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Project *Lira da braccio* and *lira da gamba*: reconstruction of playing technique and the repertory

FINAL REPORT, (first version February 2001¹)

Foreword, p. 3.

I. Report:

§ 1. Historical development of the interest for the *lira da braccio* and *da gamba* (since 1892 till today), p. 5.

§ 2. The role of *liras* and their diffusion in Europe in 15th, 16th and 17th c., p. 9.

§ 3. The Terminology, p. 13.

§ 4. The organological features. p. 14.

§ 5. Contemporary sources, tuning and playing techniques, p. 18.

5.1. Written sources, p. 18.

5.1.1. Ways of tuning the *lire*, p. 20.

5.1.2. The technique of playing, p. 20.

5.1.3. Players of the *lira da braccio* and *da gamba* in 15th, 16th and 17th c., p. 21.

5.1.4. H. Cardanus on the *lira* by Alessandro Striggio (elder), p. 21.

5.2. Music sources and those connected with them, p. 22.

§ 6. Iconographic sources, p. 25.

§ 7. Reconstruction of the playing technique and improvisation, p. 28.

7.1. Benvenuto Disertori, p. 28.

7.2. Martin Greulich about the *lira da gamba*, p. 29.

7.3. The Reconstructions by S. Jones and J. M. Skeaping, p. 31.

7.4. Imke David, p. 33.

7.5. G. Victor Penniman, p. 34.

7.6. My summary of the playing technique and art of the improvisation on *liras* based on the contemporary sources and my own practical experience, p. 37.

¹ German original updated in 2003 and 2011 according to the Croatian version from 2009. Italian version 2004. Croatian version updated 2016 and translated and updated in English 2018.

§ 8. Reconstruction of the repertory, p. 39.

8.1. Reconstructions by W. Osthoff and V. Ivanoff, p.41

8.2. Reconstructions by S. Jones, J. M. Skeaping and I. David, p.41

8.2.1. Sterling Jones, p.41

8.2.2. Joseph M. Skeaping, p. 42

8.2.3 Imke David, p.42

8.3. My reflections on reconstruction of the repertory on both *liras*, p. 43

§ 9. Liras (da braccio and da gamba) in Croatia during the Renaissance and early Baroque, p. 46.

Conclusion, p. 50.

Supplement (I.):

A. Partially commented bibliography and discography to the lira da braccio and da gamba, February 2001 with updates after Zagreb 2009, Bibliography: pp. 1 - 14; Discography pp. 14 - 17.

B. Names of the lira (da braccio and da gamba) players from 1475 till today, p. 18

C. List of the preserved original & extant liras (da braccio and da gamba) and copies (made before 1945), p. 24.

D. Audio databank: digital recordings made with DAT – recorder, Minidisc and digital video camera, which have been recorded for this project, until July 2005. p. 26.

E. Music examples, p. 30.

F. Iconography and other pictorial sources, p. 35.

G. List with names of instrument makers (2001), p. 36.

H. List of persons and institutions who sent an answer to our questionnaire (till 2001), p. 38.

I. Musicologists, musicians or directors of ensembles who occupied themselves more intensely with liras (theoretically or practically; research, studies, concerts and recordings – 2001), p. 41.

J. Lira da braccio and lira da gamba/ lirone in internet, p.42.

Supplement (II.): Pictures of preserved Liras, Music and Iconography Examples, LIRA FORUM no. 1 and Project Questionnaires.

Foreword:

On the University of Music in Vienna², guided by Mr Prof Dr Hartmut Krones, I finished the final report of my project „**Lira da braccio and lira da gamba: reconstruction of the playing technique and the repertory**” (Project number: P11434-HIS) at the beginning of 2001. I was working on this project from autumn 1996 to February 2001, thanks to the assistance of the Wiener Forschungsfond (Vienna Research Fund), although my interest and occupation with the liras (da braccio and da gamba) had already started in the mid seventies of the past century.

My first direct contact with the music of Middle Ages and the Renaissance occurred 1964 at the Zagreb concert of the American ensemble “New York Pro Musica” (at that time the best one, specialised in the so called early music), under the artistic director and conductor Mr. Noah Greenberg. I knew until that moment baroque music performed exclusively on modern instruments, madrigals sung by huge choir and using the usual “operatic” vibrato, cembalo being the only “real” early musical instrument I ever heard : it was an immense shock to hear and to see all this beauty and above that, very skilfully played! That was the turning point of my not only musical life, when I firmly decided I did not want to play anything else but exactly that and on these reconstructed instruments...

I began my intensive occupation with early music in the summer of 1969, first due to a course given by another avant-garde American ensemble “Studio der Frühen Musik” (active in Munich) and later through the founding of a Zagreb ensemble “Universitas Studiorum Zagrabiensis”. After a thorough study of English music for consort of viols of the late 16th and the entire 17th centuries, I came increasingly in contact with the music of the Middle Ages and its instruments; at that point I started to play the medieval fiddle (in German *Fidel* or *Fiedel*, in French *vielle*, in Italian *viola*) and in the early seventies³ to occupy myself with, at that time young, discipline of the performance practice.

During my studies of archives and iconographic Italian and Croatian sources of the late 15th, 16th and the 1st part of the 17th century I noticed that the name of one bowed instrument – *lira* – appeared very often in written and even more often in iconographical sources of that period.

I was wondering that in the same time, in mid seventies, we did not know almost anything about this apparently important instrument. My further research showed that for *liras* hardly any music was preserved (which could be explained with the fact that the music on both instruments has been almost exclusively improvised); in the collections of musical instruments all over the world several original instruments exist

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³ During the seminars I visited 1974 in Holland, Belgium and Denmark.

and both instruments appear very seldom (some 50 years ago) in concerts and on the recordings of early music.

The fact that I am a graduated viola player (who later through playing the viol also learned the so called underhand or palm up bowing technique, similar to the German double bass playing) has certainly been a good foundation to start at all with the experiments on both *liras*.

As to this moment I had already been playing the medieval fiddle for several years, it helped me a lot to understand a harmonic, at least drone – like playing on one bowed instrument.

Shortly afterwards (1977), thanks to the study trip to Great Britain financed by the British Council of Zagreb (which donated me and my colleagues important music, books and LPs), my great interest for *liras* got a concrete chance to get answers to all my questions about instruments from the best specialists ever (musicians, musicologists and the instrument makers).

For the first time I could see (and touch) the presumably original lira da braccio in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, find a lot of important books and finally, crucial for the further development of my interest for *liras* playing, meet an instrument maker, who not only had a great interest for these instruments but also made some experience in their construction. This was Mr Robert Hadaway from Wales, for me professionally and personally an important relation for long years. Mr Hadaway had studied and measured in Vienna both *liras* (da braccio and da gamba, considered at that time indisputable original instruments) and offered me therefore to build a rather big lira da braccio from this collection. The instrument was ready only in 1981 and that is why I had to make my first experiments with the playing of the lira on my medieval fiddle. Thanks to these experiments I was able to make relatively quickly my first steps on the lira and during the musicological symposium on *seconda pratica* at Poggio a Caiano, Florence, to shortly demonstrate my new knowledge, performing the *lira* fragments from the Pesaro Ms.

This first positive experience brought me to the decision to purchase from Bob Hadaway a lira da gamba, too. While waiting for the instrument, I succeeded to clarify the functional principles of lira da gamba chords "on paper" and I have been playing both instruments now since 1985.

I must admit that in all these years of laborious work there have been also moments of crisis, where I was close to leave the whole thing, trying to persuade myself that it was enough satisfaction for me to be acclaimed soloist on medieval fiddle of the renown "Clemencic Consort", co-founder of "Ensemble Lyra Wien", playing also viol and various early wind instruments.

As I realised that my experiments at last showed serious results, I was very satisfied that I did not stop. The important encouragement from Prof Dr René Clemencic

(during our unforgettable artistic collaboration from 1983 until 2004), my colleagues from the "Ensemble Lyra Wien" (in particular Mrs Mira Valenta, singer and co-founder of this ensemble) and the opportunity to challenge my newly acquired experience in concerts or recordings were very important to continue this way. The confidence that Dr Mag Hartmut Krones gave to me and to my ideas have been very important for me, too.

When in 1996 I finally got the funding (from the Vienna Research Fund) to start my work on this project, it was above all a recognition of my long-time work.

Similarly to the majority of my colleagues - specialists for early music in the world - for the sake of selection, preparation and recording of programmes, I often have to deal with rather theoretic disciplines as, for instance, transcription or performing from the original notation, iconography, organology and especially performance practice. I always felt myself and preferred to be musician - practitioner and not a musicologist or theorist.

Therefore, this project can be described rather as a kind of laboratory for practical experiments. An important part of these experiments and their results have been made by a practitioner for other practitioners' use, for example the recordings kept in the audio and video database, the music examples and finally the playing instructions for potential students. There are also many information in the form of lists that can help everyone (both practitioners as theoreticians) interested in *liras*, renaissance music, performance practice of early music, iconography and organology.

This project was finished and presented in its original German version at the University of Music, Vienna, in 2001. I made various corrections and updates in German, translated and published it in 2004 in Italian. It was translated in my mother tongue, Croatian, in 2009 and updated in 2016. Finally, I decided to make this last version in English. This 2018 edition will be the basis of my methods for both *liras*, which will come out in a digital version in the next future.

I.Report:

§ 1 Historical development of interest for lira da braccio and da gamba (from 1892 till today)⁴

A little bit more than a hundred twenty years ago, in 1892, it was Alexander Hajdecki, (major in the K.u.K. Army and music lover) who as first in modern times wrote a book about the "Italian lira da braccio". The book was published in Mostar, the capital of Herzegovina.

⁴ For detailed informations see in the Appendix A.Bibliography and discography on *liras da braccio* and *da gamba*.

Hajdecki, a musical layman, tried in the first place to prove, that: "... *it is the lira, this little known instrument, what gave us the first impulse, the immediate stimulus to the critical study of the origin of our violin, it forms the centre of it, which is why we put its name on the top of this treatise.*"⁵ Although we should today in many respects be critical towards Hajdecki's work,⁶ it remains the fact that hundred twenty years ago, only thanks to him the international musicology started to be interested in this forgotten musical instrument for the first time.

In the past 120 years many (in most cases well-known) authors wrote about *liras*. Particularly important and interesting contributions to this topic were given by Georg Kinsky, Gerald Hayes, Martin Greulich, Benvenuto Disertori (before 1945), Emanuel Winternitz and Howard Mayer Brown since 1945. With Erin Headley⁷ also active musicians and performers are coming on the scene, not only musicologists. This tendency, starting in the late eighties, was followed by very important papers (articles and books), written by Vladimir Ivanoff, Sterling S. Jones, late Joseph M. Skeaping, Imke David, G. Victor Penniman and myself.

The opinions of various authors on the instruments, their role and importance in the period in which they have been flourishing, goes from positivism to the complete neglecting; from the believe with no criteria that under any mention of the name *lira* always and exclusively a *lira da braccio* (or *da gamba*) is meant to the contrary opinion, that this name or the name *lyra* without exception means an ancient instrument of the same name or the Renaissance lute, in both cases a plucked and not a bowed instrument.

Emile Haraszti wrote in the mid 20th century (1955) about the improvisation technique in Italian or Latin language in Italy in the 15th century: although he interpreted the terms *lira* or *lyra* (even *viola*) almost exclusively as "lute", which is certainly exaggerated, we shall consider his work very seriously.

Even if this is very difficult, when based on the contemporary sources, we should distinguish between renown lutenists⁸ and presumed *lira* (*da braccio*) players, for example Leonardo da Vinci. Especially when it is taken into consideration, what Giorgio Vasari wrote about his *lira* playing: "*l'armonia con tuba maggior sonora di voce ...*". Or if we read about one of the most famous composers of frottola, Marco Cara, and his "*sonora lira*"; if I have to choose between harmonic and sound characteristics of the *lira* and lute, under "sonora" I would rather think on the first one.

⁵ "... dieses verkannte Instrument, diese Lira es ist, welche uns den ersten Impuls, die unmittelbare Anregung zur kritischen Untersuchung über die Entstehung unserer Violine gab, - sie bildet den Mittelpunkt derselben, weshalb wir auch ihren Namen an die Spitze dieser Abhandlung stellten."

⁶ As for instance Walter Kolneder did in his "Buch der Violine", see the Bibliography.

⁷ American cello and viol player, the first who started a systematic research on the reconstruction of the playing technique on the *lira da gamba* — *lirone*.

⁸ For instance Pietro Bono, whom the colleague Antonio Baldassare put to the players of *lira*.

His interpretation of the terms *lira*, *lyra* and *viola* with the plucked instrument lute justifies Haraszti with the opinions by contemporary authors, as for instance Baldassare Castiglione (1528) and Johannes Tinctoris (1487). While by Castiglione it is very difficult or impossible to recognise which (bowed or plucked) instrument he means when he says "*cantare alla viola per recitare*", it is quite different by Tinctoris, who⁹ under terms *lyra* and *viola* always refers to the plucked instrument lute. I think it is really strange he did not mention playing on the *lira da braccio*, that exactly in his days experienced its first boom! As Rainer Ullreich informs in his article about the "Fidel" in the new MGG), Tinctoris wrote only about the tuning of three to five stringed *violas*, which have been tuned in fifths and octaves and served to accompany the epics, both of which reminds on *lira da braccio*...

If we would accept the views of Tinctoris, what would mean all these numerous iconographic representations of the *lira* (*viola*) *da braccio* players? Primarily in the liturgical context, or in the act of improvisation in front of the public of humanists?

I am convinced that it is not a case that the only examples of music for *lira* (*da braccio*) can be found in a direct comparison with that of the lute, and in a manuscript from the Italian town of Pesaro (now kept in the library "Oliveriana", under the no. 1144) that contains only tablature for the lute and other plucked instruments.¹⁰

Among other things, Haraszti says that the practice of singer - improvisers ("*improvvisatori*") comes from medieval *trouveres* and *menestrels*. The art of improvisation is indivisible in its entirety: from one to another performer the complexity of its accompaniment was different. Some performers (such as P. Bono) were primarily virtuosos (on a lute) and singers, others, singers of *cantastoria* (i.e. singing about important historical events, something like *gusle* singers in nowadays Croatia), have likely put emphasis on the text and accompanying their singing with relatively simple sequel of chords.

Haraszti assumes that this art of singing accompaniment arrived in Italy from the Iberian Peninsula, through the Aragon's court in Naples.

Haraszti interpreted not only the terms *lira*, *lyra*, but also *viola*, (for example by B. Castiglione) invariably as a lute, and on the p. 20 of his article, without any further explanation he says: "the term *viola* was meant here as the lute, it is therefore the plucked and not bowed instrument ..."

How, according to Haraszti, did the technique and performance style of the singers (improvising to the lute) function in the practice? Quoting Philippe Monnier¹¹, Haraszti said that some singers of *cantastoria* sang slow melody and accompanied themselves on the "violin"(!) or lute. Depending on the text, they mimed, depicting various moods, laughing, crying, etc. Haraszti considered this too excessive, but

⁹ In his treatise "De inventione et usu musicae", Naples 1487.

¹⁰ See Appendix E; music examples nr. 1. a,b and 2. a – e.

¹¹ Philippe Monnier: Le Quattrocento. Essai sur l'histoire Littéraire du XVIe siècle italien. Paris, 1901.

based on different sources¹² he agreed with André Pirro when he said that singing was barely modulated, and that the singers accompanied their declamation with just a few chords on the lute, of course ...

The author asks himself how were the melodies on which the *improvvisatori* improvised: have they been similar to those in the folk music or were they more like a rhythmic *parlando*? Since for him in the practice of improvisation there was no place for (bowed) lira da braccio, he not only declares Leonardo as a lutenist, but on page 29 the player of the lira to braccio (and very likely the inventor of the lira da gamba; see in David I.), Atalante Migliorotti, as "Leonardo's (female) student" on the lute!

In the past 25 years more or less regularly articles or basic information appeared about both liras (da braccio and da gamba), in all music dictionaries, encyclopaedias and history of music. This is the case even by those meant for rather wide public. Although those information are generally correct (and successively they are more and more complete) by the majority of authors¹³, it comes through a whole series of works an old error about two deepest strings, outside the fingerboard. Starting with Disertori, many authors call these two strings "drones".

On the lira da braccio, unlike the medieval fiddle¹⁴ the drones (in Italian *bordone*, in German *Orgelpunkt*) have not been used. Instead of accompanying the melody with one more or less same laying harmony, it was enforced with the chords in a kind of proto-basso continuo.

Lanfranco (1533) called the seven strings of the lira da braccio, starting with the lowest: *basso grave*, *basso acuto*, the two lowest ones on the fingerboard, *bordone grave* and *bordone acuto*¹⁵ - hence probably from that this whole controversy and misinterpretation originated. If somebody ignores the fact that in the 16th century in Italy the name *bordone* was used for only one (or two) of the strings by all stringed (plucked or bowed) instruments, it is understandable that it comes inevitably to these mistakes. In this way its meaning is interpreted in its medieval signification, as one

¹² For instance: Paolo Cortese in his work "De Cardinalatu", 1510.: see the bibliography.

¹³ The exception is Emanuel Winternitz, with his even after many years unabridged article "Lira da braccio" in the first edition of the music encyclopaedia "Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart", and Marianne Bröcker, in "Metzler Neues Handbuch der Musik", 1996.

