

## Chapter 4

### Correspondence, tools, and more violins

Count Cozio, having acquired from the Stradivari workshop what he believed were all the remaining instruments, then turned his attention to the purchase of all the tools and equipment. Again, the Count used Giovanni Michele Anselmi as his intermediary (but not, apparently, Guadagnini) while Paolo Stradivari, and then Antonio (II), used a firm based in Turin<sup>1</sup> – Domenico Dupuy & Sons – as their banker. The protracted and tortuous correspondence which resulted from this hands-off approach could have been entirely avoided if Count Cozio had personally visited Cremona, but such a visit apparently did not take place until March 1776.<sup>2</sup>

The documents preserved at the Biblioteca Statale di Cremona reveal that the letters sent to Paolo Stradivari between May and December 1775 were drafted by Count Cozio within a large, stitched, notebook (BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90). The letters are marked *sbozzo* ('draft', 'rough sketch') and at the end of each letter Count Cozio indicates the name of the person (G M Anselmi) to whom the 'fair copy', written out by the Count's secretary, was to be sent. The strong likelihood is that, on receipt of the fair copy, G M Anselmi signed the letter and then sent it onwards to Paolo in Cremona;<sup>3</sup> Paolo's letters of reply (BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 89) were sent to Anselmi before being forwarded to Count Cozio. Anselmi, although acting on behalf of Count Cozio (who, in a letter of 30<sup>th</sup> August 1775, is described by Anselmi as *mio padrone* ('my master')) also seems to have been active as an instrument-dealer in his own right: a letter sent by Anselmi to Pietro Mantegazza on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1776 ends with the following postscript admonition: 'Do not put "violin dealer" on the address – I also look after other business.' It is unclear why Anselmi should apparently want to draw a veil over his involvement in the string-instrument trade across northern Italy (unless it was that he did not wish Count Cozio to be aware of his personal activities).

The earliest extant letter which relates to the purchase by Count Cozio of the Stradivari workshop equipment is dated 4<sup>th</sup> May 1775 and is addressed by Paolo to G M Anselmi. Paolo writes:

Your two [letters]<sup>4</sup> were much appreciated. With respect to your first, I said to you that all the moulds, measurements, utensils and metal tools [*utensigli e ferri*] that I find that I possess I would have no difficulty in offering, provided that they do not remain in Cremona [*purche non siano in Cremona*] and you will remember that I showed [you] all the metal tools [in my possession], and also the box of measurements, and so all that I own I offer, and because I want to please you, I offer everything for eight *gigliati*.<sup>5</sup>

Commentators have puzzled over the comment 'provided that they do not remain in Cremona', a comment which perhaps suggests that Paolo, like Omobono, had a difficult and problematic relationship with his father. More positively, perhaps Paolo, recognising his father's extraordinary

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<sup>1</sup> One hundred miles to the west of Cremona.

<sup>2</sup> See later in this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> These letters, as received by Paolo, have not survived.

<sup>4</sup> Apparently both of these letters are lost.

<sup>5</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 89/3; see also Hart pp. 207-208, Sacchi p. 42, Cozio/Bacchetta p. 345, and Santoro (1993) p. 60. The Hills (Hill (1902) p. 249, footnote) state that the *gigliato* coin was the same as the Florentine *zecchino*. George Hart (Hart (1884) p. 347, footnote) comments: 'A *gigliat[o]* was a Tuscan gold coin bearing the arms of Florence, the value of which was 9s 6½d [nine shillings and sixpence half-penny]. Its present purchasing power would probably be three times as much [...].' The Hills (Hill (1902) pp. 248-249) echo Hart: 'A *gigliato* was a Tuscan gold coin of the value of 9s 5d of our money, and assuming that its purchasing power was three times that of today [...].'

excellence of craftsmanship, did not want lesser violin makers within Cremona to obtain the tools which, in some cases, Antonio had made for his own use (although an exception was evidently made in the case of Bergonzi family (see below)).

In the same letter Paolo reports to Anselmi that the Cremona workshop is empty of instruments:

It happened that a few days ago a German gentleman wanted two Stradivari violins and, hearing that I didn't have any left, was most upset and, for this reason, I gave your name. He made a note of your name, your family name, and your location, but said nothing else, and I told him that you were well supplied with instruments by various makers, but of those by Stradivari you had many.<sup>6</sup>

In response to Paolo's aforementioned letter of 4<sup>th</sup> May 1775 one of Anselmi's colleagues replied on 15<sup>th</sup> May, acknowledging Paolo's willingness to sell four of his father's violin moulds as well as three cello moulds and an unspecified number of viola moulds, together with all of Antonio's metal tools and templates (some of which had been loaned by Paolo, decades earlier, to the Bergonzis) for the sum of eight *gigliati*; Anselmi's colleague offers Paolo just five. On 4<sup>th</sup> June Paolo writes to Anselmi regarding the latter's 'offer of five *gigliati* for all the forms and models that I have, and those lent to the Bergonzis, and the tools of the profession of my father, but it [the offer] is too little.'<sup>7</sup> Paolo requests one extra *gigliato* to cover the transport costs, concluding his letter with:

There was in Cremona an Englishman, a person of rank, who wanted two violins by Stradivari. I didn't have the courage to ask his first name and family name, but I indicated to him your name and told him how you were an enthusiast for instruments by all the best, most renowned, makers, giving your name, surname, and location (Casale), and he asked whether you might have any instruments by Stradivari and I said that you had many which only very recently I sold to you.<sup>8</sup>

It is curious that one month earlier a German visitor wanted to buy two Stradivari violins, and now an English visitor also wants to buy two violins, but in neither case does Paolo obtain a name.

