Italian & French Violin Makers

by Jost Thöne Verlag

—pdf Sample—
Italian & French Violin Makers

Volume I-IV
Note collègue et ami. Jost Thöne a déjà fait ses grâces à plusieurs reprises par ses publications, et a semblé être à chaque fois un succés bien mérité.

Si la chance lui permet de devenir des exemplaires bien typiques et de haute qualité tant italiques que françaises, le résultat est surant soutenant avec un photographe aussi acéré que Jan Rößmann.

Que me voici l'accompagnement.

Paris le 25 Mars 2004

[Signature]
Introduction

The encyclopedia which is planned to comprise ten volumes, is being continued in the form of this second volume of "Italian & French Violin Makers". The first volume was very positively received all over the world, which reinforced me to publish a further volume each year. My travels throughout Italy and France were very informative, especially as the violin makers I met imparted to me new stimuli and ideas by means of their knowledge and constructive criticism. I have been able to work some of these stimuli and ideas into this volume.

I am frequently asked why I have chosen this particular selection of instruments. The reply to this question has its roots in the intention that each individual volume is meant to present a summary of the last four centuries of violin making in Italy and France, and therefore each volume speaks for itself. Moreover, this composition brings with it the advantage of being able to place the various volumes of this encyclopedia next to each other, so that instruments from the same period yet different schools, can be compared. Until now, the lack of a sufficient and qualitatively relevant range of illustrations in original sizes has made this more or less impossible.

The illustrated instruments are to be seen as a "snapshot" from the complete works of the master violin maker. I am not concerned with choosing the "best" work of the particular master, which is impossible when you consider the subjective perception of each individual observer. Only a monograph about the one or the other violin maker can convey a fair and just overview of the complete works of a particular master.

This encyclopedia is therefore confined to brief biographies which, following bibliographical research, summarize the latest state of information. They are available in the German original as well as English, French, Italian and Japanese translations. I would like to draw your attention to the bibliography in the appendix. This appendix contains a selection of interesting supplementary literature for extending your studies in Italian and French violin makers, should you be interested in doing so. For further information on the "Italian & French Violin Makers" encyclopedia, please visit: www.italianandfrenchviolinmakers.com.

In addition to the illustrated instruments by famous masters, there are also those instruments from one or the other unknown violin maker. The interest shown in such instruments is great, and is what makes an encyclopedia really attractive although the biographical data might be very rare. At this point, I would like to quote Monsieur Etienne Vatelot’s reaction to the first volume: "I find it so much more interesting to find French and Italian instruments of varying qualities and periods rather than keep on looking at the already much-published great Cremonese masters!"

On a visit to Lyons, I met Monsieur Jean-Frédéric Schmitt. Along with Etienne Vatelot, Bernard Millant and a few other master violin makers, he is without doubt one of the last "figureheads of the old guard"! His spontaneous and thrilling lecture on the dependency of violin making on political and religious developments over the past few centuries in Europe made such an outstanding impression on me that I asked Monsieur Schmitt to make this subject available in the form an interview for this second volume. I would like to thank both him and my interview partner Igor Moroder, and hope that your interest in this complex subject has also been aroused. I hope that Jean-Frédéric Schmitt can soon present us with his own planned publication on this subject.

It was difficult to find the right instruments for the first volume. In contrast, I am now being bombarded with a plethora of instruments for documentation purposes. This fact does not make the decision any easier, however, yet it does increase the chance of presenting an interesting selection as possible. The attribution of the particular instruments by internationally-acclaimed experts remains the utmost commendation. In this second volume, the creative talents of many a violin maker are represented by two or even three instruments. They are mainly one violin with one viola or a cello.

At the suggestion of many, you will discover in this volume several more body views taken both from the side and from a 3/4-profile. I have also inserted several additional sizes, yet continue to refrain from providing information regarding the thickness of the tables and backs. These are too frequently unsecured - since they have been too chad up – and therefore, in my opinion, do not present the true value. If required, the dimensions taken with the slide caliper rule can be carried out by means of
The European Heritage of Stringed Instrument Making

When I was asked by Monseur Thine, who was aware of my work in the field over the last fifteen years, to write an article on the possible connections between the development of stringed instrument-making and the history and economy of Europe, my first reaction was to decline the invitation. I did so for the following reasons. The subject is too vast to cover in a few lines and the 19th century literature that can be used for information often lacks precision. Moreover, the techniques were unstandardized and even in the personal corresponde of the writers. Adapting an economic, social and historical approach to the history of instrument-making should nevertheless allow us to consider the reality in a different light and to improve our understanding of the influence of all those parameters on the evolution of musical instruments. The Object is the reflection of History but it is also by considering what the Object reflects that we can improve our understanding of History. A systematic and rigorous study of the subject requires a team consisting of historians and professional instrument-makers. Historical theories are of course called into question at regular intervals, which may not constitute a reason for not writing at all, but it does perhaps encourage us to express ourselves with caution.

