Συμφωνία not a Bagpipe

GEORGE F. MOORE
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

IN an interesting article in this JOURNAL (vol. xxiii, 1904, pp. 180–190) Mr. Phillips Barry essays to prove that the musical instrument which was called in Greek *συμφωνία*[1] was a bagpipe. The extracts from Polybius give no indication of the nature of the instrument. Mr. Barry has quoted at large a considerable number of passages from Latin writers in which *symphonia* is certainly, or probably, the name of an instrument; but neither from these nor from those collected out of later authors by Du Cange does it appear what it was, further than that in some instances a wind instrument is meant. For the interpretation 'bagpipe' Mr. Barry relies in part upon the meaning of the borrowed words *sumphōnyāh*, *ṣephōnyā*, in Aramaic, Hebrew, and Syriac, in part on the meaning of the derivatives of *symphonia* (*zampogna*, *zampoña*, etc.) in the Romance languages. Upon closer examination it will be found that this evidence does not sustain his contention.

In Dan. $3^{5(10.15)}$, in an Aramaic list of musical instruments, we find the Greek names *ḳithros*, *sabkā*, *psanterīn*, *sumphōnyāh* (*κίθαρις*, *κιθάρα*, *σαμβύκη*,[2] *ψαλτήριον*, *συμφωνία*). Of the last Mr. Barry writes: "Hebrew tradition has always held to the interpretation of *ṣūmpōnyāh* in Dan. 3^5 as a bagpipe."

[1] Polybius, xxvi, preserved by Athenæus, *Deipnosoph.* v. p. 193; x. p. 439, and Diodorus, xxix. 32; Dan. 3^5 (LXX.; most mss. of Theod.); Luke 15^{25}. On Luke 15^{25} it may be observed that the Ethiopic version renders *συμφωνία* by *'enzērā*, the name of a musical instrument, by which elsewhere *αὐλός*, *ὄργανον*, *σύριγξ* (?), etc., are translated. The Coptic merely takes over the Greek words.

[2] An adopted word of Oriental origin.

This definition is, indeed, given in modern Hebrew dictionaries with a unanimity which might pardonably be mistaken for the consensus of tradition. When we inquire, however, how ancient this dictionary tradition is, it proves impossible to trace it farther back than the twelfth century of our era, when it appears in the commentary on Daniel printed in the Rabbinical Bibles under the name of "Saadia":[3] "*sumphōnyāh*, an instrument played by shepherds, resembling an inflated wine-skin; compare *bēth ha-simphōnōth*."[4] The currency of the interpretation 'bagpipe' is due to the chapters on music in the *Shiltē ha-gibbōrīm* by Abraham di Porta Leone, published in 1612.[5] The author, a learned physician of Mantua, quotes and adopts the explanation of "Saadia," and follows it by a detailed description of a species of Italian bagpipe, the name of which was "*piva sordina*." He surmises that the same instrument was meant in M. Kelim 20^2, where "the bag of pipes" (*ḥēmath ḥalīlīn*, see below, p. 169) is mentioned, and compares the Latin "*tibia utricularis*."[6] The substance of this passage in the *Shiltē ha-gibbōrīm* is quoted by Joel Loewe ("Bril") in his introduction to the Book of Psalms in the so-called Mendelssohn Bible. Many Christian scholars seem to have imagined — probably without having read the passage — that the author of the *Shiltē* was giving a "traditional" description of the ancient Hebrew instrument, whereas he was illustrating what he thought it might have been like by describing an Italian instrument that he had seen.

The older Jewish commentators on Daniel confine themselves to the cautious statement that the ἅπαξ λεγόμενα in 3^5 are names of musical instruments. Ibn Ezra dismisses some attempts at more specific identifications as "unproved guesses." The commentators on the Mishna (see below,

[3] Not the Gaon Saadia (d. 942 A.D.), but a French or South German scholar two centuries later.

[4] See below, p. 168.

[5] This part of the work was reprinted, with other dissertations on Hebrew music, in Ugolini Thesaurus, vol. xxxii.

[6] It should be noticed that he does not connect the name of the instrument with the Italian *zampogna*.

p. 169) are not more explicit. In the sixteenth century Elias Levita wrote: "*sumphōnyāh* is the name of a musical instrument which is called in Italian *zampogna*, in German *Leier*,"[7] i.e. *Drehleier*, French *vielle*, English "hurdy-gurdy."