On 10<sup>th</sup> July 1775 Paolo writes again to Anselmi: 'I say to you that I did not believe to have so many items as I have found; nonetheless, my previous promise must not be repeated [*ripettere*].'<sup>9</sup> Paolo's sense of obligation to the original contract – not requiring a re-negotiation despite having apparently discovered far more artefacts than he realised existed – is noteworthy.

In his reply of 30<sup>th</sup> July 1775<sup>10</sup> Anselmi (Count Cozio) unexpectedly introduces a wholly new concern:

There are many people, who know little about instruments, who are asserting that the violins of your late father are not authentic [*veri legittimi*], since they appear entirely new. Therefore, please make an attestation, written on official [stamped] paper as used in your area, with your signature, name, and with your testimony in the following form:

"I, the undersigned [Paolo Stradivari], affirm that there still exist, of my late father, Antonio Stradivari, some of his genuine violins, in good condition and undamaged, still to be set up,<sup>11</sup> but

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<sup>6</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 89/3; see also Cozio/Bacchetta pp. 345-346 and Santoro (1993) p. 60. Paolo's statement appears to confirm Count Cozio's 1775 assessment of the situation: '[Paolo] no longer has any instruments' (see Chapter 3).

<sup>7</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 89/4; see also Hart p. 208, Cozio/Bacchetta p. 351, and Santoro (1993), p. 66.

<sup>8</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 89/4; see also Sacchi p. 42, Cozio/Bacchetta p. 352, and Santoro (1993) p. 66.

<sup>9</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 89/6; see also Hart p. 209, Sacchi p. 43, Cozio/Bacchetta p. 356, and Santoro (1993) p. 72.

<sup>10</sup> An annotation indicates that this letter was not sent until 3<sup>rd</sup> August.

<sup>11</sup> Since Stradivari designed and made pegs, bridges, and tailpieces (see Hill (1902) pp. 204-206) and therefore would surely have fitted these items to a new instrument (together with a sound-post and a set of strings) it would seem that 'not set up' referred to the need, at the point of sale, for final adjustments to the position of the bridge and the sound-post to optimise the instrument's tone and its responsiveness to the playing style of the purchaser.

never played, with red varnish and others of a lighter colour. I have released all of them, I have none left, and [they] were sold to Signor G M di A Briatta, an excellent dealer in instruments. In proof of this attestation I have signed.”<sup>12</sup>

It is more than likely that the ‘many people, who know little about instruments’ never existed; what was being sought, by Count Cozio, was an all-purpose certificate, written and signed by a son of Antonio Stradivari, which would enhance and facilitate the sale of the instruments owned by the Count.

Unfortunately, Count Cozio’s concerns about the authenticity of the instruments obtained from Paolo were not without foundation. In 1772 Paolo sold to Francesco Brambilla – the brother of a priest at the Royal Court in Madrid – a set of two violins, two violas, and one cello (the inlaid ‘Spanish Quintet’) which had been made by Antonio around the turn of the century. Spanish suspicions about the authenticity of these instruments resulted in Paolo being required to certify, in a *charta declarationis*, that he was only selling instruments made by Antonio or by Francesco.<sup>13</sup> It is possible that Count Cozio, in 1775, was aware of what had occurred in 1772, and his forceful request (through Anselmi) for Paolo to sign a new certificate may have been influenced by this earlier event.

On 20<sup>th</sup> August 1775 Paolo replied to Anselmi:

I am trying, as I lie in bed, to reply to your [letter] of the 3<sup>rd</sup> [August] and I tell you that the violins left to me by my late father Antonio and my brother Francesco were 91, with two cellos, and [some] violas, and also the concerto [quintet] sold to the Court of Spain. All – all<sup>14</sup> – were as new, and anybody who might want to criticise by saying that the instruments must already have been used and played, I say that they are simply out of their minds. For if they had already been used and played I could not [and would not] have claimed that I had inherited them from my father and brother – but rather that I had bought them for selling. This is something that I could not have done since I have no expertise as a violin dealer. I cannot write the certified attestation you have asked for since we do not use such documents.<sup>15</sup>

Given the exasperated tone (and somewhat confused content) of this letter, it should be noted that Paolo, by this point, was a very sick man. In a slightly earlier letter, of 17<sup>th</sup> July 1775, to Guadagnini, Paolo writes: ‘I reply, lying in bed feeling very ill, [...]’; Paolo ends his letter with: ‘Nothing else [to say]; I am feeling very weak and tired.’<sup>16</sup>

One further layer of information, but one which perhaps brings some credit to Paolo, is provided by a document written by Count Cozio during 1775. In the early part of the eighteenth century the Marchese Vincenzo Carbonelli (1664-1740), of Mantua, had amassed an extensive collection of string instruments, including ten violins by Antonio Stradivari.<sup>17</sup> After Carbonelli’s death (brought about by being bitten by one of his horses) the collection was inherited by his nephew Il Conte Pomponio Spelimbergo (d. 1753) who had an inventory of the string instruments drawn up on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1740. Count Cozio’s 1775 document, in part, states:

*Il Signor Conte de Spelimberch* still had all the instruments, of which Stradivari<sup>18</sup> wanted to buy back the violins sold by his father, but because he [Spelimbergo?] wanted more than they had cost

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<sup>12</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 359 and Santoro (1993) p. 75.

