

The following extract from the *Ordenanzas Municipales*, relating to the guild of *violeros* (luthiers) in Seville, 1502, indicates to me a very probable explanation for the existence of this particular and unusual instrument:

Item, que el oficial violero, para saber bien su oficio, ha de saber facer instrumentos de muchas artes: que sepa facer un CLAVÍCIMBALO, y un LAUD, y una VIHUELA DE ARCO, y una HARPA, y una VIHUELA GRANDE de piezas con sus atarcios y otras VIHUELAS que no son menos que todo esto; y el menor examen que ha de facer ha de ser de una VIHUELA GRANDE de piezas, como dicho es, con un lazo de talla con buenos atarcios y con todas las cosas que le pertenescen para buena, a contento de los examinadores, que se la vean facer, que no le enseñe a la sazòn nadie.

—quoted from José Subirà, *Historia de la Musica Española y Hispano-americana* (Barcelona, 1953), p. 219. The following translation is Diana Poulton's, to whom I am grateful for much assistance concerning the vihuela in general:

'Item, that the craftsman viol maker, in order to be proficient in his craft, must know how to make instruments of many arts: must know how to make a clavichord, and a lute, and a viol, and a harp, and a *vihuela grande* of pieces with their inlays and other vihuelas which are no less than all this: and for the lowest examination, he must make a *vihuela grande* with pieces, as it is said, with a rose of carving with good inlays and with all those things which belong to it for it to be good, to the satisfaction of the examiners, who will watch him doing it, and no one must teach him the design' (*sazòn*, literally taste, or seasoning).