



Sixth International Bagpipe Conference & Newcastle Piping Festival

Newcastle University, UK

11-13 March 2022

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CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

SATURDAY 12 MARCH 2022

9:30am – Opening Address

9:45-11:15

Panel 1: Revivals and Weddings

Chair: Dr Amanda Babington

The revival and the evolution of the gaida in Mainland Greece. A case study from the Northern Evros region.

Athanasios Ouzounis

Northern Evros, Drama (Kali Vrisi, Volakas), Serres (Chrisoxorafa, Vamvakofito, Alistrati) in Northern Greece are areas where the gaida, a form of bagpipe, has been played for a long time. The data presented here focuses on the region of Northern Evros and is based on extensive field work conducted from 2005 - 2021. The research showed that each village has its unique set of songs apart from the usual gaida repertoire. This distinct musical heritage almost vanished in the early 90s due to the fact that the youngest gaida players were at their 70s. Furthermore, no one younger was interested in learning the instrument. As musicologist Dietrich W. pointed out in his work “Bagpipers of Greece” in 2001: “The bagpipe in Greece is the only one in Europe not going through a renaissance”. Things changed at the end of the 90s when young people started learning the gaida directly from their grandfathers and other aged gaida players who realized that the instrument along with their craft would die with them. This led to a new generation of gaida players who copied the style of their mentors and in some cases evolved it. In 2007, about 70 gaida players from all over Greece gathered in Didymoteicho to perform together. It was the first meeting of a series to follow. Prompted by this development, this report aims to present the activities of the last 16 years which aided the revival of the gaida in Northern Greece.

Latvian bagpipes – DŪDAS or SOMAS STABULES

Juris Lipnis, Suti Bagpipers

I am from Suti region that is a Catholic island in otherwise Lutheran Kurzeme or Courland. Suti Cultural Space was inscribed in UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding in 2009. During preparation of UNESCO application our community made an inventory of existing traditions and decided that bagpipe making and playing is lost. In 2013 local Catholic priest Andris Vasilevskis bought bagpipes made by Latvian master Eduards Klints and gave it to the community to revive the tradition. Since then, there are more than 10 bagpipe players in Alsunga with its 1200 inhabitants.

Bagpipes are known to be in Latvia since 15th Century. Unfortunately, Luther Church decided in 19th Century that bagpipes are not instruments of God therefore they must be collected and burned, especially in North-East part of Latvia. Only in Catholic

areas especially Suti region bagpipes were still played. With the death of the last Suti bagpiper Peteris Seflers in 1945 the tradition was lost till 1970-ties when some enthusiasts started making double-reed pipes. Later on, Latvian bagpipe maker Eduards Klints got an inspiration from Estonian bagpipe maker Ants Taul and made modern version of the reed. In older instruments there is a cane reed but Eduards replaced it with the wooden body and cane chip.

Traditional Latvian bagpipes consist of one drone, one chanter and blowing piece. The bag is made of goat skin. The chanter's lower end might be complemented with bull's horn or wooden resonator.

« Svadba bez gajda ne mozhe ! » A wedding without bagpipe it's impossible!
Marie-Barbara Le Gonidec, CNRS

In this communication which will focus on the Bulgarian bagpipe *gajda*, I will show how this instrument played, in the traditional agro-pastoral way of life that prevailed until the middle of the 20th century, an essential role in communitarian life and especially during marriage where it appears to be essential for the accomplishment of this particular rite which represents the union between two beings allowing society to “renew” itself. On one hand, I will use the research of the anthropologist Svetlana Zaharieva who investigated in Thrace (Centre of the country where the *gajda* is very typical) and who highlighted the symbolism of the instrument through the player, the *gajdar*, which she describes as the “ritual acolyth” of the groom, and, on the other hand, on my own ethnomusicological work about the symbolism of pastoral Bulgarian instruments that focused on the *gajda* and the flute *kaval*. I will show how the flute enters into a system of representation complementary to that of the bagpipe, how its “phallic” role prefigures that of the bagpipe within the framework of the nuptial rite, which allows us to understand the role of the *gajdar* during this rite.

