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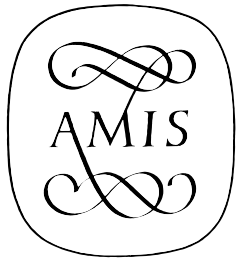


The Panormo Alto Recorder: a *Dolce Flauto Dolce*?*

Inês de Avena Braga

The topic of Italian Baroque recorders has not been exhausted either in writing or in performance. Little research has considered the building techniques displayed or the influence those instruments may have had in the music composed for them in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Italy. One wonders why instruments that present such high levels of craftsmanship in woodwind making would have been left aside in the modern revival of early music and early instruments. Compared with the number of extant Baroque recorders in other countries, the number of extant Baroque recorders originating from Italy is rather insignificant. However, if one considers the great amount of music written in that country specifically for the recorder,[1] it seems valuable to direct one's attention to the actual instruments made in Italy at that time. Information gleaned from such an investigation would be indispensible in reviving both the instruments themselves and the music written for them.

In total, at least twenty-seven signed[2] Italian Baroque recorders[3] are known to have survived (table 1) and are now in public and private col-

*The author wishes to thank Mr. Fumitaka Saito for his commitment and enthusiasm for this project, measuring and re-constructing the Panormo alto, and for his contribution to this article in the form of the measurements, photographs, and expertise in the study and reproduction of Baroque recorders. The author also wishes to express her sincere thanks to the curator of the Dayton C. Miller Flute Collection in Washington, DC, Mrs. Carol Lynn Ward-Bamford, who dedicated an entire week to assist her and Mr. Saito with their study of the Panormo alto.

1. See Federico Maria Sardelli, "Il flauto nell'Italia nel primo Settecento," *Ad Parnassum* II/3 (2004): 103–152. Treats not only the recorder but also the traverso repertoire in Baroque Italy, and especially in Venice. See also Richard A. McGowan, *Italian Baroque Solo Sonatas for the Recorder and the Flute.* (Detroit: Detroit Studies in Music Bibliography; no. 37, 1978).

2. One more instrument perhaps could be added to this list: the wonderfully ornate anonymous alto in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, previously owned by Rossini.

3. Double recorders are not included in this compilation, nor are they treated in this article or in the author's dissertation research.

TABLE 1. Italian recorder makers of the Baroque period and their extant instruments.

Maker	Stamp	Dates	Relevant cities	Extant recorders
Anciuti, Giovanni Maria[i]	(Lion of Venezia) ANCIVTI A MILAN[O]	1674 - 1744	Milan, Venice	8: 7 complete (5 altos, 1 soprano, 1 sopranino) plus 1 (sopranino) with a missing head joint
Castel[ii]	*[with or without stylized]* И CASTEL. (lion rampant)	op. 1720 - 1750	Venice	8 (2 voice-flutes/tenors, 4 altos, 1 soprano, 1 sopranino)
Castel/ Palanca	*[head marked Castel, body and foot marked Palanca]*	op. 1720 - 1750/ ca. 1691 - 1773	Venice/ Turin	1 (alto)
Garsi, Francesco[iii]	(stylized sun) GARSI PARMA	1764 - 1856	Parma	1 (bass)
Grassi, Barnaba[iv]	GRASSI ИИ MILAИ	fl. 1797 - 1802	Milan	2 (1 alto, 1 sopranino)
Montazzavi[v]	MONTAZZAVI	early 18th c.?	?	1 (unknown size)
Palanca, Carlo[vi]	CARLO PALANCA	ca. 1691 - 1773	Turin	3 (1 tenor, 2 altos)
Panormo, Giovanni[vii]	IOAN: PANORM:	fl. a. 1750	Naples	1 (alto)
Perosa, Domenico[viii]	PEROSA *[in a wimple or scroll]*	b. 1753 - a. 1757	Venice?	2 (1 soprano, 1 sopranino)

[i] Francesco Carreras and Cinzia Meroni: "Giovanni Maria Anciuti: a craftsman at work in Milan and Venice". *Recercare* XX, no. 1–2 (2008), pp. 181–215.

