

Chapter 6

Enter Tarisio, ms. Cozio 73, and ms. Cozio 81

If some aspects of this investigative account seem to be surrounded by a mist of contradictions, then Luigi Tarisio is surrounded by a veritable fog. Commentators are inclined to date his birth to c1790¹ in the village of Fontaneto d'Agogna,² near the town of Novara in northern Italy, but, as so often, the evidence is conspicuous by its absence. It is usually suggested that he came from a 'humble' background and that his early career was as a carpenter. It is further suggested that he played the violin as a hobby and this led to an interest in string instruments both as historical artefacts and as a source of income. Commentators repeatedly claim that Tarisio subsequently lived in a Milanese attic, above an inn, these claims seemingly being derived from Antoine Vidal (writing in 1876 and acknowledging that his information came directly from Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume)³ and from Vuillaume's undated biographical 'Note' on Tarisio:⁴

[Vuillaume] fut conduit dans un petit hôtel de dernier ordre, appelé avec quelque peu d'exagération Hôtel des Délices, demeure habituelle de Tarisio et son quartier-général.⁵

Vuillaume was taken to a small hotel, of the lowest class, called, with just a little exaggeration, *Hotel of Delights*, Tarisio's normal residence and his headquarters.

Into his lodgings, in the Via Legnano, near the Porta Tenaglia, in Milan, no living being but himself was ever permitted to enter.⁶

He lived on the top floor of a dirty inn in the Via Legnano, near the Porta Tenaglia.⁷

[...] il vivait dans les combles d'une auberge sordide, Via Legnano, appelée – peut-être par derision – “Hotel des Délices”.⁸

... he lived in the rafters of a squalid inn, Via Legnano, called – perhaps derisively – “Hotel of Delights”.

Tarisio's (apparent) background and character⁹ subsequently brought out the worst expressions of imperialist snobbery from some of London's violin-dealing fraternity:

[...] a man whose career merits a passing notice [...]. Taking up fiddle playing as an amusement [...] he left his trade and home to wander about the country in search of violins. [...] the

¹ Sylvette Milliot (in vV/Campos p. 49 and vV/Campos/tr. p. 49) states '1790', but in Milliot p. 74 and p. 75 states '1796'.

² Tarisio's birthplace is variously given as 'Fontaneto, near Novara, in Piedmont' (Hill (1891) p. 12); 'in the area of Novara' (Millant p. 55); 'near Novara in the Piémont' (Milliot p. 74); 'a native of Milan' (Farga p. 94); 'the Tarisio family home in Fontanetto Po' (Philip Kass, 'Holes in history', *The Strad*, August 2001, p. 864); 'Fontanetta, near Borgemonera' (Vuillaume, quoted in vV/Campos p. 258). If Vuillaume's information is correct then Tarisio's home village was Fontaneto d'Agogna which lies three miles south of Borgomanero and fifteen miles north of Novara. Fontanetto Po is an entirely different village situated thirty miles southwest of Novara on the northern bank of the river Po.

³ See Vidal (1876-78) Volume I, p. 124, footnote: *Nous tenons tous ces détails de M. J.-B. Vuillaume lui-même, qui nous a autorisé à les publier comme parfaitement exacts* ('We give all these details as supplied by M. Vuillaume himself, who has authorised us to publish them as absolutely accurate').

⁴ See Chapter 7 for the text of Vuillaume's 'Note'.

⁵ Vidal (1876-78) Volume 1, p. 125.

⁶ Hart p. 341. Hart is the first to identify the Via Legnano as the address of Tarisio's lodgings. In a footnote (*ibid.*) he states: 'The house is now turned, with those adjoining, into a manufactory. When Luigi Tarisio lived there it was a small restaurant, similar to those seen in the side streets of Soho.'

⁷ Farga p. 95.

⁸ Millant p. 55.

⁹ Cf. the text associated with footnote 115 of this chapter.

commercial instinct, which formed so marked an element of his character, convinced him that the increasing demand for these instruments might be turned to profitable account.¹⁰

M. Van der Heyden knew Tarisio, having met him on various occasions; and says he was a man of common appearance – that he looked what he was, a peasant; he spoke French indifferently, dressed badly, and wore heavy, rough shoes. He was tall and thin, and had features of an ordinary Italian type.¹¹

The violin dealer George Hart (1839-1891) is equally dismissive:

[...] he chose the trade of a carpenter, which vocation he followed with assiduity, if not with love. [...] That his playing was not of a high order may be readily imagined: it was confined chiefly to dance-music, with which he amused his friends, Fiddling to their dancing. His first Violin was a very common instrument [...]. He resolved to journey in search of hidden Cremonas. His means were, indeed, very limited. His stock-in-trade consisted only of a few old Violins of no particular value. [...] His usual method of trading was to exchange with the simple-minded villagers, giving them a Violin in perfect playing order for their shabby old instrument that lacked all the accessories. [...] these rare old instruments, in the keeping of the poor peasants, could scarcely be considered to be in their proper element; their ignorant possessors were alike unable to appreciate their sterling worth, as works of art, or their powers of sound.¹²

Roger Millant, in 1972, echoes Hart's 1884 commentary regarding Tarisio exchanging valueless new instruments for valuable old.¹³ Sylvette Milliot, in 2006, echoes both commentators: 'Playing on the ignorance of the villagers, Tarisio exchanged some of his own instruments for older, despised violins for which he knew the real value',¹⁴ and, in like manner, provides no evidential support for her text. Franz Farga, in 1950, identifies Tarisio as illiterate, devoid of any schooling, and a potential criminal 'capable of any crime if a major piece of his collection had been removed from his care'.¹⁵

The Victorian novelist, Charles Reade (1814-1884), who, it is claimed, met Tarisio on at least one occasion, seems uncertain of the approach he should take in evaluating the man. On the one hand he writes –

He was the greatest connoisseur that ever lived or ever can live, because he had the true mind of a connoisseur and vast opportunities. [...] The man's whole soul was in fiddles.¹⁶

– yet Reade also characterises Tarisio as an 'ephemeral insect' and states that Tarisio 'ransacked Italy' for instruments.¹⁷ Not to be outdone by an Italian peasant Reade proudly informs his readers: 'Twenty five years ago [therefore c1845] I ransacked Europe for [instruments by Carlo Bergonzi] – for he is a maker I always loved – and I could obtain but few.'¹⁸ Roger Millant states, without providing any evidence, that Tarisio 'brought out of Italy more than one thousand violins'¹⁹ but Millant (in 1972) was probably just following Farga (in 1950): 'It is a safe guess that during that time he took more than 1,000 master instruments out of Italy.'²⁰

¹⁰ Hill (1891) pp. 12-13.

¹¹ Hill (1902) p. 263.

¹² Hart pp. 331-333.

¹³ See Millant p. 55 and p. 123.

¹⁴ Translated from Milliot p. 74; alternatively translated in Milliot p. 75.

¹⁵ See Farga p. 94. The information offered by Farga echoes that of Antoine Vidal (Vidal (1876-78) Volume 1, pp. 121-122 and 125): *Louis Tarisio, homme sans aucune education* [...] *Cet homme, qui ne savait ni lire ni écrire* [...] ('a man without any education' ... 'this man, who could neither read nor write').

¹⁶ Reade, *Second Letter to the Pall Mall Gazette*, 24th August 1872.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Reade, *Third Letter to the Pall Mall Gazette*, 27th August 1872.

¹⁹ Translated from Millant p. 56; alternatively translated (*ibid.*) p. 124.

²⁰ Farga p. 96.

The consistent attitude of Victorian commentators is that Italians could not possibly appreciate the treasures of their own craftsmen and therefore Italy should be emptied of its violins, violas, and cellos, by superior men who knew what the proper context should be for these instruments. George Hart, describing Charles Reade, comments:

I refer to Mr. Charles Reade, the novelist, who in early life took the highest interest in old Italian Violins.²¹ We are indebted to him in a great measure for bringing into this country many of the most beautiful specimens we possess. [...] [he] thus opened up the intercourse between England and the Continent for the interchange of old Violins, which continues to this day.²² [...] These were the men who laid bare the treasures of Cremona's workshops [...].²³

'Laid bare' could hardly be bettered as a descriptive term. Hart further comments:

The knowledge of Italian works [instruments] in 1800 was of the slenderest kind, both in France and England; in less than three-quarters of a century those countries have contrived to possess themselves of the finest specimens of Cremonese instruments, together with those of other Italian schools. We have here an example of the energy and skill that is brought to bear upon particular branches of industry when once a demand sets in. Men of enterprise rise with it unnoticed, and lead the way to the desired end.²⁴

The energy and skill of Luigi Tarisio is not mentioned.

The usual 'facts' about Tarisio's first visit to Paris in 1827 are that, having gathered together some valuable Italian violins, he walked the 400 miles from Milan to Paris,²⁵ a journey which is said to have taken him more than one month.²⁶ George Hart states that he was carrying six violins;²⁷ if so, then Tarisio must have had superhuman strength and stamina. Arriving in Paris he sold his violins (according to Hart) to the Parisian dealer Jean-François Aldric.²⁸ Hart displays the usual condescension:

Upon arriving at the shop of M. Aldric, Tarisio hesitated before entering, feeling suddenly that his appearance was scarcely in keeping with his wares, his clothes being of the shabbiest description, his boots nearly soleless, and his complexion, naturally inclined to blackness, further darkened by the need of ordinary ablutions.²⁹

However, Charles Reade, in his *Second Letter to the Pall Mall Gazette* (24th August 1872) offers a quite different account of Tarisio's initial reception in Paris:

The principal dealers, whose minds were narrowed, as is often the case, to three or four makers, would not deal with him. M. Georges Chanot, younger and more intelligent, purchased largely, and encouraged him to return.

²¹ The Hills (Hill (1902) p. 264) write: 'Charles Reade, during a number of years between 1840 and 1860, took a keen interest in old instruments. He travelled a good deal in France, where he frequently met Tarisio, and purchased there Italian instruments, including Stradivaris and Guarneris [...].'

²² The reader might wonder what the Italians, and Italy, received as part of this 'intercourse' and 'interchange'.

²³ Hart p. 344.

²⁴ Hart pp. 330-331.

²⁵ The distance of '400 miles' between Milan and Paris is when measured in a straight line, which was not a normal characteristic of early-nineteenth-century roads.

²⁶ See Farga p. 95 and Milliot p. 74. Tarisio's 'heavy, rough shoes' would obviously have come in useful during this journey, and it is no wonder that he was 'tall and thin'. See also this volume's Preface.

