

# New Evidence for the Origins of Kettledrums in Western Europe

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The year 1457 marks the first eyewitness account of large kettledrums, or timpani, in Western Europe, on the occasion of the entrance into France of a large envoy sent by the young Hungarian King Ladislas to ask King Charles VII for his daughter Madeleine's hand in marriage. This story is mentioned in most historical accounts of kettledrums. James Blades and Edmund Bowles report in *Grove Music Online* that "the size and sound of these instruments prompted a Father Benoît to say that he had never before seen such drums 'like large cauldrons . . . carried on horseback.'"<sup>1</sup>

As it happens, Father Benoît could not have seen this himself. Benoît Picard (1663–1720), a Capuchin monk, was born over two hundred years later, and he recounted this story in his *L'origine de la très illustre maison de Lorraine*, published in Toul, France, in 1704. Over time his identity became conflated with that of an archbishop from either an Eastern European diocese or from Cologne. This article attempts to sort out the inconsistencies in accounts of this episode and adds a further piece of evidence suggesting that large kettledrums may have been used in Western Europe almost a century earlier than 1457.

## *The First Eyewitness Account of Kettledrums in Western Europe*

One of the earliest references to Benoît's *L'origine* can be found in Gabriel Daniel's *Histoire de la Milice françoise*, published in 1724 (fig. 1):

It appears from *l'Histoire de Lorraine* by Father Benoît, a Capuchin, that this instrument was in use in Hungary in the year 1457, but completely unknown in Lorraine. In speaking of a magnificent embassy that Ladislas, king of Hungary, sent to France to request the hand of Mademoiselle Madeleine, daughter of Charles VII, in marriage, he cites an old chronicle concerning the entry of the archbishop of Colossa, leader of the embassy, into Nancy,

1. *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Timpani," by James Blades and Edmund A. Bowles, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (accessed January 15, 2012).

Il paroît par l'Histoire de Lorraine du P. Benoît Capucin, que cet Instrument étoit en usage en Hongrie l'an 1457., mais tout à fait inconnu en Lorraine. Car parlant d'une magnifique Ambassade que Ladiflas Roi de Hongrie envoya en France pour demander en mariage Madame Madeleine: fille de Charles VII., il cite une ancienne Chronique touchant l'entrée de l'Archevêque de Coloffa Chef de l'Ambassade à Nancy où il est dit: on n'avoit ni mi oncques veu des Tabourins comme de gros chaudrons qu'ils faisoient porter sur des chevaux.

FIGURE 1. Gabriel Daniel, *Histoire de la Milice française* (Amsterdam, 1724), 386.

where it is said: “we have never seen such drums like big cauldrons, which were carried on the horses.”<sup>2</sup>

The phrase concerning the kettledrum is quoted directly from Benoît’s book, which apparently quoted it from the *ancienne Chronique* (“old chronicle”). Benoît includes further details that Daniel omits (fig. 2):

The chronicle M.S. de Lorraine states that the delegation that Ladislas sent to France arrived at Nancy in the month of July of the year 1457. It was among the most magnificent to have been seen in a long time; there were more than five hundred gentlemen and lords. The duke of Calabre, having greeted them at the St. Nicolas gate, led the most important members to the Pelegrine house, and the rest were housed in private homes. The chronicle adds that this suite and its magnificent procession stayed three days in Nancy. The head of the delegation was the archbishop of Colossa. *Never before had there been seen drums like great cauldrons, which were carried on horses.* The chronicle is referring to kettledrums.<sup>3</sup>

Louis Félix Guinement de Keralio, writing in the *Encyclopédie méthodique, Art militaire* of 1787 (fig. 3), provides the same information as Daniel,<sup>4</sup> although the quotation from the *Chronique* is slightly altered.