[ii] Francesco Carreras: "Il Flauto traverso in Italia: Tre secoli di storia nella collezione Carreras / Flute-making in Italy: Three centuries of history in the Carreras collection." Exhibition catalog, MUSA-Museo degli strumenti musicali dell' Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, 10 settembre—11 ottobre 2009 (Rome: Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, 2009), p. 32.

[iii] Francesco Carreras: "Flute making in Italy during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries." Geschichte, Bauweise und Spieltechnik der Qüerflöte, Band 74 (2006), pp. 71–102.

[iv] Francesco Carreras: "La produzione di strumenti a fiato in legno nell'Ottocento a Milano." *Il Flauto in Italia*, ed. C. Paradiso (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 2005), pp. 331–364.

[v] Waterhouse: op. cit. Private collection.

[vi] Carreras (2006): op. cit. Alfredo Bernardini: "Carlo Palanca e la costruzione di strumenti a fiato a Torino nel settecento". *Il flauto dolce*, No.13 (1985), pp. 22–26.

[vii] Francesco Nocerino: "Gli strumenti musicali a Napoli nel secolo XVIII." *Storia della musica e dello spettacolo a Napoli. Il Settecento*, a cura di F. Cotticelli, P. Maione, 2 tomi, Turchini Edizioni (Napoli 2009), tomo II, pp. 773–804.

[viii] Carreras (2006): op.cit.

lections around the world.[4] In most cases, little is known about these makers, and few of the instruments have been appropriately measured and copied since the so-called rebirth of the recorder in the twentieth century. It is not at all possible to talk about a Baroque Italian recorder school of woodwind making or to compare it to other schools previously established in other research (for example, English[5] or Dutch[6]), as most modern recorder makers (and players) would not be able to say anything significant about those instruments. Thus, further research on Italian recorders is required to enable reconstruction and performance

4. Belluno (private collection), Berlin (Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung), Celle (private collection), Copenhagen (Musikhistorisk Museum), Edinburgh (Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments), Graz (Landesmuseum Joanneum), Leipzig (Museum für Musikinstrumente), London (Victoria & Albert/Horniman Museum), Milan (Archivio del Museo Teatrale alla Scala/Raccolta Museale del Conservatorio "G. Verdi" di Milano), Montoggio (private collection), Nice (Musée du Palais Lascaris), Parma (Museo storico del Conservatorio Arrigo Boito), Quito (Museo Pedro Pablo Traversari), Rome (Museo degli Strumenti Musicali di Roma/Museo degli Strumenti Musicali Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia), unknown location in Sardegna (private collection), Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum and Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde Wien), and Washington, DC (Library of Congress). Both William Waterhouse's *The New Langwill Index* (London: Tony Bingham, 1992) and Phillip T. Young's *4900 Historical Woodwind Instruments* (London: Tony Bingham, 1993) list the majority of instruments in this compilation, and provide a great part of the information contained in table 1, otherwise completed in private communication with the respective collections and collectors or consulting the following: *The Dayton C. Miller Flute Collection: A Checklist of the Instruments*, compiled by L. E. Gilliam and W. Lichtenwanger (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1961), *Musical Instruments in the Dayton C. Miller Flute Collection at the Library of Congress: A Catalog*, volume I: Recorders, Fifes, and Simple System Transverse Flutes of One Key, compiled by Michael Seyfrit (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1982), Bruce Haynes: *A History of Performing Pitch / The story of "A"* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2002), and http://www.recorderhomepage.net/original.html (accessed 2 July 2012). Also, Anthony Baines, *Catalogue of Musical Instruments in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, Part II: Non-Keyboard Instruments (London: V&A Publications, 2002). Guido Bizzi and Lorenzo Girodo, *La collezione di strumenti musicali del Museo Teatrale alla Scala* (Milan: Il Laboratorio, 1991), Arnold Myers, ed., *Historic Musical Instruments in the Edinburgh University Collection,* Part D Fascicle i: Recorders and Flageolets, 1st edition (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments, 2000), Luisa Cervelli, *La Galleria Armonica: catalogo del Museo degli strumenti musicali di Roma* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1994), Richard Rephann, *A catalogue of the Pedro Traversari Collection of Musical Instruments* (Washington, DC: Organization of American States, 1978), and Franca Falletti, Renato Meucci, Gabriele Rossi-Rognoni, eds.: *Marvels of Sound Beauty: Italian Baroque Musical Instruments* (Florence: Giunti Editore, 2007).

