

## ***‘Fortissimo di voce, e quasi tenore’***

‘Very strong of voice, and like a viola’

An evidence-based investigation into the historical reality of the Stradivari violin  
which Il Conte Cozio di Salabue sold to Niccolò Paganini in 1817

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Nicholas Sackman

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Dr N Sackman: Associate Professor, Department of Music, University of Nottingham (retired). Author of ‘The *Messiah* violin: a reliable history?’ (2015); see the [www.themessiahviolin.uk](http://www.themessiahviolin.uk) website for details. Author of an historical study of the Stradivari *Habeneck* violin, published in the *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society*, 2016, and re-published on the aforementioned website. Author of an historical study of the ‘original’ neck of the Stradivari *Soil* violin (also available on the website). Author of an extensive and detailed historical study of the two Guarneri *del Gesù* violins which belonged to John Tiplady Carrodus (website). Author of an historical study of the Stradivari *Chant du Cygne* violin (*Journal of the Galpin Society*, March 2017).

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The following description of a 1727 Stradivari violin was written by the Paris-based violin dealer Gustave Bernardel. Bernardel’s text is today located within the *The Jacques Francais Rare Violins Inc. Photographic Archive and Business Records (the sales ledgers 1845-1938, Box 55, Folder 2, p. 126, and Box 55, Folder 4, p. 126), National Museum of American History (Archives Center), Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, USA.*

1894: M<sup>r</sup> Nicolini, à Ystradgynlais

*Violon Stradivarius, année 1727, 13p. 3l.,*

*Fond de 2 pièces, ondes douces descendant, belles éclisses pareilles, table de 2 pièces, très-beau sapin; petite cassure à l’f droite, et 2 petits trous de ver au fond; beau vernis rouge doré bien conservé; très-belle tête.*

*Ex Paganini*

*Ex Comte de Vireille*

*30,000 francs.*

1894: M. Nicolini, from Ystradgynlais

Antonio Stradivari violin, year 1727, 13 *pouces 3 lignes* [358.7mm]

The back plate is made from two pieces; mild flames, descending [from the centre-joint]; the beautiful ribs are similar [the wood used for the ribs is similar to that used for the back plate]. The front plate is made from two pieces; very beautiful spruce. There is a small split at the treble *f*-hole and two small worm tracks at the bottom. Beautiful varnish, golden red, well conserved.

Very beautiful head.

*ex Paganini*

*ex Comte de Vireille*

*30,000 francs.*

Ernesto Nicolini (1834-1898) was the second husband of the soprano Adelina Patti (1843-1919); Adelina bought a country house in Ystradgynlais (Powys, Wales) overlooking the river Tawe.

Ernest Doring (*How many Strads?* (1945), pp. 281-283) identifies the following violin:

1727\* The PAGANINI, *ex Salabue*. Our plates indicate the visual characteristics of this famous violin. It is in a perfect state of preservation and almost fully covered with its original varnish of rich dark-red color. [Doring’s asterisk indicates his personal inspection of the violin.]

Doring's monochrome plates illustrate the same violin as that which appears on the Tarisio.com/Cozio Archive website (ID 40048) as well as in Claude Lebet's publication *Le Quatuor Stradivarius "Niccolò Paganini"* (Les Amis de la Musique, 1994). In both locations the violin is identified as the '*Paganini-Comte Cozio di Salabue*'.

Doring quotes from a text (the author of the text is not identified) which was published in 'a British journal' in 1896:

It is one of the finest and most perfect of this maker [Stradivari]; its date is 1727. It is of the grand pattern, covered with beautiful soft red varnish. The instrument is of peculiar interest, having been in the possession of the great Paganini, who bequeathed it to his son, Baron Achille. J. B. Vuillaume acquired it from the Baron and sold it in 1853 to the Comte de Vireille,\*who in turn disposed of it to Messrs. Gand & Bernardel, of Paris; thereafter it passed into the hands of Signor Nicolini, from whom it was purchased by Messrs. Hart & Son. With the violin there is an interesting letter from Vuillaume, dated 1853, fully authenticating its former possession by Paganini and his [Vuillaume's] purchase of it from the former's son.