The author of the "Saadia" commentary manifestly derived his interpretation 'bagpipe,' not from "tradition," but by etymological association with the Talmudic phrase which he quotes, *bēth ha-simphōnōth*. *Simphōn* (*σίφων*) is a tube or pipe; specifically, the *simphōnōth* are the 'tubes' of the lungs, commonly taken to mean the great blood-vessels, but more correctly the bronchi[8]; *bēth ha-simphōnōth* is the part of the lungs in which these vessels are situated.[9] Assuming that *sumphōnyāh* in Daniel was the same word as the Talmudic *simphōn*, the lungs with the bronchi and trachea suggested the bagpipe. The whole combination, however, rests on a mistaken etymology: *συμφωνία* is not *σίφων*.[10]

The word *sumphōnyāh* occurs in the Mishna and Tosephta as the name of a musical instrument, in connection with *ḥālīl*, 'pipe,' and *ḳeren* or *ḥaṣōṣerāh*, 'horn, trumpet.'[11] From the contexts it is evident that it was a wind instrument; that it might be of metal or (of wood) covered with metal; and that it was kept in a case, which was sometimes open at one end, the instrument being slipped into it lengthwise, sometimes opened at one side. Nothing in these passages suggests a bagpipe, and the description of the cover or case seems clearly to exclude such an instrument. Further than this the texts do not lead us.

The commentators on the Mishna offer nothing more

[7] Methurgeman, *s.v.*; quoted by Drusius.

[8] See Aruch, *s.v.*: "The hollow tubes in the midst of the lungs through which the air enters." Cf. Lewysohn, *Zoologie des Talmuds*, 36. The Talmudic anatomy did not distinguish between the air passages and the great arteries; see, *e.g.*, Ḥullin, 45 *b*.

[9] Ḥullin 45 *b*. Cf. M. Ḥullin 3[1]; Ḥullin 47 *b*, 48 *b*, 49 *a*; Succa 36 *a*, etc.

[10] The two words are associated in the inverse sense by the author of the Aruch; the *simphōnōth* are 'pipes,' like *sumphōnyāh* in Daniel. Some Christian scholars have in other ways connected the word in Daniel with *simphōn*, 'pipe.'

[11] M. Kelim 11[6 bis], 16[3]; Tos. Kelim, B.M. 1[7] (p. 579 Zuckermandel).

definite than a "kind of musical instrument";[12] so also R. Nathan in the Aruch. R. Asher b. Jehiel (d. 1328) adds: "It has a thick piece of wood at the top made to blow on."[13] The Jewish commentators recognize a reference to the bagpipe in M. Kelim 20[2] (*ḥēmath ḥalīlīn*),[14] but none of them connects this, as Abraham di Porta Leone does, with *sumphōnyāh*.

According to several recent writers on Hebrew antiquities, Jewish tradition ascribes the meaning 'bagpipe' to another word in the Old Testament, viz. *'ūgāb* (Gen. 4[21] Ps. 150[4] Job 21[12] 30[31]), making it equivalent to the Aramaic *sumphōnyāh*. Thus Benzinger (1894): "Der selten erwähnte *'ûgâbh* . . . wird von der Tradition als Sackpfeife (*sûmpônjâh* Dan. 3[5]) erklärt."[15] — Riehm (1884): "Nach der Überlieferung ist *'ûgāb* die Sackpfeife (Dudelsack, Schalmei), die auch unter dem . . . Namen *sumponjah* (Dan. 3[5. 10. 15]) . . . vorkommt." — Leyrer (1882): "Die Pfeife, עוגב . . . (LXX *ὄργανον* . . .), nach Targ. Hier. ad Dard. Schilte haggib. die Sackpfeife."[16] — Diestel (1872): "Das *'Ugab* . . . war nach jüd. Interpreten ein Dudelsack oder ein Sackpfeife. . . . Genau so wird (vgl. Schilte bei Ugolini . . . XXXII. Kap. 11) das Instrument beschrieben, welches Dan. 3, 5; 10, 5 [N.B.!] vorkommt und *sumephonja* [*sic*] heisst."[17] — Winer (1848): "עוגב Gen. 4, 21. Hiob 21, 12. etc. nach den jüdischen Interpreten, Chald. und Hieron. die Sackpfeife, Dudelsack. סומפוניה chald. Dan. 3, 5. 10, 15 [N.B.!]., *συμφωνία* Polyb. bei Athen. 10. 439, wohl eben dasselbe, wie denn die hebr. Uebersetzung dafür עוגב hat. Noch jetzt heisst die Schalmei im Ital. Sambogna," etc.[18]

[12] Maimonides, Samson of Sens, Bertinoro. Hai Gaon unfortunately does not explain the word at all.