Further references to Benoît’s book appear in Georges Kastner’s *Manuel général de musique militaire à l’usage des armées françaises* (1848) and

2. Gabriel Daniel, *Histoire de la Milice française* (Amsterdam, 1724), 386.

3. Benoît Picard, *L’origine de la très illustre maison de Lorraine* (Toul, France, 1704), 425: “La cronique M. S. de Lorraine, dit que l’ambassade, que Ladiflas envoioit en France, ariva à Nancy au mois de Juillet, de l’an 1457. Elle étoit des plus magnifiques qu’on eut vû depuis longtems; il y avoit plus de 500 gentilshommes ou grands seigneurs. Le duc de Calabre les aiant recû à la porte de S. Nicolas, conduisit les principaux dans la maison Pelegrine, & les autres furent logés chez les particuliers. Cette cronique ajoûte que cette suite & magnifique cortége séjourna trois jours dans Nancy. L’archevêque de Colossa en étoit le chef. *On n’avoit ni mi oncques vû des tabourins comme de gros chaudrons, qu’ils faisoient porter sur des chevaux.* Cette cronique veut parler de timbales.”

4. Louis Félix Guinement de Keralio, *Encyclopédie méthodique, Art militaire*, vol. 3 (Paris: Panckoucke, 1787), 107.

La cronique M. S. de Lorraine , dit que l'ambassade , que Ladislas envoioit en France , arriva à Nancy au mois de Juillet , de l'an 1457. Elle étoit des plus magnifiques qu'on eut vû depuis longtems ; il y avoit près de 500. gentilshommes ou grands seigneurs. Le duc de Calabre les aiant receû à la porte de S. Nicolas , conduisit les principaux dans la maison Pelegrine , & les autres furent logés chez les particuliers. Cette cronique ajoûte que cette suite & magnifique cortège s'journa trois jours dans Nancy. L'archevêque de Colossâ en étoit le chef. *On n'avoit ni mi oncques vû des tabourins comme de gros chauderons , qu'ils faisoient porter sur des chevaux.* Cette cronique veut parler de timbales.

FIGURE 2. Benoît Picard, *L'origine de la très illustre maison de Lorraine* (Toul, France, 1704), 425.

Les timbales nous sont venues des Sarrasins par les Allemands. Il y en avoit dans l'ambassade envoyée en 1457 par Ladislas , roi de Hongrie , pour demander en mariage Madeleine , fille de Charles VII. On lit dans une chronique citée par le père Benoît , auteur de l'histoire de Lorraine : « *On n'avoit n mie oncques veu des tabourins comme de gros chauderons , qu'ils faisoient porter sur des chevaux* ». Les

FIGURE 3. Louis Félix Guinement de Keralio, *Encyclopédie méthodique, Art militaire* (Paris: Panckoucke, 1787), 3:107.

his *Les danses des morts* (1852).<sup>5</sup> Kastner refers to the archbishop as being not from Calossa/Kalocsa, but from Cologne, and he also states that Father Benoît said that the kettledrums were known in Hungary in 1457, but completely unknown in Lorraine (fig. 4). However, it was Daniel rather than Benoît who had made the latter claim. A similar version of this story can be found in Adolphe Le Doulcet Pontécoulant's *Organographie*.<sup>6</sup> It is therefore not surprising that later historians, who relied on these sources, made misattributions.

5. Georges Kastner, *Manuel général de musique militaire à l'usage des armées françaises* (Paris: Didot frères, 1848), 90, and *Les danses des morts* (Paris: Brandus, 1852), 298.

6. Adolphe Le Doulcet Pontécoulant, *Organographie* (Paris: Castel, 1861), 98.

les (1)? Dans l'ouvrage du père Benoit, il est dit que les timbales étaient connues en Hongrie, l'an 1457, mais qu'elles étaient complètement inconnues en Lorraine, car, en faisant la description d'une magnifique ambassade que Ladislas, roi de Hongrie, envoya en France pour demander en mariage madame Madeleine, fille de Charles VII, cet historien cite, à l'appui de son assertion, une ancienne chronique touchant la visite rendue à Nancy par l'archevêque de Cologne au chef de l'ambassade, dans laquelle se trouvent ces mots : *On n'avoit ni mi oncques veu des tabourins comme de gros chaudrons qu'ils faisoient porter sur des chevaux.*

FIGURE 4. Georges Kastner, *Manuel général de musique militaire à l'usage des armées françaises* (Paris: Didot frères, 1848), 90.

