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## The *Habeneck* violin, Count Cozio di Salabue, and Francesco Stradivari

NICHOLAS SACKMAN

Antonio Stradivari, the finest violin maker of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, died in 1737, probably aged 88. It is thought that during the final decades of his life Antonio received considerable help in his workshop from his eldest son, Francesco. After Antonio's death, Francesco continued to make violins, some of which had his own label glued inside and some of which used his father's label.<sup>1</sup> Around 1775 a number of Antonio Stradivari instruments, as well as two violins made by Francesco, were obtained by Il Conte Ignazio Alessandro Cozio di Salabue, an Italian aristocrat who was not averse to removing labels from within instruments and substituting counterfeit replacements. One of the instruments bought by Count Cozio—an instrument that is considered to be of uncertain authorship (Antonio or Francesco? Or a mixture of both?) and containing an unconvincing label—is the violin that is now known as the *Habeneck*; examination of documents written by Count Cozio suggests this violin was made by Francesco Stradivari in 1742.

The *Habeneck* violin has been owned by the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) in London since 1909.<sup>2</sup> Prior to that, the violin was owned (in reverse order) by Ada Hannah Lewis Hill (1844–1906)<sup>3</sup> who presented the violin to the RAM, Andrew Fountaine (c1809–1872), François-Antoine Habeneck (1781–1849), and Nicolas Lupot (1758–1824) the finest Parisian violin maker of the late-eighteenth/early-nineteenth centuries. In 1824 Lupot sold F-A Habeneck the Stradivari violin to which the latter's name was subsequently attached as a soubriquet.

1. Cf., Simone F. Sacconi, *I "Segreti" di Stradivari* (Cremona: Libreria del Convegno, 1972), 101.

2. See Charles Beare, Peter Beare, Carlo Chiesa, Jon Whiteley, *Stradivarius* [Catalogue for the 2013 *Stradivarius* exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum] (Oxford: University of Oxford, 2013), 214.

3. Ada Hannah Lewis married William James Montagu Hill in 1904 following the death in 1901 of her first husband, Samuel Lewis.

1824: Habeneck bought a Stradivari from Luptot for 2,400 francs = £96. Some years later this instrument was purchased by Andrew Fountaine and brought to England.<sup>4</sup>

On February 12, 1903, a certificate for the *Habeneck* violin was issued by W. E. Hill & Sons, the pre-eminent violin dealer in London:

We certify that the violin in the possession of Mr. Haydn Inwards was made by Antonius Stradivarius of Cremona. It is a fine and characteristic example of its maker's work, and is in a perfect state of preservation. It is known as the "Habeneck Stradivari" having belonged to the well-known French player of that name who died in 1849. At his death the violin passed into the hands of the late Mr. Andrew Fountaine of Narford [Norfolk, England], whose remarkable collection of china and other works of art was sold some years ago at Christie's.<sup>5</sup>

The *Habeneck* violin has been described by David Rattray:

This violin of c.1734 is remarkable for its fine state of preservation and also for its demonstration of the clean, meticulous workmanship of the master [Antonio Stradivari] in his 91st year. It is thought to have been one of around 80 instruments still in Stradivari's possession at the time of his death in 1737.

During the 1730s Stradivari was assisted by his two sons, and possibly also by Carlo Bergonzi (1683–1747). Certain features of the "Habeneck," including the cut of the soundholes, would suggest the collaboration of Antonio's eldest son Francesco, who was aged 63 at the time.<sup>6</sup>

4. W. Henry Hill, Arthur F. Hill, Alfred E. Hill, *Antonio Stradivari, His Life and Work (1644–1737)* (London: William E. Hill & Sons, 1902), 270.

5. For a reproduction of this 1903 certificate see David Rattray, *Masterpieces of Italian Violin making, 1620–1850* (London: Royal Academy of Music, 1991), 38. Haydn Inwards was a violinist and a member of a small ensemble of musicians employed privately by Ada Hannah Lewis Hill. The "remarkable collection of china" referred to by the Hills was established by Sir Andrew Fountaine (1676–1753); the collection was dispersed by auction in 1884. According to the Hills' certificate, it was the nineteenth-century descendant of Sir Andrew Fountaine, also named Andrew, who acquired the *Habeneck* violin around 1849. Charles Beare has stated (Beare et al., *Stradivarius*, 214) that the violin passed to "Mrs. Sam Lewis" in 1890, but this transfer appears to sit against the content of the Hills' 1903 certificate unless it was that Mrs. Lewis—herself a skilled violinist—then loaned the violin to Mr. Inwards and it was during this loan period that the Hills' certificate was written; it is noticeable that their certificate speaks of the violin being "in the possession" of Mr. Inwards rather than "owned by").

6. David Rattray, *Masterpieces of Italian Violin Making, 1620–1850* (London: Outline Press, 2000), 106.

Charles Beare has commented in like manner that “The preservation of the instrument is very fine, and it is thought to have been one of the violins still in Stradivari’s possession at the time of his death.”<sup>7</sup>

Ratray draws attention to the “powerful arching,” “delicate purflings,” “well-proportioned head,” and “slab-cut back [that] ripples beautifully through the remaining thick layer of dark-orange silky-textured varnish.” He also describes the *f*-holes as “each different in shape and character, the top circles [eyes] large in relation to the bottom ones, and the lower wings distinctly pointed. The treble soundhole is 4mm higher than its neighbour, an extreme discrepancy”<sup>8</sup> (fig. 1).