[13] לחבות בו: חבה is the usual word for blowing a pipe (*ḥālīl*), etc. Rabbenu Asher probably means the mouthpiece of an instrument similar to the shawm. Cf. Maimonides on M. 'Arakin 2[2].

[14] Maimonides, Samson of Sens, etc.

[15] *Hebräische Archäologie*, 276; cf. Nowack, *Hebräische Archäologie*, i. 277. See also Benzinger in *PRE*[2], *s.v.* "Musik."

[16] *PRE*[2], x. 393.

[17] *Bibel-Lexikon*, iv. 263.

[18] *Realwörterbuch*[3], ii. 123.

If the reader has patiently gone through these extracts, he will see

When "Jewish tradition" is alleged in this easy and familiar way, it is not an unfair presumption that the writer does not know where to lay his hand on a definite reference. In the present instance this presumption is readily verified. The ancient versions render *'ūgāb* in various ways, *cithara*, *organon*, etc., these variations showing that there was no fixed tradition. The only one of them which has been cited in support of the interpretation 'bagpipe' is the Aramaic Targums, which have uniformly *'abbūbā*, a pipe or flute.[19] Grotius (on Gen. 4[21]) quoted the scholiast on Horace: "Ambubaiae dicuntur mulieres tibicinae lingua Syrorum. Etenim Syris tibia sive symphonia ambubaia dicitur." In Bereshith Rabba on Gen. 4[21] (c. 23, 4), those who play on the *kinnōr* and *'ūgāb* are interpreted אדרבולין and כורבלין, *i.e.* *ὑδραύλαι* and *χοραύλαι*. In Jer. Succa 5[6] (ed. Zhitomir 22[a]) Simeon b. Lakish says: עונב זה ארדבלים (l. ארד'), "the *'ūgāb* is a water organ" (*ὕδραυλις*).[20]

The mediæval commentators on the Old Testament are content to explain *'ūgāb* as 'a musical instrument.' Abul-

why I have thought it worth while to quote them *in extenso*, in chronological order. I might have added to the list the articles in Lichtenberger's *Encyclopédie*, the Calwer *Bibel-Lexikon* (Kittel), and others, but *sapienti sat*. These industrious compilers have copied one another with such credulous fidelity that not only the larger errors about Jewish "tradition" reappear in all of them, but even the false reference to Dan. 10[15] in Winer is reproduced by Diestel, with a fresh misprint (?), 10[5]! (I have observed that a man who does not verify his references usually has a touching confidence that his predecessor was more honest.) The climax of blundering is reached in Leyrer. The Targum renders consistently אבובא, which nobody before or since has imagined to be a bagpipe. Jerome "ad Dard." [Ep. 129, Vallarsi, i. 960 ff.] contains no syllable on the subject; in Ep. 21, § 29 (ad Damasum), Jerome controverts the opinion of some of the Latins who thought that *symphonia* (Luke 15[25]) was *genus organi*: *συμφωνία* is equivalent to *consonantia*; cf. his Comm. on Is. 5[12] (referring to Dan. 3[5]). In the *Shiltē ha-gibbōrim* the *'ūgāb* is interpreted not as 'bagpipe,' but as 'viola da gamba'! The last strange error is preserved by Benzinger in *PRE*[2], xiii. 593.

[19] Used in the Temple; see M. 'Arakin 2[3], 'Arakin 10[5], in conjunction with *ḥālīl*; of reed, *tb*.

[20] See Krauss, *Lehnwörter*, ii. 13, 295; cf. Ber. Rabba, c. 50, 14. On the water organ see also Tos. 'Arakin 1[15], 'Arakin 10[5].

