

COUNTERFEIT RUCKERS INSTRUMENTS IN THE MIM COLLECTION A CASE STUDY OF THE SO-CALLED “RUCKERS-TASKIN” HARPSICHORD

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Izveček: *Uporaba arheometričnih orodij je osvetlila dejansko preteklost tako imenovanega »Ruckers-Taskinovega« čembala (Muzej glasbil v Bruslju, inv. št. 3848), glasbila ki ni niti Ruckersovo niti Taskinovo, temveč francoski inštrument iz okoli leta 1695, ki ga je leta 1750 ponaredil Antoine Vater in leta 1774 restavriral Pascal Taskin.*

Ključne besede: *čembalo, Ruckers, Taskin, ponaredek, arheometrična orodja*

Abstract: *The use of archeometrical tools has shed light on the true history of the so-called “Ruckers-Taskin” harpsichord (Musical Instruments Museum, Brussels, inv. 3848), an instrument that is neither a Ruckers nor a Taskin but a French instrument from c. 1695, falsified around 1750 by Antoine Vater and ravalé by Pascal Taskin in 1774.*

Keywords: *harpsichord, Ruckers, Taskin, counterfeit, archeometrical tools*

If musical instrument counterfeiting is documented as early as the mid-sixteenth century,¹ the oldest trace of harpsichord counterfeiting dates back to 1582, when a dispute broke out over an instrument sold as a Hans Bos but probably made by one of his workmen.² Hans Bos (’s-Hertogenbosch?, c. 1518 – Antwerp, between 1580 and 1582) was at the time one of the most highly regarded organ builders and harpsichord makers active in Antwerp. Of the hundreds of instruments that must have been built in his workshop, only the magnificent virginal of the royal monastery of Santa Clara in Tordesillas (1578) is preserved, but another one represented in *The Hoefnagel Family* as portrayed in 1581 by the Flemish painter Frans I Pourbus (Bruges, c. 1545 – Antwerp, 1581) likewise testifies to his by then appreciable fame.³

Regarding the instruments of the famous Ruckers dynasty, which is for the harpsichord what Stradivarius is for the violin, the harpsichord built by Michel Richard (fl. 1659–1693)

For advice regarding this paper, the author wishes to thank especially Friedemann Hellwig, Olaf Kirsch and John Koster.

¹ Restelli, “La falsificazione”, 3; Barnes, Beare and Libin, “Faking and Forgery”.

² Lambrechts-Douillez, *Orgelbouwers te Antwerpen*, 11–13.

³ Hans Bos’s fame is also attested by the reference to his work in Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum*, vol. 2, *De organographia* (Wolfenbüttel, 1619), 16. Koster, “Virginal by Hans Bos”, 72–73.

in Paris in 1688, presented as a Hans Ruckers dating from 1613, is considered the oldest known counterfeit.⁴ It will be followed by dozens of others. Fake Ruckers instruments will in fact become commonplace in the eighteenth century: in England and the Low Countries, but especially in France, as shown by a large number of workshop inventories mentioning old Flemish instruments planned to be “taken apart” or “counterfeited” or to “have their soundboards removed”.⁵ “Most if not all of the makers established in Paris engaged in this practice: the Blanchets, pioneers in this field, Vater, Goujon, Hemsch, Galland, Lempereur, Taskin [...]”.⁶ The great fashion for Flemish instruments and the price they could fetch easily explain it:

In the period between 1750 and 1780 the average price for a double-manual harpsichord made by a Parisian builder was about 300 to 400 livres. A Ruckers or Couchet double, on the other hand, was usually listed for either 600 or 1,000 livres. But sometimes prices as high as 2,000–5,000 livres were asked.⁷

Was counterfeiting then considered as a crime or rather as a commercial practice – “una sorta di omaggio a una grande tradizione artigianale e ai suoi illustri maestri”?⁸ If so, can the same be said for the second half of the nineteenth or the beginning of the twentieth century? While large public and private collections were being assembled, and since demand was far greater than supply, unscrupulous individuals chose to make a living out of counterfeiting. As in the case of the Florentine antiques dealer Leopoldo Franciolini (Florence, 1844–1920), their explicit intention was to deceive buyers – ones eager to increase the prestige of their collections and easy to convince, given the general lack of knowledge about the history of musical-instrument making.

