

The *Habeneck* violin, Count Cozio di Salabue, and Francesco Stradivari

© Nicholas Sackman

www.themessiahviolin.uk

2016

The text which follows is derived, for the most part, from that which was published under the same title in the **Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society** in 2016 (Vol. XLII, pp. 197-220). The opportunity has been taken to clarify some less-than-satisfactory expressions in the original text, to correct some minor mistakes, and to format the complex narrative in a user-friendly manner. The **JAMIS** publication contained eight illustrations (both in monochrome and in colour); these are not reproduced in the following pages.

Antonio Stradivari – the finest violin maker of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries – died in 1737, probably aged 87. It is thought that during the final decades of his life Antonio received considerable help in his workshop from his eldest son, Francesco. After Antonio's death, Francesco continued to make violins, some of which had his own label glued inside. Around 1775 a number of Antonio Stradivari instruments, as well as two violins made by Francesco, were obtained by Il Conte Ignazio Alessandro Cozio di Salabue, an Italian aristocrat who was not averse to removing labels from within instruments and substituting counterfeit replacements. One such instrument – of uncertain authorship (Antonio or Francesco? – or a mixture of both?) and containing an unconvincing label – is the violin which is now known as the *Habeneck*. Close examination of documents written by Count Cozio suggests that this violin was made by Francesco Stradivari in 1742.

The *Habeneck* violin has been owned by the Royal Academy of Music, in London, since 1909.¹ Prior to that date the violin was owned (in reverse order) by Mrs Ada Hannah Lewis Hill (1844-1906)² who presented the violin to the RAM, Mr Andrew Fountaine (c1809-1874), François-Antoine Habeneck (1781-1849), and Nicolas Lupot (1758-1824) the finest Parisian violin maker of the period – ‘the French Stradivarius’. In 1824 Lupot sold to F-A Habeneck the Stradivari violin to which the latter's name was subsequently attached as a soubriquet:

1824: Habeneck bought a Stradivari from Lupot for 2,400 francs = £96. Some years later this instrument was purchased by Andrew Fountaine and brought to England.³

On 12 February 1903 the Hills issued a certificate for the *Habeneck* violin:

We certify that the violin in the possession of Mr. Haydn Inwards was made by Antonius Stradivarius of Cremona. It is a fine and characteristic example of its maker's work, and is in a perfect state of preservation. It is known as the “Habeneck Stradivari” having belonged to the well-known French player of that name who died in 1849. At his death the violin passed into the hands of the late Mr Andrew Fountaine of Narford [Norfolk, England], whose remarkable collection of china and other works of art was sold some years ago at Christie's.⁴

¹ See Beare *et al.* 214.

² Ada Hannah Lewis married William James Montague Hill in 1904 following the death in 1901 of her first husband, Samuel Lewis.

³ Hill (1902) 270.

⁴ See Rattray (1991) 38 for a reproduction of this 1903 certificate. Haydn Inwards was the second violinist in the Gompertz Quartet. The ‘remarkable collection of china’ referred to by the Hills was established by Sir Andrew Fountaine (1676-1753); the collection was dispersed, by auction, in 1884. It was the nineteenth-century descendant of Sir Andrew Fountaine – also

The *Habeneck* violin has been described by David Rattray:

This violin of 1734 is remarkable for its fine state of preservation and also for its demonstration of the clean, meticulous workmanship of the master [Antonio Stradivari] in his 91st year. It is thought to have been one of around 80 instruments still in Stradivari's possession at the time of his death in 1737.

During the 1730s Stradivari was assisted by his two sons, and possibly also by Carlo Bergonzi (1683-1747). Certain features of the "Habeneck", including the cut of the soundholes, would suggest the collaboration of Antonio's eldest son Francesco, who was aged 63 at the time.⁵

Charles Beare has commented in like manner:

The preservation of the instrument is very fine, and it is thought to have been one of the violins still in Stradivari's possession at the time of his death.⁶

David Rattray draws attention to the 'powerful arching', the 'delicate purflings', the 'well-proportioned head', and 'the slab-cut back [which] ripples beautifully through the remaining thick layer of dark-orange silky-textured varnish [...]' Rattray also describes the *f*-holes:

The soundholes are each different in shape and character, the top circles [eyes] large in relation to the bottom ones, and the lower wings distinctly pointed. The treble soundhole is 4mm higher than its neighbour, an extreme discrepancy [...].⁷

The Hills, in 1902, also comment on the *f*-holes of the *Habeneck* violin but attribute their asymmetric condition entirely to Antonio, not Francesco:

Others [other 1730-1737 instruments] he [Antonio] apparently made entirely by himself, for we cannot admit that either of the sons [Francesco and Omobono] or [Carlo] Bergonzi [...] would have cut those palsied sound-holes, in which we discern not only the trembling hand, but also the failing sight – for instance, those of the "Habeneck" Stradivari, dated 1736, where the right-hand one is set quite $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch higher than the other.⁸

However, Charles Beare has recently stated: 'This fine and very well preserved violin [...] is principally the work of [Antonio] Stradivari's elder son Francesco.'⁹

With regard to the wooden mould around which the *Habeneck* violin was built David Rattray has written: '[...] the "Habeneck" seems to have been constructed on one of the oldest moulds still in use in the Stradivari workshop, the "PG" form [mould] dated 1689.'¹⁰ Stradivari's extant *PG* mould, incised with *A4GIVI689* ('On the day of 4 Giu[gno] [June] 1689') has bout-width and body-length measurements of

named Andrew – who, according to the Hill certificate, acquired the *Habeneck* violin around 1849. Charles Beare has stated (Beare *et al.* 214) that the violin passed to 'Mrs Sam Lewis' in 1890. Perhaps Mrs Lewis then loaned the violin to Haydn Inwards and it was during this loan period that the certificate was written; it is noticeable that the Hill certificate speaks of the violin being 'in the possession' of Haydn Inwards rather than 'owned by'.

