The Invention of Tradition: The Price of Stradivari Violins

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The traditions of Highland Scotland and the market forces that dictate the prices for fine violins make unlikely bed-partners. Yet both were created as a deliberately constructed "truth" during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In today's world, both survive ingrained and overstated as unshakable elements of global culture.

The dress of the Scottish Highlander, the kilt, is worn "with tribal enthusiasm by Scots and supposed Scots from Texas to Tokyo." So wrote the eminent historian Hugh Trevor-Roper in the introduction to his highly influential essay *The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland*.[1] Moreover, the kilt has embedded itself into other cultures around the world to a degree that has not been achieved by other components of national dress, and for contemporary reasons which may have nothing to do with the invented tradition of the past. We do not, for example, see Japanese schoolchildren wearing Bavarian lederhosen or French berets; yet paraded daily through the streets of a country far removed from Scottishness is a school uniform that is one-half sailor's outfit and one-half a type of kilt so short that it would give a genuine Scotsman a seizure!

Trevor-Roper's analysis of the traditions of Highland Scotland brings to light a set of circumstances that contain a remarkable parallel to the way in which the violin is understood in modern times. His essay reflects on the manner in which an invented identity came about as a consequence of the social and economic changes that took place in Scotland at the end of the 18th century and how these ideas gathered momentum through the 19th century. In today's society, old violins assume identities that are as removed from the original intentions of an invented tradition as they are from any historical truth.

Paris provides a setting for a reading of the invented traditions that shaped the world of violins. These traditions are otherwise identical to those of the kilt, even leading to comparable extremes of interpretation within modern global culture. The most notable extreme arises with the word "Stradivarius" which, thanks to its presence in countless cheap late 19th-century mass-produced instruments, evokes a potency beyond expected boundaries. "Many of the six hundred or so surviving violins, violas and cellos made by Stradivari are regularly heard in concert and on record, so their extraordinary quality of tone is familiar to all who enjoy classical music; whether they know it or not," wrote Charles Beare in the introduction to the catalogue of an exhibition

held in Cremona to mark the 250th anniversary of the death of its most famous son.[2] However, concerts are seldom billed for the instruments that are played within them. Programme notes and record sleeves increasingly acknowledge the identity of an instrument in the hands of a soloist, but it is rare for them to exceed a single sentence, when basic facts about an instrument’s pedigree could create several paragraphs of legitimate general interest. It requires a sophisticated knowledge of classical music to discover exact information about the instrument played by a soloist. Even among professional musicians, few have ever had an informed experience either playing or examining the instruments made in Cremona by Antonio Stradivari (1644–1737).

Yet, such is the recognition of a concept of “Stradivarius” that, to mirror Trevor-Roper’s observation of the kilt, it is received with enthusiasm by connoisseurs and supposed connoisseurs from “Texas to Tokyo;” it is utterly ubiquitous in global everyday culture, even though ownership of a Stradivari or legitimate intellectual authority on the subject belongs to a tiny number of people. In October 1999, when Yo- Yo Ma left his cello – the 1712 “Davidoff” – in the trunk of a New York City taxicab, the story received tremendous publicity and, for several years after, was even recounted thousands of times

daily as a recorded reminder to the city’s taxi passengers.[3] Stepping into a taxi in London with a violin case, the driver will predictably ask you if you are carrying a “Stradivarius”, otherwise if it is a machine-gun or a guitar.

Trevor-Roper explains that while the kilt existed in a vestigial form particular to Highland – not Lowland – Scotland before the Union with England in 1707, the concept of a distinct Scottish culture that includes the kilt is a retrospective invention. He recalls how, during the 17th century, the Highlands of Scotland served as an overflow from Ireland with no independent tradition of their own. He explores the creation of a tradition born out of a cultural revolt against Ireland, usurping Irish culture and rewriting early Scottish history, and reveals how this culminated in a false assertion that Celtic Scotland was the mother nation and Ireland its cultural dependency. And all of this perpetrated by a people rapidly undergoing the transition from a rural to an industrial economy. He further examines the imposition of this new tradition with its outward badges on the whole Scottish nation during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, a tradition which, in spite of historical evidence to counter it, is as strong today – even stronger – than when it was first written.

Likewise, the development of the modern market for violins emerged in Paris at a time of huge social change during the same time period, as the rising bourgeoisie were attempting to find badges to define themselves. In the same way, the towering dominance of Cremonese makers over their rivals reflects a historical truth. In 1678, for example, the Englishman Edward Phillips expressed a typical view, describing Cremona as "a rich and well fortified Town in Longobardia, or the Dutchy of Milan. The Violins made in this place, are accounted the best in the World."[4] Even during the middle of the 18th century, regarded as a low point in the popularity of Cremonese violins, certain cognoscenti were willing to pay modest premiums for fine old instruments, but not the stratospheric values that are assigned in today's marketplace.

The invention of traditions and the love of antiques reflect a certain idealized attitude toward the past, which has a bearing on how instruments and other cultural artifacts are perceived and ultimately preserved. In this essay, I map out the origins of our modern-day perceptions of the Cremonese school by examining how the modern-day market for antique violins came about – why we value them so and why we uphold certain ethics in their preservation and conservation. I explore the background of the violin market in the 18th

century, contending that by the end of the 1720s, Cremona had ceased to provide instruments to royal and aristocratic patrons and that the death of Antonio Stradivari in 1737 and Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù in 1744 was not the end of a golden era, but the tail end of an earlier catastrophic decline. I go on to suggest that the needs of a growing number of amateur players tended toward other sorts of violins that were more amenable to their fashions of playing, and that by the 1780s, when violins of the sort made by Stradivari began to find a serious demand from professional players in Paris, there was neither a tradition of making them nor an established market for reselling antique instruments. As the market opened up in the 19th century, an invented bourgeois tradition, based only in part on the history of violin making in Cremona, was created to inflate the market prices of antique instruments, establishing the modern market mechanism.

The Economic Decline in 18th-Century Cremona

Violin making in the northern Italian city of Cremona has its origins in the first half of the 16th century. The earliest known stringed instruments made in Cremona are those commissioned from Andrea Amati (d. 1576/79) by King Charles IX of France. The earliest dated example - indeed the oldest violin of modern form extant – was made in 1564.[5] As there is no apparent evidence of violin making in Cremona before Andrea

Amati became established, probably around 1538,[6] he is considered the father of a tradition that spanned five generations and gave birth to a violin-manufacturing industry that became foremost in Europe, after the rival Brescian makers perished in a plague that swept northern Italy in 1632. For the conspicuously rich in the 17th century who wanted to have the best things in the world, the finest lutes came from Venice, trumpets from Nuremberg, viols from London, harpsichords from Antwerp and violins from Cremona.

In 1684, Andrea Amati's grandson Nicolò died and Antonio Stradivari took precedence over other violin makers in that city. Until then, Cremonese workmanship had fitted into strict yet evolving ideas of style and most Cremonese makers continued to work under the influence of the Amati tradition. The first maker to challenge these conventions was Pietro Guarneri, who developed a slightly elongated form evidenced in a violin of 1685, the same year (perhaps significantly) he was appointed as a violin and viol player in the royal court at Mantua.[7] His experimentation corresponds with the rise of the instrumental concerto, in which it was important to maintain a contrast between the orchestral ensemble and the solo instrument. The first printed music of this sort was Giuseppe Torelli's *Concerti a Quattro*, published in Bologna in 1692,

although Arcangelo Corelli had certainly been developing the same form in Rome from the beginning of the 1680s. The versatility of the violin and the skill of violinists such as Corelli made it a natural instrument to dominate the solo concerto repertoire; yet, unlike the hautboy, trumpet or other early concerto instruments, the violin did not contrast against the sound of the accompanying string band. Shortly before 1690, Stradivari developed the long pattern, a slightly lengthened and proportionately narrowed model of violin. Its tonal characteristics contrast against those of the prevailing Amatise sound world from which the homogenous string orchestra was composed and suggest that Stradivari and Pietro Guarneri were exploring a new market for soloists' instruments, while their contemporaries, who faithfully worked in the Amati tradition, were supplying the market for orchestral instruments. Before 1700, Stradivari was combining the long pattern with a flatter arching derived from Brescian ideals of violin making. In 1704, he embarked on combining the flatter arching with the outline of the "grand Amati" pattern. Stradivari's adoption of a red-coloured varnish like that of the early Brescian makers might have been intended to mark out those instruments favoured by soloists from the homogenous sound world and visual spectacle of the golden brown Amati string ensemble.

