

The Evolution of Player Voiced Aerophones Prior to 500AD

The Development and Use of Brass Instruments in Ancient Europe

**By
Dr Peter Holmes**

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Scanned from original thesis

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Dedication

Dedicated to:

Nellie Mil(l)ward/Holmes/White

me mam

Elfriede Arbogast/Holmes

Companion/friend/wife

John M Coles

The man who guided me back in time

Introduction

The term 'player-voiced aerophones' was one I coined many years ago as a more-descriptive term for the family of musical instruments more-generally referred to as 'brass instruments' or the 'brasswind' or lip-reed instruments'. To the man on the Clapham omnibus, the family of trumpets and horns.

The book is a (very) slightly edited version of my PhD thesis to which I have added some footnotes while leaving the text almost entirely as written some 45 years ago. This of course means that some aspects of its content reflect a bygone age, such as the use of BC and AD but that is the way it was way back then. Another feature which a read-through of this text has highlighted is the shadow of diffusion casting itself over much of the text. This too is of that time.

There are many sentences/paragraphs/ideas/interpretations which now make me cringe but, nevertheless, the chapters on the Late Bronze Age have stood the test of time and my ideas then on the Irish Horns and the Bronze Lurs have changed little. Other chapters have not fared so well but they're left in warts an'all!

With the passage of time, I have changed my views many times and would no longer use the same terminology as I did way back when. Examples are with the 'Celtic Lituus' which I would now describe as the Short Lituus and the 'Celtic Curved Horn' which I have elsewhere described as the Long Curved Horn. I would no longer attribute these to 'Celtic' peoples but to Native European Peoples, meaning those tribes who inhabited Europe before the Romans ravished their lands.

When trying to understand the form and use of musical instruments from societies which left us no complete instruments or written descriptions of their use, it is first necessary to strip away our preconceptions about the trumpet and horn based upon their use in modern-day and recent societies. For this reason the first chapter of this book discusses the instruments in their pure form, stripped as far as possible of their cultural attributes. Only by understanding the instruments pure and simple in this way, can we hope to allow ourselves access to the instrumental usage of the past and the thoughts of those who made and used them.

The Story of this Book

In 1978, when I had completed my thesis, I carried on doing research in the same field and have published many papers since. However, despite the good advice and encouragement, I never published the PhD. Over time, I began to feel that the work was dated and no longer worthy of publication. I no longer hold that view.

Two things have served to bring this about, one of these being the passage of many years since these ideas were committed to paper. The term 'Music Archaeology' had not yet been aired at that time and the efforts of the few people working in the field were channelled into directions which differ markedly from those followed today. The youth of the endeavour is often reflected in the approach of the time which could, from a current perspective, be characterised as naïve.

While we were, indeed, ploughing new furrows, there were still many who had gone before, on whose shoulders we stood. What our early years in the field witnessed was a considerable increase in effort put into the field of music archaeology, the increase in sophistication of research effort was to follow a decade or so later.

The second development which has changed my view of the worthiness of this publication project lies in the recent dramatic changes in IT. Existing as only five poor photocopies of a typewritten text, the PhD had a massive barrier separating it from the world of modern electronic publishing. That barrier was lifted by the development of efficient and accurate Optical Character Recognition software has made the enterprise feasible.

As a document of recent historic record, the thesis would stand without change. The aim, however, is to point to the changes which have taken place without going into their full detail. That's a task for another day. However, recent research which updates the text is referenced wherever is thought to be useful to you, the reader.

The diagrams have been reworked into an electronic form, starting from scans of the originals. They are, therefore pretty faithful to what I drew 45 years ago. Only one diagram has been added, this being Plate 6.5bb. It was added as I wasn't sure how well the photo in 6.5 would reproduce so this was belt and braces. One other change which has been made in Appendix 1 is the spelling of the Ancient Israelite trumpet as chatzozerah as the diacritical marks which I drew in by hand on the original document were not available on my keyboard.

The current text is the result of scanning in from my photocopy of the thesis. At times, the OCR software is a little over-enthusiastic and inserts characters which were not in the original. I apologise if any of these have slipped through the editing process.