⁵ Rattray (2000) 106.

⁶ Beare 276.

⁷ Rattray (2000) 106.

⁸ Hill (1902) 87. The metric equivalent of $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch is 1.58mm. Inspection and measurement of the *Habeneck* violin by the present author (May 2013 and January 2015) confirmed that the treble-side *f*-hole is of the same overall length as the bass-side *f*-hole, but is positioned 4mm further up the top plate.

⁹ Beare *et al.* 214.

¹⁰ Rattray (2000) 106.

Upper Bout 161mm, Centre Bout 103mm, Lower Bout 200mm, and Body Length 348mm¹¹

which, when extended by the usual thickness of a violin's rib (1.15mm on the treble side and similarly on the bass side) and the usual width of a plate's 'overhang' beyond the outside vertical face of the rib (2.5mm on each side) – i.e. a combined total of 7.3mm – would produce the following dimensions on a resultant instrument:

UB 168.3mm, CB 110.3mm, LB 207.3mm, and Length 355.3mm.

These projected dimensions display only limited agreement with back-plate calliper-derived millimetre measurements of the *Habeneck* violin:

167	107.5	206.5	356 ¹²
166	107	205.5	355.4 ¹³
167	107.5	206	356. ¹⁴

The substantial discrepancy between the projected centre-bout measurement of 110.3mm and the real-life measurement (back plate) of 107.5mm (or 107mm) suggests that Stradivari's 1689 mould was not the source for the *Habeneck*, a possibility that is acknowledged by David Rattray:

The form of both violins [the 1734 *Scottish University* violin and the *Habeneck* violin] relates to one of Stradivari's oldest surviving moulds, the "PG" form dated 1689, although it is possible that both were built on a similar mould that has now been lost.¹⁵

The deeply-browned label inside the *Habeneck* violin has the text:

Antonius Stradivarius Cremonensis
Faciebat Anno **I736**

The first two numerals of the year-date are printed, the third and fourth (now substantially faded from view) are handwritten. This combination is sufficient, by itself, to prompt doubts about the label since, from 1700 onwards, Antonio Stradivari used labels which (according to the Hills) only had the first numeral printed – **I** – (in Roman form); the three remaining numerals were always handwritten.¹⁶

The Hills, in 1902, identified the *Habeneck* violin's date as '1736' (see earlier quotation, p.2) despite their rejection of the label (see overleaf); David Rattray offers 'c1734'.¹⁷ Charles Beare, in 1993, wrote that the label was not original and the instrument's date was 'c.1734',¹⁸ but more recently has written that 'the date on its label [is] obscured'.¹⁹ The current Tarisio.com website (instrument number 40150) states '1734',²⁰ as does the anonymous historian in Jost Thöne's *Antonius Stradiuarius*, (2016), Vol. VIII, 278: 'This remarkably well-preserved violin, known as the 'Habeneck', bears a label from the Stradivari workshop dated 1734.'

¹¹ Sacconi (1972) 196.

¹² Rattray (2000) 106.

¹³ Beare 320.

¹⁴ Brandmair and Greiner 363.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 340.

¹⁶ 'and from this rule he never again deviated' (Hill (1902) 218).

¹⁷ Rattray (1991) 36, and Rattray (2000) 106.

¹⁸ Beare 276.

¹⁹ Beare *et al.* 214.

²⁰ Tarisio.com website accessed December 2014.

The third numeral of the *Habeneck* label is clearly a 3 (the shaping of this numeral is very similar to that habitually drawn by Il Conte Ignazio Alessandro Cozio di Salabue in his memoirs and documents).²¹ The label's fourth numeral suggests different interpretative possibilities:

1. It may originally have been a nought – 0 – aligned with the lower loop of the preceding 3, the nought subsequently being erased and replaced with a 6 drawn above the erasure so that the circle of the 6 was aligned with the upper loop of the 3.
2. It may originally have been a nought but aligned with the upper loop of the preceding 3 (with the abrasion of the paper below being entirely coincidental). Illustrations of Stradivari labels which show such a 'upper' 0 – labels which are dated 1700, 1701, 1703, 1704, 1708, 1709, and 1720 – can be found in Hill (1902) between pages 216 and 217. Subsequently this 0 could easily have been modified to appear as a 6.
3. It may originally have been an 8 from which the lower circle was erased and the upper circle changed to a 6 but this is the least likely possibility; in the eighteenth century the numeral 8 was not drawn as two vertically-stacked circles.

