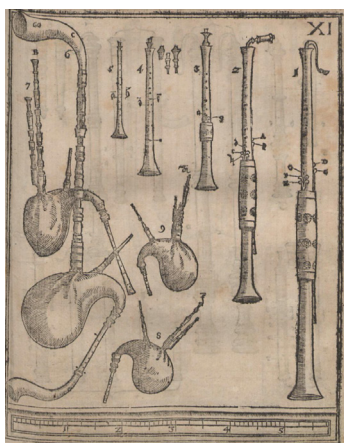


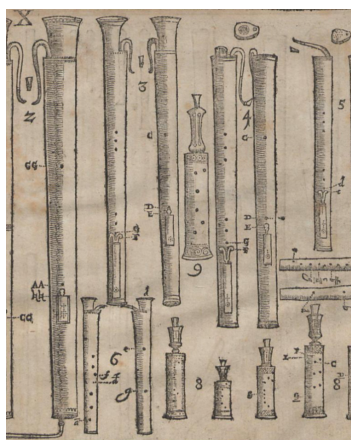
## RENAISSANCE INSTRUMENTS



### Shawm and Bagpipes

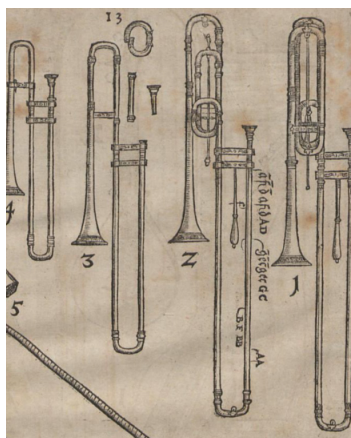
The shawm is a member of a double reed tradition traceable back to ancient Egypt and prominent in many cultures (the Turkish zurna, Chinese sona, Javanese sruni, Hindu shehnai). In Europe it was combined with brass instruments to form the principal ensemble of the wind band in the 15th and 16th centuries and gave rise in the 1660's to the Baroque oboe. The reed of the shawm is manipulated directly by the player's lips, allowing an extended range.

The concept of inserting a reed into an airtight bag above a simple pipe is an old one, used in ancient Sumeria and Greece, and found in almost every culture. The bag acts as a reservoir for air, allowing for continuous sound. Many civic and court wind bands of the 15th and early 16th centuries include listings for bagpipes, but later they became the provenance of peasants, used for dances and festivities.



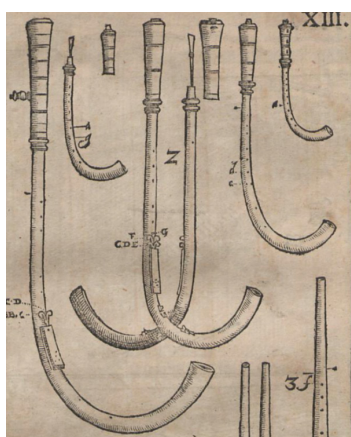
### Dulcian

The dulcian, or bajón, as it was known in Spain, was developed somewhere in the second quarter of the 16th century, an attempt to create a bass reed instrument with a wide range but without the length of a bass shawm. This was accomplished by drilling a bore that doubled back on itself in the same piece of wood, producing an instrument effectively twice as long as the piece of wood that housed it and resulting in a sweeter and softer sound with greater dynamic flexibility. The dulcian provided the bass for brass and reed ensembles throughout its existence. During the 17th century, it became an important solo and continuo instrument and was played into the early 18th century, alongside the jointed bassoon which eventually displaced it.



### Sackbut

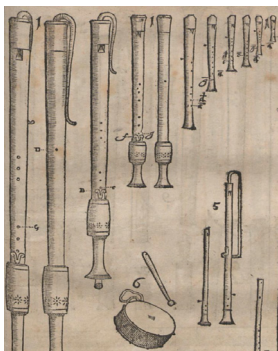
The sackbut is the direct ancestor of the modern trombone and, of all the Renaissance winds, the closest in appearance and sound to its modern descendant. Most likely a development from the earlier slide trumpet, the sackbut played a prominent role in both loud and soft ensembles in the Renaissance due largely to its wide dynamic flexibility and broad range, over two octaves. The word "sackbut" probably derives from the Old French "sacqueboutee," meaning "pull-pull." The Italians called it "trompone," meaning "large trumpet."



### Krumphorn

The krumphorn, or "curved horn," had a brief though illustrious existence in the Renaissance, originating in the third quarter of the 15th century. A testament to its popularity, it was found throughout Europe during the Renaissance before it became all but extinct by the middle of the 17th c. Its distinctive buzzing sound is produced by a double reed underneath a wooden cap into which the player blows. The player cannot manipulate the reed with his lips which limits the instrument's range to an octave and a second and disallows any dynamic flexibility.

Learn more about Renaissance instruments and watch demonstration videos by visiting: [www.piffaro.org/education](http://www.piffaro.org/education)



### Recorders

The recorder, probably dating as early as the 14th century, is a whistle mouthpiece flute, a family with an ancient lineage found in most cultures throughout the world. By the second half of the 16th century the recorder family consisted of soprano, alto, tenor and bass. These instruments sound, however, an octave higher than the human voice of the same name. During the 16th century larger instruments called "great basses" were constructed allowing the tenor, bass, great bass and contra-bass recorders to perform music at vocal pitch. Renaissance recorders differ from their Baroque descendants in having a wide, cylindrical bore that favors the fundamental tones and limits the range to an octave and a sixth.



### Lute

The lute was one of the most aristocratic instruments of Renaissance Europe, and court lutenists were held in great esteem. The lute had its origins in the Arabic Ud, and was probably introduced to Europe by the Moors. It is distinguished by its pear shape and characteristic rounded back, which is made of strips of wood glued together over a mold. The lute is strung in pairs of gut strings called courses, with a single top string known as the chanterelle, or "singing string."



### Viola da gamba

The viol, or gamba, as it is also called, is a bowed string instrument with frets like a guitar, and 5 to 7 strings. It is usually played held downwards on the lap or between the legs. Appearing in Europe towards the end of the 15th century, it became an important and popular instrument in the Renaissance and Baroque periods. A normal consort, or "chest" of viols, consists of the treble, tenor and bass sizes. Unlike the violin, the bow is held in an underhand grip, the palm facing upwards.



### Violin

The origins of the violin date to the early 16th century in northern Italy. The first makers most likely borrowed elements from medieval offshoots of the Byzantine lyre, the rebec and the vielle. It was popular among street musicians, and was frequently used to provide music for dancing, but by the middle of the century became an important instrument in courts of the nobility as well.



### Harpsichord

The earliest reference to a harpsichord dates from 1397, and the first representation of the instrument appears as a sculpture in an altarpiece from 1425. It differs from a piano, in that the strings are plucked by jacks activated by the keys, rather than struck by felt hammers. During the Renaissance period the instrument was played both in a solo capacity, as well as accompanying singers or instrumental ensemble. It was, along with the lute, the first instrument for which composers wrote specific pieces.

Note: illustrations are from the "Theatrum Instrumentorum", a section of Michael Praetorius' opus, *Syntagma Musicum* (1619), an encyclopedic treatise on music and instruments of the period.