

Lost: one very large Stradivari violin, dated 1684

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On 19th June 1816 Count Cozio di Salabue wrote out the following description and measurements of a violin which belonged to his friend and agent, Carlo Carli, whose banking house was based in Milan. The Count's document is archived at the Biblioteca Statale di Cremona, Libreria Civica, ms. Cozio 47, folios 53r-55r:

*1816. 19 giugno Milano
più grande del P.G.*

Violino del Caval. Carlo Carli dell'Antonio Stradivari dell'anno 1684 forma grandissima finora incognita, vernice ora affatto gialla ed era con poco rosso siccome quasi tutta perduta, con due rotture nel fondo e molto nel coperchio che è di vena troppo fina, e disuguale senza nervo e [...?] è stato agiustate a Pariggi non bene per cui ha poca voce nella 4^a e non buona sulle altre corde che li deve costare zecchini 35. con molta curva nel fondo e coperchio, fondo giunto, vena bella, disuguale, e lo stesso nelle fascie, e manico.

1816, 19th June, Milan

Larger than *P.G.* [i.e. this violin is larger than those which are built around the *P.G.* mould]

Violin belonging to the nobleman Carlo Carli, of Antonio Stradivari, of the year 1684, [built around an] enormous mould thus far unknown [i.e. yet to be found and identified]. The varnish now is entirely yellow; previously there was also a little red but it has been almost entirely worn away. With two splits in the back plate and many splits in the front plate which has ring-widths which are extremely narrow, and irregular which are without veins [?irregularly-shaped areas where the growth-rings are not visible]. [The cracks] have been badly repaired in Paris and [as a result] the violin has only a little voice on the 4th string [G-string] and the voice on the other strings is not good. [Carli] paid 35 *zecchini* for it.

With pronounced arching on the back and front plates; the back plate is jointed; beautiful flames, the same on the ribs and the neck.

Misure col compasso al piede del Re d'parigino e compresi li profili

Measurements with dividers using the Parisian Foot of the King, and including the profiles [purfling]

Longhezza dal ponticello al bordo superiore polici sette e mezzo ponto pol. 7. - 3/6

The length from the bridge to the upper border [i.e. to the outer line of the purfling],

7 *polici* and ½ of one *ponto* = **190.6mm**

Spessore del ponticello ponti due pol. - 2. -

Thickness of the bridge [measured at the foot], 2 *ponti* = **4.5mm**

Longhezza inferiore polici sette ponti sette e 1/2 cinque ponti dieci e mezzo pol. 5. 10. 3/6

Length [from the bridge to the lower border], 5 *polici*, 10½ *ponti* = **159.1mm**

Li due bordi ponti tre e mezzo pol. - 3. 3/6

[Width] of the two plate-borders [outside of the purfling], 3½ *ponti* = **7.9mm**

Totale longhezza Corpo pol. 13. 4. 3/6

Total length of the body, 13 *polici*, 4½ *ponti* = **362.1mm**

N.B. questa Longhezza è eguale alli miei due P.G.

This length is the same as is found on my two *P.G.*-mould violins

[Count Cozio's two *P.G.*-mould violins, dated 1716 and 1724, had body-lengths of **361mm**.]

Folio 53v

Larghezza maggiore nella parte superiore polici sei ponti ~~due~~ uno e due terzi pol. 6. 1. $\frac{2}{3}$

Maximum width across the upper bout, 6 *polici*, $1\frac{2}{3}$ *ponti* [+ 7.9mm plate-borders width] = **174.1mm**

[the equivalent measurements on the two *P.G.*-mould violins are **169.9** (1716) and **170.7mm** (1724)]

[*Larghezza*] *Minore nei CC polici tre, ponti dieci, e due terzi* pol. 3. 10. $\frac{4}{6}$

Minimum width across the C-bout, 3 *polici*, $10\frac{2}{3}$ *ponti* [+ 7.9mm plate borders] = **113.2mm**

[the equivalent measurements on the two *P.G.* violins are **110.2** and **110.3mm**]

Larghezza maggiore nella parte inferiore polici sette, ponti sette, e mezzo pol. 7. 7. $\frac{3}{6}$

Maximum width across the lower bout, 7 *polici*, $7\frac{1}{2}$ *ponti* [+ 7.9mm plate borders] = **214.3mm**

[the equivalent measurements on the two *P.G.* violins are **210.5** and **210.6mm**]

[side margin rotated text] *più larghezza della forma P.G. in[...?] fol. 15*

wider than the *P.G.* type [...?] folio 15

[Folio 15 of ms. 47 contains Cozio's text for his *P.G.*-mould Stradivari violin of 1724 which he sold to Paganini in 1817.]