²⁷ Hart p. 335.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 334-335.

Tarisio apparently returned to Paris two or three times each year, each time bringing with him yet more violins, violas, and cellos, which were met with ever more delight from the dealers – Vuillaume, Thibout, and Chanut.³⁰ During his visits Tarisio apparently talked to the dealers about an immaculate, perfect, Stradivari violin which he owned, a violin which he always promised to bring to Paris on his next visit, but never did.³¹

In 1876 the first volume of *Les Instruments à Archet*, by Antoine Vidal, was published in Paris. Vidal (or Vuillaume)³² describes Tarisio thus:

Around 1827, an Italian named Louis Tarisio, a man without any education, an itinerant dealer in second-hand goods who combined commercial acumen with a genuine expertise in old instruments, came to Paris carrying a stock of shoddy goods³³ which he managed to sell quickly and advantageously. From then until 1854, the time of his death, there was not a year in which he did not make an appearance. He travelled all over Italy, ‘harvesting’ instruments, rummaging in absolutely every corner; not a single instrument escaped him, and one might say that during the thirty years or so that he engaged in this trafficking [of instruments] he brought to this side of the continent [Paris] all the available instruments that existed by the old Italian masters.³⁴

It is possible that in the first two decades of the nineteenth century – prior to the arrival of Tarisio – Parisian violin shops were not so devoid of Italian instruments as is often assumed. Count Cozio di Salabue may have begun his Cremonese rescue mission with the highest ideals but, as the compulsion of his single-minded interest waxed and waned, he bought and sold instruments much as any commercial dealer would do. In June 1801 the Count advertised the sale of some of his instruments through a French-language public notice:

AUX AMATEURS DE MUSIQUE

Un amateur de musique aïant fait depuis plusieurs années avec beaucoup de soin et de dépense une ample et choisie collection de Violons des plus célèbres Auteurs Crémonois qui aient jamais été, tels que ANTOINE, JEROME, et NICOLAS AMATIS Pere, oncle et Fils, ANTOINE STRADIVARIO, RUGERI dit le Per, ANDREE et JOSEPH GUARNERIO, CHARLES BERGONZIO, et JEAN BAPTISTE GUADAGNINI, et étant disposé à vendre cette collection tant en gros, qu’en détail ici à Milan, avant de satisfaire aux demandes qu’on lui a faites hors du país, cet amateur invite tous ceux qui en voudront faire acquisition de s’adresser dans l’espace de 20. jours à dater du 22. prairial tous les jours ouvriers depuis les onze heures du matin jusqu’à midi, et depuis les trois heures après-midi jusqu’à cinq, au portier de la maison 1295. dans la Rue del Gesù peu loin du mont S. Thérèse, qui leur fera voir cette collection aus heures et jours ci devant marqués.

Cet amateur se flatte que non seulement ils admireront la rareté de cette collection, mais qu’ils trouveront encore très-discrets les prix qui y sont fixes, eu égard aux qualités de ces instrumens. Milan ce 22. Prairial An. IX. Republicain. (8. Juin 1801. v.s.).³⁵

³⁰ See Hart p. 336. Some commentators have indicated that the quality of the instruments supplied by Tarisio in later years was poor. David Schoenbaum (Schoenbaum p. 153) writes: ‘By 1853, Tarisio himself acknowledged that he was bringing “vegetables”, and [Georges] Chanut noted in a letter to his son Adolphe that at least two major Paris dealers “[...] no longer took his instruments on consignment.’ Common sense suggests that, after 25 years, this lesser quality of instruments might have been expected, but, if so, why (as is claimed) did Tarisio still have two dozen Stradivari instruments secreted at his Milanese lodgings, and still more at his nephews’ farm, at the (alleged) date of his death? See Chapter 7 for further information.

³¹ See Hill (1891) p. 14.

³² See footnote 3 of this chapter.

³³ *Pacotille* – ‘shoddy goods’ – ‘cheap rubbish’. Vidal’s text sits against the usual narrative whereby Tarisio, in 1827, brought rare and important instruments with him. George Hart (Hart p. 335) states that the six violins brought to Paris by Tarisio included examples by Nicolò Amati, Maggini, and Rugeri.

³⁴ Translated from Vidal (1876-78) Volume 1, pp. 121-122.

³⁵ BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 16/4; see also Hill (1902) opposite p. 276. ‘V.S.’ is *vecchio stile* (old-style, Gregorian, date, as opposed to the French Republican Calendar, in which *Prairial* is the ninth month, 20th or 21st May to 18th or 19th June).

A lover of music, having spent many years creating (with great care, and at great expense) a substantial and choice collection of the violins of the most celebrated Cremonese makers who have ever lived, such as Antonio, Girolamo, and Nicolò Amati (father, uncle, and son),³⁶ Antonio Stradivari, Rugeri (called ‘The Father’), Andrea and Giuseppe Guarneri, Carlo Bergonzi, and Giovanni Battista Guadagnini, and being disposed to sell this collection wholesale, rather than individually, here in Milan – before satisfying the requests which he [Count Cozio] has received from elsewhere – this lover of music invites all who might wish to buy to present themselves during the period of twenty days from the 22nd *Prairial* on any weekday between 11am and 12 noon, and between 3pm and 5pm, at the front door of 1295 Via del Gesù, not far from Monte Santa Teresa, where they will be able to see this collection during the hours and days indicated.

This music lover [Count Cozio] flatters himself that not only will they admire the rarity of this collection, but they will also find the prices (which are determined according to the qualities of the instruments) remarkably modest.

A few weeks later, on 17th July 1801, Count Cozio drafted a letter to *Signor Picler*, of Vienna:

When Mr Monzino, guitar and mandolin maker, saw my wonderful collection of violins made by early Cremonese makers (a collection which I have gathered at great expense and effort over many years and which I have recently decided to sell, piece by piece) he suggested that I should inform you, since you are a famous professor and an admirer of such violins. [...] I have also sold some [instruments] to French dealers, who took many of them to Paris. [...] The finest Stradivari [violins] cost one hundred and fifty *zecchini* each, with the remainder priced at between eighty and one hundred *zecchini* each. The Bergonzi [violins] cost between thirty and fifty *zecchini* each. The Guarneri and Guadagnini instruments cost between fifteen and eighteen *zecchini* each. These prices may appear high, but they reflect the instruments’ qualities and how rare some of them are in Italy. *In France these instruments sell at very high prices.*³⁷

In a postscript, addressed to *Monsieur Pickler, premier violon a la Cour de Vienne en Autriche*, the Count adds:

I assure you that my highest quality violins – made by Amati, Stradivari, Bergonzi, and Guadagnini – are guaranteed to be genuine.³⁸

Two days later, on 19th July 1801, the Count sent a similarly-worded letter to a *Signor Professore Stimatissimo*:³⁹

I am in the position of selling my extensive collection of rare instruments (including also violas and the odd cello) which, at considerable expense and effort, I have assembled over the course of more than twenty-five years. I describe to you, succinctly, the state of my collection, and ask you to act on my behalf in negotiating an advantageous sale. My duty will be to recompense you, in proportion, for your trouble [...].⁴⁰

One of Count Cozio’s French dealers is likely to have been a merchant by the name of Durand, for whom the Count prepared, in 1805, a three-page translation into Italian of French terms for the various constituent parts of string instruments.⁴¹ A brief note written by Count Cozio in 1816 states:

³⁶ Antonio Amati (c1540-1607) and Girolamo (Hieronymus I) (c1550-1630) were brothers. Nicolò Amati (1596-1684) was the son of Girolamo.

³⁷ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90. BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 55 indicates that the recipient’s name was Vincislao Pichler. Emphasis of the final sentence is by the present author.

³⁸ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 404.

³⁹ The identity of this ‘Esteemed Professor’ is uncertain.

⁴⁰ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 90. These letters, preserved at the Biblioteca Statale di Cremona, are rough drafts; there are many corrections and alterations to the texts.

⁴¹ See BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 8 (not transcribed by Renzo Bacchetta). Monsieur Durand, evidently, did not speak Italian, whereas the Count spoke both Italian and French. See this volume’s Appendix for further information about M. Durand.

*1816 Dilettanti di musica abili ed intelligenti di stromenti [...] Parigi: Durand dilettante e negoziante in stromenti.*⁴²

1816 Enthusiasts for music, skilful and knowledgeable about instruments [...] Paris: Durand, enthusiast and instrument dealer.

Yet another *Catalogo* entry by Count Cozio (22nd December 1820) reads: ‘My two violins [...] that I sold to M. Durand’,⁴³ while one of the Count’s small notebooks⁴⁴ contains a page headed *Segue Parigi* [Paris], and, within the subsequent text, appears the name ‘Durand’. The Count’s text associates M. Durand with another dealer by the name of ‘Colicher’ (the Count has subsequently changed the spelling to ‘Koliker’).⁴⁵ In the top-left corner of this notebook page is an address: *Rue Croix des Petit Champs, no. 106*. The Rue Croix des Petits Champs was the road in Paris in which Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume subsequently established his violin shop, in 1827, at number 46.

The Hills had also heard of Monsieur Durand:

A certain J. N. Durand – a city merchant – appears to have been particularly active, and brought – or had consigned to him – Stradivari instruments from France and Germany.⁴⁶

In the aforementioned letter (see Chapter 4) to Count Alessandro Maggi (of Cremona), of 30th September 1804, Count Cozio writes:

Today, in Paris and in Lyon, there are instrument makers who copy [*imitano*] Stradivari instruments rather well with respect to the external workmanship, and even including the varnish, but [their instruments] still have the aforementioned defects of proportions, even though France has acquired many [authentic] instruments by Cremonese makers.⁴⁷

The Hills, in 1902, also acknowledge the magnetism of Paris:

Now, France was unquestionably favoured in her intercourse with Italy: her geographical position, the intimate relations between the two peoples, the fact that most of the cultured musicians generally wended their way first to Paris, where, at the period of which we write (the early part of last century) all the most brilliant executants were to be met with, and, lastly, the advantageous dealings early commenced between the indefatigable Tarisio and the principal Parisian luthiers, soon brought into their country a far greater proportion of Stradivari’s instruments than were possessed by other nations.⁴⁸

Count Cozio repeated his sale notice in 1803, this time additionally written in English:

To the Virtuosos of Violins.