11:15-11:45 – Tea and Coffee Break

11:45

Panel 2 – Instrument making

Chair: Cassandre Balosso-Bardin

Restoration of an 18th century ivory musette

Bart von Troyen

Summary of presentation

1. Musette de cour: a very short introduction about the instrument and it's organology
2. The instrument after it was bought at auction: missing and damaged parts
3. Proposed method of fixing the damaged parts
4. The actual process of the repairs
5. Replacing the missing parts
6. Assembly, reeds and tuning
7. L'atelier Chédeville: a perfect match with another musette
8. Music

A friend of mine, Pieterjan Van Kerckhoven, bought an ivory musette at auction in Vichy, a few years back. Remy Dubois has used this instrument, with the permission

of Pieterjan, to teach me how to restore these instruments. This musette was the perfect guinea pig because it had a whole range of damaged parts and missing bits. Also, we suspected prior to auction that this musette was made in the workshop of Nicholas Chédeville. I have an original Chédeville as well, so we could compare both instruments in case of doubt. As it turned out, the two musettes are very similar. Mine is tuned to A=410 (playable in 415 with a slightly shorter reed), Pieterjan's musette is 2mm shorter and is tuned to A=415. This means we now have the opportunity to play duets on instruments made by the same luthier. I would like to talk about the process of the restoration, show a few pictures of how it's done, and finish off with a bit of music on our two musettes.

Diamond in the Rough -The pipemaking of Tom Clough and Fred Picknell

Andy May

The instruments made by Tom Clough and Fred Picknell in the early 20th century occupy a special place in the development of the Northumbrian pipes. While makers such as Will Cocks and George G. Armstrong strove to equal the standards set by Robert and James Reid, Clough and Picknell clearly took a very different approach to fulfilling the demand for instruments. Having heard their work dismissed by many as 'rough', 'ugly' and 'un-reedable', but at the same time aware of the Cloughs' reputation as pipers, I became intrigued what could be learned by studying the pipes that they made.

My research is on-going and involves studying the pipes which have survived and attempting to understand them. So far I am aware of around 6 sets of pipes and a further 15 individual chanters. Some of these I've had the opportunity to photograph, measure, and reed up and play, others not (yet). Those pipes I have had the chance to reed up have mostly played very well and with a distinctive tone rarely heard nowadays.

My talk will focus on a couple of instruments which have recently surfaced, and some aspects of the development work done by Clough and Picknell which could easily be overlooked.

French and Italian bagpipes, from sordellina to Parisian bal-musette: a long tradition of exchange and musical construction between France and Italy.

Eric Montbel (online presentation)

The exchanges between France and Italy were as much political, philosophical as aesthetic and musical, since the 17th century. Bagpipes were particularly at the heart of this setting in scholarly representation, in Rome, Milan, Florence, Paris and Versailles, whether for the Italian sordellina and the French baroque musette, which we have shown the incontestable filiation.

This collaboration continued into the 18th century, especially in the field of bagpipes, while sordellina and musette disappeared from court music and gave way to popular practices, zampogna a chiave in southern Italy, chabrettes in Limousin and cabrettes in Auvergne in particular. The zampogne players from Calabria and Lazio have traveled Europe spreading a strongly identity image, which is at the origin of a romantic and aesthetic vision of the "bagpiper playing in the woods". George Sand especially has recovered this vision of the Calabrian zampognari to build his characters of Les Maitres Sonneurs and Consuelo, which we know has been

fundamental during the revival of traditional music in the 1970s, by oriented reading and poetic, creative too, from reading the novels George Sand .

But it is also in the field of Parisian popular music that we find the influence of Italy in the 1890s and 1900s with once again the presence in Paris of zampogna players, and accordionists from Italy, as the brothers Peguri or Fredo Gardoni who are at the origin of the Parisian bal-musette, associated with the cabretaires, musette players of Auvergne, such as Antonin Bouscatel.

Our presentation proposes new elements of this crossed history, between French and Italian bagpipes. It concerns several centuries of cultural, organological, musical, social and intertextual exchanges between popular music and learned music, between France and Italy, between North and South.

13:15-14:30 – Lunch break. Served in King's Hall

14:30

Panel 3: Historical accounts and traditional piping

Chair: Cassandre Balosso-Bardin

“Having a stave” in 1833: An early first hand account of the Northumbrian Smallpipes

Rob Say (online presentation)

The Rook Manuscript is a large collection of music, created in 1840 by John Rook of Waverton, Cumberland. The manuscript is significant in that the cover includes an accurately drawn set of, the then ‘newly improved’, Northumbrian Smallpipes alongside other instruments. Within the music itself there are many pieces explicitly noted as for the smallpipes or known to be part of the early 19thC repertoire. John Rook himself has remained hidden since the manuscript was discovered leading many to ask questions of the music and its place within the history of the instrument. Recent research has now identified John Rook and placed him at the centre of the very early piping community in Newcastle and North Shields, the birthplace of the modern instrument. Identifying Rook, and the discovery of his papers, allows much of the information within the manuscript to be placed in context, including; confirmation that Rook was an active and competent piper in his time, identification of the manuscript as an active non-antiquarian collection, and evidence of multi-generational musical transmission. Smallpipe music sources from this time are very limited and comparisons with the likes of Peacock, Bewick & Fenwick can be used to identify elements of a common repertoire as well as potential paths of transmission amongst the earliest known pipers. Rook also recorded details of his musical activities in his journals and these provide a unique and important insight into one piper’s daily musical activities at the very beginning of modern Northumbrian piping.