By the late 1720s, economic conditions in Cremona had altered radically. And although the city was indisputably producing its finest violins, it appears that the market was facing a catastrophic decline. The first evidence of this is found in the instruments that survive from this period. Frequently, the quality of workmanship and the selection of materials are pronouncedly inferior.[8] This is evidence that they were being made for a lower price to be sold to less discerning customers and intended so that their aesthetic would not compete against expensive instruments made for wealthier patrons. Cellos in particular are found comprising the use of inexpensive materials - beech for the necks and willow that is soft enough to carve speedily for the backs. Two cellos by Stradivari, the 1726 "Marquis de Corberon" and a violoncello piccolo of the following year are examples of this. The cello of 1726 even has a large, unsightly knot in the back.[9] A third cello, dated 1732 with the label of Francesco Stradivari, is made of twisted maple from the very top of the tree. The figure varies along the length of the back from slab-cut to lightly flamed.[10] The inference that this was a piece of wood rejected at an earlier stage (lower parts of the same tree trunk would have been of better quality) but brought into the workshop to make cheaper instruments is sustained by the use of an apparently adjacent piece of wood from the top part of the same

log to make the "Habeneck" violin of about the same period.[11] The Hill brothers' critique of this violin speaks volumes about its workmanship compared with earlier works of Stradivari. "Palsied" is the word they use to describe the soundholes that provide evidence of "the trembling hand, but also of failing sight" of the ageing violin maker; they note in particular that the right-hand soundhole "is set quite 1/16 of an inch higher than the other."[12] Their critique of a similar violin, the 1736 "Muntz," describes the ribs "on which sandpaper marks show plainly all over the sides" and further that the violin "pathetically portrays the veteran's work" and that "the formation of the corners and edges is ponderous, blunt, irregular, and of square appearance."[13]

While the Hills use these descriptions to construct a portrait of Antonio Stradivari – aged 92 – as an "old and enfeebled, though practised, hand,"[14] what they choose to ignore is the similarity in style between his late instruments and those they freely attribute to his sons Omobono and Francesco who assisted him in his workshop, as well as the work of other Cremonese makers from that period - Carlo Bergonzis and, most obviously, the more extreme examples of Guarneri del Gesùs. The thesis that these are simply typical of a less expensive sort made for a less lavish market is upheld when their

workmanship is compared against abundant specimens of contemporary “second tier” work made, for example, in Milan by the Grancino and Testore families. Stradivari was still capable of producing instruments with a fine visual aesthetic during the period of his alleged enfeeblement, if the commission justified it. The 1730 “DeMunck” cello and the 1727 “Reiner” and 1733 “Sassoon” violins display the same quality of materials and intense attention to detail found in workmanship from the height of his career.[15]

The reasons for an economic decline are yet to be explored properly; however, educated speculation is possible. As we have seen, Cremona supplied a specialized niche at the very top of the market. Most of Stradivari’s known courtly commissions took place before 1700.[16] Only a set of violins for the Dresden court delivered in 1715 and the 1722 “Rode” – the last of the decorated violins – provide any hint of important aristocratic orders in the 18th century.[17] By the 1720s, it seems that the single most influential factor determining the economic decline is that, after more than a century and an half of making expensive, high quality and extremely durable instruments, including the thousand or so “soloist model” violins of the Stradivari workshop, the market became saturated and demand ran dry. In Paris, for example,

the violins purchased by Charles IX were still known even in 1780, and several of these instruments are still at large today.[18] Between 1624 and 1712 in England, the records of the Lord Chamberlain's office contain copies of the receipts submitted by the band of 24 string players for 7 bass violins, 18 tenor violins and 33 treble violins either specified as made in Cremona or sold for a price comparable to Cremonese instruments.[19] Moreover, this does not take into account instruments that were added to the court by gift or exchange, so there may have been many more Cremonese instruments in the court's possession. There is, for example, no record of receipt for the decorated set of violins purportedly commissioned from Stradivari for James II by the Venetian banker Michele Monzi in 1682.[20] Cremonese instruments made to the Amati model are unusual after 1700, further suggesting that demand for new "orchestral" violins had slowed. In London during the early 18th century, we see the monetary effects of this decline. In 1702, the Roman violinist Nicolo Cosimi was able to sell a "Cremona," bought for 9 guineas, for 30 guineas.[21] In contrast, William Corbett was unable to sell his collection of Italian instruments at a public sale in 1724.[22] The receipt for a "Cremona bass violin" bought for the English court by John Singleton in 1680 shows it to be worth £20.[23]

Yet when Giacobbe Cervetto, who traded personally with Stradivari, brought a consignment of Italian instruments with him to England around 1738, he is reported to have "returned them, as he could not get as much as £5 for a violoncello."[24]

Throughout Europe, at the same time Cremona's client base for expensive new violins became saturated, a massive growth of amateur music-making by the rising middle classes took place. By the end of the 17th century, conspicuous schools of violin making appeared in almost every major city in Italy and every capital city in Europe to sustain this new demand – though with very few exceptions, the standard of work falls short of the finesse of the Cremonese. One major phenomenon of the 18th century was an apparent preferment of violins by the Tyrolean maker Jacob Stainer (ca. 1618/9–1683) over those of the Cremonese. The responsibility for this seems to rest fairly on the shoulders of George Frideric Handel, who may have been as influential in turning the world toward Stainer as Viotti would be in turning it back to Stradivari. Between 1706 and 1709, Handel travelled between Florence, Rome, Naples and Venice, sparking demand for Tyrolean sonority and a surge of popularity in this style. In differing ways, a philosophy of violin making embracing Stainer's ideals (often combined with vestiges of the broader Amati model) became almost ubiquitous

in Italy.[25] In England, the influence of Stainer is again probably due to Handel's reception in London in 1710 and his permanent residence there from 1714, when his patron, the Elector of Hanover, succeeded to the British throne as George I. Inevitably, whatever trappings the Germans brought with them to the British court became the height of fashion in England. By the 1720s, violins by Stainer were in the possession of English patrons of music such as the Duke of Chandos, and prominent musicians such as William Corbett.[26] London's leading violin makers had embraced this pattern.[27] However, the market structure for Stainer's instruments appears to have developed differently from the ubiquitous Cremonese instruments. It is unlikely that very many Stainer violins left Germany during the early 18th century, and the high prices they attained in England and elsewhere on the Continent are a reflection of the fact that these were considered to be much scarcer than Cremonese violins.