The Hills, in 1902, also comment on the *f*-holes of the *Habeneck* violin but attribute their asymmetric condition entirely to Antonio, not Francesco, writing,

Others [other 1730–1737 instruments] he [Antonio] apparently made entirely by himself, for we cannot admit that either of the sons [Francesco and Omobono] or [Carlo] Bergonzi . . . would have cut those palsied soundholes, in which we discern not only the trembling hand, but also the failing sight—for instance, those of the “Habeneck” Stradivari, dated 1736, where the right-hand one is set quite  $\frac{1}{16}$  of an inch higher than the other.<sup>9</sup>

However, Beare has more recently stated, “This fine and very well preserved violin . . . is principally the work of [Antonio] Stradivari’s elder son Francesco.”<sup>10</sup>

With regard to the wooden mold around which the *Habeneck* violin was built, Ratray has written, “the ‘Habeneck’ seems to have been constructed on one of the oldest moulds still in use in the Stradivari workshop, the ‘PG’ form [mold] dated 1689.”<sup>11</sup> Stradivari’s extant *PG* mold, incised with *A4GIVI689* (“On the day of 4<sup>th</sup> Giu[igno] [June] 1689”) has bout-width and body-length measurements of Upper Bout [UB] 161mm, Center Bout [CB] 103mm, Lower Bout [LB] 200mm, and Body Length [L] 348mm,<sup>12</sup> which, when extended by the usual thickness of a violin’s

7. Charles Beare, *Antonio Stradivari, The Cremona Exhibition of 1987* (London: J. & A. Beare, 1993), 276.

8. Ratray, *Masterpieces* (2000), 106.

9. Hills, *Antonio Stradivari*, 87. The metric equivalent of  $\frac{1}{16}$  of an inch is 1.58mm. Inspection and measurement of the *Habeneck* violin by the present author (May 2013 and January 2015) confirmed that the treble-side *f*hole is of the same overall length as the bass-side *f*-hole but is set 4mm further up the top plate.

10. Beare et al., *Stradivarius*, 214.

11. Ratray, *Masterpieces* (2000), 106.

12. Sacconi, 196.





FIGURE 1A. Front view – Violin by Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, c. 1734, “Habeneck.” Image reproduced with permission from the Royal Academy of Music, London. (See color photo p. 231)



FIGURE 1B. Back view – Violin by Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, c. 1734, “Habeneck.” Image reproduced with permission from the Royal Academy of Music, London. (See color photo p. 231)

rib (1.15mm on the treble side and similarly on the bass side) and the usual width of a plate's "overhang" beyond the outside vertical face of the rib (2.5mm on each side)—i.e., a combined total of 7.3mm—would produce the following dimensions on a resultant instrument:

UB 168.3mm, CB 110.3mm, LB 207.3mm, and Length 355.3mm.

These projected dimensions display only limited agreement with back/front caliper-derived measurements of the *Habeneck* violin:

[back plate] 167mm, 107.5mm, 206.5mm, and 356mm<sup>13</sup>

[back plate] 167mm, 107.5mm, 206mm, and 356mm<sup>14</sup>

[back/front plates] 166/167.2mm, 107/107.2mm, 205.5/205.5mm, and 355.4/355mm.<sup>15</sup>

The substantial discrepancy between the projected center-bout measurement of 110.3mm and the real-life measurement (back plate) of 107.5mm (or 107mm) suggests that Stradivari's 1689 mold was not the source for the *Habeneck*, a possibility that has recently been acknowledged by Rattray:

The form of both violins [the 1734 *Scottish University* violin and the *Habeneck* violin] relates to one of Stradivari's oldest surviving moulds, the "PG" form dated 1689, although it is possible that both were built on a similar mould that has now been lost.<sup>16</sup>

The deeply-browned label inside the *Habeneck* violin (fig. 2) has the following text:

Antonius Stradivarius Cremonensis  
Faciebat Anno I736

The first two numerals of the year-date are printed, the third and fourth (now substantially faded from view) are handwritten. This combination by itself is sufficient to prompt doubts about the label since from 1700 onward Antonio Stradivari used labels that (according to the Hills) only had the first numeral printed: I (in Roman form); the three remaining numerals were always handwritten, "and from this rule he never again deviated."<sup>17</sup>

13. Rattray, *Masterpieces* (2000), 106.

14. Brigitte Brandmair and Stefan-Peter Greiner, *Stradivari Varnish: Scientific Analysis of his Finishing Technique on Selected Instruments* (n.p., 2010), 363.

15. Beare, *Antonio Stradivari*, 320.

16. As cited in Brandmair and Greiner, *Stradivari Varnish*, 340.

17. Hills, *Antonio Stradivari*, 218.



FIGURE 2A. Violin by Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, c. 1734, "Habeneck" (close up of label). Image reproduced with permission from the Royal Academy of Music, London. (See color photo p. 232)

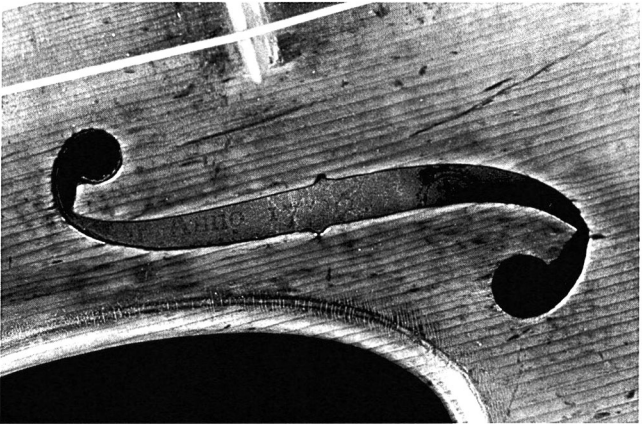


FIGURE 2B. Violin by Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, c. 1734, "Habeneck" (close up of label). Image reproduced with permission from the Royal Academy of Music, London. (See color photo p. 232)

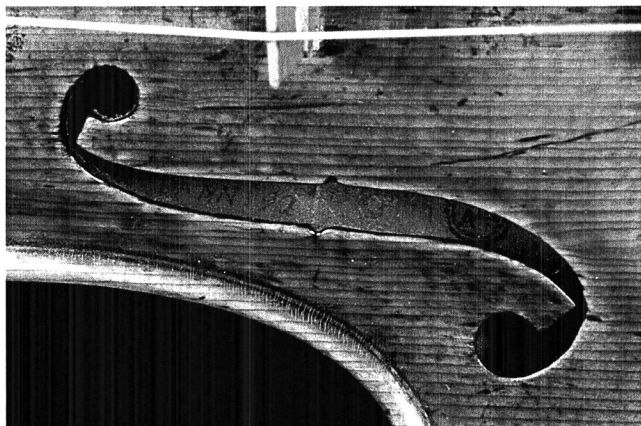


FIGURE 2C. Violin by Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, c. 1734, “Habeneck” (close up of label). Image reproduced with permission from the Royal Academy of Music, London. (See color photo p. 233)

In 1902, the Hills identified the *Habeneck* violin’s date as “1736” (see quotation above), despite their rejection of the label (see below); Rattray offers “c.1734;”<sup>18</sup> Charles Beare wrote in 1993 that the label was not original and the instrument’s date was “c.1734”<sup>19</sup> but more recently has written that “the date on its label [is] obscured;”<sup>20</sup> the current Tarisio.com website (instrument number 40150) states “1734.”<sup>21</sup>

On the label, the third numeral is clearly a 3. The shaping of this numeral is similar to that habitually drawn by Il Conte Ignazio Alessandro Cozio di Salabue in his memoirs and documents<sup>22</sup> (fig. 3). The label’s fourth numeral suggests different interpretative possibilities.

