

**Zeitschrift:** Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis : eine Veröffentlichung der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, Lehr- und Forschungsinstitut für Alte Musik an der Musik-Akademie der Stadt Basel

**Herausgeber:** Schola Cantorum Basiliensis

**Band:** 15 (1991)

**Artikel:** On the early history of the trumpet in Italy

**Autor:** Meucci, Renato

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-869112>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 07.01.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## ON THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE TRUMPET IN ITALY

BY RENATO MEUCCI

The aim of this paper, far from being that of attempting a general history of the Italian medieval and renaissance trumpets, is to present some unknown (or underestimated) evidence about these instruments in Italy. The first of these testimonies is contained in the codex Palatinus Latinus 909 of the Vatican Library<sup>1</sup>, the originality of which can be better explained by recalling the results of my previous research on ancient Roman military instruments<sup>2</sup>.

These instruments were generally considered to belong to four main types: *tuba*, *cornu*, *bucina* and *lituus*. However, our principal source about them, the passage 3,5 of Vegetius' *Epitoma rei militaris* (late 4th century A.D.), lists only three<sup>3</sup>: *tuba quae directa est appellatur*; *bucina quae in semet aereo circulo flectitur*; *cornu quod ex uris agrestibus, argento nexum, temperatum arte spirituque canentis flatus emittit auditum* (the *tuba* is straight; the *bucina*, which is made of bronze, is curved toward itself in a circular fashion; the *cornu*, which is made from bovine material, is decorated with silver, and produces a modulated sound according to the ability and force of the breath of the player).

My research proved that this text was emended by a scribe<sup>4</sup> in the 6th century, and that the original reading of the same passage should run as follows: *tuba quae directa est appellatur*; *cornu quod in semet aereo circulo flectitur*; *bucina quae ex uris agrestibus, argento nexa, temperatum arte spirituque canentis flatus emittit auditum*. In fact a plethora of sources testifies that the ancient *bucina* was a simple animal horn, not the C- or G-shaped metal instrument (the *cornu*) frequently seen in Roman military contexts. In addition, one can document that, at least from the beginning of the Imperial Era, the *lituus* disappeared from the actual military context while the term was still (and long) used as a poetic synonym for *bucina*. Therefore, we can now describe Roman military instruments as follows: the *tuba* was a bronze straight trumpet (as for this I would recall the little-known item preserved in the National Museum in Budapest<sup>5</sup> and a bell section in the

<sup>1</sup> R. Meucci, „Lo strumento del bucinator A. Surus e il cod. Pal. Lat. 909 di Vegezio“, *Bonner Jahrbücher* 187 (1987), pp. 259-272. I would express my gratitude to professor Renato Badali, who first encouraged and supported my research on musical instruments of Classical ages.

<sup>2</sup> R. Meucci, „Roman military instruments and the *lituus*“, *Galpin Society Journal* XLII (1989), pp. 85-97.

<sup>3</sup> The *lituus* is never mentioned throughout the *Epitoma*.

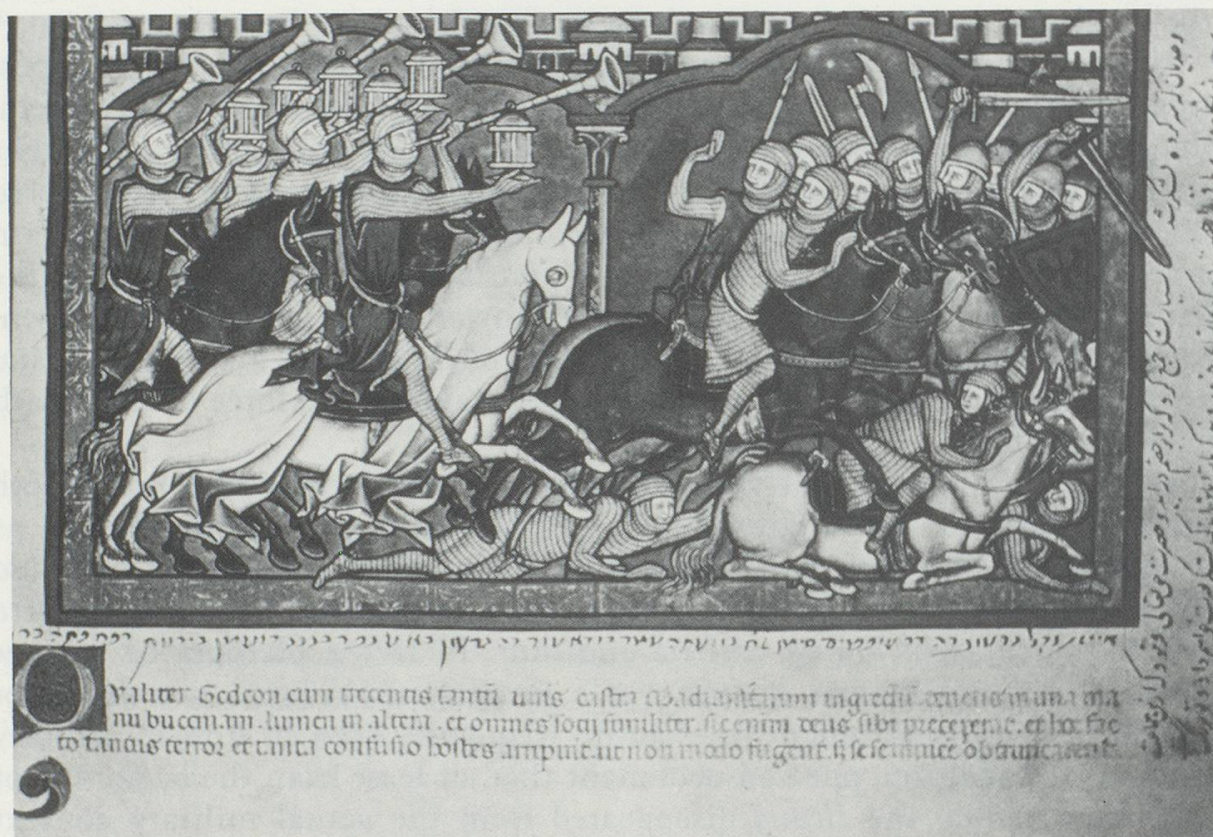
<sup>4</sup> On this particular topic see also R. Meucci, „A proposito di un passo di Vegezio: cornu e bucina“, *Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale* 25 (1983), pp. 71-73.

<sup>5</sup> Two photographs of this instrument are also reproduced in *Brass Bulletin* 48 (1984), p. 58.



Museo teatrale alla Scala, Milan<sup>6</sup>; the *cornu* was the bronze instrument which looks like a capital C or G; the *bucina* was a simple animal horn; the *lituus*, a metallic instrument in a J-like shape, was abandoned during the late 1st century B.C.: its name, however, remained in common use in non-military vocabulary (particularly in the poetic language) as a synonym for *bucina*.

The same passage 3,5 of Vegetius' text appears in the codex Palatinus Latinus 909 in a further updated reading<sup>7</sup>. In fact this codex, written in Naples or at Montecassino between 976 and 1025,<sup>8</sup> informs us that *tuba que directa*



Pl. 1: Gideon is victorious over the Midianites (Judges 7): „Qualiter Gedeon cum trecentis tantum uiris castra Madianitarum ingreditur, tenens in una manu buccinam, lumen in altera ...“. (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Phillips Bible, f. 13)

<sup>6</sup> Illustrated in *MGG*, vol. 13, p. 773, Abb. 14; here an ivory attachment partially inserted in the narrower end is erroneously considered a mouthpiece.