¹⁴ As well as in the today alive performance practice present in the traditional folk music of Southern Europe (Croatia included) and in the non European countries.

¹⁵ Giovanni Maria Lanfranco, Scintille di musica (Brescia, 1533): "Della accordatura della Lyra"(str.136-7): "Hora e da Sape:che ciascuna delle due / piu graui chorde chiamiamo Basso:/ perche la seconda si accorda in otta/ua con la prima: Contro le quali le due / seguenti (percioche lo acuto Bordon / in ottaua col graue Bordon si tira) p/ quarta si concordino: Laonde nasce,che il detto Bordon acuto col Basso / acuto: & il graue Bordon col graue/ Basso in quarta si rispodino: Quan/tunque il Basso Bordon col Basso acuto per quinta remessa si faccia udire. Per tanto auertire si dee:chel/ 4. Equal dimostra la quarta: posto fra i due Bassi: & i due Bordoni: seme doppiamente: Percioche (com/e detto) l'acuto Bordon contro dell'acuto Basso: & il graue Bordon contra del graue Basso per quarta si/fanno risonare. Ora quella chorda, che noi chiamiamo Tenore: si accorda in ottaua col graue Basso:/ & in Vnisono con lo acuto: Per il che il detto Tenore risponde in quinta sopra il graue Bordon, & in q(ua)rtta sotto lo acuto. Ma dal Tenore alla Sottanella: & dalla Sottanella al Canto per quinta si ramina.... I tasti dellaqual Lyra si trouano a tastone: & a orrechia: po/scia che in essa altrimente non si pongono."

(or two) strings placed outside the fingerboard and having similar function as the real drone strings on the hurdy-gurdy or drone pipes on the bagpipes.

Even the more recent and otherwise certainly very valuable contributions devoted to this problem perpetuate, unfortunately, this mistake. One could even think the authors have not read or understood as it should be the Lanfranco naming of the strings. Thus, the Swiss musicologist Antonio Baldassare (see Appendix A, bibliography) wrote about “*outboard drone strings (even if on the lira da braccio - unlike the medieval fiddle - they have been used as drones only occasionally) as well as the often very useful octave tuning of both drone and the (two lowest) strings on the fingerboard.*”¹⁶

Dorothea Baumann (in the same year) writes: “*the term lira da braccio have been used from 15th to the 17th century for the stringed instrument with C- or F-shaped holes, typically with 5 strings on the fingerboard and 2 drone strings out of it.*”¹⁷ They have been, as Lanfranco (and S. Cerreto, 1601, in the case of the lira da gamba repeats) bass and not the drone strings.

Even Imke David (in section 2.1.1., p. 21.) delivers one not completely correct German translation of the Italian Cerreto original and says: “*The two drone strings out of the fingerboard.*”¹⁸ In the original text I did not find a single place where the author called those strings “*bordoni*”- he wrote only about *corde di fuora*, *corde fuora al Manico* or *corde gravi*: therefore, the external strings which are placed outside the fingerboard or the deep strings. Starting from these mistakes, Imke David calls them “*drones*” always when she is talking about the deepest strings.

G. Victor Penniman Manual for Lirone repeats, unfortunately, this mistake calling the strings outside the fingerboard *bourdon strings*.

§ 2 The role of liras (da braccio and da gamba) and their distribution in Europe, during 15th, 16th and 17th century:

Lira and lute have had a similar role in the improvised (‘ad hoc’) performances of Italian humanists. The most important difference was primarily that on the lute one played both from music i.e. tablature (from the 16th century we have a huge repertoire of music for lute solo or voice accompanied by a lute) and improvised, while the practice of playing the lira da braccio (and da gamba) belonged to the field

¹⁶ p.11: “abgespreizten Bordunsaiten (auch wenn sie bei der Lira d.br. im Gegensatz zum Fidel nur noch gelegentlich als Bordune zur Anwendung gekommen zu sein scheinen) sowie die oft gebräuchliche Oktavstimmung sowohl der Bordun- als auch die ersten Griffbrettsaiten ...”

¹⁷ p. 35: “Die Bezeichnung Lira da braccio ist vom 15. bis ins 17. Jh. gebräuchlich für ein Streichinstrument mit ... C- oder f-Löchern, in der Regel mit 5 Griffsaiten und 2 nicht über das Griffbrett laufenden Bordunsaiten.”

¹⁸ “Zwei Bordunsaiten ausserhalb des Griffbretts.”

of improvisation, the act of momentary and seldom twice repeated performance.¹⁹ In the contemporary iconography lira da braccio (if at all associated with another instrument) appears as in a rule together with the lute.²⁰ Because of these just mentioned similarities between the lute and lira da braccio, I believe that almost everything what Haraszti said about the practice of improvisation (in the late 15th and early 16th century), could be applied to a hypothetical reconstruction of the lira da braccio playing.

Lira da braccio was the instrument which the humanists and reciters of the period used for accompaniment of their chordal (homophonic) sung or recited performances. About that it has been said a bit more in the last 20 years. Especially good is the article by already mentioned Antonio Baldassare, "Die Lira da braccio im humanistischen Kontext Italiens."²¹ For this reason, here I am quoting several places crucial for our topic: *"A prerequisite for the acceptance of antiquity in the Renaissance, which Middle ages in this form did not know, was the humanism with its anthropocentric conception ... On the one hand in the Renaissance it has been flourishing the ancient musical form of improvisation - in a kind of imitatio, although the historical sources for it lacked ... learning musical training has become constituent part of the curriculum vitae of each humanist, as well as most of the princes. In particular, its relation to musical skills, including the singing to the accompaniment of musical instruments, had a great importance and is very similar to the ancient conception of the moral strength of music ..."*

Generally, it appears that during the Renaissance there was no doubt that lira da braccio evolved from the ancient lyre, surprising behaviour as - on the basis of intense studying of ancient science, art and mythology for the theorists and musicians it must be clear that lira da braccio cannot be of ancient origin. Raphael fresco "Parnassus" shows that the Renaissance possessed already accurate ideas about the construction of ancient musical instruments.

The fact that this contradiction, despite knowledge on the instruments of the Antiquity, was either not realised nor irritating for anyone, could rely on the widely accepted and widespread belief in / antique, op.IP / origin of contemporary bowed instruments . In the history of development of medieval fiddle to lira da braccio, the increase in the number of strings /from five, op. IP / to seven was certainly influenced

¹⁹ Something which we today could compare with the practice in the traditional folk music, blues, folk rock or jazz...

²⁰ See: V. Ravizza: Das instrumentale Ensemble von 1400 - 1550 in Italien. Wandel eines Klangbildes, in: Publikationen der Schweizerischen Musikforschenden Gesellschaft, Serie II, vol. 21) Bern, 1970.

²¹ See the Bibliography

by the supposed ancient origin of the *lire*.”²² See by Lanfranco, Ganassi, Bernardi - even by L. Mozart in 1756!

Regardless of its role as a solo instrument, *lira da braccio* was often mentioned in the contemporary sources about the so called intermedia, where it occurs alone or in various combinations of instruments - for example as an accompaniment of madrigals. In the contemporary iconography *lira da braccio* appears very often in all its forms²³, almost always in some kind of mythological or allegorical depictions in hands of Orpheus, Apollo or king David. As this instrument (as already stated) was closely connected with the attempted revival of the ancient music (this explains its central role in the contemporary musical culture and performance practice), it is quite understandable that many musicians, composers, artists, poets and philosophers (amateurs and professionals) of the period excelled in the art of the improvisation on the *lira*.

To illustrate this, let us mention only the most famous among them: Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Gaudenzio Ferrari, Leonardo Giustiniani, Serafino dall'Aquila, Marcilio Ficino and many others.²⁴

Lira da braccio has had an important role in the performance of the so called Horatian ode of the latinists of this period. Numerous musical examples of odas in Italy, Istria and Dalmatia more an artistic form - in the German-speaking countries, (with the exception of Ludwig Senfl compositions of this art) primarily of a didactic nature and help for learning the meter of Latin poetry, look like some sort of "realisation" of the chordal accompaniment on the *lira da braccio* - even more on the *lira da gamba*.²⁵ I have studied and performed this repertory several times²⁶ and I can say that

²² On the page 9: "Die Voraussetzung für die Antikenrezeption in der Renaissance, die das Mittelalter in dieser Form nicht kannte, war der Humanismus mit seinem antropozentrischen Denken ... Zum einen blühten in der Renaissance sozusagen die antiken Musikformen als Improvisationskunst in Form einer Art *imitatio* wieder auf, auch wenn die historische Quellen dafür fehlten. ... Die musikalische Erziehung gehörte gleichsam selbstverständlich zum Curriculum jedes Humanisten, sowie der meisten Fürsten. Besonders der musikalischen Bildung, vorab dem Singen zur Begleitung eines Musikinstruments, wurde dabei grosse Bedeutung beigemessen, und zwar ganz im Sinne der antiken Vorstellung von der moralischen Kraft der Musik. ... Insgesamt scheint in der Renaissance die Vorstellung dass die *Lira d.br.* ein Abkömmling der antiken Leier sei, nicht bezweifelt werden ... erstaunende Sachverhalt, weil aufgrund intensiv betriebenen Studiums der antike Wissenschaft, Kunst u. Mythologie die Theoretiker und Musiker klar sein musste dass die *Lira d.br.* nicht antike Ursprungs war... Raffaels Parnass-Fresko zeigt, dass die Renaissance bereits genaue Kenntnisse vom Bau antiker Instrumente hatte. Dass der Widerspruch trotz des Wissens um die antiken Instrumente entweder nicht wahrgenommen oder kaum jemanden irritierte, mag mitunter durch eine in der musikalischen und musiktheoretischen Literatur weitverbreitete Vorstellung über den Ursprung der zeigenössischen Streichinstrumente begründet gewesen sein." "... in der Entwicklungsgeschichte von der mittelalterlichen Fidel zur *Lira d.br.* die Erweiterung der Saitenzahl auf sieben, gerade durch den vermeintlichen antiken Ursprung der *Lira* beeinflusst war."

²³ See by S. Jones, § 6.

²⁴ See in Appendix B.1. List with names of (probable) players - improvisers on the *lira da braccio*.

²⁵ Italian composers took mostly the poetry by Virgilio and follow the Aristotelian school of "rhythmics", for which is characteristic the prolonging or abbreviation of the syllables and inclusion of pauses. In this way the poetry could be synchronised with/to the bars of music. Beside that, by Italians often occurs the so called "madrigalism". Differently, German composers used mostly the poetry by Horace and followed rather the so called "Alexandrian" school of "metrics". In this last case the poetry, based on firm/closed? forms has the absolute priority.

²⁶ As a member of "Clemencic Consort", our own "Ensemble Lyra Wien", with the Swiss ensemble "Daedalus" as well as a soloist; see the Appendix D. Audio Databank

it is very convenient for the performance on both *liras*. It is interesting to mention that in 2003, for my performances in the festival of early music "Styriarte", I was asked to make a reconstruction of music for seven Orphic hymns, which were translated into Latin by Italian humanist, philosopher, physician and *lyra* player, Marsilio Ficino. For this reconstruction in some cases I used Gregorian chant from medieval Zadar and in two cases odes, published by the Italian humanist of Croatian origin, Franciscus, Francis, Niger in his "Grammatica brevis".²⁷

Although the *liras* were typical product of Italian culture and practice, here I want to quote several sources from which it is clear that they were well-known and used in the German (and Austrian) and the French cultural area, too. In the archives of the University of Vienna it is kept the so called "Celtis chest." According to Adalbert Schusser, among other things, paintings displayed on this chest (it was made 1508, after the death of Conrad Celtis²⁸, German humanist active in Vienna) depict an Apollo (having laurel wreaths on his head) who plays the fiddle (or lira da braccio?).²⁹ It is interesting that this chest was used to store the insignia of the Viennese "*Collegium poetarum et mathematicorum*", founded by the Austro - German Emperor Maximilian in 1501.

Also interesting are the two quotations from the list of the musical instruments from the Ambrass castle (close Innsbruck), dating 1596; first, under no. 230 says: "*Lyro-violâ purchased in Cremona, four pieces, two tenor and two of soprano size ...*", and the other, "*one Lira*"³⁰

In the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, there is preserved a sketch (which was made for the procession in Vienna, in 1571, by the famous Milanese painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo), which shows a male costumed person with a small lira da braccio in his right hand.³¹

From the writings of French music theorists M. Mersenne (1636), it is clear that in France the *lyre* (da gamba) has been played by the "Orpheus of France," Le Bailiff. In his book Imke David identifies this musician as Jean-Antoine de Baif (1532-1589), famous French humanist and poet, inventor of the so-called. "*Vers mesurée à l'Antique*," and founder of the Academy of "poetry and music." I could not find the name "le Bailiff" in any of the French, English or German musical lexicon.

Relatively recent it came out that primarily lira da braccio (but also lira da gamba), appears in the dutch and french painting of the late 16th and th whole 17th century - maybe because numerous artists from those regions have been active in Italy, too. Lira

²⁷ About which I was informed by my colleague, dr Ennio Stipčević (Zagreb), who kindly put on my disposition his article containing his own transcription of five odas by Niger.

²⁸ Konrad Celtes

²⁹ Celtis Truhe, Wien, 1508, Holz, 31 x 31 x 31. Bemalung in Tempera Archiv der Universität Wien, U.A. Ins. 114. See in the Supplement, F.8.

³⁰ „Lyro - viole, so zu Cremona erkhaufft worden, vier stuckh, als zwei tenor und zwei discant"; 2. "ain lira".

³¹ See Appendix F, iconographical example nr. 2 a.

da gamba has been used exclusively for chordal (proto - basso continuo) playing, and its main role was the accompaniment of singing. According to my own practical experience, I can say that on this instrument you can perform even independent (improvised or notated) instrumental introductions and interludes, and homophonic chordal dance of the 16th and early 17th c.

Although Erin Headley found the first mention of the *lira da gamba* already in the early 16th century³², it seems that it definitely enters into the musical practice towards the middle of the same century. As bowed continuo instrument *lira da gamba* has been mentioned equally often in the sources speaking about the performances of religious or secular music. Of particular importance it has been its role in the theatrical music of the second half of the 16th and the early opera and oratorio throughout the whole 17th century, especially in Venice, and later in all other major Italian music centres like Florence, Naples and Rome.³³

§ 3 Terminology:

Emanuel Winternitz, Austrian-born American musicologist, devoted an entire chapter to the terminology in his article on the *lira da braccio* and *da gamba*, published in the first edition of the MGG.

Lira da braccio was one of the most important bowed instruments of the Renaissance, which developed directly from the medieval fiddle.

The music literature and archival sources from the mid 15th to the late 16th century mention *lira da braccio* under numerous names. In the beginning, mostly called *lyra*, during the 16th century, under *lira* or *lira moderna* (as opposed to the ancient instrument of the same name: *lira antica*), *lira di sette corde*, *lira da spalla* and *lira con l'archetto*. From the second half of the 16th century it starts to be called *viola*. For example Giorgio Vasari, describing a musical instrument in 1564 says: "... una *lira* ovvero *viola* ...". In 1581 Vincenzo Galilei explains that not so long ago *viola da braccio* was called *lira*! Let us remember that music theorist Johannes Tinctoris (1435-1511) when mentioning *lyra* thinks always on the lute.³⁴

To illustrate even better this terminological confusion present in the contemporary sources, we shall quote the Venetian musician and composer Sylvestro Ganassi. In his treatise "*Regola Rubertina*" (or more precisely, its second part, "*Lettione Seconda*" from 1543) he first speaks about the *lira di sette corde* (which in itself has a clear meaning and refers with certainty to the Renaissance *lira da braccio*). However, when

³² In her book on *lira da gamba* Imke David confirms with one document that *lira da gamba* was invented by Attalante Migliorotti, friend and student of Leonardo da Vinci, in 1505. See more about this on p. 35, V. Penniman.

³³ See Appendix E; musical examples; A. List with....

³⁴ See by Tinctoris, Haraszti and similar/etc.

the author later in the same work reports on an antique fund from Rome, (where presumably a player of bowed instrument is depicted) he says that "... *player holds the viola d'arco ... which one should better call lira or lirone and not viola or violone ...* ".

As an Italian colleague Rodolfo Baroncini (1994) showed, at least in the 16th century Venice terms *lira* and *lirone* could mean *violin* and *violone* (i.e. various members of the violin family). This, in other words, means that even when one or both *liras* are mentioned by name, this must not always be sure proof³⁵ that we really have to do with our instruments.

I think that (at least in the first period from 1470 to 1530) for the humanist, neo-Platonists, artists and musicians (like M. Ficino, L. da Vinci, G. Ferrari or Raphael) the fact if someone accompanies her or his singing improvising on the plucked or bowed instrument, it was of secondary importance. The act itself, so called "Gesamtkunstwerk", or supposed revival of ancient musical practice was for them and their audience the most important.

When *lira* and/or *lirone* are mentioned in the descriptions of the intermedia instrumentation³⁶ for stage work "La Pellegrina" of 1589, separately or together, it is not anymore a reliable evidence that *lira da braccio* was still in use.

