

## The Tieffenbruckers and the Business of Lute-making in Sixteenth-century Venice

THE Tieffenbrucker family represents for the music historian one of the most intriguing cases among the many lute-makers active in the sixteenth century. Emigrating from their native village of Tieffenbruck in Bavaria members of this family established themselves as craftsmen in numerous cities in Italy and France.<sup>1</sup> The Venetian branch of the family is especially remarkable for their lengthy presence in the musical life of the city, unbroken from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the second decade of the seventeenth century. Documents providing biographical details about the family members are available, but are not always as informative as one would want them to be, due in part to the annoying habit of the Tieffenbruckers of using the same first names from generation to generation.

Although Stefano Toffolo and Maria Pia Pedani have reconstructed most of the family tree of the Venetian Tieffenbruckers in a recent article published in the journal *Il Fronimo*, some questions are still unresolved.<sup>2</sup> Members of the family who were unquestionably lute-makers in sixteenth-century Venice were Ulrich, who signed a 1521 lute,<sup>3</sup> Magno (I), who died in 1560, his sons Magno (II) and Moisé, dead around 1576 and in 1581 respectively,<sup>4</sup> Paolo, son of Moisé, who rented a shop between 1577 and 1591,<sup>5</sup> Dorigo, who died before 1573, Leonardo, who worked in Padua before moving to Venice around 1590,<sup>6</sup> Giovanni, perhaps active in Lyon before moving to Venice in the last part of the sixteenth century,<sup>7</sup> and a third Magno, who signed several lutes, *chitarroni*, and *tiorbe* between 1589 and 1621, and lived at least until 1629.<sup>8</sup> With the exception of Leonardo and Giovanni, whose relationship to the others is unclear, all these lute-makers must have been closely related. It is worth repeating here that indeed there were three Magnos in the Venetian branch of the family: secondary literature on the subject has on occasion obscured rather than clarified the issue, most often recognizing only two Magnos as active in Venice.<sup>9</sup> Incontrovertible documentary evidence shows that the first Magno, who died in 1560, left a son also named Magno, who in turn died between

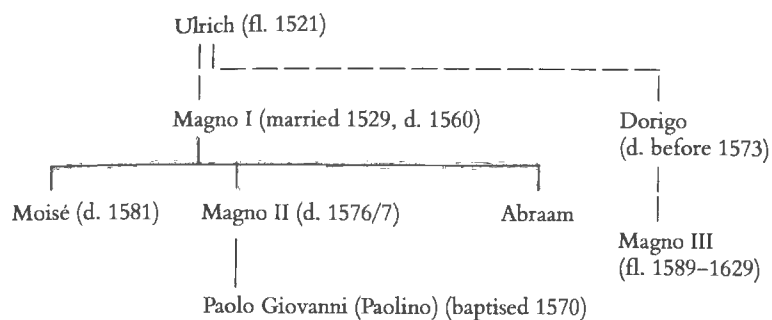
February 1576 and 4 March 1577, making impossible his identification with the Magno active until about 1629.<sup>10</sup>

The evidence confirming the life and career of the third Magno comes primarily from his signed instruments and from a few documents. The first of these is an overlooked document from the archives of the diocese of Venice. The first surviving parish census, dating from 1594, lists in the parish of San Salvador a 'Magno the lute-maker', who lived with his wife Anna, with a journeyman, Jacomo, and with two apprentices, Zorzi and Jacomo.<sup>11</sup> Stefano Toffolo has also presented several archival documents mentioning a Magno lute-maker, whom he has identified as Magno II. A closer examination of these documents, however, makes abundantly clear that they could only refer to a person still living in the years 1607–1629, and therefore could not refer to Magno II. None of the documents discovered by Toffolo identifies Magno as '*quondam*', as was customary for deceased persons. Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that over forty years after Magno II's death a maid could still be said to be living in his house (as opposed to his widow's, or his son's house). It is also unthinkable that the *Arte dei Marzeri*, the guild to which lute-makers belonged, would list Magno II in 1629. At any rate, the most convincing proof of the existence of a third Magno is without a doubt the parish census, which listed only living persons.

