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The following communication has been received from Barbara Owen.

The authors of "Miniaturization of the Positive Organ, 1570–1750" in this *Journal* 14 (1988): 5–37, state that the chaire organ "often had only two ranks," citing an account of the 1613 Worcester Cathedral organ from a secondary source that is not always reliable. This organ, built by Thomas Dallam in 1613–14, had in fact a chaire of five stops: a principal of metal, a stopped diapason of wood, a flute of wood, and a fifteenth and twenty-second of metal. The source for this, a letter from Nathaniel Tomkins (dated 1665) in the cathedral archives, is cited in several reliable sources, including Denis Stevens's *Thomas Tomkins* and Andrew Freeman's "The Organs of Worcester Cathedral," *The Organ* 5, no. 18 (1925).

The five-stop chaire was quite common in seventeenth-century England; other examples are recorded at St. John's College, Oxford (1618), York Minster (1632), Salisbury Cathedral (1635), Magdalen College, Oxford (ca. 1637), and Litchfield Cathedral (1639). Only one smaller seventeenth-century chaire is recorded: a three-stop division in a smallish organ built in 1631–32 by John Burward for Chirk Castle Chapel. As far as recorded examples go, there was no such thing as a two-stop chaire, though in the previous century positives or "regalles" of from two to five stops were known (cf. the 1547 inventory of the instruments of Henry VIII¹).

It is now generally accepted that "chaire" or "cheyre" (analogous to the German *Rückpositiv*) has nothing to do with the "organist's seat" as it was called in the seventeenth century, but is probably a borrowing from the French, who used the term *cheière* or *cheyere* in the sixteenth century to refer to the division of the organ later known as the *positif de dos*. A similar term in modern French means "desk" or "pulpit"—which a chaire organ somewhat resembles. It is also dangerous to assume that the German terms *Positiv im Stuhl* and *Rückpositiv* mean the same thing; the *Stuhl* was the base of the organ case, and a *Positiv im Stuhl* is likely to have been an interior division similar to the *cadireta interior* of some Iberian organs (the *cadireta exterior* being the same as the *Rückpositiv*).

I will gladly agree with the authors in questioning the stock attribution of both the date (read variously as 1630 or 1650) and maker of the Blair Atholl positive, an instrument that deserves closer scrutiny than it has yet received.

1. Printed in Francis W. Galpin, *Old English Instruments of Music*, 4th ed. (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1965); also in Raymond Russell, *Harpsichord and Clavichord* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959).