Later³⁷, we are in big trouble if we want to be sure that in certain cases the name *lira* means really our instrument and not an ordinary viol or one member of the violin family. Only when we find in the written sources terms like *lirone*, *lira da gamba*, *arciviolata*, *arciviolatalira* or *lirone perfetto / imperfetto*, we can be sure that here it has been meant *lira da gamba*. Furthermore, this musical instrument could be found under the names *arcivioladaslyras*, *lyra*, *lyrone*, *lyra de gamba*, *lira*, *lira in gamba*, *gran lira*, *lira grande*, *lira*, or *lyra doppia* and *lyra perfecta*.

§ 4 Organological features:

The body and neck of the earliest *liras* (last quarter of the 15th century) were, presumably, built from a single piece of wood, to which a soundboard was fixed. It could be assumed that in the transitional period it was not possible to make a clear distinction between the late form of the medieval fiddle (*vielle*) and the early forms of *lira da braccio*. About organological features of the *lira da braccio*, Dorothea Baumann says the following: "*The denomination *lira da braccio* has been used from 15th to the 17th century for a bowed instrument with a body shape first similar to*

³⁵ As in their writings has been interpreted by H.M. Brown, Erin Headley, Imke David and V. Penniman.

³⁶ See Bastiano de' Rossi: *Descrizione dell'apparato, e degl'intermedi*. ... Firenze: Anton Padovani, 1589 and Cristofano Malvezzi, ed., *Intermedii et concerti*, ... Venice complete title in the Supplement A., Bibliography.

³⁷ From 1550 on and especially at the end of the 16th century, when/ as the *lira da braccio* slowly disappears from the art music and mutate to a kind of folk instrument, see by S. Cerreto, 1608.

medieval fiddle, then like a violin with a slightly recessed bottom of the body³⁸, C- or F- sound holes, in the typically with 5 strings on the fingerboard and two drone strings outside it, with barely curved bridge, which was allowing to perform three - to four (IP: or five) note chords. Initially the fingerboard had frets that disappeared as latest around 1600."³⁹ Although there are few sources that display *lira da braccio* with frets, we cannot consider it typical for this instrument, before all iconographic sources are collected in one place and successively analysed. But we should keep in our mind that Lanfranco (1533, see note 15) expressly says that the frets have not been used on the *lira da braccio*.

On the basis of six (presumably) in the original form survived *liras da braccio* and four so called *lira - violas*⁴⁰ we cannot make any conclusions about the construction of the typical *lira da braccio*. In no one single case (Sterling Jones thought at least two of them are not altered) we cannot be certain that the survived instruments have been originally built or used as *liras da braccio*. The most important parts of the instrument, the neck, fingerboard, tailpiece, bridge, strings and bows in any case are not preserved.

With *lira da gamba* (sometimes called *lirone*) the situation is, unfortunately, not better; there are seven (alleged) originals and fragments of an eight instrument⁴¹, but not in one single case we can be sure in their authenticity. Based on Karel Moens (1988, see bibliography) and on my own, as well as on the research done by Imke David, it may be that we do not have any *lira* (da *braccio* or da *gamba*) preserved in its original form. It seems that those preserved have been made out of instruments, built originally as viols, cellos, violas or violins (from 16th, 17th and 18th centuries) during the 19th century ... We have to ask ourselves what was the purpose to do similar things?

The first rare and so called "Historical" concerts (with the use of original instruments and, much later, proper playing technique and interpretation) occurs indeed in the 19th century (organised and performed by person like J. J. Fétis, A. Dolmetsch etc.), but serious and systematic experiments in this direction started only about a century later. Is it possible that the above mentioned fake original *liras* (of both kind) emerged in the heads of some directors of (in this period newly established) collections or museums of historical instruments (for instance in Vienna, Berlin, Brussels or

³⁸ The feature which, according to S. Jones, is to be rarely found on iconographical presentations of the period but present at the all of the extant (presumed) originals.

³⁹ On the page 35: "Die Bezeichnung *Lira d.br.* ist vom 15. bis ins 17. Jh. gebräuchlich für ein Streichinstrument mit fidel., dann violinähnlichen Resonanzkörper mit leicht eingezogenem Unterbügel, C-oder f-Löchern, in der Regel mit 5 Griffsaiten und 2 nicht über das Griffbrett Taufenden Bordunsaiten und mit flachem Steg, der drei-bis vierstimmiges Akkordspiel erlaubt. ... Das Griffbrett war zunächst mit Bündlen versehen, die spätestens nach 1600 verschwanden". Here must be said the not only the frets, as stated by Baumann, but the instrument itself disappeared as latest around 1600...

⁴⁰ According to Jones, those instruments could be originally build as *liras da braccio* and only later transformed to violas.

⁴¹ Catalogue by G. Kinsky, no. 784.

Leipzig) because they wanted to be able to show there something exotic, mysterious, maybe even the “missing link” in the development of the violin family⁴²?

Obviously, we will never know the answer.

Taking into consideration both, the preserved *liras* and the rich iconography of especially *lira da braccio* (to the lesser extent *lira da gamba*), we can say that the construction of *lira da braccio* (depending on the period about which we are speaking) was similar to the medieval fiddle, later *viola da braccio* and at the end an early violin. Even if it belongs to the different family of *liras*, *lira da gamba* was built very much like "usual" viol. Number of strings of the *lira da braccio* was (mostly) seven and 11 to 18 by the *lira da gamba*.

Already mentioned Emanuel Winternitz⁴³, on the basis of his own extensive iconographic research, identified three basic body shapes by the *lire da braccio*:

- Oval, narrow body with a slightly inwards turned sides, without the corners
- Because of the division of the body in two parts: the upper narrower and longer and lower wider and shorter part;
- The body is divided in three parts, as the immediate predecessor of the violin shape
- In his book, Sterling Jones distinguishes the following shapes of *lira da braccio*⁴⁴:
 - A. a violin-like with four corners (present through the whole time of its use)
 - B. two corners, two on each side of the lower bouts (first third of the 15th century)
 - C. body without corners, guitar-shape and similar to the medieval fiddle (late 15th and first third of the 16th century)
 - D. *lira* shape can not be identified (for instance, musical instrument is shown viewed from below or from the back of the player)
 - E. elliptical shape resembling medieval fiddle, too (in his book, Jones delivers a single representation of this shape, which is almost indistinguishable from the medieval instrument).

With Jones's analysis of iconographic depictions of the *lira da braccio*, we shall deal more intense in the sixth chapter, dedicated to iconographic sources.

⁴² See Appendix C. List of preserved *liras*.

⁴³ Emanuel Winternitz: article "Lira da braccio", in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, first edition, 1960.

⁴⁴ See in Supplement II C. Pictures of Preserved *liras* etc., Various shapes of the *liras da braccio*, S. Jones, p.9

For comparison, we also give here the classification of various shapes of the medieval fiddle done by D. Baumann⁴⁵:

A. flat oval

B. long - elliptical shape,

C. as a number eight inducted in the middle, since the 13th century developed more towards guitar-shaped,

D. in the 15th century a) with two corners and later b) with four corners and 3-5 strings”

Starting already in the late 12th century the sides have been cut round and then glued.

The pegs sits on the top of the pegbox.⁴⁶

Late english maker and player of the lira da braccio, colleague Joseph M. Skeaping (d. 2016)⁴⁷, considered that organologically speaking, we should distinguish between two basic types of instruments. The first, or what he calls the "classical" form of lira, was very similar to medieval fiddle, while the second one was basically a violin or viola with seven strings and with flat bridge - that allowed playing of the chords. The first form had a larger body but a lighter construction.

Only when all iconographic sources (especially Italian, but also those who were painted or drawn by Italian artists, or others who stood under Italian influence, were made in other countries, for example in Croatia) have been found, listed and analysed, we shall be able to make more definitive conclusions. That was (and after more than 20 years remains) the main task of my Lira DATABASE, which I started at the beginning of this project, in 1996.⁴⁸

Thanks to Benvenuto Disertori (who noticed this as first already in early forties of the 20th century) and Imke David who enlarged this relatively recently (1999), we now know about the existence of at least three iconographic sources that show almost identical form of the lira da gamba, one could say its "standard" shape. Interesting enough, to this type belongs relatively small instrument of which only one photo (before destruction during the Second World War) and a few fragments remained: part of the neck and fingerboard, pegbox, tailpiece and the button to fix it.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Baumann, Dorothea: "Streichinstrumente des Mittelalters und der Renaissance" in: *Music in Art* 1999.

⁴⁶ Similar to many pictorial evidences of the lira da braccio.

⁴⁷ In his *Manual for the playing the lira da braccio*, 1998, see the bibliography.

⁴⁸ As well as of IPs LiraFORUM, which exist on the Facebook as a group and functions pretty well.

⁴⁹ See Appendix F. no. 3 a,b and 4 a,b, respectively the drawing by B. Disertori, we published as a supplement to the article on the books by S. Jones and I. David in „*Arti Musices*“, no.1/ 2001.

§ 5 Contemporary sources, tuning and playing techniques:

5.1. Written sources:

Both liras are mentioned frequently in written (archival or literary) sources, from which (as in the case of iconography - with due caution ...) it is possible to learn something about their significance, role, way of use, the social status of musicians and the performance practice of the period in general.

About *lira da braccio* and *da gamba* several famous music theorist and or composers have written during the 16th and early 17th centuries. Particularly valuable information about these instruments gave Giovanni Maria Lanfranco (1533), Silvestro Ganassi (1549), Hieronymus Cardanus (Cardan) in 1550, Gioseffo Zarlino (1558), Ludovico Zacconi (1592), Scipione Cerreto (1601 and 1608), Agostino Agazzari (1607), Pedro Cerone (1613), Michael Praetorius (1619), Francesco Rognoni (1620), Marin Mersenne (1636 and 1648), André Maugars (1639), Athanasius Kircher (1650) and Angelo Berardi (1689)⁵⁰.

Lanfranco gives the relative tuning of the *lira da braccio* strings - in fact only relations of the intervals between the strings, without the exact pitch - what most of other authors later simply copied. Ganassi (besides the already mentioned terminological confusion) provides some important information about the playing technique (see below 5.1.2. Playing techniques). Cardanus gives detailed information on the *lira* played by Alessandro Striggio (elder) and something about both *lira antica* and *lira moderna*, ian. *lira da braccio*.

Cerreto and Mersenne - except details of tuning and information about the technique of playing the *lira da gamba* (and just short about the *lira da braccio*) - give two short musical examples (fragments) for the *lira da gamba*. Both authors (in particular this is true for Cerreto) give some information about the players of *lira da gamba* of the period, Cerreto in Naples and Mersenne obviously in France.

Agostino Agazzari, composer and musician at once (which was almost the rule at that time) is talking about the role of *lira da gamba* as a continuo instrument, and Praetorius repeats more or less information taken from several Italian colleagues (we could assume that he has never seen or heard *lira da braccio* personally, because for the drawing of it he uses slightly altered version of his drawing of the *lira da gamba* ...) ⁵¹. In his book on the *lira da gamba*, Imke David brings all these treatises in the original language and in not always correct German translation.

⁵⁰ Erroneously, or due to the printing mistake, in the Imke David's book André Maugars appears as Maugar and Berardi as Bardi.

⁵¹ About which I was informed by dr Anette Otterstedt, at this time at the Museum of early musical instruments, Berlin

Italian physician, philosopher, mathematician and music theorist Hieronymus Cardanus (Girolamo Cardano, Jerome Cardan)⁵² gives not only very important information about the *lira* of Alessandro Striggio (elder) (see 5.1.4.) but also some information on the *lira da braccio*. From his writings it seems that around 1550⁵³ this instrument in the circles of humanist and musicians has still the same place and role as fifty years before, at the time of its greatest popularity, prestige and prosperity. Cardanus distinguishes between two types of *liras da braccio*: *lira maior* with seven strings (tuned in same intervals as by Lanfranco) and *lira parva* with three strings tuned in fifths. The latter is reminiscent of the tuning of the rebec / rubebe. As Cardanus calls the "ordinary" *lira (da braccio)* *lira maior*, this could explain on which instruments Nicholas Gombert thought, when he said that the soprano part of his motets (in four parts from 1539) could be performed on *lyris maioribus*.

Beside that Cardanus says "... *there is no instrument more perfect than lira, which offers so much pleasure, which is matching so remarkably well with the human voice and represents the instrument of the Gods, because they play on it often on numerous depictions ...*"⁵⁴. Of course, some of those allegations, particularly the last one, could very easily apply on the *lira da braccio* and not only on the *lira da gamba* - as this was interpreted by Imke David.

According to Cerreto⁵⁵, *lira da braccio* (at least in Naples and southern Italy) during the last third of the 16th century lost the place it has held unchallenged for a whole century. Instead of humanist, famous artists and musicians, the instrument has now been played and used for singing accompaniment almost exclusively by people from the lowest social classes: the blind, itinerant beggars and street musicians. In any case, even then it remains in the area of improvised musical practice and, very likely, it has given the name to a real "drone" instrument - Hurdy-Gurdy (German *Drehleier*, Italian *Gironda*). Not only Haydn, but also many other composers called this instrument *lira* ...

In his most famous work, "*Della prattica musica Vocale et Strumentale*" (1601) Cerreto gives a series of practical tips and several musical examples for *lira da gamba*. Similarly, to Pesaro manuscript, we find in Cerreto treatise chords and a short fragments that gives us insight into a forgotten technique of playing of this instrument. French music theorist, father Marin Mersenne⁵⁶, gives to the *lira da gamba* (or as he calls it: *lyre*) a pretty important place, describing its construction, the relations between the length of its strings, neck and frets and its properties and role, and adds a short musical fragment, "Laudate Dominum" (see in Supplement E).

⁵² See the bibliography under Cardanus respectively Miller.

⁵³ According to V. Ivanoff, exactly in the time when Tempesta Blondi at Pesaro (?) notate his fragments for *lira da braccio*, see Pesaro MS. The newest research indeed put the formation of this manuscript between 1490 and 1511.

⁵⁴ All my quotations about writings by H. Cardanus, are based on english translation of the latin original made by Clement A. Miller and published 1973; see the bibliography.

⁵⁵ In his less known work "Dell' arbore musicale" from 1608.

⁵⁶ In his work "Harmonie Universelle" from 1636.

5.1.1. Ways of tuning the *lire*:

From various contemporary sources we can conclude that the *lira da braccio* was tuned similarly to violin. As we said, Lanfranco (1533.) gives a relative tuning (in intervals), and Praetorius (1619) an exact tuning. Based on the writings of the first author (and presuming it handles about a smaller, violin like instrument), deepest strings (outside of the fingerboard) were tuned in octave *D - d*, and the remaining strings on the fingerboard in the octave *G - g*, *d'*, *a'* and *e''*⁵⁷, - by Praetorius (who, concerning the *lira da braccio* - as we have already stressed -, is not a fully reliable source), the highest string was tuned *d''*. Disertori guessing that larger *liras da braccio* ought to be tuned a fifth lower - like a modern viola - has been confirmed by Sterling Jones, J.M. Skeaping and my own experiments.

Lira da gamba could have 9 -14 strings on and 2 - 4 ones outside the fingerboard. Its unusual but ingenious tuning and unique sound qualities were highly estimated by most of music theorists, music writers, musicians - composers in the second half of the 16th and throughout the 17th the century. Mentions about the instrument appeared in various works of theory of music and musical lexicons a whole century after it disappeared from the music practice. *Lira da gamba* (*lirone*) has been tuned in ascending fifths (or descending fourths). Although the information on the tuning of the instrument, as given by Cerreto, Praetorius and Mersenne, differ somewhat regarding the overall range, they all have in common above mentioned tuning in ascending fifths.⁵⁸

This tuning allows the player to perform most (four or five part) major and minor chords with the same grip, in a kind of "*jeux barée*". Additionally, on this instrument we can relatively easy perform various suspensions (for instance 4 -3, 7-6), chord of seventh or ninth and their inversions, diminished or augmented chords, etc.

In the strong contrast to the above mentioned, there are information on the *lira* of Alessandro Striggio (elder)⁵⁹ given by H. Cardanus: eighteen strings of the instrument were tuned in a succession of major - triads (see Appendix E, musical examples, 7). In his otherwise valuable and interesting book on the *lira da gamba*, Imke David unfortunately does not mention this important fact.⁶⁰

5.1.2. The technique of playing:

What Ganassi tells about singing accompaniment on the *lira di sette corde*, without further notice could be applied to the (bigger) *lira da gamba*. The notice "*Prattica del dire i bassi ...*" explains Disertori with singing the (soprano) melody an octave lower,

⁵⁷ I am using the so called "Helmholtz pitch notation", see Wikipedia for more details.

⁵⁸ See Appendix E, music examples no. 4.a – e.

⁵⁹ More about that check under 5.1.4. Cardanus on *lira*.

⁶⁰ See Appendix E. musical examples no. 5. a, b and 7 c.

so that the chords of the lira (da braccio or da gamba) actually sounds higher than singing. Of course, also the different interpretation is possible. In my opinion, the singer - player of the lira da braccio could sing bass part of the frottola, or homophonic written madrigals. This would certainly help that some chords (with fifth in the bass, for instance), sound more complete and more convincing.