The approach adopted by Braudel and Daley, who saw our European culture as the continuation of Oriental culture, was for me a marvellous example of scholarly reflection. Why should instrument-making, the 'engine-room' of music, stand apart from the influences of history and why should it not be considered as an integral part of this link?

If we begin by considering plucked stringed instruments we must look first to Asia and the Middle East. Their discovery by the Christian world took place along a line descending vertically from the Public Sea to Hungary, corresponding roughly to the European frontier of the world of Islam. The Jews were swift to adopt these instruments, and carried them to and fro in the turbulent population movements in Central Europe. We will not comment on other currents such as the movement from Asia and the Middle East to Spain and France or the maritime route between the Middle East and Northern Europe which opened Britain in the 17th century, because our exposition was not sufficiently advanced at the time to allow the development of the instruments that they brought with them.

The beginning of the 16th century was a great period in history of instrument-making. The rational and pragmatic minds of the renaissance musicians, tired of the vocal quartet, preferred to use instruments for the parts previously given to singers. This meant the birth of quartets for different families of instruments. These great inventions were once again the result of encounters between technicians from the north (German) and Italian artists in which both parties were able to find what was needed in order to progress artistically, just as it happened in other art forms, such as painting, music, copper engraving and watch-making. Emigration towards Italy took place in several waves and for different reasons. They were in the first instance economic. Venice was the El Dorado of Europe and attracted artists and traders alike. Another explanation was the exodus to the south, and to safety from religious conflicts, of protostrats not wishing to consent to Catholicism.

It is impossible to evoke this period without mentioning two charismatics figures, Giuseppe Tartini and Gasparro Guarnerius of Venice. Venice was a friend of Leonard da Vinci, moved to Lyon with twelve other instrument-makers from Bohemia around 1530. Why should they have chosen a town of 40,000 inhabitants with no court and a local market too small to justify that move? We now know that the instrument-makers came because Louis XI had founded four annual pavone fairs. For the same reason a hundred and fifty printers had come from Nuremburg a hundred years earlier. We also know today that Lyon was situated on the great trading route that ran from Edinburgh via London, Paris and Lyon to either Venice or Spain or Milan and Venice. Tartini and Guarnerius, at all events, can be considered to be the first violin-makers and perhaps the creators of the quartet of stringed instruments in the modern sense.

"He is known to have been in contact with Leonardo da Vinci. The final achievement attributed to Leonardo is his invention of the violin. It is claimed that Leonardo was not only acquainted with the Tartini and Guarnerius families but was on intimate terms with them. It is certainly reasonable that an invention of this sort should take place in a house which Leonardo frequented as a friend without his knowing about it. Knowing Leonardo, it would seem impossible that he didn't have a hand in it. All that remains is to find some proof of this assertion. All that remains is to find some proof of this assertion. The violin's crōck is also attributed to Leonardo. And what of the nykel, a symbol spumed from time to time again in Leonardo's work? Other mysteries still await elucidation, such as the two reises in the 'Leda' portrait on which phallicus can read the name 'Vespucci'. Are these the examples of the name 'Leonardo' to be found among Tartini's 'sogne' of pages? These are the examples of the name 'Leonardo' to be found among Tartini's 'sogne' of pages? These are the examples of the name 'Leonardo' to be found among Tartini's 'sogne' of pages?

In the history of all other instruments it is always the end or the need which is responsible for the development of the means. But in the case in point the reverse is true. Only a visionary could have foreseen the future in this way. After the creation of the quartet, the celli returned to the church and the violin to the street. It was not until 1650 that the violin was used in the orchestras by Monteverdi and in sonatas by Biagio Marini. Instrument-making was then in its creative heyday.

1608-1740 saw the second great period of instrument making. It was not the consequence of a cultural encounter as in 1530, but it would appear to correspond to a definite policy of unification on behalf of the rulers of the Habsburg Empire. The latter were no longer dreaming of an empire modelled on that of Charlemagne but were seeking instead to consolidate their position in what was to become the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and to return to the theme of an empire that was hereditary and intellectually dominated.