It is less clear why musical amateurs drove demand for the Stainer model over Cremonese forms. In England and France, instruments of lesser quality were overwhelmingly built on approximations of Stainer's model throughout the larger part of the 18th century. It is necessary to pass over this phenomenon with a broad brush, except to point out that the rise in amateur music belonged to a very different social

class than the one that dabbled in Cremonese instruments. Therefore, the massive increase in middle-class music making would not have provided a boost to the Cremonese market, nor did the momentum of many violin makers working all over Europe provide the final nail in the coffin of any sort of Cremonese monopoly – the two phenomena are completely unconnected. The bulbous, exaggerated Stainer forms may simply have sat more securely under the chin - something that would have been increasingly important as amateur violinists began to discover the upper reaches of the fingerboard, following Francesco Geminiani's performances in London in 1713.[28] The increasing disregard for any sort of classical patterns that is found in an abundance of French and English instruments may also provide some clue to the sound world in which music inhabited. In particular, the strings available to most players might not have been terribly good, and so the finer points of violin making would have been lost on the average player. We know little about strings before the late-18th century, but we do know that during the 17th century, those of good quality were excessively expensive and we can presume that there were no significant improvements of technology in the years that followed. In 1676, Thomas Mace, on the subject of lutes, whose strings were similar to violin strings, argued that "it is a very chargeable instrument to keep; so that one had as good

keep a Horse as a Lute for cost."[29] Mace suggests that the "ordinary charge" for strings should be 20 shillings (£1) per year, yet this was a large proportion of the cost of a newly made instrument - Samuel Pepys paid £3 for a bass viol in 1663.[30] By contrast, English court violinists, who were accustomed to using the very best strings, would frequently submit receipts in the region of £5 per year, when the price of a Cremonese violin was £12. Amateur musicians may have taken to using cheap strings so they could afford to replace them frequently. Otherwise, they used strings sturdy enough not to snap. Either way, the quality of the instrument they were tied to would do little to improve the sound of the music.

While much of the market turned against Cremonese instruments, they did not disappear from view altogether. It is clear that a few cognoscenti did have an impact on the market throughout the 18th century. Cremona did not betray the flat model until after the death of Carlo Bergonzi and returned to something of the Cremonese tradition in the 1770s under the influence of Lorenzo Storioni. Neapolitan makers appear to have been unphased by the turn to Tyrolean fashions, and the Gagliano family were able to find a market for their robust instruments based on Stradivari's Golden Period. In England, Richard Duke,

whose work normally consisted of better violins after Amati and Stainer, adopted Stradivari's long pattern for a few instruments after 1760. A number of these contain imitation labels of Stradivari, although many features of Duke's work are so noticeably inconsistent with the original that it is doubtful whether they deceived anyone. In England, Joel Collier went some way toward obtaining an act of parliament so that "by laying an additional tax upon such necessaries of life as are not already overloaded," the government could "raise a competent sum for the purchase of the best Cremonas, and other instruments which can be procured on the continent" for the use of the orphans at the Foundling Hospital.[31] Duke's pupil John Betts provides the best account of taste in the late 18th century with a notice published in 1782 which reads:

> To the Curious in Musical Instruments.
>
> JOHN BETTS, real MUSICAL INSTRUMENT-MAKER begs to inform the public, and in particular these gentlemen who are judges of violins, tenours and violoncellos, that he has taken Mr Whitaker's late shop, No. 2, North Piazza, Royal Exchange, where he actually makes instruments in the ancient manner, after the patterns of Antonius Straduraus, Nicholas Amati, Jacobus Stainers &c. He further adds, that he is not numbered amongst those who pretend to be makers, but that he has served seven years

> apprenticeship to that much-esteemed artist, Mr Duke, senior and worked with him fully ten years after. Vanity it may (be) thought, should he venture to say, that he has rather, by his assiduity and observing his late maker's method, made improvements on his art to alter violins that are deficient, in tone equal to those made in Cremona.
> Several fine-toned instruments to be sold as above.[32]

Clearly, Stradivari had considerable recognition in London before 1782 – a violin by Richard Duke sold in 1769 to the philosopher Jeremy Bentham for 10 guineas suggests, if Bentham approached violin buying in the obsessive manner that he approached everything else (he did take the step of incising his name, date and cost of purchase into the neck of the instrument), that Duke thought more of Stradivaris than Amatis and Stainers (even though his Stradivari copies are the scarcest of his work).[33] Betts's work from the 1780s is invariably based on Stradivari's, though it lacks the delicacy of the genuine work.[34]

Therefore, we can distinguish between the rise in popularity of Cremonese models and the rise in popularity of original Cremonese work. It is indeed possible that in the late 18th

century, a violin maker such as Betts was able to make instruments that were perceived to be comparable in tone to those made in Cremona because of technical factors, including the nature of the strings, so it is possible that present-day criticisms of the limitations of copies by Betts were less valid when the instruments were made. What emerges is a market in which demand for antique instruments had fallen into abeyance. Newly made instruments matched old instruments for tone, were more robust and did not need potentially costly restoration or adaptation of the neck and fittings to prepare them for modern usage. Like today's market in vintage cars, old instruments were sold to a specialist minority at nominally inflated prices. The prevailing amateur market was for the new.

The Re-emerging Market, 1780–1827

The narrative describing the market after the 1780s is taken from the writings of George Hart (1839–1891), whose father, John, was among the first dealers to emerge in the London market for Italian violins as it was established in the 19th century:

> Attention was thus directed to the works of the Cremonese, and the year 1800 or thereabouts may be put as the time when the tide of Italian Violins had fairly

set in towards France and England. The instruments by the Amati were those chiefly sought after; the amount of attention they commanded at this period was probably about equal to that bestowed upon the works of Stradivari and Guarneri at the present time. Violins of Amati and other makers were, up to this time, obtainable at nominal prices. The number in Italy was far in excess of her requirements, the demand made upon them for choir purposes in former days had ceased, and the number of Violins was thus quite out of proportion to the players. The value of an Amati in England in 1799 and 1804 may be gathered from the following extracts from the day-book of the second William Forster, who was a dealer as well as a maker – "20th April, 1799, A Violoncello by Nicholas Amati, with case and bow £17 17s.0d.;" and further on – "5th July, 1804, an Amati violin £31 10s.0d." These prices were probably less than those which William Forster received for many instruments of his own make. It is certain that these low prices did not long continue; the price increased in due proportion to the vanishing properties of supply. The call for Violins by the Amati was so clamorous as speedily to effect this result; the prices for them were doubled, trebled, and often quadrupled, until they no longer

found a home in their native land.[35]

The market described by Hart that emerged in France and England in the early 19th century is a return to the sort that had existed a little over one hundred years before. It does not explain the stratospheric prices achieved by Amatis, let alone the prices attained by Stradivaris and Guarneris.

The explanation for this rise in prices seems to derive from the Industrial Revolution. It not only produced a new middle class of consumers who would ultimately boost demand for violins, it also led to the creation of new materials and industrial processes which would deeply affect the tonal possibilities of stringed instruments. The emergence of a mass-production market for new instruments in Markneukirchen during the late 18th century created new technologies of string production, principally the process of polishing strings, which allowed strings of an even consistency to be made cheaply. This solved an age-old problem that had dogged string makers. For the first time, a tonally superior string could be made from inferior raw materials, undercutting the traditional market for fine strings made in Italy and enabling Markneukirchen to dominate the string trade throughout Europe for most of the succeeding century.[36]

From the 1790s, it appears that violin makers were experimenting toward a modern setup for their instruments. This widespread experimentation suggests that innovations in string making had not only increased responsiveness – producing a superior tone with a wider frequency spectrum – but also made strings cheap and durable enough that a large proportion of the string-playing public could afford the best. At the same time, François-Xavier Tourte in Paris had developed the modern form of bow, swiftly copied by John Dodd in England. Tourte's stick and frog were both revolutionary, setting a standard that is little changed today. In Italy, the Mantegazzas are recorded using maple shims to repair a broken button and raise a neck on an instrument.[37] A viola dated 1793 by the Mantegazzas in original condition has basically a modern neck configuration.[38] In Germany, documents suggest that radical adaptation of violin setup had become necessary by 1790. An inventory taken in 1800 and amended in 1809 from the Weimar Hofkapelle indicates that 2 Cremonese violas and 7 violins (of which 5 where either by Jacob Stainer or Cremonese makers) had been "von Kirchschlag arrangirt, ao 1790," which probably relates to a change in setup. A further 12 violins, including 4 Cremonese and 3 Stainers were "reparirt von Nisle ao 1797." Within context, the number of violins "reparirt" or "arrangirt" suggests that they underwent significant change.[39]

Sometime before 1810, makers in London had adopted a way to modify old Italian instruments quickly and effectively, which is reflected in new styles of violin making. By prizing the neck from the body, the heel could be built up to give the correct elevation. Instead of opening the instrument to nail the neck back on, it could be mortised into the top block to provide the same stability.[40] By means of this relatively simple operation, old and new instruments could be provided with an identical setup. The particular qualities of one violin or other could be judged easily.