<sup>13</sup> For an exhaustive study of the history of the *Spanish Quintet* see N. Sackman, *The Spanish Puzzle* (readable at [www.themessiahviolin.uk](http://www.themessiahviolin.uk)). See also Chiesa & Rosengard p. 45, and Santoro (1973) pp. 23-30.

<sup>14</sup> *Tutti, tutti ...*

<sup>15</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 89/10; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 362 and Santoro (1993) pp. 77-78. Nonetheless, Paolo had signed the *charta declarationis* required by the Spanish Royal Court.

<sup>16</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 89/7; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 358 and Santoro (1993) p. 74.

<sup>17</sup> For details see Chiesa and Rosengard pp. 57-63.

<sup>18</sup> Assumed to be Paolo.

him, Stradivari gave up on them, and then *il sig. Conte de' Spilimbergh* died, and it is assumed that the legacy passed to the *Casa Palazza*, but it is not known what became of the aforementioned instruments, meanwhile 25 or 30 years have passed.<sup>19</sup>

Paolo would surely not have made a 'buy back' approach to Count Spelimbergo while his two elder brothers, Francesco and Omobono, were still alive (especially in light of Francesco's status as head of the post-Antonio household) and therefore Paolo's attempt to re-purchase his father's violins must date from between 1743 (after Francesco's death) and 1753 (when Count Spelimbergo died). Such an attempt perhaps suggests that Paolo was sensitive enough to the importance of his father's legacy to try and prevent the scattering of the instruments to the four winds.<sup>20</sup> The label-dates of the ten Stradivari violins owned by Count Spelimbergo were 1702, 1714, 1715, 1722 (three violins),<sup>21</sup> 1723, 1726, and 1727 (two violins).<sup>22</sup>

In November 1775 (not knowing that Paolo had already died) Anselmi writes:<sup>23</sup>

I am still waiting for the box with your father's utensils, and would have thought that by now it would have reached Turin as many boats have arrived here recently. If it is not too late, send it directly to Casale, with my address, preceded by a letter.

I have received your certificate<sup>24</sup> for the violins of your father but not [worded] exactly as I requested it should be. You have discredited them [Antonio's instruments] by including the name of your brother who was not of the same renown as your father, and, moreover, there were in any case only two of them [two Francesco violins] which I immediately sold because they were not of the same quality as the others. So I ask you please to make me a new [certificate], without naming your brother, Francesco, because [if you do mention him] they [the violins] will all instantly be discredited – do not even mention him – because it is certain that you will have requests from people [i.e. customers, asking] whether the violins that you sold me were [truly] made by Antonio Stradivari, and it will be necessary to assure these people that they were, [especially since] there are none left by your brother.<sup>25</sup>

On 21<sup>st</sup> November 1775 Paolo's son, Antonio (II), writes to Anselmi with the news that Paolo had died five weeks earlier, on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1775.<sup>26</sup> Antonio (II) states, in a slightly mocking tone of voice, that the box with the workshop items (which, evidently, had still not left Cremona) would be sent in due course:

With the ferryman,<sup>27</sup> Gobbi, will be sent the 'well-known' box, with the 'well-known' instrument moulds and tools of the deceased Signor Antonio, my grandfather, the box closed and packed before my Father [Paolo] took to his bed; [the contents] will be found well protected, with [my]

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<sup>19</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 27/1; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 175.

<sup>20</sup> Or perhaps Paolo thought that he could retrieve the instruments for low prices and then re-sell at a profit (despite declaring to Anselmi that he had no expertise as a violin dealer).

<sup>21</sup> One of these three 1722 violins was the decorated violin now known as the *Rode*.

<sup>22</sup> See Chiesa and Rosengard p. 58.

<sup>23</sup> Renzo Bacchetta (Cozio/Bacchetta p. 368) transcribes the date of this letter as 16<sup>th</sup> November 1775, but the manuscript is clear: 8<sup>th</sup> November 1775. Anselmi begins this letter with: 'From now until the 16<sup>th</sup> [November] I shall be going to the fair at Alessandria; you may write to me there.'

<sup>24</sup> *Certificato*; but the 20<sup>th</sup> August letter from Paolo clearly indicates his refusal to write a certificate for Anselmi. It is likely that further correspondence (now lost) took place between 20<sup>th</sup> August and October/November 1775, correspondence which perhaps included the certificate required from Paolo.

<sup>25</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 367-368 and Santoro (1993) p. 80.

<sup>26</sup> Some sources give 1776 as the year in which Paolo died. According to the Hills (Hill (1902) p. 290) the date was 14<sup>th</sup> October 1775, and this date is confirmed in Chiesa and Rosengard p. 120.