In 1680 the frontiers were closing. Venice, hitherto cut off from its trading routes, was to go rapidly into decline, thus bringing about the collapse of instrument-making in Fussen, a satellite town whose success was dependent on the wealth of the Venetians. It should nevertheless be noted that despite this major crisis, Venice continued to invest more and more heavily in different aspects of music.

The closing of the frontiers also resulted in the worsening of the position of the protestant traducers of Salzburg, who from 1680 onwards no longer received interest on the money they had invested in Venice. The isolation of the city seriously affected instrument-making there. The problems the Habsburgs had to face were innumerable (controlling the protestant uprisings in Bohemia, solving the Hungarian problems, checking Protestantisms unwillingness to convert to Catholicism to leave the country, and also dealing with considerable linguistic diversity) and the need to find tools for unifying their empire became paramount. Religion, baroque art and music were to develop both in popular and aristocratic culture. Surely this explains the decision taken by the instrument-makers of Milan and Naples, two cities under the control of the Habsburgs, to orient their production towards mass manufacturing in order to satisfy the needs created by the demonstration of music, whereas Cremona continued to supply the aristocracy and the nobility? This demonstration was also mirrored elsewhere in Europe, but some twenty years later than in Italy; in North Germany around 1725 and in France in 1735. As regards Italy, how important were politics in the development?

Venice, caught in the middle between the Turks and the Austrians, sought help from France. Exchanges began. Could this not explain the similarity in style between Pierry and Bocouy and that of the Venetian instrument-makers? We know that bodies by Pierry have often been used in the past to repair instruments by Pierre Guarrney of Venice.

Prior to the 1640-1645 period, France had been isolated from baroque culture by the restrictions imposed by Lully, remaining unaffected by what was being produced in Northern Italy, whereas Prague, England and Holland had drawn inspiration from it.

In 1780 the removal of the restrictions allowed Italian musicians from Florence to come to Paris. French instrument-makers appear to have followed the changes in musical taste by copying Italian instruments. This explains in turn why Pierry and Bocouy never acquired the status of a school and why Guarneri and the "Vieux Paris" violin-makers are so close to the Homeste style.

The last great period occurred when Vient arrived at the 'Concert Spirituel'. His Stradivarius impressed the princesses and in the space of a few months the violin-makers graduated from a caricature of a Stradivarius (by Remondin, conserved in the 'Musee instrumental de Paris') to a copy of a Stradivarius. Vient and his pupils were also to herald the development of French bowmaking. The Belgians, who had maintained relations with the Italians, came to work in Paris, which became a cultural centre which was to influence the whole of Europe but first and foremost France's own instrument-makers. This was what was known as the "Franco-Belgian school". Vuillaume was later to promote the school in London, Budapest and St. Petersburg (where he would live for twenty years) and, directly or indirectly, all the great Russian and Hungarian violinists such as Bodzion and Joaoins, to name but two.

1 Cf. L'Arte stromente, in Histoire de l'Art, Ette Faure
2 Cf. Leonard de Vinci, in L'Art renaissant, Georges Duby
3 Cf. L'Arte stromente, in Histoire de l'Art, Ette Faure
4 Cf. Comment l'Allemagne est devenue musicienne, Marcel Rebillat
5 Cf. Histoire du concert spirituel (1725-1790), Constant Perre
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Nicolò Amati
* 1596 Cremona
† 1684 Cremona

Nicolò Amati, the son and pupil of Girolamo Amati, worked until about 1625 after his father’s guidance. Yet his search for perfection regarding beauty and sound of the instruments made him develop his own model. He changed the arching and the thickness of wood of the model used until then. Nicolò Amati’s instruments show very bold sound holes, and an elegant and rather small scroll. His supple varnish is of a yellow-brown or red-golden tinge and the wood was chosen with great care. Nicolò Amati is considered the most important and gifted violin maker of his family. His pupils included Andrea Guarneri, Giacomo Gennaro and possibly, Jacob Stainer, Francesco Rugieri and Antonio Stradivarius. He built mainly violins, and especially the ones made after his bigger “Grand Pattern” are highly sought after. His violas are rare and the violoncellos are made after a relatively small pattern. Nicolò Amati had nine children, yet only his son Girolamo became violin maker.


