

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

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2019

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 half 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.

This 1735 violin has no association with Joseph Joachim, David Laurie, or Mischa Elman.

Lower half 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

1886 M^r Joachim.

} Gand's red ink annotations

[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.

This 1722 violin is now known as the *Laurie*; it has no association with Mischa Elman.

Upper half 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

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.

This 1717 violin is now known as ‘The Nightingale’; it has no association with Joseph Joachim or with Mischa Elman.

Lower half 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

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 sound-post 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).

This is the 1722 *Rode* decorated violin; it has no association with Joseph Joachim, David Laurie, or Mischa Elman.

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.

The GBC&F archive also contains three further *Signalement* ledgers, in which are listed all the stock-numbers together with descriptive and financial information for each number/instrument; regrettably, these three ledgers are not available online for inspection.

The 1722 Laurie violin

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 1866-1876,¹ although it contains entries for *Monsieur 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 in his red-ink annotation). From Gand's chronological information it appears that Accursi owned the 1722 violin for only a short time before placing it with Gand & Bernardel for sale. According to the General Ledger for 1866-1876 on 1 May 1874 G&B sold to David Laurie *Un violon Stradivarius, N° 1113, 5,500 francs*; the year-date and the sale-price match the information provided by Gand in **G18L** for the 1722 Stradivari violin: *1874 M^L Laurie, 5,500*. During the latter part of the nineteenth century 5,500 French Francs was equivalent to £220.

Clear photographic evidence for 'wear-marks made by the bow' can be found in Jost Thöne's publication *Antonius Stradiarius* (Vol. VIII, p.16, the *Laurie* violin) which 'bears an original Stradivari label dated 1722';² 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 is certainly the *Lamoureux/Accursi/G&B/Laurie* violin of 1722.

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 Joachim³*

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 unlikely that Laurie would have told Gand & Bernardel about the hugely inflated price (£500) at which he had sold 'their' 1722 violin; hence, perhaps, the absence of a price in Gand's final red-ink

¹ E.981.8.14

² To clarify: within Jost Thöne's *Antonius Stradiarius* publication the *Laurie* violin, with rising flames and a chipped edge, is photographed in Vol. IV, pp. 12-19, but is incorrectly identified as the *c.1722 Joachim, Elman, Bloomfield* violin. The Vol. IV photographs reappear in Vol. VIII, pp. 12-19, where the violin is identified as the *c.1722 Laurie*. The *1722 Joachim, Elman, Bloomfield* violin, with widely-spaced and rather faint descending flames, is photographed in Vol. VIII, pp. 28-35. The three historical commentaries offer contrasting narratives.

³ *Reminiscences*, p. [172].

annotation (which is likely dated 1886 simply because it was only in that year that Gand learned of Joachim's ownership of the violin). The Directory for 1881-1887⁴ 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 purchases were of violin strings and hanks of bow-hair (total cost 50 francs and 60 centimes).⁵ Perhaps it was when Joachim was making his January 1886 purchases that he told G&B about his 1722 *Lamoureux/Accursi/G&B/Laurie* violin.

Ruprecht Kamlah⁶ states that it was Heinrich Joachim (Joseph's older brother; c.1824-1897) 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.*⁷

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!*⁸

Two weeks later Joseph Joachim sold the *Laurie* 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 [...].*⁹

Summary: On 10 March 1880 David Laurie sold to Joseph Joachim, through Heinrich 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**).

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.¹⁰ Since the 1722 *Lamoureux/Accursi/G&B/Laurie/Joachim* violin apparently

⁴ E.981.8.39

⁵ E.981.8.4

⁶ *Joseph Joachims Geigen*, Palm und Enke, Erlangen, Germany, 2018; see pp. 69 and 91.

⁷ *Leider aber muß ich daran denken die Laurie-Strad, von dir, zu verkaufen*. Joachim's letter is archived at the Brahms Institut, Lübeck. When buying the 1722 violin Heinrich must have told David Laurie the name of the intended recipient. Heinrich, a wealthy merchant, lived in London at Phillimore Gardens, Kensington, and then at Airlie Gardens.

⁸ *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!*

⁹ *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.*

¹⁰ 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 Francais 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.

remained for many years post-1887 within the Mendelssohn family this lack of updated knowledge is understandable.