Today, after advances in organological knowledge, few old forgeries appear to be well executed. In some cases, only the signature is forged, while the general instrument shape does not even begin to conform. But in other instances, as the ten harpsichords purporting to be seventeenth-century Iberian instruments sold in the 1990s have shown, forgers may be more aware of the state of the art and succeed in deceiving both private collectors and museums.⁹ The study of the so-called Luis de Carballeda instrument, supposed to be a 1641 transposing double harpsichord, demonstrated that only a careful examination by high-level experts can detect fraud, uncovering modern tool marks such as circular saw cuts on the soundboard liner and rotary planer marks on the interior framing, the use of wood from California – of course, not available in seventeenth-century Spain – or the presence of modern pigments on the painted decoration.¹⁰

In the collection of the Musical Instruments Museum (MIM) in Brussels, up until a few years ago, the heritage inventory listed eighteen instruments considered to be by

⁴ Koster, “Harpsichord in Seventeenth-Century France”, 39.

⁵ Hardouin, “Harpsichord Making in Paris: Part I, Eighteenth Century”, 10.

⁶ Anselm, “Note on the So-Called ‘Ruckers/Taskin’ Harpsichord”, 393.

⁷ O’Brien, *Ruckers*, 204.

⁸ Restelli, “Il cembalero del re”, 77; Kottick, *History of the Harpsichord*, 504.

⁹ Beurmann, “Iberian Discoveries”, 183; Beurmann, “Spanish Harpsichords”.

¹⁰ Koster, “Contemporary Example of Forgery”.

Ruckers: seven harpsichords and eleven virginals of different sizes and types. By the 1950s, however, the authorship of some of these instruments had started to be questioned.¹¹ In 2014 the MIM therefore decided to conduct an in-depth study of the corpus.¹² Along with traditional organological studies, thanks to private funding obtained from the Baillet Latour and Courtin-Bouché Funds, the research team was able to make use of archeometrical tools such as CT scans or X-rays to visualize the internal structure of each instrument and produce technical drawings; microscopical and dendrochronological analyses to identify and date the soundboards' wood; X-ray fluorescence to specify the composition of the roses or that of the palette of pigments used for the cases' decoration; micro Raman spectroscopy or Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy to detail further the nature of the pigments and characterize the binders; and finally analyses of the vibration of the soundboards to determine the acoustic profile of the instruments. These sophisticated tools have indeed led to significant results. They shed light on certain questions that were previously left unanswered: notably, the woods used for the soundboards and the decorative techniques. In combination, they generated hypotheses concerning the history of each of the instruments: its original state and the different alterations undergone over the centuries in musical or decorative terms.

The results also showed irrefutably that the five following so-called Ruckers harpsichords were not genuine:

- “n.d.a HR”: undated double-manual harpsichord with a rose bearing Hans Ruckers' initials (inv. 2510),
- “n.d.b HR”: undated double-manual harpsichord with features close to those of Hans Ruckers' instruments (inv. 2934),
- “1612 HR”: double-manual harpsichord with a rose bearing Hans Ruckers' initials and the date 1612 (inv. 3848),
- “1637 HR”: single-manual harpsichord with a rose bearing Hans Ruckers' initials and the date 1637 (inv. 4276),
- “1639 AR”: single-manual harpsichord with a rose bearing Andreas Ruckers' initials and the date 1639 (inv. 3908).

This does not, of course, mean that these inauthentic instruments are without historical or musical interest. On the contrary, some have undeniable organological value. The “n.d.b HR” (inv. 2934), for instance, an undated double-manual harpsichord with features close to instruments by Hans Ruckers, though ultimately not a Ruckers harpsichord, proves to be

¹¹ Marcuse, “Transposing Keyboards”, 421–423; O'Brien, *Ruckers*, 277, 278, 280, 282; O'Brien, “Ruckers Double-Manual Harpsichords”; Koster, “Remarkable Early Flemish Transposing Harpsichord”, 49; Koster, “Three Early Transposing Two-Manual Harpsichords”, 81.