<sup>7</sup> After personally examining this codex Carl Lang, editor of the modern critical edition of Vegetius' *Epitoma* (Lipsiae, 1869) felt impelled to put out a second, revised edition of his book (see the 2nd edit., Lipsiae, 1885, *Praefatio* by C. Lang, pp. XX, XXXI).

<sup>8</sup> The codex is one of a group of manuscripts copied in the area between Naples and Montecassino, all of which preserve unusual readings or otherwise unknown texts. To this regard see the outstanding article by Guglielmo Cavallo, „La trasmissione dei testi nell'area beneventano-cassinense“, *La cultura antica nell'Occidente Latino dal VII all'XI secolo*, (Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, XXII – 18-24 aprile 1974), 2 vols., Spoleto 1975, vol. I, pp. 357-414, in particular p. 383.



*est appellatur bucina; quae in semetipsa ereo circulo flectitur tuba; cornu quod ex uris agrestibus argento nexum temperato arte, spirituque canentis, flatus emittit* (the straight trumpet is called *bucina*; the bronze trumpet which curves in a circular fashion is called *tuba*; the *cornu*, which is made from bovine material, is decorated with well-moulded silver, and produces the sound according to the force of the breath of the player).

When I first studied this manuscript, I was inclined to believe that the instrument intended by the name *bucina* was one of those straight trumpets



Pl. 2: Trumpeting angel from a fresco of the Last Judgement on the west wall of the basilica of S. Angelo in Formis. (After: Edward H. Tarr, *The trumpet*, London 1988).



referred to as *buisines* in many Romance languages<sup>9</sup> – of course, an instrument which has long been considered of Muslim descent<sup>10</sup>. However, I questioned and requested many times this first (and perhaps hasty) opinion, also in consideration of the doubts recently cast by some scholars about an actual Arabic role in the revival of the straight trumpet in Europe. I had in mind, in the first place, the opinion expressed by Sabine Žak<sup>11</sup> about the frescoes in the church of S. Angelo in Formis (near Capua). Here, on the west wall, are depicted four Last Judgement angels with trumpets<sup>12</sup>, an illustration considered for a long time to be the earliest evidence of the Arabic trumpet arriving in Europe<sup>13</sup>. I have also taken into account the passionate objection recently raised by Don L. Smithers against any possible Arabic influence in the history of European trumpets<sup>14</sup>. The opinions expressed by both these scholars will be discussed here, also in connection with the trustworthy evidence of the codex Pal. Lat. 909.

The church of S. Angelo in Formis, which at one time belonged to the abbey of Montecassino, was built between the years 1072-87, when the abbot in charge was the famous Desiderius. With regard to the decoration of this basilica Sabine Žak (p. 72) has pointed out: „*nicht nur Formsprache und Ikonographie von St. Angelo verraten das byzantinische Vorbild; auch durch schriftliche Quellen ist dieser Zusammenhang außerordentlich gut bezeugt* (not only the formal language and the pictorial evidence of S. Angelo follow a Byzantine prototype; but some literary sources as well clearly bear witness to this relationship). She refers here to Leo Marsicanus' *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis* (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, vol. 7, p. 718 [= l. III, c. 27]), which reports that the abbot Desiderius sent an envoy to Constantinople „*ad locandos artifices, peritos utique in arte musiaria et*

<sup>9</sup> Meucci, *Lo strumento...*, p. 267. An unmistakable iconographic demonstration of the relation between *bucina* (or *buccina*) and the straight trumpet is to be seen in several illuminations of the Philips Bible (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library).

<sup>10</sup> This opinion goes back at least to the beginning of this century (see, e.g., Edward Buhle, *Die musikalischen Instrumente in den Miniaturen des frühen Mittelalters*, Leipzig, 1903, p. 28) and was corroborated by such scholars as Curt Sachs and George Henry Farmer (see Sachs' *History of musical instruments*, New York 1940, p. 280 and Farmer's *The sources of Arabian music*, Leiden, 1965, p. XV; the latter passage is quoted *in extenso* below, p. 18).

<sup>11</sup> See her invaluable book *Musik als „Ehr und Zier“* (Neuss, 1979, p. 72).

<sup>12</sup> For a good illustration see Edward Tarr, *The trumpet*, London 1988 (engl. transl. of the German edition, Bern 1977), plate between pp. 96-97.

<sup>13</sup> Anthony Baines, *Brass instruments. Their history and development*, London, repr. corr. edit. 1980, pp. 72-73.

<sup>14</sup> „A new look at the historical, linguistic and taxonomic bases for the evolution of lip-blown instruments from classical Antiquity until the end of the Middle Ages“, *Historic Brass Society Journal* 1 (1989), pp. 1-64, in particular the section „Trumpets and the rise of Islam“, pp. 52-61.