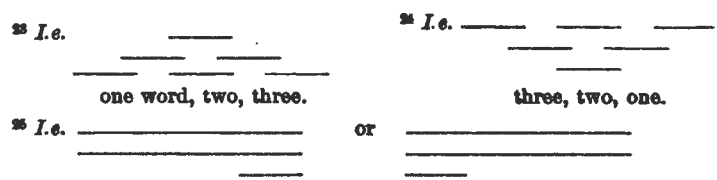
walid (with Saadia) renders it by *ḳītār* (*κιθάρα*). Solomon b. Abraham Parchon (twelfth century) in his Lexicon defines it as *ḳithros*, and describes the latter as a violin (strings of gut over a wooden sounding body, played by drawing a bow over them). Abraham di Porta Leone (seventeenth century) in the *Shilṭē ha-gibbōrīm* makes it a *viola da gamba*, which he describes, and calls by its Italian name. So much for the "Jewish tradition" that the *'ūgāb* was a bagpipe! The reader interested in the curiosities of learning may ask, How did this myth originate? I think the mystery can be solved. Winer notes that the Hebrew translation of Daniel has *'ūgāb* for *sumphōnyāh*; cf. Gesenius, *Thesaurus*, 988: "Apud Dan. III, 5. 10. 15 interpres eo [sc. *'ūgāb*] utitur pro chald. סומכוניה." "The Jewish interpreters," "Jewish tradition that *'ūgāb* was a bagpipe," appear, thus, to have grown, like the three black crows in the story, out of the statement that the Hebrew translation of Daniel has *'ūgāb* for *sumphōnyāh*. This Hebrew version does not figure in the apparatus of recent commentaries on Daniel, nor in the Bible Dictionaries, so far as I have observed.[21] It may not be superfluous, therefore, to say that Gesenius means a translation printed by Kennicott from a codex in Rome (No. 270 Kenn.; see *Dissert. generalis*, p. 90). This folio manuscript with Targum, Massora, commentaries, etc., has a Hebrew translation of the Aramaic parts of Ezra and Daniel in a column beside the text, corresponding to that occupied by the Targum in other books. The codex is dated A.M. 5087 = 1327 A.D. The age of the translation is undetermined. Its quality may be judged from the fact that קתרוס is rendered by תוף, סבכא by חליל.[22]

To return to *sumphōnyāh*. We have seen that there is no tradition that it was a bagpipe, and that the references to it in the Mishna exclude this interpretation. It is possible that some light may be thrown upon the nature of the instrument by a passage in the Palestinian Talmud. In Jer.

[21] Moses Stuart (1850) is the last by whom I find it referred to.

[22] The same version is found in Kenn. 512. It was reprinted from Kennicott by J. L. Schulze, Halle, 1782 (Bertholdt, *Einleitung*, 1548 f.).

Megilla 1[9] (ed. Zhitomir 11 *a*) the question how the closing lines of a *mezūzā* should be written is under discussion. "Rabbi Aba in the name of R. Judah said: If they be written in the form of a half lozenge, the upper line of the last three should contain three words; the next, two; the last, only *'al-hā-āreṣ*. R. Zeira in the name of R. Ḥisda: If they be written in the form of a *sumphōn*, the upper line of the three should contain three words; the last line, two [sc. *'al-hā-āreṣ*]; about the middle line I am uncertain [whether it should have three or two]." We may compare with this Menaḥoth 31 *b*, where R. Aḥa bar bar Ḥannah cites R. Johannan as follows: "A *mezūzā* so written that three lines have respectively two, three, and one word is proper; but three lines must not be written in the shape of a tent,[23] nor like a tail.[24] R. Ḥisda said, The words *'al-hā-āreṣ* are written on the last line, some say at the beginning, others at the end."[25] It would appear, therefore, that when the end of the *mezūzā* was in the form of a *sumphōn*, the last lines, of unequal length, were brought into the same vertical column at one end or the other, and that this is the point of comparison.[26] If this be so, we should infer that the *sumphōn* or *sumphōnyāh* was composed of pipes of unequal length, fixed side by side in such a way that at one end they were in the same line. This would describe the Pan's pipes if there were several pipes, or the common Syrian double pipe if there were but two. The name *συμφωνία*, in its etymological sense, would apply more properly to the double pipe, by which two tones are produced at once, than to the Pan's pipes, which are used to give notes only in succession; it



Cf. Maim., *Mishneh Torah*, H. Tephillin 5[1].

[26] The *mezūzā* is now usually written in twenty-two lines, the words *'al-hā-āreṣ* standing by themselves in the last line, at the beginning or at the end. See Maimon. *l.c.* 5[3], *Jew. Encyclop.* viii. 531.

might be added that the Pan's pipes had an old established name, *σύριγξ*, while for the peculiar double pipe supposed in the alternative there is no Greek term known. These considerations are, however, not decisive. In Syriac, as well as in the Romance languages, the name *symphonia* is given to the syrinx, and this use — an extension, perhaps, of the original application of the word — may have been established in the time of the Talmuds.

In M. Kelim 11[6] we read: "If a *sumphōnyāh* has a בית קיבול כנפים, it is liable to contract defilement, whether the instrument be covered with metal or not"; similarly, Tos. Kelim, B. M., 1[1]: "A *sumphōnyāh* covered with metal is clean; if there be made in it a בית קיבול כנפים, it contracts defilement . . .; a pipe (חלול) covered with metal is clean; if there be made in it a בית קיבול כוסות, it contracts defilement," etc. What is meant here by כנפים is not clear, and the commentators give little light. The כוסות of the pipe (Tos., *l.c.*) are not improbably the conical or cup-shaped pieces inserted in the finger-holes of many Greek (and Roman) *αὐλοί*.[27] Similarly, we might surmise that the כנפים (lit. "wings") were the projecting pieces on some *αὐλοί*, by means of which the rings were rotated which served to stop some of the holes (see the works cited in the last note). We have, however, no evidence that this apparatus was employed on Oriental pipes. Lipmann Heller (on M. Kelim 11[6]) reproduces a figure of the כנפים from Meir of Rothenburg; but the illustration does not help us much, inasmuch as we do not know what manner of instrument Meir imagined the *sumphōnyāh* to be.