<sup>27</sup> Antonio (II) uses the Cremonese dialect word *parone*.

stamp on the box, with a red ribbon, and with your seal, as on the violins already consigned to you.<sup>28</sup>

In the same letter Antonio (II) announces that the price for the box of moulds and tools is now ten *gigliati*, adding: ‘When I hear that the money has been received the box will be sent immediately.’ Perhaps not realising that he is swimming in dangerous waters Antonio (II) also attempts to engineer a new contract by referring to a viola which was desired by Anselmi (or by Count Cozio):

[...] it might be possible to make another contract for the viola which is still in my possession, as well as various models of instruments [*vari modelli di istromenti*]<sup>29</sup> found inside a chest after his [Paolo’s] death – he had forgotten where they were. This would require another negotiation, and if you are ever in these parts [i.e. Cremona] we could come to an agreement on these two matters.<sup>30</sup>

If Antonio (II) thought he could negotiate with Anselmi he was sorely mistaken for on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1775 Anselmi (Count Cozio) writes again, initially with some sympathy:

It is with sorrow that I learn from your letter of 21<sup>st</sup> November of the fatal loss of your father; many condolences. He was a worthy man of honour and my good friend, although I did little business with him.<sup>31</sup>

But then comes the sting in the tail:

[...] when we closed the contract with your late father [Paolo], by his letter he said: ‘I resolve, for the price offered me, to send all the measures, models, tools, utensils, tools [*sic*], and anything else that was used by Antonio, my father, including also those [items] that I lent to the Bergonzis, and to you [these] will be sent on your instruction.’ Being no less honourable a man than your father, you will not have any difficulty in placing all [the items] in the same box, or another, and send to me as quickly as possible, by cart, to my address.<sup>32</sup>

At this point it becomes clear that Count Cozio’s patience is being exhausted; in an undated memorandum he brusquely instructs Anselmi:<sup>33</sup>

Stradivari [Antonio (II)] is obliged, as in the letter sent to you of 4<sup>th</sup> June 1775,<sup>34</sup> to trade all the tools and designs used by the late Antonio Stradivari, and after his letter of 21<sup>st</sup> November 1775, announcing the death of his father [Paolo], he notified me of yet more tools, but he doubted whether his father would have wanted these to be part of the contract. But his [Paolo’s] letter of 4<sup>th</sup> June 1775 compels him [to part with] everything for 6 *gigliati* that was paid to Mr Dupui, as in his letter of 10<sup>th</sup> July 1775. Therefore, he [Antonio (II)] must give you everything, in good condition [...] I must have everything safely delivered to Casale [...] go and resolve this matter, if at all possible with friendly words [...] but make sure you obtain his full certificate for the violins of Stradivari which are truly by Antonio Stradivari, his grandfather [... *per li violi [sic] de’ Stradivari che sono veri di Antonio Stradivari suo Avo*].<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 89/11; see also Hart pp. 209-210, Sacchi p. 44, Cozio/Bacchetta pp. 368-369, and Santoro (1993) pp. 82-83.

<sup>29</sup> Assumed to be patterns and templates rather than finished violins, violas, or cellos.

<sup>30</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 89/11; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 369 and Santoro (1993) p. 83.

<sup>31</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 370 and Santoro (1993) p. 84. The dismissive summary of the business relationship with Paolo is curious.

<sup>32</sup> Perhaps a cart was a more reliable mode of transport than a cargo boat struggling to sail upstream on the river Po from Cremona to Turin. According to Denis Mack Smith ‘along the Po river there were as many as eighty places [customs barriers] where boats could be stopped for searching’ (*The Making of Italy*, Macmillan, 1968, p. 85). See also Chapter 14 for information regarding river transport in northern Italy in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

<sup>33</sup> Elia Santoro (Santoro (1993) p. 88) editorially states that this document is from March 1776.

<sup>34</sup> Paolo wrote the letter in question, not Antonio (II).

<sup>35</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 91/7. Renzo Bacchetta transcribes the final phrase as: *per li violini de’ Stradivari che non sono veri di Antonio Stradivari nostri* (‘for the violins of Stradivari which are not truly by our Antonio Stradivari’).

In March 1776 Count Cozio apparently travelled around northern Italy ascertaining where, and with whom, valuable instruments were located; this journey included Cremona:

*Nota de stromenti nel viaggio da Casale a Milano e da Milano a Cremona indi a Mantova poscia a Pavia nel mese di marzo 1776*<sup>36</sup>

Note of the instruments [discovered] in the journey from Casale to Milan, and from Milan to Cremona, thereafter to Mantua, then to Pavia, in the month of March 1776.