Music for French Kings

Amanda Babington, Royal Northern College of Music

The Musette is a relatively familiar member of the Bagpiping community. But very few recordings of Musette repertoire, particularly of its solo repertoire, exist. And the instrument is still not widely known outside of the Bagpiping world. Furthermore, many of the composers who wrote for the instrument (some of them prolifically) have been virtually forgotten.

The title of this lecture-recital refers to the Musette's patronage by Louis XIV. And it is largely thanks to this patronage that we have such a wealth of repertoire for the instrument. Composers seeking favour at the French court fell over themselves to compose for the Musette. Unfortunately, its favour amongst the French aristocracy possibly also contributed to the instrument's fall from grace towards the end of the 18th century.

The Musette's relatively late entry to the wider Early Music revival has possibly contributed to a lack of awareness of it amongst the world of Historically Informed Performance. And so while a good deal of organological research has been – and continues to be – carried out, research into the instrument's repertoire is rare. This lecture-recital will unpack some of the solo Musette repertoire, covering a range of works from early 17th century Branles to 18th century Italianate sonatas. Contextualisation of the composers and their works - amongst the broader background of each works' composition - will be accompanied by discussion of style and form. Discussion points will be accompanied by live examples.

Towards a pattern language for the maintenance and revival of traditional piping

Stephen Quilley and Anna Beresford, University of Waterloo, Ontario (online presentation)

In *A Pattern Language* Christopher Alexander sought to codify a hierarchy of construction 'patterns' – tried and tested solutions to problems recurring over generations – that combine to generate an emergent and undesigned 'vernacular' architecture. Such vernaculars tend to create furniture, room layouts, individual buildings, neighbourhoods and even whole towns that are recognizable, consistent and reflect something akin to a local 'terroir.' As well as being highly functional, vernacular architectures are often also pleasing to the eye and provide a deep-seated sense of authenticity, aesthetic value and inter-generational continuity. An Irish longhouse, the snug in an English pub, a hilltop Tuscan marketplace, Old Delhi or the York Shambles all, in different ways, express an implicit sense of appropriate order and harmony that contrasts sharply (and favourably) with the explicit design of modernist environments.

In this paper, we advance the theory that traditional music and dance constitutes a comparable vernacular that can be analysed using Alexander's pattern language theory (PLT). Drawing on the recent history of Northumbrian Piping and NPS, we explore a prospective pattern language for the maintenance and revival of traditional piping cultures. Explicating how the vernacular is constituted, the paper moves towards some tentative conclusions about policy touching on areas such as education, place-marketing, pub licensing, the cultural impact of rites of passage (weddings, funerals, graduations, annual seasonal rites etc.) and the uses of public ritual.

16:00-16:30 – Tea and Coffee Break

16:30

Panel 4 – Bagpipes and politics

Chair: Estíbaliz Santamaría Cadaval

‘An Phíb Mhór’ – the bagpipe as an instrument of protest

Professor Ciarán MacMuchaidh, Dublin City University

A short note in the Autumn 2021 edition of *Chanter* about the detention of a number of people who were playing bagpipes during a mass demonstration in Minsk resonated with me. One of the main reasons for that is the fact that around that time I had come across a number of stray references in a range of historical sources to the use of the instrument in various types of protest in seventeenth-century Ireland. This prompted me to start looking for other evidence that might help identify a trend in relation to this particular aspect of the use of the bagpipe in society aside from the normal occasions at which we might expect to see the bagpipe being played. It is certain that the bagpipe features at various types of protest in Ireland over a long period of time and is therefore not just simply a manifestation of a more recent trend. In this paper, various examples of the use of the bagpipe at such events will be presented to illustrate and amplify this long-established aspect of the history of *an phíb mhór*.

The National Security Law and the future of Scottish bagpiping in Hong Kong

Andrew Yu, University of Edinburgh

Bagpiping has a long tradition in Hong Kong. Like other British colonies, the bagpipe was introduced to Hong Kong in the late 19th century by the British Army. Besides British military pipe bands, many civilian pipe bands were set up in the territory in the 20th century. Although the British Army already retreated from Hong Kong in 1997 due to the handover, bagpiping as a cultural form is still generally active in this territory.