The fact that Magno I is sometimes identified in the documents as 'son of the late Rigo' has led Toffolo and Pedani to suggest that his father was the 'Dorigo Tefenprucher lauter' mentioned as deceased in a 1573 document.<sup>12</sup> Although I am not able at present to disprove this hypothesis conclusively, I believe it to be highly unlikely. The document mentioning Dorigo is the record of the baptism of his daughter's son. If we suggest that Dorigo is the father of Magno I we must also accept the hypothesis that in 1573, thirteen years after the death of Magno (who left three grown children of his own, having married in 1529), one of Magno's sisters was young enough to be of childbearing age. It is perhaps more likely that the Dorigo of the 1573 document was a brother or cousin of Magno I and had a shop of his own,<sup>13</sup> and that the father of Magno is that 'Ulrich Duiffopurgar' already mentioned, who signed a lute in Venice in 1521.<sup>14</sup> The connection of the third Magno to the others is difficult to establish. Magno III could not have been a direct descendant of Magno I since the only known grandson of Magno I was called Paolo (or Paolino) and was baptised in 1570, too late to have a grown son of his own by 1589.<sup>15</sup> It is possible, on the other hand, that Magno III might belong to the same branch of the family as Dorigo, and that he could be Dorigo's son or grandson. In the following table I present my proposal for a partial reconstruction of the family tree for the Venetian Tieffenbruckers.

TABLE 1

Partial reconstruction of the Tieffenbrucker 'family tree'.



The most interesting set of documents on the Tieffenbruckers, however, concerns the details of their lute-making business. Toffolo and Pedani have already published an inventory of the shop of Moisé Tieffenbrucker, taken after his death in 1581. This is actually the first of two inventories taken at the distance of a month and a half.<sup>16</sup> The first was taken at the request of Magno II's widow, acting on behalf of her son Paolino, the second at the request of Moisé's widow. Toffolo and Pedani have not commented on the inventories except to remark that 'examining the inventories [. . .] one is surprised at the extremely high number of instruments (both completed and unfinished), leading one to postulate an actual large-scale production'.<sup>17</sup>

Before we discuss the contents of the inventories, there is a question that needs to be answered: why would the widow of Magno II ask the Giudici di Petizion (the magistracy competent in court cases involving a contested inheritance) to inventory Moisé's property? The two brothers, Magno II and Moisé, had taken over the shop at their father's death in 1560 (a third brother, Abraam, left the shop shortly after that date, abandoning lute-making altogether).<sup>18</sup> Their partnership lasted until 1571, when they decided to divide all the 'things, cash, and merchandises pertaining to the art of the lute-maker, which [things] they have held in common up to this time'; the document further states: 'and from now on each of [the brothers] will be on his own, free to conduct his own business for his individual gain'.<sup>19</sup> Although this separation was consensual and the brothers remained on friendly terms (at least as far as we can tell from the document), there is no question that from 1571 on the two must have operated separate businesses. Whether this also meant a physical separation of the two establishments is harder to prove. The brothers had been sharing a shop in the parish of San Salvador, in the heart of Venice's business district, as late as 1570, when they were threatened with eviction from their landlord, who wanted to sell the property.<sup>20</sup> It is possible that even after 1571 the two brothers remained in close association, perhaps even working in nearby

