

CLARINES AND TROMPETAS: SOME FURTHER OBSERVATIONS

Beryl Kenyon de Pascual

The topic of the Spanish word *clarín* has recently been resurrected in *HBSJ*.¹ In trying to explain in a few words how Spanish trumpet nomenclature evolved in the 17th century, when the instrument was beginning to develop into a solo or obbligato instrument played with virtuoso clarino technique, I may inadvertently have given the impression that clarino technique was introduced into Spain and the Spanish trumpet ensemble at that late date. Such was not my intention. Peter Downey rightly drew attention to this faux pas and went on to introduce the subject of *trompetas bastardas* and *trompetas italianas*, quoting, among other sources, Sebastián Covarrubias.² He concluded that the difference between the *clarín*, the *trompeta bastarda*, and the *trompeta* was basically one of register rather than of construction, except that the *clarín* had a narrower bore. His reference to trumpet *parts* appears to suggest that he considered they played different parts in the trumpet ensemble. He did not discuss the possibility that the connotations of the terms *clarín* and *trompeta bastarda* may have changed between the Middle Ages and the late-16th/early-17th centuries. Furthermore his translation of Covarrubias' texts is inaccurate and possibly misleading.³ It is perhaps worthwhile to re-examine Covarrubias' wording, and I should like to quote other contemporary documents that provide further information on the subject of the *trompetas*, but unfortunately without completely solving the enigma of the "bastard" trumpets.

A literal translation of Covarrubias' definition of *clarín* is as follows: "The small trumpet with a high sound which, because it has a clear voice, was called clarín." (*La trompetilla de son agudo, que por tenir la voz clara la llamaron clarín.*)⁴ Dr. Downey renders this as: "The trumpet with a high sound which is [used] to produce the clear voice called clarín." He has thus distorted Covarrubias' explanation of the etymology of *clarín* into an attempt to bolster his argument concerning the trumpet ensemble. It should be noted that Covarrubias devotes considerable space to describing the etymology and history of the words included in his dictionary, although his etymological explanations are sometimes rather fanciful. *Trompetilla* is a diminutive form of the word *trompeta*. It seems to me that the addition of the diminutive suffix would hardly be justified if the word merely referred to an instrument of normal size with a slightly narrower bore. Downey argues that the diminutive was not intended as such and adduces in support a much earlier document from 1543 which mentions—unusually—*trompetillas bastardas*. However, a "bastard" trumpet (a folded or S-shaped trumpet with or without a slide, according to the theory you favor) would have looked short beside the long straight trumpet (*trompa*) which was used in the 14th and 15th centuries and still lingered on into the 16th century.⁵ This might occasionally have induced a writer to use the diminutive term *trompetilla*.

In connection with the supposedly narrower bore of the *clarín*, Dr. Downey quotes a

passage from Jean Nicot's *Thresor de la Langue Françoise Tant Ancienne que Moderne* (Paris, 1606/21). It states that the same size of trumpet is used to play *clairon* (the high register) as well as *trompette* (the low register) and that *clairon* is known as *clarín* in Spain. This seems to contradict both Covarrubias' definition and Downey's own argument about a narrow bore for the *clarín*. Nicot did, however, go on to say that *in former times* the *clairon*—such as [i.e. of the type that] is still used by the Moors and by the Portuguese who had them from them [i.e. the Moors]—used to act as the *dessus* to various trumpets playing *taille* or *bassecontre* and used to have a narrower bore than the trumpets.⁶ Nevertheless, this does not necessarily imply that the 17th-century Spanish *clarín* had a narrow bore or that the Portuguese *clairon* (*clarim*) was a folded model. Indeed, the Moorish trumpet was a straight trumpet known as the *añafil* in Spain and defined by Covarrubias as “A kind of trumpet, even and straight, without turns, which the Moors used to use; it was made of brass, like the others, and the royal ones of silver. Father Guadix says that in Arabic it is called *nafir* and is the same as *trompeta*...”⁷ The term *añafil* fell out of use in Spain in the later Middle Ages, curiously enough at about the time when the word *clarín* began to appear. As regards Portugal, it may be worth mentioning that the Lisbon musical instrument museum has undated (possibly late) examples of the *clarim* (MIC 0160 and MIC 0164). These are straight silver instruments about 40cm long with a fairly wide conical bore.