5. Eric Halfpenny, "The English Baroque Treble Recorder," *The Galpin Society Journal*, Vol. 9 (June, 1956): 82–90.

6. Jan Bouterse, *Dutch Woodwind Instruments and their Makers, 1660–1760.* (Utrecht: Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 2005).

on modern copies of such original instruments. Even before such copies exist, however, measurements and comparative analyses might help determine features and characteristics that would guide performance.

Between ca.1715 and ca.1730, Naples saw a relative boom of instrumental works composed for recorder (at least sixty-eight instrumental works in this fifteen-year span–and more than eighty works when also including cantatas from the end of the seventeenth century). This raises the question of what instruments were used to perform those many works then and whether recorders were made in Naples, probably most attuned to the specific nature of this special repertoire. A focus upon the least representative maker in table 1 and the only instrument of Neapolitan origins, both from the recorder player's perspective and from that of an instrument maker, may contribute substantially to the understanding of the Baroque repertoire for the recorder in Naples and the unique Panormo alto on the list is thus worth a closer examination.

The Panormo ivory alto (DCM 327) is now kept at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC and is part of the vast collection of instruments, iconography, music scores, and books donated by Dr. Dayton C. Miller, the American acoustician and avid woodwind collector from the beginning of the twentieth century.[7] It was acquired by Miller in 1923—in pristine condition—from Sumner Healey of New York, and had previously been in the possession of Auguste Tolbecque.[8] The previous ownership of the instrument remains unknown, and it is unlikely it could be traced back three hundred years.

The instrument is marked "IOAN: / PANORM:" on all three sections (fig. 1), but *this* Ioannes Panormo is not exactly easy to pinpoint. Panormo literally means Palermo,[9] which immediately suggests he (or his relatives) originally came from Sicily and that Panormo was an added last name to his original family name that referenced their origins once established in a new city. It was indeed a *family* of makers, as other members are known "luthiers" famously making violins, bows, and guitars

7. The Washington, DC collection also holds two other Italian Baroque instruments, already mentioned: the Castel/Palanca alto and a Palanca tenor.

8. L. E. Gilliam and W. Lichtenwanger, *The Dayton C. Miller Flute Collection: A Checklist of the Instruments* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1961), 23; Michael Seyfrit, *Musical Instruments in the Dayton C. Miller Flute Collection at the Library of Congress: A Catalog*. Vol. 1, *Recorders, Fifes, and Simple System Transverse Flutes of One Key* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1982), 22.

9. "Palermo," *Dizionario di toponomastica. Storia e significato dei nomi geografici italiani* (Turin, UTET, 1990): 469.

