

Appendix

Francesco Stradivari and his *Salabue* violin

Given the willingness of late-eighteenth-century collectors and dealers to falsify labels and modify instruments, and given the lack of respect for the creative artistry of craftsmen of the calibre of Stradivari, Guarneri, Bergonzi, and Guadagnini – artistry which should have been held sacrosanct – it is sometimes only with difficulty that certainties of manufacture and authorship can be established to everyone's satisfaction. Even with a violin maker who apparently made very few instruments the uncertainties often outweigh the certainties by a wide margin, and such a situation exists with some of the instruments made by, or attributed to, Antonio Stradivari's eldest son, Giacomo Francesco.

Two of Francesco's early violins, label-dated 1707 and 1716, are illustrated by Simone Sacconi,¹ and were listed on the Cozio.com website with the identification numbers 4993 and 4992. The website also identified a 1713 violin (no. 6345) with the label *Franciscus Stradivarius cremonensis filius Antonii faciebat Anno 1713*, a cello (no. 4453) labelled *Sotto la disciplina² di Antonio Stradiuario F. in Cremona 1733*, the *Le Besque* violin (attributed to the year 1742 by Cozio.com but 'has a Stradivari [Antonio?] label of 1734'), and the *Petersen* violin which the website attributed to *circa* 1740 despite the label: *Antonius Stradivarius Cremonensis Faciebat Anno 1734*. The Tarisio.com website (in August 2014) illustrated just five violins by Francesco: the *Oliveira* (1730), un-named (1732), *Humser* (1740), *Salabue* (1742), and the *Le Besque* (1742).³

A violin which is associated with Francesco Stradivari – a violin which is label-dated 1730⁴ – is twice described by Count Cozio (**1A** and **1B**, below), with a third description (**2**, see later) including detailed measurements of what, at first sight, appears to be the same violin. The first description is contained within an undated Cozio document titled *Violini Stradivari da Registrarsi* which contains descriptions of five Stradivari violins, one label-dated 1731, all the others label-dated 1730. The Count's description of the fifth violin is:

Description 1A

*Biglietto bollato 1730, forma non così grande, fondo intiero, legno preso per asse, covine semicerchio con due ponte sotto al profilo (per tenere il fondo alle toppe) una per la parte superiore e l'altra inferiore, manico e fascie di legno come il fondo, rizzo senza contorno nero. Coperchio di legno bellissimo ondegiante con un picciol tassello in esso al di fuori sotto le FF del bordone, le FF non incavate.*⁵

Label⁶ stamped, 1730, not so large a type, one-piece back; the wood is slab-cut, the [neck] button is a semicircle with two [locating] pins underneath the purfling (to hold the back to the

¹ Sacconi (1972) pp. 112-113.

² '[Made] under the teaching ...'

³ In addition to these five Francesco Stradivari violins the Tarisio.com website identified 'eighteen other properties' but these were not illustrated on the website.

⁴ The Cozio.com website (accessed February 2013) did not list a 1730 Francesco Stradivari violin; neither did the Tarisio.com website (August 2014).

⁵ BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 40; see also Cozio/Bacchetta, p. 199. The date when this description was written is likely to have been only very shortly before the writing of Description **1B** since the latter appears in ms. Cozio 41.

⁶ But of Antonio, or Francesco?

blocks) one in the upper part [of the body] and the other in the lower part; neck and ribs are of the same wood as the back [plate], the scroll does not have a black outline. The front plate is made of most beautiful wood, rippled, with a small patch within it [inserted from the] outside,⁷ under the *f*-hole on the bass side; the *f*-holes are not hollowed.⁸

The second description appears within ms. Cozio 41 (1774-75):

Description 1B

*Fondo intiero, bosco preso per asse, covino semicerchio con due ponte sotto il profilo una a basso e l'altra sopra manico e fasse compagni al fondo, risso senza negro, coperchio di bosco bellissimo ondeggiato, con un picciol tassello al di fuori in esso sotto l'FF del bordone, le FF non incavate, biglietto bolato anno 1730, vernice rossa questo è del Francesco figlio.*⁹