1. It originally may have been a zero (aligned with the lower loop of the preceding 3), which was subsequently erased and replaced with a 6 drawn above the erasure so that the circle of the new 6 was aligned with the upper loop of the 3.

18. Rattray, *Masterpieces* (2000), 106.

19. Beare, *Antonio Stradivari* (1993), 276.

20. Beare et al., *Stradivarius* (2013), 214.

21. Tarisio Fine Instruments and Bows. <http://tarisio.com> (accessed December 2014).

22. The Cozio manuscripts are archived at the Biblioteca Statale di Cremona, Italy.

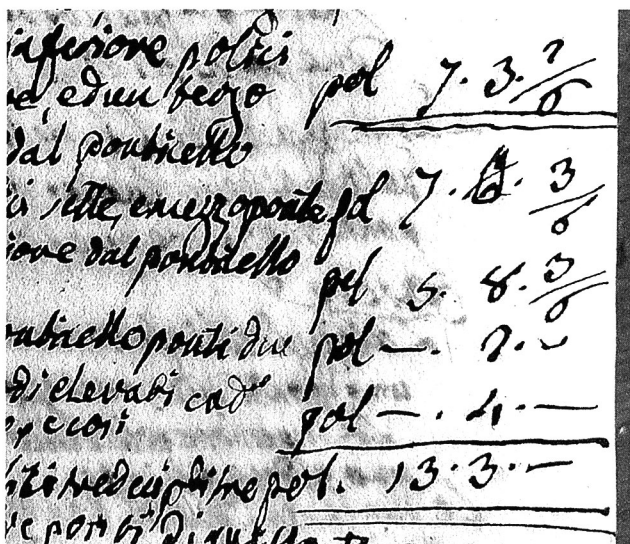


FIGURE 3. Biblioteca Statale di Cremona, LC, ms. Cozio 47, folio 19r (detail). Used with permission. Reproduction prohibited. (See color photo p. 233)

2. It originally may have been a zero but aligned with the upper loop of the preceding 3 (with the abrasion of the paper below being entirely coincidental).<sup>23</sup> Subsequently this zero could have been modified to appear as a 6.
3. It originally may have been an 8 from which the lower circle was erased and the upper circle changed to a 6 (but this is the least likely possibility since the numeral 8 was not usually drawn as two circles).

The Hills, in their 1902 *Antonio Stradivari* monograph, reject the *Habeneck* label, writing, “The ‘Habeneck’ violin, referred to by [George] Hart, we do not cite, as, though unquestionably of the latest period, neither label nor inscription is original.”<sup>24</sup> No explanation is offered for their statement—“neither label nor inscription is original”—but the lettering on the *Habeneck* label has the appearance of having been printed

23. Illustrations of Stradivari labels that show such an upper zero—labels that are dated 1700, 1701, 1703, 1704, 1708, 1709, and 1720—are found in the Hills’ *Antonio Stradivari*, 216–217.

24. Hills, *Antonio Stradivari*, 92. Cf. the aforementioned Hill certificate of 1903.

from metal blocks and has a slightly blue tint. Underneath the word “Anno” is the handwritten annotation “DANNI 92.”

1. This annotation is not on a separate piece of glued-in paper since the unusual top-to-bottom dimension of the label has left more than enough vertical space for the addition.
2. The “I” (of “DANNI 92”) has a dot above it, as if it is a tall, but lower-case “i.”
3. There may be an apostrophe between the D and the A; alternatively, the minute mark might be an imperfection in the label paper.
4. The appearance of the Antonio Stradivari monogram also raises doubts about the origin of the label since the outer band of the double circle is clearly much wider than the inner band; genuine Stradivari monograms either have two bands which are of equally narrow width, or, if there is any difference, it is more often the case that it is the inner band which is the wider.

When the Stradivari workshop artifacts were displayed at Cremona’s Museo Stradivariano (prior to their transfer to the recently-opened Museo del Violino) they included two small wooden monogram stamps (exhibits 509 and 510), the first of which was clearly implied to have been that used by Antonio Stradivari. The 1987 Museo Stradivariano catalog describes exhibit 509:

Original small stamp for applying the brand of Stradivari on the labels.  
Boxwood. Collection Giuseppe Fiorini.

*Stampino originale per l'apposizione del marchio di Stradivari sulle etichette.  
Legno di bosso. Coll. G. Fiorini.*<sup>25</sup>

Exhibit 510 is described in the Museo Stradivariano catalog as:

Copy of the small stamp described in number 509.  
Pear wood. Collection Giuseppe Fiorini.

*Copia dello stampino descritto al numero 509.  
Legno di pero. Coll. G. Fiorini.*<sup>26</sup>

In the Museo Stradivariano display cabinet, these two wooden stamps were placed on either side of a piece of paper on which were two inked prints from each stamp; two of the prints were labelled, by an unknown hand, *Copia*, the other two prints being labelled *Autentico*. The two *Au-*

25. Andrea Mosconi and Carlo Torresani, *Il Museo Stradivariano di Cremona* (Milano: Electa Spa, 1987), 94.

26. *Ibid.* In 1930 Giuseppe Fiorini donated to the town of Cremona all the Stradivari artifacts he had purchased from Paola, Marchesa Dalla Valle; included in the purchase were all the notebooks, papers, and documents of Count Cozio.