ニコロ・アマティはジローラモ・アマティの息子、弟子であり1625年頃までその父親の手本に従い製作していた。しかしながら、響きへの製作行程における完璧さへのひたむきさが、彼の創作のなかで自身のモデルへと衝き動かし、そのなかで彫曲と木の強度を今でも用いられているモデルへと変えることになる。f字孔は秀逸があり大胆に削られ、スクロールは非常に小さく洗練され、そして黄褐色、もしくは赤味を帯びた金色のニスはしなやかさをもっている。これは使用する木材に注意をはらっていた。ニコロ・アマティはその家系のなかで最も重要な才能あるヴァイオリン製作者とみられている。彼の弟子には名匠アンドレア・ガルネリ、ジャコモ・シェナーロ、そしておそらくヤコブ・シュタイナー、フランチェスコ・ルジェッリとアントニオ・ストラディヴァリが数えられる。ニコロ・アマティの製作は主にヴァイオリン、そのなかで特に彼の大きめのモデルのヴァイオリンは当時も今日も切望されている。それと比較して彼のビオラやチェロは小さめのモデルにより作られている。ニコロの9人の子供のうちただひとり、ジローラモがヴァイオリン製作者になった。
Giuseppe Guarneri † filius Andrea ‡
* 1666
† 1740 Cremona

Giuseppe Giovanni Battista Guarneri was the third son of Andrea Guarneri. Like his elder brother Pietro he was a pupil of his father. Pietro left Cremona around 1679 and went to Mantua. After Andrea’s death in 1689 Giuseppe took over his workshop. The same year Giuseppe’s youngest son Bartolomeo Giuseppe was born, who later was taught violin making by Giuseppe. For many years father and son worked together and numerous instruments Bartolomeo Giuseppe built the body and Giuseppe the scroll. From 1720 Giuseppe Guarneri Senior suffered from poor health and thus resulting financial problems. His son carried on helping him and so he was able to lead his workshop until his death.


Giuseppe Giovanni Battista Guarneri, fils de l’elevé du maître Andrea Guarneri (1623-1698), apprit le métier de luthier en même temps que son frère Pietro dans l’atelier de leur père. Alors que Pietro devait quitter Crémone vers 1679 pour ouvrir un atelier à Mantova, Giuseppe quant à lui, reprit l’atelier de son père après la mort de celui-ci en 1698. Son plus jeune fils Bartolomeo Giuseppe vit le jour au cours de cette même année. Plus tard, ce dernier devait porter le nom de Guarneri dans les plus hautes sphères de la lutherie sous le nom de Giuseppe Guarneri † del Gesù ‡. De 1714 à 1722 environ, † del Gesù ‡ assista son père à l’atelier. Il était en premier lieu responsable de la fabrication du corps du violon, pendant que son père se consacrait à la sculpture des volutes. Ceci explique que nombre d’instruments existent dont le corps est de la main de † del Gesù ‡ et la volute de Giuseppe † filius Andreae ‡. A partir de 1720, Giuseppe Guarneri † filius Andreae ‡ doit faire face à des problèmes de santé et, par voie de conséquence, à des soucis financiers. Il fut cependant toujours soutenu par son fils, ce qui lui permit de diriger son atelier jusqu’à sa mort.

Andréa・グアルネリの工房でヴァイオリン製作の技術を学ぶ。アンドレア・グアルネリは1679年にマントーナに移り、父の工房を離れ、その間ジュゼッペは1698年父の死後、その工房を受け継ぐ。同年にジュゼッペの息子バートロメオ・グアルネリが生まれ、その息子は後にジュゼッペ・グアルネリ・デル・ジェズとしてグアルネリ家の名を上げる。

1714年から1722年までデル・ジェズは父の元で働く。彼は優先的に胴体（共鸣体）を製作し、父はスクロールの彫りに集中した。その為に、明らかにデル・ジェズに作られた胴体、そしてジュゼッペ・フィリウス・アンドレエのスクロールを組む楽器が数多く存在する。1720年後、ジュゼッペ・フィリウス・アンドレエの健康は益々衰え、その為に経済的な問題と闘うが、息子デル・ジェズの支えによって、生涯を続ける事が出来た。
Giuseppe Guarneri ‘filius Andrea’
Giovanni Battista Grancino
* 1673 Milan
† after 1726

Unfortunately, little is known about the family and origin of Giovanni Grancino. The assumption that Giovanni was the son of the violin maker Paolo Grancino cannot be verified. Even today, the existence of Paolo has not been confirmed by any source. The only fact which is sure about his early life, is that he joined a workshop with his brother Francesco. In the year 1708, he was accused and later convicted of manslaughter of his colleague and rival Santino Lavazza and was sent out of town. After this event, it is nearly impossible to track him in or outside Milan and so details about his later working life are not known. His work is inspired by Nicolò Amati. The workmanship is of very high quality, especially the holes and the fine scrolls show Grancinos outstanding class as a violin maker. Like other Milanese violin makers, Grancino didn’t use tonewood of great beauty, which limited funds of his Milanese clientele. His early instruments are covered with a red-brown varnish and the instruments of his later period with a golden-yellow varnish.