¹² The present article is an extract of the complete results published in Pascale Vandervellen, ed., *The Golden Age of Flemish Harpsichord Making: A Study of the MIM's Ruckers Instruments* (Brussels: MIM, 2017).

a Flemish instrument of *c.* 1585, and therefore the oldest known transposing harpsichord. With its three rather than four registers, it foreshadows the transposing harpsichords made later by the Ruckers firm. This instrument is therefore at least as interesting as the products of the latter. The “n.d.a HR”, a double-manual harpsichord with a rose bearing Hans Ruckers’ initials, turned out to be an anonymous Flemish instrument built in 1624 – actually, the only preserved Flemish harpsichord with a 16'-foot register. And the “1612 HR”, a double-manual harpsichord known as the “Ruckers-Taskin” whose history will now be detailed, even though fake, still remains one of the jewels of the MIM collection.

The So-Called “Ruckers-Taskin” Harpsichord

At first sight, the “Ruckers-Taskin” double-manual harpsichord looks like a seventeenth-century Flemish harpsichord redecorated in the French manner. Its case (2,263 mm long, 898 mm wide and about 234–243 mm high) bears the traces of two successive enlargements corresponding to two extensions of the keyboard’s compass, or *ravalements*. Sitting on a Louis-XIV gilt stand, it is decorated with sumptuous scenes of military conquests. The soundboard is painted with floral and fruit motifs in the Flemish spirit. It features a rose bearing Hans Ruckers’ initials, and the date “1612” is written in red next to the rose. The wrestplank bears the inscription “MIS A RAVALLEMENT PAR PASCAL TASKIN A PARIS 1774”. Inside the case two labels attest the intervention of Pascal Taskin on the one hand and Louis Tomasini (an Italian piano maker and restorer active in Paris at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) on the other hand.



Figure 1
“Ruckers-Taskin” double-manual harpsichord, MIM, inv. 3848 (reproduced by permission of MIM).



Figure 2

“Ruckers-Taskin” wrestplank (reproduced by permission of MIM).

PROVENANCE

The instrument corresponds to one put up for sale in the Parisian advertising sheet *Affiches, annonces et avis divers* of 23 January 1777 and described in the following terms:

Harpichord à grand rav.[a]lement] made in 1612 by Ruckers [*sic*], superiorly painted in a superior manner by Van der Meulen and adorned with bronzes. It was restored by Mr Pascal Taskin, a famous artist. It contains four registers, one of which is the *buffle* stop invented by this maker. It is fitted with six stops that one changes with one’s knee without removing one’s hands from the keyboard, which gives the *piano*, the *forte* and the *crescendo* in the neatest and most audible manner. Price: 260 louis, in cash, at the premises of Mr de la Chevardière, master of music, rue du Roule.¹³

The instrument is already considered to be of exceptional value, since it is offered at the price of “260 louis”, which is the highest documented price ever asked for a so-called Ruckers harpsichord.¹⁴ It is not known by whom the instrument was then purchased, but in 1842 it was sold by Prince Torlini of Rome to Viscount Powerscourt. Presented at the 1885 London International Inventions Exhibition as having belonged to Queen Marie-Antoinette, it was resold in 1900 to Sir Edgar Speyer of London. In the Speyers’ home it is said to have been played by the harpsichordist Wanda Landowska. After having the instrument restored by Tomasini, the Speyers took it to the United States, where it was sold to Major Bowes. At the latter’s death, in 1948, the instrument was auctioned by Kendall Galleries and purchased by Sibyl Marcuse. The American musicologist had it restored to playing condition by Frank Hubbard. She then offered it to the MIM, which purchased it in 1960 for the rather modest sum of \$5000 – around 250,000 Belgian Francs.