The superiority of Stradivari's instruments emerged to the public arena when Giovanni Battista Viotti made his debut performance in Paris at the Concert Spirituel on March 17, 1782. Viotti's success as a musician was instantaneous, and it established him at once in the front rank of all violinists.[41] He remained in Paris until his position became untenable during the French Revolution and fled to London in 1792. Viotti was generous in attributing much of his success to the Stradivari violin he owned. In Paris, François Louis Pique and subsequently Nicolas Lupot, who came to work with him from 1794, turned their attentions to mastering the concepts of Stradivari's Golden Period. Lupot and his contemporaries in London sought to create violins that were as good as

Stradivari's when they were fresh from the workshop. Hence, there is no evidence of antiquing, though efforts to re-create the colour and texture of Cremonese varnish are found in works from that period. Lupot's own varnish is an impressive essay in Cremonese colouring, and in England Thomas Dodd (whose deep red varnish has blackened over time) claimed to be "The Only Possessor of the Recipe for Preparing the Original Cremona Oil Varnish" on a trade card issued between 1809 and 1825.[42] The mysteries of Cremonese varnish had, however, come to the attention of the English long before this point. In 1792, the novelist Charles Dibdin described the fictional character of Hannah Hewit, the female Crusoe trapped on an island in the South Seas. Her reminiscences suggest that attempts to recreate a Cremonese recipe were already presenting a challenge to English violin makers, and that the intractable problems of recreating it were already well known among a wider field of novelists and their readership. She had "now made from earth, bones, flowers, the blood of the sea snake, and other materials, some admirable colours of my own. Oils, varnishes, I had brought to such perfection, that I had no doubt but in time I should rival the famous varnish in which the beautiful tone of the Cremona fiddle is said to consist." [43]

Several observations arise from Pique and Lupot's work. Firstly, although there was a generous supply of Cremonese instruments to be had in France, it appears that Golden Period instruments were still relatively rare. Otherwise, the two makers would not have had to labour so hard to perfect Stradivari's aesthetic, nor would they have enjoyed demand for so many. Secondly, these modern copies were directed toward the very top-end of the market. Ole Bull played a Pique during a lengthy concert tour, and Louis Spohr also expressed considerable praise for the maker's work.[44] Lupot was appointed violin maker to the imperial chapel in 1813 and to the École Royale de Musique.[45] This suggests that the flatter model came into its own as a soloist's instrument whose brighter, more brilliant projecting tone was favoured specifically to contrast against the warmth and sonority of orchestral violins, even the "best possible models" by Andrea Amati that had been valued in France in the 1780s.

At the same time, among the Englishmen who travelled on the Grand Tour, there seems to have been a strong interest in acquiring Italian violins, although obtaining them in Italy, not London, may have been an important distinction for these men. During the 18th century, certain precedents had been set which may have legitimized this form of collecting. William

Corbett had formed a collection, dispersed in 1751, of Italian violins, including Cremonese violins collected during his visit to Italy in 1710. A notice of the sale of his collection mentions violins by "old Stradivarius of Cremona" (whom he is thought to have met), "the famous Amatuus's," Maggini, da Salò, Albani, Stainer and "the celebrated violins of Gobo, Torelli, N. Cosmi, and Leonardo of Bolognia, which those deceased virtuosos generally played on."[46] In 1786, some sort of violin mania seems to have hit the art auction world. In his *Farewell Odes for the Year 1786*, the satirist Peter Pindar made pointed comment about the prices of fine violins:

> Thus prove a Croud, a Stainer or Amati,
>
> No matter for the fiddle's sound;
>
> The fortunate possessor shall not bate ye
>
> A doit, of fifty, nay a hundred, pound:
>
> And though what's vulgarly baptiz'd a *rep*,
> Shall in a hundred pounds be deem'd dog-cheap.[47]

The playwrights Inchbald and Holcroft took the same circumstances to an extreme in the prologue of *The Widow's Vow* (the first occasion a violin auctioneer appeared in either a play or an ode):

> How shells, stuff'd monkies, and Cremonas old,

In hand of Auctioneer, are current gold!
He "Going! Going!" cries "The hammer's up! "This
fine antique! this Roman Caudle-cup!"
A gem so rare makes connoisseurs turn pale,
Fearful, alike, to purchase or to fail!
Hope trembles, starts, from lip to lip rebounds,
'Till down she's knock'd by – Ah! – one thousand
pounds![48]

When Count Cozio di Salabue dispersed his collection of violins in 1801, he published notices in both English and French to attract buyers.[49] In the early 19th century, John Parke bought the Stradivari of 1711 that bares his name from a noble Milanese family who had bought the violin from its maker.[50] Parke's brother, William Thomas, wrote in 1802 that "Mr E. Stephenson, the banker had perhaps the best and most valuable collection of Cremona violins of any private gentleman in England."[51] An officer in Napoleon's Army reputedly took "La Cathédrale" of 1707 out of Italy.[52] Finally, a cello by Domenico Montagnana dated 1735 (ex Emanuel Feuermann), described in a letter from Arthur Phillips Hill to Henry Werro in 1945 as "one of the most perfect examples of the master's work in existence, being practically new in condition,"

was bought, perhaps directly from Venice in 1815, "by an English country gentleman who treasured it as a rare antique to be exhibited to honoured guests but not to be played upon."[53]

By 1810, Cremonese instruments could be assessed on equal terms with newer violins made in London and Paris. Stradivari's Golden Period violins and copies of them were valued by virtuosi, but it seems that real demand of the sort encouraged by dilettantes was still limited, perhaps because the flatter model still provided a barrier to players who preferred the broader earlier models on the grounds of comfort. When Louis Spohr invented the chin rest, a device designed to assist virtuoso players, its consequence was to negate the differences between broad and flat models of violin for amateur players. Henceforth, these instruments became the most desirable sorts favoured by the best musicians, and hence the most fashionable. The economic situation after 1810 is one that echoes the fashions of a century earlier. Cremonese instruments of all sorts were worth around four times the price of the best violins made in London and Paris. Golden Period Stradivaris and the violins of Guarneri del Gesù (after the presentation of one to Nicolò Paganini reputedly following a concert in Livorno in 1806), would ultimately be worth more, since there were only a few hundred rather than the thousands of earlier Cremonese violins that existed. This was a stable,

proven market. Only an act of deliberate intervention could derail the price mechanism. By the end of the following decade, the market would be transformed as the prices of old Italian work spiralled upward.

Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume: The Making of the Modern Market

In 1819, Viotti returned to France to direct the Paris Opera, where he remained until 1821. The market for the sorts of instruments he championed had survived both through his pupils and through the influence of Pique and Lupot. But when Pique and Lupot died without a successor, in 1822 and 1824 respectively, the market fell under the control of a new generation of maker-dealers. One man in particular, Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume, had established a business in Paris from 1821. At first he supplied work for the better-established François Chanot, but after 1823, openings in the market allowed him to trade by himself. His violins closely copied the style of Lupot, and in 1827, he submitted his work to the Paris Industrial Exhibition, where he was awarded the silver medal for violins under 200 francs. The exhibition was to be one of several important events that took place over a short space of time. It was at that time that he met the cellist Jean-Marie Raoul, who commissioned him to make an exact replica of the "Map of Paris," a viola da gamba alleged to have been made by the 16th-century so-called French father of

violin making, Caspard Duiffobrougar.[54] The final event for Vuillaume in 1827 was the visit to Paris of Luigi Tarisio, an indefatigable violin collector from Piedmont. Tarisio had heard that old Italian violins were highly prized in Paris and had set out to test the market. On his first visit, he sold his instruments to the dealer Jean-François Aldric. There appears to have been much negotiation in the transaction, and although he parted after obtaining a much higher price than he was first offered, he seems to have been unsatisfied with his reception.[55] On his following journeys, he offered his instruments through auction. Vuillaume became notorious, for while other dealers were prepared to pay conservative prices, he would pay whatever it took to secure the instruments for himself. Vuillaume appears to have been the only Parisian violin dealer to conceive of a link between the market in old violins and the wider antiques market, hence his enormous purchasing power, and it is his conception that underlies the ideology of the modern violin market.

The French Revolution in 1789 and the succeeding political turmoil had made the value of the franc unstable, and objects of all kinds – furniture, silver, porcelain, and paintings – were bought as investments. But these were generally new works, and the concept of an enhanced antique value arising

from age as well as quality was a 19th-century development.[56] In the 1840s, Honoré de Balzac wrote *Cousin Pons*, which has half a century of collecting as its subject:

> This system, carried out for forty years, in Rome or Paris alike, had borne its fruits. Since Pons returned from Italy, he had regularly spent about two thousand francs a year upon a collection of masterpieces of every sort and description, a collection hidden away from all eyes but his own; and now his catalogue had reached the incredible number 1907. Wandering about Paris between 1811 and 1816, he had picked up many a treasure for ten francs, which would fetch a thousand or twelve hundred to-day. Some forty-five thousand canvases change hands annually in Paris picture sales, and these Pons had sifted through year by year. Pons had Sèvres porcelain, *pâte tendre*, bought of Auvergnats, those satellites of the Black Band who sacked chateaux and carried off the marvels of Pompadour France in their tumbrel carts; he had, in fact, collected the drifted wreck of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; he recognized the genius of the French school, and discerned the merit of the Lepautres and Lavallée-Poussins and the rest of the great obscure creators of the Genre Louis Quinze and the Genre Louis Seize. Our modern craftsmen now draw without

> acknowledgment from them, pore incessantly over the treasures of the Cabinet des Estampes, borrow adroitly, and give out their *pastiches* for new inventions.[57]

As France became politically more settled, the middle class – the economic driving force of the nation since the Revolution – had been motivated by a desire to become more conspicuous in their wealth. With their recent rise, the middle class were incapable of creating or elaborating their own style. At the same time, the aristocracy could no longer live on landed wealth. If they did not want to descend into poverty, they were forced to engage in financial speculation. Hence, the aristocracy drifted into middle-class materialism, and the middle class increasingly mimicked the aristocracy – they turned to the past to find legitimacy and define their style, and by the middle of the century, would share the same tastes. Bourgeois Paris was entranced with antiques and also with copies.

A genuine antique might sell for large sums, but the pastiche or copy was still a culturally acceptable commodity selling for proportionately less, though the figure could vary depending upon the skill and reputation of the craftsman. Those, for example, who owned a Boulle *secrétaire* would not think twice about turning it into a set by commissioning a copy. Suites of furniture could be developed out of a single

antique example; even anachronistic pastiches by craftsmen who lacked the skill to make convincing replicas of one style could win strong approval from certain segments of the public.[58]

The attempts of the newly consolidated bourgeois class to define itself artistically extended to musical taste. From the late 18th century in France, England and Central Europe, the public concert became the principal ceremony of institutionalized musical life in a manner separate from sacred and courtly circles. This promoted a core repertory of classical music, a “canon” with related concert rituals to confirm and authenticate the status quo. In England, Sir John Hawkin’s *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* and Charles Burney’s *A General History of Music form the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, both published in 1776, had established the fundamentals of middle-class musical knowledge, pre-dating by some years the emergence of the musical dictionary, the ultimate authentication of the canon. Between 1790 and 1792, Ernst Gerber published his *Historisch-biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler* in Leipzig. François Fayolle and Alexandre Choron published the *Dictionnaire Historique des Musiciens, Artistes et Amateurs, Morts ou Vivants* in Paris during 1810, and the English literary agent John Sainsbury published his *Dictionary of Musicians from the*

Earliest Ages to the Present Times in 1824. The musical canon might not have crystallized until the mid-19th century, but the perception of a group of composers who, by virtue of being fashionably heard in concert halls, were assigned value and greatness by consensus, was indelibly inked into bourgeois culture. Through the collusion of the Belgian musicologist François-Joseph Fétis from as early as the 1830s, Vuillaume was able to confer the same canonical legitimacy upon Amati, Guarneri and Stradivari as enjoyed by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. Between 1835 and 1844, substantially building upon earlier works, Fétis compiled the first comprehensive dictionary of music, his *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens et Bibliographie Générale de la Musique*, which included the great violin makers alongside composers and musicians.

Published in 1856, *Antoine Stradivari, luthier célèbre* confirmed the idea of a canon of violin makers. To lend the book legitimacy, it appeared under the name of Fétis, Director of the Brussels Conservatory, *maître de chapelle* to Léopold I and a pioneering musicologist. But Vuillaume had provided the research, if not ghostwritten the entire work himself.

> We have now related what were the results of the labours of the great makers of the school of Brescia, and of the Amati family. In the instruments of Gasparo da Salo and

> Magini we find a tone at once superb; majestic, and penetrating; in those of Nicholas, the most able of the Amati, a pure, sweet and silvery tone, but little intensity. Mellowness and beauty united to clearness, brilliance and vibratory power – this was the last problem to resolve. A man at length appeared, who, by progressive steps, ultimately discovered the secret of all these perfections combined. This man was Anthony Stradivarius.[59]

At the top of the canon was Stradivari, closely followed by Nicolò Amati, and the flat models of the early Brescian makers, Gasparo da Salò and Giovanni-Paolo Maggini. Guarneri del Gesù, presumed at that time to have been a pupil of Stradivari, is ranked alongside him.[60] Instruments by these makers were old enough to be coveted as antiques; better still, they echoed the French predilection for Renaissance and Louis XVI styles – the two extremes between which French taste hovered. Vuillaume reasoned that the market forces of the antiques world should apply to these in the same way they applied to *objets d'art*. On this basis, Vuillaume was able to construct a market in which the facsimile copy - and Vuillaume only made facsimiles of the instruments from the top of the canon - should be valued at one-tenth the price of the antique

original. Yet, the price of any copy was dictated by the long-established traditions of building new instruments. The market accepted that a violin of Vuillaume’s was worth 200 francs; the extra time and skill needed to create an antiqued violin based upon actual examples would make for a higher price – perhaps 300 francs. Hart’s estimation of the early 19th-century market that prices quadrupled from a nominal sum suggests that a Stradivari or Amati violin would have sold for about 1,000 francs by the 1820s. By Vuillaume’s calculations, if a Stradivari violin was worth ten times the value of a facsimile, the price would be forced upwards to 3,000 francs. This enormous rise in prices, which explains how Vuillaume was able to outbid his rivals when buying instruments from Luigi Tarisio, could be justified on the basis that flat-arched violins were still rare and found mostly in the hands of professional virtuosi. Vuillaume was bargaining that Tarisio would become a reliable source, and it was a risk that paid off. Overnight, Vuillaume had reinvented the market for violins. The effect would trickle down to lesser makers in the canon, whose prices would rise proportionately in the new framework.