buildings or in different parts of the same building, although it is true that the document specifically assigns the family shop to Moisé.<sup>21</sup> Since Magno died before Moisé, it is conceivable that Moisé might have taken over Magno's shop, or acted as trustee, to insure that Magno's young son, Paolino, would be able to follow in his father's footsteps when he reached a suitable age. The existence of a relationship of this type between Paolo and Moisé is the only satisfactory explanation of the need for an official inventory of Moisé's shop upon request of Magno's widow and it is an hypothesis strengthened by archival evidence. Between 1577 and 1580 several rent payments by Paolo for a shop owned by the Procuratori di San Marco are recorded, most as having been actually brought in person by Moisé on behalf of Paolo.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, several of these payments identify Paolo as 'louter', confirming that he was indeed following in his father's footsteps. The type of property rented by Paolo is described in a document from 1582 (after Moisé's death), which tells us that he was renting a high priced building (a house with a shop) in Merceria, the main thoroughfare of the business district.<sup>23</sup> The existence of a legal relationship — such as that of trustee — between Moisé and Paolo is virtually the only case in which Magno's widow or Paolo could have had any claims to Moisé's inheritance, particularly in view of the legal agreement between the brothers dividing all the property in equal parts.

How large was Moisé's shop? The number of instruments listed in the inventories is truly astonishing: 532 lutes in various stages of completion (many described as 'dozenali', that is inexpensive), thirty 'liuti da pretio' (high-priced lutes), some of ivory and some probably custom-made, as they sport coats of arms inlaid in ivory, at least forty forms for lutes and guitars, two finished guitars (eight in the second inventory), and 213 cases for lutes, some plain and some lined (and presumably more expensive). That these numbers are not scribal errors or due to unusual circumstances (a backlog due to the recent death of the owner, for instance) is confirmed by the large quantities of lute parts also listed in the inventory, which abounds in annotations such as 'a barrel full of [lute] necks', 'a barrel full of roses', or 'a mound of lute necks', written down as the officials moved from the ground floor shop through the four rooms rented by Moisé in the same building.<sup>24</sup> The second inventory — the one not transcribed by Toffolo and Pedani — is a little more specific in listing these lute parts. To our amazement we find that the shop held nine hundred dozens of viol and lute strings, forty dozens of 'thin strings', one hundred dozens of 'bad strings', and even three hundred 'stools for lute'. The notary responsible for the second inventory was not content with describing the roses or necks as being 'a mound' or 'a barrel' but had them counted: thanks to his attention to detail we can see that the shop contained 150 'roses for the fingerboard', presumably ornaments to be inlaid, in addition to several thousand regular roses (400 of which are described as 'pretty'), over 600 lute necks, and other assorted

material. It is obvious that Moisé's shop was organized for large scale production and that it must have had several workers and apprentices, perhaps working on the '*lauti dozenali*', while the owners and some of the more experienced personnel might have dedicated their time to the manufacture of the more expensive or custom-made items.

Popular as the Tieffenbrucker shop might have been, and in spite of its position in the central Venetian shopping district, it seems clear that the large inventory of instruments at hand could not have been sold exclusively at retail. The wholesale activity of the Tieffenbruckers is confirmed by a set of hitherto unpublished documents from 1568, in which competing lute-makers were asked to assess each other's business for purposes of taxation. In the first of these documents a Giacomo, son of Rigo, stated: 'Magno [Tieffenbrucker II] keeps in his shop lutes of every kind, and he sells them both wholesale and retail'. The officials were also curious to know whether Magno was shipping some of his production '*in terra todesca*', but Giacomo confessed he did not know. However, he volunteered the information that Magno had an 'old shop and a good establishment'.<sup>25</sup> His estimate of an investment of about 300 or 400 ducats is lower than that offered by 'Henerich [Henrico] *lauter*', who suggested an invested capital for the Tieffenbruckers of 500 ducats and an annual profit of approximately 200 ducats. Henrico added, however, that the shop was legally the property of Magno's mother, the widow of Magno I, and that therefore Magno II did not have the freedom he might have enjoyed if he had been the sole owner.<sup>26</sup> It is not clear from these documents whether the witnesses were estimating the total income of the shop or only the part going to Magno — the document was copied before the separation between the brothers. In the latter case the figures ought to be roughly doubled. I tend towards the first hypothesis both because it would have been very difficult for an outsider to separate the quota belonging to each brother, and because it was more or less customary in the case of family business, to address the 'senior partner' as if he had most of the responsibility for the business. The investment estimated for the Tieffenbruckers' shop is more or less equivalent to the estimate presented for one of the three other shops surveyed, whose capital is said to be about 500 ducats, and higher than that of the two remaining shops, estimated at one hundred ducats each. Curiously, the estimates of the profit of all these shops do not reflect this disparity. Except for the establishment of Giacomo di Rigo, who was said to be earning 500 ducats a year on 500 ducats of capital, the others' income ranged from two to three hundred ducats a year: in fact Magno Tieffenbrucker's shop had the lowest estimated profit among those surveyed.

