

# Count Cozio, Renzo Bacchetta, and Brandon Frazier: documentary realities and Chinese whispers

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All the extant documents written by Il Conte Ignazio Alessandro Cozio di Salabue (1755-1840) are archived at the Biblioteca Statale in Cremona, Italy. The collection is housed in four deep box-files together with a large wrap-around folder which contains individual sheets of drawings, some labels, and other miscellaneous items. Within each box file are approximately 25 card folders, each containing documents written by Count Cozio. Each folder begins with a typed sheet which replicates the title of the ensuing documents and provides some physical details, e.g.:

COZIO DI SALABUE, Ignazio Alessandro

“Descrizione del violino di Antonio Stradivari del Signor Antonio Rolla figlio del signor Alessandro, primo violino e compositore di musica a Bologna”.

Cartaceo, sec. XIX, mm 130x87, cc.2, bianca la c.2; scrittura di sola mano;  
titolo a c.1 preceduto dalla data 1823-23 gennaio.

The first page of Cozio’s manuscript document has the following text:

*1823. 23. g[...?]*<sup>1</sup>

*Descrizione del Violino d’An<sup>o</sup> Stradivari del Sig Antonio Rolla figlio del Sig Alessandro, primo Violino e composit<sup>r</sup> di musica a Bologna*

Both the typed sheet and the first page of Cozio’s document have been pencil-numbered by personnel at the Biblioteca, in this case *ms. Cozio 17*.

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Some of the typed sheets also provide page-references where a transcription of the document can be found in Renzo Bacchetta’s *Carteggio* publication of 1950,<sup>2</sup> e.g.:

COZIO DI SALABUE, Ignazio Alessandro

“Nota de stromenti lasciati e consegnati agli [*sic*] 28 dicembre 1776 a Boch e Gravier, ed ora ritirati.”

Cartaceo, ~~1776~~ *sec. XVIII*, mm.260x180, c.1; scrittura di una sola mano; titolo sul r.

Della c.1 preceduto da ~~21 giugno 1778~~. *Dalla data 21 giugno 1778*<sup>3</sup>

Cfr. I.A.Cozio di Salabue, *Carteggio*, Milano 1950, p. 196.

The first page of Cozio’s manuscript document has the following text:

*21 giugno 1778      Nota de stromenti lasciati e consegnati gli 28 xbre 1776 a Boch e Gravier,  
ed ora ritirato*

Both the typed sheet and the first page of Cozio’s document have been pencil-numbered by personnel at the Biblioteca, in this case *ms. Cozio 49*.

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<sup>1</sup> Count Cozio has written the date at the very top edge of his small sheet of paper; the paper-edge is torn and ragged and none of the letter-shapes which spell out the name of the month are complete; the month is probably *gennaio* or *giugno* but even the initial *g* is slightly uncertain.

<sup>2</sup> Cozio di Salabue, I. A., *Carteggio*, transcribed and edited Renzo Bacchetta; Antonio Cordani, Milano, 1950.

<sup>3</sup> The texts shown in italics, as well as the strike-throughs, are handwritten inked corrections made to the typed information.

Although some of Count Cozio's documents have been treated for preservation, others, as far as one can tell, are in their original condition. With the passage of time many of the sheets of paper have been eaten away by the acid in both the paper itself and in the iron gall ink used by the Count; some sheets of paper consist more of holes than paper. Even where the paper has not been damaged the ink from one side of a sheet has often bled through to the other side, thus making the reading of either text problematic. In addition, Count Cozio's writings exhibit inconsistent spellings, non-standard grammar, an absence of punctuation, brief 'notes' rather than fully-formed sentences, and a very masculine and dramatic style of handwriting which becomes increasingly uninhibited as he gets older; there are many annotations penned in the margins (here the handwriting often becomes very cramped) together with 'squeezed-in' corrections in the main body of the texts. Despite all this, there are no insuperable problems in transcribing Cozio's texts – it is just that even a single page of writing will take some time to unravel, precisely and accurately, and thus be brought into the clear light of day.