A Virtuoso having done a large, and choice collection of Violins of most famous ancient Cremona’s Authors, viz, of A’NTHONY, JEROM, and NICOLAS AMATIS, A’NTHONY STRADIVARIUS, FRANCIS RUGER, called PER, ANDREAS and JOSEPH GUARNERIUS, CHARLES BERGONZI, and JOHN BAPTIST GUADAGNINI, and being now disposed to sell that collection both by wholesale, and separately here into Milan, at discret [sic] price, invites all virtuosos who will buy them, to apply in this City to Merchant A’nthony Clerici at house

⁴² Cozio/Bacchetta p. 280.

⁴³ Translated from Cozio/Bacchetta p. 316. See this volume’s Appendix for information concerning the sale of a Francesco Stradivari violin to M. Durand.

⁴⁴ BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 52.

⁴⁵ According to the Cozio.com website (accessed November 2012) one of the two violas (ID 40261) from the Stradivari ‘Spanish Quintet’ was owned, from an unknown date until 1819, by Jean Gabriel Koliker, a noted Parisian violin dealer. See also Hill (1902) pp. 260 and 269, and Antoine Vidal (Vidal (1876-78) Volume 1, p. 227.

⁴⁶ Hill (1902) p. 261.

⁴⁷ Translated from Cozio/Bacchetta p. 425.

⁴⁸ Hill (1902) p. 259.

Cavanago in the street of that name, N.2334 since twelve o'clock until two, and since four, until six.⁴⁹

The violins on sale would appear to be those listed by Count Cozio in a June 1803 inventory (see Plate 17) entitled *Nota di stromenti posseduti dal sottoscritto che alienarebbe in Milano a contro danaro [denaro] sonante* ('Note of instruments owned by the undersigned which are separately grouped in Milan for cash sale').⁵⁰ It would seem that, at the start of the nineteenth century, the Count wished to dispose of his instruments with some urgency, possibly because of the volatile political and military situation in northern Italy; French and Austrian armies disputed control, and popular protests and uprisings were quashed with extreme brutality.

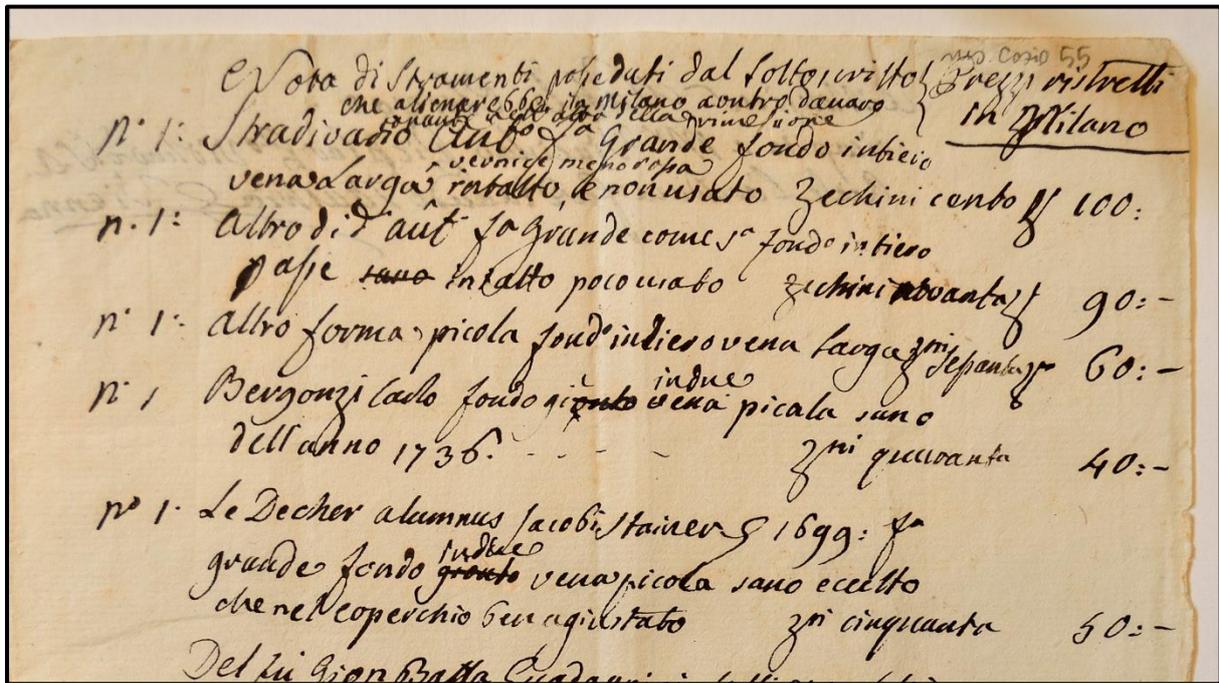


Plate 17: BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 55.

This single-page June 1803 inventory begins with three undated Stradivari violins:

Stradivario Antonio, f[orm]a grande, fondo intiero, vena larga, vernice meno rossa, intatto e non usato, zecchini cento.

Antonio Stradivari, large mould, one-piece back, wide flames, varnish is less red, undamaged and not used, one hundred zecchini.

Altro di d'autore, f[orm]a grande come s[opr]a, fondo intiero, asse, ~~sano~~, intatto, poco usato, zecchini novanta.

Another of this maker, large mould as above, one-piece back, slab cut, ~~in good condition~~, undamaged, a little used, ninety zecchini.

Altro, forma piccola, fondo intiero, vena larga, zecchini sessanta.

Another, small mould, one-piece back, wide flames, sixty zecchini.

⁴⁹ BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 16/3; see also Hill (1902) opposite p. 276. It seems quite extraordinary that Count Cozio should expect English enthusiasts to travel all the way to Milan on the off-chance that, when they eventually arrived, desirable instruments would still be available.

⁵⁰ BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 55; not transcribed by Renzo Bacchetta.

Further instruments on sale in 1803 included violins by Carlo Bergonzi, Stainer, Guadagnini (costing just 10 *zecchini* each), Girolamo Amati, Nicolò Amati, and Andrea Guarneri. The inventory concludes with the date, 2nd June 1803, and Count Cozio's signature, followed by *Cavanaghi No 2334* (see the 'Virtuosos' advertisement text, above).

On 27th February 1823 Count Cozio compiled a three-page inventory of instruments (see Plate 18) which he was depositing with his banker, Carlo Carli, for sale:

Primo Inventaro de stromenti componenti la Collezione a vendersi tutti unitamente, di proprietà del sottoscritto che si lasciano in deposito al Sig^r Cavale^e Carlo Carli.⁵¹

First Inventory of instruments comprising the Collection, to be sold altogether, the property of the undersigned, which are left on deposit with *Signor Cavalière Carlo Carli*.



Plate 18: BScR, LC, ms. Cozio 73.

On the manuscript it is noticeable that Count Cozio has enlarged his lettering of *la Collezione* which strongly suggests that his margin annotation in his 1774 description of a 1716 Stradivari violin⁵² – *nel 1823 posto in collezione principale* – refers to the inventory described here, wherein a 1716 violin is

⁵¹ BScR, LC, ms. Cozio 73; not transcribed by Renzo Bacchetta. An earlier version of this inventory, dated 15th January 1823, forms ms. Cozio 68.

⁵² BScR, LC, ms. Cozio 41; see Chapter 3.

defined as derived from the *P.G.* mould. This 1823 *la Collezione (Primo Inventaro)* comprised the following instruments:⁵³

VIOLINS

1. *Amati, Nicolao, 1668 ... capo d'opera* ('masterpiece') ...⁵⁴
2. **Guarnerio, Andrea, 1658 ... capo d'opera ...*
3. *Stradivari, Antonio, 1716 ... capo d'opera ...*
4. **Ruger, Francesco, 1684 ... capo d'opera ...*⁵⁵
5. *Stradivari, Antonio, anni '92, 1736 ... capo d'opera ...*
6. *Guarnerio, Giuseppe, del Gesù, 1741*
7. **Guarnerio, Pietro, figlio di Andrea, 1722*⁵⁶
8. **Guarnerio, Giuseppe, figlio di Andrea, 1707... capo d'opera ...*
9. *Amati, Antonio e Girolamo fratelli, 1612*
10. **Amati, Girolamo, figlio di Nicolao, 1729 ... capo d'opera ...*
11. **Bergonzi, Carlo, violino d'amore, 1731 ... capo d'opera ...*
12. **di detto Bergonzi, 1733 ... capo d'opera ...*
13. **Amati, Andrea, 1546*
14. **Cappa, senza biglietto* ('no label')
15. **Amati, Nicolao, 1647 ... capo d'opera ...*
16. **Cappa ... con biglietto di Nicola Amati, 1683*⁵⁷
17. **Guadagnini, Giovanni Battista, 1776 ... capo d'opera ...*
18. *Guadagnini ... li più bello fra li diciotto esistenti nella guardarobba* ('the best from the eighteen which are in the wardrobe'); eleven violins, label-dated between 1773 and 1776.

VIOLAS

1. **Guarnerio, Giuseppe 1690* ('with label of his father, Andrea')
2. *del Gatto, Andrea, 1669*
3. **Giovanni Battista Guadagnino, 1773*

CELLOS

1. **del Ruger, Francesco, 1684*
2. **del Bergonzi, Carlo, 1746*
3. **del Guadagnini, G B, 1776 ... capo d'opera ...*

E cosi trenta quattro stromenti con tre casse per li sudetti ('And thus thirty-four instruments, with three cases for the above')

The inventory is signed: *Milano li 27 febbrajo 18 venti tre* ('Milan, 27th February 1823')

C^{te} I. A. Cozio di Salabue

⁵³ An asterisk indicates that the same instrument reappears in Giuseppe Carli's 1841 'left over' inventory (see later in this chapter); i.e. the instrument was not sold during the lifetime of Count Cozio.

⁵⁴ This is almost certainly the violin which had belonged to Count Cozio's father; it reappears in the 1834 BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 81 document (see later in this chapter) but does not appear in Giuseppe Carli's 1841 'left-over' inventory. This omission suggests that Count Cozio retrieved the 1668 Amati violin from Carlo Carli when it became clear that Carli could not sell it; perhaps Count Cozio also retrieved the 1716 *P.G.* Stradivari violin at the same time.

⁵⁵ Francesco Rugeri (1620-1698) known as 'Il Per'.

⁵⁶ Pietro Guarneri (1655-1720), of Mantua, was one of two sons of Andrea Guarneri (1626-1698) but died two years before the label date of the violin. Perhaps Count Cozio misread the label date – perhaps it was 1712 – or perhaps a workshop assistant completed a violin left unfinished by Pietro, glued a genuine label inside, but added the then current year date.