One-piece back, the wood is slab-cut, the button is a semicircle, with two pins under the purfling, one in the lower part and the other above [in the upper part]; neck and ribs match the back [plate], the scroll does not have a black outline; the front is made of most beautiful wood, rippled, with a small patch [inserted from the] outside within it, under the *f*-hole on the bass side, the *f*-holes are not hollowed, label stamped 1730, red varnish, this is of Francesco, the son.¹⁰

It will be noted that description **1A** does not mention a maker's name; it is the close repetition of the information from **1A** in **1B** – and description **1B** concluding with *questo è del Francesco figlio* – which enables Francesco's name to be applied to the first description (**1A**) of this 1730 violin. It is unclear on what basis Count Cozio identified the violin as having been made by Francesco Stradivari; perhaps Paolo Stradivari was the source of the information. Count Cozio does not describe the text-content of the violin's internal label.

These two near-identical descriptions are evidently of the same violin, label-dated 1730, and this violin exhibits strong physical similarities to that which today is known, slightly confusingly, as Francesco Stradivari's *Salabue* violin (a violin which currently contains an internal label dated 1742). Photographs of today's *Salabue* violin reveal the following positive correspondences with the **1A** and **1B** descriptions of the 1730 violin:¹¹

- one-piece slab-cut back plate; the wood matches that of the ribs and the neck
- semi-circular neck button
- the scroll not outlined in black¹²
- longitudinal ripples in the wood of the front plate¹³

⁷ A custom-made sliver of wood exactly filling a resin pocket in the plate. The same type of infill, but in a different location on the front plate, can be found on the *Messiah* violin; see Chapter 3 and Plate 8.

⁸ For an example of hollowed wood, see the close-up photograph of the bass-side *f*-hole of the *Messiah* violin in John Dilworth, 'Silent witness', *The Strad*, March 2011, pp. 32-33.

⁹ BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 41; see also Cozio/Bacchetta, p. 218. Count Cozio has drawn a box around the final phrase of the description (present author's underscore).

¹⁰ The near-identical text suggests that the first description may have been a rough draft, with the second description the fair copy.

¹¹ High-resolution photographs of the Francesco Stradivari *Salabue* violin – front plate, back plate, centre bout, and head – are published in Accornero, G., Epicoco, I., Guerci, E., *Il Conte Cozio di Salabue, Liuteria e Collezionismo in Piemonte* (2005), pp. 50-51.

¹² The disintegration of the black outlining seems to have occurred very rapidly; only a few flecks of black are still visible on the bass side of the scroll. See Chapter 12 for a discussion of the rate at which the varnish on Cremonese instruments disintegrated and disappeared.

¹³ The ripples are visible in the treble-side lower bout and to the right of the treble *f*-hole. Count Cozio also noted (BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 46) a rippled appearance in the top plate of a Nicolò Amati violin with a label-date of 1658: *Coperchio vena larga*

- an infill on the front plate underneath the bass-side *f*-hole (see Plate 32, below)¹⁴
- two locating pins – top and bottom of the back plate
- the *f*-holes are not hollowed¹⁵

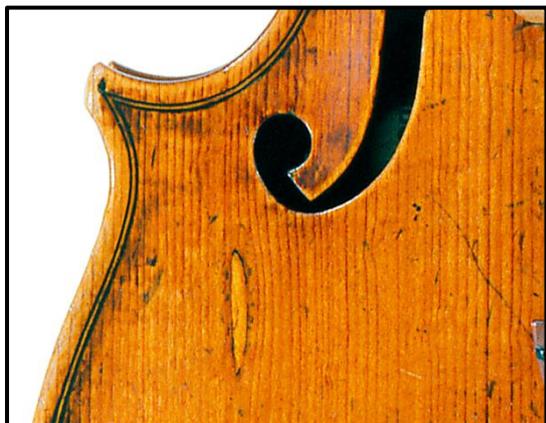


Plate 32: Francesco Stradivari's *Salabue* violin.