When Renzo Bacchetta began his painstaking work of transcribing most – but not all – of Cozio's manuscripts, no numbering system had yet been applied to them. Bacchetta was obliged to make his own decisions as to how they might be arranged both by subject matter and by chronology. He divided his transcription into four sections: *Storiografia* (History), *Liutologia* (Technical aspects of making violins), *Catalogo* (the Count's descriptions and measurements of his instruments) and *Epistolario* (Correspondence). The first subject-area – *Storiografia* – contains Bacchetta's transcriptions of Cozio manuscripts which date from 1816, and so, after the 1950 publication of *Carteggio*, those manuscripts were pencil-numbered by personnel at the Biblioteca according to Bacchetta's sequence: *ms. Cozio 1, 2, 3*, etc. This procedure meant that other manuscripts – because they appear within one of Bacchetta's three remaining subject-areas – were pencil-identified with much higher numbers even though they might be dated from forty years earlier (c.1775-76).<sup>4</sup> The Biblioteca pencil-numbering of Cozio's manuscripts runs from *1* to *93*.

Bacchetta's transcriptions are mostly faithful to the texts as written by Count Cozio but there are more than a few places where he 'corrects' the Count's 'mistakes', changes spellings to modern versions, and where he does not understand the Count's text he simply omits that word or phrase from his transcription (often without indicating that such an omission has occurred). If, for the modern-day researcher, studying Count Cozio's original documents at the library in Cremona is not an option then Bacchetta's publication is useful but it can only ever be the originals which are entirely trustworthy (notwithstanding the interpretative difficulties which they present).

Most of the folders contain documents which are only a few pages in length, sometimes just a single sheet of paper. One folder, however, – actually a protective cardboard box purpose-made by the Library – contains a 300-page (150 folios) 'booklet', approximately A5 size, dating from 1816, which sets out all of the Count's measurements and descriptions of the instruments which he owned; this manuscript is identified as *ms. Cozio 47*.

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Around 2005 Brandon Frazier initiated a project to transcribe and translate Count Cozio's documents into English; the result was the self-published *Memoirs of a Violin Collector* (2007). In the *Preface* Frazier makes the following statements:

In this book, Cozio di Salabue's memoirs, correspondence, and explicit notes, which were taken from the handwritten manuscript now held in the Biblioteca Statale di Cremona, Italy, are being published. For almost all of this material, this is the first time in either English or contemporary Italian.

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<sup>4</sup> See the two examples on p. 1 of this account: *ms. Cozio 17* (1823) and *ms. Cozio 49* (1778).

Great effort has been given to be faithful to the original text. This is even at the cost of showing Cozio's occasional vagueness, his change of opinion over time, and the gaps in his wording. This literal translation will provide the violin community with an important and permanent historical insight.

It is unclear why Frazier should refer to 'the handwritten manuscript', as if there is only one; equally curious is the claim that the translation is 'literal' and that 'great effort has been given to be faithful to the original text' since Frazier's English-language texts are usually *not* direct translations of what was written by Count Cozio.

Frazier's *Memoirs* publication contains four chapters – *Storia di Liuteria*, *Elementi di Liuteria*, *Epistolario*, and *Inventario di Strumenti*<sup>5</sup> – in which the texts are presented in 'contemporary Italian'. At the start of these chapters the names of Frazier's assistants are shown as Marco Dell'Utri and Giovanna Maria Ferranti. It seems most unlikely that Dell'Utri and Ferranti created their 'contemporary' texts by laboriously working from the hundreds of pages of handwritten manuscripts which make up the Cozio archive in Cremona, especially when Bacchetta's *Carteggio* publication of 1950 already provided most of the solutions to the orthographical and calligraphical difficulties contained within the manuscripts. But, if Dell'Utri and Ferranti did indeed use Bacchetta as their source (instead of Cozio) they would have been unaware of situations where Bacchetta has omitted a word or phrase; these omissions, therefore, would have been carried forward into the 'contemporary Italian' texts and then into the translated-into-English texts.

The four 'contemporary Italian' chapters are matched by four chapters of translated-into-English text: *History of Violin Making*, *Terms of Violin Making*, *Correspondence*, and *Catalogue of Instruments*. The first two chapters are identified as having been 'translated by Brandon Frazier'; the third and fourth chapters were translated by Carolina Lo Nero, her translations then being 'revised by Brandon Frazier'; the evidence points towards the translations being of the 'contemporary Italian' texts. It will be appreciated that what Count Cozio wrote is likely to have been distorted by the sequential layers of transcription and translation – 'Chinese whispers'.