Evidently, during his time in Cremona, the Count met with Antonio (II) Stradivari since a *Nota de stromenti ritrovati nel giro dei 2 Aprile 1776* ('Note of the instruments found during the tour, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1776') lists:

*Signor Antonio Stradiva[ri]: violini del Carlo Bergonsio – 4.*<sup>37</sup>

Whether Count Cozio bought these Carlo Bergonzi violins is not known.<sup>38</sup>

On 9<sup>th</sup> April 1776 Count Cozio (through Anselmi) writes to the Mantegazza brothers – Domenico and Pietro – in Milan; they are also now required to supply a certificate, the text of which is provided:

We certify, the undersigned brothers Mantegazza, makers of instruments in Milan practising for many years in this profession, how we have sold to Signor Giovanni Michele Anselmi of Briatta, of the city of Turin, many instruments still new and untouched, with labels of Antonio Stradivari of Cremona, made in various years, authentic and genuinely of this maker, and we further know they were obtained from Paolo Stradivari, son, merchant in Cremona, that they were inherited from the late Antonio, his father, the maker of the violins, and in witness of the above is our handwritten signature below, and our seal. Brothers Mantegazza.<sup>39</sup>

The skilfully-worded text of Count Cozio's certificate – containing not one piece of specific information – would have been particularly useful when finalising sales of violins with buyers 'who know little about instruments'. Three days later, on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1776, Anselmi writes to Antonio (II) with his usual forcefulness:

I have been waiting until today for your new [letter], for the notification [certificate] which you promised to make but which I have not yet received. I therefore urge you to hurry. Send me, with the first available boat, to Casale, boxed up, the chest of utensils [...]. I am also waiting, with great anxiety, for the certificate for the violins which were obtained by me from your father [Paolo], [the certificate to be] made in the following way, written by your hand and provided with your seal.<sup>40</sup>

Anselmi then supplies Antonio (II) with the required text for the certificate (Count Cozio's draft text shown below):<sup>41</sup>

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Count Cozio's manuscript has a firmly crossed-out word between *che* and *sono*; the crossed-out word clearly begins with the letter 'c'. Elia Santoro (Santoro (1993) p. 88) transcribes the final phrase as: *per li violini de' Stradivari che sono veri di Antonio Stradivari maestro* ('... which are truly by Antonio Stradivari the master').

<sup>36</sup> BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 30; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 180.

<sup>37</sup> BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 29; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 179. The Count's numeral is unclear; it may be '5'.

<sup>38</sup> A note made by Count Cozio in 1801 (Cozio/Bacchetta p. 221) states that, in December 1776, he also bought a 1708 Antonio Stradivari violin from Antonio (II) Stradivari; it is unclear how Antonio (II) Stradivari could still possess any instruments made by his grandfather.

<sup>39</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90; see also Cozio/Bacchetta pp. 380-381 and Santoro (1993) p. 99. Such a certificate, written and signed by the Mantegazzas, is not within the Cozio archive at the Biblioteca Statale di Cremona.

<sup>40</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 381 and Santoro (1993) p. 101. This letter suggests that Paolo never did write the certificate from which he was required to omit all mention of Francesco.

<sup>41</sup> Count Cozio's draft text (dated 12<sup>th</sup> April 1776) of both the letter and the certificate is immensely difficult to read, parts of the paper having been entirely eaten away by acid. The text has many corrections (shown here with strike-through) and, in the margin, there are additional lines of text (shown here underlined) to be inserted into the main body of text. Given the rate

*Attesto io sottoscritto qualmente ho veduto a vendergli da mio Sigr Padre Paolo ~~a venduto~~ al Sigr Giovanni Michele Anselmi Briatta della città di Torino ~~dodici violini da detto mio signor padre~~ il rimanente de violini<sup>42</sup> ancora nuovi per non essere mai stati suonati avendoli sempre custoditi per rarità che aveva il detto mio Sigr Padre avuto in eredità da Antonio suo padre, e mio avo, quali violini mio padre mi assicurò varie volte di averli veduto a travagliare tutti da mio Avo stesso e perciò essendo tale la verità mi sono manualmente sottoscritto, e munito il presente attestato di mio sigillo.<sup>43</sup>*

I, the undersigned, affirm how I have seen my father, Paolo, sell to Signor Giovanni Michele Anselmi Briatta, of the city of Turin, the remaining violins, still new, never played, always kept because of their rarity, these my father inherited from Antonio, his father and my grandfather. My father assured me, on various occasions, that he had seen all these violins being made by my grandfather, and therefore, this being the truth, I sign below with my own hand and provide this attestation with my seal.

Antonio (II) evidently did as he was told since the following attestation (Plate 15) is to be found within Count Cozio's documents.