At the time of its acquisition by the MIM the instrument was still considered a Ruckers. But in his monumental study on the famous Antwerp harpsichord makers published in

¹³ “Clavecin à grand rav.[a]lement] fait en 1612 par Ruckers, supérieurement peint par Van der Meulen, orné de bronzes. Il a été mis en état par le sieur Pascal Taskin, artiste célèbre. Il contient 4 registres, dont un est le jeu de buffle inventé par ce facteur. Il est composé de six mouvements que l’on change avec le genou sans retirer les mains de dessus le clavier, ce qui donne le piano, le forte et le crescendo de la manière la plus nette et la plus sensible. Prix: 260 louis comptant, chez le sieur de la Chevardière, maître de musique, rue du Roule”.

¹⁴ Gétreau, “Fashion for Flemish Harpsichords”, 124.

1990 Grant O'Brien put an end to this myth, describing the instrument as “a large French double-manual harpsichord of compass F_1 to f^3 , with a composite soundboard some of which has been taken from a (Flemish?) virginal. The case and lid are painted with scenes from the career of Louis XIV by van der Meulen. Besides the fake Ruckers signature the instrument bears the inscription ‘Mis à Ravalement par Pascal Taskin à Paris 1774’. Taskin may well be responsible for the whole of the instrument”.¹⁵ Of course, given that Adam-Frans Van der Meulen (Brussels, 1632–Paris, 1690) died long before Pascal Taskin (Theux, 1723–Paris, 1793) was born, either the paintings are not by Van der Meulen or Taskin is not the maker of this instrument. But the organological examination and numerous scientific analyses carried out showed that the history of the “Ruckers-Taskin” is much more intricate: if the instrument is not a Ruckers, it is also not Taskin who built it from elements taken from old Flemish instruments, nor he who falsified it – even if this famous *facteur de clavecins et garde des instruments de musique du roi* was elsewhere implicated in several forgeries.¹⁶

OUTER-CASE DECORATION

Regarding the authorship of the military scenes adorning the outer case, the MIM called on different experts, especially Maité Pacco and Joost Vander Auwera. The conclusions from their examination can be summarized in three points.¹⁷ “Firstly, that what is represented here are scenes from the campaign of Louis XIV in Flanders (1667–1668) by which he claimed to defend his rightful position as heir to the Duchy of Brabant [...]. Secondly, that the style of Adam-Frans Van der Meulen (Brussels, 1632–Paris, 1690), the artist who became famous for being asked by the French King to illustrate his victories in that theatre of war, differs in many respects from the style of these paintings [...]. Thirdly, that the hands of at least two different masters and/or their studios have been involved”:
Jean-Baptiste Martin (aka Martin des Batailles; Paris, 1659–1735) and Pierre-Denis Martin (Paris, 1663–1742).



Figure 3

“Ruckers-Taskin” bentside (reproduced by permission of MIM).

“If both attributions hold true, this has important consequences for the chronology of the pictorial decoration. And as a result, also for the dating and genesis of the instrument itself in its current painted form”.¹⁸ As Martin des Batailles founded his own studio only

¹⁵ O'Brien, *Ruckers*, 278.

¹⁶ Restelli, “Il cembalaro del re”, 64.

¹⁷ Vander Auwera, “Comments on the ‘1612 HR’”.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

after the death of Van der Meulen in 1690, and as he started to collaborate with Pierre-Denis Martin only in 1694, the paintings have necessarily to be dated to after 1694.

But could the instrument still be a Ruckers made in 1612 and redecorated by Martin des Batailles and Pierre-Denis Martin after 1694?

ROSE

“One of the most characteristic features of a Ruckers instrument is the rose. In any authentic instrument the type of rose used (or if the rose is missing, the rose-hole diameter) must correspond to that of its maker and to the period in which the maker was working”.¹⁹

The rose of the “Ruckers-Taskin” is fitted into a 65 mm-diameter hole. It bears Hans Ruckers’ initials and matches the rose used by Ioannes Ruckers from about 1595 to 1615. However, XRF analyses carried out by the University of Antwerp show that, contrary to genuine Ioannes Ruckers roses, which are made of a lead-tin alloy, the “Ruckers-Taskin” rose has been cast in pure lead. The original gilding was done with gold leaf, but over a red undercoat (which is unusual). Moreover, whereas Ruckers roses are usually fastened under the soundboard using linen and adhesive, the “Ruckers-Taskin” rose is held in place with little metal pins. In comparison with other Ioannes Ruckers roses, the underside seems here very flat, with sharp edges, while the tabs are dovetail-shaped rather than rounded. These differences, added to those in composition, strongly suggest that this rose is a copy rather than an original Ruckers rose.²⁰



Figure 4
“Ruckers-Taskin” rose (reproduced by permission of MIM).