It might be wondered why a re-casting of Cozio's texts into contemporary Italian should even be necessary; the Count's language is not so far removed from modern Italian as to be impenetrable. Any Italian, with just a little effort, can read what the Count has written and therefore does not need a modernised version (*understanding* the Count's writings requires knowledge of the the art of violin-making) and while it is acknowledged that Cozio's texts cannot be read by someone for whom English is their only language the same applies to the 'contemporary Italian' version. Perhaps these texts were created because there were issues of ownership which needed to be addressed; Renzo Bacchetta died in 1975.

Opposite Frazier's *Preface* there is a photographic illustration of the title page from Count Cozio's lengthy historical study of north-Italian *lutherie*, written in 1816 (*ms. Cozio I*); the caption describes the illustration as 'First page of Cozio's original manuscript' [sic].

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In 2017 a short monograph was published, privately, by the owner of a little-known but genuine Antonio Stradivari violin, dated 1724.<sup>6</sup> In the monograph (p. 11) the owner/author quotes from a document written by Count Cozio which is stated to be 'translated Frazier – see original Italian below'. The 'original Italian' is provided through a partial image of p. 227 of Bacchetta's *Carteggio*

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<sup>5</sup> i.e. it is a structural copy of Bacchetta's *Carteggio*.

<sup>6</sup> Desmond Cecil, *A violin by Antonio Stradivari, 1724*.

publication where Bacchetta presents his transcription of the Cozio manuscript which was subsequently numbered *ms. Cozio 46*.<sup>7</sup>

Count Cozio's title for this manuscript is:

*1808. 16: Gennajo Milano Inventaro delli  
instromenti nella guardarob-  
-ba alta di noce nel Gabinetto  
Nella Cassetta forte coperta di bulgaro guarnita di ottone  
fodrata di veluto in seta verdone*

Bacchetta's transcription of Cozio's text (with Bacchetta's added punctuation) is:

1808, 16 gennaio, Milano.  
Inventario delli instromenti nella guardaroba alta di noce nel gabinetto:  
Nella cassetta forte, coperta di bulgaro, guarnita di ottone, foderata di veluto in seta verdone:

The 'contemporary Italian' version (p. 579 of *Memoirs*) is:

Lista degli strumenti contenuti nel guardaroba alto di noce del gabinetto.  
Nella custodia coperta di cuoio, guarnita d'ottone, foderata di velluto di seta verde:

The translated-into-English version (p. 227 of *Memoirs*) is:

List of the instruments placed in the [tall?] walnut wardrobe in the cabinet.<sup>8</sup>  
Inside the case<sup>9</sup> covered in leather, brass decorated, and lined with silky green velvet:

It is clear that this translation is of the 'contemporary Italian' text.

The translated-into-English text can be compared with a direct translation of Cozio's manuscript text:

1808 16 January Milan  
Inventory of the instruments in the tall walnut wardrobe in the closet  
In the strong-box [a trunk?] covered in 'bulgaro' [a type of leather] trimmed with brass  
lined with velvet – silky green.

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Below his title-text Count Cozio writes a description of a *P.G.*-mould Stradivari violin dated 1716; Bacchetta's *Carteggio* transcription of this descriptive text (p. 227) is omitted from the image which appears in the aforementioned monograph. The Count then writes a note-form description of a 1724 Stradivari violin, i.e. the violin which he would subsequently sell to Niccolò Paganini, in July 1817:<sup>10</sup>

*Violino di d'Ant<sup>o</sup> Stradiuari del 1724*<sup>11</sup>  
*Forma più grande P.G.*<sup>12</sup> *anche b[...]*<sup>13</sup> *fino per modello, vernice rosso chiara,  
fondo giondo, vena larga viva,*<sup>14</sup> *fascie di vena più fina bella, e così il manico*

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<sup>7</sup> See Fig. 1A.

<sup>8</sup> *Gabinetto* translates as 'closet' – a small, private, room to which, probably, only Count Cozio had access. It is unlikely that a tall walnut wardrobe could have been fitted inside a cabinet.

<sup>9</sup> The Italian word *custodia*, in addition to indicating 'custody' or 'protection' is also used to identify, specifically, a case for a musical instrument.