One hypothesis that would reconcile all these seemingly conflicting statements is that the earliest *clarines* in Spain were relatively short straight trumpets, probably shorter than the *trompas* and possibly with a fairly narrow bore. Covarrubias' information might refer to this early form. The term could later have been applied to the higher-tessitura part in a trumpet ensemble, although there is no text that specifically mentions this. Indeed, this would be a logical stage in the word's evolution towards its ultimate use as the standard Spanish term for an orchestral trumpet in the late-17th, 18th, and early-19th centuries and for the cavalry trumpet today. As a postscript to this discussion I would quote excerpts from the definition of *clarín* in the Spanish *Diccionario de Autoridades* (Madrid, 1732): “A straight bronze *trompa* [*trompa* = hooped or coiled horn in the 18th century] ... the sound it produces is very high-pitched. It is also made with two or three turns so as better to expel the air and it is in this form that they are used in modern times.”⁸

The second definition by Covarrubias quoted by Downey is that for *bastardo*. It may be translated literally as follows: “That which is coarse and made without order, reason or rule. *Trompeta bastarda*. That which is between the *trompeta* [,] which has a loud and low-pitch sound[,] and the *clarín*, whose sound is delicate and high.” (*Lo que es gressero y no hecho con orden, razón y regla. Trompeta bastarda, la que media entre la trompeta que tiene el sonido fuerte y grave y entre el clarín, que le tiene delicado y agudo.*) Downey's version reads: “*Trompeta bastarda* is that [trumpet part] which mediates between the trumpet [part] that produces the low and loud sounds and the *clarín*, which sounds delicate and high.” Again, this is interpreted as referring to trumpet ensemble parts not necessarily implied by the original, which is ambiguous. It may be pointed out, however, that Covarrubias used the feminine form *la trompeta* (trumpet) and not the masculine *el trompeta* (trumpeter), a distinction of which many non-Spaniards are not aware. If Covarrubias had intended to

refer to a trumpet part, might he not have used the word for the player rather than that for the instrument?

Covarrubias' ambiguous passage would be easier to elucidate if we knew with absolute certainty what the physical difference was, if any, between the *trompeta bastarda* and the *trompeta italiana*, and whether the meanings of the two terms had evolved over time. Two widely held opinions in Spain are that the medieval and early Renaissance *trompeta bastarda* referred to (a) the S-shaped trumpet and (b) the slide trumpet. Nebrija's distinction (see note 5) between the *cornu* (folded trumpet) and *lituus* (bastard or curved trumpet) suggests that the bastard trumpet was indeed an S-shaped trumpet. So far there is no documentary evidence that it was a slide trumpet. That *trompeta bastarda* was not merely the name for a part in the trumpet ensemble is proved by the fact that bastard and Italian trumpets could be found playing independently of each other. Furthermore, in the late-16th and early-17th centuries the trumpeters who nominally played the bastard trumpet (then called "bastard trumpeters," "Spanish" trumpeters, or trumpeters of the Spanish school) and the Italian trumpeters (or trumpeters of the Italian school) represented two different corps in the Reales Caballerizas (the Royal Stables, i.e. the body responsible for providing the equipment and personnel, including musicians, needed for royal journeys and processions). It is possible that, like *clarín*, the term *trompeta bastarda* originally referred to a distinct model of trumpet, but usage of the term changed when that model of trumpet became obsolete. The term *trompeta bastarda* would later appear conventionally *in specific contexts*, even though the trumpet in question was then the standard folded trumpet. A palace document, however, seems to contradict this interpretation. When the *trompeta español* Antonio Fillol Martínez replaced Andrés González de Figueroa in 1648, four *trompetas bastardas* declared him to be proficient and competent for the position of bastard trumpeter to His Majesty. He then signed a paper affirming that he had received a *trompeta bastarda* and a banner which had belonged to his predecessor.⁹

The standardized wording of early-17th-century trumpeter examination certificates (*cartas de examen*) reveals that different techniques were theoretically required of the two classes of candidates: the Spanish or bastard trumpeters and the Italian trumpeters.¹⁰ The texts would seem to support the theory that the bastard trumpet may originally have corresponded to the minstrel's trumpet while the Italian trumpet was the military instrument. By the 17th century, however, the certificates' wording had probably become fossilized and may no longer have corresponded to the de facto situation. The key passages in the certificates refer to (a) the examination exercises and (b) the successful trumpeter's acquired rights.

