

## REVIEWS

Avionam Shalem with the collaboration of Maria Glaser. *Die mittelalterlichen Olifante*. Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2014. ISBN 978-3-87157-235-7. 2 vols. 1: 512 pages with 224 illustrations. 2: 158 plates with approx. 325 illustrations. CD with four tracks. Price in Germany €250.

On my kitchen scale the two volumes at hand weigh together 6.7 kg (or 14 lbs., 2 oz. for those still metrically challenged). This girth is due to the desire of the Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft to continue Adolph Goldschmidt's monumental six-volume series *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen*, originally published between 1914 and 1934 (since reprinted in smaller, less colossal format), but "completed" only in 1971 with the production of Ernst Kühnel's *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen: VIII.–XIII. Jahrhundert*. How incomplete this work may be measured by the fact that Kühnel included exactly 100 oliphants, whereas Shalem counts an additional forty-one.

Raw numbers aside, it is clear that, as always in science, the task is never-ending—definitionally, historiographically, and bibliographically. Missing, for example, from the sixty-four-page list of sources and secondary literature is Sabine Klaus's *Trumpets and Other High Brass* (Vermillion, SD: National Music Museum, 2013, reviewed in the *HSBJ* 26 [2014]) and, as a result, the authors are apparently unaware of the full discussion in her vol. 2, chapter 2, of ivory cornetts and the way they were made. Of course conventionally, a cornett is not an oliphant, but so comprehensive is Shalem and Glaser's text that one expects some discussion of the relationship between these sorts of horns in the ten long chapters it comprises. Richly illustrated, these deal *inter alia* with ivory as a material, the way it is worked, and the preparation of oliphants in particular; their classification (into nine groups); their functions and meanings; their secondary roles in Christian contexts; legends and popular traditions attached to them; the history of horns as wind instruments; and their sound as described in literature and depicted in the visual arts down to the sixteenth century. Of these, naturally, it is the last two chapters that will be of greatest interest to readers of the *HBSJ*, and for such devotees, the authors have helpfully provided a CD recording of the sounds of two instruments in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, played by a hornist and a trumpeter of the Berlin Staatsoper, both duly acknowledged. To my inexpert ear (how many of us have ever actually heard an oliphant properly played in a good acoustical environment?), these sounds were surprisingly clear and sweet, an opinion endorsed by my colleague Lisa Bontrager, Distinguished Professor of French Horn at Pennsylvania State University, who further remarked on the impressive range and accuracy of very high overtones achieved without vibrato by the musicians. The implications of this observation for medieval performance are obvious.

Nonetheless, Shalem and Glaser are art historians writing in the main for other art historians, as was surely their mandate from the Berlin authorities. Accordingly,

it will be disappointing to many who use the volumes that the images conform to the Goldschmidt-Kühnel model in that they are all in black and white, whereas reproductions in color are much more revealing. (For a choice selection, see Antony Eastmond's article "Byzantine Oliphants?" in *Philopation: Spaziergang im kaiserlichen Garten*, ed. Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger and Falko Daim [Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums / Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2012], 45–54). A similar failing is the absence in the catalogue of indications of the weight of the objects in question, a datum important not only for the history of "international" trade in the raw material but with consequences for the techniques employed in its working. There are, moreover, some mistakes and misrepresentations: the plaques on the casket in the Ivrea Cathedral treasury, decorated with animals and plant life akin to those on some oliphants, are bone, not elephant ivory; and Shalem has over-simplified my account of the complex of carving techniques involved in Byzantine production (see *The Hand of the Master: Craftsmanship, Ivory, and Society in Byzantium (9th—11th Centuries)* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994], 110–12).