CASE CONSTRUCTION

Most authentic Ruckers instruments, regardless of the extent to which they have been altered, retain most of the case-side material and some of the internal bracing. To be authentic a Ruckers instrument must be constructed of poplar. Needlewoods (fir, pine and spruce) and lime, which is much denser and more finely grained wood than poplar, were never used for the case sides or internal framing by any of the Ruckers family.²¹

¹⁹ O’Brien, *Ruckers*, 186.

²⁰ Akkermans and Storme, “Ruckers Roses”, 322.

²¹ O’Brien, *Ruckers*, 187.

In the “Ruckers-Taskin”, if the cheekpiece, bentside and tail are of poplar, the spine is of lime. Other elements similarly do not correspond to the characteristics of Flemish instruments. Whereas, for example, the thickness of authentic Ruckers case sides is usually between 12.5 mm and 16 mm, the bentside is here only 7.5 to 9 mm thick.

As for the internal construction, X-ray images show that the case framing has absolutely nothing to do with Ruckers harpsichords. The lower-level framing consists of seven braces instead of four; the upper-level framing is likewise made up of seven massive braces placed obliquely rather than the expected three. All these framing elements are made of softwood instead of poplar. They feature a rounded profile, which is a feature specific to French, as distinct from Flemish ones.

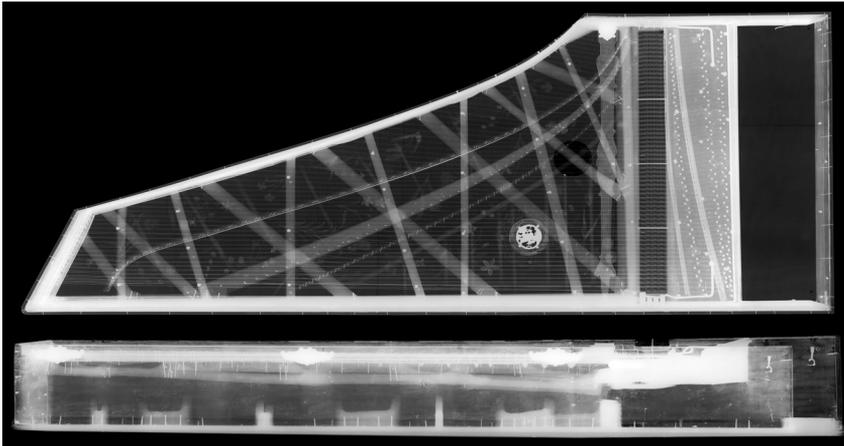


Figure 5
“Ruckers-Taskin” X-rays images (reproduced by permission of MIM and KIK-IRPA).



Figure 6
“Ruckers-Taskin” case framing (reproduced by permission from MIM).

WRESTPLANK

The X-ray images of the wrestplank confirm the French origin of the instrument. They also provide an indication of the date of its building. Indeed, they allow one to observe, next to the current location of the wrestpins, traces of two other, previous, wrestpin locations. The three original ranks of wrestpins were placed according to the French disposition: the first 8', comprising 55 pins, runs behind the nameboard on two parallel ranks – one for the naturals, the other for the sharps. Then come the 55 pins of the second 8', placed diagonally, likewise on two ranks. This means that the instrument originally had two manuals with a compass of four octaves and a fifth running from G_1 , A_1 to d^3 (lacking the $G\#_1$), a compass that most likely dates the instrument to the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – a period fully consistent with the dating of the outer-case decoration made by the painting experts.²²