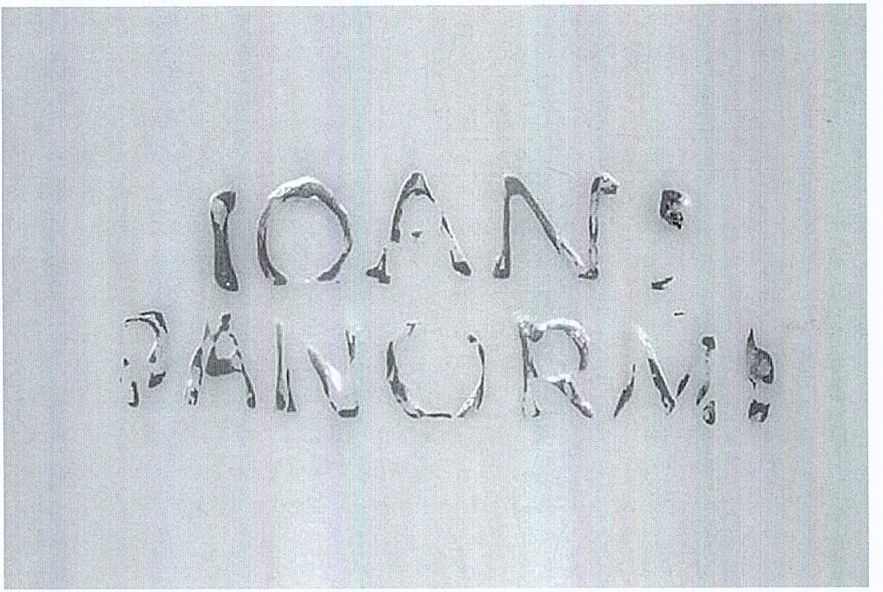


FIGURE 1. Maker's mark on the middle joint of DCM 327. Photograph by Fumitaka Saito.

not only in southern Italy but also in Paris, Dublin, and London; the Neapolitan branch of the family, though, seems to have specialized in woodwind instruments well into the nineteenth century.[10]

The actual surname of the Panormo family was Trusiano (or Trusiani), and a certain Giovanni Trusiano ("detto" Panormo) was active in Naples and is known to have sold two *flautini* to the Teatro Fondo in 1783.[11] Could the Washington recorder be from this same late period? The style of the turning work is typical of the early 1700s, which could indicate that this instrument is possibly by a different Giovanni Panormo than the one just mentioned.[12] Another indication for this alto's early

10. Francesco Nocerino, "Gli strumenti musicali a Napoli nel secolo XVIII," in *Storia della musica e dello spettacolo a Napoli. Il Settecento*, ed. F. Cotticelli, P. Maione. (Naples: Turchini Edizioni, 2009), Vol. 2, 795–797.

11. Nocerino, op. cit., 795–797.

12. The archival information on the members of the Panormo family, provided mostly by Nocerino (op. cit., 795–797) does not present information that matches the observations made on this specific alto recorder and presented in this article. Its constructional traits point to an instrument of the beginning of the eighteenth century, but no Ioannes Panormo is known to have been active at that time. Three possible explanations can be reasoned: 1) Archival information has been lost or has not been

eighteenth century dating is its long foot with a very wide bore. Early instruments by Bressan and Stanesby, Sr., for example, follow this same design principle.

The website of the Dayton Miller collection states that the instrument shows "Head joint severely cracked into 3 pieces with other cracks and losses."[13] The head joint of DCM 327 is indeed severely broken on its front and back sides (fig. 2 and fig. 3). In fact, if it were not for the sticky transparent tape that holds it together, it would be in three *separate* pieces. It is damaged in such a way that the top of the labium has sunk much lower than it was originally. In short, it is impossible to play it.

A central question is thus how much information one could possibly distil from a musical instrument without ever playing a single note on it. As it was once a sounding instrument, one wishes it were possible to present a few frugal words on how it sounds, even if those were only personal, ephemeral impressions. Without such an opportunity, measuring[14] and comparative analyses suffice as the primary tools in revealing not only its construction but also its sounding qualities, before these can be verified in the sounding copy. The quality of the craftsmanship present in the instrument's construction is remarkable, everything pointing to a master of recorder making. Considering such mastery, it is strange that only a handful of woodwind instruments survive with this maker's mark:[15] one transverse flute, two oboes,[16] one tenor oboe, a clarinet, and the Washington, DC recorder. Even more surprising is that this one recorder had never been measured—and, therefore, probably never copied—since Miller purchased it in the beginning of the last century.

Despite the poor condition of the recorder's head, when an elastic band is wrapped around it to bring it to its smallest diameter, the

found yet; 2) The instrument was made by the currently-known members of the family of Panormo in an earlier style, perhaps even copied from another maker (this hypothesis was raised by Francesco Carreras at the presentation of this paper at the 2012 AMIS conference in New York City). This hypothesis raises the open question of why a maker would copy an old-fashioned instrument in Naples at a moment in which it was already in decline for a couple of decades (the latest Neapolitan work for recorder in the author's compilation dates from 1728); 3) The instrument was made by another maker and stamped by the Panormos, or was stamped Panormo at a later stage (this hypothesis was raised by Renato Meucci, at that same conference).