The reference to the archbishop of Cologne is carried over into historical accounts of kettledrums in the twentieth century. In Percival R. Kirby's article "The Kettle-Drums: An Historical Survey,"<sup>7</sup> and in a book by Henry G. Farmer (1950),<sup>8</sup> the archbishop of Cologne is said to be the witness. In Caldwell Titcomb's doctoral dissertation, "The Kettledrums in Western Europe,"<sup>9</sup> Father Benoît himself becomes the archbishop of Cologne. Blades, in both *Percussion Instruments and Their History*<sup>10</sup> and in the article in *Grove Music Online* cited above, states that Benoît was the eyewitness in 1457. Notable exceptions are the accounts of the story given by Bowles<sup>11</sup> and Montagu<sup>12</sup> who are each aware of the existence of Benoît's eighteenth-century *L'origine*. Neither delved into the matter, however.

The date, July 1457, is problematic. Because this was such a large and *magnifique* group of people, there are many contemporary accounts of their entrance into Tours—on December 8, 1457.<sup>13</sup> Olivier de la Marche

7. Percival R. Kirby, "The Kettle-Drums: An Historical Survey," *Music & Letters* 9, no. 1 (January 1928): 37.

8. Henry G. Farmer, *Handel's Kettledrums, and Other Papers on Military Music* (London: Hinrichsen, 1965), 42.

9. Caldwell Titcomb, "The Kettledrums in Western Europe: Their History Outside the Orchestra" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1952), 151.

10. James Blades, *Percussion Instruments and Their History* (Westport, CT: Bold Strummer, 2005), 226. Although Blades does not cite the source for this in the book, he does cite *Organographie* elsewhere in the book (p. 351n3), as well as Kirby's article and Farmer's *Handel's Kettledrums*, on p. 227.

11. Edmond A. Bowles, "Eastern Influences on the Use of Trumpets and Drums during the Middle Ages," *Anuario Musical* 26 (1971): 28.

12. Jeremy Montagu, *Timpani and Percussion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 219n35.

13. Jean Chartier, *Histoire de Charles VII* (Paris, 1661), 295–98; Jean Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII roi de France*, ed. Auguste Vallet de Vireville (Paris: Librairie

(1425–1502) commented that the envoy was “la plus belle et la plus gross embassy qui oncque vint en France” (the finest and the largest embassy that had ever come to France).<sup>14</sup> However, King Charles was ill, and they had to wait until December 18 to see him.<sup>15</sup> On Thursday December 22, a great banquet was held for the visitors at St. Julien.<sup>16</sup> But on Christmas Eve the news reached Tours that King Ladislav had died on November 23.<sup>17</sup> A requiem mass was held for him at St. Martin<sup>18</sup> on December 29.<sup>19</sup> The ambassadors left Tours on New Year’s Day (1458),<sup>20</sup> stopping briefly at Paris,<sup>21</sup> where a service for Ladislav was held at Notre Dame.<sup>22</sup> They returned to Prague by February 14.<sup>23</sup>

The group had left Prague on October 10,<sup>24</sup> which means that it took sixty days for the eight-hundred-mile (ca. 1,300 km) journey from Prague to Tours—an average of thirteen to fourteen miles (around 22 km) per day for their leisurely trip. Since Nancy is a little over half way, it is reasonable to assume that the ambassadors arrived there in mid-November,<sup>25</sup> not in July as written in Benoît’s *L’origine*.<sup>26</sup> Was it written so in the “M.S. Lorraine” or did Benoît make an error?

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Plon, 1858), 3:74–79; Jacques Duclercq, *Mémoires, choix de chroniques et mémoires relatifs à l’histoire de France*, ed. J. A. C. Buchon (Paris: Paul Daffis, 1875), 105; Georges Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, ed. Joseph Marie Bruno Constantin Kervyn de Lettenhove (Brussels, 1863–66; repr., Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1979), 3:369; Gilles le Bouvier dit le Héraut Berry, *Les chroniques du roi Charles VII*, ed. Marie-Henriette Jullien de Pommerol (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1979), 411.

14. Olivier de la Marche, *Mémoires*, ed. Henri Beaune and Jules d’Arbaumont (Paris: Société de l’histoire de France, 1884), 2:408.

15. Le Bouvier, *Les chroniques*, 412; Duclercq, *Mémoires*, 105; Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, 6:371.

16. Duclercq, *Mémoires*, 106; Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, 6:373; Chartier, *Chronique*, 3:76.

17. Chartier, *Chronique*, 3:76.

18. Mathieu d’Escouchy, *Chronique de Mathieu d’Escouchy*, ed. Gaston Louis Emmanuel DuFresne de Beauport (Paris: Société de l’histoire de France, 1863), 2:355.

19. This date is given by the editors of Marche’s *Mémoires*, 408n4.

20. Chartier, *Chronique*, 3:77; Chartier, *Histoire*, 297; Le Bouvier, *Les chroniques*, 413.

21. Chartier, *Chronique*, 3:77–79, 710; Le Bouvier, *Les chroniques*, 413.

22. Chartier, *Histoire*, 297.

23. Franz Palacky, *Geschichte von Böhmen* (Prague: Friedrich Tempsky, 1860), vol. 4, pt. 2:29; Václav Vladivoj Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* (Prague: Řivnác, 1885), 6:292–93.

24. Palacky, *Geschichte von Böhmen*, vol. 4, pt. 1:416.

25. In *Histoire de Nancy* (Paris: Editions Berger-Levrault, 1902), 1:333, Christian Pfister records the month of the arrival as November (see also 333n3, where the author comments that the *Chronique de Lorraine* places the entry in July).

26. Via modern roads, Prague to Tours is 815 miles (1,312 km); Prague to Nancy is 471 miles (758 km) (58%); and Nancy to Tours is 344 miles (554 km) (42%). Note that the news of Ladislav’s death took only thirty days to reach Tours.

Fortunately, another eighteenth-century author makes reference to the kettledrums witnessed in Nancy.<sup>27</sup> Augustin Calmet (1672–1757), a French Benedictine monk, wrote, among other books, a three-volume *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de la Lorraine* (Nancy, 1728). The reference to the visit to Nancy can be found in volume 2 (fig. 5). Although quite similar to Benoît’s version, Calmet’s includes further information such as “les autres furent reçus dans les maisons des Bourgeois” (the others were received at the houses of the bourgeoisie). Also, the quote about the kettledrums has several differences. Note the “(y)” on the first line in figure 5, which refers to a footnote (fig. 6). Calmet reports the arrival as July 1457, also citing the “Chronique ms. de Lorr.” So what happened to this all-important manuscript that contains the famous eyewitness account?<sup>28</sup>

A curious entry appears in the glossary section of Calmet’s *Histoire* (“Des Ecrivains de Lorraine”) (fig. 7): “*Chronique de Lorraine*, from 1350 to 1544. I have two copies of the manuscript, and a third was communicated to me by M. Thiebaut, the Treasurer of Saint-George of Nancy. I have printed it in the third volume of the *History of Lorraine*. The copies are quite different from one another. We have chosen the accounts that were most detailed.” There is no mention of the manuscript in the table of contents of volume 3; but buried in the middle of this volume is a section labeled “Preuves servans à l’histoire de Lorraine.”<sup>29</sup> The famous quote appears a few pages later (fig. 8). It does, indeed, say that the Hungarians came in July 1457:

In July of the year one thousand four hundred and fifty-seven, came the great caravan company of Hungarian nobility consisting of five hundred, Archbishops, Bishops, Princes, Counts, and Barons. It was grand to see; they had grand chariots supported by large poles. Duke John from Nancy greeted

27. Bowles, “Eastern Influences,” 28.

28. Montagu, *Timpani and Percussion*, 219n35: “Père Benoît de Toul, *L’Origine de la très illustre Maison de Lorraine* (Alexis Laurent, 1704), p. 425, citing the chronicle *M. S. de Lorraine*, with no further detail of that source: ‘*On n’avoit ni mi oncques vû des tabourins comme de gros chauderons qu’ils faisoient porter sur des chevaux*. Cette cronique veut parler de timbales.’ The sentence in italics is quoted from Benoît by Georges Kastner, *Manuel général de musique militaire* (Paris: Didot frères, 1848), p. 90, and thence by Curt Sachs, *Handbuch der Musikinstrumentenkunde* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1930), pp. 85–6, and thence by Herbert Tobischek, *Die Pauke* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1977), pp. 18–19, but none seems to have traced the original chronicle for further information.”