A larger difficulty and one of concern to historians of both art and music attaches to the questions of the place(s) of origin and diffusion of oliphants. Neither the term—used in English, borrowed from Old French as early as ca. 1300 (see *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Elephant, 4a")—nor the northwestern European circulation of the instruments has been the problem on which recent scholarship has concentrated. Rather, the dispute has been over the currency of oliphants in Byzantium, the early Islamic world, and southern Italy, and the struggle waged on two fronts—the textual and the representational. In the first of these regions, we are faced with a much broader situation. Not only oliphants but ivory artifacts of all types are scarcely mentioned: in the entirety of Byzantine literature I know of only two such allusions. But the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. (If we depended on contemporaneous sources, we would know next to nothing, for example, of the library of Alexandria, the largest of the Ancient world, how many books it contained, where it was located, how it was organized.) Of the second region, the *dar al-Islam*, Paul Williamson, the great connoisseur of Western medieval ivories, in a review of *Die mittelalterlichen Olifante* (in the *Burlington Magazine*, 107 [2015]: 415–16), averred "the complete silence of references to oliphants in Arabic sources." In fact, Shalem cites at least two such passages, one of the fourteenth century, the other of the fifteenth. The problem, as always in such things, is linguistic. There are numerous allusions to horns, usually as *būqāt* (the plural of *būq*) in Arabic literature. But in a language where the term for ivory is denoted by the creature that gave rise to it—*wa-būqātuhum anyāb al-fila* (elephant tusks), as Ibn Battutah of Tangiers reported of a reception by the Sultan of Mali—it is rare to find such specification.

The Moroccan traveler's report of this event is translated in a major study by Mariam Rosser-Owen ("The Oliphant: a Call for a Shift of Perspective," in *Romanesque and Mediterranean: Points of Contact across the Latin, Greek and Islamic Worlds, c. 1000–c. 1250*, ed. R. M. Bacile and J. McNeill [Leeds: Maney, 2015], 15–28), a critique of



**Figure 1:** *Celebration of Christian Festivities.*

Montecassino, Archivio, Casin. 132, p. 274, second quarter of the eleventh century.

Photo by A. Cutler, courtesy of the Archivio.

Shalem's earlier monograph on oliphants (*The Oliphant: Islamic Objects in Historical Context* [Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004]) and one that appeared too late for him to take into account in his corpus. Rosser-Owen is surely correct to point out that all known horns, including the gigantic side-blown specimens from East and West Africa, are of the sixteenth century or later, even when their *ante quem* dates depend on those of their entry into European museums. Our awareness of the material is now to be supplemented by the exhibition at New York's Metropolitan Museum and the article by its curator, Alisa LaGamma, "Kongo: Power and Majesty" (*African Arts* 48 [2015]: 76–87). (I am grateful to William J. Dewey for this reference). Here the oliphants from the Loango coast are described as "[d]esigned exclusively for exports," an interesting parallel to that of Eastmond, who concluded that half-a-dozen "Byzantine" oliphants (Shalem and Glaser, nos. B1, B16–B20) with scenes of hunting or chariot racing were "tourist souvenirs" made in Apulia or elsewhere in southern Italy and meant to evoke "Byzantium at second hand."

Hypotheses of this sort characterize the opinions of almost all art historians who have written about oliphants and serve to demonstrate how unstable are the taxonomies of production they have erected. Historians of music are more likely to be interested in the occasions on which the oliphants were played, a domain in which the visual arts are far more informative than the paper trail and Western examples much more numerous than those from the East. Feasts, processions, battles, hunts, and Christian scenes such as the arrest of Christ and the angels of the Apocalypse abound in architectural sculpture, wall painting, other ivories, stained glass, and book illustrations. One particularly interesting example is a miniature (here our Figure 1), overlooked by Shalem and Glaser, even while they cite the manuscript, attached to a text that discusses a variety of events: Hrabanus Maurus's ninth-century *De festivitatibus* is illustrated in a manuscript of 1022–35 from Montecassino with a miniature that conflates Palm Sunday when children are anointed, *encaenia* (the dedication of a temple), and the feast of the new month with Psalm 80:3 (“Blow up the trumpet in the new moon”), celebrated with the blowing of an oliphant.