\* No details of identification for the Comte de Vireille have been located.

No specific details from Vuillaume's 1853 letter are reported and thus the evidence for the bequest of the 1727 Stradivari violin by Niccolò to his son Achille is unknown.

Doring reports (also from the 1896 article) that George Hart sold the 1727 violin to the Dutch violinist Jan van Oordt in 1896 in advance of the latter's appearance with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; this event is confirmed by the *Chicago Tribune* newspaper, 8 November 1896, p. 37:

Mr. Jan Van Oordt, the young Dutch violinist, will make his first American appearance [Brahms' Violin Concerto] with the Chicago Orchestra this week.

Colour photographs of the '*Paganini-Comte Cozio di Salabue*' violin (Lebet, pp. 26-28) reveal a back plate with slightly indistinct flames of moderate width, the flames descending from the centre joint; Lebet (*ibid.*, p. 25) defines the flames as 'medium-curl maplewood'. On the Tarisio.com website the back plate is described as 'Two piece[s] of plain maple, marked by a faint curl slanting downwards from the center.' The condition of the back plate plausibly reflects Gustave Bernardel's description: *fond de 2 pièces, ondes douces descendant*.

Lebet's colour photograph of the front plate also reveals two short longitudinal blemishes at the bottom edge of the lower bout to the right of the tail-piece; these would seem to correspond with Bernardel's comment: *2 petits trous de ver au fond*. Lebet specifies the violin's varnish as *rouge-brun*; Doring offers 'rich dark-red'; the Tarisio.com website states 'dark red'; Bernardel writes *rouge doré*.

Lebet characterises the form of the violin as *large et puissant* but does not provide any measurements; Bernardel's measurement of the violin's body-length – 358.7mm – is certainly 'large'.

Claude Lebet identifies the Bernardel/Nicolini violin as having 'an original label from 1724; the experts are agreed on 1727 as the date of its manufacture' (*Ce magnifique instrument porte une étiquette originale de 1724; les experts, eux, s'accordent sur la période de construction de 1727*). Lebet does not indicate which physical and/or stylistic features of the violin underpin the agreement of 'the experts', nor does he identify the experts or specify where their agreement is published. Ernest Doring's aforementioned commentary does not suggest that his identification of '1727' is anything other than the date which he saw on the violin's internal label. If the Bernardel/Nicolini violin is today's Nippon Foundation violin, then, in 1894 and 1896 it was label-dated 1727; seemingly it was still dated 1727 when inspected (prior to 1945) by Ernest Doring. In the summer of 1945 the violin – as part of a complete quartet of Stradivari/Paganini instruments – was purchased by Mrs A E Clark of

New York (Lebet dates this purchase to January 1946); subsequently, ownership passed to the Corcoran Gallery of Arts and then to the Nippon Music Foundation. On the Nippon Foundation (Instruments) website (accessed January 2017) the violin is dated 1727 with no mention of a 1724 label.

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‘Previous to Paganini’s ownership, it is an established fact that the [1727] violin was one of Count Cozio di Salabue’s choice possessions.’ (Doring, p. 283)

Documents written by Il Conte Ignazio Alessandro Cozio di Salabue (1755-1840) – the documents are archived at the Biblioteca Statale di Cremona, Italy – demonstrate that the only Stradivari instrument sold by the Count to Niccolò Paganini was a violin with yellow varnish, dated 1724, this violin being one of twelve which the Count had obtained in 1774/75 from Paolo Stradivari in Cremona (Paolo being the youngest son born of Antonio Stradivari’s second marriage). Count Cozio sold the 1724 violin to Paganini in July 1817, using Carlo Carli (a Milanese banker who was known to both men) as an intermediary. There are no known documents within the archive at the Biblioteca Statale which indicate that Count Cozio owned a 1727 Stradivari violin or ever sold more than the one violin, of 1724, to Paganini.

