



Figure 7.—MADERSPERGER'S 1814 SEWING MACHINE. Illustration from a pamphlet by the inventor entitled *Beschreibung einer Nähmaschine*, Vienna, ca. 1816. (Smithsonian photo 49373.)

machine could be found, and use of the machine may have died with the inventor in 1813.

About the same time, Josef Madersperger, a tailor in Vienna, Austria, invented a sewing machine, which was illustrated (fig. 7) and described in a 15-page pamphlet published about 1816.¹¹ On May 12, 1817, a Vienna newspaper wrote of the Madersperger machine: "The approbation which his machine

received everywhere has induced his Royal Imperial Majesty, in the year 1814, to give to the inventor an exclusive privilege [patent] which has already been mentioned before in these papers."¹² Madersperger's 1814 machine stitched straight or curving lines. His second machine stitched small semicircles, as shown in the illustration, and also small circles, egg-shaped figures, and angles of various degrees. The machine, acclaimed by the art experts, must therefore have been intended for embroidery stitching. From the contemporary descriptions and the illustration, the machine is judged to have made a couched stitch—one thread was laid on the surface of the fabric and stitched in place with a short thread carried by a two-pointed needle of the type invented by Weisenthal. Two fabrics could have been stitched together, but not in the manner required for tailoring. The machine must have had many deficiencies in the tension adjustment, feed, and related mechanical operations, for despite the published wishes for success the inventor did not put the machine into practical

¹¹ JOSEF MADERSPERGER, *Beschreibung einer Nähmaschine* (Vienna, ca. 1816). The exact date of this small booklet is not known. In the booklet Madersperger reports that he had received a patent in 1814 for his *first* machine adapted to straight sewing. However, the machine described and illustrated in this booklet was one that could stitch semicircles and small figures. In *Kunst und Gewerbeblatt*, a periodical (Munich, Germany, 1817, pp. 336-338), reference is made to the Madersperger machine and a statement to the effect that the inventor had published a leaflet describing his machine. The leaflet referred to is believed to be the one under discussion. For this reason it must have been published between 1814 and 1817, therefore ca. 1816. The only copy of this booklet known to this author is in the New York Public Library. It was probably not known to authors Luth and Renters. The author wishes to thank Miss Rita J. Adrosko of her staff for her important help in translating these German publications.

¹² *Sewing Machine Times* (1907), vol. 26, no. 865, p. 1.