⁵⁷ Gioffredo Cappa (1644-1717); his instruments often contained Amati labels.

The complete third entry, in this *Collezione* inventory, for the 1716 Stradivari violin, is:

N.1 di Stradivari Antonio f[orm]^a P.G. intatto, fondo in due, capo d'opera del medesimo vernice rossa dell'anno 1716.

One of Stradivari Antonio, mould *P.G.*, undamaged, the back in two [pieces], masterpiece of this person, red varnish, of the year 1716.

In the left-hand margin, and aligned with this descriptive entry, the Count writes:

Posti in cassa più grande guarnita d'ottone e coperta di Bulgaro e fodrata di veluto verdone ad una serratura, e due crochetti.

Placed in a larger case [with the 1684 Rugeri *il Per* violin] with brass fittings, covered in Bulgaro⁵⁸ and lined with green velvet, with a lock and two clasps.

A Stradivarian ‘masterpiece’ this 1716 *P.G.* violin may have been but Count Cozio still wanted to sell it – and all 33 other instruments as well – in one transaction (*a vendersi tutti unitamente*). How the Count’s agent, Carlo Carli, was expected to find a single buyer for the complete collection is unclear; if a purchaser was forthcoming then he or she would have needed huge financial resources to buy all the instruments in a single transaction.⁵⁹ Perhaps Count Cozio expected the entire consignment to be bought by an aristocratic collector and admirer of Cremonese instruments, or bought by a violin dealer – perhaps J N Durand – for resale in Paris, but, evidently, no purchaser came forward to buy the entire collection, and, in due course, Count Cozio instructed Carlo Carli to accept offers for individual instruments.⁶⁰ Even under these relaxed conditions the evidence provided by the posthumous May 1841 inventory of ‘left over’ instruments (drawn up by Giuseppe Carli⁶¹) indicates that even individual instruments were difficult to sell, since many of the same instrument details – name of maker, type of instrument, label date – reappear in that inventory. One instrument from within *la Collezione (Primo Inventaro)* which does not appear in the 1841 ‘left over’ inventory is the 1716 *forma P.G.* Stradivari violin. However, this does not necessarily indicate that the instrument had been sold since a ‘perfect’ Stradivari violin (but undated, and of unspecified mould-derivation) appears in a quite different inventory – BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 81 – drawn up in 1834 (see later in this chapter).

According to the Hills, Luigi Tarisio bought his immaculate, perfect, 1716 Stradivari violin from Count Cozio di Salabue, in 1827:

After the death of the Count, his heirs in 1827 sold the Stradivari of 1716 to [Tarisio].⁶²

How much of the Count’s collection came into the hands of Tarisio is not recorded, but evidence is forthcoming that the perfect Stradivari of 1716 became the property of the humble Italian carpenter in 1827.⁶³

⁵⁸ Bulgaro was a type of leather.

⁵⁹ The Count does not specify a price for each instrument; perhaps he was expecting a purchaser to negotiate a total price, with Carlo Carli acting as the go-between agent. Count Cozio also created a *Secondo Inventaro* of assorted instruments which were also deposited with Carlo Carli, but this inventory has a price indicated for each instrument and the Count indicates that these instruments can be sold individually – *per vendersi in dettaglio* (BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 74). The most expensive violin in the *Secondo Inventaro* is a 1736 Stradivari violin priced at 80 *Luigi*; one of the cheapest instruments is a 1675 violin by Giovanni Grancino, priced at 1½ *Luigi*. Four violins, a viola, and a cello, all by Guadagnini, could all be bought for just 75 *Luigi*. Count Cozio also drew up a *Terzo Inventaro* of yet more Guadagnini instruments.

⁶⁰ See Sacchi p. 14.

⁶¹ The son of Carlo Carli. The May 1841 ‘left over’ inventory is discussed later in this chapter.

⁶² Hill (1891) p. 12. The Hills subsequently acknowledge that Count Cozio actually died in 1840 (Hill (1902) p. 276); see also Chapter 1, footnote 10. Count Cozio had only one direct heir, a daughter named Matilde.

⁶³ Hill (1891) p. 13, but the evidence is not forthcoming within the monograph.

David D Boyden also states that 1827 was the date of purchase but implies that Count Cozio was still alive:

[Count Cozio di] Salabue kept the ‘Messiah’ until 1827, when he sold it to Luigi Tarisio [...].⁶⁴

However, an alternative date for Tarisio’s alleged acquisition of the 1716 violin from Count Cozio comes from François-Joseph Fétis (or Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume): ‘purchased by Louis Tarisio in 1824’.⁶⁵

This 1824 date of purchase is itself contradicted by the date of 1827 which Vuillaume wrote on the underside of the belly of his *Le Messie* violin:

*achette par Tarisio au C^{de} Cossio de Salabue an 1827 achette par Vuillaume le 12 Janv 1855
Le Messie*⁶⁶

bought by Tarisio from Count Cozio di Salabue 1827, bought by Vuillaume 12th January
1855 Le Messie

If Vuillaume obtained the violin in January 1855⁶⁷ then his writing of the internal inscription was contemporaneous with the writing and preparation of the Fétis/Vuillaume volume – *Antoine Stradivari, luthier célèbre* – for its May 1856 publication, yet the date for Tarisio’s acquisition of the violin from Count Cozio changes from ‘1827’ inside the violin to ‘1824’ in the book.

If, by 1824 or 1827,⁶⁸ Tarisio had sufficient funds to buy the *la Collezione 1716 P.G.* ‘masterpiece’ Stradivari violin from Carlo Carli (assuming, for the moment, that it is this violin which subsequently became Vuillaume’s *Le Messie*, the Hills’ *Salabue*, and the Ashmolean Museum’s *Messiah*) then his nomadic wanderings through the north-Italian countryside – ‘journeying in the garb of a pedlar, on foot, through Italian cities and villages’,⁶⁹ ‘exchanging’ instruments with the ‘simple-minded villagers’ – were extraordinarily profitable (and quite implausible). Nonetheless, John Dilworth has cited (unidentified) documents from which ‘it is clear that the *Messiah* violin was not among [Tarisio’s] purchases of 1840, and had been in Tarisio’s hands for some time already.’⁷⁰

On 11th October 1834, at the age of 79, Count Cozio wrote out a new, short, inventory of instruments.⁷¹ This BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 81 inventory (see Plate 19) comprises a single sheet of paper, approximately A4 size, with vertical and horizontal creases resulting from having been folded twice. The main body of the text is in the Count’s handwriting – dramatic flourishes with the pen, generous quantities of ink, a very demonstrative and masculine manner of writing. To the left are arithmetical annotations written by the Count’s daughter, Matilde. These annotations are written in a more restrained manner, the numbers and letters more elegantly shaped (and much smaller than those

⁶⁴ Boyden (1979) p. 25.

⁶⁵ Fétis (1856) p. 77, and Fétis (Bishop, 1864) pp. 73-74; see also Chapter 1, footnote 56. Franz Farga (Farga pp. 101-102) offers the same information. John Dilworth has written (‘Silent witness’, *The Strad*, March 2011, p. 37) that, in 1875, the French violin maker Charles-Nicolas-Eugène Gand saw the *Le Messie* violin and, in his ‘memoirs’ [actually his *Catalogue descriptif des Instruments de Stradivarius et J. Guarnerius*, p. 2] gave the date for Tarisio’s purchase of the violin from Count Cozio as ‘1824’. It is very likely that Gand was simply remembering the date originally stated by Fétis.

⁶⁶ This is the French text as reproduced in Hill (1891) p. 24.

⁶⁷ See Chapter 7 for consideration of this purchase.

⁶⁸ 1827 being the year when Tarisio apparently walked from Milan to Paris.

⁶⁹ Hart p. 332.

⁷⁰ ‘Silent witness’, *The Strad*, March 2011, p. 37. Tarisio’s purchase of thirteen assorted instruments (none by Stradivari) from the posthumous Cozio collection was not completed until May 1842 (see later in this chapter). In January 1844 Tarisio also purchased seven Guadagnini instruments.

⁷¹ This inventory is not transcribed by Renzo Bacchetta.

of Count Cozio), and all are visually consistent with the bottom-left statement ‘signed’ by Countess Matilde.⁷² Calligraphic confirmation that these annotations were written by Matilde is provided by financial calculations added by her to the end of a letter of 8th May 1842 sent by Giuseppe Carli to Matilde while she was visiting Rome.⁷³

The Italian text of ms. Cozio 81 is:

<i>Nota de Violini & da q[ues]^{ta} Cardenza</i>	<i>Prezzi a zecchi[n]o effettivo</i>
<i>1a Cassetta da un solo coperta di Bulgaro rosso, il Stradivari di due secoli, ossia metodi zecchini cento</i>	<i>zec.* 100</i>
<i>2da Cas[s]etta verde una viola di singular lavoro e bontà che si giudica d'amati zec. zecchini cinquanta</i>	<i>zec. 50</i>
<i>3a Casetta a Barceletto de violini del Cappa cioè quello col biglietto d'amati con rotture ben aggiuntate [?] sua forza, ed eguaglianza di voce zec. cinquanta</i>	<i>zec. 50</i>
<i>L'altro intatto molto bombé con Biglietto d'Andrea Guarneri zec trenta</i>	<i>zec. 30</i>
<i>4a Casetta da due bene guarnita d'ottone L'uno il più bello sano e grande d'Ant^o Stradivari il più perfetto zec. duecento</i>	<i>zec. 200</i>
<i>L'amati sano di nicolao amati forma sua comune intatto che era di mio padre zecchinè duecento, come veri vita</i>	<i>zec. 200</i>
<i>Casale li 11 8bre 1834.</i>	
<i>Imprestati da varii anni al Sig. C^{te} Candiani figlio</i>	
<i>1. un vi[o]lino di guadagnini G.B. montato alla moderna zec. tredici zec. 13</i>	
<i>Una viola piccola con biglietto di andrea guarnerio buona optimata zec. venti</i>	<i>zec. 20</i>
<i>IacdS[?] al Sig[no]^f Cassino[?] un violoncello grande con biglietto Rugeri d[etto] il Per però è di Francesco il Vecchio con cassa zec. quindici</i>	<i>zec. 15</i>
<i>C'è a Salabue un violino Cappa con cassa vuenti[?] con biglietto d'amati buona da camera</i>	

* The Count uses various abbreviated forms of the word *zecchini*; all have been transcribed here as *zec.*

⁷² Sometimes ‘Metilde’.