Given the size of Moisé's lute-making business in 1581 a few questions come to mind: was the brothers' shop in 1568 larger or smaller than the one inventoried in 1581? If it was as large or larger, should we deduce that at

least four lute-makers in 1568 Venice owned shops of this considerable size and output? After the equal division of the property between the brothers in 1571, was Magno's business as large as Moisé's? There is, of course, no way to answer all these questions to our satisfaction, but a few observations are in order. First, the economic situation of the Tieffenbrucker family shortly after the middle of the sixteenth century places them in a rather comfortable middle class. The evidence for this comes not only from the wills of some of the members of the family, but also from other scattered sources. In 1566, in obedience to a decree of the Senate that all income from investments and real estate property be listed, Magno submitted a tax return listing several sources of income from property on the mainland, and mentioned having loaned one hundred ducats to his landlord in Venice, Francesco Venier.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the two inventories of Moisé's shop in 1581 listed among his possessions many documents, contracts, receipts and such, that testify to a fairly active business life extending well outside the boundaries of lute-making. In this respect the Tieffenbruckers might not have been typical craftsmen, but rather an example of the few lucky ones who, through fortunate investments, dowries, and their activity were able to put together a considerable patrimony. Others, even famous makers such as Marx [Marco] Unverdorben, were probably not as well off as the Tieffenbruckers, at least judging from some scattered but important documents. From Unverdorben's tax return of 1566 we learn that he had acquired as part of his wife's dowry ten *campi* (a Venetian measure) of farmland near the village of Mirano, between Venice and Padua.<sup>28</sup> By contrast Magno's tax return listed thirty *campi* near Vicenza, plus a considerable amount of rent payments, some in cash and some in agricultural products.<sup>29</sup> As a further example, the will of Moisé's widow, dated May 24 1582, gives us additional evidence to assess the family's financial situation. Veneranda Bonaventura left various cash bequests totalling the sum of twelve hundred ducats and various other gifts of precious objects to friends and relatives: these included several golden rings with precious stones, valuable furniture (for instance a table with a coat of arms and with ivory decoration), and other personal items.<sup>30</sup> By way of comparison, after thirty-five years of service at St Mark's the great Willaert left to his wife the sum of 1600 ducats, a fortune considerably greater than that of most other musicians of the period whose wills survive, but not too far from the total value of Veneranda's property.<sup>31</sup> These pieces of evidence do suggest that the family was far more comfortable financially than most other Venetian craftsmen, and was equal to the mercantile middle class, inferior only to the wealthiest of merchants.

In conclusion, the picture of the Tieffenbruckers' activity presented by archival documents is one of a flourishing business, organized for large scale production of instruments to be sold at retail and wholesale; a business sufficiently solid to survive not only the death of its founder, but also the

deaths of his sons Magno II and Moisé within a few years from each other. Much more remains to be done in the field of instrument making in sixteenth-century Venice: only further discoveries of documents will help us to put together a puzzle in which at the present time too many pieces consist simply of little more than names.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For general information on the Tieffenbruckers (not always correct) see the articles by Adolf Layer in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Kassel, 1949–79), vol. XIII, cols. 400–4; and by Ian Harwood in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, 1980), vol. XVIII, pp. 814–5. A recent contribution is *Antichi strumenti veneziani: 1500–1800* by Stefano Toffolo (Venice, 1987), the value of which is greatly reduced by a number of incorrect statements. It might be useful to remember that we should not always assume that people sharing the same surname belong to the same family, especially when that surname is simply derived from a place name. A parallel could be made with the Renaissance composers nicknamed the ‘wolfpack’, all bearing some form of the name ‘Lupus’, who were not related; or with the many people named ‘Vicentino’, ‘Padovano’, etc.

