

Giulio Paolucci, Susanna Sarti (ed.), *Musica e Archeologia: reperti, immagini e suoni dal mondo antico*. Roma: Edizioni Quasar, 2012. Pp. 75. ISBN 9788871404684. €20.00 (pb).

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The book is addressed to all those interested in matters musical in the ancient cultures of Etruria and Rome, mainly, with brief references to Egypt and Hellas. The work is divided into three major sections: in the first (pp. 18-33), instruments are presented and discussed individually and the second section (pp. 34-60) is dedicated to iconography. A third section, in English (pp. 60-63), presents modern reconstructions by Stefan Hagel of the Classical tortoise-shell lyre (*chelys*), the Classical wooden grand lyre (*kithara*), and the cylindrical, double-reeded, late Hellenic double pipes (the ‘Louvre’ and ‘Berlin’ *auloi*), and similar but keyed Roman pipes (the ‘Pompeii’ *tibia*).

The editors, Giulio Paolucci and Susanna Sarti, both also authors of a number of individual entries, introduce (pp. 10-17) the artefacts, providing the reader with a unified picture of relations between instruments, setting them in their cultural context.

Pharaonic music is represented by four musical instruments: a small, portable, four-stringed, wooden, arched harp, played by both men and women in music groups during public ceremonies, religious rites, and in the banquets of the nobles, which lasted only through the 18th Dynasty (1); a cane pipe with five round holes (3); one fragmentary member of an ivory clapper in the shape of the human hand (2), and a bronze sistrum (used in the cults of female divinities at this time) with four axles, bearing the head of goddess Hathor, the figure of Bes and four cats (4). The first three are dated to the New Kingdom (1550-1070 BC), the fourth to the Late Period (664-332 BC).

Etruria is represented by five instruments and sixteen depictions of musical scenes. The Etruscan material forms the core of the volume, and it is in the study of Etruscan music life rather than the special value of the present work lies. Amongst the items presented of special mention are a complete 7th c. bronze horn (6), 1 a 7th-6th c. fragmentary bronze, cylindrical, hook-belled *lituus*-trumpet (7), published here for the first time, and a delicate, bronze, spherical, “archaic” rattle filled with small stones and needles (9). There is also an 8th c. natural sea conch used for signals (5), and an “archaic” bronze, hollow *armilla*-bracelet with small bronze bits inside (8), worn either at the wrist or at the ankle, conceivably also by dancers, in which case the sound would have enhanced the rhythm.

Significant information on Etruscan music life is provided by relief images on a number of stone cippi. In a scene of a burial dance (18), the *tibia* is played during a

prothesis of a young deceased, in the presence of mourners in excessive lamenting gestures, and a group of nude youngsters, probably in imitation of wrestlers' movements (ca. 520 BC). In a similar funerary context (20A), the 'cradle' *cithara* played by a young person accompanies dancers who seem to follow a leader, and conceivably perform an appropriate programmatic dance (5th c. BC). There are also dances in unspecified contexts. On one such occasion (20B), *tibia* and 'cradle' *cithara* accompany a group of male and female dancers (5th c. BC). In another case (20C), a young wreathed *tibia* player accompanies the dance (5th c. BC). In a third case (20E), the *chelys* (probably) is the instrument providing music for the dance, the small size of which is thought to be (p. 44) in accord with the high pitches of the *tibia* (5th c. BC). Finally (20D), a nude wrestler(?), a judge(?), and a stick-bearing male participate in the dance to the sound of clappers (5th c. BC), the percussive sound of the clappers most effectively enhancing rhythm.

In a sacrificial scene incised on the back of a bronze mirror (19), the *tibia* is played before an altar, most probably in honour of Fufluns (the Etruscan equivalent of Dionysos), in which both Dionysian and Apollonian elements are present, a common 'blend' in Etruscan ritual scenes (6th c. BC). In a sport scene depicted on a cippo in relief (20G), the *tibia* accompanies what has been imaginatively interpreted as a chariot race (rather than a wrestling contest), in which a charioteer is ejected from his car at a closed bend, in a similar fashion to the scene appearing on the Tarquinia Olympiadi Tomb (5th c. BC). During a banquet, on another cippo (20F), a bass lyre is played by a young male symposiast – head thrown back, hand just having strummed across the strings with the plectrum – in the company of another male and in the presence of a slave servant (5th c. BC).[2](#)

In a mythological scene painted on an olpe (21), two satyrs dance, while one of them plays the *tibia* (500-480 BC). Perhaps, it would be too liberal to characterise the *tibia* as a "contralto" type, on account of its drawn size in relation to the player's head, despite the fact that, indeed, different sizes of *tibiae* and *auloi* were in use, as is known. Also, a closer look at the photograph provided would reveal that the second pipe is not completely lost, as stated; its lower end has survived. Interestingly, the left pipe is here, again, drawn longer than the right pipe, a fact confirmed by a statistical analysis on depictions of Hellenic *auloi*.[3](#) In another mythological scene, depicted in relief on a bronze mirror case (30), the god Fufluns himself, drunk and merry, supported by Eros, is totally immersed in the music making of a maenad, produced on what could be interpreted as a 'flat-based' *cithara* (3rd c. BC).