Cerreto, Agazzari and Mersenne provide unmistakably instructions on the slow legato bow stroke, same as Rognoni⁶¹, who use the term *lireggiare* for that. This term with the same meaning but applied to all bowed instruments, remained in the use for decades. Let us mention once again that in addition to the already mentioned, Cerreto said that due to the fact the bridge is hardly curved and almost flat, player must play several strings simultaneously and tie three to four notes on one bow.

5.1.3. Players of the lira da braccio and da gamba in the 15th, 16th and 17 century:

From a various contemporary written sources (archival, literary, treatises) I have accumulated a list of possible performers on the liras (da braccio and da gamba) of the last third of the 15th to the end of the 17th c. Their number and the names, the importance they had in their time, demonstrate most eloquently the high esteem both instruments enjoyed in the period of their popularity.⁶²

From forty humanists, artists and musicians who between 1470 and 1530th played the lira and (in most cases) accompanied their singing by ad hoc improvised chordal accompaniment, only for a small number of cases we can be absolutely sure that they did it really on the lira da braccio, and not on a lute, another plucked instrument or viola da braccio. From a somewhat smaller number - some thirty composers, musicians and singers (usually united in the same person in this period) who presumably played the lira da gamba, for some of them it could be that they played only a "normal" viol. According to Cerreto only in Naples and during his time (around 1600) it existed seven known master - players of the lira da gamba.

5.1.4. H. Cardanus on the *lira* by Alessandro Striggio (elder):

We have already mentioned that Cardanus (in addition to a number of other interesting information) has left a relatively detailed description of the *lira*, which was played by A. Striggio (elder)⁶³. Due to the fact that Striggio⁶⁴ was known as one of the best players of the *lira* (presumably: da gamba) of the period, one could expect a lot from Cardanus report. Since he has (according to his own words) seen and heard

⁶¹ He gives 1620 interesting remark, which confirms a bit earlier one by Cerreto (from 1608) that lira da braccio in this period is scarcely known.

⁶² See more about that by A. Baldassare; § 2, and Appendix A. bibliography.

⁶³ We may not confound him with his son, of the same name, renown poet and author of the libretto for C. Monteverdi's opera "Orfeo" and close friend of the Italian composer.

⁶⁴ Living from 1537 till 1592; famous and in his time very appreciated composer, musician and diplomat.

Striggio's *lira*, we have to believe when he says that the instrument was as big as an adult man⁶⁵ - a kind of double bass viola da gamba, with no less than 18 strings on the fingerboard! This *lira* was tuned in six major triads⁶⁶ (placed one above the other) having an overall range of five and a half octaves. How such an instrument might look like and how its 18 strings could be played on ONE relatively flat bridge? The schematic (and in any case poorly drawn) sketch of this instrument, made by Cardanus, does not help at all to solve this puzzle.⁶⁷ What was possible to play on such instrument, or better: what Striggio played on it that his contemporaries were so delighted with his performances - we could almost say, recitals?

My practical research⁶⁸ clearly showed that this method of tuning allows one to perform significantly fewer chords than for example one given by Cerreto or Mersenne. In addition, other than Cardanus, I decided to use the minor triads, because they give slightly greater number of possibilities compared to the original version ... Was Striggio's playing some kind of anticipation of what - maybe under his own but certainly under the direct Italian influence - English people some 30 - 40 years later called *lyra* - *viol*, which was essentially a "normal" viol with many special tunings and its own playing technique? This technique, similar to the lute, implied that player accompanies the melody on the higher strings with (his own) chords, on the lower strings. In the A. Otterstedt book about the english lyra-viol, I found a way of tuning identical to that of Striggio's (although with "only" six-strings) - of German origin and from the year 1741!⁶⁹

5.2. Music sources and those connected with them:

As we shall report about the fragments of music for *lira da gamba* left by S. Cerreto and M. Mersenne more later⁷⁰, we shall limit ourselves here to a relatively detailed analysis of the Pesaro manuscript⁷¹ as well as several other secondary but interesting sources.

⁶⁵ See the picture no., from Bonani.

⁶⁶ Similar to the tuning of the viola d'amore.

⁶⁷ See Appendix F, iconographic examples no.5 b .

⁶⁸ For the sake of which I re-tuned my tenor viol (in G) as the six middle strings of the Striggio's *lira* - i.e. the strings 7 to 12 or two triads.

⁶⁹ See Appendix E, music examples no.5.a,b and 7.a -c.: tunings of the period, my corrections and the reconstruction of the chords which/whose one could play on *lira* by A. Striggio. See too the Appendix F. iconographic examples, no.13., my reconstruction of the possible outline of the Striggio's instrument and painting by P. F. Mola, on which a young man plays bigger viol with eight (or nine?) strings. It is interesting that the pegs for six of them are placed as usual, in the pegbox- on the left side of of the instrument (presumably at the end of the fingerboard?) it could be seen two pegs for - I suppose - high and because of that rather short strings.

⁷⁰ I deal with them in chapter § 7. Reconstruction of the playing technique and § 8. Reconstruction of the repertory.

⁷¹ Found and preserved, under the no. 1144 in the library "Oliveriana" in this Italian town.

Due to V. Ivanoff the Pesaro manuscript was written by mid-16th century⁷² and represents the only known source from which we could learn something about the technique of playing the *lira da braccio*. The manuscript was discovered by Walter Rubsamen, and had been analysed and printed by H. M. Brown, Vladimir Ivanoff, and S. S. Jones. All musical examples (fragments of music and chords) are written in the so called Italian lute tablature, in which the frets (unlike the French tablature, using the letters instead) are identified by numbers: 0 for an open string, 1 for the first fret, etc. On four pages (no. 173 - 176) the examples come, starting with (in the form of the scale) all tones that can be played on the *lira*.

There follow chords G, Bb, F, C, D major, D, A, Eb and G minor, in different inversions that can be played on the (renaissance) lute, and then the same chord (with the exception of D minor and smaller number of inversions) on the *lira da braccio*.

Further, two brief music examples are given: a “*Romanesca*” and fragment of a “*Passamezzo de lira*”. They show how to use one of the many ways the *lira* has been played. Melody (without use of the highest string) remains at the top, while the chords (harmonic accompaniment) are in the middle and lower register. In the nature of the tablature lies its weakness: solely on the basis of it (without the additional information on the rhythm, as used by both the Italian and French tablature for lute - but even with them ...) it is not possible to be sure whether a single note in the chord, should sound longer or shorter, should they be played arpeggiando or sound simultaneously.

As next, in the manuscript it comes a sort of “catalogue”, containing all chords that could be played on the *lira da braccio*. According to H.M. Brown, during writing the author (or scribe) made four to five obvious errors. Three of them have been corrected by V. Ivanoff, and all of them has been solved by S. Jones.

It is interesting to notice that in the entire manuscript, the highest string (e’’) is used exclusively in the first example of that manuscript, while in all chords and both musical examples, i.e. the fragments, this has not been done. This is even more surprising, as due to its inclusion we got a number of very usable chords.⁷³ The remaining four pages of Pesaro manuscript were lost, but thanks Tempesta Blondi (who according to V. Ivanoff was one of the owners and writers of notations and probably the player of the *lira da braccio*) and his *Tavola* (content) we know at least the titles of the songs, which are (probably irreversibly) lost:

str. 173) *note p(er) la lira*
Botte d(el) leuto
le medesime botte d(el) leuto

⁷² The newest research put it indeed to an earlier period, between 1490 and 1511.

⁷³ Due to the experiments done by S. Jones and my own ones.

(str. 174) *Romanesca*

(str. 175) *pasamezo*

(str. 176) *simitoni fora dei tasti*

Intavolatura d(e)l la lira

(str. 177) *e(h) non (oder: Dar) piu guerra* - lost

(str. 184) *Bataglia* - lost

(str. 187) ? - lost

(str. 188) ? - lost

This loss is just one of several cases due to which we lose some further sources of information on the technique of playing of the lira da braccio: Silvestro Ganassi in his treatise "*Regola Rubertina*" (more precisely, in its second part "*Lettione Seconda*", Chapter XVI .) promised that, as next, he shall write a book about the lira da braccio. If he ever did - we do not know. Aurelio Virgiliano (late 16th century) in his work (preserved in manuscript but carefully prepared for print), "*Il Dolcimello*"⁷⁴ has left charts with different fingerings for various instruments of that time (including even renaissance sackbut), and - among other things - an empty beautifully decorated page with a title *lira* ...

Together with colleague S. Jones, we can only hope that the above four-page from Pesaro manuscript will be found one day, which could contribute to a better understanding of the performing practices and techniques of playing on the lira da braccio and enrich its (lost) repertoire.

The remaining music sources belong almost exclusively to intermedi in which, between 1539 and 1600 (sometimes even later), at the beginning lira da braccio, for a certain period both, and at the end only lira da gamba appeared relatively frequently: as an accompaniment for singing or in a variety of instrumental and vocal-instrumental ensembles. In many cases the music have been lost, the parts devoted to liras have been anyway improvised. In rare fortunate occasions where the music has been preserved (of course, written as a normal score and not as "realisation" for *lira*...), we have no idea which of the two instruments have been used, which was the voice or part it performed nor the way it played. The only thing we find mentioned there are indications (above or below the specific line of music) of the names *lira* or *lirone*.

⁷⁴ See the bibliography.

In addition, let us mention that H. Cardanus (in his treatise “*De Tranquillitate*”) brings a musical example (actually, only the single melody without the chords), entitled “*Lamentatio*”, for which he says⁷⁵ that he has composed it on the occasion of the death of his son, “*performed after the dinner ... singing the upper and performing other four voices on the lira*”.

§ 6. Iconographic sources:

The iconography is one of our most important (often the only) sources, not only for the study of organological features, but also for the reconstruction of the playing technique (holding of instruments, hand positions, etc.) and performing practice of the renaissance music in general. As already recommended by Emanuel Winternitz, the iconographic sources should always be used with due caution.

In a number of iconographic depictions *lira* appears often⁷⁶ because of symbolic reasons. It is therefore very difficult to use its appearance in a variety of instrumental and vocal-instrumental ensembles as a reliable source for the performance practice of the period. Some of these sources are more, some less realistically painted, and some of the subsequent restorations “corrected” instruments into violins or violas ... In any case, one can easily tell if the artist (who painted it) had or not at all certain knowledge of the instrument and its playing technique.

As we saw in the second chapter, devoted to the role of liras and their distribution in Europe from the end of the 15th till the end of the 17th century, *lira da braccio* often appears as an instrument of humanists and - as a “natural” replacement, successor of the ancient *lyre* - in the hands of Apollo, Homer and Orpheus, as an attribute of poetry, the muses and satyrs, associated with an allegory of hearing etc. In numerous depictions of religious character, it has been played (or at least hold in their hands) by King David and the angels, often as an ornament or an important symbolic contribution to the larger compositions in praise of the Virgin, Holy Cross, The Presentation of Christ, the Adoration of the shepherds and the Magi, and more.

Starting with Georg Kinsky (1912) several musicologists used in their research of the *liras* iconographic sources and came to very interesting results. Benvenuto Disertori (1940/41 and later), Victor Ravizza (1970), H. M. Brown, and especially E. Winternitz created in this sense a kind of standards, leaving a series of extraordinary articles and gave many useful ideas and guidelines.

In the art of its time *lira braccio* appears in several different forms.

⁷⁵ In the discussion of the three personages: philosopher, citizen and the hermit.

⁷⁶ This guilt primarily for the *lira da braccio*, less for the *lira da gamba*.

In the chapter devoted to organology, i.e. the construction of the lira da braccio and da gamba, we briefly mentioned that Sterling Jones, based on analysis of 97 (more specifically, with two later additions: 99) iconographic sources, divided the shape of instrument as follows⁷⁷:

“A. Lira with four corners, B. lira with two corners, C. lira with no corners, D. instruments that cannot be identified, and E. lira with oval body.”

Given the importance of iconographic study for the problematic of liras, we shall bring here our summary and comments of Jones results.⁷⁸

1.A. Lira with four corners, two on the upper bouts, two on the lower bouts, similar to the shape of violin, could be seen throughout the history of the instrument even if we cannot be certain when this type went out of use. By this type, the curved bridges could be seen more often than the flat ones. The characteristic feature here is the so called indentation at the lower end of the body where the tailpiece was attached. This feature is present on all (presumably) original instruments and on the number (exactly: 53) of the liras in the iconography.

2.B. lira with two corners, usually one on each side of the lower bouts, appeared in the first third of the 16th century, often connected to the religious themes. The majority of bridges are slightly curved and on most liras we cannot see the above mentioned indentation.

3.C. lira with no corners, with a guitar shape, most closely related to the medieval fiddle, occur within the first third of the 16th century, with some dating from the 15th century. Almost the equal number of instruments has more or less curved bridge and majority of them has not the above mentioned indentation.

4.D. instruments that cannot be identified. For instance, when we cannot see any important features because the artist who depicted it is looking from above or behind the back of (presumed lira) player.

5.E. lira with oval body, a shape sometimes found on medieval fiddles as well, has been documented with one example only.

When we compare these four (five) types of instruments with the presumed surviving originals, it is possible to conclude the following:

-All preserved (and those changed in violas) instruments have characteristic indentation at the lower end of the instrument, as well as five strings on the

⁷⁷ See in Supplement II C. Pictures of Preserved liras etc., Various shapes of the liras da braccio, S. Jones, p.9

⁷⁸ See bibliography, Jones, p. 16 – 54 and Supplement Folder C. Organology: S. Jones, Various shapes of the lira da braccio, p.9. On FaceBook, under IPs LiraFORUM group, you can find almost all iconographic material/sources whose Jones analysed in his research.

fingerboard and two outside of it.⁷⁹

-On the contrary, only half of the (99) analysed instruments display the mentioned indentation. In most cases lira da braccio has been played by male players - only exceptionally female, although even in these few cases, it is not sure whether they were probable angels. More than a half of the analysed sources of art comes from the first third of the 16th c.

-Number of strings: from 99 pictorial evidences and 10 surviving original instruments, on 60 evidences it could be determinate with certainty the number of strings but only 16 show a seven strings (by 13 of them number of strings corresponds to the number of pegs) and 26 depict identical number of strings and pegs. According to Jones, only two or three of the (alleged) original instruments have the original neck and pegbox, confirming the number of seven strings.

-Bridge: from 40 iconographic evidences where the bridge could clearly be seen, only nine are almost flat and the others shows various degrees of curvature.

-One or more players (ensembles): in 43 cases only one player is displayed and in 44 other instruments are present. In neither cases it could be seen that two or more liras (violas) da braccio play together. It should be remembered that the sources, describing the performance of the intermedi for "La Pellegrina" (1589), mention almost invariably use of two liras da braccio in the same time and two liras da braccio together with lira da gamba, in two cases. For a comparison, I quote A. Baldassare who mention the iconographic analysis made by Victor Ravizza: *"... of 536 analysed iconographic evidences, a total of 37 shows lira da braccio, where it is displayed as a solo instrument or in duet (almost always with a lute whose use in music was very similar to that of lira da braccio in the case of singing accompaniment) but rarely in a three-or four-part ensemble."*⁸⁰

-Bow: from all (99) pictorial sources only 20 shows long bow, 26 one of medium length, and 35, even a short bow. Contrary to that several contemporary written sources report rather about a long bow ...

Colleague, Sterling S. Jones, sent me a supplement to its iconographic analysis - which among other things, has been made as a result of reactions⁸¹ on his book.

The most important from those amendments: from 99 surveyed art evidences, 71

⁷⁹ When we speak about the presumably preserved, extant, instruments, we don't may lost from the sight? the fact that by any of them we cannot be sure they are genuine.

⁸⁰ p. 18-19: „...von 536 untersuchten ikonographische Quellen befinden sich insgesamt 37 Darstellungen mit einer lira da braccio, auf welchen die oft entweder als Soloinstrument oder im zweistimmigen Ensemble (bezeichnenderweise fast ausnahmslos zusammen mit der Laute, deren musikalische Funktion ähnlich wie bei Lira d.br. in der Begleitung von Gesang bestand dargestellt ist und selten im drei- oder mehr-stimmigen Ensemble."

⁸¹ Including my review published in the RIDIM/RCMI Newsletter; see bibliography.

provide some information about the playing technique of the left hand. 50 of them shows that hand in the so called first position but 12 of them does not show the actual act of playing. In 9 cases (all depicting the act of making music) players of the *lira da braccio* use second or third position. Most of the *lira da braccio* players are holding their thumb and fingers (of the left hand) similar to the violin (or viola), and only 10 of all evidences show the thumb of the left hand over or on the strings of the fingerboard.⁸²

The number of nearly hundred iconographic representations (to which should be added ten presumably original instruments), analysed by Sterling Scott Jones, is certainly great, but given the excellent presence of the *lira da braccio* (and relatively rare *lira da gamba*) in the fine arts of the Renaissance and the early baroque, it is far from being the "definitive". Surprises are always possible, and international projects such as a RIDIM (Répertoire International d'Iconographie Musicale) could bring "to the light" from time to time new sources and provide the possibility of new analysis and corrections. In the past years several important (in some cases traveling) exhibitions took place in Europe, thanks to which we got an array of new iconographic sources.⁸³

§ 7. Reconstruction of the playing techniques and improvisation:

7.1. Benvenuto Disertori:

Disertori, Italian musicologist and engraver, already mentioned several times, was the first of the scholars who already in early forties of the 20th century (more precisely, 1940th and 1941) made an attempt to reconstruct the playing techniques and repertoire on the *lira da braccio*.⁸⁴ His reconstruction was very brave: chords, which (according to him) one could play on the instrument, Disertori "read" from the iconographic depictions originated in the period of the most frequent usage of the *lira da braccio*, its Golden Age - at the end of the 15th to the end of the thirties of the 16th c. We do not know, unfortunately, how many pictorial sources exactly he reviewed working on his article. Even if from his writing we could conclude that there were

⁸² See by Joseph M. Skeaping, § 7.3.