<sup>2</sup> S. Toffolo and M. P. Pedani, ‘Una famiglia di liutai tedeschi a Venezia: i Tieffenbrucker’, *Il Fronimo* XIII (April 1985), pp. 56–62.

<sup>3</sup> See Luisa Cervelli, ‘Brevi note sui liutai tedeschi attivi in Italia dal sec. XVI al XVIII’, *Analecta musicologica*, Bd. 5 (1968), p. 331.

<sup>4</sup> A third son, Abraam, probably worked in the family workshop, but quit shortly after his father’s death. See the pertinent document, dated 12 April 1568, in Archivio di Stato di Venezia (henceforth I–Vas), Notarile Atti, Busta 8283, Atti P. G. Mamoli, f. 194r. In 1575 Abraam was wanted by the Venetian Inquisition for being a suspected Lutheran. He and his brothers had already been accused in 1565 by an informer who said ‘they do not believe in the Mass, in Purgatory, indulgences, and [believe] that the Pope has no authority, following what Martin Luther says, and they have Lutheran books, and I have heard that they eat meat on forbidden days . . .’. In 1575 Abraam was believed to be in Vicenza, but the local authorities wrote to the Venetian Inquisitors that they did not know anybody by that name. They did say, however, that a man called Simonetto (whose religious beliefs were rather unorthodox) had been in town, playing his lute and periodically leaving for Lyons with five or six hundred ducats’ worth of lutes. The authorities speculated that this Simonetto might be the same person as Abraam, but they lacked evidence. It is worth noting that the Tieffenbruckers had ties to families of Vicenza. All the documents on the Lutheran sympathies of the Tieffenbruckers are in I–Vas, Sant’ Uffizio, Busta 39.

<sup>5</sup> See I–Vas, Procuratori di S. Marco de Supra, Giornali Cassier, Registri 3 and 4.

<sup>6</sup> I. Harwood, ‘Tieffenbrucker’, op. cit., p. 815.

<sup>7</sup> S. Toffolo, *Antichi strumenti*, pp. 89–90.

<sup>8</sup> See L. Cervelli, ‘Brevi note’, p. 331; I. Harwood, ‘Tieffenbrucker’, p. 815, and S. Toffolo, *Antichi strumenti*, pp. 89–90.

<sup>9</sup> See for instance Stefano Toffolo in *Antichi strumenti* (pp. 92–95), where he attributes to Magno II several instruments dated from 1589 to 1621, in spite of his earlier statement that the lute-maker had died before 1581.

<sup>10</sup> For a summary of the documentary evidence, see S. Toffolo and M. P. Pedani, ‘Una famiglia’, pp. 56–7. The death date of Magno as given by Toffolo and Pedani can be narrowed down thanks to a few surviving documents. Magno was still alive in February 1576, when he was mentioned in his mother’s will (I–Vas, Notarile Testamenti, Busta 89, Test. R. Benedetti, no. 106). There are records of rent payments coming directly from Paolo (see n. 5) that begin on 4 March 1577, thus indicating that by that date Magno had passed away.

<sup>11</sup> The document is in the Archivio della Curia Patriarcale, Censimenti Parrocchiali, Busta 3, fascicle ‘S. Salvador’ (no foliation).

<sup>12</sup> S. Toffolo and M. P. Pedani, ‘Una famiglia’, pp. 56–7, especially fn. 6.