For the trumpeter of the Italian school the relevant passages are as follows (with minor variations):

(a) "...in our presence he played with his Italian trumpet all seven war calls that every Italian trumpeter must be able to play and other things that we required of him..." (*el qual ante nos tañó con la dicha su trompeta italiana todos los siete toques de guerra que cualquier trompeta italiana debe ser obligado saber tocar y otras cosas que por nos le fueron pedidas...*)

(b) "...we give him license...freely to practice his profession of Italian trumpeter in

this town of Madrid and in all the other cities, towns and places, armies and frontiers, campaigns and garrisons of the kingdoms and domains of the king, our lord. In all these he may play with his Italian trumpet all that relates to the seven war calls mentioned in this certificate..." (*le damos licencia... para que pueda libremente usar el dicho oficio de trompeta italiana, ansien esta villa de Madrid, como en todas las demás ciudades, villas y lugares, exércitos y fronteras, campañas y presidios de los reinos y señoríos del Rey, nuestro señor, en todo lo cual pueda tañer con su trompeta italiana en cuanto toca a los dichos siete toques de guerra contenidos en esta carta de examen.*)

The comparable passages for the *trompeta bastarda* or *trompeta español* are:

(a) "...in our presence he played with his bastard trumpet what we required of him and he replied satisfactorily by word and deed to the questions we asked. Having examined him we pronounce him proficient and competent in the elements [literally: voices] of a bass, an impulse [*golpe* = sudden, hard movement with a wide range of meanings], an impulse of the chest, a fifth [or quint], a piano, all of which are very appropriate for the aforementioned profession and art of playing the bastard trumpet." (*el qual ante nos tañó con la dicha trompeta bastarda lo que le fue pedido por nos y satisfizo de obra y palabra a lo que se le preguntó y habiéndole desaminado le damos por ábil y suficiente en las voces de = un bajo = un golpe = y golpe de pecho = una quinta = un piano = todas voces muy convenientes al dicho oficio y arte de trompeta bastarda...*)

(b) "...we give him the power and faculty freely to practice his profession of bastard trumpeter in this town of Madrid and in all the other cities, towns and places in all the kingdoms and domains of His Majesty [;] and in His service, in His Household and Court and in any fiestas, jousts and tourneys, and celebrations, he may play and plays with his bastard trumpet whatever is related to the contents of this examination certificate..." (*le damos la poder y facultad cumplida para que pueda libremente usar el dicho su oficio de trompeta bastarda, ansi en esta villa de Madrid como en todas las demás ciudades, villas y lugares de todos los reynos y señoríos de Su Magestad y en su servicio y en su Casa y Corte y en cualesquiera fiestas justas y torneos y goçoijos, pueda tañer y taña con su trompeta bastarda en quanto toca a lo contenido en esta carta desamen.*)

All the candidates had, of course, studied with a qualified trumpeter. The description of the exercises for the bastard trumpet is enigmatic and open to a number of interpretations. It is significant that there is no reference to a military use of the trumpet. In contrast, in a few cases Italian trumpeters were licensed to play the seven war calls in fiestas, jousts, and tourneys, as well as in military locations. In general, however, there is a line of demarcation between military functions and entertainment. The situation regarding a ceremonial trumpet ensemble is not specifically mentioned in the examination certificate. In descriptions of processions the word *trompeta* tends to be unqualified. The same usually applies in the written rules of court etiquette but on one occasion, namely, when the king's horse was led from the stables it was specified that it was to be accompanied by the trumpeters of both schools (no mention of *clarines*).¹¹ No examination certificates for a *clarín*-player from the 16th and early 17th centuries have yet come to light.

The reference to jousts and tourneys—events that were long obsolete by the 17th cen-

ture—suggests that some, if not all, of the certificates' text represented wording preserved over the centuries until it had become a meaningless formula. The same could well have applied to the specified requirements for the trumpeters, who in practice could have been examined on other techniques, covered by the phrase "other things that we required of him."