29. This hidden chapter was known to French historians in the nineteenth century, e.g., Theodore de Puymaigre, “La chronique espagnole de la Pucelle d’Orléans,” *Revue des questions historiques* 29 (1881): 565n1.

L'année suivante (y) fournit encore à la Ville de Nancy un spectacle nouveau. Cefurent les Ambassadeurs que Ladiflas Roy de Hongrie envoyoit en France, pour demander au Roy Charles VII. la Princeffe Madeleine sa fille pour femme. La fuite des Ambassadeurs étoit de près de cinq cens Gentilshommes ou grands Seigneurs. L'Archevêque de Coloffa en étoit le Chef. Le Duc de Lorraine les reçut à la Porte S. Nicolas de Nancy. Les principaux furent logez dans la Maison Pelegrin. Les autres furent reçus dans les maisons des Bourgeois. Il n'y eut pas une maison où il n'y en eût de logez. On les regala magnifiquement pendant trois jours. L'Historien du pays remarque, *qu'ils étoient tous noblement montez, & qu'ils avoient des tabourins, comme gros chaudrons sur des chevaux. Ils frappotent dessus en se rejoüissant tous. Au son des tabourins, dansoient les chevaux.*

FIGURE 5. Augustin Calmet, *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de la Lorraine* (Nancy, 1728), 2:857. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

(y) An 1457. mois de Juillet. Chronique ms. de Lorr.  
 (z) Memorial de la Chambre des Comptes de Paris. Daniel, t. 2. hist. de France, p. 1248. Vie ms. du Duc Jean, an 1458. Voyez aussi la Chronique ms. de Lorraine.

FIGURE 6. Augustin Calmet, *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de la Lorraine* (Nancy, 1728), 2:857, footnote. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

their entry at the Gate of Saint Nicolas. They were all magnificently mounted. They had drums like big cauldrons on horseback, and as they were struck, everyone rejoiced and the horses danced to the sounds of the tabors and there was no house where there were not lodged, and all nobly.

It was by the order of Duke John that all the Princes were lodged in the “maison Pelegrin”; Duke John feasted with them for three days. They were greatly appreciative and said: “we will relate this to King Charles and to our good King when we return.” After feasting they all took leave of Duke John,

*Chronique de Lorraine*, depuis l'an 1350, jusqu'en 1544. J'en ai deux exemplaires mss. & un troisieme qui m'a été communiqué par M. Thiebaut, Tresorier de Saint-George de Nancy. Je l'ai fait imprimer dans le troisieme tome de l'Histoire de Lorraine. Les exemplaires sont assez differens les uns des autres. Nous avons suivi les plus amples.

FIGURE 7. Augustin Calmet, *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de la Lorraine* (Nancy, 1728), 1:lxv. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

L'an mil quatre cens cinquante-sept, au mois de Juillet, vinrent les Hongres à belles compagnies de noblesse, cinq cens estoient, Archevesques, Evescques, Princes, Comtes, Barons, beau les faisoit veoir, grantz chariotz avoient, dessus grantz bastons estoient. Le Duc Jean à Nancy les festoya, par la porte Saint-Nicolas feirent leur entrée; ils estoient tous noblement montez, ils avoient des tambours comme gros chaulderons dessus des chevaulx, ilz frappaient dessus, s'en resjouissoient tous, aux sons des tabourins dançoient les chevaulx; il n'y eut maisons qu'il n'en y eut des logiez, & tous noblement. C'estoit par l'ordonnance du Duc Jean, tous les Princes en la maison Pelegrin estoient logiez; le Duc Jean fort les festoya trois jours durant. Ilz le prinrent grandement en gré: Au Roy Charles en ferons relation, & à nostre bon Roy quand retournez ferons. Après tous festoyemens ilz prindrent congie du Duc Jean, ilz se mirent au chemin, droict allerent à Paris vers le Roy Charles, qui les attendoit pour traicter le mariage de sa fille avec le jeune Roy Lancelot de Hongrie. Lefd. Hongres par l'or-