Count Cozio’s earliest manuscript text (BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 41, written in late 1774 or early 1775) for his 1724 Stradivari violin is here transcribed and translated by the present author:

*Fondo giunto, bosco diversa, piuttosto larga e bella, il covino più rotondo, quasi al cerchio, il rizzo belle e col contorno nero, travagliate come l’antecedente ma la vernice più gialla di tutti. Il biglietto come gli altri anno 1724 e bolate.*

Jointed [two-piece] back plate, different wood, [the flames] rather wide and beautiful. The [neck-foot] button is more rounded [than is usual], almost a circle, the scroll is beautiful and with black edging. The workmanship is like the previous [violin within the Count’s sequence of descriptions – a 1716 violin] but the varnish is the yellowest of all. The label [in its appearance] is like the others, *anno 1724*, and stamped [i.e. with Stradivari’s monogram].

Left margin annotation: *2<sup>da</sup>, il più forte, si hà*  
Number 2; the stronger [in tone]; I have it.

Added no earlier than July 1817: *venduto dal Cavaliere Carlo Carli al celebre suonat Genovev Paganini per Luigi cento ma da togliere cinque sconto.*  
Sold by Signor Carlo Carli to the celebrated player from Genoa, Paganini, for 100 *Luigi* [100 *Louis d’or* 20-franc coins] but deduct 5 [*Luigi*] as a discount.

The reason for the discount is unknown.

In 1801 Count Cozio wrote a new inventory of his instruments (BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 42):

*1801, 8 Aprile: Violini di Stradivario Antonio da molti anni accomperati dal suo nipote a Cremona*

1801, 8 April: Violins of Antonio Stradivari, of various years, obtained from his grandson at Cremona

The same 1724 violin is now described in more detail:

*Come sopra: anno 1724: fortissimo di voce, tonda e pastosa sebbene paja ancora interna, di forma più grande, segnata, vernice rosso chiara tirante nel giallino: fondo, fascie, e manico di bellissima vena larga: e fondo in due pezzi cosi al solito del coperchio, che ha la vena piuttosto larga. Di forma delle più*

*grandi con panza corta al fondo ben tirata, ed al coperchio anche ben spianata: benissimo profilato, e di finissimo lavoro, ed ff ben fatte e scavate, con manico dato indietro dal G. B. Guadagnini: intatto pero con una picciol marca di fissura nel coperchio a destra vicino al cordile: vale cento trenta.*

As above: *anno 1724*: very strong of voice, rounded and mellow, although [*paja?*] still constricted [*?not sounding freely*]; of larger type, marked [*?lettered in the pegbox*]; the varnish is light red shading into yellow. The back plate, the ribs, and the neck – all have the most beautiful wide flames. The back plate is in two pieces; likewise, as usual, the top plate, which has rather wide veins [*growth rings*]. [*The violin*] is of the larger type with the barrel[*?*] arching on the back plate being well graduated, and the top plate is also well smoothed out. Excellent purfling of the finest workmanship, and the *f*-holes nicely made and [*the wings*] hollowed; with a neck which has been [*raised, lengthened and*] tilted backwards by G. B. Guadagnini. Undamaged; however there is one small fissure in the top plate, to the right of, and next to, the tailpiece. Worth 130 *zecchini*.

Left margin annotation: *zecchini 130. Viglietto stampato e bollo sudetto*  
130 *zecchini*. The label is printed and stamped as above [i.e. as with the previous instruments described in this inventory]

Added no earlier than July 1817: *1817 Luglio venduto al Signor Professore Niccolò Paganini di Genoa per mezzo del Signor Cavaliere Carlo Carli di Milano.*  
1817 July, sold to Signor Professor Niccolò Paganini of Genoa through Signor Carlo Carli of Milan.

The following features are noteworthy:

- 1: the violin is of ‘larger type’
- 2: the violin is ‘marked’
- 3: the varnish is ‘light red shading into yellow’
- 4: the back plate, ribs, and neck ‘all have the most beautiful wide flames’.