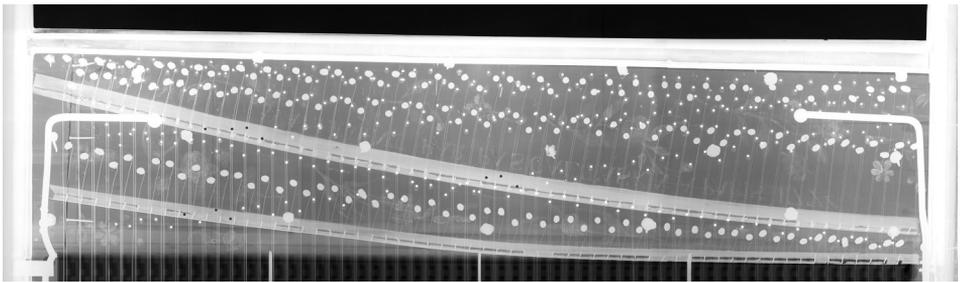


Figure 7a

“Ruckers-Taskin” X-ray images of the wrestplank (reproduced by permission of MIM and KIK-IRPA).

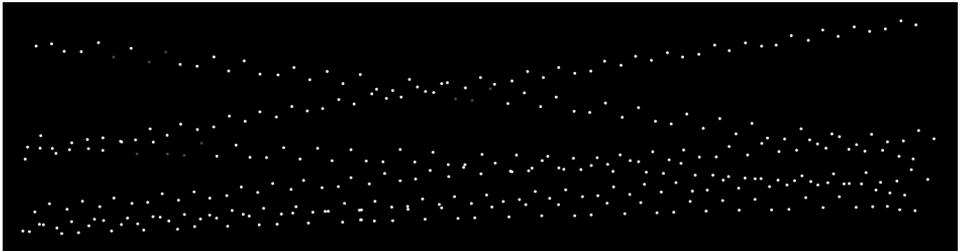


Figure 7b

Wrestpins locations (reproduced by permission of MIM).

²² Alain Anselm suggested that the original compass was 53 notes and that the notes $c\#^3$ and d^3 were early additions. Anselm, “Note on the So-Called ‘Ruckers/Taskin’ Harpsichord”, 390.

X-ray images also show that at the time of the first *ravalement*, hence before the enlargement (or second *ravalement*) made by Pascal Taskin in 1774, the wrestplank was turned over and the compass of the keyboards extended to fifty-eight notes running from F₁ to d³. After the wrestplank had been turned over, its upper surface had to be veneered with new leaves of softwood. Dendrochronological analyses of the latter show that they were taken from a single tree whose most recent ring dates from 1747 – the best results being those obtained using a chronology established on the basis of instruments built by Parisian violin makers active in the eighteenth century. The first *ravalement* was therefore carried out after 1747, probably around 1750.²³

KEYBOARDS

The two keyboards now present in the instrument, extended by three notes in the treble, originally had a compass of four octaves and a sixth (fifty-eight notes) and therefore date from the first *ravalement*. They are similar to those built by eighteenth-century French makers and, in particular, Antoine Vater. The examination made by the expert Alain Anselm revealed indeed that “the thin keyplates separated by wide gaps, the keyfronts with a semicircular moulding, the profiles of the coupler dogs, the numberings and, above all, the traces of pegs holding thin cords in front of the balance points” are typical of this German maker active in Paris from 1715, “as witnessed by his instruments dated 1732,



Figure 8
“Ruckers-Taskin” keyboards (reproduced by permission of MIM).

²³ Versteeg, “Dendrochronological Analyses”, 364.

1737 and 1738”. “This system, meant to replace the cloth punchings, is more generally encountered in German instruments. In France it remained peculiar to Antoine Vater’s”.²⁴

Vater therefore became the identified author of the first *ravalement*, but the research team also reached the conclusion that it was similarly he who falsified the instrument’s origin.

SOUNDBOARD

The soundboard is obviously made of leaves of diverse origin. Some were taken from a virginal, others from a harpsichord. Several in fact bear marks of wrestpins, mortises or hitchpins partially masked by judiciously positioned decorative motifs. Unfortunately, the dendrochronological analyses performed did not provide convincing results – neither in relation to the origin of the woods nor concerning their date.