⁷³ See BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/10; see also ms. Cozio 78.

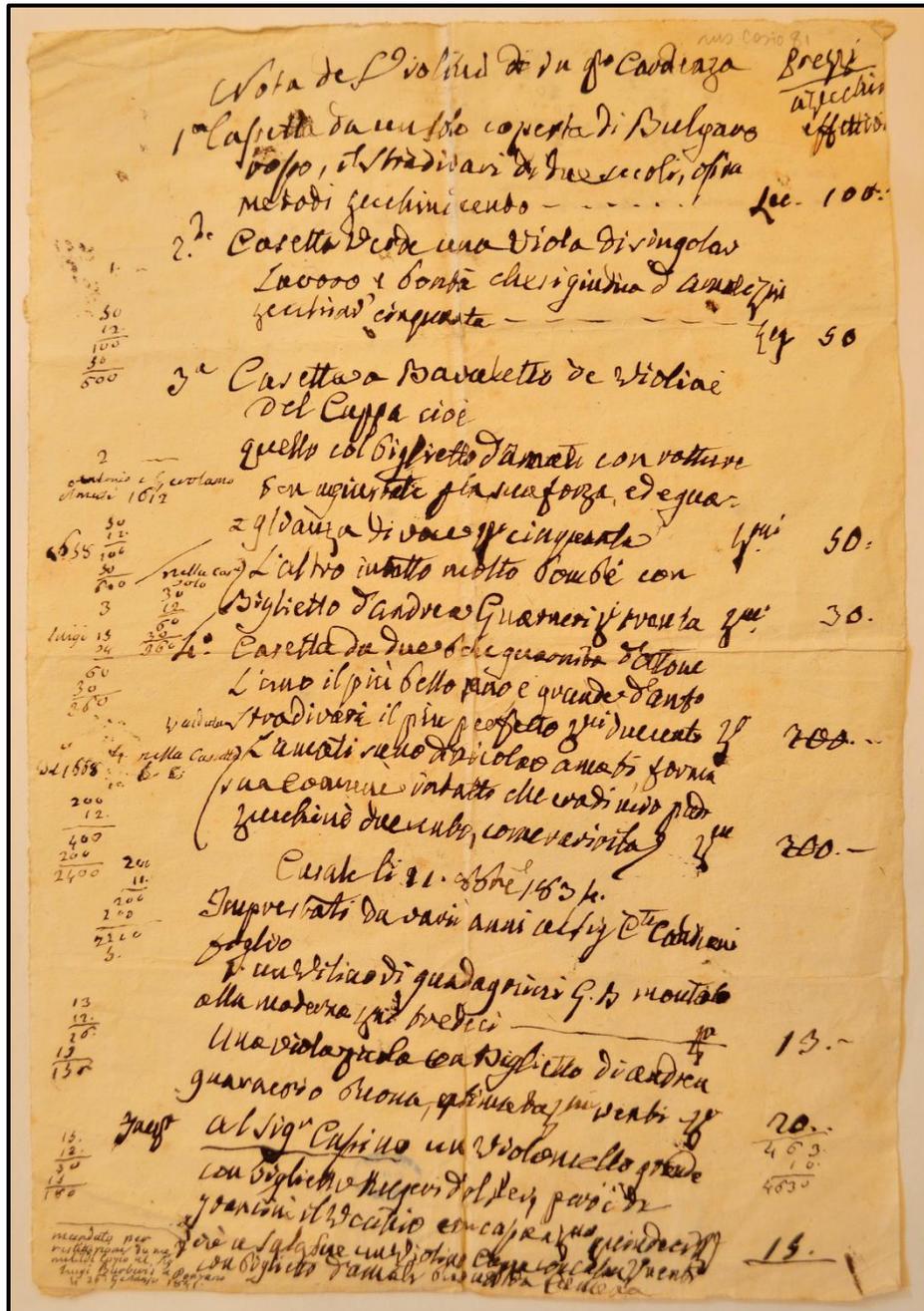


Plate 19: BScR, LC, ms. Cozio 81r

The present author's translation, punctuation added, of this manuscript:

Note of the violins in this cupboard	Prices in nominal zecchini
1. A case for one instrument, covered in red Bulgaro, the Stradivari of two centuries or methods, ⁷⁴ one hundred zecchini	100 zecchini
2. Green case, a viola of singular workmanship and quality and judged to be by Amati fifty zecchini	50 zecchini

⁷⁴ This instrument is probably the Stradivari violin described by Count Cozio (16th January 1808; BScR, LC, ms. Cozio 46) as part of the 'walnut wardrobe' collection, with seventeenth-century ribs, neck, and back, but with an eighteenth-century front. In that entry the violin is priced at 60 Luigi (equivalent to 100 zecchini); see also Cozio/Bacchetta pp. 228-229.

3. Case of Barceletto[?] of Cappa violins, that is the one with the Amati label with cracks, well mended, strong and consistent tone, fifty *zecchini* 50 *zecchini*
- The other, undamaged, fulsome shape, with label of Andrea Guarneri, thirty *zecchini* 30 *zecchini*
4. A double case, well decorated with brass
- One the most beautiful, in good condition, and large, of Antonio Stradivari, the most perfect,⁷⁵ two hundred *zecchini* 200 *zecchini*
- The Amati, in good condition, of Nicolò Amati, his usual mould, undamaged, which belonged to my father, two hundred *zecchini*, as true life[?]⁷⁶ 200 *zecchini*
- Casale, 11th October, 1834.
- On loan for several years to Signor Count Candiani⁷⁷ son
- I. a violin of G. B. Guadagnini mounted in the modern manner,⁷⁸ thirteen *zecchini* 13 *zecchini*
- A small viola with a label of Andrea Guarneri, well optimised, twenty *zecchini* 20 *zecchini*
- IacdS[?] To Signor Cassino[?] a large cello with a label *Rugeri detto il Per* but known as Francesco the Elder, with a case, fifteen *zecchini* 15 *zecchini*
- There is at Salabue a Cappa violin with a [?] case with an Amati label, good for chamber [music]

It appears that the violin and viola loaned to the son of Count Candiani had been returned to Count Cozio which is why the Count added them to ms. Cozio 81 and defined their sale prices.

The title at the top of ms. Cozio 81 strongly suggests that this was the beginning of this particular inventory – i.e. there are no previous pages – and the positioning of the date, 11th October 1834, two-thirds of the way down the page, suggests that this date line terminated the inventory of just six instruments. It is noticeable that the Count’s numbering stops at ‘4’, above the date line, and it is a characteristic of Italian documents that the date is often placed at the end rather than at the beginning. Located at the bottom left of the sheet, in smaller and more elegantly rounded handwriting, Countess Matilde has written:

mandato per restituzione da me matilde Cozio al Sig Luigi Barberis a Ponzano li 26 Gennaio 1841

authorised for restitution, by me, Matilde Cozio, to Signor Luigi Barberis at Ponzano, 26th January 1841

This annotation applies to the last two lines of her father’s text describing an unpriced Cappa violin (with an Amati label) which is thus not included within any sale process. Contained within the Cozio archive in Cremona is a letter from Luigi Barberis [Raimondi] to Countess Matilde:

⁷⁵ No label date is provided by the Count for this instrument, nor for any of the others.

⁷⁶ BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 47, folio 12r, identifies a ‘Nicola’ Amati violin of 1668 as having belonged to Count Cozio’s father.

⁷⁷ See later in this chapter for further information about Count Candiani.

⁷⁸ Assumed to indicate that the neck had been raised, re-angled, and lengthened.

Ponzano, 26th, 1841

I offer you infinite thanks for the kindness and goodness you have shown in sending me the violin mentioned in your letter dated today. Not knowing myself anything about this violin, as I explained to you when I had the honour of speaking to you at your house, I now believe, as you do, that it is probably the very instrument left by my father to Your Ladyship's father. [...] [and I trust that] you will allow me to retain the case together with the violin.⁷⁹

In the left margin of ms. Cozio 81 there are various arithmetical calculations, most probably written by Countess Matilde after the death of her father (it is not likely that the Countess would have annotated her father's documents while he was still alive). The calculations appear to be financial conversions from the 'nominal' *zecchini* into another currency, almost certainly *francs*. The first entry (below and to the left of the Count's item '2' – the Amati viola) shows the viola's *zecchini* price (50) multiplied by 12, with a resultant total of 600 (*francs*). The conversion rate of 12 fits reasonably well with the content of a letter subsequently sent to Countess Matilde in November 1842 by her banker and agent, Giuseppe Carli. In this letter Carli writes of Luigi Tarisio buying Guadagnini violins [...] for which he paid 100 *francs* each. This would be the equivalent of 9 *zecchini* and 15 *lire*.⁸⁰ Thus, between January 1841 and November 1842, the conversion rate between *zecchini* and *francs* dropped from 12 to approximately 11.

Underneath the first financial conversion (and next to the item '3') the Countess has written *Antonio e Girolamo Amati 1612* followed by a conversion of 50 multiplied by 12 – a diagonal line connects the conversion to the Cappa violin with an Amati label priced at 50 *zecchini*. To the left is the date 1658, which may refer to the entry for the Cappa violin with the Andrea Guarneri label, the entry being annotated by the Countess with *nella cassetta solo* ('in the single case') and the price of 30 *zecchini* converted to 360 *francs* through a multiplication of 12. To the left of that conversion, and annotated *Luigi*, is another conversion which achieves the same result of 360. This second conversion suggests that a potential buyer for the Cappa/Guarneri violin offered to pay with fifteen *Luigi* (*Louis d'or*) gold coins,⁸¹ and Matilde's calculation, using a conversion rate of 24, revealed to her that such a payment would generate the same total, in *francs*, as a conversion rate of 12 applied to 30 *zecchini*. The word *Luigi* does not indicate a connection with either Luigi Tarisio or Luigi Barberis Raimondi. It is unclear why Countess Matilde should convert her nominal *zecchini* price by 24, rather than by 20.⁸²

Below that entry, and just to the right, is the word *venduto*, adjacent to the word *Stradivari*; thus the undated *più bello [...] più perfetto* violin had been sold as an individual item. Since this important annotation appears in Matilde's handwriting it is unlikely that the sale took place at any point while her father was still alive. The name of the purchaser of the Stradivari violin is not indicated, and there is no extant correspondence within the documents archived at the Biblioteca Statale di Cremona which makes any mention of this sale.