*tentico* prints had double bands that were equally narrow; the two *Copia* prints both had an outer band that was wider than the inner band.<sup>27</sup>

Simone F. Sacconi provides a photographic illustration of a wooden stamp from which the monogram seal was printed, identified as having been Stradivari's own (*A. Stradivari: sigillo originale e sua impronta*) and a copy-stamp (*copia del sigillo di Stradivari*), which, according to the adjacent handwritten text, belonged to Carlo Mantegazza: *copia del Carlo Mantegazza, Bollo Biglietti [label-stamp] dell' Antonio Stradivario*.<sup>28</sup>

In late 1774 or early 1775, Il Conte Ignazio Alessandro Cozio di Salabue wrote inventory descriptions of the violins he had bought from Paolo Stradivari (Antonio's youngest son by his second marriage).<sup>29</sup> Each description has a main body of text together with annotations subsequently entered in the left margin; an annotation to one of the descriptions identifies a Signor Pasquale Odoardo Folli as the 1801 purchaser of a Stradivari violin label-dated 1720.

Left margin:<sup>30</sup> 1801, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Milan, sold to Signor Pasquale Odoardo Folli as will be found in the new [note-]book.<sup>31</sup>

1774/5 text: [...] Label like the others; of the year 1720.

*1801 4 Luglio Milano, venduto al Signor Pasquale Odoardo Folli seguente come da libro nuovo  
Biglietto come gli altri d'anno 1720.*

In the latter part of the same 1774/5 inventory, Count Cozio describes another Stradivari violin; again there is a main body of text together with subsequent annotations in the margin. This second violin, label-dated 1730, was also bought by Signor Folli on July 4, 1801.

Left margin: 4<sup>th</sup> [or 5<sup>th</sup>?] in terms of quality  
I have it  
July 4<sup>th</sup> 1801: sold to the aforementioned Folli

1774/5 text: One-piece back plate, wood with medium veins [flames], not continuous, but of little prominence; the neck-button is large and more than a semicircle; the neck is of slab-cut wood,

27. The present author has photographs of these items.

28. Sacconi, "*Segreti*," 101, figs. 91 and 92.

29. Biblioteca Statale di Cremona, Deposito Libreria Civica, ms. Cozio 41.

30. The margin annotations reveal Count Cozio's handwriting at different stages of his life.

31. See the subsequent description written by Count Cozio in 1801 (BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 42).



with a nail which passes through the lower part [of the neck-foot];  
 the scroll is outlined [in black];  
 the *f*-holes are rather ordinary, and large; the workmanship is ordinary;  
 red varnish, with a label like the others,  
 [the plates] thinned by Guadagnini.  
 The year 1730. Written underneath *D'anni 92* ["aged 92"].

4 [overwritten with, perhaps, a 5] *di bonta*<sup>32</sup>  
*si ha*

*4 Luglio 1801: venduto al sudetto Folli  
 Fondo intiero, bosco con vena mediocre,  
 non seguitata ma di poco spicco,  
 covino grande, e più del semicerchio,  
 manico di bosco preso per asse  
 con un chiodo che è passate per disotto,  
 rizzo contornate  
 le effe piuttosto ordinario e grandi, travaglio ordinario,  
 vernice rossa, con biglietto come gli altri,  
 stato sotigliato da Guadagnini  
 anno 1730 scritto al disotto D'anni 92.*<sup>33</sup>

Some twenty-six years later, on April 8, 1801, Count Cozio started writing a new inventory of his instruments:

1801: April 8<sup>th</sup>, Milan, and subsequently: Inventory of Violins Violas and Cellos

Violins of Antonio Stradivari, of various years, obtained from his grandson in Cremona<sup>34</sup>

*1801: 8 Ap[ri]l<sup>e</sup> Milano e seguenti. Inventario de Violini, Viole, e Violoncelli*

*Violini di Stradivario Antonio da molti anni accomperati dal suo nipote a Cremona*<sup>35</sup>

Within this April 1801 inventory Count Cozio provides new descriptions of the 1720 and 1730 violins, and these descriptions are clearly elaborations of those that had appeared within the 1774/5 inventory. It would seem that in early July 1801, having sold these two violins to Signor Folli, Count Cozio then retrieved his 1774/5 inventory and brought it up-to-

32. Count Cozio's texts are reproduced verbatim; the present author's translation includes some clarifying punctuation.

33. If there were a plausible connection between the label-date of 1730 and Antonio Stradivari being 92 years of age, he would therefore have been 99 when he died in 1737, having apparently been born in 1638; neither such an age, nor such a date of birth, has ever been proposed by any investigator.

34. Antonio [II] Stradivari, the son of Paolo Stradivari.

35. BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 42.

date by adding the sale details in the margins; both 1774/5 descriptions were then crossed through with diagonal pen-strokes. Count Cozio's April 1801 description of Signor Folli's 1720 violin is followed by his description of Folli's 1730 violin:

Left margin: June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1801: today added by me [?today the counterfeit label was added]

Printed label, and with a seal [monogram] like the previously-described [violins].

Right margin: 1801: July 4<sup>th</sup>: sold to Citizen Pasquale Odoardo Folli, [the price] calculated in Milanese *lire*.

Main text: As above[;] of the year 1730 (with added handwriting underneath: DANNI 92.

The tone is strong and good; [derived from a] larger mold). Characteristics: varnish is from red to deep pastel; the outline [purfling] is beautiful; with a pronounced belly;<sup>36</sup> usual workmanship; the *f*holes are fairly good but [the wings are] not, as is usual, hollowed; and the one on the right (always looking at the face [of the violin]) is higher up, and large. The top plate is of regular, rather narrow, grain [growth rings].<sup>37</sup> One-piece back plate with wide flames; in the lower part [the wood looks] marbled.<sup>38</sup> The neck-button is two-thirds [of a circle]. The ribs have wide flames and the neck is similar and is well made, with black edging on the scroll. Value is at least sixty *zecchini*. On the label the small "u" [the first "u" of "Stradiarius"] is written as a "v."<sup>39</sup>

As was necessary, it [the violin] has been arranged [set up] by Guadagnini, thinning the back plate to improve it.

*8 Giugno 1801: oggi gionte mi* [?oggi aggiunte da me]

*Viglietto stampato e col bollo come li retroscritti*

*1801: 4 Luglio venduto al Citto Pasquale Odoardo Folli, calcolato Lire di Milano.*

*Come retro dell'anno 1730 (con agionta manuscritta sotto d'DANNI 92:*

*Voce forte, e buona: forma più grande)<sup>40</sup>*

36. Cf. David Rattray's "powerful arching."

37. This condition can be confirmed by reference to the high-resolution photographs of the *Habeneck* violin presented in Beare et al., *Stradivarius*, 216 and 218.