Ruprecht Kamlah¹¹ states that from the Mendelssohn family the 1722 *Laurie* 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:

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 evidence¹² a 'dark red varnish' is *slightly* more noticeable on the 1722 *Joachim/Hausmann/Wolff/A.Herrmann/Burmester/Elman* violin (see overleaf) than on the 1722 *Lamoureux/Accursi/G&B/Laurie/Joachim/Mendelssohn* violin on which Gand identified a 'light golden-red' colour of varnish (see **G18L**). The precise identity of Ballard's 1722 violin is uncertain.

Jost Thöne's historian¹³ 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 catalogue¹⁴ 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, p.4).

Jost 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,

¹¹ *Joseph Joachim's Geigen*, p. 93.

¹² Thöne, Vol. VIII, pp. 12-19 and 28-35.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁴ 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.

as already shown, the gift was from Heinrich Joachim, Joseph's older brother. Franz von Mendelssohn (b.1829) – who bought Joachim's 'Laurie' violin for £700 (see earlier, p.4) – was the father of Franz von Mendelssohn (b.1865).

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 Aurny Quartet. The violin's provenance excludes any connection with Mischa Elman.

The 1722 *Elman* violin

Ernest Doring creates confusion with the mis-information which he published in 1945:¹⁵

1721 The MISCHA ELMAN, ex Joachim.*¹⁶ *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 sold it to the great violinist for £500. Joachim sold it to Professor Leonhard Wolff. Then, through Emil Herrmann,*¹⁷ *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.*¹⁸

The names of Leonhard Wolff (1846-1934), [August Friedrich] Herrmann, Willy Burmester (1869-1933), and Mischa Elman (1891-1967) reappear on the Tarisio.com/Cozio Archive webpage¹⁹ 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 rather faint back-plate flames which descend from the centre-joint. The violin's owners are listed (as at August 2020) as:

Joachim / D. Hausmann / Wolff / Emil Herrmann / Burmester / Elman /
Bloomfield / Merryman / Rogoff / Josef Suk II / Chi-Mei Foundation.

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',²⁰ 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".

¹⁵ *How many Strads?*, p. 236.

¹⁶ Doring's asterisk indicates his personal inspection of the violin.

¹⁷ 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).

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Accessed February 2019.

²⁰ Vol. 15, no.2, March-April 1954, pp. 60-61.

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', and continues:

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.

As shown earlier, Doring's supposition is erroneous; the 1722 Laurie violin, with narrow rising flames and a chipped edge, has no connection with Mischa Elman.

Doring 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 Mathilde Riechers.²¹

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.²² The following 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) quotes part of Hausmann's German-language text (present writer'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'.

²¹ The present author has not been able to inspect the original German-language document.

²² 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.

Doring reports (and translates?) a third document, this being written by Joseph 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 Stradivarius, and to comply with Professor Wolff's wishes,²³ I take pleasure in herewith certifying this fact.

(signed)

Joseph Joachim

Jost Thöne's historian (Vol. VIII, p. 28) quotes part of Joachim's German-language text (present writer'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 –

- 1) an identification of the source from whom he obtained the violin,
- 2) nor the date when he obtained it,
- 3) neither does he confirm his sale of the violin to David Hausmann in 1878,
- 4) Joachim does not even confirm the violin's label-date,
- 5) 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' – who sold it to Willy Burmester, and Burmester sold it to Mischa Elman's father in 1907.

Summary: The 1722 Stradivari violin with faint descending flames which David Hausmann bought from Joseph Joachim in 1878 and owned until 1893 (i.e. the subsequent *Elman* violin) cannot be the 1722 violin with ascending flames which Joachim bought from David Laurie in March 1880 (i.e. the *Laurie* 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.²⁴

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

²³ 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.

²⁴ Frederick H. Martens, *Violin Mastery: Talks with Master Violinists and Teachers*, Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, 1919.

*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 [46] years.*²⁵

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),²⁶ 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 violin²⁷ [...] 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 instrument²⁸ 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 [*sic*], 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 Bloomfield* 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.

²⁵ *World of Strings*, William Moennig & Son, Spring 1958, p. 2, *Star gazing*. According to Allan Kozinn (*Mischa Elman and the Romantic Style*, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1990, p. 344) '[Elman] retained the 1722 Stradivarius until the mid-1950s, when he sold it to a collector in the midwestern United States.' The collector was surely Sam Bloomfield; see above.

²⁶ 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 ...' (p.6).

²⁷ Strangely, Ernest Doring does not mention this letter in his article.

²⁸ Note the (erroneous) certainty: 'this is the instrument ...