XXXIX.  
Venuë des  
Hongrois à  
Nancy.  
1457.

FIGURE 8. Augustin Calmet, *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de la Lorraine* (Nancy, 1728), 3:xxij. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

and headed for Paris to King Charles, who was waiting to negotiate his daughter's marriage to the young King Lancelot of Hungary.

How was this error made? One hint is that this chronicle covers 1350–1544, a period of some 194 years. In a critical edition of the *Chronique de Lorraine* published by Laurent Marchal in 1860, Marchal explains that he did not have the original manuscript, and that at the end of the sixteenth or at the beginning of the seventeenth century only six print versions of it were extant, including those in the first and the second editions of Calmet's *Histoire . . . de la Lorraine* (volume 3 in the first edition, volume 7 in the second edition).<sup>30</sup> He believed that the anonymous author of the *Chronique* was twenty-five to thirty years old in 1477, meaning that he was but a child in 1457.<sup>31</sup> In fact, states Marchal, the author must have relied on manuscript material or oral reports for the first part of the chronicle.<sup>32</sup> This would explain the error in the date of the arrival of the ambassadors to Nancy. Also note that later in the story the author mistakenly talks about the ambassadors leaving for Paris to meet King Charles VII, who was, in fact, at Tours (fig. 9).

The text of Marchal's edition is virtually the same as Calmet's except for spelling, which Marchal claims to be closer to the original orthography. Benoît's version is different from both, and it could be that he had access to a source unknown to Calmet. Marchal says that one of the versions he had is quite different and probably furthest from the original.

### *A New Iconographical Source*

A discovery was made in February 2006 when we visited the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena (the town hall completed in the early fourteenth century), whose rooms are adorned with frescoes commissioned by the governing body of the city. The most famous are three panels on two walls in the Sala della Pace, collectively known as *The Allegory and Effects of Good and Bad Government*, by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (ca. 1290–1348). The Great Council Hall, also called the Sala del Mappamondo (it contained a large

30. Laurent Marchal, *Recueil de documents sur l'histoire de Lorraine*, vol. 5 (Nancy: Wiener aîné et fils, 1859), ix.

31. Marchal is fairly certain, based on various circumstantial evidence, that the author was Chrétien de Châtenoy, a secretary to Duke René II; see Marchal, *Recueil de documents*, 5:iii–ix. He also believes that someone else completed it, especially events after 1525 (5:vi–vii).