Mr James Warren,¹⁶ in correspondence with the present author, has supplied the following dimensions of the present-day *Salabue* violin (with its 1742 label) – ‘over the arching’ – i.e. measured with a tailor’s tape:

Upper Bout:	6½ inches	[165.1mm]
Centre Bout:	4 ³ / ₈ inches	[111.1mm]
Lower Bout:	8 inches	[203.2mm]
Body Length:	13 ¹⁵ / ₁₆ inches	[354mm]

Calliper-derived metric equivalents of these arching measurements – i.e. point-to-point measurements – would likely be:

Upper Bout:	163.9mm
Centre Bout:	108.1mm
Lower Bout:	202mm
Body Length:	352.5mm

Allocating 352.5mm to the length of the back-plate of the *Salabue* violin as photographed in Accornero *et al.*, pp. 50-51 and extrapolating the bout widths (as photographed) by using a multiplication of 2.049 produces the following results:

Upper Bout:	164.9mm
Centre Bout:	107.7mm
Lower Bout:	203.2mm

These results closely correspond with the proposed calliper-derived equivalent measurements (above) and thus confirm the physical reality of the present-day *Salabue* violin. Supportive evidence is

disuguale in fondo e dalla parte del cantino con diversi ondeggiamenti (‘The top has wide uneven veins [growth-rings] at the lower end, and on the treble side, with various ripples’).

¹⁴ The infill is approximately 20mm long by 3mm wide.

¹⁵ This not-hollowed condition appears to be confirmed by the photographic evidence; see Plate 32.

¹⁶ American violin dealer, based in Chicago.

provided by the Francesco Stradivari violin known as *Le Besque* which is stated by Ernest Doring to have an Antonio Stradivari label of 1734 and the following dimensions:

UB $6\frac{7}{16}$ inches, CB $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches, LB 8 inches, Length $13\frac{15}{16}$ inches.¹⁷

These measurements are almost identical with Mr James Warren's over-the-arching measurements of the *Salabue* violin; the *Salabue* violin thus has a twin – the *Le Besque* violin.

The *Salabue* violin and the *Le Besque* violin both fit around Antonio Stradivari's *S* mould of 20th September 1703:

	UB	CB	LB	Body Length
<i>S</i> mould (Sacconi (1972) p.197 measurements)	157	102	196	345 (with blocks fitted)
Mould + 7.3mm extensions ¹⁸	164.3	109.3	203.3	352.3
The <i>Salabue</i> measurements ¹⁹	164.4	107.9	202.6	352.5

Note the Count's comment – 'not so large a type' – in Description **1A**.

Descriptions **1A** and **1B** both indicate that the described violin was label-dated 1730; the present-day *Salabue* violin has a 1742 Francesco Stradivari label glued inside:

Franciscus Stradivarius Cremonensis
Filius Antonii faciebat Anno 1742

These details of the label-text and the date-digits – 'The last three digits in ink by hand' – were supplied to the present author by Mr James Warren, who also offered the following comments:

You should also be aware that this label was put in the violin by Alfred Hill, who considered it likely to be its original label, possibly removed by Count Cozio who owned this particular instrument and was known to sometimes do some alterations, including label switching [...]. The Dalla Valle Collection included this label and Mr Hill approached Signor [Giuseppe] Fiorini of Rome, who [subsequently] had all the Stradivari relics [between 1920 and 1930]. He [Alfred Hill] purchased this label from him and reinserted it in the violin. He was quite sure, because of this trail, that it was the violin's original label.

Clearly, the *S*-mould/**1A**/**1B**/*Salabue* violin had its 1730 label removed before the violin passed into the Hills' hands; once there Alfred Hill 're-inserted' a 1742 label.

In their 1902 monograph the Hills provide a 'facsimile' of a 1742 Francesco Stradivari label:

Franciscus Stradivarius Cremonensis
Filius Antonii faciebat Anno 1742²⁰

In this case only the last two date-numerals are handwritten with pen and ink, which raises doubts over the provenance and reliability of the label. There is no monogram in the Hills' facsimile of the label.²¹ The Hills write:

¹⁷ Doring p. 357.

¹⁸ See the end of Chapter 2 for an explanation of the author's 'extensions'.

¹⁹ Averaged from the proposed 'calliper equivalents' and the 'extrapolated' measurements.

²⁰ Hill (1902) between pp. 216 and 217.

²¹ Another Francesco Stradivari 1742 label (without a monogram) is illustrated by Antoine Vidal (Vidal (1876-78) Volume I, Plate XXII, opp. p. 106), and yet another (also without a monogram) in Vidal (1889) Plate XVIII, opp. p. 198. The latter label is very similar, but not identical, to that illustrated by the Hills in 1902.