The Hills, in their 1902 monograph, reject the *Habeneck* label:

The “Habeneck” violin, referred to by [George] Hart, we do not cite, as, though unquestionably of the latest period, neither label nor inscription is original.²²

The Hills offer no explanation for their statement – ‘neither label nor inscription is original’ – but the lettering on the *Habeneck* label has the appearance of having been printed from metal blocks and has a slightly blue tint.

Underneath the word ‘Anno’ is the handwritten annotation: *DANNI 92*.

1. This annotation is not on a separate piece of glued-in paper since the unusual top-to-bottom dimension of the label has left more than enough vertical space for the addition.
2. There may be an apostrophe between the *D* and the *A*; alternatively, the minute mark might be an imperfection in the label paper.

The appearance of the Antonio Stradivari monogram also raises doubts about the origin of the label since the outer band of the double circle is clearly much wider than the inner band; genuine Stradivari monograms either have two bands which are of equally narrow width, or, if there is any difference, it is more often the case that it is the inner band which is the wider.

When the Stradivari workshop artefacts were displayed at Cremona's Museo Stradivariano (prior to their removal to the recently-opened Museo del Violino) they included two small wooden monogram stamps (exhibits 509 and 510), the first of which was clearly implied to have been that which was used by Antonio Stradivari. The 1987 Museo Stradivariano catalogue described exhibit 509:

*Stampino originale per l'apposizione del marchio di Stradivari sulle etichette.
Legno di bosso. Coll. G. Fiorini.*²³
Original little stamp for applying the brand of Stradivari on the labels.
Boxwood. Collection Giuseppe Fiorini.

²¹ The Cozio manuscripts are archived at the Biblioteca Statale di Cremona.

²² Hill (1902) 92.

²³ Mosconi and Torresani 94.

Exhibit 510 was described in the Museo Stradivariano catalogue as:

*Copia dello stampino descritto al numero 509. Legno di pero. Coll. G. Fiorini.*²⁴

Copy of the little stamp described in number 509. Pear-wood. Collection Giuseppe Fiorini.

In the Museo Stradivariano display-cabinet these two wooden stamps were placed either side of a piece of paper on which were two inked printings from each stamp; one of the pairs of prints was labelled, by an unknown hand, 'Copia', the other pair being labelled 'Autentico'. The two 'Autentico' printings showed double bands which were equally narrow; the two 'Copia' printings both had an outer band which was wider than the inner band.²⁵ A photographic illustration of a copy-stamp is provided by Simone F Sacconi; the photograph is captioned:

*copia del Carlo Mantegazza, Bollo Biglietti [label-stamp] dell' Antonio Stradivario.*²⁶

Why did Carlo Mantegazza need such a stamp?

In late 1774, or early 1775, Il Conte Ignazio Alessandro Cozio di Salabue wrote inventory-descriptions²⁷ of the violins which he had bought from Paolo Stradivari (Antonio's youngest son by his second marriage); each description has a main body of text together with annotations which were subsequently entered in the left margin. An annotation to one of the descriptions identifies Signor Pasquale Odoardo Folli as the purchaser, on 4 July 1801, of a Stradivari violin label-dated 1720.

In the latter part of the same 1774/5 inventory Count Cozio describes another Stradivari violin; again there is a main body of text together with subsequent annotations in the left margin. This second violin was also bought by Signor Folli on 4 July 1801; the violin's label-date was 1730:

Left margin: 4 [overwritten with, perhaps, a 5] *di bonta
si ha
4 Luglio 1801: venduto al sudetto Folli
4th [or 5th?] in terms of quality
I have it
4 July 1801: sold to the aforementioned Folli*

Main text: *Fondo intiero, bosco con vena mediocre, non seguitata ma di poco spicco
covino grande, e più del semicerchio, manico di bosco preso per asse
con un chiodo che é passate per disotto, rizzo contornate
le effe piutosto ordinario e grandi, travaglio ordinario, vernice rossa,
con biglietto come gli altri, stato sotigliato da Guadagnini
anno 1730
scritto al disotto D'anni 92.*

One-piece back plate, wood with medium veins [flames], not continuous, but of little prominence; the neck-button is large and more than a semicircle;
the neck is of slab-cut wood, with a nail which passes through the lower part [of the neck-foot]; the scroll is outlined [in black];
the *f*-holes are rather ordinary, and large; the workmanship is ordinary;
red varnish, with a label like the others, [the plates] thinned by Guadagnini.
The year 1730.
Written underneath *D'anni 92* ['of years 92'].

²⁴ *Ibid.* It was Giuseppe Fiorini who, in 1930, donated to the town of Cremona all the Stradivari artefacts which he had purchased from Paola, Marchesa Dalla Valle. Included in the purchase were all the notebooks, papers, and documents of Count Cozio (these items now archived at the Biblioteca Statale di Cremona).

²⁵ The present author has photographs of these items.

²⁶ See Sacconi (1972) 101.

²⁷ Biblioteca Statale di Cremona, Libreria Civica, ms. Cozio 41.

If there was a plausible connection between the label-date of 1730 and Antonio Stradivari being 92 years of age he would therefore have been 99 when he died in 1737, having apparently been born in 1638; neither such an age, nor such a date of birth, has been proposed by any investigator (cf. p.11).

Three months prior to selling the two Stradivari violins to Signor Folli, i.e. in April 1801, Count Cozio had started writing a new inventory of his instruments:

*1801: 8 Ap[ri]^{le} Milano e seguenti. Inventario de Violini, Viole, e Violoncelli
Violini di Stradivario Antonio da molti anni accomperati dal suo nipote a Cremona²⁸
Violins of Antonio Stradivari, of various years, obtained from his grandson²⁹ in Cremona.*

Within this April 1801 inventory Count Cozio writes new descriptions of the 1720 and 1730 violins which, three months later, he would sell to Signor Folli, and these descriptions are clearly elaborations of those which had appeared within the initial 1774/5 inventory. It would seem that after selling the two violins in July 1801 Count Cozio retrieved his 1774/5 inventory and brought it up-to-date by adding the margin annotations.

Count Cozio's April 1801 description of Pasquale Odoardo Folli's 1720 violin is followed by his description of Folli's 1730 violin:

Left margin: *8 Giugno 1801: oggi gionte mi [?oggi aggiunto da me]
Viglietto stampato e col bollo come li retroscritti
8 June 1801: today added by me
Printed label, and with a seal [monogram] like the previously-described [violins].*

Right margin: *1801: 4 Luglio
venduto al Citto Pasquale Odoardo Folli,
calcolato Lire di Milano.*

1801 4 July:
sold to Citizen Pasquale Odoardo Folli,
[the price] calculated in Milanese *lire*.

Main text: *Come retro dell'anno 1730 (con agionta manuscritta sotto d'DANNI 92:
Voce forte, e buona: forma più grande)³⁰
Conotati vernice rossa a pastello densa, profilatura bella: con molta panza,
lavoro commune, le FF passabili ma non scannelate al solito, e quella destra
(sempre vista in faccia) più elevata f[orm]^a grande, Coperchio di vena
regolare, e piuttosto sottile. Fondo intiero parte a vene larghe ed inferiormente
marmoregiate. Covino al due terzi. Fascie di vena larga, e manico di tal vena e
ben lavorato col nero intorno al riccio: vale per lo meno zecchini sessanta: nel
biglietto il poco U e fatto V.
come dovutosi arangiare da Guadagnini nel sotigliarli il fondo per
migliorarlo.*

As above[;] of the year 1730 (with added handwriting underneath: *DANNI 92*.
The tone is strong and good; [derived from a] larger mould).
Characteristics: varnish is from red to deep pastel; the outline [purfling] is
beautiful; with a pronounced belly;³¹ usual workmanship; the *f*-holes are fairly

²⁸ BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 42.

²⁹ Antonio [II] Stradivari, the son of Paolo Stradivari.

³⁰ The underscores are as in Count Cozio's manuscript.

³¹ cf. David Rattray's 'powerful arching'.

good but [the wings are] not, as is usual, hollowed; and the one on the right (always looking at the face [of the violin]) is higher up, and large [see p.2]. The top plate is of regular, rather narrow, grain [growth rings].³² One-piece back plate with wide flames; in the lower part [the wood looks] marbled.³³ The neck-button is two-thirds [of a circle]. The ribs have wide flames and the neck is similar and is well made, with black edging on the scroll. Value is at least sixty *zecchini*. On the label the small ‘u’ [the first ‘u’ of ‘Stradiuarius’] is written as a ‘v’.³⁴

As was necessary, it [the violin] has been arranged by Guadagnini, thinning the back plate to improve it.

Twenty-two years later, on 20 February 1823, Count Cozio wrote yet another description:³⁵

Milano: 1823, 20 Febbraio

Conotati del violino di Stradivari ora app[artenen]³⁶ al Sig[no]r Ragionato³⁶ Ambrosoli [...?] delli due da me venduti al fù Odoardo Folli 4 Luglio 1801 e fraposto il biglietto d'An^o Stradivari dell'anno 1730³⁷ e sotto vi è manuscritto (di mio carateri) d'ANNI 96 92.³⁸ Esso violino è ancor senza rotture ma con diversi sfogliature della vernice al coperchio, e sotto ed a lato del cordile. Il lavoro d'esso è piùtosto ordinario eccetto che nella profilatura e nel riccio.

Fondo intiero de vena disuguale. Il manico piùtosto per asse con un pirolino dietro il piede del manico: manico statole mezzo nel ridarlo indietro il manico dal Carlo Mantegazza per riempire il buco fatto da uno de tre chiodi che teneva il manico messoli troppo lungo da G B Guadagnini quando glielo diedi nel 1777^{ca} in Torino.

Il coperchio di legno nuovo bello. Le curve sono piùtosto alte e che arrivano quasi vicino al profilo d'intorno. Le ff sono entrambe ma fatte,³⁹ quella sinistra della 4^a pare a quelle dei belli [?] di Joseph Guarneri detto del Gesù, e la destra è più alta dell'altra di due ponti. E li occhietti superiori d'entrambe sono assai grandi e le ponte inferiori più ristrette non scannellate e così pajon fatte dal Francesco figlio ed infatti il biglietto pure già stato da me cangiato.

Il coperchio di detto violino fù come era troppo grosso assotigliato dal sudetto Guadagnini per cui acquistò di [?], e forza di voce.

Il covino del fondo piùtosto grande ed eccedente la meta del circolo. La vernice rossa oscura ossia non stata schiarita e rafinata per cui impedisce la vista della vena.

Ne pretende cento zecchini [...].

Milan, 1823 20 February

³² This condition can be confirmed by reference to the high-resolution photographs of the *Habeneck* violin presented in Beare *et al.* 216 and 218. See also J Thöne, *Antonius Stradiuarius* (2016), Vol. VIII, 278-285.

³³ See Beare *et al.* 217 and 219.

³⁴ According to the Hills (Hill (1902) 218) Stradivari used a ‘v’ instead of a ‘u’ in his family name from 1730 onwards.

³⁵ BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 47, folio 136v; see also Cozio/Bacchetta 329. In February 1823 Count Cozio was 67 years of age, and his handwriting is difficult to read; in addition, parts of the paper which he used have been eaten away by the acid in both the ink and the paper.

³⁶ Renzo Bacchetta (Cozio/Bacchetta 329) suggests that *ragionere* (‘accountant’) was intended.

³⁷ Count Cozio’s underlining of the third and fourth numerals appears to be related to his habit, in many of his descriptive documents, of indicating (by placing ink-dots underneath) which label-date numerals had been handwritten by the maker of the instrument. This interpretation of the Count’s February 1823 evidence agrees with the condition of the label currently inside the *Habeneck* violin.

³⁸ The first letter is drawn as a large but lower-case ‘a’. Count Cozio actually strikes through 96 twice. The numerals 92 have ink-dots beneath.

³⁹ Renzo Bacchetta (Cozio/Bacchetta 329) transcribes this phrase as *Le ff sono entrambe mal fatte* but Count Cozio clearly only writes *ma*.

Characteristics of a Stradivari violin,⁴⁰ presently belonging to the accountant Signor Ambrosoli [...]

[One?] of the two sold by me to the late Odoardo Folli,⁴¹ on 4 July 1801, and [I] inserted the label of Antonio Stradivari, of the year 1730, and underneath there is handwritten (in my lettering) *d'ANNI 96* 92. This violin remains without cracks but with various scuff-marks in the top-plate varnish (and underneath, and to the side of, the strings).⁴² The workmanship of this [violin] is rather ordinary, with the exception of the profile [purfling] and the scroll.⁴³

The one-piece back plate has uneven veins [flames]. The neck, instead, is slab-cut, with a pin at the rear of the neck-foot [inserted] by Carlo Mantegazza to fill the hole made by one of the three over-long nails which secured it, [this being the work] of G B Guadagnini, when I gave [the violin] to him, *circa* 1777, in Turin.⁴⁴

The front plate is made of new good wood. The arching is rather high and extends as far as the inside line of the profile.⁴⁵ The *f*-holes are both [?] made, that to the left of the fourth [string (the G-string)] appears like those beautiful [?] of Joseph Guarneri known as *del Gesù*, and the [*f*-hole] on the right is higher than the other by two *ponti*.⁴⁶ The upper eyes of the *f*-holes are very large,⁴⁷ and the lower points [wing tips] are shorter [than usual], not hollowed, and thus the pair made by Francesco, the son, and in fact the label has already been changed by me.

The top plate of this violin was originally too thick, now thinned by the aforementioned Guadagnini, from which it gained [?] and strength of tone. The back-plate neck button is rather large and exceeds a semicircle. The varnish is dark red, not bright and delicate, thus preventing sight of the veins. It is worth not less than one hundred *zecchini* [...].⁴⁸

These three increasingly-detailed descriptions of Folli's 1730 violin – descriptions which were written by Count Cozio in 1774/5, 1801, and 1823 – have multiple points of agreement with the present-day *Habeneck* violin. If the current 'Antonio Stradivari' label inside the *Habeneck* violin is that which was inserted, on his own admission, by Count Cozio, then that label, in February 1823, was showing a date of 1730.

At first sight it is not clear why, if Count Cozio sold the 1730 violin to Signor Folli in 1801, he wrote a new description of the same violin in 1823. The answer may lie in the Count's reference to Folli's death, *circa* 1816; perhaps Folli's heirs, having no further use for the violin, sold it back to Count Cozio who then sold it to Signor Ambrosoli, and Ambrosoli, in turn, took it to Paris and sold it to Nicolas Lupot.

⁴⁰ It is noticeable that Count Cozio does not specify Antonio or Francesco (or Omobono).

⁴¹ Odoardo Folli died *circa* 1816 according to a note made by Count Cozio in that year; see Cozio/Bacchetta 236.

⁴² Close examination of the front plate of the *Habeneck* violin (January 2015) revealed many dozens of tightly packed transverse striations, each approximately 5mm in length, around both *f*-holes.

⁴³ Compare with David Rattray's aforementioned 'delicate purflings', and 'well-proportioned head'.

⁴⁴ The current neck on the *Habeneck* violin is not the original – a grafted joint can clearly be seen in the walls of the peg-box and also above the 'chin' of the peg-box – and therefore the existence of a filled-in nail hole is no longer demonstrable.

⁴⁵ cf. 'The powerful arching rises immediately from the deep edge fluting' (Rattray (1991) 36); '[...] the powerful arching [...] rising immediately from the deeply formed edgework [...]' (Rattray (2000) 106).

⁴⁶ 4.52 millimetres; one *ponto* was one-twelfth of one *pollice* which was one-twelfth of the *Pied du Roi* (324.8mm).

⁴⁷ cf. quotation from David Rattray on p.2 of this account.

⁴⁸ Very few of the violins from Count Cozio's extensive collection, when sold, were priced higher than 100 *zecchini*; in an 1803 inventory (BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 55) three Antonio Stradivari violins were priced at 100, 90, and 60 *zecchini* respectively. Notwithstanding his criticisms it is evident that Count Cozio held Signor Folli's 1730 violin in high regard. It is regrettable that the Count never measured the various dimensions of this violin.

After the final folio of his 1823 inventory – folio 148 of BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 47 – Count Cozio created an index of all the instruments described (and in most cases measured) in the preceding pages of the inventory. The index entry for the violin belonging to Signor Ambrosoli is:

*Violino Ant^o Stradivari 1736 del Ragionato Ambrosoli
già nel Folli da me venduto: folio 136v*

Antonio Stradivari violin, 1736, [belonging to] the accountant Ambrosoli
previously sold by me to Folli: folio 136v

The final numeral of the label-date is clearly drawn by Count Cozio as a 6, not a 0. Since the 1774/5, 1801, and 1823 descriptions unambiguously specified the fourth numeral of the violin's label-date as 0, it would seem that between writing his February 1823 description and subsequently compiling the inventory's index Count Cozio altered the label's fourth numeral from 0 to 6 but forgot to amend the numeral as it appeared in his three descriptive texts.

Count Cozio evidently knew how to detach a violin's top plate in order to gain unrestricted access to the label inside. It is likely that he was shown how to carry out this procedure either by one of the Mantegazza family in Milan (possibly Pietro Giovanni Mantegazza (?1730-1803)) or by G B Guadagnini (with whom Count Cozio had established a commercial relationship during the 1770s). In his documents Count Cozio unashamedly acknowledges his interference with labels:

[I] changed the label (*1804, 11 9bre*⁴⁹ *Violino di Ant^o Stradivari del 1710, cangiato il Biglietto*)⁵⁰

[a violin label-dated 1730]: changed label (*cambiato biglietto*)⁵¹

Medium sized [violin], front plate by the Amatis, 1717, label changed (*biglietto cambiato*).⁵²

[...] label with seal, as with the others, except that it was cancelled by me (*fu cancellate da me*)⁵³

If Antonio Stradivari made the violin now known as the *Habeneck* then he would have glued his own label inside the instrument. If Francesco made the violin during Antonio's lifetime it is more than likely that Antonio would have insisted on his own label being glued inside. Count Cozio would have had little commercial reason to remove an Antonio label and substitute another. However, Count Cozio's comments – 'thus the pair [of *f*-holes] made by Francesco, the son, and in fact the label has already been changed by me' – suggest that the original internal label was actually a Francesco label (the use of such a label implying that Antonio had already died; i.e. Francesco made the violin after 1737). Since a Francesco Stradivari label might jeopardise the future sale of the violin it is here proposed that Count Cozio removed Francesco's label and commissioned a printer to produce an Antonio copy-label which, despite its obvious shortcomings, could still convince an unwary purchaser, especially if Count Cozio could disingenuously point to his own handwritten annotation:

DANNI 92.

It is very unlikely that anyone in northern Italy at the start of the nineteenth century – anyone other than Count Cozio – was sufficiently knowledgeable about Antonio Stradivari labels to challenge the appearance of the **I730** (subsequently **I736**) label.

⁴⁹ November.

⁵⁰ BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 45/2; see also Cozio/Bacchetta 226.

⁵¹ Translated from Cozio/Bacchetta 197.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 41; see also Cozio/Bacchetta 202.

What cannot be known today (with certainty) is the date which was present on the *Habeneck* violin's original label, but one line of investigation can be based upon documents written by Count Cozio in connection with his Francesco Stradivari violins. Firstly, in a commentary written under the general date of 1816, Count Cozio refers to two Francesco violins of 1742:

[...] two of his [Francesco's] masterpieces, dated 1742, were acquired in 1775 by me, with those made by Antonio, from the merchant Paolo, brother of Francesco.⁵⁴

In a subsequent commentary:

[...] the undersigned [i.e. Count Cozio] who, in addition to acquiring [Antonio's] instruments, patterns, and notebooks [*memorie*] in 1774, had the good fortune to find two violins of this Francesco Stradivari [...].⁵⁵

In a *Postscript: Nota Bene* dated 22 January 1823:

[...] those [instruments] made [by Francesco] between 1740 and 1742 are made as well as those of his father. The few instruments that [Francesco] left to Paolo, his [half-] brother – at his death – were sold at the same price as those of his father, this [I know] from correspondence between Paolo and Count Cozio.⁵⁶

In a critically important document – a small booklet – Count Cozio wrote detailed comments about a range of violin makers:

Vol. 2^{do} 1800 in 1805 Milano e 1800 in 1809

*Specifica de primari autori de stromenti del tempo che hanno lavorato, estratto da biglietti originali veduti da me I A Cozio ne stessi istromenti, registrati nelle mie memorie Vol Primo e 3^o indi 1816.*⁵⁷

Volume 2: 1800 to 1805, Milan, and 1800 to 1809

Details of the prime makers of instruments, of the period in which they worked, [this information] based on original labels seen by me I A Cozio in these instruments, registered in my notebooks Volume One and Three, 1816 onwards.

Within this booklet is a page on which the Count replicates a Francesco Stradivari label:

Franciscus Stradivarius Cremonensis
Filius Antonii faciebat anno I⁵⁸

Underneath this replication the Count has written:

*De violini di d'autore di me I.A.C. L'uno venduto nel 1805 fondo intiero a M^r E. Durand mandato a Parigi e L'altro io ritengo, e ritenuti i due biglietti dell'anno 1742*⁵⁹ *L'uno col bollo del padre male impresso.*

Violins of this maker [owned] by me, I A C[ozio]. One sold in 1805, one-piece back plate, to Monsieur E Durand, taken to Paris, and the other I retained, and kept the two [Francesco] labels of the year 1742, one with his father's stamp [monogram] badly impressed.

Count Cozio's statement clearly confirms that he had owned two Francesco Stradivari violins, both label-dated **1742**. After removing both labels (these then being added to his private collection) Count

⁵⁴ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 2.

⁵⁵ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 3.

⁵⁶ Translated from Cozio/Bacchetta 67-68. This commentary was written just one month before Count Cozio wrote his detailed description of Signor Ambrosoli's violin.

⁵⁷ BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 83; not transcribed in Cozio/Bacchetta.

⁵⁸ Count Cozio's handwritten replication does not include a 'long S' after the letter 'i' of 'Franciscus' but the Count does draw a particularly large and tall 'S' to represent the 'long S' of 'Cremonensis'. Count Cozio clearly indicates that only the first numeral of the year-date is printed.

⁵⁹ Here the Count has carefully placed ink-dots underneath the numerals 7, 4, and 2 – i.e. handwritten.

Cozio would have been left with the problem of how to sell two anonymous and undated violins (but these violins, as he knew, were extremely rare, having been obtained, almost uniquely, directly from the Stradivari workshop in Cremona in 1774/5). A commercially advantageous solution would be to insert counterfeit Antonio Stradivari labels complete with bottom-right-corner monograms. It is therefore here proposed that Count Cozio glued a false **I730**, *DANNI* 92 label inside one of the now anonymous, undated, violins and, on 4 July 1801, sold this violin to Signor Folli. In 1823, having re-acquired this violin following Folli's death and having realised that '1730' and 'of years 92' was an impossible combination, Count Cozio amended the instrument's label date so that **I730** became **I736** and sold the violin to Signor Ambrosoli.⁶⁰ The date on which the violin passed from Signor Ambrosoli to Nicolas Lupot is unknown, as is the precise date in 1824 when Lupot sold the violin to F-A Habeneck).

In addition, Count Cozio glued a false 'Antonius Stradivarius' label inside the second anonymous and undated violin and, in 1805, sold this violin to Monsieur Durand who took it to Paris.

Following the death of Count Cozio in December 1840, all his instrument possessions, together with his documents and memoirs, passed to his daughter, Matilde (d. 1853). From Matilde they passed to Marchese Rolando Giuseppe Dalla Valle, and, after his death in 1891, to his youngest son Rolando Alessandro Dalla Valle. Rolando died in 1905 but his wife, Paola, lived on until 1950. It was from Paola, in 1920, that Giuseppe Fiorini bought all Cozio's documents and artefacts; Fiorini subsequently donated everything to the town of Cremona.

The earliest known (type-set) presentation of the text of a 1742 Francesco label appears on page 249 of *Les Luthiers Italiens aux XVII et XVIII siècles* by Jules Gallay, published in 1869; the location of the label from which Gallay copied the text is not indicated.

A hand-drawn illustration – mock-authentic in appearance – of a 1742 Francesco label (without a monogram) appears in Vol. 1 (opp. p.106) of Antoine Vidal's *Les Instruments a archet*, published in 1876. This illustration implies that the '17' numerals of the source label were printed while the '42' numerals were hand-drawn; the location of the label from which the copy-drawing was derived is not indicated.

Vidal provides a second illustration of a Francesco Stradivari label in his subsequent publication *La Lutherie et Les Luthiers* (1889) where, in Plate XVIII (between p. 198 and p. 199), there is another 1742 label, also without a monogram. The label-date numerals are presented in the same manner as previously – two printed and two drawn: **I742**. It is unclear whether this 1889 illustration is entirely new or a 'touched-up' revision of the 1876 illustration (the two illustrations are not identical). At the end of his 1889 Foreword (*Avant-Propos*), Vidal writes:

Le texte a été complété par des gravures, reproduction fidèle d'instruments précieux, et par le facsimilé d'une collection d'étiquettes de luthiers d'après les originaux authentiques. Ces documents rares et pour la plupart inédits rencontreront, j'ose l'espérer, un accueil favorable auprès des amateurs.

The text has been supplemented by accurate engraved reproductions of precious instruments, and by the exact copying of a collection of *luthier* labels, working from the authentic originals. It is hoped that these documents – rare and for the most part previously unpublished – will receive a favourable response from music lovers.

⁶⁰ Cf. the present writer's research article 'Whence the *Muntz*?', pp. 5-7 (free to read at www.themessiahviolin.uk).

Vidal does not identify the source of his collection of authentic original labels.