⁷⁹ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/7; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 462 and Santoro (1993) p. 182 (who editorially indicates that the full date of this letter is 26th September 1841 but offers no supportive evidence). It seems more likely that on 26th January 1841 Countess Matilde wrote her bottom-left annotation on ms. Cozio 81, sent the Cappa violin to Ponzano (Monferrato) – just one mile to the west of the Castello di Salabue – and Luigi Raimondi immediately wrote his letter of thanks.

⁸⁰ Translated from Cozio/Bacchetta p. 469; see also Santoro (1993) p. 187. In Count Cozio's 17th July 1801 letter to Signor Picler/Pickler (previously quoted) his Guadagnini violins were then priced at between 15 and 18 *zecchini* each; forty years later the price has plummeted.

⁸¹ See Chapter 3, footnote 104.

⁸² Financial annotations made by Matilde at the bottom of the aforementioned 8th May 1842 letter sent to her by Giuseppe Carli (BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/10) are prefaced by the Countess writing *135 Napoleoni d'oro* (i.e. *Luigi* coins) and her conversion of this currency is through multiplying by 20.

The next annotations – *Nella cassetta and dal 1668* – refer to the Nicolò Amati violin which had belonged to Count Cozio’s father.⁸³ There then follow two conversions of 200 *zecchini*, one at the rate of 12, the other at the rate of 11. The first conversion is very likely related to the *più bello* [...] *più perfetto* Stradivari violin while the second relates to the Nicolò Amati violin (but the reason for the change in conversion rate is unclear).

The subsequent conversion of 13 *zecchini* applies to the Guadagnini violin. Below that conversion, in thick black ink, are what could be the letters *IacdS* (Ignazio Alessandro Cozio di Salabue?) which suggest that the Francesco Rugeri cello was sold after 11th October 1834 to Signor Cassino for 15 *zecchini*, and the Count has initialled the entry to signify the completion of the sale. Countess Matilde has added her own conversion of 15 *zecchini*, multiplying by 12, to find the equivalent in *francs* (although, since the cello was already sold, Matilde’s calculation is somewhat redundant).

At the bottom-right corner of the page appears a total of 463 *zecchini* multiplied by 10, totalling 4,630 (*francs*). It is possible that Countess Matilde was calculating the financial result of selling multiple instruments in one transaction and, by way of a discount, reducing the exchange rate from 12 (or 11) to 10. The close positioning of the ‘463×10’ calculation underneath the 20-*zecchini* price for the Andrea Guarneri small viola suggests that ‘463’ is the result of combining all the prices on the right-hand side of the sheet of paper but excluding the prices of the Stradivari violin and the Rugeri cello, both of which had already been sold. It is notable that while the Stradivari violin had been sold, the Amati violin, which had once belonged to Count Cozio’s father, had not.

The evidence of ms. 81 strongly suggests that the *più bello* [...] *più perfetto* Stradivari violin was sold by Countess Matilde to a purchaser (name unknown) on a date (unrecorded) after the death of her father in December 1840. A layer of uncertainty is perhaps generated by the *verso* of this document where there are four further arithmetical calculations, and two lines of text (see Plate 20) all written by Matilde (but whether these items are explicitly related to each other is difficult to establish):

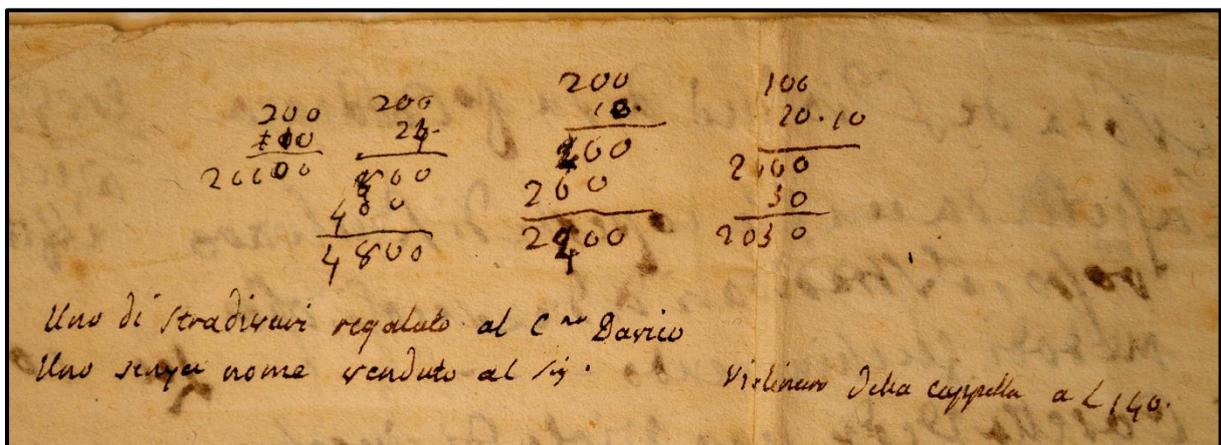


Plate 20: BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 81v

*Uno di Stradivari regalato al C^{te} Davico*⁸⁴

Uno senza nome venduto al Sig[nore] [...] violinaro della cappella a L[ire]140.

One of Stradivari presented [gifted] to Count Davico

One without a name [label?] sold to Signor [...] violinist of the chapel, *Lire* 140.

The Count Davico referred to by Matilde was Count Pietro Giovenale Davico di Quittengo, grandson of Silvio Davico (who had married Count Cozio’s sister, Paola, in 1778). Pietro Giovenale Davico

⁸³ See also footnote 76 of this chapter.

⁸⁴ See also Chapter 1, footnote 11.

received the title to the lands of the Salabue estate on 3rd August 1841 by order of King Carlo Alberto (King of Piedmont-Sardinia between 1831 and 1849); perhaps Matilde presented a Stradivari violin to Count Davico in recognition of his new status⁸⁵ (whereas the anonymous violinist of the chapel clearly bought his ‘no name’ violin for 140 *Lire*). The evidence of the 8th June 1844 letter from Giuseppe Carli to Countess Matilde (see later in this chapter) indicates that Matilde, at that date, still possessed the Stradivari violin ‘of two centuries’; this, together with the already-sold status of the *più bello [...] più perfetto* Stradivari violin, suggests that the Stradivari instrument presented by Matilde to Pietro Giovenale was neither of the Stradivari violins itemised in ms. Cozio 81.

Three of Matilde’s four arithmetical calculations begin with ‘200’ (the nominal price, in *zecchini*, of the *più bello [...] più perfetto* Stradivari violin, and of the 1668 Amati violin), and the third calculation shows a conversion into 2,400 *francs*, but this conversion already exists on the *recto* so its (re)appearance on the *verso* is puzzling. The first, second, and fourth multiplications are difficult to explain.

The first mention of Luigi Tarisio’s name within Count Cozio’s extant correspondence comes in a letter sent by Giuseppe Carli on 3rd December 1839 to Count Cozio. Carli writes:

Another reason which obliges me to write to your Lordship is to inform you that the instrument dealer [*negoziante di stromenti*] Tarisio indicated to me his desire to see your collection [of instruments], and I did not in any way hesitate to satisfy him, knowing the instructions given by Your Lordship to my brother.⁸⁶ It seems that the said Tarisio, if it happens that he has to come to Piemonte, will come here [Carli’s banking house in Milan?] in order to arrange a new contract with your Lordship.⁸⁷

Included with Carli’s letter was a listing of fourteen instruments which Tarisio had seen in Milan a few days earlier and was now offering to buy.⁸⁸ The listing indicates that the price required by Count Cozio for all fourteen instruments was L.4,900 but Tarisio was only offering L.2,750, and, in addition, he wanted three old necks and an old violin front plate to be included in the contract at no extra cost.⁸⁹ A subsequent letter from Giuseppe Carli (May 1841 – see below) indicates that Tarisio subsequently raised his offer to L.3,000, but this was still not accepted by Count Cozio, and the fourteen instruments in question were still unsold when Count Cozio died in December 1840.

⁸⁵ See later in this chapter for the correspondence from August and September 1841 between Countess Matilde and her banker, Giuseppe Carli, correspondence which suggests that, in the light of the Salabue lands being passed to Conte Davico, Matilde was liquidating all her family’s remaining assets in order to fund her retirement.

⁸⁶ Giuseppe Carli’s brother was Felice Carli, who died on 13th August 1839; see Santoro (1993) p. 171.

⁸⁷ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 91/34; see also Cozio/Bacchetta pp. 454-455 and Santoro (1993) pp. 169-170.

⁸⁸ The initial documentation for Tarisio’s offer (a memorandum – *Per memoria* – written up at the Carli banking house in Milan and listing the instruments which Tarisio wanted to buy, and the prices he was willing to pay) is dated 24th November 1839 (BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 16/6). This document identifies Tarisio’s Milanese residence: *Signore Tarisio Luigi, alloggia il corso di Porta Renza, ossia Orientale, albergo di S. Paolo, e si troverà colà circa la metà di Dicembre* (‘Signor Luigi Tarisio, lodging on the main road of Porta Renza, or Orientale, the hotel S. Paolo, and can be found there until mid-December’). Tarisio is evidently not residing at his secretive lodgings – ‘the top floor of a dirty inn in the Via Legnano, near the Porta Tenaglia in Milan’ – wherein, it is claimed, many dozens of extremely valuable instruments were stored. The *Porta Renza* was one of the twelve city gates of Milan, known locally as the *Porta Orientale*. In 1862 the gate was formally renamed the *Porta Venezia*. See also BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 75 which is a copy of the Carli memorandum, annotated by Count Cozio on 14th December 1839. See also BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/5.

⁸⁹ The Austrian *lira* (‘L’) was the same as the *lira* currency which had been imposed on northern Italy by Napoleon in the early years of the nineteenth century. To distinguish between the Napoleonic/Austrian *lira* and the ancient Milanese *lira* (of different value) the north-Italian population usually referred to the former as *francs*.

The next relevant letter, dated 14th February 1841 and thus two months after the death of the Count, is from Giuseppe Carli to Countess Matilde:

Most illustrious Ladyship Countess Matilde Cozio in Casale (Piemonte)

I note with pleasure that you intend to dispose of the instruments which are in my possession in accordance with what was agreed with your esteemed father. [...] I shall take it upon myself to immediately establish a precise inventory [...] I shall send it to you as soon as possible.