While on the subject of the "Italian" and the "Spanish" trumpeters it should be pointed out that the existence of two separate corps in the royal stables had a bureaucratic origin resulting from the merger of the Hapsburg and Spanish royal houses in the first half of the 16th century. The Spanish king Charles I (the Hapsburg emperor Charles V) introduced the Italian corps (the Italian trumpet itself was not entirely unknown in Spain) to the Spanish court, and its salaries were paid out of the Burgundian household's finances (Casa de Borgoña). The Spanish corps, which already existed but not under that name, was paid out of the Castilian household's funds (Casa de Castilla).¹² Although the first Italian trumpeters may well have been Italian by nationality, the criterion of nationality was not maintained. Admittedly at the beginning of the 17th century Neapolitan players (e.g. Juan Andrea Ferraro, Vicente de Bonhomo, Santiago Brancato, and Antonio Brancato, etc.) were numbered among their ranks, but Luís Cuderque, for instance, was a Frenchman, Felipe Cabrera was described as a Burgundian, and many Spanish names appear in the lists (Antonio Méndez, Juan Marcos Castellano, Juan Rodríguez, etc.). The "Spanish" trumpeters, however, appear to have been Spaniards or—but only very rarely—foreigners long resident in Spain, and their basic rate of pay in the 17th century was lower than that of the "Italian" trumpeters. Documents from 1614 show that the "Italian" trumpeters received twelve *placas* per diem (=120 *maravedís* or approx. three and one-half *reales*). They asked for an increase similar to that granted to the trumpeters of the Archers bodyguard (from 119 *maravedís* to 180 *maravedís*).¹³ Six months later the trumpeters and drummers paid by the Castilian household also asked for a raise since their wages were not enough to support themselves and their families. They received a basic wage of two *reales* per diem but, with the additional amounts earned when traveling with the king (one and one-half *reales* per diem) or playing on certain public occasions, their pay came to the same as that of the Italian trumpeters. That their wages were not increased is shown by the fact that when two German trumpeters were engaged in 1638 the latter were each assigned twenty *reales* per diem eventually derived from two posts of Italian trumpeter and six and one-half posts of Spanish trumpeter, i.e. seven + thirteen *reales*. (These German trumpeters became responsible for examining candidates for posts in the king's Spanish and Italian schools of trumpeters.)

A comparison between the numbers of trumpeters in the Italian and Spanish corps in the first half of the 17th century reveals that from a position of approximate parity the proportion of Spanish trumpeters diminished considerably. The picture provided by various documents is the following.¹⁴ Early in the century there were sixteen members of the Spanish corps. In 1612 the number was officially cut from fourteen to twelve. In 1614 only seven remained and this figure was to be reduced to six. A list from 13 June 1634 shows five trumpeters and four drummers (*atabaleros*) in the Casa de Castilla. In 1640

a single trumpeter represented the Spanish school of players. Eight Spanish posts were then being reserved to pay the two German trumpeters and there were three vacancies. It was decided to fill the three vacancies so that the school would not die out (“*porque no se acabe esta escuela*”). According to incomplete figures compiled by Barbieri, the last Spanish trumpeter was appointed in 1653.¹⁵ As regards the Italian school I can as yet produce only a few figures from the same sources in the palace. In March 1616 there were fourteen “Italian” trumpeters, but by July of the same year the number had fallen to thirteen. (The “Spanish” had declined from sixteen to seven by 1614.) In 1634 there were eleven “Italian” trumpeters and two “Italian” drummers (five and four, respectively, in the Spanish school). Further research is needed to obtain reliable figures for future years.

It should be noted that the official nomenclature for the trumpeters in the Reales Caballerizas was *trompeta*. An official trumpet post denominated *clarín* did not exist at court until a position was created for the Venetian Josef Loschi in the Royal Chapel group of instrumentalists. Only this one trumpeter was engaged, not a trumpet ensemble, and he was not referred to as a *trompeta*. His appointment in 1679, however, does not preclude earlier sporadic appearances of this type of *clarín* in the palace. Surviving scores by Sebastián Durón, who joined the Royal Chapel in 1691 as an organist and later became the *maestro de capilla*, and by other composers from the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century show that the *clarín*-player in Spain was not expected to reach dizzy heights, the usual limit being h12 with very rare and late excursions to h16. The Royal Chapel composers did, however, expect their *clarines* to bend notes as a matter of course to produce notes outside the harmonic series.¹⁶

Although enthusiasm to present some of my 17th- and 18th-century research material has led to digressions, I hope that there have been sufficient indications in the foregoing to suggest that (a) there did at one time exist a short trumpet called the *clarín*, that (b) the *trompeta bastarda* is unlikely to have combined with the *clarín* and the *trompeta italiana* to form the standard trumpet ensemble, and that such an interpretation of Covarrubias’ definition would be fallacious.¹⁷

Beryl Kenyon de Pascaul is a musicologist and instrument consultant normally resident in Spain.