In 1808 Count Cozio once again returned to his 1724 Stradivari violin and wrote yet another description (BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 46). Although his manuscript does not contain a margin annotation identifying the sale of the violin to Paganini the descriptive details agree with the previous (and subsequent) texts:

*1808, 16 Gennajo, Milano. Inventaro delli instramenti nella guardaroba alta di noce nel gabinetto.*

1808, 16 January, Milan. Inventory of the instruments in the tall walnut wardrobe in the closet

*Violino di d'Anto Stradiuario del 1724, forma più grande P.G. anche b[...?] fino per modello, vernice rosso chiara, fondo giondo vena larga viva, fascie di vena più fina bella, e così il manico fascia doppiamente gionta al fondo con due profili intieri, coperchio pura vena larga eguale forastiero. Fortissimo di voce, e quasi tenore, con solo picol crepatura in fine a destra nel coperchio. Colle pontine nel fondo vicino alli profili, e nel profilo dei CC, per la sua rarità di voce – Luigi 140. Covino più grande a tre quarti di circolo.*

Violin of the aforementioned Antonio Stradivari, of 1724, [derived from] the larger ‘P.G.’ mould, also [...?]. The varnish is light red, the back plate is jointed, with wide bright flames; the ribs have narrower flames, beautiful; likewise the neck. The rib is double-jointed at the bottom [at the tailpiece end pin] with two inserted pieces of purfling. The top plate also having wide and consistent growth-rings; foreign wood. Very strong of voice and like a viola; with one small crack at the [bottom] end, to the right of the top plate. In the back plate the [top and bottom] locating pins are [positioned] adjacent to the purfling, and [additional pins are positioned] within the purfling of the

C-bouts. For its rarity of voice – 140 *Luigi*. The [back-plate] button is larger [than usual] at three-quarters of a circle.

Note:

- 1: the violin is associated with ‘the larger P.G. mould’
- 2: the reiteration regarding the ‘wide, bright flames’ of the back plate (cf. both previous documents)
- 3: the expression – ‘very strong of voice and like a viola’ – which finds an echo at the end of the Count’s text from May 1816 (see below)
- 4: the single crack (to the right of the tail-piece) which was identified in the April 1801 text (see earlier) and is here identified again.

One descriptive detail found in this 1808 text, but not mentioned previously, is the identification of two vertical slivers of purfling inserted into the rib at the tail-piece end pin (probably to restore the bottom ribs, after shrinkage, to their original curvature). What is unclear is why Count Cozio did not mention this feature in his 1774/75 and 1801 texts. An explanation might be that between 1801 and 1808 the Count had this 1724 violin restored – possibly by one of the Mantegazza family in Milan – and the purfling inserts were added on that occasion. A second newly-identified feature concerns the locating pins in the violin’s back plate, specifically those ‘within the purfling of the C-bouts’. These pins may have been original but not previously observed by Count Cozio within the dark colouring of the purfling, or they may have been fitted when the lower ribs were expanded (to ensure the structural security of the back plate).

Photographic information received by the present author demonstrates that the Stradivari ‘1727 Paganini’ violin currently owned by the Nippon Foundation of Japan does not have any slivers of purfling inserted at the tail-piece end pin. It has not been possible to confirm or deny the presence of pins within the violin’s C-bout purfling.

In 1816, one year before selling the 1724 violin to Paganini, Count Cozio comprehensively measured the instrument’s various dimensions (BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 47, folio 15r); the Count used the French *Pied du Roi* measurement system in which one *pollici* is equivalent to 27.07mm and one *ponto* is equivalent to 2.26mm. Since the Count still possessed a 1716 Stradivari violin which he had defined in his 1774/75 documents as ‘number 1’ he uses that violin as a point of comparison with the ‘number 2’ 1724 violin:

*1816, 19 Maggio, Milano*  
*Misure del mio violino Antonio Stradivari, nella cassa marcato: forma P.G.,*  
*più forte, vernice giallo, dell’anno 1724*