13. http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/dcmhtml/dmhome.html (accessed 2 July 2012).

14. Complete technical measurements and drawings will be made available in the author's PhD dissertation, once completed (Leiden University).

15. Although, as suggested, it is possible that the mark refers to different makers.

16. Waterhouse does not mention one of these oboes, in a private collection.

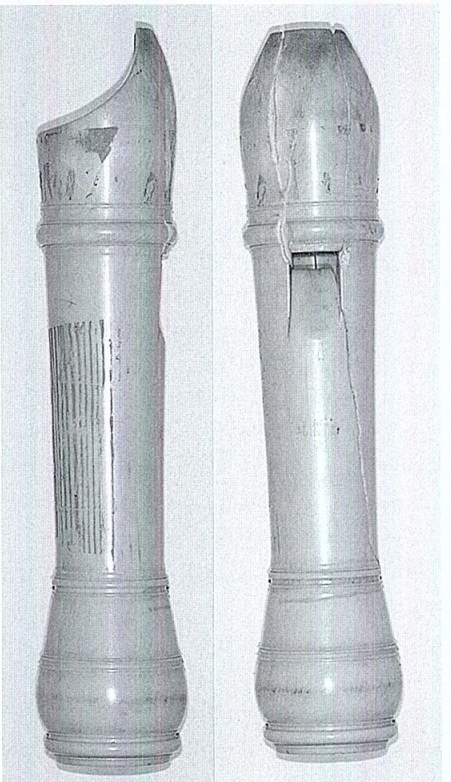


FIGURE 2. Head joint of DCM 327 (front and side with cracks). Photographs by Fumitaka Saito.

original block still fits perfectly. This may suggest the ivory has not shrunk much since it was turned into an instrument and that the instrument is probably close to its original pitch. The Panormo alto is a rather short instrument for that period, its sounding length being 431 mm (with its long foot). See table 2 for sounding length comparisons.

From the length and bore measurements of DCM 327, its pitch is deduced to be around A=420 Hz, which is well within the range of the Italian recorders Bruce Haynes lists, i.e. between A=410 and 440 Hz.[17] Pitch in Naples is believed to have been between the low Roman pitch of around A=392 and the high Venetian pitch of A=440 Hz, so a recorder from Naples would be very acceptable at 415 or 420 Hz.