NOTES

- 1 Beryl Kenyon de Pascaul, “José de Juan Martínez’s *Método de Clarín* (1830),” *Historic Brass Society Journal* 5 (1993): 92-106; Peter Downey, “Concerning the *Clarín* and the Early *Clarines*,” *Historic Brass Society Journal* 6 (1994): 364-66.
- 2 S. Covarrubias (or Cobarruvias): *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana o Española* (Madrid, 1611).
- 3 He also equates *clarín* with *clarón* without further comment, although -ón is an augmentative suffix and -ín a diminutive one.
- 4 In the Spanish quotations reprinted in these observations accents have been used in accordance with modern usage even where they are absent in the older texts.

- 5 Antonio de Nebrija (Antonius Nebrissensis) in his Spanish/Latin dictionary or *Vocabulario* (Salamanca, 1495(?), 2nd rev. ed. Sevilla, 1516) gave the equivalents: *trompa* or *trompeta derecha* (straight trumpet) = *tuba*; *trompeta de vueltas* (folded trumpet) = *cornu*. He translated *lituus* as *trompeta bastarda* or *trompeta curva* (curved trumpet). Covarrubias (*op. cit.*) amusingly defined *trompa* as, inter alia, the elephant's trunk, which was so-called because it had the form of the plain and even trumpet that has no folds.
- 6 ...*le clairon anciennement, ainsi qu'en usent encore les Moresques et les Portugois, qui le tiennent d'eux, servoit comme d'un dessus á plusieurs trompetes sonnans en taille ou bassecontre, et estoit de tuyau plus estroit que les trompetes...*
- 7 *Añafil. Género de trompeta, igual y derecho, sin bueltas, de que usavan las moros; eran de metal, como los demás, y las reales de plata. Dize el padre Guadix que en arábigo se dize nafir, y vale lo mesmo que trompeta...*
- 8 *Trompa de bronce derecha...va igualmente ensanchándose...el sonido que despide es mui agudo. Suele también hacerse con dos o tres vueltas para que despida mejor el aire y así se usan modernamente.*
- 9 Archivo General del Palacio, secc. admin., leg. 659.
- 10 A number of these documents were "acquired" by the 19th-century musicologist Francisco Barbieri and are preserved in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid. A few of them are reproduced in print in F. Barbieri: *Legado Barbieri I*, ed. E. Casares (Madrid, 1986).
- 11 A.G.P., registro 2191. Documents in the same file also show that there were several trumpeters attached to the Archer Bodyguards, one trumpeter among the Spanish Guards, and none in the German Guards.
- 12 A description of how the arrival of the Hapsburg dynasty to the Spanish throne affected the court musical establishments is given in L. Robledo, "La música en la corte madrileña de los Austrias. Antecedentes: las casas reales hasta 1556," *Revista de Musicología* 10/3 (1987): 753-796. The Royal Chapel singers were similarly divided into two separate bodies for administrative purposes, a Flemish chapel and a Spanish chapel, although in practice they usually sang as a single choir.
- 13 A.G.P., secc. admin., leg. 659.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Bibl. Nac., Ms 14.048²⁴.
- 16 This point was raised in two papers presented in 1985, one of which has been published in brief: B. Kenyon de Pascual, "Instrumentos e instrumentistas españoles y extranjeros en la Real Capilla desde 1701 hasta 1749," *España en la Música de Occidente* 2 (Madrid, 1987): 93-97.
- 17 Kenneth Kreitner has written a thesis on *Music and Civic Ceremony in Late 15th-century Barcelona* (Duke University, 1990). Unfortunately I have been unable to consult this study, which surely contains material relevant to the early life of the *clarín* and *trompeta bastarda*.