[...] As for the valuation (to which you refer) made by Signor Tarisio – which does not agree with the annotations made by your late father [...] I find it opportune to remark that the price accorded to certain of the violins by the aforementioned Signor Tarisio was not a minimum estimate of value but rather an offered price for the acquisition of the said violins. Agreement [in the earlier negotiations with Count Cozio]⁹⁰ was not possible since the financial proposition put forward by Signor Tarisio was not accepted by your father.

I shall wait to hear from you as to whether, in compiling the inventory, I should include everything in the collection, that is to say the violins, violas, cellos, tools, apparatus, and other objects.

Meanwhile I think it wise to indicate to you a doubt in my mind as to whether, when I carry out the valuation of the aforementioned instruments, they should be valued at the same price as was offered by Signor Tarisio. I would believe not. I have reason to think that they will perhaps be valued at even lower prices than the said offers. [...] Here in Milan the enthusiasm of amateurs for music has been much diminished. [...] If, nonetheless, Your Ladyship would like me to organise this valuation, I will select experienced and honest people. I will also bear in mind the offer made by Signor Tarisio, and, in this connection, I shall be sure to conduct myself in accordance with the precise instructions which you will confer on me.⁹¹

In May 1841, Carli writes again:

Today, having finally completed the task with which it pleased your Ladyship to charge me, I hereby send to you the written inventory of the instruments,⁹² which it will be good for you to examine carefully so as to confirm whether, as I do not doubt, you find it in agreement with the annotations which you already have.

[...] I can report to you that since Signor Tarisio is in Milan for a few days he instructed me to renew to Your Ladyship his offer, which was made to your father in December 1839, for the purchase of 13 violins by different makers, and a Bergonzi cello, plus three old necks, and an old violin front plate, all for the sum of L.2,750. This offer, although subsequently raised to L.3,000, had no outcome, given the much more elevated price demanded by your late father, of L.4,900.

I wait for your reply about this, which I will communicate to Signor Tarisio when he returns to Milan within the month. Meanwhile, I would observe to you that although the offer made by Signor Tarisio is very much lower than the price demanded by your father I would be of the view that you should not ignore it, assuring you, as I do, that here in Milan a better offer will not be found, nor, even, an equal offer. [...] Please favour me with your precise instructions on everything, and, in the meantime, I shall cultivate any meetings [with prospective buyers] which come my way, and I will keep you informed.⁹³

⁹⁰ See the subsequent letter, which also refers to the earlier negotiations.

⁹¹ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/2; see also Cozio/Bacchetta pp. 456-459.

⁹² 'Inventory of the instruments truly of the late Count Alessandro Cozio di Casale which were by this person deposited [in 1823] with the late Cavalière Carlo Carli of Milan and which are currently to be found with his son, Giuseppe' (translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 84; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 335 and Santoro p. 175). This 'left over' inventory itemises 74 instruments, including 48 violins by Guadagnini and many other items such as bridges, pegs, bows without any hair, moulds, etc.; there are no Stradivari instruments listed. It is in this inventory that Giuseppe identifies three cello moulds and three violin moulds – 'of various dimensions' – which he is still holding; see Chapter 2, page 2.

⁹³ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/3; see also Cozio/Bacchetta pp. 459-460 and Santoro (1993) pp. 173-175.

It must be assumed that Countess Matilde replied to Giuseppe Carli, as requested, although no such letter is preserved at the Biblioteca Statale di Cremona. Carli writes again to Matilde, on 17th August 1841, and, at the end of his letter, he lists the instruments which he has succeeded in selling to Luigi Tarisio. These are the thirteen violins and one cello mentioned in Carli's earlier letter of May 1841 which, in turn, refers back to Carli's 3rd December 1839 listing of 'violins seen by Signor Luigi Tarisio':

Nota delli strumenti di ragione della Signora Contessa Metilde Cozio da Giuseppe Carli venduti il 14 Agosto 1841 al Signor Luigi Tarrisio secondo l'offerta stata dal sudetto fatta al fu Signor Conte Alessandro Cozio.

Note of the instruments truly of Countess Metilde Cozio, sold by Giuseppe Carli on the 14th August 1841 to Signor Luigi Tarisio following the offer made by this person to the late Count Alessandro Cozio.

* ⁹⁴	<i>1 violino di Pietro Guarnerio figlio di Andrea del 1722 and</i>	
*	<i>1 violino di Giuseppe Guarnerio del 1707</i> ⁹⁵ [both instruments for]	<i>fr. 500</i>
*	<i>2 violini di Carlo Bergonzi (1731 and 1733)</i> ⁹⁶	<i>fr. 500</i>
*	<i>1 violino di A. Sneider con biglietti d'Amati del 1647</i> ⁹⁷	<i>fr. 250</i>
*	<i>1 violino di Francesco Rugieri detto il Per del 1684</i>	<i>fr. 300</i>
*	<i>1 violino di Cappa con biglietto d'Amati del 1683</i>	<i>fr. 200</i>
	<i>1 violino di Guadagnini del 1773, 2 di detto del 1775,</i>	
	<i>3 di detto del 1776</i> ⁹⁸ [all six violins for the total price of]	<i>fr. 600</i>
*	<i>1 violoncello di Carlo Bergonzi del 1746</i>	<i>fr. 400</i>
	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>fr. 2,750</i> ⁹⁹

Carli adds a further *fr.100 – aumento* – to the total; this supplementary charge was presumably in recognition of Carli's efforts as the intermediary. The final price, therefore, was 2,850 *francs*, and thus Countess Matilde had been obliged to sell these instruments at the prices originally offered by Luigi Tarisio.

With respect to the instruments listed in the aforementioned 1834 ms. Cozio 81 inventory, a subsequent letter of 2nd September 1841 from Giuseppe Carli to Countess Matilde includes:

The principal reason for this letter is to let you know that the aforementioned Signor Tarisio requests Your Ladyship to send me a list of the instruments in your possession,¹⁰⁰ with [in each case] the name of the maker, and the year, and the minimum price at which you would be disposed to release it. If Signor Tarisio was to find that the demands are reasonable then, when he next travels to Piemonte, he would make a special journey to you [at Casale] in order to conclude the transaction [i.e. collect the instruments].¹⁰¹

Given the date of Carli's letter, it is reasonable to assume that the aforementioned annotations made by Countess Matilde to the 1834 ms. Cozio 81 inventory (see p.13) were by way of preparing the

⁹⁴ An asterisk indicates the previous listing of the instrument in *la Collezione (Primo Inventaro)* of 1823.

⁹⁵ The maker is Giuseppe Guarneri *filius Andrea* (1666-1739/40).

⁹⁶ Renzo Bacchetta's transcription of this bill of sale (Cozio/Bacchetta p. 464) gives a label date of 1733 for both violins.

⁹⁷ Despite the unexpected appearance of 'A. Sneider' (identified by Giuseppe Carli both in his May 1841 'left over' inventory and in his August 1841 bill of sale) this is probably the 1647 Amati violin listed in *la Collezione (Primo Inventaro)*

⁹⁸ In Giuseppe Carli's May 1841 inventory he had itemised forty-eight Guadagnini violins (see Cozio/Bacchetta pp. 335-338 and Santoro (1993) pp. 175-177).

⁹⁹ BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/5.

¹⁰⁰ i.e. instruments which were kept at the Castello Salabue – the ms. Cozio 81 instruments (and, perhaps, others) – rather than instruments which were kept at the Carli banking house in Milan.

¹⁰¹ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/6; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 464 and Santoro (1993) p. 181.

information required by Tarisio; thus Matilde's financial calculations, in the left margin of that inventory, were made soon after 2nd September 1841. But Matilde's prices were evidently not acceptable to Tarisio; Carli eventually wrote again, on 4th January 1842:

[...] In reply to the esteemed letter sent to me last September, [...] you have probably already realised that the price you required for those violins [4,630 *francs*?] did not accord well with Signor Tarisio.¹⁰²

A subsequent letter from Giuseppe Carli to the Countess (8th May, 1842) states: 'I have received from Mr Tarisio, for the sold instruments, 570 pieces of five francs.'¹⁰³ This payment of 2,850 *francs* concluded the sale of the thirteen violins and one cello (and had no connection with any of the ms. Cozio 81 instruments).

On 3rd September 1842 Carli writes again to Countess Matilde:

Coming now to the question of your instruments I can inform you that, a little while ago, I was close to signing a contract for one of the two cellos made by Guadagnini (the one made entirely by that maker) but we did not conclude anything, [the buyer] not wishing to spend more than 15 *zecchini*, whilst I maintained the minimum price of 24 *zecchini* [...]. I have also received some enquiries [*dimanda*] with regard to the violins of the same maker, but the offered price was 100 *francs*. No deal was made since this was no more than the price offered by Signor Tarisio.¹⁰⁴

Finally, a letter from Countess Matilde to Giuseppe Carli appears, dated 22nd October 1842:

I trust in your judgment, being persuaded of your loyalty and knowledge. Therefore, if you do not believe that, by deferring the sale, the instruments will increase in price, then by all means do sell them as soon as the opportunity presents itself, and I shall always be most grateful for your truly singular attention in this matter.¹⁰⁵

Carli writes again (30th November 1842) indicating further difficulties in selling the instruments, but, fourteen months later, on 27th January 1844, he is able to report that he has sold to Tarisio six violins and one cello, all by Guadagnini (but no label dates are indicated). In addition, to 'different professors of Milan' Carli has sold two more Guadagnini violins, a viola by Guarneri, and two cellos, one by Guadagnini and one by Rugeri.¹⁰⁶

On 8th June 1844 Carli writes with news that

Signor Tarisio has been in Milan for a few days; as a result he has asked me to ask whether Your Ladyship would be disposed to sell the two violins made by Stradivari and kept by you – that is to say, the large one made in two different periods, and the other, extremely small, one. If this is the case, I would ask that Your Ladyship indicates to me the price that you desire for each of these two instruments. I could probably also manage to make an arrangement to sell the other instruments which are in your possession.¹⁰⁷

The description – 'the large [violin] made in two different periods' – appears to fit exactly with the first item of the ms. Cozio 81 inventory; if so, this violin was evidently still with the Countess in the summer of 1844. The 'extremely small' violin is possibly either a *pochette* – a dancing-master's pocket violin, played in the crook of the arm rather than on the shoulder – or a quarter-size violin of

¹⁰² Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/8; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 465 and Santoro (1993) p. 183. Carli is presumably using the term 'violins' in a generalised sense.

¹⁰³ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/10; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 467 and Santoro (1993) p. 185. Did Tarisio pay his bill with 570 five-franc coins – each one needing to be counted – just to irritate Carli?