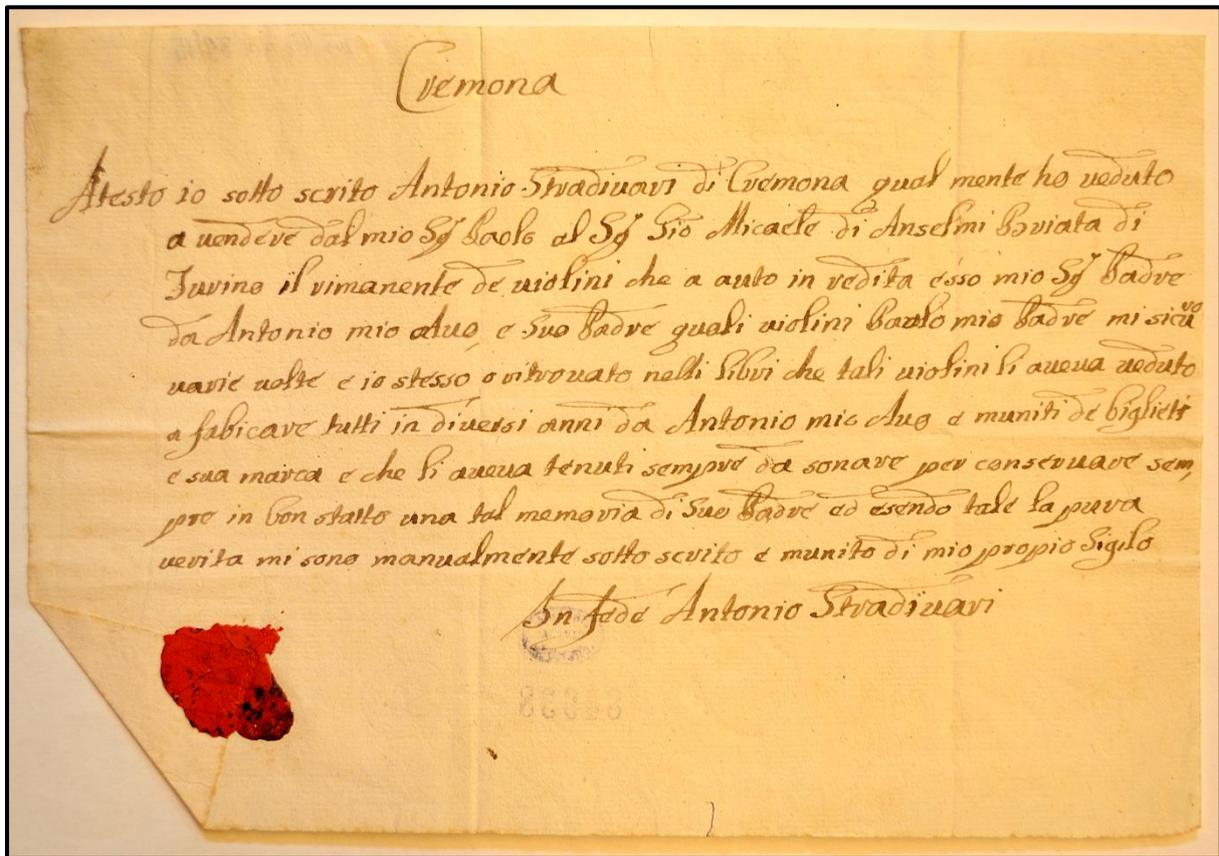


Plate 15: BScR, LC, ms. Cozio 89/14

However Antonio (II) did not follow exactly the required wording:

I, the undersigned, Antonio Stradivari of Cremona, affirm how I have seen my [father] Signor Paolo sell to Signor Gio[vanni] Micaele di Anselmi of Briata, of Turin, the remaining violins that were inherited by my father from Antonio, my grandfather and his father. Paolo, my father,

at which the paper is disintegrating it is likely that Renzo Bacchetta could see more text in 1950 than Elia Santoro could see in 1993, and Santoro could probably see more text than is visible today.

<sup>42</sup> It is noticeable that Count Cozio initially specifies 'twelve violins' but then strikes through that text and replaces it with 'the remainder of the violins'. See Chapter 3 for details of these violins.

<sup>43</sup> BScR, LC, ms. Cozio 90.

assured me, on various occasions, that these violins can be found in the books,<sup>44</sup> that these violins were all seen being made in various years by Antonio my grandfather, and provided with labels and his stamp, and were always kept [by my father, Paolo] in playing condition – such a memory of his father [Antonio] being well preserved – and this being the absolute truth, I sign below with my own hand, and provide [this certificate with] my true seal. Upon my faith, Antonio Stradivari.<sup>45</sup>

As with the Mantegazza certificate this document from Antonio (II) means almost nothing; no date is specified for the sale of the instruments, there is no indication of any of the instruments' label-dates, and, since he was not asked to do so, Antonio [II] has not stated the number of instruments sold to Anselmi. Nonetheless, the very vagueness of the certificate text ensured that it would be flexible and transferable.

On '31<sup>st</sup> June'<sup>46</sup> 1776 Antonio (II) sends a letter to Anselmi:

Three weeks ago, two English "milords" were looking for eight of our violins. They asked me whether I still had any and I replied that I no longer had any, but I gave the details of your house, saying that I had a contract with you [...]. Then, with respect to what has been said about the shipping of the box,<sup>47</sup> I have to tell you that my *Signor Procuratore* does not want me to send anything out of the house until he knows that you have paid the remaining two *gigliati* for those models that have been seen and [the money] paid to Signor Domenico Dupuij, as we agreed in our negotiations [...]; then my procurator will send you the box without any delay.<sup>48</sup>

Antonio's letter also responds to the following demand which had been made by Anselmi in his aforementioned 12<sup>th</sup> April 1776 letter:

While looking over the books, do me the favour of extracting a list of how many violins were made by your esteemed grandfather, to whom they were sold, and at what price. Please also take the trouble to send me the descriptions of the violins, violas, and cellos which can still be found in Cremona, truly and authentically [made] by your grandfather, and the names of the [current] owners, in which year they were made, and at what price they could be bought, but do this discreetly, because they [already] stand at high prices.<sup>49</sup>

Antonio responds to this quite unreasonable demand in a delightfully sarcastic tone of voice:

If you want to know the number of *violini*, and *violoni*, and *violoneli* and *viole*, I reply that, if you want to know, the body of my grandfather – if you are able to make him talk – is buried in [the church of] San Domenico, which is in Cremona.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1776, Antonio (II) writes two memoranda, stating, in the first, that he has received three *gigliati* 'for the remainder of the sold merchandise, and these are all the utensils (*utensili*) of my Signor grandfather', and, in the second, that he had received one *gigliato* 'which has

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<sup>44</sup> These books presumably being the ledgers which Count Cozio subsequently tried to locate.