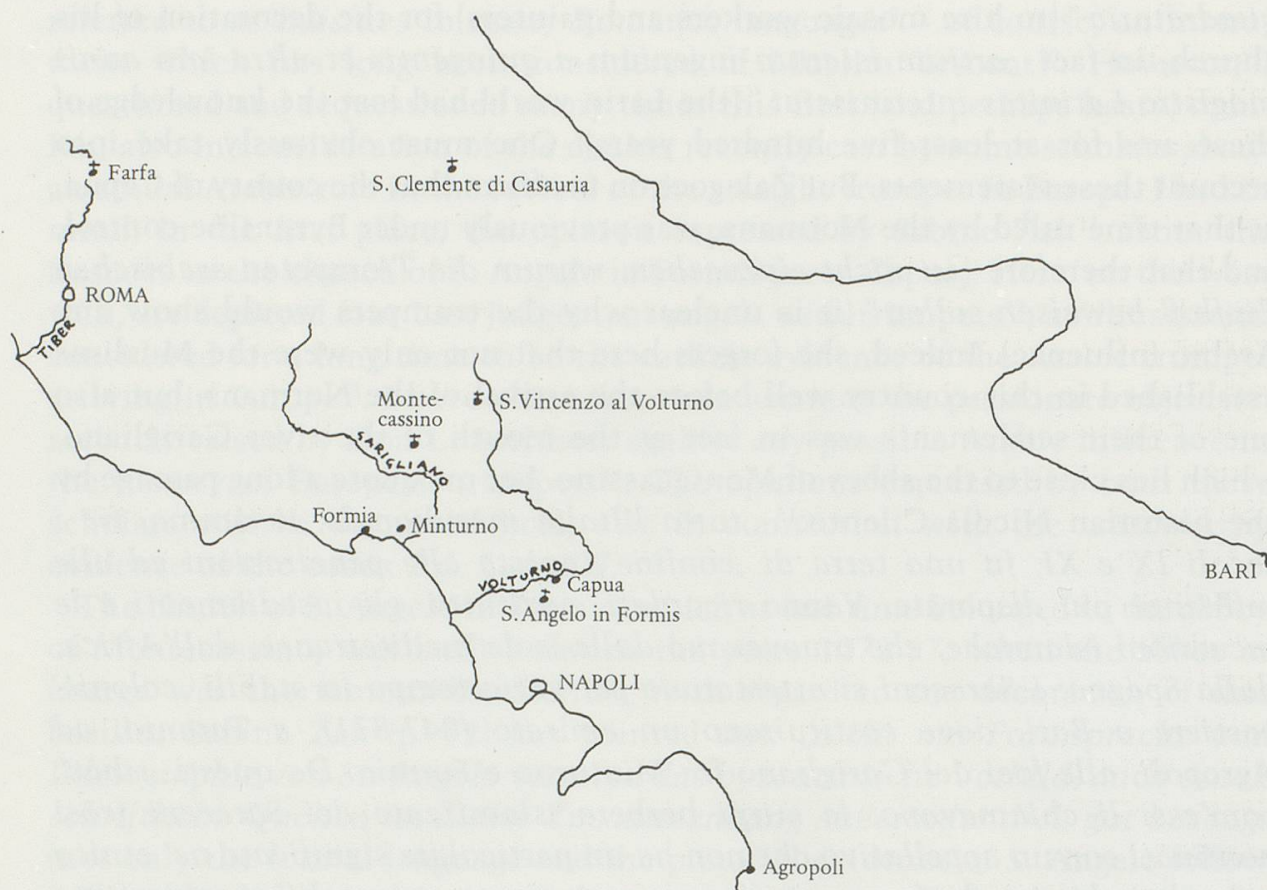
*quadrataria* “ (to hire mosaic workers and painters) for the decoration of his church; in fact „*artium istarum ingenium a quingentis et ultra iam annis magistra Latinitas intermiserat* “ (the Latin world had lost the knowledge of these arts for at least five hundred years). One must obviously take into account these statements. But Žak goes on to affirm that the county of Capua, at that time ruled by the Normans, was previously under Byzantine control, and that therefore „*ist nicht einzusehen, warum die Trompeten arabischen Einfluß beweisen sollen* “ (it is unclear why the trumpets would show any Arabic influence). Indeed, she forgets here that not only were the Muslims established in this country well before the arrival of the Normans, but also one of their settlements was in fact at the mouth of the river Garigliano, which lies close to the abbey of Montecassino. Let me quote a long passage by the historian Nicola Cilento:<sup>15</sup> „*tutta l'Italia meridionale, insomma, fra i secoli IX e XI, fu una terra di ,confine‘, aperta alle penetrazioni ed alle influenze più disparate. Vanno ricordati, anzitutto, gli insediamenti e le incursioni islamiche, che muovevano dalle isole mediterranee, dall’Africa, dalla Spagna: i Saraceni si attestarono per vario tempo in stabili ,colonie‘ costiere a Bari, dove costituirono un emirato (847-871), a Taranto, ad Agropoli, alle foci del Garigliano fra Minturno e Formia. Da questi ,ribât‘, com’essi li chiamavano, le stirpi berbere islamizzate dei Saraceni (così nominati con un appellativo che non ha un particolare significato ne’ etnico ne’ culturale, ma che forse significa genericamente ,orientali‘) si spingevano arditamente nell’interno con rapide incursioni* (in sum, between the 9th and 11th century, the entire south of Italy was a penetrable borderland, open to the most differentiated influences. One must recall, in the first place, the Islamic settlements and the raids made by the Muslims from Mediterranean islands, from Africa, or Spain. In various periods the Saracens settled down in stable colonies along the coasts: in Bari, where they founded an emirate (847-871), in Taranto, in Agropoli, and at the mouth of the river Garigliano, between Minturno and Formia. Berber Islamic groups of ,Saracens‘ – a name which has no particular ethnical or cultural meaning, but could be loosely translated ,oriental people‘ – pushed from the ,ribât‘, settlements, into the interior with swift raids).

In fact the early presence of the Muslims in this area is well documented by a series of incursions:

- 10 Oct. 881 – destruction of S. Vincenzo al Volturno
- 22 Oct. 883 – destruction of Montecassino
- 897 – destruction of Farfa
- c. 916 – destruction of S. Clemente di Casauria

<sup>15</sup> See his „*La storiografia nell’Italia meridionale*“, *La storiografia altomedievale* (Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo, XVII – 10-16 aprile 1969), 2 vols., Spoleto 1970, vol. II, pp. 521-556.





Pl. 3: Map of south Italy and of Arabic settlements.

However, their cultural contribution must also be taken into consideration. Concerning this, Cilento continues as follows: „*non è facile distinguere fino a qual segno essi [gli Arabi] rappresentino un elemento di dissoluzione e di rottura o, all'opposto, un prezioso fattore di contatto e di scambio con le altre componenti europee e mediterranee della vita [dell'Italia] meridionale*“ (it is difficult to distinguish to what extent they [the Arabs] represent a dispersive or breaking-up element or, on the contrary, a precious factor of connection and exchange among the other European and Mediterranean components of southern [Italian] life). Furthermore, with regard to the presence of foreign workers at Montecassino, one must integrate Leo Marsicanus' evidence with that of the monk Amatus, whose *Storia de' Normanni* (dating from the 11th century) is known in an old French translation (ed. V. De Bartholomaeis, Roma, 1935, p. 175 [= l. III, c. LII]): „*pour ce qu'il non trova in Ytalie homes de cert art, manda en Costentinoble et en Alixandre pour homes grex et sarazins; pour aorner lo pavement de la eglise de marmoire entaillié et diverses peintures; laquelle nous clamons ,opere de mosy'*“ (as he did not find artists of this sort, he sent to Constantinople and to Alexandria looking for Greek and Arabic artists who were to decorate the church with floor mosaics and with paintings, that we call ,opere de mosy').



In sum, we know for certain that the Arabs were well established in the region of Montecassino<sup>16</sup> and that, in addition, some Arabic artists were among the group working there during the period in which S. Angelo was decorated. Therefore – let me use the same words as Sabine Žak – it is unclear why the trumpets would not show any Arabic influence. Furthermore, it seems difficult to see any organological link between the instruments of S. Angelo and the Byzantine trumpets one can cite as comparisons. In fact the Byzantine *instrumentarium* shows us, amongst various horn-like instruments, a short (about one meter long) straight trumpet with a conical bell, frequently seen both in wall paintings and in manuscript illuminations<sup>17</sup>, while the trumpets of S. Angelo are much longer and have a larger bell, somewhat resembling the modern Persian *karna*.

Smithers, in the above-mentioned article<sup>18</sup> offered some interesting considerations in trying to demonstrate that „metal lip-blown instruments have had an unbroken history of manufacture and use in Europe since antiquity and that it was both Franco-German as well as Byzantine craftsmen that perpetuated the trumpet after the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West“ (p. 64). Anyway, he attempted to debate the entire history of the trumpet in antiquity<sup>19</sup>, and was therefore forced to ignore many essential details. The present discussion confronts those arguments which aim to rule out any possible Arabic influence in the history of the western straight trumpet<sup>20</sup>.

In order to identify a possible Arabic equivalent of this trumpet Smithers (p. 55) refers to the term *buq* and, after having called the attention to a possible Greek or Latin origin of the same name (and of the instrument itself)<sup>21</sup>, he concludes that *buq* must be among those „words and the objects

<sup>16</sup> On the complex political situation in the region of Benevento and Montecassino during the 11th century, see also N. Cilento, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, Milano-Napoli, 2nd edit. 1971, p. 234 and *passim*.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., the contemporary Byzantine trumpet illustrated in Joachim Braun, „Musical instruments in Byzantine illuminated manuscripts“, *Early Music* 8 (1980), p. 321, fig. 5a.

