

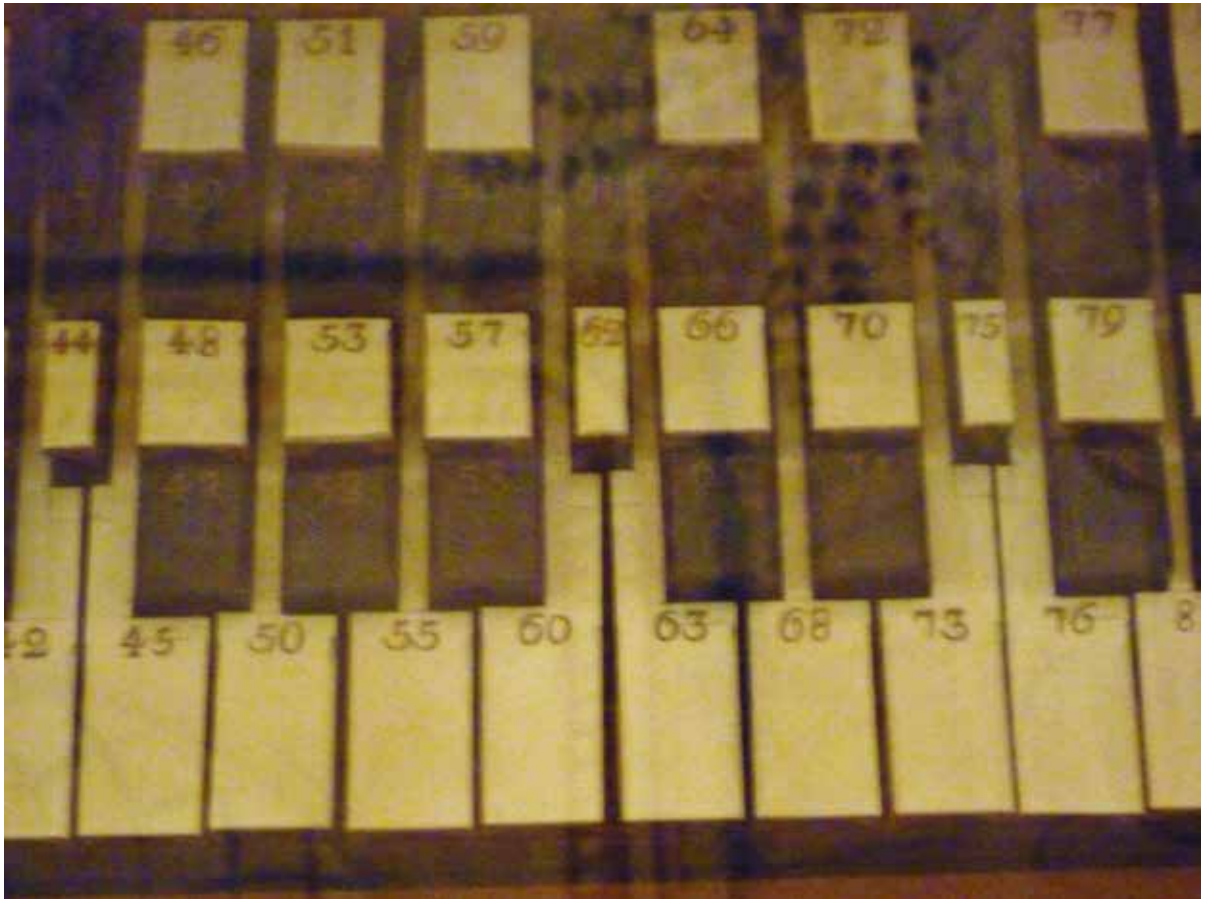
Following Comm 2009, a Venetian monochord (dichord? tetrachord?)

Following the 'queries about the dichord' expressed in Comm. 2009 readers might be interested to see this example of an early 17th century monochord – or more strictly tetrachord, though the layout of the strings suggests a double strung dichord, in the Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca di Musica di Bologna. It was made by Vito Trasuntino in Venice in 1606, and sits in the same case as a triple manual harpsichord by the same maker.



The intention of this instrument seems to have been to help correctly tune the microtonal harpsichord, labelled 'Clavemusicium omnitonum modulis diatonicis, cromaticis, et enamarmo[nici]s', whose three manuals, with numbered keys, could be used to demonstrate the three types of harmony: diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic. The museum acoustiguide which gives a splendid musical guided tour, with many recorded music examples, includes a demonstration of music played on this keyboard, though alas my ear is not really good enough for me to be moved to different emotions by the different types of harmony, as the ancient Greek theorists no doubt thought they should be . . .





The other music museum in Bologna, by the way, the Tagliavini Collection, boast this old overwinding machine, whose workings are plain enough to require little explanation:

