

Joseph Joachim, David Laurie, and Mischa Elman: revising the provenance

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Charles-Nicolas-Eugène Gand, in his *Catalogue descriptif des Instruments de Stradivarius et J. Guarnerius*, writes descriptions of four Stradivari violins belonging to Charles Lamoureux, the French conductor and violinist (1834-1899):

Upper part of Gand's *Catalogue descriptif* page 18 (hereafter **G18U**)

(année 1870) Monsieur Lamoureux, Paris

Violon Stradivarius, 13 pouces 1 ligne ½, année 1735

Fond de deux pièces presque uni, éclisse plus veinées, très-belle table et très-belle tête. Les filets sont un peu écartés dans certains endroits. Vernis rouge doré, très-beau. Complètement intact.

Ex marquis de Louvencourt [this annotation written by Gand using red ink]

(1870) Mr Lamoureux, Paris

Antonio Stradivari violin, 13 *pouces*, 1½ *lignes* [355.3mm], year 1735

The back plate is made from two pieces; almost plain. The ribs are more flamed. Very beautiful front plate and very beautiful head. There are slight gaps in the purfling in some areas. The varnish is golden red, very beautiful. Completely intact.

ex Marquis de Louvencourt.

Lower part of page 18 (**G18L**)

[*Monsieur Lamoureux*]

(année 1870) Violon Stradivarius, 13 pouces 2 lignes, année 1722

Fond de deux pièces, veines un peu serrées remontant un peu, belles éclisses, table de deux pièces ayant une petite cassure à l'âme, une petite au menton près du cordier, marque d'usure faite par l'archet, tête beau modèle. Vernis rouge doré clair.

187 M^r Accursi, 5,000 }

1874 M^r Laurie, 5,500 } red ink

1886 M^r Joachim. }

[Mr Lamoureux]

(1870) Antonio Stradivari violin, 13 *pouces* 2 *lignes* [356.4mm], year 1722

The back plate is made from two pieces; the flames are slightly tight/narrow, rising slightly [from the centre-joint]. Beautiful ribs. The front plate is made from two pieces having a small split at the sound-post, [another] small split at the chin next to the tail-piece. There are wear-marks made by the bow. The head is a beautiful example. The varnish is light golden red.

187 Mr Accursi, 5,000 [francs]

1874 Mr Laurie, 5,500

1886 Mr Joachim.

Upper part of page 19 (**G19U**)

(année 1872) M^r Lamoureux, Paris (suite)

Violon Stradivarius, 13 pouces 2 lignes ½, année 1717

Très beau fond un peu à contresens, très belles éclisses, table très-beau sapin ayant une cassure très-peu visible sur la barre, tête moderne. Vernis rouge doré magnifique.

Ex Soyer de Rouen }
1877 M^r Laurie (avec une tête de Stradivarius) 8,000 }
1878 M^r Van de Weghe, Lille, 13,500 } red ink
1890 M^r J. G. Orchar, Dundee (Ecosse) 25,000. }

(1872) Mr Lamoureux, Paris (continuing)

Antonio Stradivari violin, 13 *pouces*, 2½ *lignes* [357.6mm], year 1717

Very beautiful back plate, cut slightly against the grain. Very beautiful ribs. The front plate is made of very beautiful spruce, having a split – only just visible – above the bass-bar. The head is modern. The varnish is golden red; magnificent.

ex Soyer, of Rouen

1877 Mr Laurie (with a head made by Stradivari) 8,000 [francs]

1878 Mr Van de Weghe, Lille, 13,500

1890 Mr J G Orchar, Dundee (Scotland) 25,000.

Lower part of page 19 (G19L)

[*Monsieur Lamoureux*]

(année 1872) *Violon Stradivarius, 13 pouces 1 ligne, année 1722*

Fond d'une pièce magnifique, veines larges remontant à droite, très-belles éclisses, avec rinceaux peints en noir (oiseaux et têtes de serpents) tête avec rinceaux, table de deux pièces, sapin un peu fin, petite cassure à l'âme, et une au-dessus de l'f gauche, doubles filets avec incrustations en ivoire, losanges et ronds sur fond noir. Vernis rouge doré magnifique.

Ex Rode }
Ex Norès, de Niort } red ink
1890 M^r Ch. Oldham (Brighton) 30,000^f (Hill). }

[Mr Lamoureux]

(1872) Antonio Stradivari violin, 13 *pouces* 1 *ligne* [354.2mm], year 1722

The back plate is in one piece; magnificent; wide flames rising to the right. Very beautiful ribs with floral designs painted in black (birds and serpent-heads); the head [also] with floral designs. The front plate is made from two pieces; the spruce [rings are] slightly thin/narrow. There is a small split at the soundpost and one above the bass *f*-hole. Double purfling with an ivory inlay – lozenges and discs – on a black base. The varnish is golden red; magnificent.

ex Rode

ex Norès, of Niort

1890 Mr Charles Oldham (Brighton) 30,000 francs (Hill).

The Musée de la Musique, in Paris, has placed online more than 40 free-to-access digital files, the files containing an image of each and every page from the business ledgers which were used by the personnel at the Gand/Bernardel/Caressa & Français violin dealership in Paris during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries: <http://archivesmusee.citedelamusique.fr/en/gand/archives.html>. The ledgers are paired together: 1) a Directory (*Répertoire*) showing customers' names in alphabetical order, each name usually being followed by an address; adjacent to the address are numbers which refer to pages in 2) a parallel General Ledger (*Grand Livre*) which usually covers the same chronological period as the Directory. Code numbers for all these digitised files follow a consistent format: E.981.8.xx.

In the Directory for 1861-1866,¹ the name *Lamoureux* is followed by page references 254 and 309; the General Ledger for 1861-1878² has the following information:

page 254: 1864 Mars 14: *Violon Stradivarius, N° 996, 3,500 francs* [Lamoureux paid cash]

page 309: 1864 Juillet 6: *Un violon Stradivarius, N° [blank], année 1722, 4,000 francs*
1864 Octobre 13: *Reçu Espèces* [‘Received cash’], 4,000 francs

Since both these purchases took place during 1864 it is reasonable to assume that the two violins are those which Gand describes, six years later, in **G18U** and **G18L**.

The name of Charles Lamoureux reappears in the Directory for 1866-1875;³ his address in Paris is specified as *10 Avenue Frochot* and the page references are 247, 251, 254, 755, and 791.⁴ Unusually, the General Ledger for 1866-1876⁵ has the same page number printed on both the left and right of each double-page spread. Page 247 (left) reveals that on *1871 Novembre 3* Lamoureux bought *Un violon Stradivarius, N° 1082, 5,000 francs*; he also bought *Un violon Bergonzi N° 676 avec étui* (‘with a case’), *1,200 francs*.

Thus, by November 1871 Charles Lamoureux owned three Stradivari violins and a Bergonzi violin.

Page 248 (right) of the same General Ledger is also headed *Lamoureux*, and, against the date of *1872 Octobre 24* is written *Un violon Stradivarius année 1722, N° 1173, 7,500 francs*; there is no indication of payment. It is all but certain that Charles Gand’s fourth *Catalogue* description (**G19L**) – a description written in 1872 of a 1722 Stradivari violin – is of this 7,500-francs instrument which, from Gand’s text, can be identified as the *Rode* violin (Stradivari’s decorative enhancements presumably justifying the markedly higher price).

Charles Lamoureux now owned four Stradivari violins, two of which were label-dated 1722 – one plain, one decorated.

On the same page 248 (right), against the date of *1872 Octobre 28*, is written *en compte un violon Bergonzi, 1000 francs*, and, directly underneath and against the date *1872 Novembre 15*, is written *reçu espèces en compte (Stradivarius) 2,500 francs*. Thus, Lamoureux had sold the Bergonzi violin back to G&B and had been credited with 1,000 francs; in addition, Lamoureux had paid, in cash, 2,500 francs towards the cost of the *Rode* violin bought on 24 October – total 3,500 francs. At the bottom of page 248 is an annotation which indicates a continuation on page 254 of the same General Ledger. At that location, and against the date of *1873 Février 15*, is written *reçu solde du Stradivarius, 4,000 francs* (‘received the balance for the Stradivari, 4,000 francs’). The full cost of the second 1722 Stradivari violin – the *Rode* – had finally been met.

Pages 755 and 791 of the same General Ledger identify only the renting of instruments for concerts.

According to Charles Gand (see **G18L**) the post-Lamoureux owner of the plain 1722 violin was ‘Accursi’ who, almost certainly, was Romeo Accursi (1836-1919), Italian violinist, composer, and conductor. However, the General Ledger for 1866-1876,⁶ although it contains entries for *Monsieur*

¹ E.981.8.34

² E.981.8.35 (Gand Frères)

³ E.981.8.19

⁴ Note that an individual’s account in a General Ledger may continue onto subsequent pages but these additional page numbers will not necessarily be indicated in the parallel Directory.

⁵ E.981.8.14 (Gand et Bernardel Frères)

⁶ *Ibid.*

Accursi dated between May 1867 and April 1876, makes no mention of the sale or purchase of a Stradivari violin. This suggests that Lamoureux may have sold his 1722 violin (with rising flames and *marque d'usure faite par l'archet*) to Accursi in a private transaction (which may explain why Gand is unable to provide the precise year-date). From Gand's chronological information it would seem that Accursi owned the 1722 violin for only a short time before placing it with Gand & Bernardel for sale. According to the General Ledger of 1866-1876 on 1874 *Mai 1* G&B sold to David Laurie *Un violon Stradivarius, N° 1113, 5,500 francs*; the year-of-purchase and the price match the information provided by Gand in **G18L** for a 1722 Stradivari violin: 1874 *M^l Laurie, 5,500* (equivalent to £220).

Clear photographic evidence for 'wear-marks made by the bow' can be found in Jost Thöne's publication *Antonius Stradiuarius* (Vols. IV and VIII, p. 16 – the *Laurie* violin – which 'bears an original Stradivari label dated 1722'); the treble-side C-bout edge has been chipped by the frog of the bow. The Thöne photographs also reveal that the violin's back-plate flames are slightly narrow and rise gently from the centre joint. The violin illustrated by Thöne is surely Lamoureux's 1722 violin.⁷

David Laurie's *Reminiscences of a Fiddle Dealer* provides information concerning his sale of a 1722 Stradivari violin six years after he bought just such an instrument from G&B:

PRICES OF ITALIAN INSTRUMENTS

The following entries are extracted from his sales account:

*March 10, 1880. – Stradivarius violin, 1722 ... £500**

** Sold to Dr. Joseph Joachim⁸*

The 25 extracted entries are dated between June 1876 and October 1880; Joachim's violin is the only Stradivari of 1722 which is listed. It is plausible that Joseph Joachim obtained the 1722 violin from David Laurie when the violinist was in England; on 18 March 1880 Joachim was in London, performing Brahms' Violin Concerto at St. James' Hall with the Philharmonic Society.

Summary: on 10 March 1880 David Laurie sold to Joseph Joachim a 1722 Stradivari violin which had slightly narrow back-plate flames rising gently from the centre-joint and a front plate with a chipped treble-side C-bout edge. The known history of this violin dates back no further than 1870 when it was in the possession of Charles Lamoureux (see **G18L**).

It is unlikely that Laurie would have told Gand & Bernardel about the hugely inflated price at which he had sold 'their' 1722 violin; hence (perhaps) the absence of a price in Gand's final red-ink annotation (which is likely dated 1886 simply because it was only in that year that Gand learned of Joachim's ownership). The Directory for 1881-1887⁹ identifies *M. Joachim* but his only purchases from G&B took place on 15 and 19 January 1886, 14 and 20 January 1887, and 1 February 1887, and these were of violin strings and hanks of bow-hair (total cost 50 francs and 60 centimes).¹⁰ It is plausible that it was when Joachim was making his January 1886 purchases that he told G&B about his 1722 *Lamoureux/Accursi/(G&B)/Laurie* violin.

⁷ To clarify: within Jost Thöne's *Antonius Stradiuarius* publication the *Laurie* violin (with rising flames and a chipped edge) is photographed on pages 12-19 of Vol. IV, incorrectly identified as the *c.1722 Joachim, Elman, Bloomfield* violin. The photographs of the *Laurie* violin reappear on pages 12-19 of Vol. VIII where the instrument is identified as the *c.1722 Laurie*. The *1722 Joachim, Elman* violin (with wide and somewhat faint descending flames) is photographed on pages 28-35 of Vol. VIII. The three historical commentaries offer various narratives.

⁸ *Reminiscences*, p. [127].

⁹ E.981.8.39

¹⁰ E.981.8.4

Ruprecht Kamlah¹¹ states that it was Heinrich Joachim (Joseph's brother) who bought the *Laurie* violin and then gifted it to Joseph. Kamlah cites a letter dated 23 October 1887 from Joseph to Heinrich wherein the former writes (present author's translation):

*Unfortunately I have to remember to sell the Laurie-Strad, from you.*¹²

Joseph's letter continues:

*Buying the violin was not a careless mistake since I will get the money back; for the 'Laurie' I will get £700 because, since then [since March 1880?], the price of violins has risen; furthermore, the violin is a marvel!*¹³

Two weeks later Joachim sold the violin to Franz von Mendelssohn (1829-1889) for £700; Kamlah cites a letter sent by Mendelssohn to Joachim on 10 November 1887:

*Dear friend, with best regards I accept our friend Laurie for a price of 700 pounds; [...] It is a precious keepsake which will be treasured in our house, always, as a souvenir [...].*¹⁴

When Gand's *Catalogue descriptif* text (**G18L**) was copied into the new descriptive ledger which was subsequently compiled by Albert Caressa & Henri Français no alterations or additions were made to Gand's information.¹⁵ Since the *Lamoureux/Accursi/Laurie/Joachim* violin apparently remained for many years post-1887 within the Mendelssohn family this lack of updated knowledge is understandable.

Ruprecht Kamlah¹⁶ states that from the Mendelssohn family the 1722 *Laurie/Joachim* violin passed to the American collector and songwriter Francis Drake ('Pat') Ballard (1899-1960):

Von den Mendelssohns ging die Geige über an den Sammler und Lieder-Autor Francis Drake Ballard

In 1945 Ballard self-published his volume titled *The Appreciation of Rare Violins*. At the end of this volume, in an *Addenda*, Ballard provides a list of some of the rare violins

which comprise his collection, or have, at one time or another, been in his possession or placed in his hands for disposal by other collectors. Therefore, listed herewith are some of the instruments which, through ownership or custody, have left their impression and can briefly be commented upon.

Ballard briefly lists 92 instruments, including a 1722 Stradivari violin:

¹¹ *Joseph Joachims Geigen*, Palm und Enke, Erlangen, Germany, 2018; see pp. 69 and 91.

¹² *Leider aber muß ich daran denken die Laurie-Strad, von dir, zu verkaufen* (but would David Laurie have written 'Sold to Dr. Joseph Joachim' if it was Heinrich who bought the violin?). Joachim's letter is archived at the Brahms Institut, Lübeck.

¹³ *Daß ich die Geige erworben ist kein Leichtsin, denn das Geld bekomme ich immer wieder, und ich glaube für die Laurie werde ich längst 700£ erhalten, denn die Violinene sind seitdem ich sie bekam im Preis gestiegen; das Instrument ist ja auch ein herrliches!*

¹⁴ *Verehrter Freund, mit verbindlichem Danke nehme ich unsere Freundin Laurie zu einem Preise van 700 Pfund an [...]. Es ist ein kostliches Andenken, das stets in unserem Hause als Andenken.*

¹⁵ After Charles Gand died in 1892 some of his *Catalogue descriptif* texts were updated by Gustave Bernardel; when the Gand/Bernardel business was bought by Albert Caressa and Henri Français in 1901 the entire updated *Catalogue* – 252 descriptive texts – was copied into a new ledger. This ledger (which includes new descriptions of a further 140 instruments) is now archived as part of the Jacques Français Rare Violins, Inc. Photographic Archive and Business Records, held at the Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, USA; the ledger is within Box 55, Folder 2 [JF55.2]. A copy of the Gand/Bernardel/Caressa & Français ledger was made by Emile Français; this is also archived at the Smithsonian Institution, within Box 55, Folder 4 [EF55.4]. A complete transcription and translation of the Smithsonian ledgers (with commentaries) is linked from www.themessiahviolin.uk.

¹⁶ *Joseph Joachims Geigen*, p. 93.

STRADIVARI, ANTONIO. Cremona 1644-1737.

This example, dated 1722, was said to have been in the possession of Joachim.

Rich, dark red varnish.

It is unclear whether Ballard owned this violin or was merely its custodian. From Jost Thöne's photographic evidence¹⁷ a 'dark red varnish' is much more noticeable on the 1722 *Joachim/Hausmann/Wolff/A.Herrmann/Burmester/Elman* violin (see below) than on the 1722 *Lamoureux/Accursi/Laurie/Joachim/Mendelssohn* violin (above). Kamlah's reported transfer of the 1722 *Laurie* violin from the Mendelssohn family (in Berlin) to F D Ballard (in the US) lacks convincing evidential support.

Jost Thöne's historian¹⁸ cites the catalogue which was produced for the *Mostra di Antonio Stradivari* which was held at the Palazzo Borromeo, Isola Bella, in 1963. The *Le Laurie* – 1722 violin appears on page 54 of the catalogue¹⁹ together with an Italian-language commentary which is translated into English:

Da un'interessante informazione pervenutaci da Rudolph von Mendelssohn, si sa che lo strumento "Le Laurie" 1722 è stato suonato da Joachim, durante l'ultimo periodo della sua carriera. Fu Rudolph von Mendelssohn padre che ne fece dono a Joachim. Questo violino fu sempre il preferito dal celebre violinista; quando morì, la moglie, Madame Joachim, lo rese alla famiglia von Mendelssohn. Appartiene attualmente al Sig. Blaise Calame di Parigi.

From an interesting information given by Rudolph von Mendelssohn, we know that the instrument "Le Laurie" 1722 was played by Joachim during the last period of his career. It was Rudolph von Mendelssohn father who gave this violin to Joachim, as a gift. The famous violinist preferred this instrument to the others, and, when he died, his wife, Mrs. Joachim gave it back to the von Mendelssohn family. Today's owner is Mr. Blaise Calame, of Paris.

Clearly there are differences between this historical account of the violin's movements and the evidence from the Joachim/Mendelssohn letters of October and November 1887 (see earlier).

Thöne's historian queries the name of *Rudolph von Mendelssohn*, stating that the *c.1722 Laurie* violin was gifted to Joachim *by the wealthy Berlin banker Franz von Mendelssohn (1865-1935)* but, as already shown, it was this person's father who, in 1887, bought Joachim's 1722 *Laurie* violin for £700.

The Calame family eventually sold the 1722 *Lamoureux/Accursi/G&B/Laurie/Joachim/Mendelssohn* violin; the present-day owner has loaned the violin to Matthias Lingenfelder of the Aurnyn Quartet. The violin's provenance and physical characteristics exclude any connection with Mischa Elman.

The Elman violin

Ernest Doring creates confusion with the mis-information which he published in 1945:²⁰

1721 The MISCHA ELMAN, ex Joachim.*²¹ *This violin is presumed to be the one which David Laurie sold to Joseph Joachim March 10, 1880. His entry names 1720 as the date of the instrument and that he*

¹⁷ Thöne, Vol. VIII, pp. 16 and 32.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁹ The monochrome photographs are too small to show the violin's chipped C-bout edge but the gently-rising back-plate flames are clearly visible.

²⁰ *How many Strads?*, p. 236.

²¹ Doring's asterisk indicates his personal inspection of the violin.

sold it to the great violinist for £500. Joachim sold it to Professor Leonhard Wolff. Then, through Emil Herrmann, the instrument passed to Willy Burmester and, lastly, from him to Mischa Elman in whose possession it remains.

Note Doring's use of the word 'presumed'.

Doring's mis-information was copied by Albert Mell in 1999 when the latter wrote:

*The instrument sold by Laurie to Joachim was later sold by the violinist to Professor Leonhard Wolff. Through Emil Herrmann it passed to Willy Burmester, and from him to Mischa Elman.*²²

The names of Leonhard Wolff (1846-1934), Emil Herrmann (1888-1968), Willy Burmester (1869-1933), and Mischa Elman (1891-1967) reappear on the Tarisio.com/Cozio Archive webpage²³ for the violin which is identified as the *Joachim, Elman* (ID 41503), with an *original label but date is faded ... 1722*; the photographic illustration shows a violin with wide and somewhat faint back-plate flames which descend from the centre-joint. The violin's owners are listed as:

Accursi/Laurie/Soyer/Laurie/van de Weghe/Joachim/D. Hausmann/
Jan van Oordt/August Riechers/Wolff/Emil Herrmann/Burmester/Elman/
Bloomfield/Sothebys/Merryman/Rogoff/Josef Suk II/Chi-Mei Foundation.

Reference to the four descriptive texts penned by Charles Gand will show that the third violin (**G19U**) – a violin which is label-dated '1717' – is associated with M. Soyer, David Laurie, and M. Van de Weghe (also J G Orchar).

The name of 'Soyer' does not appear in any of the aforementioned Directories which are dated between 1854 and 1875; no further identification has been found. Gand's red-ink annotations clearly show that the 1717 *Lamoureux/Soyer* violin – *avec une tête de Stradivarius* – was sold to David Laurie in 1877. This sale is confirmed in the General Ledger for 1875-1884, where page 313 is titled *M^e Laurie David à Glasgow*:²⁴

1877 Avril 14: Un violon Stradivarius, N^o. 1174, plus une tête de Stradivarius séparée, 8,000 francs.

In 1877 the GB Pounds equivalent of 8,000 francs would have been £320. Exactly one year later, on 14 April 1878, Laurie sold a 1717 Stradivari violin for £480; the name of the purchaser is not stated in Laurie's accounts but Gand (**G19U**) indicates that the next owner of Laurie's 1717 Stradivari violin was *M^e Van de Weghe*. The name of Van de Weghe appears in the Directory for 1875-1884 with his address, *163 Boulevard de la Liberté, Lille*, and a page reference: *1681*.²⁵ Page *1681* of the parallel General Ledger²⁶ itemises transactions with *M. Wan de Weghe* which include:

1880 Janvier 29: réparation d'un Stradivarius, 50 francs.

The documentary evidence regarding the next owner, J G Orchar (1825-1898), is deficient – there is no mention of James Guthrie Orchar in the three Directories which span the years 1881-1899;²⁷ perhaps Orchar bought the 1717 violin from Van de Weghe in a private sale. The violin eventually made its way to America; its soubriquet is 'The Nightingale' and it has no connection with Joseph Joachim.

²² Albert Mell, *Joseph Joachim: a connoisseur of fine violins*, Journal of the Violin Society of America, 1999, Vol. 16, Issue 1, pp. 133-156; the quotation appears on page 151.

²³ Accessed February 2019.

²⁴ E.981.8.6

²⁵ E.981.8.5

²⁶ E.981.8.6

²⁷ E.981.8.39 (1881-1887); E.981.8.26 (1887-1891); E.981.8.42 (1892-1899).

The names of Jan van Oordt, ‘Richers, of Berlin’ (i.e. August Riechers), and Joseph Joachim appear in a description of a 1721 Stradivari violin, the description written by Gustave Bernardel in 1892 or 1893:²⁸

M^r Van Oordt, à La Haye

Violon Stradivarius, année 1721, 13p. 1l.,

Fond de 2 pièces, très-beau bois, ondes moyennes vives descendant, éclisses très-belles, table de 2 pièces, sapin serré au milieu et côté gauche; cassure à l’âme, pièce d’âme et doublure; plusieurs autres cassures au-dessus des ff et au menton; belle tête bien caractérisée, beau vernis rouge doré, bien conservé au fond et aux éclisses, et plus dépouillé à la tête et à la table.

Acheté à Richers, de Berlin

A dû appartenir à Joachim.

Mr Van Oordt, from The Hague

Antonio Stradivari violin, year 1721, 13 pouces 1 ligne [354.2mm]

The back plate is made from two pieces; very beautiful wood, with bright medium [-width] flames, descending [from the centre-joint]. The ribs are very beautiful. The front plate is made from two pieces; the spruce [rings are] tight/narrow in the middle and on the bass side. There is a split, a patch, and a doubling at the sound-post; several further splits above the *fs* and at the chin. Beautiful head, very characteristic. Beautiful varnish, golden red, [the varnish] well conserved on the back plate and on the ribs, [but] more abraded at the head and on the front plate.

Bought from Richers [Riechers], of Berlin [by Jan van Oordt?]

Must have belonged to Joachim.

Bernardel’s certain citing of both Jan van Oordt and August Riechers (together with his slightly uncertain citing of Joseph Joachim) almost guarantees confusion, especially since Ernest Doring, in 1945, mistakenly presents the label-date of the *Elman* violin as ‘1721’.

The following information is found in the Directory for the period 1892-1899:²⁹

van Oordt, 38 Surinamestraat, La Haye, page reference 919

In the General Ledger for 1892-1899,³⁰ page 919:

1893 Novembre 13: Réparation complète d’un violon d’A. Stradivarius, année 1721, 250 francs.

It would seem that van Oordt’s 1721 violin had been extensively damaged; the details are unknown.

In 1953 the 1722 *Joachim-Elman* violin was sold, through the firm of Rudolph Wurlitzer, to Samuel Bloomfield (president of the Swallow Airplane Company, Wichita, Kansas). Ernest Doring took the opportunity, in a short article published in ‘Violins and Violinists’,³¹ to correct the information which he had previously published in *How many Strads?*. Doring’s text is assumed to be derived from the historical documents which accompanied Elman’s violin. Doring begins by acknowledging (but without much conviction) that the label-date on Elman’s violin was ‘1722’, not ‘1721’:

My records had the date as 1721 due to a faulty reading of the fourth digit, which seems to be, instead of “1”, the figure “2”.

Doring also acknowledges (with certainty) that Laurie’s *Prices of Italian Instruments* sales account did not indicate a label-date of ‘1720’ for the violin which the latter sold to Joachim (as Doring had previously reported) but, instead, ‘1722’:

²⁸ JF55.2, p. 125; EF55.4, p. 125 (see footnote 15).

²⁹ E.981.8.42

³⁰ E.981.8.41

³¹ Vol. 15, no.2, March-April 1954, pp. 60-61.

This [date, of 1722] seems to strengthen the supposition that it [i.e. the Laurie/Joachim violin] was the same violin that eventually was acquired by Mr. Elman.

Doring's supposition is erroneous.

He continues:

Documentary evidence attesting the authenticity of the Elman Stradivari and its passage from Joachim to its present owner dates from the year 1893, when it was sold through the intermediary of a well known Berlin violin maker and dealer, August Riechers. Riechers' death occurred on January 4th, 1893, and the sale was actually closed by his widow, as indicated by a receipt written on the Riechers stationery and dated March 15th, 1893. Translated [by Doring?] from the original German, this reads:

Upon request, I herewith certify that I have sold to Professor Leonhard Wolff, Director of Music in Bonn, a Stradivarius violin bearing the label Anno 1722 for 15,000 (fifteen thousand) marks, the entire genuineness of which in all parts I herewith expressly guarantee.

The violin was for several years in the possession of Professor Joseph Joachim of this city and it has been paid for in cash by Professor Leonhard Wolff.

(signed)

*Mathilde Riechers, nee Lohmann,
Widow of August Riechers.*

It is unclear whether the text of the receipt was written by August Riechers but subsequently dated and signed by his widow when payment in cash was received from Professor Wolff, or whether the entire text was the work of Matthilde Riechers.³²

Doring also reports that Riechers' stationery was used for a second document, also dated 15 March 1893 and also written in German; the writer was Dr. David Hausmann, the owner of the 1722 violin prior to Leonhard Wolff.³³ The translation is assumed to be by Doring:

The violin with the label Antonius Stradivarius Cremonensis Faciebat Anno 1722, further identified by the reddish varnish and by the black line still preserved on the scroll, which are characteristic of Stradivarius, was bought by me in the year 1878, from Professor Josef Joachim; it is a genuine Stradivarius violin. It has been in my possession since that time and no repairs, with the exception of new pegs, have been made.

(signed)

*Dr. David Hausmann
Lecturer.*

Jost Thöne's historian (Vol. VIII, p. 28) provides part of Hausmann's German-language text in a quotation (present author's translation):

[Das Instrument] habe ich im Jahre 1878 von Professor Joseph Joachim als echte Stradiarius-Geige gekauft.

[The instrument] I had in 1878 from Professor Joseph Joachim as a genuine Stradiarius violin.

Note the difference between 'it is a genuine Stradivarius violin' and 'as a genuine Stradivarius violin'.

Doring reports (translates?) a third document, this being written by Joachim and dated 10 April 1893:

The violin herein mentioned was owned by me in years subsequent to my making my residence in Berlin [1866] and then often played in concerts. I consider this instrument to be a genuine

³² The present author has not been able to inspect the original German-language document.

³³ David Hausmann (1839-1903) was a gynaecologist (not to be confused with Robert Hausmann, cellist, close friend to Joachim, and, for many years, cellist in the (German) Joachim Quartet). Leonhard Wolff was a musicologist, composer, and conductor – also Professor, and Director of Music, at the University of Bonn between 1884 and 1897.

Stradivarius, and to comply with Professor Wolff's wishes,³⁴ I take pleasure in herewith certifying this fact.

(signed)

Joseph Joachim

Jost Thöne's historian (Vol. VIII, p. 28) provides part of Joachim's German-language text in a quotation (present author's translation):

Die Violine ... habe ich in den Jahren nach meiner Übersiedlung nach Berlin besessen und damals öfter in Konzerten gespielt.

The violin ... I owned in the years after my move to Berlin, and, at that time, often played it in concerts.

It is noticeable that Joachim does not provide an identification of the source from whom he obtained the violin, nor when he obtained it; neither does he confirm his sale of the violin to David Hausmann in 1878. Joachim does not even confirm the violin's label-date. Indeed, Joachim's certified 'fact' is merely his opinion with regard to the violin's Stradivarian genuineness.

The late-19th-century chronology for this 1722 violin (with faint descending flames) is thus:

prior to 1866: unknown owner

1866 to 1878: with Joseph Joachim

1878 to 1893: with David Hausmann

1893 to 1906: with Leonhard Wolff.

Doring concludes with the information that Wolff sold the violin in 1906 to August Herrmann – 'prominent Berlin violin dealer now deceased'³⁵ – who sold it to Willy Burmester, and Burmester sold it to Mischa Elman's father in 1907.

Summary: The 1722 Stradivari violin which David Hausmann bought from Joseph Joachim in 1878 and owned until 1893 (i.e. the subsequent *Elman* violin) cannot be the violin which Joachim bought from David Laurie in March 1880 (i.e. the violin now played by Matthias Lingenfelder).

Of course, the instrument the artist uses is an important factor in making it possible for him to do his best. My violin? It is an authentic Strad—dated 1722. I bought it of Willy Burmester in London. You see he did not care much for it. The German style of playing is not calculated to bring out the tone beauty, the quality of the old Italian fiddles. I think Burmester had forced the tone, and it took me some time to make it mellow and truly responsive again, but now.... Mr. Elman beamed. It was evident he was satisfied with his instrument.³⁶

At present I am the possessor of two fine instruments – a Stradivarius and a Nicholas Amati. The Amati was presented to me as a gift by the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz of the Russian branch of the German family just before I made my debut in Berlin in 1904. I played on this instrument until 1907. In that year my father bought me a Stradivarius (dated 1722) which belonged at one time to the famous Josef Joachim and later to Joachim's brilliant pupil, Willy Burmester, from whom my father purchased it. I played on this Strad for 16 years.³⁷

³⁴ It would seem that Leonhard Wolff (a one-time violin pupil at Joachim's Musikhochschule in Berlin) required more reassurance about the violin he was buying than that which was provided in Riechers' receipt.

³⁵ August Friedrich Herrmann (c.1863-1943) set up a violin dealership in Frankfurt in 1890 but moved to Berlin in 1902; his second son, Emil, became a partner in the firm in 1905 (aged 17).

³⁶ Frederick H. Martens, *Violin Mastery: Talks with Master Violinists and Teachers*, Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, 1919.

³⁷ *World of Strings*, William Moennig & Son, Spring 1958, p. 2, *Star gazing*. Did Elman sell the violin in 1923 to Emil Herrmann? – see Sotheby's 1970 auction brochure (p. 11 of this account).

Sotheby's auction house, London, Thursday 22 October 1970; page 28 of the auction-brochure:

The Property of Mr. Sam Bloomfield

[Lot] 96 AN IMPORTANT VIOLIN by *Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, dated 1722 (ex Joachim, Elman)* bearing its original label *Antonius Stradivarius Cremonensis Faciebat Anno 1722* (the date has faded),³⁸ the back in two pieces of faint broad figure sloping downwards from the joint [...].

Sold with a certificate from the Rudolph Wurlitzer Co., New York, signed by J. C. Freeman and dated December 10th 1941 [...]. Also certificate from William Lewes [*sic*] & Son, Chicago dated October 20th 1962; a letter from Emil Herrman [*sic*], New York dated November 21st 1925 stating the history of the violin³⁹ [...] two letters from the firm of August Reichers [*sic*], Berlin one dated March 15th 1893, the other undated[?] (both translations) [...].

Separate from the above are the original documents from the firm of August Reichers [*sic*] mentioned above, also a letter from Joseph Joachim dated April 10th 1893 and various other documents.

This is the instrument⁴⁰ which David Laurie sold to Joseph Joachim on March 10th 1880 for the sum of £500, the date of which he states to be 1722 (Laurie). Joachim, in turn, sold it to Professor Leonard Wolff[!], then through Emil Hermann [*sic*] the instrument passed to Willy Burmester and then to Mischa Elman in whose possession it remained until recent times. [...].

The *Elman, Bloomfield* violin is now owned by the Chi-Mei Foundation in Taiwan. The violin's provenance cannot be supported with documentary evidence prior to 1878 (when Joseph Joachim sold the violin to David Hausmann).

Summary

1722 *Laurie* violin, with narrow rising flames and a chipped C-bout edge:

Lamoureux (1870) – Accursi (187?) – Laurie (1874) – Joachim (1880) – Mendelssohn (1887) – Calame – present owner (anonymous).

1722 *Elman* violin, with faint, wide, descending flames:

(Joachim) – Hausmann (1878) – Wolff (1893) – A. Herrmann (1906) – Burmester – Elman (1907) – Bloomfield (1953) – Merryman – Rogoff – Suk – Chi-Mei Foundation.

Nicholas Sackman: Associate Professor, Department of Music, University of Nottingham (retired).

Author of *The Messiah violin: a reliable history?* (2015); see www.themessiahviolin.uk 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 (website).

Author of a detailed historical study of the two Guarneri *del Gesù* violins which belonged to John Tiplady Carrodus (website). Author of an extensive and detailed investigation into the reality of the 1724 Stradivari violin which Count Cozio di Salabue sold in 1817 to Niccolò Paganini (website). Author of an historical study of the Stradivari *Chant du Cygne* violin (Journal of the Galpin Society, March 2017).

Author of a transcription and translation of the complete sales-ledger archive of Jacques Francais (Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC); see website. Author of a detailed historical examination of the Stradivari quartet of decorated instruments exhibited at the Palacio Real in Madrid, Spain; see website. Author of *The case of the missing mould* ('The Strad', June 2018). Author of a detailed examination of issues which surround both the *Cannone* violin in Genoa and the *Canon* violin sold by David Laurie (website).

³⁸ It is unclear whether Sotheby's was indicating that the ink used to write the date had faded but the numerals were still readable, or that the ink had faded to the point where the numerals were now unreadable; cf. Doring's 'seems to be ...'

³⁹ Strangely, Doring does not mention this letter in his article.

⁴⁰ Note the certainty: 'this is the instrument ...'