32. Marchal, *Recueil de documents*, 5:xi–xii.

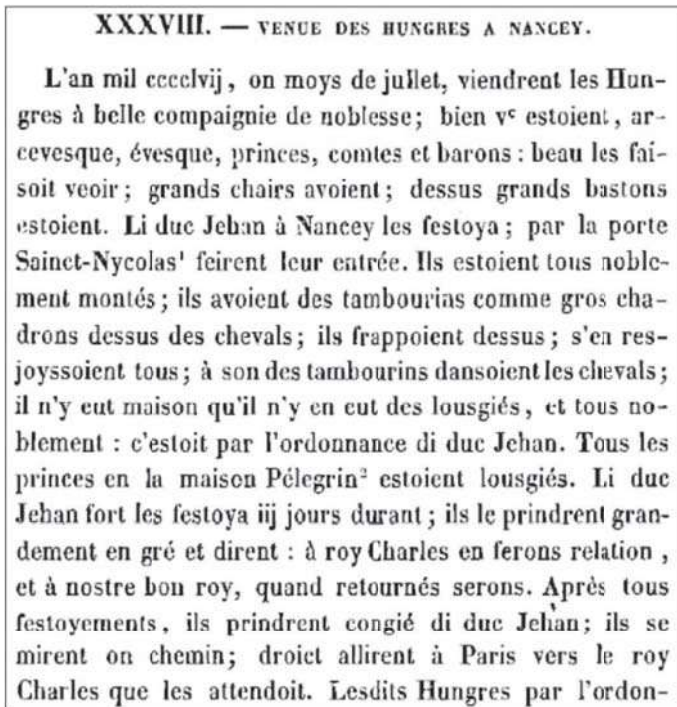


FIGURE 9. Laurent Marchal, *Chronique de Lorraine*, in vol. 5 of *Recueil de documents sur l'histoire de Lorraine* (Nancy: Wiener aîné et fils, 1859), 534. Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Gallica).

map of the world, now lost), has a large fresco above the archways (4 m x 12.5 m, 4.5 m up), *The Battle of Val di Chiana*, completed sometime between 1363 and 1373<sup>33</sup> by the fourteenth-century Siennese artist Lippo Vanni (active 1344–76).<sup>34</sup> The fresco includes some musical instruments: there is a pipe and tabor, and trumpets, and behind the trumpeters mounted on horseback is a large pair of kettledrums, previously unnoticed (fig. 10; see p. 17).<sup>35</sup>

33. Edna Carter Southard, *The Frescoes in Siena's Palazzo Pubblico, 1289–1539: Studies in Imagery and Relations to Other Communal Palaces in Tuscany* (New York: Garland, 1979), 242.

34. Sharon Dale, "Lippo Vanni: Style and Iconography" (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 1984).

35. Howard Mayer Brown, "Catalogus: A Corpus of Trecento Pictures with Musical Subject Matter, Part I, Installment 3," *Imago Musicae* 3 (1986): 103–87, here 182 and

Lippo Vanni was a member of the General Council of the city of Siena in the 1360s. His work includes: numerous manuscript illuminations, among them his earliest known works, the miniatures in the choirbooks for the Collegiata at San Gimignano; an altarpiece in San Francesco; and the chancel frescoes of San Leonardo al Lago, a church located on the outskirts of Siena. These frescoes, probably painted between 1350 and 1365,<sup>36</sup> depict scenes from the life of the Virgin. On the chancel ceiling, angels are depicted playing musical instruments, among them, nakers (fig. 11a, small kettledrums; see p. 18). The *Sposalizio* (The Wedding of the Virgin) on the right wall includes a figure with nakers, who most likely has them strapped around his waist (fig. 11b).

Federico Ghisi noticed the sticks used by the angel musicians in the ceiling frescoes: “an angel in the middle beats a kettledrum with sticks that are thicker at the held end than at the end that strikes the drum’s surface.”<sup>37</sup> This drum appears to be larger than the nakers in Lippo Vanni’s *Sposalizio* and, more importantly, may contain one of the earliest representations of snares. The player in the *Sposalizio* uses similar sticks. Compare the shape of the sticks held by players in Lippo Vanni’s frescoes to those used by the drummer on horseback in the sixteenth-century *Zafarnamah* in the Walters Art Museum (fig. 11c).<sup>38</sup> All are pointed, an unusual shape found—aside from Lippo Vanni’s depictions, including the ones in the *Val di Chiana* fresco—only in Persian exemplars. The shape of the sticks implies an Italian–Middle Eastern connection.

The Val di Chiana, which gets its name from the river Chiana, is a natural communication route between the provinces of Arezzo and Siena.<sup>39</sup> Siena and Florence fought for control of it on a number of occasions. In October 1363, the Florentine paid mercenary “Compagnia del cappello”

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183, plate 535a. The caption for the photograph of this part of the fresco states: “two men on horseback play trumpets, leading the cavalry.” Brown makes no mention of the drummer in the middle.

36. Eve Borsook, “The Frescoes at San Leonardo al Lago,” *The Burlington Magazine* 98 (1956): 351–58.

37. Federico Ghisi, “An Angel Concert in a Trecento Siennese Fresco,” in *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music: A Birthday Offering to Gustave Reese*, ed. Jan LaRue (New York: Norton, 1966), 308–13, here 311.