The Hill brothers, in their 1902 *Stradivari* monograph (opp. 217), provide an illustration of a 1742 Francesco label which ‘comes to us from the Marquis [Rolando Alessandro] Dalla Valle. It was most probably taken from one of the two violins purchased by Count Cozio in 1775 from Paolo Stradivari.’⁶¹ It is unclear whether the Hills borrowed this label for their 1902 illustration and returned it afterwards to the Marquis, or bought it outright; perhaps it was a gift. There is no monogram on the label as illustrated by the Hills. Close study of the illustration reveals that the **I7** numerals have been printed, while the **42** numerals have been hand-drawn (a faint first inking of the **42** numerals can be observed, with a more certain re-inking on top): **I742**.

The National Music Museum (Vermillion, South Dakota, USA) holds an extensive collection of instrument labels from various makers – the Salabue-Fiorini-DeWit-Herrmann collection – which includes seven Antonio Stradivari labels and one Francesco Stradivari label. The Francesco label is associated with a paper envelope on which Count Cozio has written:

*Due veridici Bigⁿ [biglietti] del f^o [figlio] Stradivari ~~1743~~ 1742 levati delli due suoi violini
come in Registro*

Two genuine labels of the son of Stradivari ~~1743~~ 1742 removed from two of his violins,
as [listed] in my register.

The single NMM/Francesco label has a 1742 date which comprises a printed **I** followed by three hand-written numerals: **I742**; the adjacent ‘AS’ monogram is hand-drawn.

Information received by the present writer from Mr James Warren indicates that, during the 1920s, Alfred Hill went to see Giuseppe Fiorini in Italy and bought from him a 1742 Francesco label which Alfred Hill then inserted in the Francesco violin now known as the ‘Salabue’; this label has three hand-written numerals: **I742**.⁶² It is likely that this label was the second of the two **I742** labels which had been stored within Count Cozio’s paper envelope (the first label being that which is now owned by the National Music Museum).

The evidence points towards the **I742** Francesco ‘Salabue’ label and the **I742** Francesco label at the National Music Museum – both with three hand-written numerals – being the two which Count Cozio removed from his two ‘masterpiece’ Francesco violins.

It is here proposed that the *Habeneck* violin was made by Francesco Stradivari and originally carried his own label, dated **I742**; the violin’s current, false, label of **I736** (initially **I730**) was inserted by Count Cozio. Nicolas Lupot, in 1823-24, with all his lifetime’s knowledge and experience of Stradivari instruments, would surely have recognised the falsity of the label within Signor Ambrosoli’s violin, and perhaps the slightly low price (£96; 2,400 *francs*) paid by François-Antoine Habeneck reflects the lack of absolute certainty about the instrument’s origin (but, alternatively, the purchase price might have taken into account the value of Habeneck’s then-current violin, a violin which could have been used in part-exchange). The Hills provide some prices paid for Stradivari violins around 1824:

1. a 1696 viola, sold in Paris in 1825 for £120
2. a ‘1660(?)’ violin, sold in 1816 for 100 guineas

⁶¹ Hill (1902) 220.

⁶² A subsidiary question is: if the Hills had a **I742** label (with two hand-written numerals) which they illustrated in 1902 why did they then buy a **I742** label (three hand-written numerals) from Fiorini in the 1920s; what had happened to the 1902 label?

3. a 1702 violin, sold in London in 1818 for 100 guineas
4. a 1700 violin, sold in 1818 for 200 guineas
5. G B Viotti's violin, sold in Paris in 1824 for the equivalent of £152.⁶³

The fact that F-A Habeneck kept his new violin for fully twenty-five years suggests that it was the instrument's tonal qualities – its capacity to respond to his technique – which most appealed to him, and he was content to know that the violin, at the least, had been made in the Stradivari workshop in Cremona.

Bibliographic references

Beare

Beare, C., *Antonio Stradivari, The Cremona Exhibition of 1987*. J. & A. Beare, London, 1993.

Beare et al.

Beare, C., Beare, P., Chiesa, C., Whiteley, J., *Stradivarius: Catalogue for the 2013 Stradivarius Exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum*. University of Oxford, 2013.

Brandmair and Greiner

Brandmair, B., and Greiner, S.-P., *Stradivari varnish: Scientific Analysis of his Finishing Technique on Selected Instruments*. 2010.

Cozio/Bacchetta

Count Cozio di Salabue, *Carteggio* (transcribed and edited by Renzo Bacchetta). Antonio Cordani, Milan, 1950.

Hill (1902)

Hill, W. H., Hill, A. F., Hill, A. E., *Antonio Stradivari, His Life and Work (1644-1737)*. William E. Hill & Sons, London, 1902.

Mosconi and Torresani

Mosconi, A., and Torresani, C., *Il Museo Stradivariano di Cremona*. Electa Spa, Milan, 1987.

Rattray (1991)

Rattray, D., *Masterpieces of Italian Violin making, 1620-1850*. Royal Academy of Music, London, 1991.

Rattray (2000)

Rattray, D., *Masterpieces of Italian Violin making, 1620-1850*. Outline Press, London, 2000.

Sacconi (1972)

Sacconi, S. F., *I "Segreti" di Stradivari*. Libreria del Convegno, Cremona, 1972.

Thöne (2016)

Thöne, J., *Antonius Stradiuarius*, (2016), Vol. VIII.

⁶³ See Hill (1902) 268-270.