Perhaps Tarisio proved too much of a good thing. The exceptional rarity of flat-arched violins in France, combined with almost certain knowledge of Stradivari’s earlier more Amati-inspired work, may have led Vuillaume to believe that

these instruments were genuinely very rare; indeed, there may have been an element of legitimacy behind his actions. Tarisio's supply of instruments could not be stopped, and instruments began to reach Paris from other sources also. On the other hand, French interest stimulated a market that reached Britain, Germany and Russia, yet the whole market was founded on a particularly French set of economics. Particularly if London failed to respond to the new economy and was able to find its own sources for these instruments, the artificially inflated prices would collapse, with damaging results for the Paris violin trade. Furthermore, for the market to have any longevity and not become a "bubble," Vuillaume needed to establish some form of inflationary mechanism. In the absence of price increases, he could not buy back instruments for resale on profitable margins without undermining the market. Establishing inflation would prove impossible, as instruments continued to flood into the market. Vuillaume was faced with stockpiling instruments to give the illusion that demand outweighed supply. Only by collusion with other Parisian dealers and with his brother in Brussels and by sending his instruments to London to be sold was he able to reduce the quantity of instruments for sale in any particular place and stimulate the market to absorb them.

To stimulate inflation, Vuillaume turned again to his tricks

of constructing a market. He had successfully fixed the relationship between the price of the antique specimen and the facsimile. If he could increase the quality of the facsimiles, he could justify asking a higher price for them, yet at the same time he could use the price of his facsimiles, always one-tenth the price of the original, to justify the cost of owning a genuine Stradivari. In a letter to his customer Mr. Henry of Geneva dated February 3, 1859, Vuillaume explains the situation in his own words:

> I cannot alter the price. I am in the middle of putting up my prices for the violins from 400 to 500 francs, I have no alternative, and my reputation obliges me more and more to only provide items of the finest quality. I am forced to do this because of the time that I spend and the work that this gives me, and believe me it is still cheap, for you can compare your Vuillaume violins with any Stradivaris that might cost 4,000 or 6,000 francs. Everything is similar; beauty, quality of wood, and yet the difference in price is enormous.[61]

Vuillaume began looking for ways to make his instruments more convincingly like those he was copying. Every extra franc he could charge for his own work would manifest itself tenfold on the price of one of his finest antique instruments. Moreover, the price of inferior Italian instruments was assessed as a

proportion of the value of the finest Stradivari. The consequence of a price rise in the finest instruments would filter down to every other instrument that he had for sale. He began by experimenting with kiln-drying wood to simulate ageing. He soon abandoned this, concentrating on finding new wood with the right sort of figure, or procuring suitable old Italian stock. When he returned from a trip to Italy in 1855, shortly after he had acquired the 1716 "Messiah," he wrote to his brother from Paris on October 1:

> My trip was very rapid. I was in Piedmont at the heirs of Tarisio, I bought the whole lot and also a beautiful double bass by Gaspard da Salo . . . From there I went to Mantua, Verona, Juspruch and Mittenwald, where with very much effort I was able to obtain all the materials for me to reproduce "the Messiah" several times over.[62]

Vuillaume's attempts at copying the "Messiah" - including a violin dated 1856 that was certainly made from wood collected the previous year – serve to illustrate the extraordinary lengths he went to.[63] The wood makes formidable comparison to the original. The grain of the spruce falls away from the centre at about the same density, except that it lacks the few rings of exceptionally tight grain from the Maunder Minimum

running beneath the strings. The back is made from maple with similar density of flame running at the same angle as the original, and the eye is drawn to broad areas just below the top corners and halfway along the lower bout. Both pieces of wood present the same visual markers as the original.

The insurmountable problem for the copyist lay in the varnish (or more precisely the techniques for colouring the wood and preparing the ground layer). Even if the recipe for Stradivari's varnish had survived – a false claim made to Vuillaume by Giacomo Stradivari, a descendant who alleged to have found it tucked inside a family Bible - it is unlikely that it could be perfectly replicated. Since before Dibdin's 1782 novel, varnish was recognized as playing a fundamental part in the tone of violins, and varnishes by makers at the top of the canon – Stradivari and Guarneri del Gesù – happen to have had optical properties that were also impossible to reproduce. Though not everyone held Cremonese varnish in such awe, Count Cozio di Salabue, an avid collector of Stradivari's work, was obsessed with varnish, as can be detected from a letter dated September 30, 1804.[64] But this was only so far as attempting to re-create every single technique used by Stradivari. In 1824, the Cremonese biographer Vincenzo Lancetti, who had interviewed Cozio in order to compile his unpublished account of violin making in that city, described

the work of Stradivari's sons. Paraphrased by the Hills in their 1902 work on Stradivari, it reads that they "principally confined their efforts to repairing and adjusting instruments, aided in the varnishing and general management, so that the master might be free to devote himself unremittingly to the construction of his instruments."[65] Clearly, there was no mystique about the composition of varnish, nor was there any idea that it had secret acoustical powers. Even Vuillaume was prone to play down the mystique when it suited him. A letter to Giacomo Stradivari dated April 14, 1859, begins:

> The recipe for the varnish that you believe you have, seems doubtful to me, because there was no secret made of it, since seven or eight of Stradivari's contemporaries, whose work did not compare with his, have exactly the same varnish, with the same colour and all its qualities. Also, I have in my own collection several instruments with varnish that is as beautiful as that of the finest Stradivaris.[66]

Yet, dozens of instruments made in Paris and London, including those by Vuillaume himself, were finished in a pastiche of Stradivari's varnish. A letter from Vuillaume to Giacomo Stradivari on January 3, 1860, before his recipe came to

nothing, gives some indication of the mystique that had been generated around the quest to perfectly reproduce the Cremonese varnish:

> Fetis' book has glorified your name and will render it immortal: it awoke the attention of poets, painters; and there goes one seeker who has just discovered what *I* found out twenty-five years ago, in other words the secret of the varnish and its application. I read his work with care, and I do not believe that he is correct, but that is always a good subject for discussion, and the public tends to accept the printed word. So tell me something about your old Bible (Giacomo said that he had found the varnish recipe in the pages of an old Bible.), and if you have ever made attempts which showed results. I am doubtful because even if you have the information, you still need the right hand that is used to this work. I have offered to experiment with your recipe and to keep it secret, and just supposing that it did give better results than what I use, I would naturally reimburse you for any benefit which I might derive from it, for you will not find anybody else connected with violin making who would be content to spend money on just experimenting. There isn't the money about in our circles at the moment; everywhere trade is going through

> a depression. Fortunately for me, I am the exception that proves the rule.[67]

While Vuillaume was capable of emulating the colour of Stradivari's varnish, his work lacks the optical qualities of the original. No copy, however accurate, could provide the same tonal characteristics that distinguished genuine Golden Period work, and Vuillaume's thesis that the difference was locked in the secrets of the varnish was an attractive one. Of all the makers, Vuillaume came closest to the original varnish, and he jealously guarded his method. By giving weekly master classes on varnishing and endorsing a varnish made in his workshops that was sold to instrument makers, he was able to reinforce his superiority over other makers by effectively leading them on a wild goose chase. Better still, as they believed their instruments approached the superior work of Vuillaume, they raised their prices, and Vuillaume could respond by raising his accordingly. The Scottish violin dealer David Laurie, who visited Vuillaume in 1864, relates how, after a master class on varnishing, the two of them retired to Vuillaume's workshop, where Vuillaume removed the varnish from the instruments he had used in his demonstration. When Laurie questioned him about his actions,