<sup>45</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 89/14; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 382 and Santoro (1993) pp. 101-102.

<sup>46</sup> Renzo Bacchetta transcribes the date as 30<sup>th</sup> June 1776.

<sup>47</sup> Evidently the 'well-known' box has still not left Cremona.

<sup>48</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 89/13; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 388 and Santoro (1993) p. 107.

<sup>49</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 381 and Santoro (1993) p. 101. As previously mentioned, just a few days earlier Count Cozio had compiled his 'Note' of instruments seen during his March 1776 journey around northern Italy, a journey which included Cremona, where, in addition to the Bergonzi violins belonging to Antonio (II) Stradivari, the Count located five other instruments, by Amati, Guarneri, Stradivari, and Bergonzi, belonging to Marchese Cattaneo. Perhaps these discoveries prompted Count Cozio to wonder whether there were yet more Stradivari instruments hidden away in Cremona, and therefore the 12<sup>th</sup> April letter to Antonio (II) reflected a new investigative strategy.

<sup>50</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 89/13; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 388 and Santoro (1993) p. 107.

been deposited with Signor Domenico Dupui for the remainder of the utensils of my grandfather.’<sup>51</sup> The whole sale/purchase process, for all the remaining violins and all the tools, had lasted three years.

According to the Cozio archives there is only one more letter from Antonio (II) to Anselmi – dated 30<sup>th</sup> July 1777 – in which Antonio (II) asks Anselmi to decide whether or not he will buy two violas (possibly *viole d’amore* – see below) made by Antonio (I).<sup>52</sup>

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By the end of the eighteenth century Count Cozio had acquired the most extensive collection of violins, violas, and cellos ever assembled under one roof. Nonetheless, he was still buying and selling instruments.<sup>53</sup> On 4<sup>th</sup> July 1801<sup>54</sup> Count Cozio writes to Antonio (II) Stradivari, referring back to a letter sent by Antonio (II) to the Count on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1775 – some twenty-six years earlier. In his 1801 letter the Count enquires about two *viole d’amore* made by Antonio Stradivari which the Count evidently believes are still in the grandson’s possession. Not receiving an immediate reply, Count Cozio writes again, on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1801:

Do you still possess the two *viole d’amore* made by your grandfather, Antonio? In 1775 they were offered to me through my agent, the late G. B. Guadagnini, for thirteen *zecchini* each, after I purchased the remaining tools and violins which were in your possession.<sup>55</sup>

Count Cozio never received any replies to his letters since Antonio (II) Stradivari had already died, in 1789.<sup>56</sup>

In a letter to the *luthier* G A Marchi (10<sup>th</sup> May 1804) Count Cozio indicates his desire to purchase a violin and viola made by Nicolò Amati. Nine days later, the Count writes again to Marchi, this time with regard to purchasing a viola or a cello by Antonio Stradivari.<sup>57</sup> The Count also endeavoured to locate the items from the Stradivari workshop which he believed should have been included with the artefacts bought during 1775-76 but were not supplied. On 30<sup>th</sup> September 1804 Count Cozio writes to Count Alessandro Maggi (of Cremona) requesting his help in finding the missing items:

The true recipe [for Stradivari’s varnish] must be with the heirs of Stradivari, in various books which, for three years, I have been searching [...] these books contain various notes relating to the construction of the instruments, and also there is a list of all the instruments that were made by Antonio Stradivari, and descriptions of the persons to whom they were sold. Also left in the hands of these [heirs] was the seal, or the stamp, used on his labels, and a number of original labels, just as they [the heirs] should also still have the proportional dividers for measuring the thicknesses [of the plates], the four cello moulds,<sup>58</sup> the tools for cutting the purfling, and various other tools which are missing from the collection which I acquired, with the remaining instruments, from the merchant [Paolo] Stradivari, son of this maker, in 1774.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90, 89/15, and 89/16; see also Hart p. 211, Sacchi p. 45, Cozio/Bacchetta p. 390, and Santoro (1993) p. 109.

<sup>52</sup> See BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 89/17; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 393 and Santoro (1993) pp. 112-113.

<sup>53</sup> See Chapter 6 for details of sales.

<sup>54</sup> Renzo Bacchetta (Cozio/Bacchetta p. 400) erroneously transcribes the date as 14<sup>th</sup> July. The manuscript, BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90, is clear – *Milano li 4 Luglio 1801 V.S. [vecchio stile – old-style date]*.

<sup>55</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 405. It is noticeable that Count Cozio identifies Guadagnini as his agent rather than Giovanni Michele Anselmi.

<sup>56</sup> There is no subsequent trace of the two *viole d’amore*.

<sup>57</sup> See Cozio/Bacchetta p. 410 and Santoro (1993) p. 131.