The Francesco Stradivari label comes to us²² from the Marquis [Rolando Alessandro?] Dalla Valle. It was most probably taken from one of the two violins purchased by Count Cozio in 1775 from Paolo Stradivari. We may add that not a single authentic example of Francesco's work has been hitherto identified by us.²³

In the 1909 second edition of the Hills' monograph (p. 233) the final quoted sentence is excised, which would suggest that between 1902 and 1909 the Hills saw an instrument – perhaps the cello mentioned by Wurlitzer (see later in this Appendix) – which contained a Francesco Stradivari label, but it is unclear how a solitary label could be adjudged as genuine and entirely reliable.²⁴ Ernest Doring quotes from a 1928 letter sent by Alfred Hill to Monsieur Vatelot-Hekking: 'Since the publication of our [1902] Life of Stradivari, I have been fortunate enough to come across an authentic instrument of Francesco's bearing his original label', but Doring does not indicate whether this instrument was a violin, viola, or cello.²⁵

A conundrum centres on why, if the Hills had obtained a 1742 (42 handwritten) Francesco Stradivari label from the Marchese Dalla Valle (and reproduced this label in their 1902 monograph), Alfred Hill then purchased a 1742 label (742 handwritten) from Giuseppe Fiorini on a date between 1920 and 1930? What had happened to the label used in the 1902 monograph?

It is here proposed that Francesco Stradivari's *Salabue* violin should be acknowledged as originating from the year 1730 rather than from 1742.

Description 2

On 3rd June 1816 Count Cozio wrote a descriptive entry (see Plate 33) which, mostly, comprises measurements of a Francesco Stradivari violin. This entry appears to describe the same 1730 violin as in descriptions **1A** and **1B** but the instrument is now clearly identified as containing an Antonio label despite Francesco being the author of the instrument:

*Misure mio violino del Francesco Stradivari con bigl[iett]o suo padre del 1730
compresi li profili sul coperchio²⁶*

Measurements [of] my violin of Francesco Stradivari with his father's label of 1730, including the profiles [purfling] on the front plate.²⁷

²² The expression 'comes to us' indicates a date prior to 1902, and thus this is not the 1742 label bought by Alfred Hill from Giuseppe Fiorini. Whether 'comes to us' indicates that the 1742 label was a gift from the Marchese Dalla Valle to the Hills, or just loaned for the purposes of the Hills' 1902 monograph (and returned thereafter), or bought from the Marchese by the Hills, is unclear.

²³ Hill (1902) p. 220.

²⁴ The Francesco Stradivari label illustrated on page 227 of the Hills' 1909 second edition is the same as that which appeared in the 1902 first edition.

²⁵ Doring p. 357.

²⁶ BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 47, folio 29v; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 255. The underscore is as in the original manuscript.

²⁷ Sacconi (Sacconi (1972) p. 101) comments: 'Of this period we know of instruments totally constructed by the sons [Omobono and Francesco] with the father's original label but without any annotation of age.' Sacconi gives no details of these instruments. Count Cozio writes (22nd December 1820) of a colleague's violin which has an Antonio Stradivari label dated 1725: 'I believe that this violin could be made by Francesco [...] who, as in my two [violins], used his father's label' (*che fece come ne' miei due uso del biglietto di suo padre*).

1616-3. M^o mio Vitolino del duca di Savoia / Trad.
 gruppo nei confronti suo padre del 1730.
 compresi li Profili subcoperti

larg. larg. superiore polii cinque pol. 5-11 $\frac{3}{8}$
 ponti undici e mezzo
 Minor larg. nel petto quale pol. 3-9 $\frac{4}{8}$
 polii tre per ponte due terzi
 maggior larg. inferiormente pol. 7-4 $\frac{4}{8}$
 sette per quattro o due terzi
 Longh. dal ponticello, al fondo superiore pol. 7-
 polii sette
 Longh. dal post. al fondo del cocino polii pol. 5-9-
 un piede ponti roca
 grossezza del ponticello pol. due pol. - - 2 $\frac{1}{3}$
 grossezza dei due colli o pian fondo: pol. - - 3 $\frac{3}{6}$
 ponti tre e mezzo
 Totale polii tre dieci, ponti due e mezzo pol. 13-2 $\frac{3}{6}$
 mezzo ponte
 Larghezza delle A. per un ome pol. 5-1 $\frac{4}{6}$
 di polii cinque delle ferrie polii pol.
 tre un forato, o due terzi di ponte
 Larghezza nel petto quale polii due pol. 2-10 $\frac{4}{6}$
 ponti dieci e due terzi
 Larghezza fra li cavalli superiori delle ff. 1-6 $\frac{1}{2}$
 polii uno ponti sei, ed un quarto di pol.
 larg. inferiore quale due ponti inferiori
 delle ff. pol. 4-2 $\frac{3}{6}$