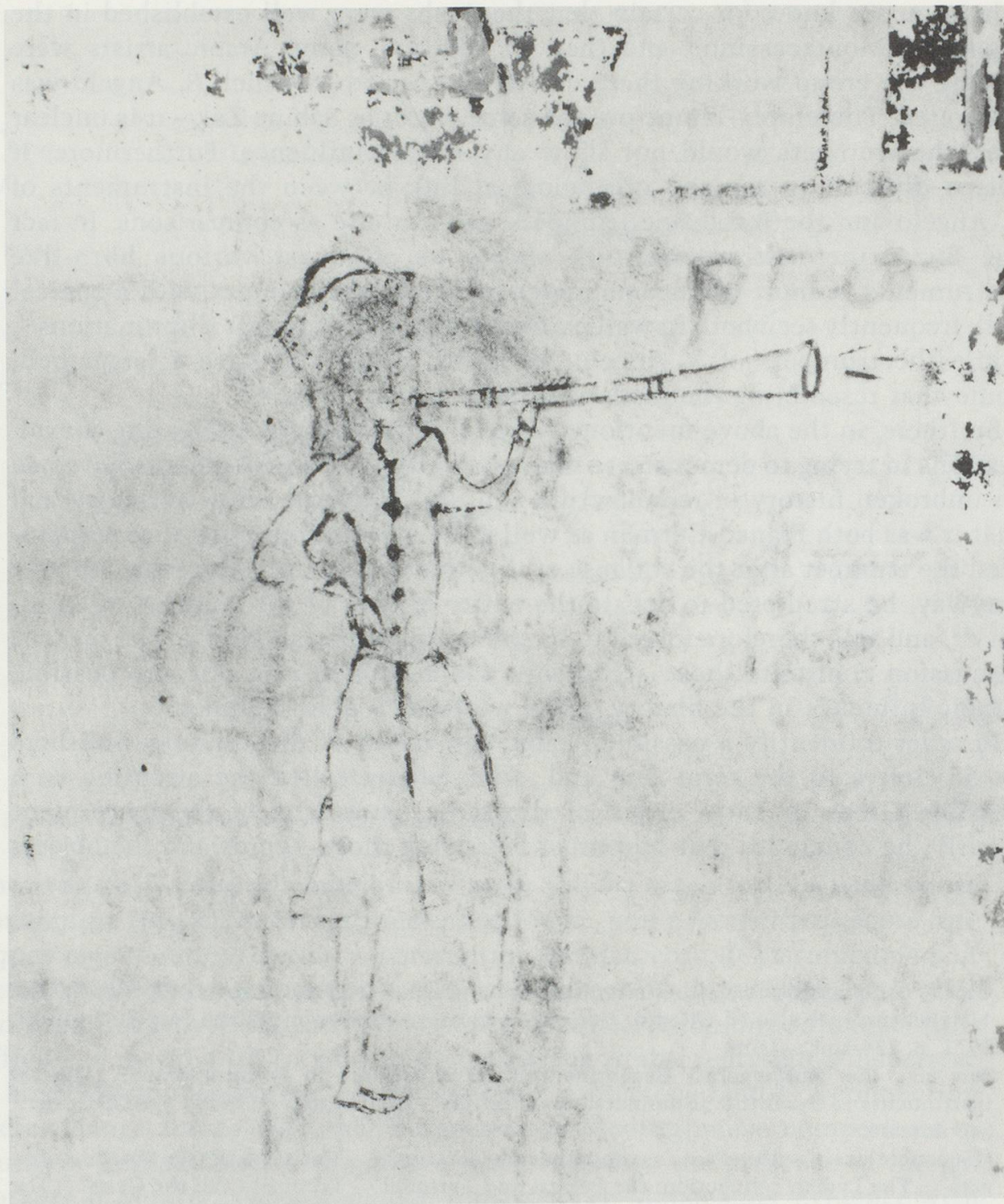
<sup>18</sup> See note 14.

<sup>19</sup> His article deals with: „Some taxonomic considerations“, „The most ancient metal trumpets“, „The Lydian connection: the Pelasgi and Tyrsenoi“, „Trumpets and the Celts“, „The role of the Phoenicians“, „The Romans and the proliferation of trumpets in the ancient world“, „Trumpets, technology and the ‚Dark Ages‘“, „Trumpets, Christian Europe and the Middle Eastern connection“, „Trumpets and the rise of Islam“, „Trumpets and the northern Europe-Baltic connection“.

<sup>20</sup> P. 54 „the use of trumpets by the armies of Islam was never an anticipation of their use in Europe“.

<sup>21</sup> See also Farmer, in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, p. 1291, col. 1, „*buq*“. However, the actual etymological roots of the Latin term *bucina* are from *bos-* and *cano*, not from *bucca* (as in Smithers, p. 56, note 162). To this very subject see J. B. Hofmann – A. Walde, *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg, 4th edit., 1965, I, p. 121; A. Ernout – A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine*, Paris, 4th edit., 1959, p. 77; A. Cuny, *Gr. BŪKANH, lat. BUCINA*, in *Mélanges ... De Saussure*, Paris, 1908, pp. 107-114.

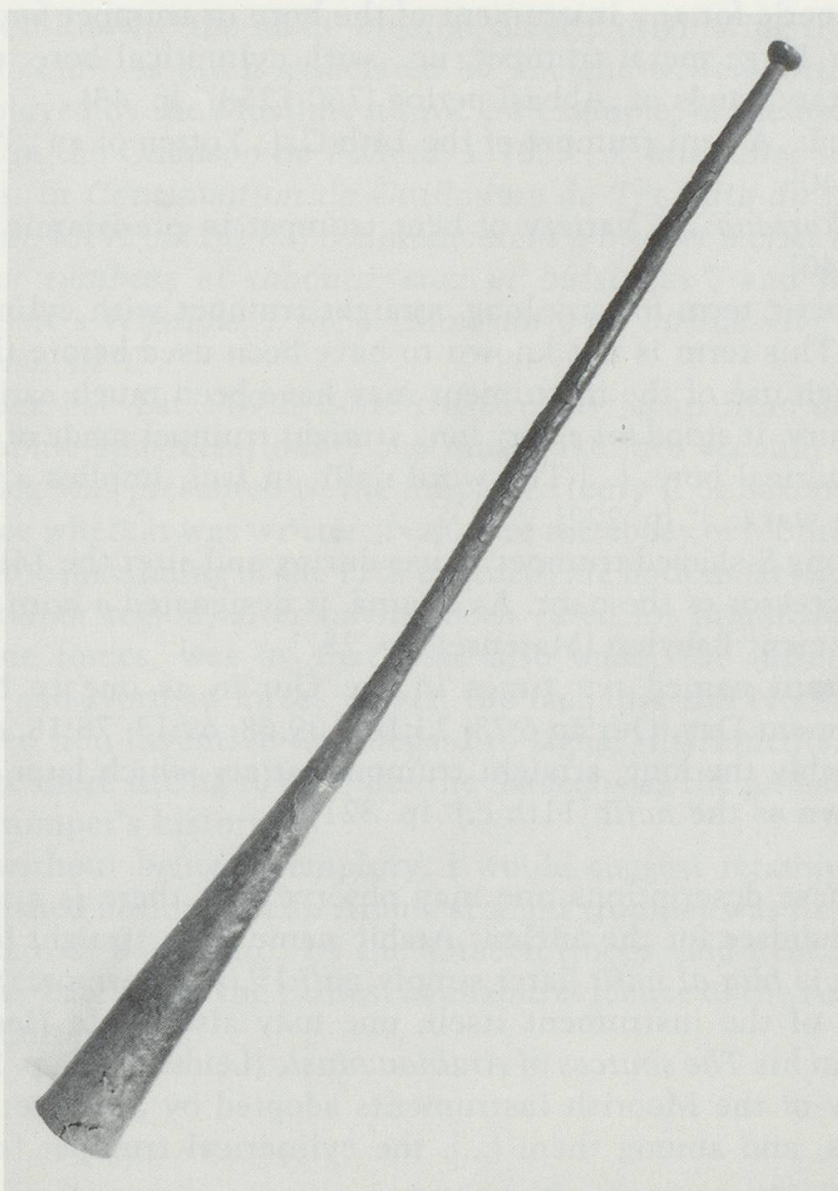




PL. 4: The brother of Barlaam playing the tumpet of death (Jerusalem, Library of the Greek Patriarchate, Codex Hagios Stavros 42, fol. 33; cf. Joachim Braun, „Musical instruments in Byzantine illuminated manuscripts“, *Early Music* 8 [1980] 32).