38. See Beare et al., *Stradivarius*, 217 and 219.

39. According to the Hills (Hills, *Antonio Stradivari*, 218) Stradivari used a "v" instead of a "u" in his family name from 1730 onward.

40. The underscores are as in Count Cozio's manuscript.

*Conotati vernice rossa a pastello densa, profilatura bella: con molta panza, lavoro commune, le FF passabili ma non scannelate al solito, e quella destra (sempre vista in faccia) più elevata f[orm]a grande, Coperchio di vena regolare, e piuttosto sottile. Fondo intiero parte a vene larghe ed inferiormente marnoregiate. Covino al due terzi. Fascie di vena larga, e manico di tal vena e ben lavorato col nero intorno al riccio: vale per lo meno zecchini sessanta: nel biglietto il poco U e fatto V. come dovutosi arangiare da Guadagnini nel sotigliarli il fondo per migliorarlo.*

Twenty-two years later, February 20, 1823, Count Cozio wrote yet another description:<sup>41</sup>

Milan, 1823, February 20<sup>th</sup>

Characteristics of a Stradivari violin,<sup>42</sup> presently belonging to the accountant Signor Ambrosoli . . . [One] of the two sold by me to the late Odoardo Folli,<sup>43</sup> on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1801, and [I] inserted the label of Antonio Stradivari, of the year 1730, and underneath there is handwritten (in my lettering) “d’aNNI 96 92.” This violin remains without cracks but with various scuff-marks in the top-plate varnish (and underneath, and to the side of, the strings)<sup>44</sup> (fig. 4). The workmanship of this [violin] is rather ordinary, with the exception of the profile [purfling] and the scroll.<sup>45</sup>

The one-piece back plate has uneven veins [flames]. The neck, instead, is slab-cut, with a pin at the rear of the neck-foot [inserted] by Carlo Mantegazza to fill the hole made by one of the three over-long nails which secured it, [this being the work] of G B Guadagnini, when I gave [the violin] to him, circa 1777, in Turin.<sup>46</sup>

41. BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 47, folio 136v; see also Cozio di Salabue, *Carteggio*, transcribed by Renzo Bacchetta (Milano: Antonio Cordani, 1950), 329. In February 1823 Count Cozio was 67 years of age, and his handwriting is difficult to read; in addition, parts of the paper he used have been eaten away by the acid in both the ink and the paper.

42. It is noticeable that Count Cozio does not specify Antonio or Francesco (or Omobono).

43. Odoardo Folli died c1816, according to a note by Count Cozio in that year; see Cozio, *Carteggio*, 236.

44. Close examination of the front plate of the *Habeneck* violin (January 2015) revealed dozens of tightly-packed transverse striations around both *f*holes, each approximately 5mm in length.

45. Compare with Rattray’s aforementioned “delicate purflings” and “well-proportioned head.”

46. The current neck on the *Habeneck* violin is not the original. A grafted joint can be seen clearly in the walls of the peg-box and also above the “chin” of the peg-box, and, therefore, the existence of a filled-in nail-hole is no longer demonstrable.

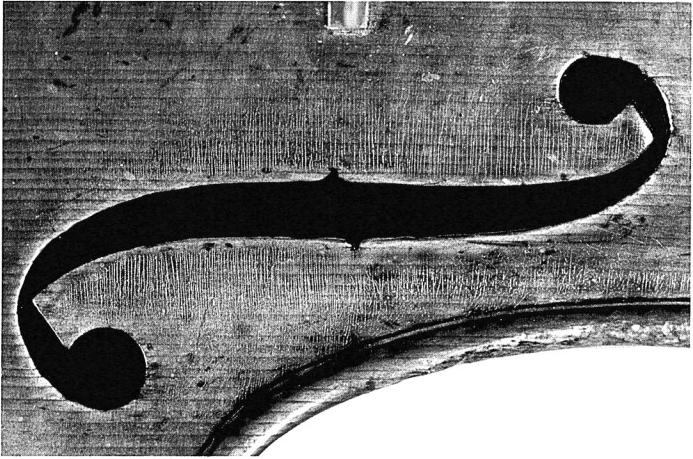


FIGURE 4. Violin by Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, c. 1734, “Habeneck” (*f*-hole detail). Image reproduced with permission from the Royal Academy of Music, London. (See color photo p. 234)

The front plate is made of new good wood. The arching is rather high and extends as far as the inside line of the profile.<sup>47</sup> The *f*-holes are both [?] made, that to the left of the fourth [string (the G-string)] appears like those beautiful [?] of Joseph Guarneri known as *del Gesù*, and the [*f*-hole] on the right is higher than the other by two *ponti*.<sup>48</sup> The upper eyes of the *f*-holes are very large, and the lower points [wing tips] are shorter [than usual], not hollowed, and thus the pair made by Francesco, the son, and in fact the label has already been changed by me.

The top plate of this violin was originally too thick, now thinned by the aforementioned Guadagnini, from which it gained [illegible text] and strength of tone. The back-plate neck button is rather large and exceeds a semicircle. The varnish is dark red, not bright and delicate, thus preventing sight of the veins. It is worth not less than one hundred *zecchini* [...].<sup>49</sup>

47. Cf. “The powerful arching rises immediately from the deep edge fluting” (Rattray, *Masterpieces* (1991), 36); “the powerful arching . . . rising immediately from the deeply formed edgework” (Rattray, *Masterpieces* (2000), 106).

48. 4.52 millimeters; one *ponto* was one-twelfth of one *pollice* which was one-twelfth of the *Pied du Roi* (324.84mm).

49. Very few of the violins from Count Cozio’s extensive collection were priced higher than 100 *zecchini* when sold; in an 1803 inventory (BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 55)

Milano: 1823, 20 Febbraio

Conotati del violino di Stradivari ora app[artenen]<sup>te</sup> al Sig[no]<sup>r</sup> Ragionato<sup>50</sup> Ambrosoli . . . delli due da me venduti al fù Odoardo Folli 4 Luglio 1801 e fraposto il biglietto d'Ant<sup>o</sup> Stradivari dell'anno 1730<sup>51</sup> e sotto vi è manuscritto (di mio carateri) d'aNNI 96 92.<sup>52</sup> Esso violino è ancor senza rotture ma con diversi sfogliature della vernice al coperchio, e sotto ed a lato del cordile. Il lavoro d'esso è piùtosto ordinario eccetto che nella profilatura e nel riccio.