<sup>10</sup> See Fig. 1B. Count Cozio's documentation shows that he owned only one 1724 Stradivari violin. In addition to the text which the Count penned on 16 January 1808 he also wrote a description in 1774/75 (*ms. Cozio 41*) and another dated 8 April 1801 (*ms. Cozio 42*); the Count provides measurements of his 1724 violin in a document dated 19 May 1816 (*ms. Cozio 47*). For full details see the present author's detailed article *Fortissimo di voce, e quasi tenore* which is linked from [www.themessiahviolin.uk](http://www.themessiahviolin.uk)

<sup>11</sup> The numerals 2 and 4 each has an inked dot underneath; this was Count Cozio's method of indicating that they were handwritten. According to the Hills (1902), Stradivari, post-1700, always handwrote the second, third, and fourth numerals of a year-date.

<sup>12</sup> Stradivari's *P.G.* mould (now lost) was larger than the *G* mould (Museo del Violino, Cremona); for full details see the present author's article *The case of the missing mould* (*The Strad*, June 2018, pp. 54-58).

<sup>13</sup> The first letter drawn by Count Cozio is clearly a *b*; there follow two or three indecipherable letters and thus the complete word resists understanding; see Fig. 1B. Bacchetta renders the word as *perfino* (see p. 5 of this account).

*fascia doppiamente gionta al fondo con due profili intieri,  
 coperchio pura vena larga eguale forastiere  
 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, e per fin[?] Luigi 140  
 covino più grande a tre quarti di circolo*



Fig. 1A: Biblioteca Statale Cremona, Libreria Civica, ms. Cozio 46, title

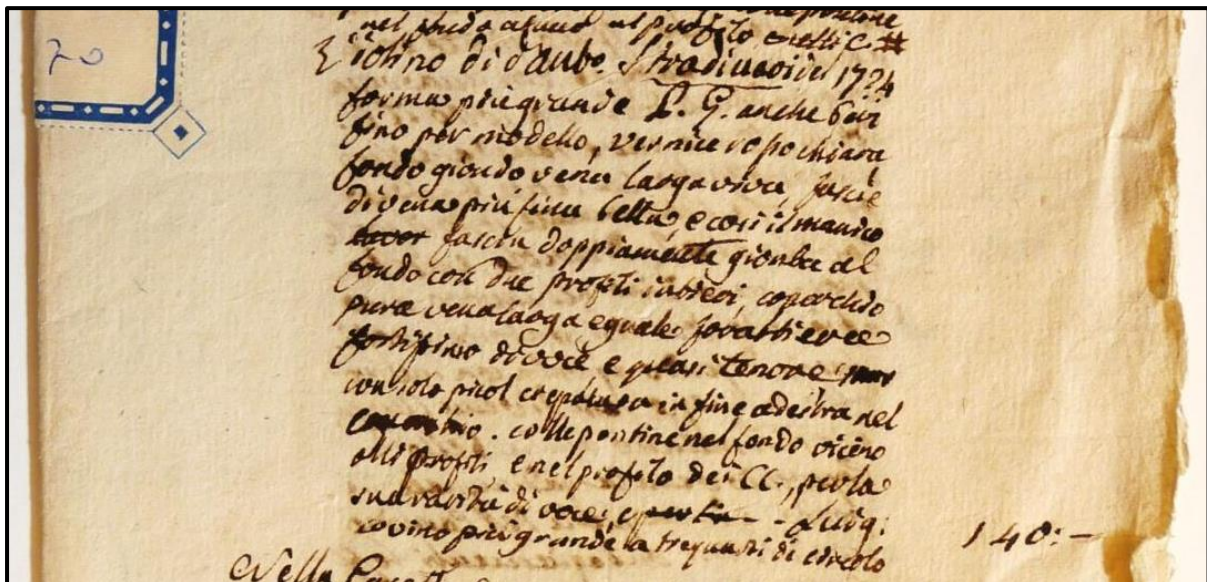


Fig. 1B: BScR, LC, ms. Cozio 46; descriptive text for the 1724 Stradivari/Cozio/Paganini violin

Bacchetta's transcription of the Fig. 1B text is presented on p. 11 of the 2017 monograph:

*Violino di Antonio Stradivari del 1724, forma più grande anche perfino<sup>15</sup> per modello vernice rosso chiara, fondo gionto, vena larga viva, fascie di vena più fine bella e così il manico, fascia doppiamente gionta al fondo con due profili intieri, coperchio pure vena larga eguale forastiere, fortissimo di voce e quasi tenore, con solo picola 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, e per fin[?] Luigi 140, covino più grande a tre quarti di circolo.*

<sup>14</sup> In his writings Count Cozio uses the word *vena* ('vein', 'streak') with reference to both the 'flames' of a violin's maple back plate and the flames of the ribs (as in this quotation) as well as the longitudinal growth-ring 'grain' found in a spruce front plate.