⁸³ From 12th december 2000 till 18th march 2001 an travelling exhibition was held, first in Cremona (Santa Maria della Pietà) and succesively a Vienna (Harrach palace; from 4th april to the 1st July) under the name/title "Dipingere la musica", devoted to the "Music in the Fine Arts of the 16th and the 17th ceturies" (see the bibliography). It have been presented a number of partially known as well some (15) until unknown iconographical sources, showing *lira da braccio* or *lira da gamba*. Among others, there have been exhibited both *liras* from the permanent exhibition in the Viennese "Sammlung alter Musikinstrumente" at Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna. Almost simultaneously, another similar exhibition was held in Italy (first in Rome, Galleria Nazionale d' Arte Antica di Palazzo Barberini, from 15th of december 2000 to 28th of february 2001; later a Siena, in the church Santa Maria della Scala, from 6th of april to the 17th of june 2001) under the title „Colori della Musica“: images, instruments and concerts between „Cinquecento“ and „Seicento“. In this second exhibition too appeared partly known as some unknown depictions of both *lira da braccio* and *da gamba*.

⁸⁴ Doesnt matter if some of the later (and of today) scholars accept or ignores that.

more - he took only 10 into consideration. Disertori published his reflections, reconstructions and proposals in the article "*Pratica e tecnica sulla lira da braccio*".

Violinist himself, Disertori was inclined to consider the whole issue of playing technique on the lira da braccio from the standpoint of modern violin technique of his time, i.e. the first half of the 20th century. Despite that, it remains the fact that it was Disertori who as first laid the foundation and guidelines⁸⁵ on which all others (after him) could further develop the research devoted to liras. Among other things, already then, he realises, that the singing to the accompaniment of the lira (da braccio) was the natural inclination of the Italians towards the monody, in terms of "*Seconda pratica*" by Caccini, Peri, Monteverdi and others, and thus anticipation of the style "*affetuoso e recitativo*", which enters into the music scene only a century later. Even if Disertori's experiments with the chord reconstructions based on the iconographic sources have been very courageous, they could not be ignored because all of them are playable on the lira da braccio and in concordance with practical knowledge about its playing technique. In addition, Disertori deals with some practical aspects of the playing of the lira da braccio, such as depictions that show how the lira players have hold or tuned their instruments. When judging his work today we shall not forget that in the time he made his research and wrote articles on both liras, contemporary musicology still did not know about the only survived source of music for the lira da braccio from the Pesaro manuscript.⁸⁶

7.2. Martin Greulich on the lira da gamba:

In his doctoral thesis entitled "*Contributions to the history of playing stringed instruments in the 16th century*"⁸⁷ from 1933., German musicologist Martin Greulich devoted total of 13 pages to the phenomenon *lire* (slightly less to lira da braccio, a lot more to lira da gamba). In addition to quotations from contemporary sources, Greulich (who was graduated cellist) deals profoundly with the instructions given by S. Cerreto and his fragments in tablature for the lira da gamba, which he brings in his own transcription. Moreover, as first in modern times - on the basis of just mentioned Cerreto's instructions (and musical examples) he makes practical experiments with several liras (da braccio and da gamba) from the museum of historical musical instruments in Leipzig. From his writing, unfortunately, it does not clearly come out with which ones specifically. As Anette Otterstedt said: "*to the Greulich's thinking (and writing) about the technique of holding the bow today some objections could be*

⁸⁵ See bibliography

⁸⁶ In 2000, I succeeded to come in touch with the on of the late Benvenuto Disertori (died 1969), ing. arh. Andrea Disertori, who kindly sent to me and to my use? gave (partly) unpublished articles, original drawings and separates (?) of his father, in his time renown and acclaimed engraver. Also on this place, I want to thank him cordially for that.

⁸⁷ "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Streichinstrumentenspiels im 16. Jahrhunderts."

made, although it is the fact that at that time there was almost no musician who owned any experience with the so called under grip bowing."⁸⁸

And further, A. Otterstedt: " ... *I suppose that the players of the lira da braccio and da gamba performed their chords in a similar way, and that one not necessarily - what Greulich apparently assumed - must play all strings simultaneously, but rather in broken chords of a 'arpeggiando' kind.*"⁸⁹ Based on my own experience, I can say (colleague Otterstedt is an excellent player of the "normal" and so called English lyra viol but obviously does not know the technique of playing both *liras*) that I certainly do not share her opinion. After all, in his article *lira* (in which there is very little about the lira braccio, a little bit more about the lira da gamba) in a more recent edition of the music encyclopaedia MGG⁹⁰, she has somehow mitigated these misconceptions about the technique of playing in broken chords on both *liras*.

Imke David,⁹¹ on the basis of intensive study of contemporary treatises and her own practical experience, has the opinion that the notes of a three - to five part chords have to be performed with one bow stroke and (almost) simultaneous sounding of all strings. Based on my own practical experience I can absolutely share this opinion.

Let us turn to Martin Greulich. Apart of the practical experiments with playing the lira da gamba (where he primarily deals with the problem of how, with the previously described underhand or palm up holding of the bow, to play as many notes of a chord as possible), Greulich tried to find some more examples of the (original) repertoire for both *liras* and so he came to musical fragments published by Marin Mersenne 1636. As a support of his thesis he brought two more reconstructions of his own, the singing of the priest, the composition of Alfonso Della Viola, intermedia from the dramatic work, "Il sacrificio" (1554) for *lira* (in the original, presumably intended for a performance on the lira da braccio; Greulich decides for lira da gamba)⁹² and the madrigal "*Io che l'onde raffreno*" by Cristoffano Malvezzi from the intermedia for "La Pellegrina", 1589.

⁸⁸ This holding of the bow was typical for the family of viols, German double bass as well as for the majority of traditional bowed instruments even today; for instance the Croatian *gusle* and *lijerica*, Greek *lyra* and Bulgarian *gadulka*.

⁸⁹ In her book "Die Englische Lyra- Viol: Instrument und Technik" (Kassel: Bärenreiter 1989). The quotation taken from the page 27, footnote no.10: "zu Greulichs Bogentechnik wäre jedoch einiges einschränkende zu sagen, wobei man ihm zugute halten muss dass zu seiner Zeit wohl kaum jemand Erfahrungen mit der Untergriffhaltung besass." i dalje: "ich vermute dass sowohl die Lira da braccio als auch die Lira da gamba ihre Akkorde im akustischen Bild ähnlich formten und es bei beiden nicht zwingend auf ein - von Greulich offenbar erwartetes - gleichzeitiges Anstreichen aller Saiten, sondern auf rasches Arpeggieren hinauslief."

⁹⁰ See bibliography.

⁹¹ She didnt mention Greulich's research, published in the form of booklet which could be found in the libraries of the most Austrian or German universities, thus we can suppose that she haven't know about its existence; see our review of her book on lira da gamba in „Arti Musices“, no. 1/2001.

⁹² The reconstruction of this piece of music have been after him by Wolfgang Osthoff (twice) and by Sterling Jones; see under/in § 8. Reconstruction of the repertory.

For his reconstructions Greulich invented a very clever system how the music for the *liras* (in the original, that is in rare surviving fragments notated in tablature with 7 to 13 lines) transfers to the normal notation on five lines. He marked the strings (starting from the lowest one) with Arabic numerals, which must be learned by heart. Within musical examples stay at every single note the number of string on which the player must play it.⁹³

Certainly it is a pity that Martin Greulich did not continue to work on the issues of *liras* and possibly came in touch with Benvenuto Disertori, who dealt with the same problematic only 6 - 7 years later. We do not know what happened to him later, whether he survived the Second World War or not. Despite the fact that Annette Otterstedt informed about his achievements the international musical and scientific community already in 1989, Greulich's experiments have remained completely unknown not only to American but also to the majority of European colleagues - musicians and musicologists.

Concluding this section, I would like to quote what Greulich says about playing the *lira da gamba* in the conclusion of his thesis: *"If we look upon once more in the light of the stylistic and historical point of view, this practice on the lira da gamba means a pronounced feeling for pure chordal playing of a triad as such - in an isolated form - conscious of a distinguished musical event for understanding and processing of harmonic basis and thus representing the predecessor of a period of 'basso continuo' ..."*⁹⁴

7.3. Reconstructions of Sterling Jones and Joseph M. Skeaping:

Due to a lot of experiments and long-standing research Jones comes to a surprisingly great number of chords that with no major technical difficulties could be performed on the (smaller, normal sized and violin like) *lira da braccio*. In his instructions on playing technique, Jones recommends the utilisation of chords in which all (or at least most) of tones are shortened by fingers, and only a small number of them played on empty strings. In particular, this applies to the tones to be played on medium strings. With certain limitations, the confirmation of Jones' recommendations could be found in contemporary iconography, also see at Disertori. If one wants to play only a single string, it is possible to achieve by very precise control of the right hand i.e. of the bow. This technique of playing is described by S. Ganassi in the chapter XVI of the second part ("*Lettione Seconda*") of his book "*Regola Rubertina*". Jones' reconstruction of chords (he devoted to it entire 27 pages of his book) is academically, theoretically speaking excellent - for the practical act of improvisation and rapid

⁹³ See Appendix E, musical examples no. 9.a.

⁹⁴ "Unter stilgeschichtlichen Gesichtspunkten noch einmal gesehen, bedeutet diese Praxis ein absolut ausgesprochenes Empfinden für reine Akkordik, die den Dreiklang als solchen - in isolierter Form - aus dem musikalischen Geschehen für die Auffassung und die Verarbeitung der harmonischen Grundlagen bereits bewusst herausrät und somit als ein Vorläufer des Generalbasszeitalters, wenn nicht schon selbst als solches, zu betrachten ist."

response it is often too complex. Contemporary sources speak of a slow bow stroke and simple improvised accompaniment of the sung text, performed by one and the same musician. Based on my own experiments (which I tried on many concerts or lectures, performances and recordings), I got enough proof for this later conception.

Due to his outstanding knowledge and experience (as a founding member of the “Studio der frühen Musik, Munich” and long time teacher at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, Basle, as well as an accomplished medieval fiddle, renaissance viol and baroque viola player) it is really a pity that Jones’ playing of lira da braccio was not documented with his own recordings, and thus completed his extraordinary important book.⁹⁵

My late colleague, Joseph M. Skeaping,⁹⁶ inspired himself less by the chords found in the Pesaro manuscript and more (as Disertori) by the pictorial evidences. An important feature of his reconstruction of the playing techniques on the lira da braccio was the frequent use of the thumb of the left hand. Thanks to this, the player can melody, perform on (just as in the Pesaro MS) the two highest strings, accompany with the sequence of chords of a “*passamezzo moderno*” type: similar to the Blues one; tonic, subdominant, tonic, dominant. His solutions and practical examples are equally valid and convincing as S. Jones’ ones - who restricts the use of the thumb mostly on the bass strings outside the fingerboard. The playability of Skeaping chords depends, as well as those of Jones, after all, on the musical instrument (its size, the width of the fingerboard etc.) on which they are performed. On a large lira da braccio⁹⁷ with almost completely flat fingerboard and tailpiece and barely curved bridge (to this type belonged my lira da braccio, based on the presumed original in the Viennese collection, before the change was made a year and half ago), his chord with the use of the thumb are very tedious.⁹⁸

All three of us (Jones, Skeaping and me, independently one of another), come to similar conclusions regarding the role and influence the technique of playing chords on the lira da braccio carry out on chordal playing on other bowed instruments - especially those of the violin family.⁹⁹ Lost tradition of playing techniques of the renaissance lira da braccio has been maintained in a certain way, to this day in the chordal playing on the violin or viola in the works - to mention only the most important authors, composed by Farina, Marini, Balthasar, Biber, Bach, Tartini, Paganini, and even Bartok. As the best and most direct proof of this assertion let us mention the “*Capriccio*” (*Per Sonare il Violino con tre corde al modo di Lira*) by

⁹⁵ Due to nowadays technical possibilities, this would not dramatically augment the publishing cost of Jones’ book

⁹⁶ British player and maker of lira da braccio, who in the late nineties of the last century was working on his magister degree on the lira da braccio in London.

⁹⁷ As for instance my lira, based on the presumed “original” made by Giovanni d’Andrea in 1511.

⁹⁸ Compare, concerning the use of a thumb, with the results of the Jones’ analysis: § 6.

⁹⁹ My opinion; probably on the viola d’amore too/as well.

Biagio Marini,¹⁰⁰ which Jones found and published in his book on the *lira da braccio*.¹⁰¹

7.4. Imke David instructions on playing technique on the *lira da gamba*:

In her excellent book on the *lira da gamba*, Imke David gives series of practical advices on playing technique and the realisation of the *basso continuo*. She thinks that *lira da gamba* could be used only for chordal accompaniment, but not for solo playing. Thus she says that "*... due to the characteristics of its construction, hardly rounded/curved bridge and a greater number from 11 to 16 strings, on the instrument cannot be performed a single melody.*" David has repeatedly stressed the importance of the slow bow strokes, what she documented by quotations from the contemporary treatises. She decidedly refuses the misleading conception about the playing of broken (*arpeggiando*) chords, suggested by Otterstedt.

Regarding the realisation of *basso continuo* David says: "*After long experience in the practice of playing the lira (da gamba), it is possible to find the best chords and get the feeling for the most simple and logical combinations of them. Thanks to this the conduct of voices will be recognised, suspensions prepared and resolved.*" A short, accented, bow stroke is possible but - according to David: "*... does not belong to the characteristics of playing on the lira da gamba.*" Chords can often remain incomplete, and conduct of voices is not always clearly recognisable and: "*because of that the acoustic properties are the most important virtue of the lira da gamba.*"¹⁰² Chords sometimes have to be played in inversions, a more complex linking of them is not always possible to fully implement. On the other hand, owing to peculiar tuning "*... one can perform all chords, suspensions and cadences with the same and simple grip of the left hand.*"¹⁰³

Lira da gamba was considered an "imperfect" instrument among other things, because during the playing it comes inevitably to parallel intervals - at least of those hidden. The author rightly recommends that (when performing a *basso continuo* accompaniment) one should add to the *lira* another "bass" instrument, so it could take over and underline the bass melody, leading of voices, and to "cover" parallel intervals, too. Very interesting is Imke David notices about double frets on the *lira da gamba* by Pietro Salvetti (see the painting by A. D. Gabbiani, I. David book,

¹⁰⁰ Published in 1620 in Venice, in the time *lira da braccio* certainly already went out of use.

¹⁰¹ Appendix E, musical example no.10.

¹⁰² p. 90: "Wegen der besonderen Bauweise, der flachen Steges und der grossen Anzahl von 11-16 Saiten konnte keine einstimmige Melodie gespielt werden." ... str. 92: „Nach langer Praxis können die Griffmöglichkeiten und ein Gefühl für die einfachste logische Akkordverbindung gefunden werden, wodurch die Stimmführung andeutungsweise erkannt und Vorhalte vorbereitet und aufgelöst werden können." ... str. 93: „Obwohl kurze, artikulierte Stricharten möglich sind, gehören diese nicht zum Charakter der *Lira da gamba*" ... „Somit stellt der Klangcharakter die wichtigste Eigenschaft der *Lira da gamba* dar."

¹⁰³ p. 93 "Erstens werden Akkorde im Umkehrungen gespielt, um die einfachste Griffmöglichkeit und einen vollen Ton zu erhalten, ..." str. 112-13: „Trotzdem erlaubte die besonders praktische Stimmung von abwechselnd aufsteigenden Quinten und absteigenden Quartan, mit einem einfachen Griff alle Akkorde in jeder Tonart des Quintenzirkels, alle Vorhalte und Kadenzen zu spielen."

illustration 11, p. 47) exactly on its first and third fret. According to David, there are "... often used tones of high tuned minor thirds with the sign of flat - Db, Ab, Eb, Bb. In the case of sixth chord bass (root) tones, which are the leading ones in a mean tone temperament (German "Mitteltönig") with the sign of a sharp - C#, G#, D#, A# - should sound low. On the second fret one plays the major thirds - whose tones have no accidents - G, D, A, E, B and they sound relatively OK, why on this fret no doubling would be necessary.

On the third double fret we play the octaves to the root tone; there again are the tones that lies away from each other in the cycle of fifths, which makes relatively high or low intonation very suitable for them - F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#, B# - and on the other side - Gb Db, Ab, Eb, Bb, F, C, G."¹⁰⁴

7.5.G. Victor Penniman on *lirone*:

In 2004, an American colleague, G. Victor Penniman, presented his doctoral thesis, under the title: "*La Lyra d'Orfeo: a practical Manual of technique and performance practice for the Lirone*", to the Indiana University in Bloomington. Mr. Penniman wrote an extraordinary work to which I could make only a few remarks.