17. Haynes, op. cit., 452.

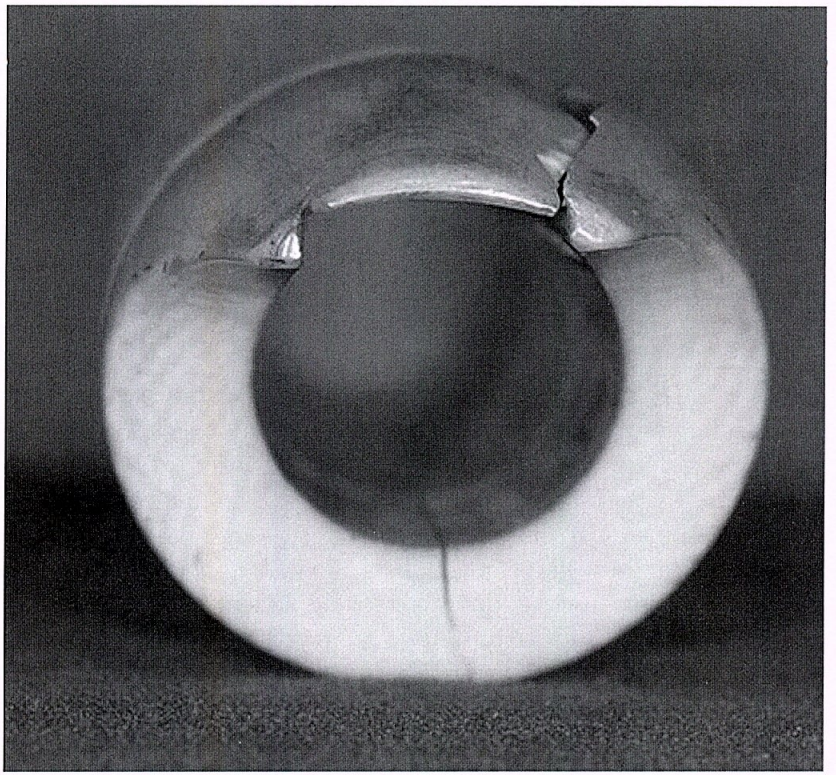


FIGURE 3. Detail of head joint of DCM 327 with cracks. Photograph by Fumitaka Saito.

TABLE 2. Comparison of sounding lengths. Measurements by Fred Morgan.

Instrument Maker	Sounding Length	Collection
Denner	438 mm	Musikhistorisk Museum, Copenhagen
Bressan	with long foot: 453 mm	Frans Brüggen private collection, Amsterdam
Stanesby Jr.	442 mm	once in the private collection of Michel Piguet
Steenbergen	445 mm	Frans Brüggen private collection, Amsterdam
Heytz	451 mm	Frans Brüggen private collection, Amsterdam

The character of the bore is similar to that of English recorders. It keeps to more or less the same degree of conicity and swells in similar ways in similar places as shown in table 3. As the bore gives the instrument its sounding body, it determines to a great degree how low and high notes will function, usually one at the expense of the other. In the Panormo, as with Bressan and other English makers, the bore privileges low notes: it is what could be called a "slow-bore," not favoring a fast response. However, the voicing of this instrument is only partly similar to English recorders. In other ways, it follows principles more commonly found in Nuremberg instruments, like recorders by Denner. Appropriately called voicing, it can be bright and clean or rusty and velvety. In the case of this Panormo, its construction suggests a bit of both. Unlike Denner, it has a very small top chamfer, which would mean that its speaking would not be the most enunciated, and the articulation response—especially in the high notes—could be slow. On the other hand, the cutting on the bore part of the labium is very long[18] and parallel and touches the bore, just like Denner. This allows the air to flow faster and creates easier high notes, indeed increasing its speaking capabilities. It has a very concave windway length-wise, a feature common in historical recorders but rarely seen in modern instruments. Along with the opposite concavity in the block, this is key to creating a feeling of easiness in blowing. An extreme feature of this instrument is the inverted angle at which the window top is cut, the opposite being found on instruments by both Stanesby Sr.[19] and Stanesby Jr.[20] and Steenbergen.[21] Unlike what is often suggested with other ivory instruments, this recorder was certainly not simply a piece for display in the collection of a wealthy person: it shows real signs of use. This is very apparent from the black lines with mold on the windway, where there probably were superficial cracks (before the current, more severe ones) caused by extensive use, and is also obvious when observing the thumb hole area, which, in its worn state with a slight depression, is incredibly comfortable to hold (fig. 4).

The fact that this instrument has such refined and distinctive turnings suggests a maker at the peak of his craft (fig. 5). The numerous balancing elements in the voicing and shaping of the bore also point to the de-

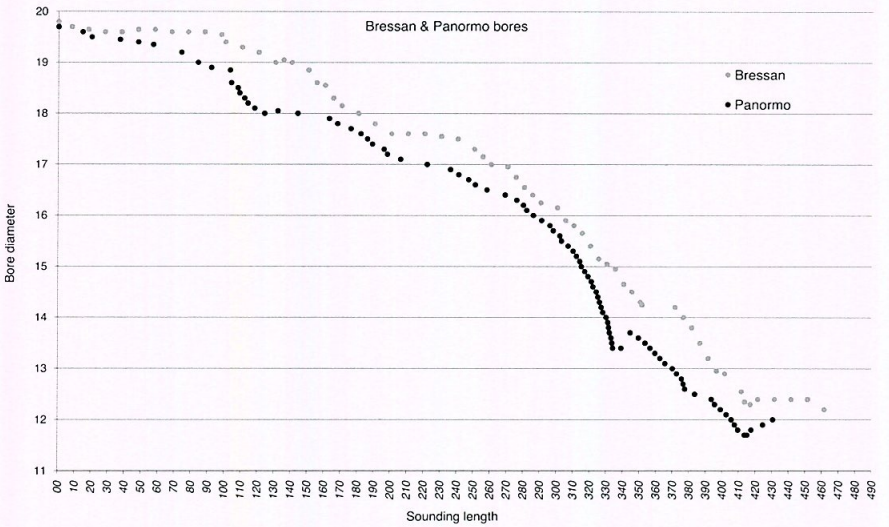
18. 34 mm long.