During an actual music making scene painted on an amphora (22), two young men, one with *tibia* and another with what looks like a long *chelys*, are presumably intending to play together (5th c. BC). I do not agree with the author that the arms of the lyre look as if the painter intended them to be goat horns; they are too long, and not the right shape. The transverse line across the bases of the arms is not the yoke of the instrument, as suggested, but rather the cord onto which the plectrum is tied, the whole shown wrapped around the arms. In any case, the yoke is situated towards the top of the arms.

Finally, in historical scenes depicted in relief on alabaster ash urns (31-32), the popular theme of the capturing of the seer Cacu – *cithara* in hands – by the brothers Vibenna is often represented (2nd c. BC, and 3rd c. BC, respectively). The story, amply

represented in Etruscan and Roman monuments, probably as a precious piece of national history, finds a Hellenic parallel in the story of the seer Elenos, captured by Odysseus and Diomēdēs. On another alabaster ash urn (33), a trio of anthropomorphic Sirens, playing *tibia*, ‘flat-bottomed’ *cithara* and *fistula*, trying to lure Odysseus to their rock (2nd c. BC), probably symbolizes either the passing of the dead person’s soul to the other world, or remind the living that the passage to the Underworld means abandonment of the good things in life, such as music. On yet another alabaster ash urn (34), during a battle scene involving the Celts, a long, cylindrical(?), straight pipe, with a curving bell at its lower end is blown by a Celt (undated). It is difficult to associate it with the instrument lying on the floor of the statue of “The Dying Gaul”, as suggested, since the latter is very much longer and curved, and definitely belonging to the horn family.

Less material pertains to Roman musical life: a 4th c. BC fragment of a bone pipe (11); parts of a 1st c. AD ivory cylindrical pipe (*tibia*) clad in bronze (12); a small bronze “Roman” bell (13); a 1st c. AD bronze, hollow, circular loop with small parts inside it (*armilla*) with a small bronze bell attached to its circumference (14.1); a number of 1st c. AD glass beads, thought to have belonged to a ‘sounding’ necklace (14.3); a 3rd-2nd c. BC bronze, hollow, flask-like ‘sounding’ object (*bulla*), with small parts in it (15); a 5th-4th c. BC terracotta horn (16), believed to be a real instrument. Two iconographic items add a bit more information on Roman music: a 3rd c. AD relief on a marble sarcophagus depicting a group of cupids as musicians playing the ‘cradle’ *cithara*, double (conical) pipes, and cymbals (35); and a 4th c. AD marble statue of a Muse with a late type grand *cithara* (36).

Lastly, the 6th c. BC ‘Auloi of the Giglio Wreck’ (10) deserve special attention, as they are a significant relic, and in wood, of what is today characterized as the ‘Early’ Hellenic aulos type. The pipes were part of the cargo of a ship which was wrecked off the coast of island Giglio in the region of Tuscany. Significantly, their holes are near equidistant, suggesting a very early phase of music style. Whether of Eastern Hellenic manufacture (Cristofani) or a local, Etruscan, product (Colonna), the Giglio auloi may prove to be an important element in the study of music style.

The book is a valuable addition to the archaeomusicological bibliography, although perhaps more for archaeology than organology, as it offers detailed discussions of individual finds, clear colour photographs of every item, and a rich bibliography for reference and further reading; a most welcome ‘gift’ [4](#)

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Notes:

1. *Cornu* is not, strictly speaking, the appropriate term for this instrument. The *cornu* was hoop-shaped with a distinctive vertical brace (see McKinnon 2001:490 with figure; Fleischhauer 2001:409 with fig. 2; Fleischhauer 1980:288 with fig. 2; Wegner 1989:1598 with fig. 5). However, the term is applied to horns of all kinds in Carrese et al. 2010; e.g. 18 fig. 6, 141 figs. 1-2, 151 figs. 40-42, 154 fig. 53.

2. Perhaps, it would be reading too much into the picture to agree with the author, that the left hand of the musician is now plucking the strings in accompaniment to his song. Also, a very interesting feature of this representation of the lyre has not been pointed out: the sculptor has realistically rendered in relief the arms-yoke junction, with the pierced yoke penetrated by the ‘shaved’ arms, and resting onto the projecting ‘horns’ of the arms, just as is done on the famous Elgin lyre in the British Museum. This detail is very rarely portrayed, if ever. To the remark that the arms of this lyre are uniformly curved inwards (p. 44), a resemblance could be pointed out with the lyre shown on the Tarquinia Tomb of the Leopards wall fresco (see Fleischhauer 1980:289 fig. 3), a shape not attested in the Hellenic representations of the lyre.

3. See Psaroudakēs 2008.

4. Some corrections to spelling mistakes: *faccia* to *fascia* (20C); *face* to *falce* (32 p. 53); *face* to *facce* (20E).