Left margin annotation: *N.B. questo violino l’ho venduto al Signor Proffessore Paganino*

*Maggiore larghezza superiore polici sei e un terzo, 6. 0.  $\frac{1}{3}$ , nel fondo e poco più nel coperchio*

*Maggiore larghezza inferiore polici sette, ponti sei, 7. 6. -.*

*In mezzo alli CC ossia il petto è questo più grande d’un ponto, ma nel fondo è eguale al sudetto. La longhezza totale è eguale, ma questo e longo dell’altro d’un ponto e mezzo inferiormente e più corto di un ponto e mezzo superiormente.*

*E pure eguale nella distanza delle ff in mezzo al petto [...] così le ff di questo violino sono più in piedi dell’altro di due ponti e sono più vicini li occhietti di sotto [sopra?] alle ff di un ponto.*

*Le altezze delle fascie di questo sono pure eguali a quelle. Li bordi sono eguali ma le ponte del [?] più grande [?] e così sostanzialmente la forma e eguale all'altro più bello rosso ma non sta nel medesimo sito nella cassetta.*

[...] *Questo ha la voce più forte, e da tenore.*

1816, 19 May, Milan

Measurements of my violin, Antonio Stradivari, marked in the [?peg] box, P.G. mould, the stronger [of the two violins], yellow varnish, of the year 1724.

Left margin annotation: N.B. this violin I sold to Signor Professor Paganini

Maximum width of the upper bout is 6 *policci* and  $\frac{1}{3}$  of one *ponto* [163.2mm], measured on the back plate; a little wider on the top plate.

Maximum width of the lower bout is 7 *policci* and 6 *ponti* [203.1mm]

[Measuring] across the mid-point of the C-bout, also termed the 'chest', and this [the 1724 violin] is wider [than the 1716 violin] by 1 *ponto*, but on the back plate the two measurements are the same. The total [body-] length is the same [on both violins] but this [1724 violin] is longer than the other by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  *ponti* in the lower part [i.e. from the bridge to the lower edge of the plate] and shorter by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  *ponti* in the upper part [bridge to upper edge].

[i.e. the inside *f*-hole notches – which define the location of the bridge – were further up the plate on the 1724 violin than on the 1716]

And, also, [the two violins] are equal in the distance [between] the *f*-holes at the mid-point of the chest [...] the *f*-holes of this violin [1724] are more [i.e. wider] at the feet [at the *f*-hole lower eyes] than the other [1716] by two *ponti*, and are closer at the upper[?] eyes of the *f*-holes by one *ponto*.

[i.e. the *f*-holes on the 1724 violin were angled outwards more than on the 1716 violin]

The height of the ribs on this [1724 violin] is also the same as on the 1716 violin. The edges are the same but the [locating] pins of [?] are larger [?] and thus the form [of the 1724 violin] is substantially the same as the other [the 1716, which is] a more beautiful red but is not identified as being made by this maker [Stradivari] in the [peg-] box.

[i.e. the 1724 violin had identifying letters marked in its peg-box whereas the 1716 violin did not]

[...] This [1724 violin] has the stronger voice, and [like] a viola.

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In 1828 Niccolò Paganini consigned to Carlo Carli a collection of his instruments which were to be kept safe while Paganini was travelling and performing around Europe. On 4 March 1828 Carli sent Paganini a letter itemising the instruments which he had received:

*Un Violino di Antonio Stradivario di forma grande, vernice gialla col biglietto del 1724.*

A violin by Antonio Stradivari, of large form, yellow varnish, with label of 1724.

*Un Violino con vernice rossa col biglietto di Giuseppe Guarnerio del 1724, con arco in una cassa da due.*

*Un Violino di Andrea Guarnerio col biglietto del 1675, in una cassa da uno, quadrata, dipinta in verde, con arco.*

*Una Viola di Antonio e Girolamo Amati col biglietto del 1612, in cassa da uno, coperta di bulgaro.*

*Un Violino piccolo senza biglietto con arco, borsa, e cassa di legno in bianco.*

*Una Chitarra di Napoli con cassa di legno.*

*Un Violoncello con vernice rossa col biglietto di Antonio Stradivario del 1728, in cassa usata.*

(Grisley R., *Niccolò Paganini: Epistolario, Vol. 1, 1810-1831*, Skira, Milan, 2006; letter 218, pp. 340-341.)