19. Once in the private collection of Michel Piguet, measured by Fred Morgan. Its current location is unknown.

20. Private collection of Frans Brüggen (Amsterdam), measured by Fred Morgan.

21. Private collection of Frans Brüggen (Amsterdam), measured by Fred Morgan.

TABLE 3. Graph showing the bore of Panormo (DCM 327) compared to that of a Bressan alto (Frans Brüggen private collection). Measured by Fumitaka Saito and Fred Morgan respectively.



sire for very specific sound character and playing possibilities. It is at just as high a standard—and therefore should be as highly regarded—as instruments by Bressan and Denner. The style of the turning work and the relatively long foot indicate an instrument probably built in the first decade of the eighteenth century, precisely when Neapolitan recorder music was starting its "golden age."

Using ivory as the material for the whole instrument indicates it was probably owned by someone who had the necessary financial means for such expensive materials, while the worn thumb hole area indicates someone who played extensively—it is not damage so much as proof of good use. In addition, the choice of material determines largely the sound: a compact, hard, smooth material like ivory produces a loud, bright, sharp sound and a responsive feeling when blowing.

The reproduction of the Panormo alto by Fumitaka Saito, commissioned by the author as a result and extension of this research, confirms a few of the speculations about how the instrument's constructional traits translate into practice:[22] the copy plays at A=422 Hz; it is indeed a

22. Some pragmatic decisions had to be taken for the copy: the author decided to have it made in boxwood, for all the financial, environmental, and legal complications

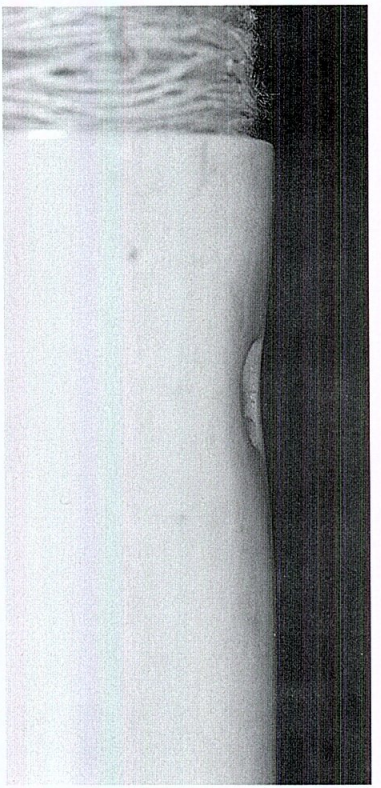


FIGURE 4. Thumb hole of DCM 327 showing signs of wear. Photograph by Fumitaka Saito.

well-balanced instrument with stable low notes, open high notes, and fair ease of speech (although notes above and including d‴ do not respond well to harsh articulations). Though those remain personal, subjective observations, it can be said the instrument has a very sweet, warm, round, open sound.

With just one reproduction of the original, it is not yet possible to determine the function of the unusual angle at which the top of the windway is cut. Nonetheless, by observing the geometry of this feature, it is imaginable it should have direct influence in the airflow, rendering it less laminar. It is also possible that the inverted angle might increase the pressure required to force air out. Furthermore, Saito postulates it could function as an exaggerated top chamfer (which the Panormo does not have). All this could be examined further under controlled circumstances and investigated by means of flow and spectral analysis.