Because of its importance I decided to make a thorough analysis and review of his thesis in a separate article. Here, I want to make only a relatively brief survey of it. It is important to stress the point that starting with the title and through the whole thesis Penniman insist on the name "*Lirone*", which would be all right if there would not be some doubts that *lirone* and *lira da gamba* have not been one and the same instrument.

First of all, I found it very significant that more than the half of his Manual Victor devoted to numerous music examples: chords, exercises and the proposed repertory reconstruction for the *lirone*.

As already mentioned, articles by several scholars or performers like Erin Headley and the book by Imke David, have not had any pedagogical nature, Victor Penniman Manual is the first and only complete practical method on "*playing the lirone and realizing accompaniments upon it in all of its diverse repertoire*."

¹⁰⁴ p. 95: "Aus diesem Grund muss immer ein zweites Bassinstrument hinzugefügt werden, um Bassmelodie und Stimmführung zu übernehmen und die Parallelen zu überdecken." ... Str.97: "Gerade in der Mittelage des Instrumentes befinden sich auf dem ersten Bund die häufig verwendeten Töne von sehr hoch gestimmten moll-Terzen mit b-Vorzeichen -des, as, es, be'- und für Sext-Akkorde die Basstöne, die als Leittöne in einer mitteltönigen Stimmung mit # als Vorzeichen äusserst tief erklingen müssen cis, gis, s ; Auf dem zweiten Bund erklingt die Dur-Terz, deren Töne ohne Vorzeichen tg, d, a, e, h - relativ gemässigt gestimmt werden, weshalb kein Doppelbund konzipiert ist. Auf dem dritten Bund, einem Doppelbund, wird die Oktave zum Grundton gegriffen; dabei finden sich wieder die Töne, die im Quintenzirkel weitab liegen und einer sehr tiefen und sehr hohen Stimmung bedürfen - fis, cis, gis, dis, ais, eis, his - und auf der anderen Seite - ges, des, as, es, be, f, c, g. Aus diesem Grunde finden sich auf dem ersten und dritten Bund Doppelbünde."

I have to say that it is really a shame that a rich country as the United States has not been interested to publish this excellent work, as it was done with the book on *lira da braccio* by Sterling Scott Jones.

I agree with Victor when he states that *lirone*: “...offers bowed stringed-instrument players the opportunity to play a chordal role in continuo accompaniment, and it opens up completely new and wholly satisfying realms of performance possibilities.” as well as that: “If one has played the *viola da gamba* in particular for any length of time, the *lirone* does not pose a serious technical challenge.”¹⁰⁵

Dealing briefly with the history of the *lirone*, among other things Victor adds to the already known another name for the instrument: *arcvioladaslyras*.¹⁰⁶

In the same chapter Victor quotes the letter Atalante Migliorotti (only known student of Leonardo on the *lira da braccio*), sent to Francesco Gonzaga in Mantua, 1505, from which it is clear that he invented *lira da gamba* (*lirone*?) with twelve strings on and “couple of them” outside the fingerboard (unfortunately, Victor call them *bourdon strings*) “in perfect and beautiful harmony.”¹⁰⁷ Quoting twelve contemporary sources (written from 1542 till 1689) mentioning the *lire*¹⁰⁸, Victor tends to interpret all of them as speaking about *lirone*, to which I cannot agree.

According to Victor, it seems that, in the 16th and 17th centuries and based on some pictorial evidences (which one can find in his Manual) *lirone* “or something like it” was known in the Spanish colonies of Mexico and Central America.¹⁰⁹

Very important in his Manual is the second chapter, devoted to the playing technique of the *lirone*. There he gives numerous excellent practical advices on strings, their tuning, frets calibration, bridge, holding the instrument and bowing technique. He also brings some valuable information (with very intelligent system which helps the orientation of the beginners) how to play from the tablature on the *lirone*.

¹⁰⁵ I suppose because of that there are meanwhile numerous players of the instrument on the “every corner” but still only relatively few players (able to sing or, even more seldom, singers able to play) of the *lira da braccio*.

¹⁰⁶ Obviously of Spanish origin.

¹⁰⁷ Actually, Erin Headley discovered and Imke David has published it in his book already 1999. On p. 16 there is a German translation and on p.66 the Italian original: “Col mio debito ingegno, introduco nuovo, inaudito et inusitato modo di sonare, con nuova et inusitata forma di lyra, con cio sia io adgiunga corde al compimento al numero di XII. parte nel suo tempo opportuno dal piede, et parte della mano tastabili in perfecta et consummate consonantia.”

¹⁰⁸ Silvestro Ganassi: *Regola rubertina*, Venice, 1542, Jerome Cardanus: *De Musica*, Milan, 1550, Ludovico Zacconi: *Prattica di musica*, Venice, 1592, Scipione Cerreto: *Della Prattica Musica Vocale et Strumentale*, Naples, 1601, Agostino Agazzari: *Del suonare sopra l'basso con tutti li strumenti*, Sienna, 1607, Pedro Cerone: *El Melopeo*, Naples, 1613, Michael Praetorius: *Syntagma musicum*, Books II and III, Wolfenbüttel, 1619, Francesco Rognoni: *Selva de varii passaggii*, Milan, 1620, Marin Mersenne: *Harmonie universelle, Traité des instruments a cordes*, Paris, 1636 and *De Instrumentis Harmonicis*, Paris, 1648, André Maugars: *Response faite a un curieux sur le sentiment de la musique italienne*, Paris, 1639, Athanasius Kircher: *Musurgia universalis*, Rome, 1650 and Angelo Bardi: *Miscellanea Musicale*, Bologna, 1689.

¹⁰⁹ p. 11 in Manual

Then it follows his advice on basic accompaniment, for which he uses the combination of a standard (staff) notation and the tablature. He gives a chart which helps a lot to clear the relation of tablature lines to each string and fret. Starting with basic chords (5/3), Victor stresses the point that this form could be moved across the fingerboard and produce a major (or minor) chord on “any combination of four strings”. To that, minor chord (very similar to the major one) is explained as well as the suspensions (7-6th chord and 4-3) and some chord-changing exercises are given.

Speaking about writing the chords, Victor, uses the same system I have been using for many years (and decided to abandon recently, in order to make it more international, especially for the English speaking public...): capital letters for major and lower case letters for minor chords.

I do not want to go in further details about that, because I still do hope that Victor method will be published one day.

In the fourth chapter, the author deals with music of the 16th century, especially the repertory of the frottola and gives his suggestions on *lirone* intabulation. Very interesting is his opinion that, when it appeared, *lirone*: “...was considered more of a large *lira da braccio*, held between the knees, than an entirely different instrument.” This concords with the statement he made already at the beginning of his Manual: “Though the *lirone* is held “a *gamba*” and is sometimes called *lira da gamba* in various sources, it bears little if any direct relation to the *lyra viol* (a viol played “*lira way*”) and is not a member of the family of viols; it is actually the larger member of the *lira da braccio* family”.

Concluding, Victor recommends to be aware of harmonies, to articulate “*dynamics and sustain notes indefinitely*”, to be sensitive to the text i.e. to understand “*how the language is pronounced*”. Important, too, is the use of articulation and phrasing, that one is being aware of the fact the Baroque music is: “*above all else, rhetorical; it is speech*”. To the last category (of phrasing) falls also the “*hemiola*”, which “*occurs when a piece in a triple meter changes to duple without an actual change in the time signature.*”

After a conclusion, it comes a huge Appendix, containing ground bass patterns¹¹⁰, exercises and examples from period literature, list with further repertoire, recommended recordings, more advices on the continuo group (incl. list of works where *lirone* i.e. *lira* have been mentioned), another list with the important contact information (containing the names and addresses of instrument and bow makers, strings and organisations) and at the end, the bibliography.

¹¹⁰ Chaconne, Bergamasca, Passamezzo Antico, Passamezzo Moderno, Romanesca and Ruggiero.

Again, a great work written by a musician for other musicians which I can warmly recommend to anybody interesting in *liras* or performance practice of the renaissance and early baroque music in general.¹¹¹

7.6. My summary of the playing technique and art of the improvisation on *liras* based on the contemporary sources and my own practical experience:

A. Lira da braccio:

1. On the lira da braccio we could play as well melodically (using the uppermost two to three strings) as in chords. It should be noted that all of the (supposedly) in their original shape survived instruments have slightly curved almost flat bridges - on the contrary a large number of iconographical evidences has a curved bridge. (See § 6 iconographic sources).

I changed (from 1981 till now) four bridges of different grade of curvature, searching for the best solution when playing the combination of melody and chords.

2. On the instrument it was not possible to play all chords in all their inversions, although Jones', Skipping and my research show that there are a lot more options than one might suppose, judging on the "catalog of chords" from the Pesaro manuscript. Although Ivanoff says that "*both so called drone* /! / *strings*" could not be shortened by fingers, which means that only two bass tones have been available, Disertori found a pictorial evidence on which the lira da braccio player can (using a ring put on the left thumb) change those bass (and evidently no *drone*) notes. This could function only if the instrument has a single bass string outside the fingerboard, and has been documented by only one iconographic evidence, so far.

3. Lira da braccio players used technique of playing the chords that is now being called "*jeux barée*": several strings has been simultaneously pressed with one finger placed over the fingerboard. Chords on the three middle strings could have been, probably, played with one finger of the left hand.

4. The way in which the lira da braccio have been played in this period varied, most likely, from simple to quite a virtuoso combinations of fast passages¹¹² and chords. "*Romanesca*" from the Pesaro MS shows, most likely, the usual structure of the lira playing: melody that moves mostly in second and in the upper register (on the top two strings), supported by a relatively simple chords on the lower four to five strings.

¹¹¹ His Manual could be download from the www.academia.edu.

¹¹² Due to Disertori, the lutenist of the period called them "perfidie" from latin "per fides" i.e. "on faith?"/ haphazardly .

5. It can be assumed that the most players performed their playing i.e. improvisation on the lira (which could be applied to the lira da gamba too, see 7.5. / B) based on memorising of (all) chords and their combinations. Of course, this technique changed over the time: initially it was more likely that of the medieval fiddle - later, coming closer to the playing technique of the Renaissance or early baroque violin. Moreover, I believe that precisely the experiments with chordal playing on the lira da braccio (on the viol playing in chords have been used from the very beginning - see at Ganassi)¹¹³, led to the further development of this technique on the violin.¹¹⁴ According to Rainer Ullreich¹¹⁵, the practice of *drone* playing on the medieval fiddle began gradually to convert into a sort of proto-chordal accompaniment of singing, already in the late 14th century. In other words, this would mean that, in the moment the proto (or the so called “classical”, see by Skeaping) lira da braccio appeared, this technique has been used in practice for almost a century.

6. Several musicologists and musicians thought, or supposed that lira da braccio players sang in the register, which has been located below the instrument itself, and the chords with which they accompanied their singing - what was confirmed by statements of S. Ganassi. In this way, with her or his melody the singer could add the root tones of the chords, which - through the technical and musical characteristics of the instruments - were often limited to a inversion of 6/4, or the fifth instead of the root tone or the third in the bass. However, S. Jones' (see his proposals for the reconstruction of the repertoire) and my experiments suggest that a different way of performance - in which the singer sings in the same register or the one that lies above the chords of the lira da braccio - was possible and satisfying.¹¹⁶

B. Lira da gamba:

Unlike Imke David (see 7.1.4.) and based on my own practical experience, I can say that on the lira da gamba, if desired, it is possible to play also single strings. This is especially true for those in the highest register. In addition, this instrument is, beside its basic function of the singing accompaniment¹¹⁷, absolutely appropriate to be used for performance of stand-alone instrumental introductions, interludes (in the case of several stanzas) or shorter dances of more homophonic nature. We remember again A. Striggio and the fact that he (according to numerous reports of his contemporaries) often played alone, playing his *lira* as a soloist. This was, of course, not the case in his performances of various intermedia, where usually several musicians joined in a

¹¹³ See the bibliography.

¹¹⁴ Here my opinion concords completely with both Jones and Skeaping.

¹¹⁵ Ullreich, Rainer: article "Fidel", "Die MGG", 2nd edition, 1996.; see bibliography.

¹¹⁶ For the purpose/scope of their project, I tried to sing and accompany myself on both liras - as it was usual in the period. This was for me very important experience gained through and applied on many occasions, lectures and concerts, what has been recorded on number of recordings made by DAT- and Minidisc recorder as well as with the digital video camera for projects audio Database; see the Appendix D: Audio Database.

¹¹⁷ In this concord all of the contemporary sources from 16th and 17th centuries.

kind of continuo-group, up to a small orchestra as in the case of “La Pellegrina”. We do not have (for now) any of the sources from which it could be concluded that Striggio when playing the *lira* accompanied his own or singing of his wife, an excellent singer and lutenist. Unlike Imke David, I am convinced that on the *lira da gamba* - depending on the repertoire and musical form - the use of a short, accentuated bow stroke is absolutely possible. In the performance of dance like music (such as in some intermedia from “La Pellegrina”, 1589) this kind of bow stroke can be very welcome.

I think that the *lira da gamba* could not be classified as a bass instruments, because its register and timbre belong rather to the tenor register. In numerous occasions I played this instrument in combination with (usually one) plucked (i.e. *chitarrone*, *arciliuto*; a kind of a bass lute) or bowed (bass viol, baroque cello or *Violone*) bass instrument and can agree with Imke David when she says that this (in a number of occasions confirmed by contemporaries) practice provides outstanding results.

On the *lira da gamba*, too, there are number of chords which one can play in a kind of “jeux barée” technique but in comparison with *lira da braccio* they resembles more on those by modern guitar and make the transposition of the complete accompaniment rather simple.

§ 8. Reconstruction of the repertoire:

For today's reconstruction of the repertoire on the *liras* (*da braccio* and *da gamba*) couple of things are essential: the notation, tuning of the instrument and sources that are selected for adaptation or intabulations. Historically, during the 16th and 17th century, the (rare) examples of music for both *liras* have been written in the Italian¹¹⁸ and French lute tablature¹¹⁹. In his book, Sterling S. Jones suggested the slightly changed version of an Italian tablature, in which (opposite to the original version) the highest line represents also the highest string. Joe Skeaping and me, we have accepted this change and believe that it should be introduced as a "standard" tablature for *lira da braccio*, because for the musicians of our time (mostly educated on modern bowed instruments) it is more natural and clearer.

Utilisation of the tablature on the instruments of “*da braccio*” i.e. violin family, in the 16th and 17th century was (unlike the viol and all plucked instruments with frets) quite rare. One of these exceptions is certainly the violin tablature from the island of

¹¹⁸ Notated with numbers as the Pesaro MS and Cerreto examples.

¹¹⁹ Notated with letters, as the Mersenne fragments from 1636.

Hvar from the 17th century.¹²⁰ The reason why tablature is so seldom used for the instruments of the violin family, lies probably in the problem how to determinate the chromatic tones, i.e. whether the player should play the flat or sharp with numbers from 0 to 4 (0 = empty string, 1 = first finger and so on).

Aware of this problem, Jones introduced in his proposal of tablature for *lira da braccio* some new signs which correct this deficiency. In this way, the accent to the right (') accompanying the number in the tablature, means sharp, doubling the same accent (''), accordingly - double sharp; the accent to the left (') means flat and doubling of it (``) double flat. For use of the thumb (of the left hand) Jones uses the lowercase "t".¹²¹

A whole series of important articles (which contain information about liras, their role in the music of their time - especially in intermedia - were written by the American musicologist Howard Mayer Brown. Although already Walter Rubsamen (1968) discovered and described the Pesaro MS, only Brown recognised in it our only surviving source of music and practical information on the technique of playing the *lira da braccio*. As for the *lira da gamba*, Brown (although he never played this instrument) in his article "Psyche's Lament ..." has published a fragmentary reconstruction for this instrument, based on the solo lute version of the madrigal "*Fuggi speme mia*" composed by Alessandro Striggio¹²². Of course, even if this reconstruction, the first after Greulich, is surely ingenious, it re-imposes again one until now unsolved question: which *lira* and in which way Striggio actually played? Since I cannot imagine that one so renown and extraordinary composer and musician like Striggio, did not know or master technique of playing of "normal" *lira da gamba*, (tuned in Cerreto way), maybe that in the same period existed and were used several different types of liras (da gamba) with completely different tunings? Starting from Brown's fragment, I made a complete reconstruction of Striggio madrigal and - just as Brown - intended for the performance on the *lira* of the Cerreto type and tuning.¹²³

8.1. Reconstructions by W. Osthoff and V. Ivanoff:

¹²⁰ Tablature for violin by Mr. Gabriel Pervane from Hvar (in Italian original: "Intauladure del Violino di Sgr. Gabriele Peruaneo di Lesina"), found in a collection containing the works by Dalmatian poets of 16th century, written around 1625. (taken from: J. Andreis: History of Music (in Croatian), vol. IV, Zagreb: Liber - Mladost, 1974) About this tablature thoroughly reported and tried to transcribe American musicologist of Croatian origin, dr. Dragan Plamenac in his paper "An Unknown Violin Tablature of the Early 17th Century", published in Papers of the American Musicological Society, Annual Meeting 1941, p. 114-157. Some of fragments in this tablature sounds quite convincing on the *lira da braccio*.