In the final few months of his life, Paganini, with his son Achille, took up residence in Nice (southern France) where he was befriended by Comte Hilarion Spitalieri de Cessole (1776-1845).

In the early months of 1840 Paganini gathered together many of the instruments which he had bought on various occasions and stored them with a M. Brun, of Marseilles, in an attempt to hide them from his Parisian creditors. In a letter of 8 January 1840, to Vincenzo Merighi, Paganini acknowledged the delivery of a quartet of Stradivari instruments, and in a letter of 17 January 1840 to Luigi Geremi, his Italian lawyer, Paganini identified his ownership of eleven violins, one viola, and four cellos. On 18 January 1840 Paganini wrote again to Geremi:

I have neither touched my music nor an instrument, other than the two Stradivari violins recently received from Milan via Genoa – one of which cost me 95 *Louis* which I shall have to let Conte de Cessole (a great enthusiast) have for 4,500 francs, though I could get 5,000 for it in Paris. But it is necessary to make a sacrifice for such a friend.

(Neill E., *Paganini: Epistolario*, Edizione speciale per il Comune di Genova; letter 366, p. 297; present author's translation.)

Given that Carli, in 1828, lists only one Stradivari violin as having been deposited with him it must be the case that, at a later date, Paganini sent another Stradivari violin to Milan for safe-keeping.

Further descriptive entries within the Jacques Francais Rare Violins Inc. sales ledgers (Smithsonian Institution) identify a Guarneri *del Gesù* violin of 1740, known as the *Boissier/Paganini/Arbos*, as having been owned by Paganini (p. 180) as was a 1672 Stradivari violin (p. 101), a 1712 Stradivari violin (p. 198), and a 1726 violin, the *Hubay* (p. 50). The *Tarisio.com/Cozio* Archive website identifies a 1720 Carlo Bergonzi violin which also belonged to Paganini (ID 47169). Paganini himself, in a letter of 15 February 1840, identifies his ownership of an Amati viola and 'My Amati cello, or Rugeri, or whatever make it is [...]'. In April 1840 Paganini instructed Vincenzo Merighi to buy six Guadagnini violins (and a Stradivari violin from Count Castelbarco) as part of 'our enterprise' but whether these instruments were bought and delivered to Paganini before his death in May 1840 is unknown.

The Hills (*Antonio Stradivari* (1902), p. 276) cautiously write: 'Paganini had a quartet of Stradivaris, which were sold, after his death, we believe, to Vuillaume. We can trace three of these instruments' (identical text appears in the 1909 second edition of the Hills' monograph). Elsewhere in their 1902 publication the Hills identify the following 'Paganini' instruments (which may or may not be the three instruments which the Hills had traced):

p. 105: a viola of 1731, sold by the dealer George Corsby (1790-1872) to Paganini in 1832-33, 'the viola remaining with the great violinist until he died.' This instrument is now known as the *Mendelssohn* viola.

p. 132: the 'Stanlein' (Stainlein) cello of 1707 which was sold by Vincenzo Merighi to Paganini 'about 1834-35'; Paganini 'sold it to J. B. Vuillaume, who resold it in 1854 to the late Count Stanlein.'

p. 145: a cello of the 1730 period; 'Vuillaume stated that it came from Paganini.' This instrument is now known as the *Paganini/Ladenburg* cello.

Paganini died on 27 May 1840; an inventory of his estate was compiled two months later, on 24 July 1840. Claude Lebet (Lebet, p. 18) indicates that the inventory documents are located in the 'Mandozzi Collection' in Locarno, Switzerland; access to these documents has not been possible.