> He laughed uproariously at my amazed looks, and said

> that, while the varnish he sold was good varnish and would make a fine job of a fiddle if put on according to the directions given, it could hardly be expected that he would give away his own varnish. I thought to myself that his customers when they used this summer-house varnish must have bee greatly astonished at the result as it was as little like Vuillaume's varnish as their fiddles were like his, I suppose, in workmanship.[68]

Trusting not even his own workmen, he would not allow them to varnish his instruments, and after varnishing in his summerhouse he would hide the smell on his clothes with aniseed so that his workers would not guess of its composition from its aroma.[69] If Vuillaume could claim to be better than his competition, with an authentic varnish to prove it, the prices of his facsimiles would be driven up by the prices claimed by his inferior rivals, and hence the price of old Italian instruments would inflate.

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Hugh Trevor-Roper describes how an independent Highland tradition and the imposition of that new tradition occurred in three stages between the late 18th century and the mid-19th.

First, there was a cultural revolt against Ireland, the usurpation of Irish culture and the rewriting of Scottish history, culminating in the insolent claim that Celtic Scotland was the “mother-nation” and Ireland the cultural dependency. Taking place in the 1780s, this mirrors the technological changes and musical demands that brought Stradivari instruments under the influence of Viotti to a legitimate forefront and created the demand for copies by Lupot and Pique. Secondly was the artificial creation of new Highland traditions, presented as ancient, original and distinctive – an apt description of Vuillaume’s activity from the 1820s. And thirdly, there was the process by which these traditions were offered to, and adopted by, historic Lowland Scotland, a nation of Picts, Saxons and Normans. Similarly, Vuillaume’s market, based on perceptions unique to bourgeois France, was adopted and furthered by musicians, dealers and collectors throughout Europe.

The spiralling market of the 19th century owes its origins to one man, known by the Belgian cellist Adrien Servais as “the whale of instrument making.” Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume had come to prominence at a time when the market for violins was on a level playing field, and Cremonese instruments of the Golden Period were still in short supply. His feat as a businessman was to invent an entirely artificial market by dovetailing the

supply of rare violins into pre-existing bourgeois cultural values. His feat as a craftsman was to sustain the market by making many of the finest copies of Cremonese work to this day. In a century of very little inflation, the price for his own work rose from 200 francs in the 1820s to 600 francs by 1858. The price of violins by Stradivari had leapt from a nominal 200 francs to more than 6,000 francs. As Vuillaume sank into retirement, demand for violins from London, the rich capital of the British Empire, sustained the prices that had been attained in Paris. While this history of the market for great violins in part explains why the concept of "Stradivarius" is overstated in today's society, it has little relevance in describing today's market, where Stradivaris regularly sell just below £1 million at auction, and the greatest example, the 1716 "Messiah," has a theoretical value of £10 million. An important distinction between the 19th and 20th centuries: Vuillaume could never be sure how many of an increasing number of great violins would pass through his hands because he had no way of knowing how many would emerge onto the market. Today, we can never be sure of the exact number of instruments since war, revolution, theft and ignorance have taken their toll. The demand for Cremonese violins grew with the emergence of markets in America as it became economically dominant at the end of the First World War, and again more recently with emerging markets in Japan,

China and Korea. The number of virtuosos and collectors hungering over an ever-diminishing pool of instruments has created a market in which increasing demand and dwindling supply justify ever-spiralling prices for the finest stringed instruments.

There is no dispute that Stradivari was correctly placed at the top of a canon of instrument makers, a fact that has been asserted and reasserted by informed musicians, violin makers, dealers, scientists and connoisseurs since the late-18th century. Yet, the tradition that first assigned stratospheric values to these instruments and the myth of a lost art are simply inventions, part of a wily gamble by a maverick businessman in 19th-century Paris that has gained approval and acceptance from connoisseurs and supposed connoisseurs from Texas to Tokyo.

Notes

[1] Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. E. Hobsbawn and T. Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 15–42.

[2] Charles Beare, *Antonio Stradivari: The Cremona Exhibition of 1987* (London: J. and A. Beare, 1993), 11.

[3] http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0009/03/pin.00.html, accessed

4 December 2003.

[4] Edward Phillips, *The New World of Words: Or, A General Dictionary of English,* 4th edition (London: 1678).

[5] Hill Collection, no. 10, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

[6] Carlo Bonatti, *La Genealogia degli Amati liutai et il primato della scuola liutistica cremonese* (Cremona: 1938); quoted in English from *A Geneaology of the Amati Family of Violin Makers: 1500–1740*, ed. D. Draley, trans. G. Graubart Champe (Iowa City: Maecenas Press, 1989), 16–18.

[7] A violin of 1685 is illustrated in Sotheby's *Musical Instruments* (27 March 1990), lot 67: 61.

[8] From time to time throughout Stradivari's career, instruments are found in which the quality of materials is inferior, though workmanship never seems to be an issue. Such examples include the 1672 "Mahler" viola with a willow back and a violin of 1666 whose maple back is knotted.

[9] The 1726 "Marquis de Corberon" is part of the collection of the Royal Academy of Music. Illustrated in David Rattray, *Masterpieces of Italian Violin Making* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 96–101. The violoncello piccolo dated 1727 was sold at Sotheby's, London, in November 2003.

[10] Moscow Conservatory, illustrated in P. Cieślak et al.,

Genius Stradivari (Poznań: Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu, 2001), 120–121.

[11] Collection of Royal Academy of Music; illustrated in Rattray, 106–109. The facsimile label inside reads 1736, although the violin is now attributed a date of c. 1734, in part due to the similarity between this and another instrument with a dubious date, labelled to Omobono Stradivari, 1727 (illustrated in ibid., 102–105).

[12] W. Henry Hill, Arthur F. and Alfred E., *Antonio Stradivari: His Life and Work* (1644–1737) (London: William E. Hill and Sons, 1902; reprint New York: Dover, 1963), 87. Normally, there is a difference of about 1.5 mm in the setting of soundholes on Stradivari violins.

[13] Ibid. Also illustrated in Beare, 294–299.

[14] Hill, 87

[15] Illustrated in Beare, 264–296, 258–263 and 270–275 respectively.

[16] A summary of known commissions is listed in Beare, 32–34. These largely took place in the 1680s.

[17] Evidence about a commission for the Dresden Court is examined in K. Kopp, “Stradivari’s Court Order,” *The Strad* 114, no. 1355 (March 2003), 256–265.

[18] M. Jean-Benjamin De Laborde, *Essai Sur La Musique Ancienne*

Et Moderne (Paris: 1780), 356-358. He writes: "We do not know when a fourth string was added to this instrument; it can only be before the 16th century since the best violins still in our possession are those commissioned by Charles IX, King of France, to the famous Amati in Cremona, and they are still the best possible models." Quoted in Karel Moens, "Vuillaume and the First Violin Makers," in Rémy Campos, ed., *Violons, Vuillaume, 1798-1875*, trans. M. de Mazières (Paris: Cité de la musique/Musée de la musique, 1998), 130. There is no evidence that these were still property of the French Court in 1780, even if numerous examples were still to be found in Paris.

[19] Taken from Andrew Ashbee, *Records of English Court Music*, 9 vols (Snodland: A. Ashbee, 1986-1989). Breakdown in B. Hebbert, *The London Music Trade, 1600-1725* (forthcoming).