¹²¹ This, on my opinion, one could make simpler with usual signs for flat *b*, sharp *#*, double flat *bb* or double sharp *x* - the last come into question rather seldom on *liras*. The sign *t* for thumb one could substitute with *p* for Italian police because it is Italian and not English language the whole world normally uses for music expressions, dynamic etc.

¹²² Brown, H. M.: "Psyche's Lament: Some Music for the Medici Wedding in 1565", 1972.; see bibliography. on this occasion Striggio alone performed this piece on his *lira*.

¹²³ I intend to publish it (together with other reconstructions from my repertory for both liras) in a kind of method (accompanied by my advices about playing technique devoted to potential student of one or another instrument.

German musicologist Wolfgang Osthoff made twice an attempt to reconstruct Alfonso Della Viola music for dramatic work, "Il Sacrificio" by Agostino Beccari, which has been sung with his own lira da braccio accompaniment by Alfonso's brother Andrea.

The first attempt was published in 1969 and the second 1983¹²⁴. Both reconstructions sound on the lira da braccio acceptable. Particularly successful is the reconstruction of the same song that S. Jones published in his book on the lira da braccio (1995).

Vladimir Ivanoff, German musician and musicologist of Bulgarian origin (an expert on historical plucked instruments), made a huge research, transcribed and published all of the music from the Pesaro MS, among others, fragments of music for the lira da braccio. According to him, this manuscript which contains numerous pieces for lute solo and other plucked instruments, was written during the 16th century¹²⁵ by several scribes in different periods and types of the tablature.

8.2. Reconstructions by S. Jones, J. M. Skeaping and I. David

8.2.1. Sterling Jones decided to take the Praetorius tuning for lira da braccio, where the highest string is tuned d'' (instead of e'' as by Lanfranco), which proved to be useful in most cases. This is particularly convenient when using for liras the lute repertory. Both Joe Skeaping and myself, (independently) we decided for Lanfranco version of tuning, in which, after all, are written the only surviving examples of music for *lira* in the Pesaro MS. Joseph Skeaping decided to write his chords and musical examples in the Jones version of the Italian tablature for lute, but on the five lines: two lowest strings on the fingerboard were treated as a "choir" (similar to the lute) i.e. two strings doubled in octave which you are playing with only one finger.¹²⁶ Unlike Jones, his tablature has no special signs for sharps or flats but uses an "t" for thumb.

Apart from his detailed iconographic analysis, Sterling Jones gave in his book very important instructions on the technique of playing the lira da braccio, an extensive lexicon of chords which could be played on this instrument as well as the selected repertory of altogether eight pieces, originally composed in a period of about hundred years.

Similarly to Ferand and Disertori, Jones too decides for frottolas, early madrigal, etc., added another reconstruction¹²⁷ of the Alfonso Della Viola piece and already mentioned "*Capriccio*"¹²⁸ by Biagio Marini. He brings it in two versions, the original one (for violin) and his arrangement for the lira da braccio.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ After H.M.Brown (1973.) published his transcription of chords and fragments from the Pesaro MS.

¹²⁵ According to newest research, between 1490 and 1511.

¹²⁶ Normally, this is functioning well, unless you want to play the chords where those lowest strings on the fingerboard are not playing in octave but in another interval, see by S. Jones bank of chords.

¹²⁷ Third in thirty years.

¹²⁸ Biaggio Marini: "*Capriccio Per Sonare il Violino con tre corde à modo di Lira*", published in Venice, 1620.

¹²⁹ Interesting enough, that concerning the reconstruction of the repertory I came on similar ideas and even decide for several of the same frottolas as S. Jones!

8.2.2. Joseph M. Skeaping, in his instructions for playing *lira da braccio*, gives the exercise for the left arm, small chord lexicon and reconstruction of seven compositions, mostly of a dance character.¹³⁰

8.2.3 Imke David gave her book the title "*Sixteen strings Italian lira da gamba*," but for notating of all musical examples (chords, instructions for the realisation of the basso continuo and songs) she uses French tablature with 13 lines¹³¹ and "to better understanding" adds a drawing of fingerboard with 13 strings and 7 frets. As a basis she uses the depiction of the *lira da gamba* played by Pietro Salvetti (found on the painting by A. D. Gabbiani¹³²) which she combines with one of the three ways of tuning the *lira da gamba* by Marin Mersenne.

Apart from the above mentioned chords and instructions for realisation of *basso continuo*, Imke David brings in her book transcriptions of all preserved musical examples - fragments originally written for *lira da gamba*, and a "*Lamento*" by Domenico Mazzochi.¹³³ Original examples are taken from a treatise by S. Cerreto and M. Mersenne and give us insight into the nature of the playing techniques on this instrument. About these examples, David says: "... *Cerreto in his musical examples shows that within the sound (con)text /on the lira/ one can play chords and melody.*" Further, in connection with Mersenne examples: "... *if we make the comparison / of both sources, op. IP / Cerreto's fragment seems to be more advanced than that of Mersenne, which follows closely the homophonic chords and decorates not the middle voice with ornaments, as recommended by most sources of the period.*"¹³⁴ Her assertion that "*lira da gamba have been played only in Italy*," stands in clear contrast/ opposition to what says Mersenne: "... *I give another example in tablature, so the reader can understand practice of playing on this instrument in the method of Mr. Bailiff, the French Orpheus.*"¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Skeaping, Joseph M.: *The lira da braccio: A player's manual*, 1998. See bibliography respectively our music example no.6.b.

¹³¹ The same one that Marin Mersenne used for his fragment.

¹³² Antonio Domenico Gabbiani: "*Il Principe Ferdinando de Medici e suoi musici*" from 1680.; exhibited in Palazzo Pitti, Florence

¹³³ See Appendix E, music example no. 7.b.

¹³⁴ p. 107., „Cerreto in seinen Lira d.g. Beispiel zeigt dass es möglich ist, innerhalb der Klangfülle der Akkorde eine Melodie realisieren." Str. 108 "Im Vergleich dazu erscheint Cerretos Spielweise fortgeschrittener als die von Mersenne, die sich streng an homophon verlaufende Akkorde hält und nicht mit Umspielungen in den Mittelstimmen die Komposition ausschmückt und vorantreibt, wie es die Quellen eigentlich beschreiben." Here David forgets to underline important fact that Mersenne (others as Cerreto) in his fragment gives the sequence of chords one has to play using "barée" grip in higher positions!

¹³⁵ In French original („*Harmonie Universelle*", p. 206) Mersenne says: „Or encore que l'on use rarement de cette espece de Lyre en France, ... , ie mets icy l'accord dont use le Baillif,..." Concerning that I am rather sceptic if he could be, as David interpreted, identified with Jean-Antoine Bäiff, well known french humanist(1532 — 1589) and founder of the Academy of poetry and music.

8.3. My reflections on reconstruction of the repertoire on both *liras*:

What kind of sources, i.e. compositions are suitable for today reconstruction of the repertoire for both *liras*? Despite the fact that from the time of 1510 - 50. the use of chords in the music originally composed for bowed instruments of the viol family (see Ganassi; these examples, however, are either polyphonic or melodic and therefore less suitable for the performance on *liras*) is well documented, it seems to me that the repertoire originally composed for lute solo or any keyboard instrument (virginal, harpsichord) are more appropriate for *liras*. For the most part, this repertoire developed directly from improvisation, playing the preludes (*preludio*), searching (*ricercare*) and "fantasy" (*fantasia*) on these instruments. In addition, because of its extent, this repertoire provides great opportunities for analysis, choice, comparison, and thus facilitate the selection process.

In his book on improvisation¹³⁶, Ernest Ferand brings the huge repertoire of the frottola in direct connection with the forgotten practice of improvisation on the *lira da braccio*, of the late 15th and early 16th century (1480-1530). Shortly after that, Benvenuto Disertori took very specific steps in the same direction and with three examples demonstrates that using chordal/homophonic structure of an *aer de capituli*, *oda* or *sonetto*, (see the Appendix E. Music examples) it would be possible to accompany singing (of the highest voice) to the *lira da braccio* a number of verses from the best known and most beautiful works of Petrarch, Dante Alighieri and Torquato Tasso. Of course, the author was conscious that in such case (i.e. performing many stanzas with same melody and accompaniment) the player of the *lira da braccio* had to use all her or his talent and the art of improvisation and variation to avoid feelings of boredom and monotony to the audience.¹³⁷

Inspired by E. Ferand and B. Disertori, I decided to explore the same source¹³⁸ as a possible basis for the reconstruction of the lost repertoire on the *lira da braccio* and in that sense, I have analysed and experimented with the extensive repertoire for lute and frottolas from the period 1480-1530. It is interesting, that I found as especially suitable for my experiments the frottolas (originally written in four parts) arranged for voice and lute¹³⁹ by Franciscus Bossinensis (Francis Bosnian) and published in 1509 and 1511 in Venice, by the local publisher Ottaviano de' Petrucci. It goes without saying that in the case of arranging this repertoire for the *lira*, some changes and compromises of the lute version is inevitable.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Ferand, Ernest: *Die Improvisation in der Musik*, Zürich: Rhein Verlag 1938.

¹³⁷ See Appendix E, music example no. 8.

¹³⁸ As Sterling Jones in his reconstructions of the repertoire.

¹³⁹ Omitting one of the inner voices and adding to both *Libri* his own quasi/pseudo improvised *ricercars*.

¹⁴⁰ This is inevitable already because of the difference of tuning of renaissance lute and *lira da braccio*: the first one was tuned in fourths with the third in the middle (identical to the viol) the second one in fifths and octaves. To that one has to add differences in technique and possibilities of playing with fingers or bow. See Appendix E, music example no. 11.

Also some pieces (dances, *ricercari* or arrangements of the vocal music) originally composed for lute or any keyboard instrument (except for organ, being to specific) were very useful.

In the 16th and throughout the 17th century (first on the viol and later on the violin, see by Ganassi, Marini, Biber, etc.) it was often used the so called *scordatura* or retuning the strings for the necessities of the particular composition, in order that chords are played with as many open strings as possible. The later stands in some contrast with the recommendations of Sterling Jones.

At this point I must express my wondering that the players of *lira da braccio* chose exactly this tuning (in fifths with additional doubling in octaves) basically very similar to that of the instruments of the violin family. Tuning similar to the lute one (in fourths with the third in the middle, as on the viols), would be more logical, but it is not impossible that, through the use of the mentioned *scordatura*, even this practice occurred from case to case.

Vladimir Ivanoff believes that on the *lira da braccio* it would be possible to perform numerous compositions from the Pesaro manuscript, especially those intended for performance on a lute with a plectrum, from Tablature A. Following his recommendation, I came to some 18 lute pieces (ten from the tablature A, six from the B and two from the tablature C), which with some corrections could be performed on the *lira da braccio*; the detailed list of those pieces can be found in the Supplement E. Music Examples, B.VI.

The decision which tablature to use depends on personal tastes, preferences and habits, and every player of the *lira* (*da braccio* or *da gamba*), being an experienced musician or a student - beginner, should choose her or his own path and type of notation that suits him the best. Generally, I consider that the tablature as type of notation for both *liras* is very welcome when someone wants to explain a particularly complex place (where one has to play determinate notes of one chord) to himself or to his students, for example. For "normal" accompaniment, i.e. performance of the quasi improvised basso continuo on the *lira da gamba*, I recommend that all chords, suspensions and so on, are learned by heart. Then you can, if necessary, or depends of your preferences, play from a kind of piano redaction¹⁴¹ or from the bass part, provided with numbers. For many years I was using my own "invention": for shorter pieces (for example, dances or earlier madrigals and villanelle) I would simply write numbers (for suspensions 4 - 3, 7 for chord of seventh) and letters (upper case for major and lower one for minor) below the bass part. A similar method was used by composers in writing the tablature for renaissance or baroque guitar, and it is used today (sometimes) in blues and rock - music.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ On two staves: only melody of soprano/treble and bass line are used, which is most often way used music of 17th century.

¹⁴² See Appendix E; music example no. 12.

At the end, some more remarks about the writing of colleague Imke David, which I did not mention in my review of her book and one by S. Jones (published in no. 1/2001 of Croatian musicological journal, "Arti Musices"). Almost always the author interprets any mention of the term *lira* in the contemporary sources as the *lira da gamba*¹⁴³. At least in the period up to 1550/60 under this term one has often meant *lira da braccio* - a musical instrument "par excellence" of many humanists, artists and musicians from the late 15th until the mid 16th century. When David writes about the English *lyra-viol* (she plays that instrument), she does not mention the fact that after the death of Alfonso Ferrabosco I, 1588, in his estate one *lira* was found.¹⁴⁴ To that A. Otterstedt (in her book on the English *lyra-viol*, 1989.) gives the way of tuning of this instrument, which strongly reminds us of that (unusual) by Alessandro Striggio, who visited England in 1567. In this regard: although I. David several times mentions the writings of Cardanus about the *lira* of A. Striggio (even the 18 strings of the instrument), she does not analyse nor tries to explain fully how uncommon was the way of its tuning.¹⁴⁵

Unfortunately, even the relatively recent (defended 2004 at Indiana University) doctoral dissertations of the American colleague G. Victor Penniman¹⁴⁶ and up to this date existing only in manuscript version and in web (www.accademia.edu), does not bring any new "light" in this case.

At this point, I have to stress that it is a great pity that Erin Headley¹⁴⁷ has not written a book with instructions on playing technique and the realisation of basso continuo, reconstruction of the repertoire on the *lira da gamba*, but limited herself to couple of surely excellent article about this instrument in the "New Grove". Instead, she submitted the results of her long years of investigation and experience to her former student Imke David and to V. Penniman. Even if both of them made excellent work, Erin would, due to her long great practical experience, certainly be the most competent of all of us, to articulate in words (with music examples) and put in shape what she showed to the musical public of the world through many hundreds of concerts and numerous recordings for LP's and CD's (see discography).

Otherwise, Erin Headley has repeatedly (during the various lectures and interviews)¹⁴⁸ expressed a very interesting idea, which I repeat here. During 17th

¹⁴³ And this repeats the colleague Victor Penniman in his Manual.

¹⁴⁴ Alfonso Ferrabosco (I) Bologna 1543-Bologna 1588; Italian composer and lutenist, member of the renown family of musicians who for many years was living in England. His son, A. Ferrabosco II, born in England was one of the most known virtuoso and composers (maybe even inventor of?) English *lyra viol*. See in the book by A. Otterstedt, "Die Gambe", 1994.

¹⁴⁵ See in Appendix E., example no. 5.a.

¹⁴⁶ After he contacted me, I gave to him the German and Italian version of this project, as well as number of additional informations. In the introduction of his thesis he mentioned that.

¹⁴⁷ See § 1 and Appendix A: Bibliography and Discography.

¹⁴⁸ Lectures and symposiums in Vienna and Utrecht, for instance; see our Audio Databank, Appendix D.

century (and even later), a unique timbre of the *lira da gamba* have inspired something she calls "the great *Lirone*". It handles, in fact, about an usual string quartet, two violins, viola and violoncello - the last one probably doubled i.e. "enhanced" with at least one *violone*, or double bass viol. Such an ensemble consciously imitates just mentioned sound ideal, and continues to live in a period in which *lira da gamba*/ *lirone* disappeared from the stage, for a long time. As the best example for this statement could serve the famous aria of Orpheus, "*Posente spirto*", from the opera (*favola in musica*) of the same name by Claudio Monteverdi.

§ 9 Lira (da braccio and da gamba) in Croatia during the Renaissance and early Baroque:

Many years ago (1978...) I started to work on a doctoral thesis devoted to performance practice of the Renaissance and early Baroque music in Dalmatia, for me together with Istria the most beautiful and important part of my homeland, Croatia. This chapter of my project could be seen as a partially realisation of this idea, merely a kind of re- starting to deal with it...

Obviously, due to its extent, this topic would deserve a separate article (in preparation) - here I decided to make only a shorter report on the appearances of *liras* in the visual and written sources in Croatian, from 1470 to 1650, and to the possible real use of the instrument there.

As it is well known, the South Slavic territory of today Croatia, in the historical period covered by our survey, was divided between several major power: its continental part was ruled by Hungary (since 1527 Austrian Habsburg dynasty) and the Ottomans, almost the entire coast of Istria, Croatian Littoral, Dalmatia and all islands have been ruled by Venetians, since 1415. The coastal hinterland i.e. Dalmatian Zagora has been occupied by Turks.

Throughout this (and later) period, the rare fortunate exception was independent Republic of Dubrovnik with its coast, islands and hinterland. In spite of all problems and possible negative connotations, this political and economic situation explains the fact why most of the southern Croatia (i.e., Istria and Dalmatia - including the Republic of Dubrovnik) in this period was in direct contact with Italian culture and art of the Renaissance and Baroque. In continental Croatia, we could suppose the similar contact with Italian culture at least due to the indirect influence over Hungarian and, later, Viennese court. Of course, when for the period in question I am using the denomination "Italian", in the first line I think on culture and art of Venice. In the case of the Republic of Dubrovnik, it could be also the Florentine and (through Aragon court in Naples) even Spanish cultural influence. Together, this explains the occurrence of the instrument *lira* in the visual and written (archival and literary) sources on Croatian territory.