However, in the event of the recent political developments in Hong Kong, the position of the Scottish bagpipes in Hong Kong has changed. Since the enforcement of the National Security Law in 2020, the Hong Kong Government has been accelerating the decolonisation process. For example, Scottish tunes are no longer allowed to play in the police pipe band and other government pipe bands; tartan is removed from the uniform. Can this art survive in post-colonial Hong Kong? Especially when the post-colonial political controversy is so intense nowadays.

As a professional bagpiper myself, I will present why and how the political environment influences this piping culture in Hong Kong. Materials were mostly collected from ethnography interviews, secondary sources such as archives and news, as well as different observations as an insider. I will also present the latest survey data collected from Hong Kong just before the enforcement of the National Security Law in this paper. The survey results show what bagpipers and drummers in Hong Kong think of this colonial musical instrument's future.

SUNDAY 13 MARCH 2022

9:00: Registration – King’s Hall

9:30 – Room G.42

Panel 5 – ‘The Journey of the Askavlos’.

Chair: Cassandre Balosso-Bardin

‘The Journey of the Askavlos’

52 minute film and introduction by film maker Yorgos Arvanitis

The Greek bagpipe, the askavlos, is being revived in the hands of musicians dedicated to restoring and maintaining this ancient tradition. Slowly but surely, the instrument finds its way to the city, where modern musicians bring it into the contemporary music scene. The viewer becomes a witness to this revival and, alongside the protagonists, discovers a thing almost lost: the customs and an ethos of a people of another era, and an oral tradition that was once a way of life, preserved over the centuries.

Yorgos Arvanitis was born in 1978. After studying Business Administration in Larissa, he attended seminars by Wim Wenders and Fatih Akin at the University of Fine Arts in Hamburg. He has worked on short films as an assistant director and has written, directed and produced short films and short documentaries. The Journey of Askavlos is his first feature documentary.

10:30 – Tea and Coffee Break served in King’s Hall

11:00 – King’s Hall

Panel 6 – Shifting practices across time

Chair: Amanda Babington

Recovering the playing techniques of 18th century Border pipers to bring them into 21st century Border piping

Matt Seattle

While the revival of the Border pipes since the 1980s has seen the instrument gain popularity, their traditional repertoire has remained under the radar as far as the majority of contemporary pipers are concerned. The resurfacing of William Dixon’s 1733 manuscript in 1995 more than confirmed our intuitions about the nature of the music but, despite its enthusiastic reception by a few players, it has not gained mainstream acceptance.

Although I was the first piper to play the tunes in the modern era it has taken a long acquaintance with the idiom for the music to really come alive. Its secrets have revealed themselves gradually, to the extent that I can now describe and demonstrate techniques which are specific to the instrument and the Dixon repertoire: in their common form Border pipes have the same nominal scale as the Highland bagpipe, but employ techniques centring on the *c#-d* transition – the *wheech*, *lowp* and *crinch* – which form no part of Highland piping.

Forbye these techniques, in 1816 Thomas Scott, uncle of Sir Walter, described, and was an exponent of, the technique of overblowing a 9-note chanter by two notes to play Border tunes such as *The Soor Plooms o Galashiels*. Lastly, the techniques described above can be integrated into the playing of modern Border pipes which have chromatic possibilities outwith the traditional scale.

The Galician bagpipe in Cuba during the period between the 19th and 20th centuries.

Estibaliz Santamaría Cadaval, Universidad Complutense de Madrid

At the end of the nineteenth century there was the greatest military reinforcement of the Spanish colony in Cuba. Galicia was one of the main recruiting centers and the Galician presence on the Island stood out among other Spanish communities. In that period, the army encouraged the formation of military bands and ordered daily street performances in order to keep the population away from what was happening on the battlefields. The Galician Cultural Center in Havana always supported the Spanish forces and, the bagpipe, a traditional and rural instrument at that time, was used by the ruling Galician elite as an instrument of sensitization, commitment and support to the Galician militaries in the Spanish army. After the loss of the colony and the establishment of the Republic in the Island of Cuba, in 1902, the Galician population on the Island did not diminish and the bagpipe remained integrated into the music bands and it was recognized as an element of identity of the Galician society. The bagpipe was integrated into the new Cuban music bands and there was a singular case of folkloric music ensemble on the Island: the quintets. In these sets the bagpipe and other instruments of the military bands like the clarinet, cornet, saxophone and metallic drums were incorporated. This presentation will be focused in how the bagpipes survived the political changes of the late nineteenth century, from fulfilling a diplomatic function to becoming part of the new non-military ensembles, occupying a fundamental role in the discourse of the reconstruction of the identity of Galicia.



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