Plate 33: BScR, LC, ms. Cozio 47, folio 29v.
 Count Cozio's measurements continue on folios 30r and 30v.

Towards the end of his listing of the measurements Count Cozio writes:

Curve larghe e lunghe ben spianate; coperchio ondeggiato e traversato con un tasello sotto l'FF della q[uar]^{ta} bislongo per riempire un groppo che vi era; il fondo e fascie prese per asse senza vena. Il manico bella vena fina. Nel fondi [...] le due ponte per fermarle nelle toppe cioè la superiore nel profilo e altra fuori d'esso. [...] La voce è buona eguale ma non così forte come li retrodescritti altri tre Stradivari. Il lavoro in totale ben e atto e polito.²⁸

²⁸ BScR, LC, ms. Cozio 47, folio 30v; see also Cozio/Bacchetta p. 256. The sheet of paper on which Count Cozio has written this description is badly damaged and, in places, his text is now impossible to read.

The arching is well-smoothed across both width and length; the front plate is rippled, and crossed with a patch under the *f*-hole of the fourth [string]²⁹ – an oblong – to repair a knot which is there [in the wood]; the back and the ribs are slab-cut without flames. The neck [has] beautiful narrow flames. In the back plate [...?] the two pins to fix [the back] to the blocks, namely the pin in the upper part [i.e. at the neck] within the [width of the] purfling and the other pin [at the tail-piece end] outside [the width of the purfling]. [...] The voice is good, and even, but not so strong [sonorous] as the previously described three [violins] of [Antonio] Stradivari. Overall, the workmanship is good and appropriate and neat.

At first sight it seems that Count Cozio might once again be describing the violin of Descriptions **1A** and **1B**. However, in **1A** and **1B** the ‘neck and ribs match the back’ (alternatively, ‘neck and ribs are of the same wood as the back’) but now, in Description **2**, whilst the back and ribs are slab cut without flames ‘the neck has beautiful narrow flames’. The small resin-pocket infill identified in Descriptions **1A** and **1B** is not the same as the knot (*groppo*) under the bass-side *f*-hole as is identified in Description **2**, notwithstanding the similar location on the front plate; the Count’s usage of *al di fuori* in Descriptions **1A** and **1B** is conspicuous by its absence in Description **2**. Count Cozio’s text – *e traversato con un tasello sotto l’FF della quarta bislongo per riempire un groppo che vi era* – makes clear that while the front-plate knot could be seen, its supportive patch was glued to the underside of the front plate, underneath the knot. Evidently Count Cozio, or one of the Mantegazza family, or G B Guadagnini, removed the front plate from this violin, and, on the underside, below the bass-side *f*-hole, saw an oblong reinforcing patch, orientated across the bout width, repairing (or supporting) the knot.³⁰

In addition, the 3rd June 1816 measurements made by Count Cozio (see Plate 33) clearly demonstrate that this violin (Description **2**) has no dimensional connection with the *S*-mould/**1A/1B/Salabue** violin:

*Misure mio violino del Francesco Stradivari con bigl^o suo padre del 1730
compresi li profili sul coperchio*

*Maggior Larg[hezz]^a superiore – polici cinque, ponti undeci e mezzo: 5. 11 ³/₆
Minor Larg[hezz]^a nel petto fra li CC – polici tre, ponti nove e due terzi: 3. 9 ⁴/₆
Maggior Larg[hezz]^a inferiamente – sette, p[on]ⁱ quarto e due terzi: 7. 4 ⁴/₆*

*Longh[ezz]^a dal ponticello al Bordo superiore – polici sette: 7. -----
Longh[ezz]^a dal pont[icell]^o al Bordo del covino – polici cinque, ponti nove: 5. 9 –*