Fondo intiero de vena disuguale. Il manico piùtosto per asse con un pirolino dietro il piede del manico: manico statole mezzo nel ridarlo indietro il manico dal Carlo Mantegazza per riempire il buco fatto da uno de tre chiodi che teneva il manico mes-soli troppo lungo da G B Guadagnini quando glielo diedi nel 1777<sup>ca</sup> in Torino.

Il coperchio di legno nuovo bello. Le curve sono piùtosto alte e che arrivano quasi vicino al profilo d'intorno. Le ff sono entrambe ma fatte,<sup>53</sup> quella sinistra della 4<sup>a</sup> pare a quelle dei belli [unreadable] di Joseph Guarneri detto del Gesù, e la destra è più alta dell'altra di due ponti. E li occhielli superiori d'entrambe sono assai grandi e le ponte inferiori più ristrette non scannellate e così pajon fatte dal Francesco figlio ed infatti il biglietto pure già stato da me cangiato. Il coperchio di detto violino fù come era troppo grosso assotigliato dal sudetto Guadagnini per cui acquistò di [unreadable], e forza di voce.

Il covino del fondo piùtosto grande ed eccedente la meta del circolo. La vernice rossa oscura ossia non stata schiarita e rafinata per cui impedisce la vista della vena. Ne pretende cento zecchini.

The three descriptions of Folli's 1730 violin written by Count Cozio in 1774/5, 1801, and 1823 have multiple points of agreement with the

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three Antonio Stradivari violins were priced at 100, 90, and 60 *zecchini* respectively. Notwithstanding his criticisms, it is evident that Count Cozio held Signor Folli's 1730 violin in high regard. It is regrettable that the Count never measured the various dimensions of this violin.

50. Renzo Bacchetta (Cozio, *Carteggio*, 329) suggests that *ragionere* ("accountant") was intended.

51. Count Cozio's underlining of the third and fourth numerals appears to be related to his habit, in many of his descriptive documents, of indicating (by placing ink-dots underneath) which label-date numerals had been handwritten by the maker of the instrument. This interpretation of the Count's February 1823 evidence corresponds with the condition of the label currently inside the *Habeneck* violin.

52. Count Cozio actually strikes through "96" twice. He shapes the "a" (of "aNNI") as a lower-case letter but as tall as the three subsequent upper-case letters. The numerals "92" have ink-dots beneath.

53. Renzo Bacchetta (Cozio, *Carteggio*, 329) transcribes this phrase as *Le ff sono entrambe mal fatte*, but Count Cozio clearly only writes *ma*. While it is possible the word *mal* was intended, the resultant comment—"the *f*-holes are both badly made"—would then sit against what appears to be a positive comparison with *f*-holes cut by Giuseppe Guarneri *del Gesù*.

present-day *Habeneck* violin. If the current “Antonio Stradivari” label inside the *Habeneck* violin is that which was inserted by Count Cozio on his own admission, then that label, in February 1823, was showing a date of 1730 (but see below).

At first sight it is not clear why, if Count Cozio sold the 1730 violin to Signor Folli in 1801, he wrote a new description of the same violin in 1823. The answer may lie in the Count’s reference to Folli’s death, c1816; perhaps Folli’s heirs, having no further use for the violin, sold it back to Count Cozio who then sold it to Signor Ambrosoli, and Ambrosoli, in turn, took it to Paris and sold it to Nicolas Lupot.

After the final folio of his 1823 inventory (folio 148 of BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 47), Count Cozio created an index of all the instruments described and, in most cases, measured in the preceding pages of the inventory. The index entry for the violin belonging to Signor Ambrosoli is:

Antonio Stradivari violin, 1736, [belonging to] the accountant Ambrosoli previously sold by me to Folli: folio 136v

*Violino Ant<sup>o</sup> Stradivari 1736 del Ragionato Ambrosoli già nel Folli da me venduto: folio 136v*

The final numeral of the label-date is clearly drawn by Count Cozio as a six, not a zero. Because the 1774/5 description unambiguously indicates the violin’s label-date to be “1730,” as do the descriptions of 1801 and 1823, it would seem that between writing his 1823 description and compiling the inventory index, Count Cozio himself altered the date on the violin’s label but failed to amend the date given in his three descriptive texts.

Count Cozio evidently knew how to detach a violin’s top plate in order to gain unrestricted access to the label inside. It is likely that he was shown how to carry out this procedure either by one of the Mantegazza family in Milan (possibly Pietro Giovanni Mantegazza [?1730–1803]) or by G B Guadagnini, with whom Count Cozio had established a commercial relationship during the 1770s. In his documents Count Cozio unashamedly acknowledges his interference with labels:

[an Antonio Stradivari violin label-dated 1710]: [I] changed the label (*cangiato il Biglietto*)<sup>54</sup>

[a violin label-dated 1730]: changed label (*cambiato biglietto*)<sup>55</sup>

54. BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 45/2; see also Cozio, *Carteggio* 226.

55. Cozio, *Carteggio* 197.

Medium sized [violin], front plate by the Amatis, 1717, label changed (*biglietto cambiato*)<sup>56</sup>

Label with seal, as with the others, except that it was cancelled by me (*fu cancellate da me*)<sup>57</sup>

If Antonio Stradivari made the violin now known as the *Habeneck*, he would have glued his own label inside the instrument. Even if it were Francesco Stradivari who made the violin during Antonio's lifetime, Antonio still might have insisted that the violin carry his label rather than that of his eldest son. In either case, Count Cozio would have had little commercial reason to remove the Antonio label and substitute another. However, Count Cozio's comment—"thus the pair [of *f*-holes] made by Francesco, the son, and in fact the label has already been changed by me"—perhaps suggests that the original internal label was actually a Francesco label, the use of such a label perhaps implying that Antonio had already died; i.e., Francesco made the violin after 1737. In that a Francesco Stradivari label, even with an Antonio monogram (see below) might jeopardize the future sale of the violin, it is here proposed that Count Cozio removed Francesco's label and commissioned a printer to produce an Antonio copy-label which, despite its obvious shortcomings, could still convince an unwary purchaser, especially if Count Cozio could disingenuously point to his own handwritten "DANNI 92" annotation. It is unlikely that anyone in northern Italy at the start of the nineteenth century other than Count Cozio was sufficiently knowledgeable about Antonio Stradivari labels to challenge the appearance of the Count's 1730/1736 label.