<sup>13</sup> This last hypothesis is somewhat strengthened by the discovery of the name of a ‘Rigo lauter’ who was mentioned in his landlord’s tax return from the 1566 *decime* as renting a house in the commercial district of S. Salvador. See I–Vas, X Savi alle Decime, Busta 135, no. 177.

<sup>14</sup> See L. Cervelli, ‘Brevi note’, p. 331 (both Dorigo and Ulrich could be shortened to Rigo).

<sup>15</sup> S. Toffolo lists a 1555 document announcing the death of a ‘Moisé, son of Magno lute-maker’ (*Antichi strumenti*, p. 92). While he considers this document to be referring to Magno I, it is obvious that it must refer to a young son of Magno II. Magno I already had a grown son named Moisé, who survived him, and could not have called two of his children by the same name.

<sup>16</sup> Magno and Moisé had parted their ways in 1571 in a friendly manner, see S. Toffolo and M. P. Pedani, ‘Una famiglia’, p. 57, and I–Vas, Notarile Atti, Busta 439, Atti R. Benedetti, f. 337r–ff., 27 August 1571. The two inventories are in I–Vas, Giudici di Petizione, Inventari, Busta 332/2, no. 50 (4 September 1581) and no. 51 (19 October 1581).

<sup>17</sup> S. Toffolo and M. P. Pedani, ‘Una famiglia’, p. 57: ‘Dall’esame degli inventari [. . .] si rimane strabiliati nel constatare l’elevatissimo numero degli strumenti, finiti e non, che danno da pensare ad una vera e propria produzione di serie.’

<sup>18</sup> I–Vas, Notarile Atti, Busta 8283, Atti P. G. Mamoli, f. 194r.

<sup>19</sup> I–Vas, Notarile Atti, Busta 439, Atti R. Benedetti, ff. 337r–ff., 27 August 1571: ‘Tutti i beni mobili, danari, robe, e mercantia dell’arte spettante al lauter esistenti tra loro sino al presente [. . .] et da qui inanci cadaun di loro habbi a restar diviso, et da per se a far i fatti suoi, e negotiar per suo conto particular.’

<sup>20</sup> I–Vas, Notarile Atti, Busta 438, Atti R. Benedetti, f. 235r–ff., 1 June [recte: July] 1570.

<sup>21</sup> The building they occupied in 1570 was apparently already divided into two parts and could have accommodated the brothers even after their separation.

<sup>22</sup> See for instance I–Vas, Procuratori di San Marco de Supra, Giornali Cassier, Reg. 3, on 13 September 1577: ‘Adi 13 ditto da s[er] Paulo diefobrugar d[ucati] 25 contadi da s[er] Moisé suo barba [uncle, in Venetian dialect]; on 9 May 1578: ‘Da Paulo diefobrugar dette moise suo barba d[ucati] 30’; on 11 June 1579: ‘Da Paulo fobrugar lauter contoli suo barba ducati vinticinque’; and on 13 July 1579: ‘Da Paulo diefoblugar ducati vinti porto suo barba lauter’. After 1580 there is a gap in the pay records until 1588.

<sup>23</sup> The document in question is in I-Vas, Procuratori di San Marco de Supra, Decreti e Terminazioni, Registro 136, f. 23r, 6 June 1582.

<sup>24</sup> It is interesting to note that the inventory taken at the death of the lute-maker Andrea de Bassis in 1536 lists well over one hundred lutes in his shop, in addition to a number of other instruments, to fifty lutes brought in by the owners for repairs, and to a considerable number of accessories (roses, necks, lute cases, etc.), suggesting that the quasi-industrial organization of the Tieffenbruckers might not have been an exception. For the inventory see Toffolo, *Antichi strumenti*, pp. 195–96.