The XRF, MRS and SEM-EDX analyses of the pigments show a palette comprising lead white, red earth, vermilion, a green copper-based pigment, azurite, smalt, Prussian blue and Naples yellow. Prussian blue came onto the market between 1704 and 1710, while Naples yellow, “although introduced in northern European painting in the fifteenth century, has only limited use before 1700 as lead tin yellow stayed popular. The traditionally used lead tin yellow was gradually replaced by Naples yellow from 1730”.²⁵

On the basis of these pigment identifications there is every reason to believe that this composite soundboard decoration is not original but dates from either the first or the second *ravalement* of the instrument. Since no decorative motifs are painted on the leaf added by Taskin along the spine at the time of the second *ravalement*, and also since the decoration is centred in relation to the soundboard dimensions prior to the second *ravalement*, this addition appears, rather, to date from the first *ravalement* made by Antoine Vater. Inspection of the soundboard barring confirms this: several of the bars, in fact, do not extend as far as the spine, covering only the surface of the soundboard at the time of the first *ravalement* and not the leaf added by Taskin at the time of the second *ravalement*.

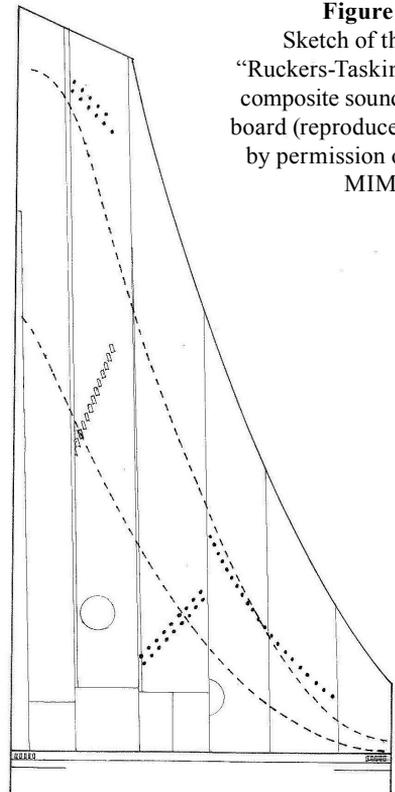


Figure 9
Sketch of the “Ruckers-Taskin” composite soundboard (reproduced by permission of MIM).

²⁴ Anselm, “Note on the So-Called ‘Ruckers/Taskin’ Harpsichord”, 391.

²⁵ Saverwyns and Van Bos, “Looking beyond the Decorated Surface”, 332–334.



Figure 10
“Ruckers-Taskin” soundboard (reproduced by permission of MIM).

Conclusion

An alliance between organological study and various available archeometrical tools has made it possible to obtain exceptional results in the study of so-called “Ruckers-Taskin” harpsichord, putting a definitive end to the question of its authorship.

Given the constructional characteristics and the attribution of the case, lid and fallboard paintings to Martin des Batailles and Pierre-Denis Martin, it is clear that the instrument is certainly not an original Ruckers harpsichord but a French instrument from the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, originally having two manuals and a compass running from G_1 , A_1 to d^3 (fifty-five notes), three ranks of strings ($2 \times 8'$, $1 \times 4'$) and three registers. It underwent a first *ravalement* around 1750, whereby its compass was extended to fifty-eight notes running from F_1 to d^3 . This was probably the work of a French maker – most likely, Antoine Vater, given the similarities in the making of the keyboards. The original wrestplank was then turned over and veneered with new leaves of softwood.

At this time, probably, the instrument was deliberately falsified in order to give the appearance of a Ruckers harpsichord: the original soundboard was replaced by a patchwork of boards, some of which were taken from a virginal and a harpsichord. A copy of a Ruckers rose was fitted, and the soundboard was decorated in the style of Ioannes Ruckers instruments – the motifs cunningly serving to hide the joints between the various leaves, the holes left by the mortises and the hitchpins of the older instruments. In 1774, Taskin undertook a second *ravalement* in order to extend the instrument’s compass to five complete octaves from F_1 to f^3 (sixty-one notes) in accordance with the practice in contemporary instruments.