Die Redaktion bedankt sich bei Herrn Professor Braun/Jerusalem, der uns freundlicherweise sein Negativ zur Reproduktion überlassen hat.





Pl. 5: Roman bronze tuba from Zsámbék (Hungary), restored. Length in restored condition 136 cm; length in original condition 128 cm. (Budapest, Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum; with kind permission of the Hungarian National Museum).

they represent(ed) having been borrowed by the Arabs in the course of their dealings with the several populations of post-Roman Europe“. Indeed, at this point, one would take into account all other Arabic words used to indicate a straight trumpet<sup>22</sup>. According to Lois Ibsen al Faruqi's *An annotated glossary of Arabic musical terms* (Westport, Connecticut – London, 1981, Index, 'trumpet'), the following terms (and instruments) should be taken into consideration:

<sup>22</sup> Smithers only adds (p. 55) that, according to both Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 855) and al-Djawhari (d. 1005), *sûr* and *nákûr* were horns, not trumpets.



- būq*/1: „Generic for any instrument of the horn or trumpet family“ (p. 43)
- būq al nafīr*: „Large metal trumpet, i.e., with cylindrical bore, used in the military bands of ,Abbāsī period [750-1258]“ (p. 43)
- karna* or *karnā*: „A bent trumpet of the 14th C. (...) often of an ,S‘ shape (...)“ (p. 140)
- karranay* or *karranā*: „A variety of bent trumpet in pre-Islamic times (...)“ (p. 140)
- nafīr*: „Generic term for any long, straight trumpet with cylindrical bore (...). This term is not known to have been used before the 11th C., though use of the instrument may have been much earlier. In that century, it stood for a very long straight trumpet made of metal with cylindrical bore. (...) The word *nafīr*, in fact, implies a connection with war (...)“ (p. 222).
- qarna*: „A long S-shaped trumpet in use during and after the 14th C. It was a successor of the *nafīr*. As *quarnā*, it designated a horn or trumpet of ancient Babylon (Marcuse)“ (p. 257)
- sūr*/1: „A horn named ten times in the Qur’ān as one to be used on Judgment Day (Qur’ān 6:73; 23:101; 39:68; 69:13; 78:18, etc.). It was probably the long, straight trumpet variety which later came to be known as the *nafīr* (11th c.)“ (p. 321).

Examining these descriptions one may observe that there is a much more promising candidate for the ancient Arabic name for a straight (cylindrical) trumpet, that is *būq al nafīr* (later simply *nafīr*)<sup>23</sup>. Furthermore, with regard to the origin of the instrument itself, one may also quote Henry George Farmer who, in his *The sources of Arabian music* (Leiden 1965, p. XV), clearly states: „Many of the Moorish instruments adopted by Spain retained their Arabic names, and among them (...), the cylindrical trumpet (*añafir* = *al-nafīr*)“<sup>24</sup>.

Most clearly, therefore, there is enough evidence to warrant a possible Arabic influence on the revival of the straight trumpet in Europe<sup>25</sup>. Let me only add a few considerations regarding the codex Pal. Lat. 909 and its contents:

<sup>23</sup> See also Tarr, p. 37. *Sūr* could, of course, be a variety of the early *būq al nafīr*.

<sup>24</sup> In any case, one ought for instance to explain how and why what seems to be the showy symbol of the eastern trumpet, that is the pommel or „boss“, was adopted in Europe (to this regard see Baines, p. 73).

<sup>25</sup> Considerable evidence about this topic is contained in Edmund A. Bowles’ „Eastern influences on the use of trumpets and drums during the Middle Ages“, *Anuario Musical*, 26 (1971), pp. 1-26. See also Žak, pp. 72-73.



- 1) As is well-known, the name *buisine*, clearly originating from the Latin word *bucina*<sup>26</sup>, is often associated by ancient writers with the instruments played by the Muslims (think, for example, of the use of the word *buisine* in the *Chanson de Roland*, l. 1629 „*Si fait suner ses cors et ses buisines*, in *Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr (dite du manuscrit de Rothelin)*, LXVI „*Li tur (...) coumancierent a huer et a crier et a siffler, et a sonner tymbrez et tabourz, corz et buisines*“, and in Wirnt von Gravenberg's *Wigalois*, l. 8651 „*Man hörte da busine vil / Blâsen nâch der heiden sit*“)<sup>27</sup>.
- 2) The codex Pal. Lat. 909 is quite trustworthy: apart from other relevant paleographic considerations<sup>28</sup>, one must take into account the fact that this codex was presented to the Emperor Henry II of Saxony<sup>29</sup>.
- 3) The place where it was written (Naples or the abbey of Montecassino) and its date too (beginning of the 11th century), are both most significant: this south Italian region, after having been ruled for hundreds of years by Byzantine forces, was by that time also under the influence of both Saracen and Norman forces. Given the fact that the Normans seem to have been non-inventive with regard to signal instruments, it seems by and large more fitting to consider the Saracens as the probable initiators in the trumpet's history.

Therefore, without being peremptory, I would suggest retaining the previously established notion that an Arabic straight trumpet was first introduced in the „Ducato di Benevento“ by the Saracen troops, and hence considering the codex Pal. Lat. 909 as the earliest available evidence of the Arabic straight trumpet in Europe.

\*

The peculiar relationship between *tuba* and *tubecta* (and such Romance terms as *trompe*, *trompette*, etc.) has long been noted by Heyde<sup>30</sup>, Baines<sup>31</sup> and Zak<sup>32</sup>, who collected sources from Italy (Cremona: 1239, Arezzo: 1240, Venice: 1255, Bologna: 1288, Lucca: 1310), Spain (1293) and France (1313-14, 1319). Baines also noted a similar distinction in later English sources (1348,

<sup>26</sup> See notes 9 and 2.

<sup>27</sup> Petrus Tudebovis, *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, XIV,IV „*ipsi Saraceni desuper muros astantes clamabant, ululabant cum buccinis*“; Albertus Aquensis, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, XIX „*Turci quidem haec audientes, et continuo exsurgentes, omnibus suis in tubis et bucinis expegefactis et convocatis*“.

<sup>28</sup> See note 7.

<sup>29</sup> Fol. 1: „*heinricus imperator istum dedere dinoscitur librum*“.

<sup>30</sup> *Trompete und Trompeteblasen im europäischen Mittelalter*, Diss., Leipzig, 1965, p. 41, 84, Anhang.

<sup>31</sup> *Brass instruments...*, pp. 87, 89, 267.

<sup>32</sup> *Musik...*, pp. 64, 106, 310.



1377) between the terms *trompe* or *trompette* on the one hand, and *clarion* on the other. The same author (p. 89) has suggested, as a possible explanation of the two categories, a relationship with the modern Andalusian *saeta* trumpet (played with „high, wild flourishes between strains of a solemn dirge of a military band“) and the notion that „high blowing on trumpets in the medieval West at first had a similar wildness of character, executed on the short trumpet“<sup>33</sup>. Whatever the relationship may be, one must note that the same distinction is documented by many other Italian and foreign sources<sup>34</sup>. As for Italy I would draw attention to a document which goes back at least to 1311 and perhaps earlier; it is included among the *Statuta Civitatis Aquile* (ed. A. Clementi, Roma 1977, pp. 21-22), the articles of the Statute of the city of L'Aquila in the Abruzzi region of central Italy. Here a neat distinction is made between the two roles of *tubatores* and *tubecta*: „*provisum et ordinatum est quod Civitas Aquile habeat duos tubatores de Civitate Spoleti, vel aliunde*“; „*nullus Capitaneus Civitatis Aquile, qui pro tempore fuit, deneget solvere tubatoribus et tubecte Civitatis eiusdem*“; „*ad eadem nostra servitia dictos duos tubatores et unum alium pro tubecta nominandos*“. Furthermore the Statute of Tivoli (near Rome), a document which dates back to 1305 and is written in Latin<sup>35</sup>, reports the name *tromecta*, the Romance term for *tubecta*: „*banditor seu preco comunis Tyburis (...) bandiat et proconiçet per civitatem Tyburtinam et cum tromecta ea que sibi iniuncta fuerint*“.

