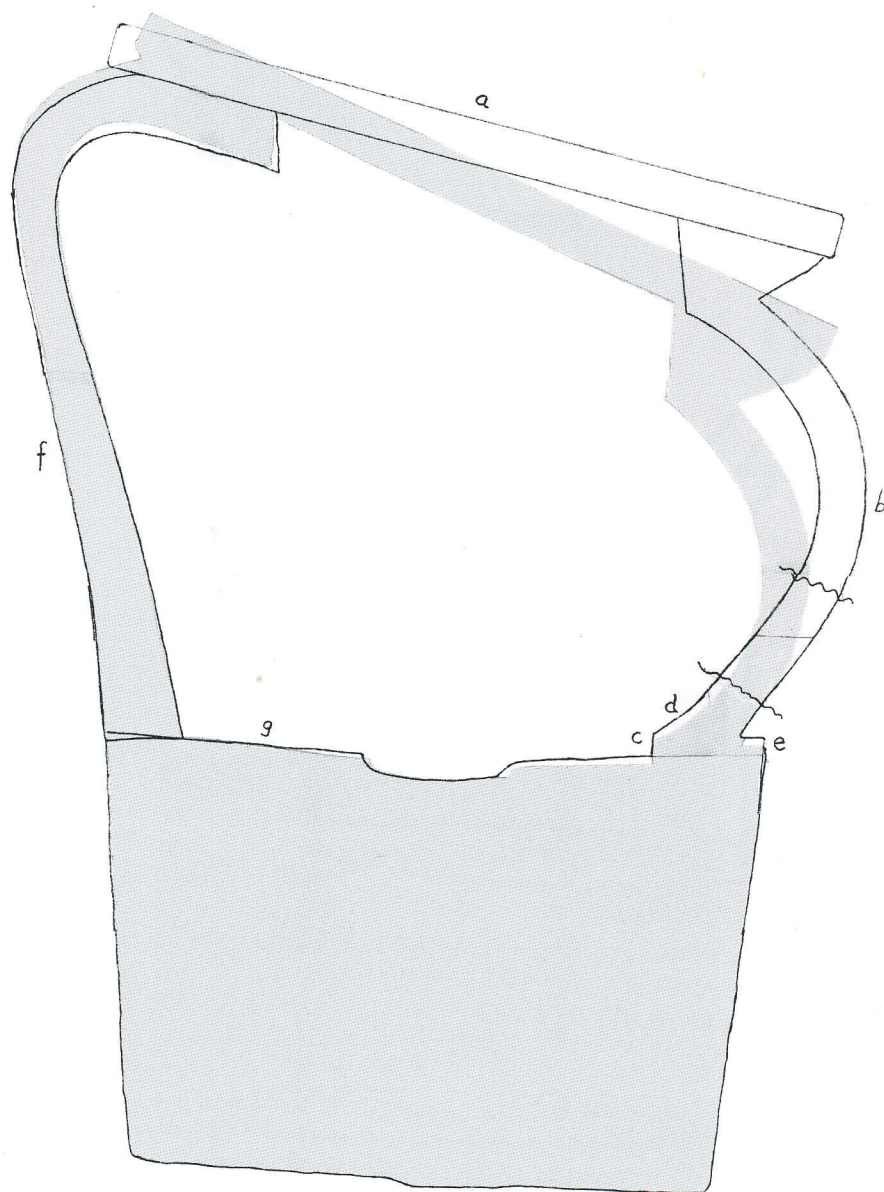


Fig. 8 Suggested reconstruction of the lyre by Paul and Barbara Reichlin-Moser superimposed on its actual appearance.





Fig. 9 The inscription on the lyre. Photo Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden.

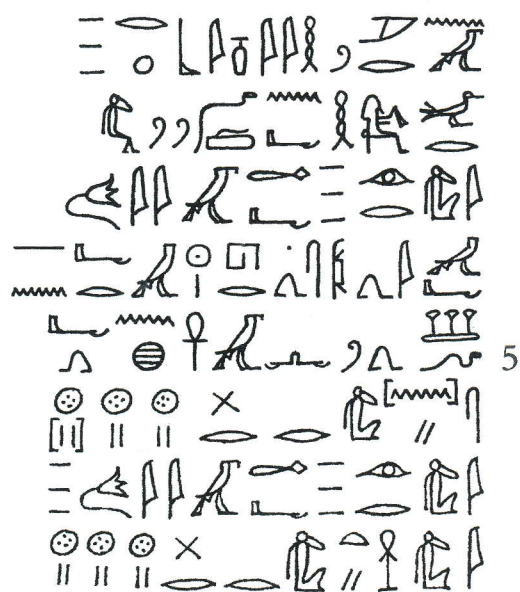


Fig. 10 Transcription of the hieratic text by J. Osing.