[20] For more information on Monzi, see Hill, 36.

[21] John Milnes, ed., *The British Violin: The Catalogue of the 1998 Exhibition "400 Years of Violin and Bow Making in the British Isles"* (Oxford: British Violin Making Association, 2000), 27.

[22] Hill, 250-251. Many of the instruments were probably acquired during his visit to Italy in 1710. It may be inferred from his reference to "old Stradivarius of Cremona" in an advertisement dated May 6 1724, in the *Daily Journal* that he had visited this maker in Cremona during his stay.

[23] Ashbee, Records of English Court Music, vol. 1, 192.

[24] Hill, 246.

[25] Two excellent examples of this are illustrated in Rattray, 152-153 and 140-143. The first, by David Tecchler, made in Rome and dated 1727, is superficially of Stainer influence. More subtly, the second is a Venetian violin by Santo Seraphin dated 1743 imposing an Italian style onto a broadly Tyrolean model.

[26] Chandos, who was also one of Handel's patrons, had four Stainer violins dated 1660, 1665, 1676 and 1678 by 23 August 1720, the date of an inventory of musical instruments in his possession undertaken by J. C. Pepusch (Stowe Papers ST66, Huntingdon Library, San Marino, California). The sale of instruments belonging to William Corbett in 1724 lists "the noted Albani and Stainer of Tyrol."

[27] The earliest dated copy of a Stainer made in England is by John Barrett dated 1722 (ex Lord Menuhin, illustrated in Milnes, 2001, 130-131). Another Stainer copy by Richard Meares II, a violin maker who was intimate with Handel and Geminiani, has a youngest tree ring date of 1717 (dendrochronology with thanks to John Topham). His instruments are featured alongside Stainer's in the inventory of instruments owned by the Duke of Chandos in 1720.

[28] Substantial numbers of earlier English instruments of flatter models are found with damage to their belly or with an entirely new front in a manner that is not often seen on instruments from other countries. Those repairs that I have seen normally date from 1720 to the 1740s. It appears that English violinists routinely clamped the violin between their chin and shoulder, and that flatter instruments were unable to sustain this amount of pressure. Francesco Geminiani (1687–1762) had arrived in London in 1713 for a hugely influential visit that lasted until 1732. In 1718, the instrument maker

Richard Meares published his *Sonate a Violino, Violine, e Cembalo*. This is the first music in the English amateur repertoire to encourage the departure from first position, and the technical demands of playing it may be responsible for the demise of many fine instruments.

[29] Thomas Mace, *Musick's Monument* (London: 1676), 43–44. Mace lists all the types of string that are available for lute players, but makes no similar list in his appended treatise on the viola da gamba. It is possible that this is because he did not feel the need to duplicate information about generic strings that would have been pertinent to both bowed and plucked musical instruments. Richard Hunt, advertising in the 1664 edition of Playford's *Introduction to the Skill of Music*, also makes no discrimination between lute and viol strings.

[30] Samuel Pepys, *Diary* 21 August 1663. Since Pepys already owned a bass viol, £3 probably gained him a viol above average quality, though the standard price for a viol destined for court use was £10.

[31] A. Bicknell, supposed author. *Musical Travels through England. By Joel Collier [pseud.]* (London: 1776), v-vi.

[32] Milnes, ed., *The British Violin*, 58.

[33] The 1769 violin by Richard Duke which belonged to Jeremy Bentham is in the collection of the Museum of London, and illustrated in Milnes, 160-161.

[34] An example dated 1786 is illustrated in Milnes, 132-133 and 406.

[35] George Hart, *The Violin, Its Famous Makers and Their Imitators* (London: 1875), 337-338. A cello by William Forster II (1739-1808) sold at auction in May 1826 to dealer Thomas Dodd for 46 guineas. Around 1775, Joseph Merlin charged between 5 and 10 guineas for violins and 10 to 20 guineas for cellos. Benjamin Banks is thought to have charged £21 for a cello. See Brian W. Harvey, *The Violin Family and Its Makers in the British Isles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 129-132.

[36] My thanks to Arian Sheets, Curator of Stringed Instruments at the National Music Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota, for

information in regard to string manufacture in Markneukirchen.

[37] Count Cozio di Salabue, Observations on the Construction of Stringed Instruments and their Adjustments 1804, 1805, 1809, 1810, 1816, 1st edition, edited and translated by Andrew Dipper and David Woodrow (Oxford: Taynton Press, 1987), 38.

[38] Collection of the National Music Museum, South Dakota.

[39] Staatsarchiv Weimar, Hofmarschallamt MS 3114, quoted in Herbert Heyde "Über die Streichinstrumente der Weimarer Hofkapelle im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Zur Weiterentwicklung des Instrumentariums im 18. Jahrhundert* (Blankenburg: Michaelstein, 1986), 38–41.

[40] This type of operation is found on several instruments, including Stradivari's 1716 "Messiah" (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) and 1693 "Harrison" (National Museum of Music, South Dakota). Since the neck can be left rather thin in the absence of a wedge, most instruments have subsequently lost their original necks, with the scroll and pegbox grafted to a new piece of wood. By 1810, the method of mortising necks had reached makers of new violins and is found on an instrument of that year in original condition made in London by Richard Tobin. Illustrated in Milnes, 308–309 and 407.

[41] Chappell White, "Viotti, Giovanni Battista," in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., vol. 26 (London:

Macmillan, 2001), 766-771.

[42] Trade card illustrated in Milnes, 62.

[43] Charles Dibdin the Elder, *Hannah Hewit; or the Female Crusoe*, vol. 3 (London: 1792), 72-73.

[44] William Henley, *Universal Dictionary of Violin and Bow Makers* (Brighton: Amati Publishing, 1973), 905.

[45] Charles Beare and Sylvette Milliot, “Lupot, Nicholas,” in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., vol. 15, 321.

[46] Hill, 251-252.

[47] P. Pindar, *Farewell Odes for the Year 1786* (London: 1786), 49.

[48] Mrs. Inchbald, *The Widow’s Vow* (London: 1786).

[49] Illustrated in Hill, 277.

[50] Beare, 166.

[51] W. T. Parke, *Musical Memoirs*, vol. 1 (London: 1806), 301.

[52] Beare, 148.

[53] Annette Morreau, *Emanuel Feuermann* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 341-342.

[54] The copy by Vuillaume is in the Musée Instrumental de Bruxelles, Inv. 1427.

[55] Roger Millant, *J. B. Vuillaume: sa vie et son oeuvre,*

English text by Andrew Hill (London: W. E. Hill, 1972), 123-127.

[56] George Savage, *Fakes, Forgeries and Reproductions: A Handbook for the Collector* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1963), 274.

[57] Honoré de Balzac, *Cousin Pons* (New York: Peter Fenelon Collier and Son, 1900), 19-20.

[58] Philippe Thiébaut, "Copies and Pastiches in the Decorative Arts," in Campos, 122-127.

[59] François-Joseph Fétis, *Notice of Anthony Stradivari, the Celebrated Violin-maker*, trans. J. Bishop (London: 1864), 60.

[60] Ibid., 101-107.

[61] Millant, 92.

[62] Quoted in Campos, 67.

[63] Illustrated in Campos, 233.

[64] Count Cozio di Salabue, 7.

[65] Hill, 67.

[66] Millant, 87.

[67] Ibid., 88.

[68] David Laurie, The *Reminiscences of a Fiddle Dealer* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1924), 47-52. Quoted in Millant, 90. Laurie also explains that Vuillaume had two different

recipes for varnish, reserving one sort for use on very few "masterpieces."

[69] Millant, 90.