As for this distinction, one may note that it is actually possible that two different trumpet sizes indeed existed, and that *tuba* and *tubecta* could first have been distinguished in northern Italy, a phenomenon which subsequently spread over a large area, including central Italy.

★

And now we come to the magnificent cycle of wall paintings in the church of S. Pietro in Gessate in Milan <sup>36</sup>. They were painted by Bernardino Butinone and Bernardo Zenale during the 1490s. Plastered over during the 17th century, they were rediscovered in 1902 and restored in 1949 (at present – 1990 – a

<sup>33</sup> In the Appendix (p. 267) Baines also proposed a different explanation, relating the diminutive *-ecta* to the „small“ or „high“ sound of the instrument, without regard to its dimensions.

<sup>34</sup> For the latter, see e.g. *Rôle de la Chambre des Comptes* (1313) „*Andrien et Bernart trompour (...) Bernart menestrel del trompettes*“; G. de Machaut (1300/5-1377), *Remède de fortune*, l. 3976 „*trompe petite*“; Jean Froissart (1337 ca.-1404), *Chroniques*, III, p. 150 „*trompes et trompettes*“.

<sup>35</sup> *Statuti della provincia romana*, a cura di F. Tomassetti, V. Federici, P. Egidì, Roma 1910, pp. 176-177.

<sup>36</sup> For a general description of the church see Bossi Franco – Brambilla Antonio, *La chiesa di San Pietro in Gessate*, Milano 1953. I am indebted to Maurizio Mingardi, who first drew my attention to these frescoes.





Pl. 6: Angel with S-shaped slide trumpet (Milan, S. Pietro in Gessate, cappella Grifi).





Pl. 7: S-shaped slide trumpet, detail (Milan, S. Pietro in Gessate, cappella Grifi).





Pl. 8: Angel with straight trumpet (Milan, S. Pietro in Gessate, cappella Grifi).



further restoration is in progress)<sup>37</sup>. The wall paintings represent a group of angels playing different instruments<sup>38</sup>. In the centre one can see a representation most striking for its originality, that of two angels playing two different *trombe*. The first, on the left, is undoubtedly an S-shaped slide trumpet (an item which might persuade Peter Downey)<sup>39</sup>; the second, on the right, is a simple straight trumpet. Both seem to have a slender curve in the tubing, due to the inclination of the walls.

These frescos, I emphasize, clearly bear witness to an actual slide-trumpet tradition in Renaissance Italy, and also to the contemporary presence of two different forms of the trumpet. In fact, one might be tempted to relate these two types with the distinction – usually encountered in contemporary sources – between ‘trumpet’ (or similar words) and ‘claret’ (etc.). Various scholars have quoted examples of such a distinction in many countries<sup>40</sup>, while I myself have collected evidence attesting to the same situation in Italy<sup>41</sup>.

As a first example, let me quote a letter written in Mantua by Johannes Franciscus Tubicen on 1 April 1486. It reads: „V. S. *qual mi comanda che gli mandi fuori mio clarono da tromba el quale prestai al Bernardino Mesalia mo quattro anni et lui rompi el paulione atraverso. Gli sono due trombette corte facte a bisca da tenir al collo*“ (Your Excellency wishes me to send you my *clarono da tromba*; but I lent it four years ago to Bernardino Mesalia, and he cracked the bell throughout. There are two short *trombette* wound like a

<sup>37</sup> I am grateful to the director of the Istituto di Storia dell'Arte Lombarda (Milano), professoressa Maria Luisa Gatti Perer, for having kindly supplied me with the photographs reproduced here, as well as with a great amount of information about these paintings.

<sup>38</sup> The cycle is located at the Cappella Grifi, on the left of the transept. The instruments depicted are, left to right, tabor and pipe, tamburine, harp, lute, S-shaped trumpet, straight trumpet, fiddle, lute, straight trumpet, bass shawm. As the argument of these paper is that of the natural trumpet I will only dwell upon this very subject, leaving a more detailed description of the other instruments to a further occasion.

<sup>39</sup> Downey was the author of a well-known article („The Renaissance slide trumpet: fact or fiction?“, *Early Music*, 12 (1984), pp. 26-33) in which the actual existence of such an instrument was at first questioned. He was replied in the 17 (1989) issue of the same journal by Herbert W. Myers („Slide trumpet madness: fact or fiction?“, pp. 383-389), Keith Polk („The trombone, the slide trumpet and the ensemble tradition of the early Renaissance“, pp. 389-397) and Ross W. Duffin („The ‘trompette des menestrels’ in the 15th-century ‘alta capella’“, pp. 397-402). Other articles dealing with relevant matters were published by Ned Gardner („In search of the Renaissance slide trumpet“, in *ITG Journal*, 12 (1987), pp. 4-9) and by Keith Polk („The trombone in archival documents: 1350-1500“, in *ITA Journal* (1987), pp. 24-31).

<sup>40</sup> See Baines, pp. 103-107.

<sup>41</sup> The opposition is here between the terms *tromba* and *chiarina*.



snake and to be hung from the neck)<sup>42</sup>. What actually *clarono da tromba* stands for, is difficult to say; in any case, one could note that three categories of trumpets seem to have been in use in Italy during the 15th century. Two of them, in straight and in S-shaped formats, are those normally seen in contemporary iconographic sources; the third, a coiled model, is extremely rare. One could hazard a guess that the straight trumpet, which had an old-standing tradition, maintained the early name (*tromba*, etc.) and that the newer S-shaped format took a more recent one (*chiarina*, etc.)<sup>43</sup>. As for the third coiled model, one can only suggest – in the absence of further documentation – that the diminutive form *trombetta* was used generically for every kind of small instrument<sup>44</sup>. In any case, a neat distinction between *tromba* and *chiarina* is clearly documented by later literary sources: Agnolo Firenzuola, *Asino d'oro* (1525; transl. from Apuleius), 318 „con due trombetti [musicians, not instruments], che mescolando coi gravi que' tuoni acuti, e facendo andare quelle chiarine infin nelle stelle destavano eziandio i vili animi ad una non usata gagliardia“; Annibal Caro, *Eneide*, (pre-1566, print. 1581; transl. from Vergil), I.295 „Su di cima lo scoglio si sentiva un suono di sampogna sì spiacevole, che non di sampogna, ma di chiarini di mare e di bellicosa tromba sembrava che fosse“; Mattio Franzesi (16th c.), *Opere burlesche*, XXVI.2.186 „Così mezzo sfibbiato mi son messo / a velar l'occhio al suon di più trombette / che con alti chiarin ronzanmi appresso“; Pantero Pantera, *L'armata navale* (1614), 383 „Nel medesimo tempo siano fatte suonar tutte le trombe, claretti, tamburi, naccare, e tutti gli altri istrumenti bellici, che accendono gl'animi alla gloria militare“; Michelangelo Buonarroti il Giovane, *La fiera* (1618), 2.4.7 „Odi conserto di trombe e di chiarine, e cennamelle e timpani, e di pive“.