*Grosezza del ponticello – pⁱ due: -- 2 –
Grosrezza dei due orli³¹ ossia bordi – ponti tre e mezzo: -- 3 ³/₆*

Totale polici tredici, ponti due e mezzo ponti: 13. 2. ³/₆

Measurements [of] my violin of Francesco Stradivari, with his father’s label of 1730, including the profiles [purfling] on the front plate:

Maximum upper width [upper bout]: 5 *pollici* and 11½ *ponti*
Minimum width in the chest between the CC [C-bout]: 3 *pollici* and 9²/₃ *ponti*
Maximum lower width [lower bout]: 7 *pollici* and 4²/₃ *ponti*
Length from the bridge to upper border [purfling]: 7 *pollici*

²⁹ The G-string.

³⁰ It is entirely possible that the internal oblong patch was fitted by the Mantegazzas, or by Guadagnini, or even by Count Cozio.

³¹ ‘brim’, ‘hem’ (Giuseppe Baretta 1831 dictionary).

Length from the bridge to the border [purfling] at the [tail-piece] button³²: 5 *pollici* and 9 *ponti*

Bridge thickness: 2 *ponti*

The width of the two brims, or edges [combined]: 3½ *ponti*

Total length of the violin body: 13 *pollici* and 2½ *ponti*

Converting the Count's measurements with 27.07mm for 1 *pollici*, and 2.26mm for 1 *ponti*:³³

UB: 5 *pollici* and 11.5 *ponti* + 3.5 *ponti* for the edges = 6 *pollici* and 3 *ponti* = 169.20mm

CB: 3 *pollici* and 9.67 *ponti* + 3.5 *ponti* for the edges = 4 *pollici* and 1.17 *ponti* = 110.92mm

LB: 7 *pollici* and 4.67 *ponti* + 3.5 *ponti* for the edges = 7 *pollici* and 8.17 *ponti* = 207.95mm

The Body Length measurement of 13 *pollici* and 2.5 *ponti* = 357.56mm.

Count Cozio's 357.5mm violin fits very convincingly around Antonio Stradivari's *G* mould:

	UB	CB	LB	Length
<i>G</i> mould (Sacconi 1972 measurements)	161	103	201	350mm ³⁴
Mould + 7.3mm extensions ³⁵	168.3	110.3	208.3	357.3
Count Cozio measurements (3 rd June 1816)	169.2	110.9	207.9	357.5

Count Cozio's documents contain an inventory dated 28th February 1823:

Inventario degli instrumeti di me C^{te} Cozio oltre quelli lasciati a Milano ne tre inventari presso il Sig^{re} Caval[ie]^{re} Carlo Carli ³⁶

Inventory of instruments [owned] by me Count Cozio in addition to those left in Milan, in the three inventories, in the care of Signor Carlo Carli.³⁷

Underneath this title Count Cozio writes *Violini a Parigi* [Paris] and lists three violins, one of which is by Antonio Stradivari. This is followed by *A Torino* [Turin], listing another Antonio Stradivari violin and a violin by Guadagnini. Next is *A Bologna*, followed by *A Casale Monferrato*.³⁸ Under this last heading are listed five violins: one by Guadagnini, three by Gioffredo Cappa, and one by Francesco Stradivari:³⁹

Un violino f[orm]a G di Francesco Stradivari con biglietto del padre del anno fondo per asse intiero, e coperchio ondato

A violin, mould *G*, of Francesco Stradivari with label of his father of the year

The back plate is slab-cut, one piece, and the front plate wavy.

³² The Count has here confused matters since *covino* normally indicates the neck-button. The Count's measurements, however, clarify that this length is from the bridge down to the tailpiece end of the violin.

³³ See Chapter 5 for a detailed explanation of the Count's system of measuring, using the 'Foot of Paris'.

³⁴ Sacconi (1972) p. 198, states that the body length of the *G* mould (with top and bottom blocks fitted) is 354mm but this is clearly a typographical error and the correct figure is 350mm.

³⁵ See the end of Chapter 2 for an explanation of the author's 'extensions'.

³⁶ BScR, LC, ms. Cozio 70; not transcribed by Renzo Bacchetta.

³⁷ This inventory was drawn up on the day after Count Cozio had written out his *la Collezione (Primo Inventario)* inventory, together with his second and third inventories (see Chapter 6, footnote 59). Evidently Count Cozio owned still more instruments (but instruments which, at least in 1823, were not for sale).