It is also interesting to note that in the period 1450 -1600 in Dalmatian cities and Dubrovnik existed (through number of sources confirmed) practice of reciting or singing to the accompaniment of lute (*leut*) and translation of the Italian poetic forms, for example *strambotto*, in Croatian, more precisely in local “chakavian” (the name derives from most common word for “what”, which in chakavian is “cha” - ča or ca and in the literary Croatian, “što”.) idiom. Remember that in Italy in this period it persisted the terminological confusion concerning the use of terms *lira* and lute ...

There are several important scientific papers (articles, books and thesis) Croatian musicologist made in the past fifty years in which we can find various relevant information and get some new ideas where the further research could be required.

This primarily relates to a doctoral dissertation written by Dr. Koraljka Kos¹⁴⁹, where she deals mostly with iconographic representations, but also provides an interesting review of the written sources.

Very briefly, we can say that Kos tends all mentions of the *lira* in the coastal literature and other written sources, interpret exclusively either as an instrument of Antiquity or as a traditional folk instrument *lijerica* or *lirica* - in Dalmatia probably present only since 1800, and now confined to the surroundings of Dubrovnik (Konavle). This can be explained by the fact that at the time, in the late sixties and early seventies of the past century, the knowledge of modern musicology concerning *lira da braccio* was very restricted. In her iconographic study, Kos finds only one source that shows the two (rudimentary drawn) *liras da braccio*.¹⁵⁰ In the case we would apply to the material from the dissertation and the book of K. Kos similar criteria, which in his research used S. Jones (or even more, Slovenian musicologist Primož Kuret)¹⁵¹, many of iconographic displays could be called “medieval fiddle, which might be a *lira da braccio*”.

During my work in the “Summer Academy of Early Music, MAGUS” (in Stari Grad on Island Hvar, 1997) by accident in the local church of St Stephen I discovered a typical display of *lira da braccio*.¹⁵²

In any case, even if we do not take into account relatively scarce iconographic sources (which anyway are not always reliable and in the Croatian regions frequently occur as a transmission or imitation of Italian models) there remain some other sources, in the dissertation of Dr. Kos, especially interesting ones in the Chapter III: *Instruments in the light of archival data, literature and theatre*.

¹⁴⁹ Published as a book in German language: *Musikinstrumente im mittelalterlichen Kroatien*, Zagreb, 1972.

¹⁵⁰ The last one found as a border decoration in the manuscript no. 633, *Psalterium Romanum*, kept in treasury of cathedral in Split and made presumably in the North Italy in 15th century - partly in Split in 17th century.

¹⁵¹ Primož Kuret: *Glasbeni instrumenti na srednjeveških freskah na Slovenskem/Musical instruments on medieval frescos in Slovenia*, Slovenska Matica, Ljubljana 1973. See the pictures on pp. 25 and 84.

¹⁵² Oil on canvass by Francesco Santa Croce 1516-1546): Angel player of *lira da braccio*; see Appendix F: Iconographical and other pictorial examples, no. 2.b.

The first source refers to the lament "*Na priminutje Marina Držića, Dubrovčanina*" written by Mavro Vetranović (poet from Dubrovnik) after the death of the great play writer (1567) in which among other things he says that Apollo, Orpheus and Arion played the *lira* and cried.¹⁵³ Of course, all these mentions could be interpreted with the ancient instrument, but remember that in Italy in this time, in such cases it usually refers to the *lira da braccio*.

For our study it is particularly interesting the source,¹⁵⁴ which stays in a certain connection with the famous poet Marko Marulić of Split (1450 - 1524): "The poet Franjo Božičević-Natalis (author of the Marulić's biography, his compatriot and contemporary who, like him, wrote in Latin and in Croatian), mentions in his collection of poems (manuscript under the title "*Carmina Francisci Natalis*", kept in the town library of Split) that their countryman - poet Jerolim Papalić (Matov) - used to sing lively Marulić's songs to the accompaniment of a bowed instrument: "*Carmina sua ad lyram ragutissimis modulis decantare solebat*". In this case there is for me no doubt that here we are dealing with *lira da braccio*, and certainly not the ancient *lira* or the traditional folk instrument - *lijerica*.

In the study of Marin Franičević "*Chakavian poets of the Renaissance*", I found an interesting mention, that the famous Hvar poet Petar Hektorović (in his letter to Vincenzo Vanetta; in Italian language and not dated) says to the Muse: "*Much time has passed since my lira is hanging on the wall. Then the Muse said ... because I have heard you in your youth, several times in the Latin language and in the language of your Homeland, with great admiration of listeners, to sing sweetly.*"¹⁵⁵ It is possible that in the above mentioned we are dealing just with a repetition of the common phrase that describe the lack of inspiration of a poet, on the other hand this source, connecting *lira* with the sweet singing, might represent the data from the living contemporary performing practice ...

Many interesting sources and ideas can be found in the book (doctoral thesis) by Dr. Miho Demović¹⁵⁶ and in several extraordinary works by Dr. Stanislav Tuksar, for instance in his books "*Croatian Renaissance music theorists*"¹⁵⁷ and "*Croatian music terminology in the Baroque period.*"¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ See in the K. Kos: dissertation, p. 242, in her book p. 92.

¹⁵⁴ See in the K. Kos: dissertation, p. 243, in her book p. 94.

¹⁵⁵ "et già gran tempo è, che la mia lira pende al muro. ... perche ve ho udito in vostra giovinezza piu fiate, et in lingua latina et in quella della vostra patria con grandissimo favore de gli ascoltanti dolcemente cantare." See in the bibliography, Franičević.

¹⁵⁶ Miho Demović: "Glazba i glazbenici u Dubrovačkoj republici od početka XI. do polovine XVII. stoljeća/ Music and musicians in the Republic of Dubrovnik from the beginning of 11th to the mid of 17th centuries, Zagreb, 1981.

¹⁵⁷ We find there the studies on neoplatonic writings and ideas by Federik Grisogono-Bartolačić, Pavao Skalić, analysis of music terminology in the dictionary by Faust Vrančić, Franjo Petris, Miho Monaldi and Nikola Vitov Gučetić,

¹⁵⁸ For details see the bibliography

Here, I would like to refer to the dictionary (of five European languages, called by the author himself the "five noblest European languages"/"*quinque nobilissimarum Europæ linguarum*" - one of them Croatian or more precise Dalmatian Chakavian) by F. Vrančić from 1595¹⁵⁹. There he translates Latin term *lyra* with Italian *lira*, German *Harpff* and (very interesting!) with Croatian *guszlè*. And further: Latin *lyricen* he translates with Italian *sonatore*, German *Harpffenschlager* and Croatian *guslar*. Latin *cithara* translates with Italian *cithara*, German *ein Harpff* and Croatian *gußle*. Consequently Latin *citharoedus* becomes *citharista* in Italian, in German *ein Harpffenschlager* but in Croatian *gudacz*! In the case of Latin *fidicen* Vrančić gives the Italian translation *citharista*, German *Geyger* and in Croatian again (as in the case of *cithara*) remains *gudacz* ...

Even today, we use the term *gusla* in Croatian language either for the normal violin or for the traditional folk instrument, used to accompany the so-called heroic, epic, poems. Consequently, a person who plays such an instrument is called *guslar*. Name *gudac* (at least in the literary language) nowadays is not used, while in the form of "*gudač*" often denominates person who plays any bowed instrument.

From the above, we can assume that at least *lira da braccio* (for *lira da gamba* we do not have up to now any reliable information) referred to the coastal Croatia of 15th and 16th century, primarily in the circles of humanists, artists, musicians and poets - that is Croatian cultural elites in cities like Zadar, Šibenik, Trogir, Split, Hvar, Korčula and Dubrovnik¹⁶⁰ - was not only known but also used in everyday musical practice.¹⁶¹

At this point I would like to stress my intense involvement with Croatian musical heritage (also related to the specific problems of both *liras* and in general) and my collaboration with a number of dear colleagues, Croatian musicologists, who - each in an own way and at different moments, with their advice, help or specific cooperation have been an important aid and perpetual inspiration on my almost fifty years long early musical life.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ See the footnote no. 143.

¹⁶⁰ For this period I added the Italian names for those towns: Zara, Sebenico, Trau, Spalato, Lesina, Curzola and Ragusa.

¹⁶¹ This musical instrument appears relatively often in written (literature) and sometimes iconographical sources and in its usual Italian context, as an attribute of Apollo, Orpheus and king David. See Appendix F, iconographic example no. 2.b.

¹⁶² Starting with Dr. Koraljka Kos, late prof. Ladislav Šaban, Dr. Dragan Plamenac and Dr. Ivo Supićić and indirectly through his editions of early Croatian music; Dr. Lovro Županović, Dr. Bojan Buijić, Dr. Zdravko Blažeković, Dr. Ennio Stipčević, Dr. Katarina Livljanić, Dr. Hana Breko and last but certainly not the least: my dear colleague and long years friend, Dr. Stanislav Tuksar.

Conclusion:

Hundred twenty six years ago, 1892, Alexander Hajdecki wrote, as the first in modern times, a book about "the Italian lira da braccio" and published it in Mostar. Since then, a number of renown musicologists wrote about *liras*, and since 1970 (with the exception of Martin Greulich, who has done his practical experiments already in 1933) several musicians - practitioners, specialists of the so called early music appeared with their papers, books and articles.

Starting with Benvenuto Disertori, many authors (usually important specialists on their field) repeat in their articles and books the same mistake, calling the two lowest strings (outside the fingerboard) "drones". Because of that it seems to be necessary to stress again and again the point that on the lira da braccio (as well as on the lira da gamba and unlike the medieval fiddle) the drones (Italian *bordone*, German *Orgelpunkt*) have not been used. This means that the melody was not accompanied by a (more or less same) lying chord, but with various chords in a kind of a proto - *basso continuo*. Even the most recent (and certainly extraordinary) contributions devoted to *liras* have not, unfortunately, been spared from these errors.

Lira da braccio was one of the most important bowed instruments of the Renaissance. Developed directly from the medieval fiddle and appearing under different names in written (archival and literary) sources, from the mid-15th until the early 17th century.

It was the instrument on which humanists and reciters accompanied their singing or recitation, with chordal, homophonic, accompaniment.

Lira da gamba (as its name itself says) was a kind of viol, at least from organological, constructional point of view. In fact, we should better think of it as the bigger member of the lira da braccio "family", held between the knees and played in lower, tenor, register.

While the number of strings on the lira da braccio was usually seven, on the lira da gamba it varied from 11 to 18. How the *lira* was looking like, which was played by Alessandro Striggio elder, we do not know. On the basis of the information left by H. Cardanus I tried to make a hypothetical reconstruction of its shape and chords that would allow to perform on it.

Lira da gamba was used exclusively for chordal playing, and its main role was to accompany the singing or another melodic solo instrument. Because of the distinctive timbre of its tone it was very much appreciated by artists, musicians, composers and theorists of the period. On the basis of my own practical experience I can tell that on the lira da gamba it is possible to perform shorter instrumental solos, interludes, intermezzos, as well as various pieces (dances, frottoles or early madrigals) of homophonic nature.

Although the *liras* have been a typical product of Italian culture and musical practice, they were known and used in other European countries (including Croatia) even those

outside the direct Italian cultural influence.

Given what has been preserved and what we know now, it can be assumed that the construction of *lira da braccio* was initially similar to that of the medieval fiddle, later *viola da braccio* and at the end (renaissance or early baroque) violin. We assume that in the transitional period it was not possible to clearly distinguish between the late medieval form of the fiddle and an early form of *lira da braccio*.

Both *liras* are mentioned frequently in written (archival or literary) sources, from which (as in the case of iconography - with due caution ...) it is possible to learn something about their significance, role, way of use, the social status of musicians and the performance practice of the period in general.

For today's reconstruction of the playing techniques and repertoire on both *liras* particularly important are the research and series of papers written by musicologists (M. Greulich, B. Disertori, H.M. Brown, W. Osthoff, etc.), and (increasingly) musicians - practitioners as for instance S. Jones, J. Skeaping, I. David, G. V. Penniman and myself.

Although there are still lacking detailed analysis of some of the supposedly extant original instruments, it could be that, as it seems, we do not have any *lira* (da braccio or da gamba) preserved in its original form (i.e. with all its details). In other words, it means that as only source of information on construction, playing technique and performance practice on *liras* remain the iconographic and written sources, unsure as they are.

Lira da braccio and *lira da gamba* played in many ways very important role in the development of musical forms, techniques of playing, performing practice and experimentation of early baroque *basso continuo*. Both instruments had in the same time intellectual and symbolic role due to their connection to the attempted revival of the ancient musical practice made by humanists (neoplatonists). The improvised performance - especially in accompaniment of singing¹⁶³, was unique, in my opinion deliberately not notated in music and for that reason forever lost. The chordal playing technique on the *lira da braccio* has been overtaken by violin (maybe by the *viola d'amore*, too) and persisted in some way ever since in the violin repertoire, in works by composers as Marini, Biber, Bach and Bartok.

In autumn 1996 I began my work on the project, "*Lira da braccio and Lirone; reconstruction of the playing techniques and repertoire.*" Thanks to the friendly and professional assistance and support from colleagues in the department for performance practice at the University for Music in Vienna, I was able to examine a number of sources, send questionnaire and issue the "*Liraforum*" News on over 300 addresses of individuals (musicologists, ensembles, musicians and makers of early

¹⁶³ In which not only the creative and performance art but also the singer and accompanist have been united in one person.

instruments), and scientific institutions (musicological institutes - including those specialised in Early music; collections or museums of musical instruments, etc.), get (in most cases) interesting reactions, remarks or information and at the end, after four and a half years finish my work on this project.

21 years ago (1997) it could still happen that some skeptics¹⁶⁴ express their doubts about sense of making similar projects as well as setting up data banks. This attitude was explained with the conviction that the whole topic would be "too thin" and therefore very quickly, "sentenced" to exhausting of the sources ...

The developments, however, demonstrated the opposite. After the books and articles, by Sterling Jones, Joseph M. Skeaping, Imke David, Antonio Baldassare and my report (which in its time, 2001, brought many fresh ideas and some new knowledge, and which I updated couple of times) in the meantime it appeared a master thesis dedicated to *lira da braccio* in London and a doctoral dissertation devoted to *lira da gamba* at the Early Music Institute on Indiana University, Bloomington (USA).

Taking all this into consideration, it seems to me that the issue *lire* at least for some time could not be considered exhausted. As one of the most important tasks it still remains to solve the puzzle of the *lira* played by Alessandro Striggio.

I am convinced that the further progress of research on this issue requires substantially greater willingness for cooperation and (why not?) a team work on the "same thing", exchange of ideas and information. An example of such cooperation was the consecutive exchange of information between my dear and unfortunately late colleague, Joseph M. Skeaping and me, as well as contacts with American colleague V. Penniman, to both of whose I put on disposition all my sources. Victor mentioned this into the introduction to his thesis. Once again I have to say that it is a real shame that a rich country as the United States, are not able to publish such an important work as his certainly is and to make it available to the world public in printed form.

If the collaboration is usual in almost all other sciences or arts, why should it not function in this case? Another time I want to repeat that only through cooperation and working together, we can come significantly closer to what might be some kind of hypothetical reconstruction of the lost and forgotten playing technique, performing practice and repertory on both *liras*. Despite some reserves, the readiness for cooperation, showed by many of my colleagues (musicologists, musicians and makers of early instruments), undoubtedly exist. Running a central bank of (all) information, as our *Lira DATABASE*¹⁶⁵ should be, would play a very important role.

At the end (in 2011 and again today, in 2018), I want to recommend to all interested colleagues, who want to actively engage in the playing of the *liras* (primarily those da

¹⁶⁴ Among them, the British scholar and string maker Ephraim Seegerman and German specialist for musical iconography, Uta Henning.

¹⁶⁵ Inspired by such great international projects as RISM and RIdIM.

braccio): try to sing to your own accompaniment, at least "for yourselves" at home. This was once a most common way to use both *liras*, which presents today (in the successively better and more numerous performances and recordings of early music) still a 'rarity', even if the situation is better as in late nineties of the past century... This is the only "authentic" way of performance on the *liras* and in my opinion unavoidable and crucial if you wish to understand and to revive this great but for centuries forgotten renaissance art.

Here, I wish to give you my reflection on how we could, in most 'authentic mode' revive the improvisation on the lira da braccio. To tell the truth, even if this idea appeared to me long time ago and I made some smaller experiments in this direction, the direct inspiration and some kind of "proof" arrived relatively recently thanks to the young lutenist Lukas Henning¹⁶⁶. If we want to reconstruct the art of improvised accompaniment on the lira da braccio, we ought to be able to enter in the 'heart and soul' of the language (poetical and musical), to sing and play in the style of Marco Cara, Bartolomeo Tromboncino, etc. Of course, in case of Italian language (I can imagine this in my own, Croatian, language), it would be ideal if this would be your mother tongue but you can try it in another language, too, English, German, Hungarian... Before I continue, I think this idea could easily develop to one of my future articles...

Igor Pomykalo, Piregg - Birkfeld, 26th April 2018

¹⁶⁶ See on YouTube under his name and Me.Mo, an excellent serial on music of the Renaissance. Lukas, who graduated on the famous Schola Cantorum in Basle, can improvise in the style of various renown lutenists-composers of the period!