\*

Let me now deal with trumpets in Siena. Here the collection at the Civic Museum in the Palazzo Pubblico, contains four ancient *chiarine*<sup>45</sup>, of which at least three date back to the 17th century<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> A. Bertolotti, *Musici alla corte dei Gonzaga in Mantova dal secolo XV al XVIII*, Milano 1890, pp. 11-12; repr.: Bologna, Forni, 1978.

<sup>43</sup> This opinion was first expressed by Baines, p. 106.

<sup>44</sup> This opinion is bolstered by the fact that in the above-mentioned letter a careful specification is needed to describe the instrument suitably (*trombette corte fatte a bisca*).

<sup>45</sup> This term is still used in Siena today for the straight trumpets played in public ceremonies such as the famous Palio. See text, below.

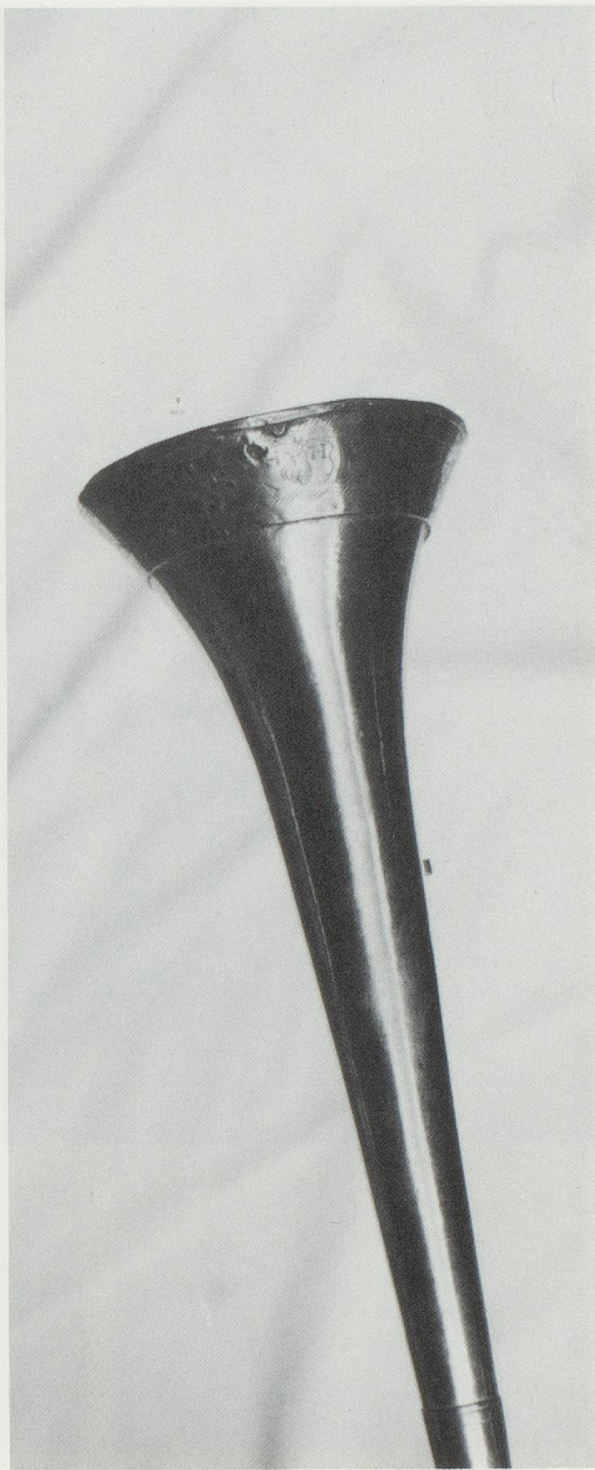
<sup>46</sup> I would like to thank Igino Conforzi, who first called my attention to these instruments. I am also indebted to Professor Vinicio Gai and Dr. Pier Luigi Ferrari – and to the director and the personnel of the Palazzo Pubblico – for the help they all gave with my research in Siena.





Pl. 9: Siena trumpets. Left to right: (1) H. Hainlein, 1659; (2) S. Hainlein, 1609; (3) S. Hainlein, 1617; (4) anonymous. (Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Civic Museum).





Pl. 10: (1) Trumpet by H. Hainlein, 1659.





Pl. 11: (2) Trumpet by S. Hainlein, 1609.





Pl. 12: (3) Trumpet by S. Hainlein, 1617.





Pl. 13: Anonymous trumpet.



The trumpets, all in straight format, were built by Hanns Hainlein (no. 1), by Sebastian Hainlein (nos. 2 and 3) and one anonymous maker (no. 4). All are well preserved (with the exception of the bell of the anonymous item) and recently restored. Even if one is tempted to consider these instruments as „newly discovered“<sup>47</sup>, it is more honest to admit that, until now, they only escaped our attention. In fact not only were these instruments still in use in Siena at the beginning of our own century (!), but they were also on exhibit at the Civic Museum<sup>48</sup> before finally being stored away in an old wardrobe. Their continued use is reported in a brief article published in 1986, before the instruments underwent conservative restoration<sup>49</sup>. According to this article (p. 110-111), spectrographic analysis of two detached microfragments shows the metal to be composed of 65% copper, 30% zinc, 1 to 4% lead. This composition would lead one to question whether they still preserve their original state, inasmuch as the amount of zinc is above the normal average for their time. However, as the trumpets were used until the beginning of this century (and were therefore restored over and over again) it is possible that the analysed microfragments can be traced back to one of these restorations. In any event, apart from such maintenance work (which is inevitable to implements used over the centuries) the trumpets are certainly original, in the sense that they are by no means the work of a swindler<sup>50</sup>.

The trumpet by Hanns Hainlein (no. 1) is marked over the garland: „HANNS / H [shield with cock's head] H / HAINLEIN / [flower] / NVRN / 1659 / MACHT / [flower]“<sup>51</sup>. The first of the two instruments by Sebastian Hainlein (no. 2) is marked: „SEBASTIAN / [cock's head turned to right] / HAINLA I / M [little crossed rhomb] DCIX / [shield with eagle and slanting bends] / MACHT [little crossed rhomb] / ICH [little crossed rhomb]“<sup>52</sup>. The second by the same maker is marked: „SEBASTIAN / S [cock's head turned to right] H

<sup>47</sup> They are not mentioned – as far I know – in any scholarly work on brass instruments.

<sup>48</sup> They are included, for example, in the catalogue *Mostra dell'antica arte senese*, Siena 1904, pp. 224-225, nos. 56-59).

<sup>49</sup> *Esami scientifici su quattro antiche chiarine del comune di Siena*, di C. Farina, M. Nobili, C. Crivellati, V. Papa, P. L. Parrini, in *Scienza conservazione e restauro*, a cura di Paolo L. Parrini, Milano, 1986, pp. 110-113.

<sup>50</sup> This fact must be stressed in order to point out that these trumpets were not available to the Florentine forger Leopoldo Franciolini. On Franciolini's activities see Edwin M. Ripin, *The instrument catalogs of Leopoldo Franciolini*, Hackensack 1974, in particular pp. 16 and 38 (items 1 and 12). For further consideration on the „Hainlein“ trumpets of doubtful authenticity (perhaps forgeries by Franciolini) now in collections in Williamstown (Mass.), Boston and Rome, see Tarr, pp. 79-80, and Smithers, p. 17, note 23. According to a personal communication by professor Gai, Franciolini's own archive was burnt by his heirs many years ago.

<sup>51</sup> Tot. length (in mm.) 1143; socket inner diameter 10.9; outer 14.8; bell rim diameter 100.4 x 99.1 (irregular); garland width 27.7; pommel diameter 33.5; three holders for banner.