It is no accident that this miniature occurs in a South Italian manuscript or that, on the other hand, the majority of Shalem's illustrations of the applications of the instruments come from transalpine works—inspired perhaps by the “souvenirs” of all those “tourists”! A less facetious interpretation of such a stimulus is provided in the catalogue (no. B5) by the inscription on the oliphant in Vienna which records that the landgrave Albert III Hapsburg gave it to the abbey of Muri (in the Swiss canton of Aargau) in 1198 to hold sacred relics. For the “Byzantine” oliphants, documentation of this sort is completely lacking. In the book at hand, despite the problems raised by the system of classification—an enterprise that most specialists feel themselves professionally constrained to undertake, and one that I criticized in 1994 (*The Hand of the Master*, 185–218)—it is exhilarating to see a major Islamicist immerse himself fully in islamicizing waters, and to do so seemingly without limitations on the size and scope of the book. This is a piece of scholarship that will inevitably remain the standard reference, one that I found almost as hard to put down as it is to pick up.

*Anthony Cutler*

D. Linda Pearse, ed. *Seventeenth-Century Italian Motets with Trombones*. Collegium Musicum Yale University, second series, vol. 19. Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2014. Musical scores, text translations, commentary, critical notes. xxx + 163 pages. ISBN 978-0-89579-792-6. ISSN 0147-0108. \$225. Separate instrumental parts available at additional cost.

Linda Pearse's work with the ensemble ¡Sacabuche! has already established her as a performer and director of considerable skill. The present edition demonstrates her acumen as a researcher and scholar. An offshoot of her dissertation at Indiana University, this edition brings together nineteen small-scale sacred works with Latin text, taken from print and manuscript sources from the first half of the seventeenth century. As we have come to expect from A-R Editions, the volume has a very useful introduction, extensive critical notes, and an appendix listing twenty-seven "Italian Small-Scale Motets with Trombones, 1602–1641."

Most of these works will likely be unfamiliar to all but the most avid of early brass performers and/or scholars. Archangelo Crotti's and Amante Franzoni's settings of *Sancta Maria* are known primarily for their similarity to Claudio Monteverdi's *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* from his *Vespro della beata Vergine* (1610); Federico Cauda's *Beatus vir qui suffert / Sancte N.* uses the same technique, though no writer before Pearse has connected Cauda's motet with Monteverdi's. As Pearse notes, all four of these composers treat the cantus firmus, "Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis" ("Holy Mary, pray for us"), borrowed either from the Litany of the Saints or the Litany of Loreto, in a very similar manner. Franzoni was a colleague of Monteverdi's in Mantua before 1605; there is no known connection between Monteverdi and either Cauda or Crotti. It is particularly gratifying to have the five works by Cauda, whose name is not mentioned in *New Grove* and whose publication was overlooked by Claudio Sartori in his *Bibliografia della musica strumentale italiana stampata in Italia fino al 1700* (2 vols., 1952 and 1968).

None of the composers represented in this edition are household names. In addition to Crotti, Franzoni, and Cauda, we have Leone Leoni, Francesco Usper, Carlo Fillago, Nicolò Corradini, and Gasparo Casati. That being said, these works are quite worthy of performance. The trombone parts are not difficult. Taking alternative designations for instruments into account, eight of the pieces can be performed with trombones as the only instruments apart from organ. Franzoni's *Sancta Maria*, for example, is essentially an instrumental canzona in its conception, the soprano voice notwithstanding. Most of the trombone parts fit easily on the tenor instrument, but a bass trombone is sometimes required, as in Leoni's *Deus exaudi* and Usper's *Intonuit de caelo*, in which the lowest trombone part descends to *D* and *C*, respectively. Often a low trombone shadows the continuo line, as is common practice in works of this era.