Larghezza nelli CC prese nelle ponte delle fascie polici tre ponti due pol. 3. 2. –

Width in the C-bout, the measurement taken between the corners of the ribs, 3 *polici*, 2 *ponti* = **85.7mm**

[side margin] *Egual a P.G.*

Equal [in width] to the *P.G.* violin

[ms. Cozio 47, folio 14r: equivalent measurement for the 1716 *P.G.* violin; 3 *polici*, $1\frac{1}{2}$ *ponti* = **84.6mm**]

Fascie Ribs

Altezza dell'inferiore polici uno, ponti uno ponti due ed un terzo [corrected text] pol. 1. 2. $\frac{2}{6}$

Height of the rib at the lower, tailpiece, end, 1 *police*, $2\frac{1}{3}$ *ponti* = **32.3mm**

La superiore [superiore] police uno, ponti uno pol. 1. 1. –

Height of the rib at the upper, neck, end, 1 *police*, 1 *ponto* = **29.3mm**

[side margin] *Egual a P.G.*

Equal to the *P.G.*

[1716 *P.G.* violin: *inferiore* 1 *police*, 2 *ponti* = **31.6mm**; *superiore* 1 *police* 1 *ponto* = **29.3mm**]

Per le ff Measurements relating to the *f*-holes

[side margin] *petto* chest

La distanza fra le due ff nel mezzo polici due ponti sette, e mezzo pol. 2. 7. $\frac{3}{6}$

The distance between the two *f*-holes, in the middle, 2 *polici*, $7\frac{1}{2}$ *ponti* = **71.1mm**

[side margin] *meno del P.G.*

less than the *P.G.*

[1716 *P.G.* violin: 2 *polici*, $10\frac{1}{2}$ *ponti* = **77.9mm**]

Distanza fra li due occhietti superiori polici uno ponti cinque e un terzo pol. 1. 5. $\frac{2}{6}$

Distance between the two upper eyes of the *f*-holes, 1 *police*, $5\frac{1}{3}$ *ponti* = **39.1mm**

[side margin] *minore del P.G.*

less than the *P.G.*

[1716 *P.G.* violin: 1 *police*, 7 *ponti* = **42.9mm**]

Distanza fra le due parte inferiori delle ff polici tre, ponti undeci pol. 3. 11. –

Distance between the two lower eyes of the *f*-holes, 3 *polici*, 11 *ponti* = **106.1mm**

[side margin] *minore del P.G.*
 less than the *P.G.*
 [1716 *P.G.* violin: 4 *police*, $3\frac{1}{3}$ *ponti* = **115.8mm**]

Folio 54r

Le ff sono bellissimo, un poco escavate, e ben più larghe in mezzo
 The *f*-holes are very beautiful, slightly hollowed, and much wider in the middle

[side margin] *pochissimo più lunghe della P.G.*
 [The *f*-holes] are very slightly longer than on the *P.G.* violins

La [?] lunghezza prese nelle ponte (al solito) polici due, ponti otto pol. 2. 8. –
 The [?] length taken between the corners (in the usual manner), 2 *polici*, 8 *ponti* = **72.2mm**
 [i.e. the length between the inside corner of the *f*-hole wing at the bottom and the outside corner of the wing at the top;
 1716 *P.G.* violin: 2 *polici* $7\frac{1}{2}$ *ponti* = **71.1mm**]

La minore polici due, ponti sei, ed un z^o [terzo] pol. 2. 6. $\frac{2}{6}$
 The smaller length [between the corners], 2 *polici*, $6\frac{1}{3}$ *ponti* = **68.4mm**
 [i.e. the length between the outside wing-corner at the bottom and the inside wing-corner at the top;
 1716 *P.G.* violin: 2 *polici* $6\frac{1}{3}$ *ponti* = **68.4mm**]

Le curve di questo instrò sono più ristrette de miei forma P.G. e più elevate e longhe massime nel coperchio, che gonfia superiormente ed inferiormente sebbene che esso coperchio apparischa grosso nelli occhietti superiori, e che sia stato fatto a tre misure.

La catena fattali a Parigi sotigliata poscia da Carlo Mantegazza non da suono.

La curva del fondo è più tosto all'Amati cioè ristretta. Il riccio è più tosto grosso ed'un poco mancante nel giro davanti, e l'ultimo giro poco più risvoltato del suo solito.

The arching of this instrument is narrower than on my *P.G.*-mould violins; more elevated, and longer, especially on the front plate which bulges in the upper and lower parts although [the wood of] this front plate [also?] appears to be thick at the upper eyes of the *f*-holes and made out of three pieces.

The bass bar was made in Paris; subsequently thinned by Carlo Mantegazza; not sounding[?].