<sup>52</sup> Tot. length (in mm.) 1143; socket inner diameter 10.4; outer 13.15; bell rim diameter 149 x 170.6 (very irregular); garland width 26.25; two holders for banner.



/ HAINLEIN [little crossed rhomb] M [little crossed rhomb] DCXVII / [shield with eagle and slanting bends] / MACHT [little crossed rhomb]"<sup>53</sup>. The last trumpet (no. 4) is anonymous and shows features of construction (e.g., the working and soldering of the metal in the bell) which are quite different from those of the other instruments; this fact may induce one to suppose that it may have been made (perhaps in the 18th century) in imitation of the previous instruments, of course adopting substantially different processes and construction techniques.<sup>54</sup>

As regards the first three instruments I wish to add the following considerations:

- a) Their dates are correctly placed within the known period of activity of both Hanns Hainlein (1596-1671) and Sebastian Hainlein the First (d. 1631; trumpet no. 3 perhaps built by Sebastian the Second, 1594-1655). Also the marks of the garlands agree with those already known from instruments by the same makers<sup>55</sup>.
- b) The longitudinal seam of their bells shows the toothed construction typical of the ancient trumpet-making technique.
- c) These trumpets are known to have been continuously in use until they were acquired by the Civic Museum. Therefore any possible falsification seems to be hardly imaginable.

The same authenticity is also verifiable for the anonymous instrument which, however, shows quite different features of construction. With regard to the possibility that it was built in Siena, one must point out that a long-standing tradition in trumpet making is attested there. Luigia Cellesi has collected documentary evidence which proves that brass instrument making in Siena goes back at least to the very beginning of the 15th century<sup>56</sup>. In fact, she reports a document (p. 66) dating back to the years 1407-1413 in which the goldsmith Iacomo d'Andreuccio del Mosca is commissioned to make *due trombete d'ariento* (two silver trumpets). A similar charge was given in 1414 to Mariano d'Ambrogio and Goro di Ser Neroccio (p. 67), and again to Iacomo d'Andreuccio in 1417 (p. 68). A further document reported by Cellesi (p. 69) is all the more significant, inasmuch as it represents one of the earliest pieces of evidence concerning the history of the trombone (18 July 1447): „*quod fiat unum trombonem argenti pro Comuni simile alli quod pulsativo cum piffaris* “

<sup>53</sup> Tot. length (in mm.) 1147; socket inner diameter 10.3; outer 14.65; bell rim diameter 130; garland width 24.6; two holders for banner (one is a later replacement).

<sup>54</sup> Tot. length (in mm.) 1165; socket inner diameter 10.65; outer 13.6; bell rim diameter 106.1 x 107.9 (irregular); garland width 36.35; pommel diameter 35.65; three holders for banner.

<sup>55</sup> Lyndesay G. Langwill, *An index of musical wind-instrument makers*, Edinburgh, 6th edit., 1980, p. 69.

<sup>56</sup> L. Cellesi, *Storia della più antica banda musicale senese*, Siena 1906.



(that a silver trombone be made for the Municipality, like the one which is played with shawms)<sup>57</sup>.

As for the further history of trumpet-making in Siena, I should like to turn to the activity of a maker, Ubaldo Montini, who has long been considered much older than he actually was. In fact, some time ago my friend Alfredo Bernardini sent me a note about this maker's biography which he found in Carlo Gervasoni's *Nuova teoria di musica* (Parma 1812, p. 46)<sup>58</sup>. Here Montini, the renowned maker of the earliest dated trumpet (1523)<sup>59</sup> as well as an undated trumpet in the Leipzig collection (no. 1785), is said to have been born in Siena in 1722 and died in the same town in 1803. When I received the letter I was just reading a book by Rinaldo Morrocchi (*La musica in Siena*, Siena 1886; repr. Bologna, Forni, 1969), which reports information that otherwise would certainly have escaped my attention. Namely, at the very end of the book, Ettore Romagnoli is said to have been Gervasoni's adviser about the musicians of Siena<sup>60</sup>. As I knew the impressive manuscripts which form Romagnoli's monumental *Biografia cronologica de' Bellartisti senesi 1200-1800*<sup>61</sup>, I suspected that the notice must also be there, and began to check it carefully. I was finally able to find the following note in the entry referring to Ansano di Pietro Montini, woodcarver and engraver (vol. XII, p. 8): „nel 1745: abitava con Esso [Ansano] il Prete Agostino (di cui appresso tratterò) e Ubaldo suo Zio uomo celebre nella professione, che esercitava, cioè nel fabbricare strumenti musicali a fiato di metallo, ricercatissimi dai professori Italiani, e d'oltramonti“ (in 1745 with him [Ansano] were living the priest Agostino – of whom I will speak later – and his uncle Ubaldo, a well-known metal-instrument maker, whose artifacts were much in demand among Italian and foreign players).

My further research in the Archivio Arcivescovile di Siena<sup>62</sup> demonstrated this information to be correct. In fact, the *Stato delle anime* of S. Marco parish<sup>63</sup> proves that Ubaldo Montini went to live with Ansano in 1736, that he was still there when he married (1740), and that he eventually left the house in 1751. The same documents report Ubaldo's age in 1737 (twenty-two)

<sup>57</sup> The same trombone was restored in 1470 by Francesco d'Antonio (Cellesi, p. 72).

<sup>58</sup> About this very subject, see also Tarr, p. 80, and his Afterword, p. 201.

<sup>59</sup> Berlin, no. 465; copy in München, Deutsches Museum, no. 18068.

<sup>60</sup> Morrocchi, p. 127: „Somministrò a Gervasoni milanese alcune notizie biografiche di Musici senesi“.

<sup>61</sup> The thirteen manuscripts are preserved in the Biblioteca degli Intronati (Siena) and were printed in facsimile by S.P.E.S. (Firenze, 1976).

<sup>62</sup> (= AAS) Thanks are due to Dr. Petroni and Dr. Nardi who kindly facilitated my work at this institution.

<sup>63</sup> AAS, cart. 2784.



and in 1742 (twenty-eight)<sup>64</sup>, and from such evidence one must conclude that Ubaldo was not born in 1722 (as reported in Gervasoni), but in about 1714-15<sup>65</sup>.

There is hence no reason to doubt that Montini was living in a period quite different from that which is attested by the trumpet in Berlin<sup>66</sup>. The instrument, however, has a decoration which looks very like that on the trumpet in Leipzig, and both of them must therefore have been built by the same maker. I am persuaded that a close re-examination of the instruments will not fail to reveal much more about them, and this work will be certainly accomplished by the respective curators.

It remains only to add some words about the man so frequently mentioned in connection with fakes, Leopoldo Franciolini (see note 50). As many instruments which he sold, after having been considered actual masterpieces, are now neglected in the storehouses of our museums, it is perhaps appropriate to underline that he was a counterfeiter more than simply a faker, and that the instruments he handled may contain original parts, or may be mostly original with false parts added or counterfeited. Among them there are objects that, whoever the actual author, are in any case beautiful and appealing artifacts.

Otherwise, how could we explain their excellent workmanship and their attractive appearance ?

<sup>64</sup> In contrast, the *Stato delle anime* for the year 1745 reports his age as twenty-eight. This must be a mistake by the parish priest who, as usual, wrote the ages of his parishioners by heart.

<sup>65</sup> My research in the *Elenco dei battezzati* for the years 1714-1727 (AAS, cart. 2573) failed to reveal the exact date of his birth.

<sup>66</sup> If a maker of this name had been living in Siena about two hundred years earlier, Romagnoli would certainly have noticed the fact.