<sup>15</sup> Note that Bacchetta omits the designation *P.G.*. The word *perfino* translates as 'even', as in 'everybody knew it, even him' (*lo sapevano tutti, perfino lui*).

The ‘contemporary Italian’ version (*Memoirs*, p. 580) of Bacchetta’s text is:

Violino di Antonio Stradivari del 1724. Forma più grande, anche più del suo modello.<sup>16</sup> Vernice rossa chiara. Fondo in due pezzi con mazzatura<sup>17</sup> larga evidente. Fasce e manico con mazzatura più sottile e bella. Fascia inferiore con doppia giunta e con due filetti. Tavola dello stesso legno straniero con venatura larga. Voce fortissimo, quasi da tenore. Presenta solo una piccola crepa nella tavola in basso a destra e dei chiodini di legno nel fondo vicino ai filetti e nei bordi delle CC. Per la sua rara voce vale 140 luigi. Nocetta più grande di tre quarti di cerchio.

The translated-into-English version (*Memoirs*, p. 227) is:

Violin made by Antonio Stradivari in 1724.

Larger model, even larger than its template.<sup>18</sup> Light-red varnish. Two-piece back with wide grain. The sides have finer grain, as well as the neck. The side is double joined at the back, with two complete purfling. The top also has wide even grain and [is] made of foreign [wood]. Very strong voice, almost tenor. There is only a small crack down on the right hand side of the top; pins on the back near the purfling, and in the C-bouts’ edge. For its rare voice, [it is worth] 140 *luigi*. The button is larger, at three-quarters of a circle.

Only parts of this English text are reproduced in the 2017 monograph:

Larger model, even larger than its template. Light red varnish. Two piece back with wide grain. The sides have finer grain, as well as the neck. ... The top also has wide even grain and is made of foreign [wood]. Very strong voice, almost tenor ... For its rare voice, [it is worth] 140 *luigi*.<sup>19</sup>

The present author’s translation of the text written by Count Cozio is:

Violin of the aforementioned Antonio Stradivari, of 1724.

[Derived from the] larger mould [which is marked with the letters] P.G., also [...?] for this model. The varnish is light red. The back plate is jointed, with wide bright vein[s] [i.e. flames], the ribs have narrower vein[s], beautiful, likewise the [wood of the] neck. The rib is double-jointed at the bottom [at the tail-piece end pin] with two strips of purfling inserted.<sup>20</sup> The front plate also has wide and consistent vein[s] [i.e. growth-rings]; foreign [wood]. Very strong of voice and like a viola.<sup>21</sup> With one small split at the [bottom] end, to the right in the top plate. With [top and bottom] locating pins in the back plate [positioned] adjacent to the purfling, and [additional pins positioned] within the purfling of the C-bouts. For its rarity of voice and [...?] [it is worth] 140 *Luigi*.<sup>22</sup> The [back plate/neck-foot] button is larger [than usual] at three-quarters of a circle.

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The 2017 publication of the monograph was followed by an article written by John Dilworth and published in *The Strad* (*An overlooked wonder*, November 2018, pp. 38-45), an article which provided an overview of the same 1724 violin, now identified as the *Cecil*. Dilworth quotes (p. 38) the *Memoirs* p. 227 text shown above and adds:

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<sup>16</sup> Note that Dell’Utri and Ferranti have invented entirely new text (an invention which is not identified to the reader of *Memoirs*).

<sup>17</sup> *Marezzatura* translates as ‘watery’ or ‘marbled’ (in appearance). The random threads and wandering lines of colour found in marble are quite unlike the (generally) regular sequence of light/dark flames as seen in a violin’s maple-wood back plate.

<sup>18</sup> The Dell’Utri/Ferranti invented text now appears in translation.

