



# A History of the Lute from Antiquity to the Renaissance

*Douglas Alton Smith*

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## **A History of the Lute from Antiquity to the Renaissance** Douglas Alton Smith

The lute was the most important and versatile instrument in Europe throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance before yielding its place to keyboard instruments in the 17th century. Ergo, this first comprehensive, English-language history dedicated solely to the lute is long overdue. Musicologist Smith, editor of the *Journal of the Lute Society of America*, has succeeded at an enormous undertaking: in addition to detailing the history of the instrument, he includes a discussion of its cultural setting, facts about changes in its construction and repertory, and biographies of its most prominent performers. The reader is given a clear overview of the instrument from its origin in central Asia, through its introduction to Europe by Arab invaders, to its prominence as the "king of Renaissance instruments" in courtly circles. About 75 illustrations (mostly black and white, with a four-page color section) and 56 musical examples round out the text. Highly recommended for medieval and Renaissance history and music collections in public and academic libraries. From *Library Journal*, 2002. Review by Timothy J. McGee, Professor of Music, University of Toronto.

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