What cannot be known with certainty today is the date that was present on the *Habeneck* violin's original label, but one line of investigation can be based upon documents written by Count Cozio in connection with his Francesco Stradivari violins. Firstly, in a commentary written under the general date of 1816, Count Cozio refers to two Francesco violins of 1742, saying, "... two of his [Francesco's] masterpieces, dated 1742, were acquired in 1775 by me, with those made by Antonio, from the merchant Paolo, brother of Francesco."<sup>58</sup> In a subsequent *Articolo 4* he writes, "... the undersigned [i.e., Count Cozio] who, in addition to ac-

56. Ibid.

57. BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 41.

58. BSCr, LC, ms. Cozio 2. [...] *due de' quali suoi capi d'opera in data 1742 furono acquisati nel 1775 dal suddetto cavaliere, con quelli dell'Antonio, dal mercante Paolo, fratello di esso Francesco [...].*

quiring [Antonio's] instruments, patterns, and notebooks [*memorie*] in 1774, had the good fortune to find two violins of this Francesco Stradivari."<sup>59</sup>

In a historical document written by Count Cozio in 1823:

[...] those [instruments] made [by Francesco] between 1740 and 1742 are made as well as those of his father. The few instruments that [Francesco] left to Paolo, his [half-] brother—at his death—were sold at the same price as those of his father, this [I know] from correspondence between Paolo and Count Cozio.<sup>60</sup>

In a critically important document—a small booklet—Count Cozio wrote detailed comments about a range of violin makers:

Volume 2: 1800 to 1805, Milan, and 1800 to 1809

Details of the prime makers of instruments, of the time in which they worked, [this information] based on original labels seen by me I A Cozio in these instruments, registered in my notebooks Volume One and Three, 1816 onwards.

*Vol. 2<sup>do</sup> 1800 in 1805 Milano e 1800 in 1809*

*Specifica de primari autori de stromenti del tempo che hanno lavorato, estratto da biglietti originali veduti da me I A Cozio ne stessi istromenti, registrati nelle mie memorie Vol Primo e 3<sup>o</sup> indi 1816.*<sup>61</sup>

Within this booklet is a page on which the Count replicates a Francesco Stradivari label.

Franciscus Stradivarius Cremonensis  
Filius Antonii faciebat anno I<sup>62</sup>

Underneath this replication the Count has written:

Violins of this maker [owned] by me, I A C[ozio]. One sold in 1805, one-piece back plate, to Monsieur E Durand, taken to Paris, and the other I

59. BScR, LC, ms. Cozio 3. [...] *il sottosegnato, che acquistò nel 1774 presso i suoi congiunti gli strumenti, modelli e memorie ebbe la fortuna di trovare due violini di detto Francesco Stradivari [...].*

60. BScR, LC, ms. Cozio 4. [...] *quelli fatti negli anni 1740 al 1742 ai migliore fabbricati dall'Antonio suo padre, a segno che quelli pochi lasciati a Paolo suo fratello al di lui desesso si sono venduti a uno stesso prezzo di quelli del padre, come risulta dal suindicato carteggio di esso Paolo col conte Cozio.*

61. BScR, LC, ms. Cozio 83; not transcribed in Cozio, *Carteggio*.

62. Count Cozio's handwritten replication does not include a "long S" after the letter "i" of "Franciscus," but he does draw a particularly large and tall "S" to represent the "long S" of "Cremonensis." Count Cozio clearly indicates that only the first numeral of the year-date is printed.



retained, and kept the two [Francesco] labels of the year 1742, one with his father's stamp [monogram] badly impressed.

*De violini di d'autore di me I.A.C. L'uno venduto nel 1805 fondo intiero a M' E. Durand mandato a Parigi e L'altro io ritengo, e ritenuti i due biglietti dell'anno 1742*<sup>63</sup> *L'uno col bollo del padre male impresso.*

Count Cozio's statement clearly confirms that he had owned two Francesco Stradivari violins, both label-dated 1742. After removing both labels and adding them to his private collection, Count Cozio would have been left with the problem of how to sell two anonymous and undated violins. However, as he knew, these violins were extremely rare, having been obtained directly from the Stradivari workshop in Cremona in 1774/5. A commercially advantageous solution would be to insert counterfeit Antonio Stradivari labels, complete with bottom-right-corner monograms. It is, therefore, here proposed that Count Cozio glued a false "1730, DANNI 92" label inside one of the now anonymous, undated, violins and, on July 4, 1801, sold this violin to Signor Folli. In 1823, having re-acquired this violin following Folli's death, Count Cozio amended the instrument's label date (so that "1730" became "1736") and sold it to Signor Ambrosoli. The date on which the violin passed from Signor Ambrosoli to Nicolas Lupot is unknown, as is the precise date in 1824 when Lupot sold the violin to F-A Habeneck.<sup>64</sup> In addition, Count Cozio glued a false "Antonius Stradivarius" label of 1717 inside the second anonymous and undated violin and, in 1805, sold this violin to Monsieur Durand who took it to Paris.<sup>65</sup>

Following the death of Count Cozio in December 1840, all his instrument possessions, documents, and memoirs passed to his daughter, Matilde (d1855). From Matilde they passed to Marchese Rolando Giuseppe Dalla Valle, and, after his death in 1891, to his youngest son Rolando Alessandro Dalla Valle. Rolando died in 1905, but his wife, Paola, lived until 1950. In 1920, Giuseppe Fiorini bought all Count Cozio's documents and artifacts from Paola, subsequently donating more than 1,000 items to the town of Cremona.

63. Here the Count has carefully placed ink-dots underneath the numerals 7, 4, and 2, which was his method for indicating which numerals had been handwritten rather than printed.

64. The *Habeneck* violin does not appear within the *Catalogue descriptif des instruments de Stradivarius et Guarnerius del Gesù* compiled by Charles-Eugène Gand.

65. For details of this 1742 Francesco Stradivari violin (1717 Antonio) see the Appendix within Nicholas Sackman, *The "Messiah" Violin: a Reliable History?* (n.p., 2015).