Even though Pascal Taskin has previously been found guilty of manufacturing several counterfeit instruments, he is not the forger of the double-harpsichord known as the “Ruckers-Taskin”.

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PONAREJENA RUCKERSOVA GLASBILA V ZBIRKI MUZEJA GLASBIL V
BRUSLJU: PRIMER RAZISKAVE TAKO IMENOVANEGA
»RUCKERS-TASKINOVEGA« ČEMBALA

Povzetek

Do pred nekaj leti je Muzej glasbil v Bruslju v svojem inventarju beležil 18 čembalov in virginalov, ki so veljali za Ruckersove. Vendar se je že v petdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja pojavil dvom o avtorstvu nekaterih od teh glasbil. Muzej se je zato odločil za poglobljeno raziskavo tega korpusa, pri čemer so uporabili tako uveljavljene organološke metode kot tudi arheometrična orodja, kot sta računalniška tomografija in rentgensko slikanje za vizualizacijo notranje strukture vsakega glasbila. Poleg tega so izvedli mikroskopske in dendrološke analize za identifikacijo lesa ter rentgensko fluorescenčno spektroskopijo (XRF) za ugotavljanje sestave rozet oziroma pigmentov, ki so bili uporabljeni za okraševanje ohišij in resonančnih plošč. Magnetnoresonančno (MRS) ali Fourierjevo transformacijsko infrardečo spektroskopijo (FTIR) so uporabili za določitev nadaljnjih podrobnosti narave pigmentov in značilnosti veziv, medtem ko so z analizo vibracij resonančne plošče določali akustični profil pregledanih glasbil. S temi prefinjenimi orodji so se raziskovalci dokopali do pomembnih spoznanj. Povezava rezultatov posameznih analiz in merjenj je omogočila oblikovanje hipotez o zgodovini vsakega od opazovanih glasbil. Raziskava je pokazala tudi to, da je pet glasbil nedvomno ponarejenih.

Zanesljivo so ugotovili, da »Ruckers-Taraskinovo« glasbilo, dvomanualni čembalo, na katerem je rozeta z inicialkami Hansa Ruckersa in datumom 1612, ni izvirni Ruckersov čembalo, temveč francosko glasbilo s preloma 17. v 18. stoletje, ki ima dva izvirna manuala, obseg med G_1 oziroma A_1 in d^3 (55 tonov), tri vrste strun ($2 \times 8'$, $1 \times 4'$) in tri registre. Veličastne vojaške prizore, ki krasijo zunanje ohišje, sta naslikala Jean-Baptiste Martin (znan kot Martin des Batailles, 1659–1735) in Pierre-Denis Martin (1663–1742). Glasbilo so prvič predelali okoli leta 1750, ko so mu razširili obseg na 58 tonov med F_1 in d^3 . To je bilo najbrž delo francoskega mojstra, najverjetneje Antoina Vaterja (1689–po 1759), sodeč po podobnostih v izdelavi klaviatur.

Vse kaže, da je bilo glasbilo takrat namenoma potvorjeno, da bi zgledalo kot Ruckersov čembalo: izvorna resonančna plošča je bila nadomeščena s sestavljeno ploščo, katere deli so prvotno pripadali starejšima čembalu in virginalu. Vstavljena je bila kopija Ruckersove rozete in resonančna plošča, okrašena v slogu Ioannesa Ruckersa, pri čemer ikonografska motivika spretno prekriva povezave med deli plošče, luknje utorov in sponk starejših glasbil. Leta 1774 je Pascal Taskin opravil drugo predelavo, namenjeno povečanju obsega glasbila na pet polnih oktav med F_1 in f^3 (61 tonov) v skladu s tedanjo prakso gradnje tovrstnih glasbil. Čeprav je Taskin danes znan kot ponarejevalec glasbil, pa dejansko ni kriv za ponarejeni dvomanualni čembalo, ki je bil poznan kot »Ruckers-Taskin«.