¹⁰⁴ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/11; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 468 and Santoro (1993) pp. 185-186.

¹⁰⁵ Translated from Cozio/Bacchetta p. 468; see also Santoro (1993) p. 187.

¹⁰⁶ See BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/13; see also Cozio/Bacchetta pp. 471-472.

¹⁰⁷ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/114; see also Cozio/Bacchetta pp. 472-473 and Santoro (1993) p. 191.

which Stradivari made at least three. Photographs of a Stradivari 1717 *pochette* (now known by its soubriquet, *Clapisson*) are provided by Charles Beare who comments: ‘This particular instrument was sold by Tarisio to the well-known violin maker Pierre Sylvestre of Lyons [...]’.¹⁰⁸ Beare also illustrates two quarter-size violins made by Stradivari, one now known as the *Fontaine* (of 1712),¹⁰⁹ purchased from Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume by the collector Andrew Fontaine, and the second, the *Gillott* (of 1720). Charles Beare states: ‘In 1848 this 1720 violin was sold by Tarisio to the London dealer John Hart, from whom it passed to the collection of Joseph Gillott, inventor of the steel pen.’¹¹⁰

On 26th August 1844 Countess Matilde evidently wrote to Giuseppe Carli with some instrument prices¹¹¹ (as requested by Carli) since Carli refers to this letter, and her prices, in his tardy reply of 22nd March 1845. This is the last letter archived at the Biblioteca Statale di Cremona.

I am sorry to have to tell you that, after the last sale,¹¹² all the efforts and measures I have tried [to sell the remaining instruments] have remained fruitless up until now. I have not omitted to tell Signor Tarisio what Your Ladyship (in your letter of 26th August) charged me to tell him with regard to the instruments you hold there [Casale].¹¹³ Nor have I omitted to try to persuade him to purchase the instruments that are still here with me, but I did not manage to induce him to make any purchase [...] though he led me to believe that something might be done on his return, when he will come to Italy in the early spring.¹¹⁴

Thus Tarisio, at least prior to 1845, seemingly did not buy the violin ‘made in two different periods’, nor ‘the extremely small one’, but, at a date after 1845, did obtain both the *Clapisson* and the *Gillott* instruments and, possibly, the *Fontaine*.

It is noticeable that, in his letters, Giuseppe Carli only ever refers to Tarisio in polite and respectful terms, and, according to his 27th January 1844 letter to Countess Matilde, Carli – desperate to sell her remaining instruments – even went to see Tarisio to try and persuade him to buy. If Tarisio was not an illiterate and avaricious peasant but, instead, ‘a shrewd businessman and a lover of [string] instruments’,¹¹⁵ then the present-day investigator is left wondering why the standard derogatory image of the man should have been so assiduously promoted during the middle of the nineteenth century. To whom would such a mis-representation be most advantageous?

Summary

1. Neither the 1716 *G*-mould Stradivari violin described by Count Cozio in 1808 (‘in the tall walnut wardrobe’) nor the 1716 *P.G.* violin (360.95mm length) measured by Count Cozio in 1816 can be connected to today’s *Messiah* violin.
2. A 1716 *P.G.*-mould Stradivari violin was included in the *la Collezione (Primo Inventaro)* of 1823. The evidence from Count Cozio’s documents strongly suggests that this violin was the one which

¹⁰⁸ Beare pp. 224-225.

¹⁰⁹ Beare p. 172, and Beare *et al.* p. 138-145.

¹¹⁰ Beare p. 234.

¹¹¹ Whether the prices were just for the two Stradivari violins – ‘two different periods, and the extremely small one’ – or, additionally, for ‘the other instruments’, is not known.

¹¹² Was this the sale to Tarisio which was itemised in Carli’s letter of 27th January 1844?

¹¹³ Precisely which instruments are here being referred to by Giuseppe Carli is uncertain.

¹¹⁴ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/15; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 474. Carli’s phrase – ‘on his [Tarisio’s] return, when he will come to Italy in the early spring’ – suggests that Tarisio visited Italy infrequently, and lived, for most of the time, in another country. The repeated evidence of Carli’s letters indicates that Tarisio spent very little time in Milan.

¹¹⁵ This thumbnail portrait was suggested to the present author by Charles Beare.

he had described in 1774 (ms. Cozio 41: ‘in 1823 it was placed in my principal collection’) and again in 1801 (ms. Cozio 42).¹¹⁶ Anyone with sufficient funds could have bought this violin from Carlo Carli at any point from 1823 onwards but, according to the initial specification laid down by Count Cozio, he or she would have had to buy thirty-three other instruments as well. The evidence points towards Count Cozio subsequently relaxing his *unitamente* requirement for *la Collezione* and allowing the sale of individual instruments, but there are no surviving documents which indicate that anyone purchased the 1716 Stradivari violin; there is no bill of sale, no receipt, no record of the transaction (but these documents, of course, may simply be lost). If, notwithstanding the lack of documentation, someone did buy the 1774-75/1801/1823 *la Collezione* 1716 P.G.-mould violin from Carlo Carli then he or she bought a violin which, according to Count Cozio’s 1774-75/1801 descriptions, does not physically agree with the violin at the Ashmolean Museum. In addition, if the *la Collezione* 1716 violin was sold then the *più bello* [...] *più perfetto* Stradivari violin itemised in the 1834 ms. 81 inventory is a different violin.

3. If the lack of documentation is interpreted as indicating that the 1716 violin was not sold then perhaps Count Cozio subsequently retrieved it (together with his father’s 1668 Amati violin), re-listed it in his short 1834 inventory, and it was sold by Matilde in 1841. Count Cozio’s 1834 description – *più bello* [...] *più perfetto* – echoes the praises which appear in the 1774-75 and 1801 descriptions but does not sit well with the *Messiah* violin’s asymmetric scroll eyes, ‘ski-ramp’ edges, and resin-pocket infill.
4. If Tarisio was so impoverished during the 1820s that he had to walk from Milan to Paris then it seems most unlikely that he could have bought any violins from Carlo Carli during that decade. If (according to Vuillaume) Tarisio subsequently became rich,¹¹⁷ and in 1841 learned from Giuseppe Carli that a *più bello* [...] *più perfetto* Stradivari violin was being offered for sale by Countess Matilde, then a purchase of this violin would have been routed through the Carli offices in Milan. Tarisio, for reasons of social etiquette, could not visit Countess Matilde to inspect the instruments stored at her residence, nor negotiate prices; the Carli family of bankers was the conduit, as had been the case with Count Cozio:

Local age-old customs dictated that noblemen carry out all [their] business affairs through intermediaries, [...].¹¹⁸

Perhaps Tarisio did indeed buy from Countess Matilde her father’s *più bello* [...] *più perfetto* Stradivari violin (of unknown label-date), but not for re-sale – simply to keep and preserve it – and, for whatever reason, there is simply no extant documentary evidence for this purchase. But, if Tarisio, in 1841, was the purchaser, and the violin was the one which was later identified by Vuillaume as *Le Messie*, then Vuillaume’s inscription on the underbelly of the violin – ‘Bought by Tarisio from Count Cozio de Salabue 1827 ...’ – becomes wholly incorrect. Buying a ‘perfect’ Stradivari violin would undoubtedly justify Tarisio subsequently teasing the Parisian dealers, but if the teasing began prior to 1841 then it was not prompted by the *più bello* [...] *più perfetto* violin which, until that year, was in Casale-Monferrato.¹¹⁹

5. If Count Cozio’s *più bello* [...] *più perfetto* Stradivari violin was also the P.G. 1716 violin which he had comprehensively measured in 1816 then, even if Tarisio did buy the violin from Matilde, its dimensions prevent any association with today’s *Messiah* violin.

¹¹⁶ See Chapter 3.

¹¹⁷ See Vuillaume’s ‘Note’ in Chapter 7.

¹¹⁸ Duane Rosengard, quoted in Accornero *et al.* p. 15.

¹¹⁹ Franz Farga (Farga p. 97) states that Tarisio ‘raved about [the *Le Messie*] violin to Vuillaume and Gand for twenty years’.

6. It is here suggested that between the death of Count Cozio (December 1840) and September 1841 (when Countess Matilde added her financial annotations to ms. Cozio 81) the *più bello [...] più perfetto* Stradivari violin was bought by someone who did not inquire or negotiate through Giuseppe Carli; i.e. it was bought by someone – very likely another Italian aristocrat – who could be properly and appropriately received by the Countess, as an equal, at the Castello Salabue. During the early months of 1841 Countess Matilde apparently endeavoured to sell her instruments to Count Candiani (from Casale-Monferrato) but her efforts were unsuccessful; a letter, simply dated ‘May 1841’, from Giuseppe Carli to the Countess, includes:

I am sorry to hear from your recent letter that the negotiation over the remaining instruments, that has been on-going between Your Ladyship and Count Candiani, has come to nothing.¹²⁰

Subsequently, perhaps Count Candiani, although still declining to buy all of Matilde’s remaining instruments, agreed to buy one of the two jewels of the collection, the *più bello [...] più perfetto* Stradivari violin (the other jewel being the Amati violin which had belonged to Countess Matilde’s grandfather). Whoever was the purchaser, he or she apparently paid 2,400 *francs* for that single violin (whereas Tarisio was buying fourteen instruments for 2,850 *francs* yet informing Giuseppe Carli that even these ‘cheap’ instruments were proving difficult to sell).¹²¹ Tarisio could not have contemplated spending 2,400 *francs* on one instrument and still expect to subsequently sell it at a profit. However, an aristocratic collector, without any commercial agenda, might have been prepared to pay the extremely high asking price. If so, then the *più bello [...] più perfetto* violin was never owned by Luigi Tarisio, was never seen by Giuseppe Rocca,¹²² was never hidden away at ‘The Farm of the Cross’,¹²³ and was never found by Vuillaume in January 1855.¹²⁴

7. The other ms. Cozio 81 instruments were apparently still with Countess Matilde in 1845. It is likely that, after Matilde’s death in 1853, it was these instruments which were passed to her cousin Marchese Rolando Giuseppe Dalla Valle (and then, after his death in 1891, to his youngest son, Marchese Alessandro Dalla Valle).¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Translated from BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/3; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 460 and Santoro (1993) p. 174.

¹²¹ See letter of 27th January 1844 from Giuseppe Carli to Countess Matilde (BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 93/13).

¹²² See Chapter 8.

¹²³ See Chapter 7.

¹²⁴ See Chapter 7.

¹²⁵ See Chapter 2.