Pearse's extensive experience as a performer of early music on trombones is readily apparent in her seventeen-page Introduction. She offers some very useful suggestions on pitch, stating that since all of the works in the collection that derive from prints

were originally published in Venice, so the Venetian standards of *mezzo punto* ( $a^1 =$  ca. 466) or *tutto punto* ( $a^1 =$  ca. 440) should be taken into consideration. She offers practical advice for trombonists wishing to play at high pitch, as well as at low pitch,  $a^1 =$  ca. 415, as may be required in some modern performance situations. Her advice for articulation is based on Edward H. Tarr and Bruce Dickey's *Articulation in Early Wind Music* (Winthertur: Amadeus, 2007), which is in turn based on such historical sources as Girolamo Dalla Casa's *Il vero modo di diminuire* (1584) and Francesco Rognoni Taeggio's *Selva di varii passaggi* (1620). Pearse notes that while several of these early tutors describe reversed articulations for cornetto, none specifically mentions the trombone. Actually, this is not quite true; Giovanni Maria Artusi, in *L'Artusi overo delle imperfettioni della moderna musica* (1600), states that while the cornett has several different tonguings, the trombone has only one. But Artusi surely overstates the case, and Pearse is essentially right: trombonists playing with cornettists undoubtedly would have matched the articulations of their colleagues.

Pearse may have overlooked a minor point of performance practice relating to these works. Five of the motets, all by Cauda, call for recorder—in three of the five, as an alternative for violin, but in the remaining two, with no alternative designation. Collectively the recorder parts range from  $g^1$  to  $b^2$ . As written, they are playable on an alto recorder in G, the normal nominative pitch for such instruments built in Venice in the early seventeenth century. But if, as Michael Praetorius (*Syntagma musicum*, vol. 2, 1619) indicates, recorders customarily played at four-foot pitch, then the part should be played an octave higher than written, probably on a soprano recorder in C. This can be a significant consideration as regards balance, for the recorder part could be difficult to hear if played at pitch.

In sum, Linda Pearse has produced a handsome—if very expensive—volume of music for voices, trombones, and other instruments. A-R has established a high standard for critical performance editions, and the present volume is no exception. Trombonists and choir directors will find here a very interesting collection of little-known works, well worth performing.

*Stewart Carter*

## GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The Historic Brass Society invites submissions of articles for its annual *HBS Newsletter* and annual *HBS Journal*.

1. The HBS publishes articles based on any aspect of brass instruments of the past—from Antiquity through the twentieth century and representing cultivated, vernacular, and non-western traditions. The *Journal* also publishes English translations of significant primary sources that shed light on brass instruments and their use, and it includes in-depth bibliographies and reviews. Most articles in the *Journal* are between 4000 and 6000 words long; shorter submissions (including brief reports of discoveries) are always encouraged, and longer ones may be considered as the subject and treatment warrant. Articles submitted to the *Journal* will be read by at least two expert referees who will advise the Editor and Editorial Board on acceptance or rejection. Contributors should aim for a concise, fluid style of English presentation that will be accessible to a broad audience of academics, performers, and interested amateurs. The HBS reserves the right to edit submissions for style and may return them to the author for extensive revision or retranslation.

2. Authors submitting articles for the *Historic Brass Society Journal* should send a CD in Microsoft Word for Macintosh or Windows or in “rich text” format to Historic Brass Society, 148 W. 23rd St., #5E, New York, NY 10011, USA (FAX/TEL 212-627-3820). Alternatively, authors may submit articles in Microsoft Word as attachments to e-mail, sent to the Editor at [carter@wfu.edu](mailto:carter@wfu.edu), with copies to Howard Weiner at [h.weiner@online.de](mailto:h.weiner@online.de) and Jeffrey Nussbaum at [president@historicbrass.org](mailto:president@historicbrass.org). The deadline for submitting articles for the *Journal* is 1 October, for publication during the following calendar year. Authors submitting material for the *Historic Brass Society Newsletter* should send a CD in one of the formats listed above to Jeffrey Nussbaum at [president@historicbrass.org](mailto:president@historicbrass.org).

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5. Musical pitch names and designations should conform to the system given in the *New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 640.

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