<sup>25</sup> I-Vas, Milizia da Mar, Presidenti, Registro 446, f. 180v: '*Costui puo haver d[el] cavedal duc[ati] 300 in 400 in c[ir]ca. La botega vecchia, bo[n] Inviament[er]to, tien in botega lauti d'ogni sorte et q[ue]lli vende in grosso et menudo. Dom[anda]to se manda in terra todesca lauti p[er] corde, R[is]po[se] no[n] saper, nè lui sa dir altro.*' Incidentally, the scope of the lute trade to foreign lands (*todesche* [i.e. German] or otherwise) can be gauged by information such as that presented in note 4. Whether Simonetto and Abraam Tieffenbrucker were the same person or not, there is no question that somebody accompanied five or six hundred ducats' worth of lutes on a journey over the Alps on a regular basis. The existence of such a trade could help to explain the large number of lutes in the Tieffenbrucker inventory.

<sup>26</sup> Also in I-Vas, Milizia da Mar, Presidenti, Registro 446, f. 180v. Henrico's assessment of the situation is confirmed by the legal document with which Magno and Moisé officially excluded the third brother Abraam from their partnership (I-Vas, Notarile Atti, Busta 8283, Atti P. G. Mamoli, f. 194r–ff.), which states that Margherita, Magno I's widow, was the only executrix and beneficiary of the inheritance, which included the shop; even though she might not have been involved in the daily administration of their business, she could have vetoed any major transaction not to her liking.

<sup>27</sup> I-Vas, X Savi alle Decime, Busta 126, no. 8.

<sup>28</sup> I-Vas, X Savi alle Decime, Busta 128, no. 869.

<sup>29</sup> I-Vas, X Savi alle Decime, Busta 126, no. 8.

<sup>30</sup> I-Vas, Notarile Testamenti, Busta 196, Test. M. A. Cavanis, no. 983, will of 24 May 1582.

<sup>31</sup> I-Vas, Notarile Testamenti, Busta 645, Test. F. Micheli, no. 12, will of 27 December 1559.

## An Italian Harpsichord of 1571: Clues to its Construction

This paper will be in two parts. First, I shall discuss the instrument, the questions that it raised, and the answers to these questions. In the second part I shall explain the fascinating method of its construction, which it is possible to trace because the maker's marks are still visible on the instrument.

### PART I

IN March 1968, a letter to the Director of the Hungarian National Museum offered a harpsichord in poor condition for sale at a very reasonable price because the owner no longer had the space for it (see Pls. I (d) and II (b)). One could read the name '*Dominicus Pisaurensis MDLXII*' on the instrument's nameboard. The graceful Italian body of the instrument was made of cypress wood, and the protective outer case was made of more solid pine. The case rested on a stand carved in an ornamental baroque style and painted predominantly red and gold. The case paintings were also baroque in style: the outer surface of the case was covered with gold leaf, and on the inner side of the cover was a winding vine design painted in tempera in light and dark blues against a rose-coloured background (Pl. II (a)). The sale was completed quickly, and the Museum thus acquired the third harpsichord in its collection.

Following the procedure for all new acquisitions, we promptly took high-quality photographs of the instrument and wrote a description of it. The photographs revealed the extent of the instrument's damage and the missing parts. The front-right and tail-end legs of the stand were crumbled from worm-damage, the tail-piece of the stand was broken, and the cypress wood of the instrument itself was covered with mildew and water stains. The lock board and short side of the case were both missing, as well as all tuning pins, strings and jacks, and unhappily, the keyboard as well. The bulk of the damage appears to have occurred before 1900. We can deduce that, perhaps near the end of the last century, an instrument maker unknown to us began to repair the antique. As is still the craftsman's custom, he disassembled the keys and jacks, and removed rusted strings and tuning pins. However, the project was interrupted and abandoned, for reasons unknown to us, and the instrument remained stripped.

These assumptions rest on one vital piece of documentary evidence, a photograph of the harpsichord that accompanied it at the time of acquisition (Pl. II (b)). We cannot determine where the photograph was