<sup>58</sup> See Chapter 2 for information regarding the cello moulds owned by Count Cozio.

<sup>59</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90; see also Cozio/Bacchetta pp. 422-423 and Santoro (1993) pp. 141-142. See also Chapter 12 for further information regarding Stradivari labels.

Within the Cozio archives there are no letters of response from Count Maggi regarding the outcome of his searches (if they happened). Count Cozio's letter to Count Maggi was written almost thirty years after Paolo Stradivari had died, and fifteen years after Antonio (II) had died, and it seems unlikely that Count Maggi could have found any items in Cremona which could be reliably identified as having belonged to Antonio Stradivari.

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In their 1902 monograph the Hill brothers write about Stradivari's workshop tools:

[...] we will devote a few words to the unique collection of relics from Stradivari's workshop which have, thanks to the intelligent enthusiasm of Count Cozio de Salabue, fortunately been preserved to us. Of mechanical tools, with the exception of the [two] callipers shown in our illustration, nothing of interest exists. Chisels, gouges, planes, knives, scrapers, cramps, and the other necessary appliances of a violin-maker's workshop, are all absent.<sup>60</sup>

It is curious that the correspondence between Paolo/Antonio (II) Stradivari and Count Cozio di Salabue should repeatedly speak of utensils and tools – *utensigli e ferri* – yet by the end of the nineteenth century all such mechanical items, apart from two thickness callipers, had apparently disappeared. Confusingly (in light of the Hills' commentary) the Museo del Violino in Cremona displays clamps made of wood and of iron, spring clips, bass-bar clamps, six planes, three thickness gauges, two pressure-point gauges, gouges and chisels, gimlets, a reamer, two purfling cutters, seven scrapers, set squares, a needle drill, an adjustable scribing compass, and even a small lathe in forged iron.<sup>61</sup> If, in 1902, the Hills could state that a collection of mechanical tools – other than two thickness callipers – did not exist among the possessions of Marchese [Alessandro?] Dalla Valle then it is possible that many of the tools currently exhibited at the Museo del Violino in Cremona (and previously at the Museo Stradivariano) have no certain relationship with Antonio Stradivari. Edward Heron-Allen, author of the entry on Antonio Stradivari which was published in the Fifth Edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, writes: 'With the exception of his callipers, the great violin maker's tools were not included in the count's [*sic*] collection [Count Cozio's collection] which subsequently passed to the Marchese [Rolando Giuseppe] Dalla Valle of Turin'.<sup>62</sup> The text appears to confirm the Hills' observation of just two callipers, but Heron-Allen may have simply extrapolated his *Grove* commentary from the Hills' text of 1902.

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At the start of the nineteenth century Count Cozio appears to have realised that his individual maintenance of the Cremonese ideal of violin making could not be sustained indefinitely. The Count outlined a proposal to G A Marchi:

So as to return this art to its former glory, I would have liked, and would still like, to have a [maker], young in spirit, and already initiated in the art, who would be supported by his parents and would stay here, with me, to learn instrument making according to the principles of the best makers. If you have a son or a relative who has already started to make stringed instruments I

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<sup>60</sup> Hill (1902) p. 205. The Hills' text may explain why the Marchesa Paola Dalla Valle makes no mention of tools in the extract from her 1948 letter (see Chapter 2).

<sup>61</sup> In Sacconi (1979) pp. 250-253 the iron clamps, two of the planes, the purfling cutters, one of the pressure-point gauges, the needle drill, and the lathe are all identified as being from the 'donation Ceruti'. These identifications of origin are not present in Sacconi (1972) pp. 248-251.

<sup>62</sup> *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Fifth Edition, ed. Eric Blom, London, 1954, Volume VIII, p. 109.

would willingly share with him all the knowledge that I have acquired, and [the use of] the original models and tools that I own.<sup>63</sup>

Subsequently, in 1823, the Count wrote a self-serving lament:

In the meantime I cannot but also regret, in this respect, the total loss from our country of the instruments of the aforementioned famous makers, as I can confirm; the loss of their masterpieces, [the loss of] the makers themselves, and, even more, the loss of the moulds, templates, and designs of these makers, [artefacts] which were so important to them and to their country (since Cremona was for more than two centuries the centre of an active and lucrative trade [in string instruments]). Is there no patron who will respond to my lament and, for the love of our homeland, enable the purchase of the aforementioned collection of instruments [i.e. Count Cozio's collection], and the models, designs, and moulds which adorn it? – before other regions [countries?] take advantage – so as to restore within this city [Cremona] the making of fine instruments!<sup>64</sup>

With respect to the loss of instruments, Count Cozio appears to have forgotten the fact that he himself had been a major facilitator for the export of Cremonese instruments, especially to France. The date of this lament, 1823, was the same year in which the Count delivered to his banker 34 violins, violas, and cellos which, according to the Count's instructions, were to be sold as one lot (together with more than fifty other instruments which could be sold individually).<sup>65</sup> At the age of 68 Count Cozio had evidently decided to divest himself of all his string-instrument possessions.

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<sup>63</sup> Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 409.

<sup>64</sup> Translated from Cozio/Bacchetta p. 75.

<sup>65</sup> See Chapter 6.