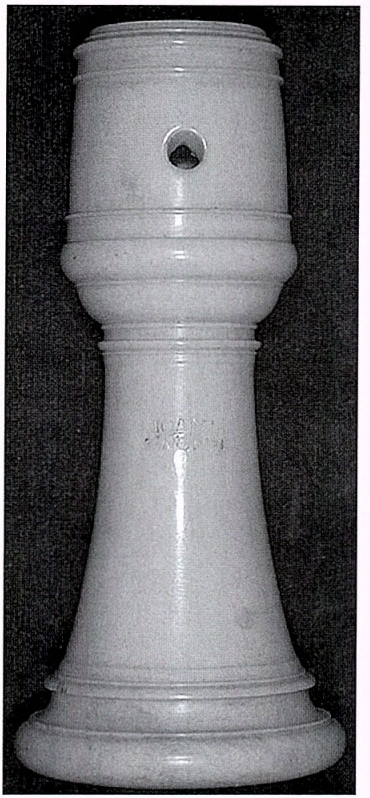


FIGURE 5. Turning work in the foot joint of DCM 327. Photograph by Fumitaka Saito.

Briefly considering more musical matters, the works written for recorder in Naples in the first half of the eighteenth century are melodious, with clear emphasis on the singing quality of the recorder. These melodies are full of long appoggiaturas, grounded by the quirky and surprising harmonic progressions so typically Neapolitan. The vast majority of this music is in minor keys; there is a cry in it, a lamenting tone. It brings out the recorder's cantabile virtues, a *dolce* eloquence. Perhaps the warm and round tone of the Washington, DC alto, previously mentioned, was what Panormo was trying to achieve, to optimize in his instrument.

Technically, the fast movements of the Neapolitan concerti are usually not too challenging if compared to concerti of the same years by Vivaldi, in which one needs an instrument with a very fast response and easy high notes in order to play all the arpeggio passages with relative ease. In

the Neapolitan works it is rather more necessary that these high notes be open and bright, not necessarily quick in speech.

In the Francesco Mancini sonatas,[23] for example, the range demanded from the instrument goes from the alto's lowest f′ to d‴. It is, therefore, similar in range to English pieces of the time and asks for stable low notes from the instrument, especially in the typically-Neapolitan fugal second movements. In the Panormo recorder reproduction, these low notes are full and stable, helping the performer to play those with confidence. In contrast, the Denner-like undercutting of the labium allows, for instance, e‴ and f‴ in Nicola Fiorenza's works[24] to be performed more freely and brilliantly (though with cautious articulation) than if the instrument displayed only English characteristics.

Neapolitan recorder music does not usually call for flashy technical virtuosity, but neither is it light entertainment: it is a theatrical contrast of moods and affects, and its virtuosity lies in being able to portray all of that with such a straightforward instrument as a recorder. Perhaps in balancing such contrasting elements in the instrument's construction, Panormo was able to present the woodwind player with truthful and inspiring means of expression. Either way, this is a beautiful, well crafted instrument, and as such, should not remain forgotten. An important step was thus taken with its actual reconstruction, and further use in performance;[25] a probable landmark in promoting research and exploration of Baroque Neapolitan recorder music, but also in raising awareness to the specificity of Baroque instrument construction and its direct influence in the composition and performance of music.

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ivory entails. A copy in synthetic ivory was not considered a plausible option as this instrument was to serve as a performing instrument for the author, a recorder player very much attuned to the Early Music movement and to the reproduction of old instruments following principles and using materials that would have been sympathetic to the original eras. Nonetheless, the author believes that more important than the material was the faithful and precise reproduction of the instrument's measurements and its constructional concept, which is translatable to any material. Even in historical instruments, whether they are made in wood or ivory, what characterizes their maker's work is not the choice of material but their shape. One can certainly argue, for example, that a good Denner copy sounds like a Denner whether in boxwood, pearwood, maple, ivory, or plastic.

23. Published (ca. 1724) in London by J. Barret.

24. Undated manuscript, Naples, Biblioteca del Conservatorio di Musica San Pietro a Majella (I-Nc).

25. The Panormo copy had its debut on December 9, 2011, in Delft, The Netherlands. This concert was recorded and broadcasted by Concertzender.