Mr. Barry arrays the Syriac among the witnesses to the meaning 'bagpipe'; but I find no evidence whatever that the word *ṣephōnyā* has this sense. The native lexicons give as equivalent of *ṣephōnyā* the Arabic and Persian names of a variety of wind instruments of the types represented by our flute, flageolet, oboe, clarinet, trumpet.[28] The only more definite description, repeated by several lexicographers, is as

[27] See Howard, *Harvard Classical Studies*, iv. 1893; v. Jan in *Baumeister*, i. 553 ff., *Pauly-Wissowa*, ii. 2416 ff.

[28] Sporadically also lyre.

follows: "It is said that it resembles a crown,[29] and consists of several pipes which are blown upon." So Bar Ali (in Payne Smith, *s.v.*) and Bar Baḥlul. The latter adds: "The Greeks give the name *συμφωνία* to a musical instrument which has seven bronze pipes; the Syrians call it *ṣephōnyā*; in Hebrew it is called *sambūḳ*." Another gloss interprets the word by the Greek *σύριγγες*. In some manuscripts of Bar Baḥlul drawings of the *ṣephōnyā* are given, in forms which seem to result from fusion and misunderstanding of the definitions, but nowhere is 'bagpipe' suggested.[30]

The last point in Mr. Barry's argument is that the instrument called in Latin *symphonia* "can be no other than the bagpipe, still called by the same name in all of the Romance languages derived from the Latin." I fear that this evidence will not stand examination much better than the rest. Pedro of Alcalà, in his Spanish-Arabic vocabulary, gives as the equivalent of *çampoña* the Arabic *zummára*, *zummár*, the usual modern name of a kind of double clarinet. To come to modern times, the Dictionary of the Spanish Academy defines: "Zampoña. Instrumento rústico pastoril á modo de flauta, ó compuesto de muchas flautas. Pipitaña." The same definition is given in all the Spanish lexicons and encyclopædias I have been able to consult, including Dominguez, Donadíu y Puignan, and Zerolo; none of them recognizes the meaning 'bagpipe.' The Portuguese-English dictionary of Lacerda defines "a pastoril [*sic*] pipe."

In the Italian lexicons and encyclopædias *zampogna* is defined as Pan's pipe, syrinx; rustic whistle, made of the bark of the poplar, chestnut, etc.; the valved pipe by which the wind is introduced into a bagpipe (Tommaseo e Bellini); the chanter and drones of a bagpipe (Broccardo); the nozzle of a syringe (obsolete). Fanfani (1865) defines the word as a whistle, but adds, "improperly confounded with the *cornamusa* (bagpipe)." Petròcchi (1891) defines as Pan's

[29] The comparison is perhaps to the radiate or crenellated crown; the projecting ends of the tubes being the point of resemblance.

[30] Bar Baḥlul, ed. Duval, *s.v.*; Payne Smith, *s.v.*

pipes, etc., adding, "In Southern Italy they call the *cornamusa* by this name." Anderoli, *Vocabolario Napoletano-Italiano* (1887): "Zampogna. Strumento rusticale da fiato, composto di un otre e tre canne, Cornamusa, Piva, ed anche Zampogna o Sampogna, sebbene questa propriamente sia tutt' altro strumento, formato di sole canne disuguali uniti insieme."

'Bagpipe' is therefore not the common and accepted meaning of *zampoña*, *zampogna*, but is unusual and provincial.[21] It is also obviously secondary: a word meaning pipe or pipes might easily be applied to the bagpipe; first, as we actually see in Italian, to the pipes themselves, then to the instrument as a whole. It is less easy to see how the specific name of an instrument of so peculiar a kind as the bagpipe should be transferred to things so different as Pan's pipes and whistles, for which there were already names in plenty. While I think, therefore, that Mr. Barry is right in taking *συμφωνία* in Luke 15[25] as the name of a musical instrument, there is no ground whatever for identifying it with the bagpipe.

[21] In the Romauntsch dialect of the Upper Engadin *zampuogn* is a cowbell.