The earliest known (type-set) presentation of the text of a 1742 Francesco label appears on page 249 of *Les Luthiers Italiens aux XVII et XVIII siècles* by Jules Gallay, published in 1869, but the location of the label from which Gallay copied the text is not indicated. A hand-drawn, mock-authentic illustration of a 1742 Francesco label without a monogram appears opposite page 106 of Antoine Vidal's *Les Instruments a archet*, vol. I, published in 1876. This illustration implies that the "17" numerals of the source label were printed while the "42" numerals were hand-drawn; the location of the label from which the copy-drawing was derived is not indicated. It seems unlikely that Gallay or Vidal could have accessed the two Francesco Stradivari/Count Cozio labels which, at that time, were in the hands of the Dalla Valle family in Italy.

Vidal provides a second illustration of a Francesco Stradivari label in his subsequent publication *La Lutherie et Les Luthiers* (1889) where Plate XVIII includes another 1742 label, also without a monogram.<sup>66</sup> The label-date numerals are presented in the same manner as previously—two printed and two drawn: "1742." It is unclear whether this 1889 illustration is entirely new or a "touched-up" revision of the 1876 illustration, as the two illustrations are not identical. At the end of his 1889 foreword (*Avant-Propos*), Vidal writes:

The text has been supplemented by accurate engraved reproductions of precious instruments, and by the exact copying of a collection of *luthier* labels, working from the authentic originals. It is hoped that these documents — rare and for the most part previously unpublished—will receive a favorable response from music lovers.

*Le texte a été complété par des gravures, reproduction fidèle d'instruments précieux, et par le facsimilé d'une collection d'étiquettes de luthiers d'après les originaux authentiques. Ces documents rares et pour la plupart inédits rencontreront, j'ose l'espérer, un accueil favorable auprès des amateurs.*<sup>67</sup>

Vidal does not identify the source of his collection of authentic original labels.

In their 1902 *Stradivari* monograph, the Hill brothers provide a "facsimile" illustration of a 1742 Francesco label that "comes to us 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

66. Antoine Vidal, *La Lutherie et Les Luthiers* (Paris: Maison Quantin, 1889), between pages 198 and 199.

67. *Ibid.*, ii.

Paolo Stradivari.”<sup>68</sup> It is unclear whether the Hills borrowed this label for their 1902 illustration and returned it afterwards to the Marquis or bought it outright; perhaps it was a gift. Close study of the published image reveals that the “17” numerals have been printed. The “42” numerals, conversely, have been hand-drawn, a faint first inking of the two numerals observed, with a more certain re-inking on top. There is no label-monogram within the Hills’ illustration.

The Witten-Rawlins Label Collection at the National Music Museum (Vermillion, South Dakota) includes seven Antonio Stradivari labels and one Francesco Stradivari label (fig. 5). Francesco’s label is associated with a paper envelope on which Count Cozio has written:

Two genuine labels of the son of Stradivari ~~1743~~ 1742 removed from two of his violins, as [listed] in my register.

*Due veridici Biglietti [Biglietti] del f<sup>o</sup> [figlio] Stradivari ~~1743~~ 1742 levati delli due suoi violini come in Registro.*

The single NMM/Francesco label has a 1742 date that comprises a printed “1” followed by three hand-written numerals, “742;” the adjacent “AS” monogram is hand-drawn.

Information received from James Warren indicates that during the 1920s Alfred Hill met with Giuseppe Fiorini in Italy and bought from him a 1742 Francesco label that Alfred Hill then inserted in the Francesco violin now known as the *Salabue*; this label has three hand-written numerals (“742”).<sup>69</sup> It is likely that the Francesco label bought by Alfred Hill from Giuseppe Fiorini was the second 1742 label that had been stored within Count Cozio’s paper envelope, which could explain why the National Music Museum has only one such label. The evidence points toward the 1742 Francesco *Salabue* label and the 1742 Francesco NMM label, both with three hand-written numerals, as the two Count Cozio removed from his two “masterpiece” Francesco violins.

It is here proposed that the *Habeneck* violin was made by Francesco Stradivari and originally carried his own label, dated 1742; the violin’s

68. Hills, *Antonio Stradivari*, 220. The facsimile label is opposite page 217.

69. James Warren, of the firm Kenneth Warren & Son, Ltd, Violin Dealers and Experts, Chicago, IL, was recently the owner of the Francesco Stradivari *Salabue* violin (personal communication, 2012). A subsidiary question is why, if the Hills had a 1742 label with two hand-written numerals that they illustrated in 1902, they then had to buy a 1742 label with three hand-written numerals from Fiorini in the 1920s. What had happened to the 1902 label?

*1742.  
Dno / serviti Bigli del Sr Stradivari  
scritti delli due suoi Violini come in  
Registro*


**Franciscus Stradivarius Cremonensis  
Filius Antonii faciebat Anno 1742** 

FIGURE 5. WRL-535. Francesco Stradivari label dated 1742, accompanied by the notated, folded piece of paper in which it was preserved by the collector Count Cozio di Salabue. Witten-Rawlins Label Collection, National Music Museum, The University of South Dakota. (See color photo p. 234)

current, false, label of I736 (initially I730), was commissioned by Count Cozio and enhanced by the use of a copy-stamp to imprint a counterfeit Antonio Stradivari monogram. Nicolas Lupot, in 1823–24, with his knowledge and experience of Stradivari instruments, would surely have recognized the falsity of the label within Signor Ambrosoli's violin, and perhaps the slightly low price subsequently paid by François-Antoine Habeneck (£96 or 2,400 *francs*) reflects the lack of absolute certainty about the instrument's origin. Alternatively, the purchase price might have taken into account the value of Habeneck's then-current violin, a violin that could have been used in part-exchange. The Hills provide some prices paid for Stradivari instruments around 1824:

1. a 1696 viola, sold in 1825 for £120
2. a "1660(?)" violin, sold in 1816 for 100 guineas
3. a 1702 violin, sold in London in 1818 for 100 guineas

4. a 1700 violin, sold in 1818 for 200 guineas
5. G B Viotti's violin, sold in Paris in 1824 for the equivalent of £152.<sup>70</sup>

The fact that F-A Habeneck kept his new violin for fully twenty-five years suggests that it was the instrument's tonal qualities—its capacity to respond to his technique—that most appealed to him, and he was content to know that the violin, at the least, had been made in the Stradivari workshop in Cremona.

70. See Hills, *Antonio Stradivari*, 268–270.