<sup>19</sup> Verbatim quotation.

<sup>20</sup> Cutting the rib at the lower block and inserting a vertical strip of purfling (or two) is a task which is undertaken to restore the original curvature of the rib. Stradivari usually made the bottom rib in one piece.

<sup>21</sup> It is difficult to achieve a satisfactorily succinct translation of *e quasi tenore*. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was British violin-dealers and commentators who used the term *tenor* as a catch-all term, encompassing both the smaller/contralto and the larger/tenor size of viola; Count Cozio, however, mostly uses the term *viola* in his writings. It seems that the Count is identifying his 1724 violin as having a tonal quality which is reminiscent of a tenor-range male vocalist. The lowest note which can be sung by a tenor is the C below ‘middle C’; the lowest note of the (contralto) viola is the same ‘bottom C’. Thus the viola replicates the two-octave range of a tenor vocalist. Note that in a document (*ms. Cozio 9*) Count Cozio comments that violins made around Stradivari’s *P.G.* mould have a tone which ‘approaches that of a viola’: *ma si approssima a quella del Contralto*.

<sup>22</sup> The *Luigi* was a 20-franc coin which was used while the ‘kingdom of [northern] Italy’ was ruled by the French at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Apart from the usual difficulties in interpreting Cozio's phraseology, what he writes is a fair description of the present [*Cecil*] violin. [...] The prominently marked wide grain of the back which Cozio notes is the most obvious point of recognition.

The back plate of the *Cecil* violin is made from two pieces, these displaying narrow horizontal flames; the appearance of the flames might be appropriately described as 'mild', and/or 'soft'. In addition (and unusually) this back plate exhibits clearly-visible spruce-like growth rings running longitudinally, at right-angles to the flames. Count Cozio's identification of 'wide bright [flames]' is derived from his 1724 *Paganini* violin; he makes no mention of longitudinal grain lines in the back plate of his violin.

Count Cozio defines the rib-flames on his *Paganini* violin as being narrower than those on the back plate; photographs of the *Cecil* violin show that its rib-flames are wider. The Count also specifies the back-plate locating pins at the upper and lower blocks of the *Paganini* violin as being 'adjacent' to the purfling; photographs<sup>23</sup> of the *Cecil* violin show that both pins are partially covered by the inner portion of the purfling. The same photographs show no sign of any locating pins fitted within the purfling at the C-bouts of the back plate (as identified by Count Cozio on his *Paganini* violin); this fundamental difference between the *Paganini* violin and the *Cecil* violin possibly explains why Cozio's descriptive comment is not included as one of the selected phrases which are quoted in the monograph (see p. 6 of this account). The monograph also omits Cozio's text which describes the cutting and expansion of the rib at the bottom block of his *Paganini* violin: *fascia doppiamente gionta al fondo con due profili intieri*. In the monograph (p. 14) it is stated that

The lower rib was evidently made in one piece, as is usual with Stradivari, but has since been cut and jointed.

Dilworth repeats this text (p. 43) and adds:

[... cut and jointed], as Cozio seems to be describing in his notes, with a doubled row of purfling inserted at the lower block [...]. The purfling mentioned by Cozio is no longer present [...].

The resultant conundrum is: how can anyone know that two pieces of purfling were inserted into the rib at the bottom block of the *Cecil* violin if those two pieces are no longer present? In any case, Cozio is describing the purfling insertions which are found on a different violin.<sup>24</sup>

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At the end of his *The Strad* article John Dilworth writes (p. 45):

Cozio says in his notes of 1818 that this 1724 violin [the *Cecil*] has a 'stronger and more mature voice; overall it is a better instrument' than the yellow 1724 Stradivari (the *Sarasate*), which has a 'stronger, tenor voice'.<sup>25</sup>

1. The Cozio notes to which Dilworth is referring were written on 29 May 1816, not 1818 (*ms. Cozio 47, folio 15r and 15v*).
2. Count Cozio clearly writes in the margin:  
*N.B. questo violino l'ho venduto al Signor Proffessore Paganino*  
N.B. this violin I sold to Signor Professor Paganini.
3. The Count presents a series of comparisons between the physicality of the *Paganini* violin and the violin which is described in the immediately preceding entry in *ms. Cozio 47* – the aforementioned Stradivari violin dated 1716.