38. *Mounted Trumpeters and Kettledrummers, Zafarnamah* (Persian, sixteenth century), MS W648, fol. 75v. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

39. Leonardo da Vinci drew up a map of the area (*A Map of Val di Chiana*, RL 12278r; Windsor, Royal Library), which showed that the valley was occupied by a large lake running north to south; the cities and villages in the hills on either side of the lake communicated by means of the ford at Valiano, a small village that still exists.

(Company of the Hat), led by Nicolò da Montefeltro fought the Siense “San Paolo” company commanded by Francesco Orsini, captain-general of the *Comune* of Siena.<sup>40</sup> Orsini and his army of Siense and German soldiers<sup>41</sup> defeated the Florentines and their mercenaries, taking Montefeltro captive. In remembrance of this great victory, the *Dodici* (the governing council of the time) of Siena commissioned Lippo Vanni to paint the grand fresco for the Palazzo Pubblico.<sup>42</sup>

Chronicles in the Archivio di Stato of Siena provide detailed descriptions of this and earlier battles in the region. The fresco by Lippo Vanni, is, however, the only known surviving visual document, and it appears to correspond with accounts of the October 1363 battle. Documents in the state archives also record the salaries for various instrumentalists, listing them by name. Payments were made to five trumpeters in 1363: Giovanni di Azzolino detto Sodo, Biagio di Follo detto Mugnaio, Luca di Pietro, Ambrogio di Duccio, and Dominico di Michele detto Grillo.<sup>43</sup> One percussionist was paid in 1363; his name was Giovanni di Domenico.<sup>44</sup> So it is clearly possible that such an ensemble of trumpets and kettledrums was heard in the battle.

\* \* \*

We now have accurate accounts of the events of 1457 and have cleared up other misleading statements regarding the appearance of large kettledrums in France. The drums in Lippo Vanni’s fresco suggest that large horse-mounted, bowl-shaped drums may have arrived in the West a century earlier than previously thought.

40. Robert Marchionni, *Battaglie senesi*, vol. 2, *Val di Chiana 1363* (Siena: L’edizione gennaio, 1997), 39. The “Company of the Hat” were said to be an intimidating bunch, made up of Bretons and perhaps some Englishmen. John Hawkwood, the English mercenary, was known to have fought in the region a month later, in November 1363. Hawkwood brought his own kettledrummer along with him, one Antonio, *naccarino*, and two trumpeters, Marcuccio and Marco, paying them two florins each. On Hawkwood’s musicians, see Frances Stoner Saunders, *The Devil’s Broker* (New York: Fourth Estate, 2004), 84.

41. The city of Pisa, upon a request by the city of Siena, hired out the German cavalrymen under the leadership of Ugo del’Ala and Ormanno. Marchionni, *Battaglie senesi*, 2:41.

42. Marchionni, *Battaglie senesi*, 2:47.

43. Frank D’Accone, *The Civic Muse: Music and Musicians in Siena during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 434.

44. D’Accone, *The Civic Muse*, 436.

**Weiss and Fujinaga, *New Evidence for the Origins of  
Kettledrums in Western Europe***



FIGURE 10. Lippo Vanni, *The Battle of Val di Chiana* (1363–73), detail. Palazzo Pubblico, Siena. Photo by Lensini.



a. Lippo Vanni, *Sposalizio* (1350–65), detail. San Leonardo al Lago. <http://www.casasantapia.com/images/art/sieneschool/lippovannibetrothal1700.jpg>.

b. Lippo Vanni, *Angel Concert* (1350–65), detail. San Leonardo al Lago.

c. *Mounted Trumpeters and Kettledrummers, Zafarnamah* (Persian, sixteenth century), detail. MS W648, fol. 75v. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore. <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/81302/timur-defeating-the-khan-of-the-kipchaqs/>

FIGURE 11. Nakers and sticks.

### Klaus and Carter, *The Jamestown Mouthpiece*



FIGURE 2. The mouthpiece fragment, exterior view 1. Photo by Sabine K. Klaus, published courtesy of Preservation Virginia.