³⁸ Count Cozio's family home, the Castello di Salabue, lies south-west of the town of Casale-Monferrato.

³⁹ The three Gioffredo Cappa violins reappear in Count Cozio's ms. 81 inventory of 11th October 1834; see Chapter 6.

Count Cozio leaves blank the space on the paper where the label-date could have been entered (after *del anno*). Nonetheless, his descriptive detail – slab-cut back plate, rippled front plate – points towards the Francesco violin which was measured on 3rd June 1816 being that which, with a 1730 Antonio label (overriding Francesco’s authorship of the violin), and with its *G*-mould-derived measurements of 169.2, 110.9, 207.9, and 357.5mm, was sent to the Cozio family’s residence. The subsequent history of this violin is unknown.

The layers of confusion which surround the Francesco Stradivari *Salabue* violin, and its label, are replicated across dozens of Italian violins, violas, and cellos made between 1650 and 1750 (and the situation does not improve much even after 1750). In the world of genuinely old and rare instruments – the supply of which is strictly finite – the persistent uncertainty as to whether written information can be trusted is the major reason why a string-instrument expert will always hope to identify a maker by the style of his visible workmanship rather than by the information which is on the internal label. Philip Kass,⁴⁰ in a January 2001 letter to *The Strad* magazine, bluntly wrote:

The quality and depth of research in older reference books, upon which many decisions by dealers and collectors have been based, are for the most part abysmal. When these books give false dates for violin makers’ working periods, it is hardly surprising that we have altered labels giving the wrong dates: a custom practised generations ago, even by such collectors as Cozio di Salabue, who altered and removed labels from instruments by Francesco Stradivari, Girolamo Amati and others in his collection, solely for motives of greed. Ironically, standards of integrity are higher now than they have been for years, or perhaps ever.

During the panel discussion about the authenticity (or otherwise) of the *Messiah* violin (the discussion hosted by the Violin Society of America in November 2000) Charles Beare commented on the issue of labels:

They are the basis of almost all our knowledge. Indeed, without the information from labels, we would mostly have no idea who made what or where or when. It is vitally important for anyone aspiring to learn about the violin family of instruments to study not only paper, print, ink, and handwriting, but also and especially the appearance of a piece of paper that has been glued in the same place for hundreds of years, as compared to a label which, although apparently original, has been moved from its original spot.⁴¹

Francesco Stradivari’s *Salabue* violin was the subject of a letter (June 1959) from the American dealer Rembert Wurlitzer (1904-1963) to the collector Mr Henry Hottinger (1885-1979) who owned this violin between 1959 and 1965. Wurlitzer identifies the *Salabue* violin’s label as ‘original’:

It is interesting to note Mr. Hill’s comments concerning the greater appreciation of the work of Francesco Stradivari, since his great book⁴² on the life of Stradivari was written. At that time not a single instrument was known to Mr. Hill bearing an original label of Francesco and although it must have been clear to him that many of the instruments bearing the label of Antonio Stradivari had the collaboration of other hands in the shop, it was of course not possible to specifically identify those hands without finding such an instrument. When that was done, first in the case of Omobono Stradivari and then later after Mr. Hill found an original example of one of Francesco’s cellos, it became easy to identify the hands of each of

⁴⁰ American violin dealer.

⁴¹ JoVSA (XVII, 3) p. 183. The condition of the label inside the *Messiah* violin is discussed in Chapter 11.

⁴² It is unclear why Wurlitzer indicates a single author for the Hills’ monograph on the life and work of Antonio Stradivari.

these makers and clearly trace their work, as Mr. Hill states,⁴³ in some of the later works of Antonio. Only recently we⁴⁴ had the good fortune to see in Paris another violin by Francesco with its original label, and this, along with the example [the *Salabue*] now in your possession, are the only ones with original labels known to us.⁴⁵

⁴³ The location of Mr. Hill's statement is not indicated.

⁴⁴ 'we' probably refers to Wurlitzer himself together with Simone Sacconi who, by 1954, was working at the House of Wurlitzer in New York.

⁴⁵ Quoted in *World of Strings*, Fall 1975, William Moennig & Son, Philadelphia, USA.