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<sup>23</sup> *Cecil* poster published by *The Strad*, November 2018.

<sup>24</sup> The owner of the *Cecil* violin has informed the present author that the violin has a single strip of purfling which is centred on the end-pin.

<sup>25</sup> Count Cozio never owned the 1724 Stradivari violin which is known today as the *Sarasate*.

4. The Count writes:  
*Questo ha la voce più forte, e da tenore. L'altro più matura e ben forte e più bello in totale*
5. Bacchetta transcribes the Count's text verbatim (see *Carteggio*, p. 243).
6. The 'contemporary Italian' re-casting of the Bacchetta text (*Memoirs*, pp. 589-590) is:  
*Questo ha la voce più forte e tenorile; l'altro più matura, molto forte ed è più bella nell'insieme.*  
This [*Paganini*] violin has the stronger, and most tenor, voice; the other is more mature, very sonorous, and is more beautiful on the whole.<sup>26</sup>
7. Brandon Frazier's English translation (*Memoirs*, p. 236) is:  
The voice of this violin is stronger, a tenor; the other has instead a stronger and more mature voice, overall it is a better instrument.
8. Present author's translation of the Count's text:  
This [the 1724 *Paganini* violin] has the stronger voice, viola-like.<sup>27</sup> The other [the 1716 violin] has a more mature and well-rounded sound, and is more beautiful overall.

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**The first description** written by Count Cozio of his sole 1724 Stradivari violin, the document dating from late 1774 or early 1775 (*ms. Cozio 41*):

*Fondo giunto, bosco di vena 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.*

[margin annotations]: *2<sup>da</sup>, il più forte,  
si hà, venduto dal Cav Carlo Carli al celebre suonaf<sup>e</sup> Genovev Paganini  
per Luigi cento ma da togliere cinque di sconto.*

The Renzo Bacchetta transcription (*Carteggio*, p. 200):

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

Il più forte

venduto dal Cavaliere Carlo Carli al celebre suonatore genovese Paganini per luigi 100 ma da togliere cinque di conto.

Bacchetta's text re-cast into 'contemporary Italian' (*Memoirs*, p. 565):

Quello più forte di voce. Venduto dal cavaliere Carlo Carli al celebre musicista genovese Paganini per 100 luigi, ma cinque sono da togliere dal conto.

Fondo in due pezzi. Legno con mazzatura piuttosto larga e bella. Nocetta molto arrotondata, quasi circolare. Riccio ben lavorato e bordato di nero. Stessa manifattura dello strumento precedente, ma con vernice più gialla.<sup>28</sup> Etichetta uguale alle precedenti, bollata. Anno 1724.

The 'contemporary Italian' text translated into English (*Memoirs*, p. 215):

The strongest. Sold by nobleman Carlo Carli to the famous Genoese musician Paganini for 100 luigi, five of them have to be taken off the bill.

One-piece back [*sic*], with wide even grain. The button is round, almost like a circle. The scroll is well carved and is outlined in black. This work is similar to the one mentioned above [1716 violin], but its yellow varnish is more intense than any other. Label as usual, with seal, 1724.

Present author's translation of Cozio's 1774-75 text:

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<sup>26</sup> Present author's translation.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. footnote 21.

<sup>28</sup> The Count's comment – *più gialla di tutti* – ought not to have been truncated.



Jointed [two-piece] back plate, the wood having vein[s] [i.e. flames] which are 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]<sup>29</sup> but the varnish is the yellowest of all [i.e. amongst the twelve violins bought from Paolo Stradivari]. The label [in its appearance] is like the others, *anno 1724*, and stamped [i.e. with Stradivari's monogram].

[margin annotations]: Second [the second best, overall]; the stronger [in tone, when compared against the 1716 violin].

I have it. Sold by Signor Carlo Carli to the celebrated player from Genoa, Paganini, for one hundred *Luigi* [100 *Louis d'or* 20-franc coins] but deduct five as a discount.