Geraldine I C de Courcy, in her two-volume biography, *Paganini: the Genoese* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1957) provides a *List of Instruments in Paganini's possession at the time of his death* (Vol. II, pp. 388-391). The documentary source for de Courcy's information is not identified

but is assumed to be the Mandozzi inventory; de Courcy does not indicate whether her information is the result of her personal inspection of the inventory documents. Her *List of Instruments* identifies seven Stradivari violins, three Guarneri *del Gesù*, one Andrea Guarneri, two Niccolò Amati, one Carlo Tononi, and one Ruggeri – fifteen violins in total. In addition there were two Stradivari violas (1721 and 1731) and two Stradivari cellos (1708 and 1736), as well as an Andrea Guarneri cello (1642) and a Pietro Rogeri cello (1714) (which is probably the instrument being referred to by Paganini in his letter of 15 February 1840).

The seven Stradivari violins are dated by de Courcy to 1680,\* 1692, 1695, 1724 (two such violins), 1725, and 1726 (this last may be the *Hubay* violin). The first of the two 1724 violins is identified by de Courcy – without any documentary support – as that which is now known as the *Bentinck/Stucki*; this violin has a one-piece back plate and is therefore not the 1724 violin which Count Cozio sold to Paganini. It is the second 1724 violin which is identified by de Courcy as the Cozio-Paganini instrument (but, again, without any supportive documentary evidence); de Courcy's historical narrative for this violin closely echoes that which was published by Ernest Doring in 1945 (Doring's narrative being extended by Claude Lebet in 1994): Achille Paganini, J-B Vuillaume, Comte de Vireille, Gustave Bernardel, Ernesto Nicolini ... Emil Herrmann, Mrs Anna E Clark, Jacques Francais, Nippon Foundation – i.e. the historical narrative for the Bernardel/Nicolini violin of 1727.

\* Courcy's date appears to follow the 1945 opinion of Ernest Doring (Doring, p. 40) which is that the violin has a 1696 label but actually dates from 1680; Doring appears to be following the opinion of the Hills (Hill (1902), p. 35).

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There can be no doubt that the Cozio/Paganini violin was label-dated 1724 and had yellow varnish; it had the same dimensions as Count Cozio's large 1716 violin and was 'marked' in the peg-box; it had two slivers of purfling inserted in the rib of the end-pin, had 'wide bright flames' on the back plate, and a crack on the front plate to the right of the tail-piece. This 1724 violin is not Gustave Bernardel's 1727 violin, *notwithstanding Bernardel's annotations regarding Paganini and the Comte de Vireille*.

Achille Paganini (1825-1895) was 15 years of age when his father died in 1840. In the years immediately thereafter Achille apparently enjoyed full control of his father's instruments. With respect to his father's *Cannone* Guarneri *del Gesù* violin this was held by Achille for several years despite Niccolò's Testament stating that the violin was bequeathed to the city of Genoa. Only in July 1851 'when the city insisted on its delivery' (de Courcy, II, p. 298) did Achille hand over 'a' Guarneri violin to the Genoese authorities.

According to de Courcy's *List* no Stradivari violin of 1727 was registered in the posthumous inventory; might Achille, in the two months following his father's death, have collected together some scattered instruments and placed them out of view of the executors? In 1846 Achille deposited a quartet of his father's Stradivari instruments with Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume, in Paris, for repair, restoration, and sale. Perhaps Achille also passed to Vuillaume a 1727 Stradivari violin, with golden red varnish, the instrument being identified – deliberately mis-identified? – by Achille as the violin which his father had bought from Count Cozio. With Carlo Carli, Niccolò Paganini, Il Conte Cozio di Salabue, and Comte Hilarion de Cessole all having died, there would have been no-one from whom Vuillaume could obtain independent confirmation of Achille's information. By 1894, when Gustave Bernardel wrote his descriptive text, Vuillaume had also died.

The current location of the 1724 Stradivari violin which Il Conte Ignazio Alessandro Cozio di Salabue sold to Niccolò Paganini in July 1817 is unknown.

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