The arching of the back plate is rather Amati-like, i.e. narrow. The scroll is rather fat and slightly flattened[?] on the first turn, and, on the last turn, the carved channel turns upwards slightly more than he [Amati or Stradivari?] usually does.

Folio 54v

L'asta del manico è stata ben cambiata, pero si vede a metà cassa sino quasi al buco del cantino dalla parte della quarta, essa ora è longa delle fascia al capotasto polici cinque, e mezzo ponto pol. 5 0. $\frac{3}{6}$
E corrisponde alla conchiglia del riccio, che, si è la maggior misura di Parigi.

The shaft of the neck has been skilfully changed but it [the new shaft?] can be seen, in the middle of the peg-box, almost as far as the hole for the 'singing string' [the E string] from the part of the fourth [the G string]; this, now, is the length from the [soundbox] rib up to the nut: 5 *polici* and $\frac{1}{2}$ *ponto* = **136.5mm**
 And it [the length?] matches the spiral of the scroll which is of the largest Parisian type.

[Count Cozio's text resists a completely convincing translation; cf. the translation of this passage as found in Brandon Frazier's *Memoirs of a Violin Collector* (Baltimore, 2007), p.251: 'The bar's neck was replaced, and it is visible from the middle of the body to the hole of the treble on the bass side. The actual length from the side to the nut is 5 *polici* and $\frac{1}{2}$ of a *ponti*. [This length] corresponds to the volute of the scroll, which is the largest Parisian model.']

La totale lunghezza della tratta cioè dalla metà del ponticello a contro il capotasto è di un piede, e ponti due, e mezzo pied 1. 0. 2.³/₆

The total length [of the freely-vibrating string] – from the middle of the bridge [at the top] to the front edge of the nut – is 1 *piede* 2½ *ponti* = **330.4mm**

N.B Il miei due violini d'Ant^o Stradivari forma P.G. sono di tratta (presi come sopra) un piede, e ponti quattro, pdi. 1. 0. 4. –

My two Antonio Stradivari violins, built around the *P.G.* mould, have the equivalent measurement (taken as described above) of 1 *piede* [nought *policci*] 4 *ponti* = **333.9mm**

[The freely-vibrating string length on the 1716 *P.G.*-mould violin was previously specified by Count Cozio as 12 *policci* 2½ *ponti* = 330.5mm; it seems that the Count has mis-remembered his own information; see ms. Cozio 47, folio 13v.]

Ancorchè il manico di quello del 1716 sia più corto, e quello del 1724 meno del suddetto Carli come si vede ove sono descritti, ma la diversità viene che le ff di questo sono più basse di quelli onde Stradivari non riteneva per esse regola fissa.

Although the neck of the 1716 violin is shorter, and that of the 1724 is less than the aforementioned Carli [violin] – as can be seen from the descriptions – but the difference is that the *f*-holes of this violin [the Carli violin?] are lower than on the others because Stradivari did not follow a strict rule with respect to their location.

[Count Cozio's text is somewhat convoluted.]

Folio 55r

La profilatura di questo violino è assai più sottile de solito di d'autore ed il nero sottilissimo, ma ben fatta col risvolto de profili nei CC come il Nicola Amati.

Ha le due pontine piccole nel fondo per fermarlo nelle topette subito dopo li profili.

The profile [purfling] of this violin is much thinner than usual for this maker and the black [parts] are extremely thin, but it is well made, with the 'turn-up' of the purfling in the C-bout [corners?] imitating the style of Nicolo Amati.

The two small pins in the back plate, for securing the plate to the blocks, are positioned directly next to the [inside] line of the purfling.

Il covino è poco più di mezzo circolo.

Si alza il manico sopra al bordo del coperchio di un ponto ed un terzo ponti θ . 1. ²/₆

Li bordi sono più tosto rotondi e poco elevati.

The back-plate button is slightly more than a half circle.

The distance by which the neck is raised above the front plate is 1 *ponto* and ¹/₃ of one *ponto* = **3mm**

The plate-borders are rather rounded and slightly raised.

Count Cozio's index to the many instruments which feature within the 150 folios of ms. Cozio 47 includes:

Violino del sud^o [sudetto] forma straord^o [straordinario] Ant^o Stradivari 1684, fol. 53

The word *sudetto* – 'the aforementioned' – refers to the owner of the violin which is described in the immediately preceding text (which begins on folio 50r); that violin is a 1724 Stradivari instrument and the Count writes that the owner is Carlo Carli.

For full details of the measurements made by Count Cozio on his 1716 *P.G.* Stradivari violin see the present writer's article 'Count Cozio's measurements of his 1716 Stradivari violin' (free-to-read at www.themessiahviolin.uk). For details of the 1724 *P.G.* 'Paganini' violin see *Fortissimo di voce, e quasi tenore* (ibid.).