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**The second description** of the 1724 *Paganini* violin, written by Count Cozio on 8 April 1801 (*ms. Cozio 42*):

*Vig<sup>to</sup> stamp Bollo sudd.*

*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 così al solito del coperchio, che ha la vena più tosto 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 ind<sup>o</sup> dal G. B. Guadagnini: intatto pero con una picol marca di fissura nel coper<sup>o</sup> a destra vic<sup>o</sup> al cordile: vale zni cento trenta.*

[margin annotation]: *1817 Luglio venduto al Signor Professore Niccolò Paganini di Genoa per mezzo del Signor Cavaliere Carlo Carli di Milano. zni 130*

The Renzo Bacchetta transcription (*Carteggio*, p. 209):

Viglietto stampato e bollo sudetto: come sopra: anno 1724; fortissimo di voce tonda e pastosa sebbene paia ancora interna, di forma più grande segnata; vernice [rosso]<sup>30</sup> chiara tirante nel giallino; fondo fascie e manico di bellissima vena larga e fondo in due pezzi così al solito del coperchio che ha la vena piuttosto larga. Di forma delle più grandi con pansa corta al fondo ben tirata ed al coperchio anche ben spianata. Benissimo profilato e di bellissimo lavoro e FF ben fatte e scavate con manico dato indietro dal G. B. Guadagnini. Intatto e ciò con una piccola marca di fissura nel coperchio a destra vicino al cordile. Vale *zecchini* 130.

1817 luglio; venduto al sig. Prof. Niccolò Paganini di Genova per mezzo del sig. Cav. Carlo Carli di Milano.

Bacchetta's text re-cast into 'contemporary Italian' (*Memoirs*, p. 569):

Luglio 1817. Venduto al professor Niccolò Paganini di Genova tramite il cav. Carlo Carli di Milano.

Etichetta stampata con bollo come sopra: anno 1724. Di voce fortissima, piena e pastosa, sebbene sembri ancora chiusa. Forma più grande di quella utilizzata.<sup>31</sup> Vernice piuttosto chiara<sup>32</sup> tendente al giallo. Fondo, fasce e manico di legno bellissimo, con marezzatura larga. Fondo in due pezzi. Tavola in due pezzi con venatura piuttosto larga. Forma tra le più grandi. La bombatura del fondo è bassa e ben spianata; anche quella della tavola è ben spianata. Bellissima la filettatura. Ottimo lavoro in generale. FF ben disegnate e ben lavorate. Manico inclinato indietro da Gian Battista Guadagnini. Ben conservato, con una piccola rottura sulla tavola a destra, vicino alla cordiera. Vale 130 *zecchini*.

The 'contemporary Italian' text translated into English (*Memoirs*, p. 215):

July 1817. Sold to Professor Niccolò Paganini of Genoa through Sir Carlo Carli of Milan.

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<sup>29</sup> 'like the previous': i.e. the workmanship seen on the 1724 violin is of the same (excellent?) quality as seen on the 1716 violin.

<sup>30</sup> Bacchetta has mis-read the Count's handwriting and transcribes *rosso* as *poco*.

<sup>31</sup> The significance of the Count's *segnata* (in *di forma più grande segnata*) has been entirely lost as a result of the re-casting of Bacchetta's transcription.

<sup>32</sup> Not only has Bacchetta mis-transcribed Cozio's *rosso* as *poco* but the 'contemporary Italian' text – derived from Bacchetta – exacerbates the error by presenting the phrase as *Vernice piuttosto chiara tendente al giallo* ('the varnish is rather light, shading towards yellow'); cf. Frazier's translated-into-English text: 'Pale yellowish varnish'; cf. the present author's translation (p. 10 of this account).

Printed label with seal as above: anno 1724. Round, strong and warm voice, but still internal. Larger than the usual model. Pale yellowish varnish. Back, sides and neck are made with beautiful open flame. Two-piece back, two-piece top with wide grain. Larger model, low arching both on the back and on the top. Good purfling work, and the F-holes are well made. The neck has been raised by G. B. Guadagnini. Intact, with a small crack on the right hand side of the top, near the tailpiece. It is worth 130 *zecchini*.

Present author's translation of Cozio's 8 April 1801 text:

The label stamped as on the above-mentioned [a Stradivari violin dated 1730].

As above: anno 1724: very strong of voice, rounded and mellow, although both [tonal qualities] are still internal [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 cross-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, near the tailpiece. Value *zecchini* 130.

[margin annotation]: 1817 July: sold to Signor Professor Niccolò Paganini of Genoa through Signor Carlo Carli of Milan.

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