Malheureusement peu d’éléments sont connus sur l’origine de Giovanni Grancino. Ainsi, dans l’état actuel de nos connaissances, la supposition selon laquelle Giovanni Grancino était un fils du luthier Paolo Grancino ne peut plus être confirmée. L’existence même d’un certain Paolo Grancino ne peut pas être vérifiée avec certitude. Par contre, il est certain qu’au début de sa carrière, il se partageait un atelier à Milan avec son frère Francesco. En 1708, Grancino fut accusé et condamné pour le meurtre d’un collègue et rival nommé Santino Lavazza. En raison de cette condamnation, Grancino dut quitter Milan et à partir de ce moment là, les historiens ont du mal à suivre ses traces. Son travail s’oriente sur un modèle d’Amati et est attesté d’un grand talent artisanal. En particulier les violes finement sculptées et les élégantes ouies le démontrent de manière impressionnante. Comme d’autres luthiers milanais, Grancino n’utilise pas un bois de très bonne qualité, ce qui reflète le pouvoir d’achat peu élevé de la clientèle milanaise. Ses premiers instruments sont recouverts d’un vernis souple rouge-brun alors que le vernis de ses créations tardives est d’une couleur or-jaune.


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Giovan Battista Grancino was the son of the violin maker Paolo Grancino, but his birthplace and ancestry remain unknown. His work is inspired by Nicolò Amati and shows a high level of craftsmanship. The scrolls and inlay of his early instruments are covered with a red-brown varnish, whereas his later work features a golden-yellow varnish.
Giovanni Battista Grancino

violoncello 1710 c.
Jacques-Pierre Thibout
* 1779 Caen
† 1856 St. Mandé

Jacques-Pierre Thibout is thought to have been a son of “Thibout Fils” whose father was supposedly a violin maker as well. In 1796 Jacques-Pierre moved to Paris and worked with Jean Gabriel Koliker. Then, in 1807, he opened his own workshop. Thibout developed his own model that was influenced by Stradivarius. He was a very meticulous and fine craftsman. His amber varnish was applied over a reddish undercoat. Thibouts instruments are regarded as equal to the Italian masters of the period and he is counted as one of finest French violin makers.
In 1901 Giuseppe Ornati began to study the art of violin making with Carlo Moneta, an amateur violin maker. From 1903 he worked in Leandro Bisiach’s workshop gaining a lot of making experience as well as studying many of the valuable older instruments that passed through the Bisiach workshop. He soon became one of Bisiach’s best pupils and like Gaetano Sgarabotto, Ornati made (until around 1918/1919) instruments for Bisiach and did repairs for him, even after he established his own workshop. Many of Ornati’s violins, violas and cellos were awarded medals including Gold at Rome (1923) and Milan (1924). He was the official violin maker for the Scala Orchestra. From 1961 to 1963 he was a teacher in the Violin Making School of Cremona. One of the Great makers of the 20th Century, Ornati Instruments are characterized by their accuracy and elegance.


Giuseppe Ornati imparò le prime arti del mestiere di liutaio presso Carlo Moneta, un dilettante liutaio. Dal 1903 lavorò nella bottega di Leandro Bisiach dove poté ampliare le sue conoscenze in materia e studiare su vecchi strumenti realizzati da maestri. Divenne presto uno dei migliori allievi di Bisiach e, come Gaetano Sgarabotto, costruì strumenti fino al 1918/1919 lavorando al contempo come restauratore, pur tenendo aperta la sua bottega. Ornati ricevette numerosi riconoscimenti per i suoi strumenti, come ad esempio il premio in oro a Roma nel 1923 e a Milano nel 1924. Inoltre era il liutaio ufficiale dell’orchestra del teatro La Scala di Milano e dal 1961 al 1963 lavorò come maestro alla scuola di liuteria di Cremona. Giuseppe Ornati fu uno dei più insigni maestri del XX secolo; la sua abilità si riflette nell’eleganza e nella forte personalità dei suoi strumenti.

Giuseppe Ornati

viola 1921
### Dimensions of the Instruments

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<th>Instrument make and year</th>
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<th>E</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gioffredo Cappa 1700 violin</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>20.15</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>10.26</td>
<td>12.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlo Giuseppe Testore 1703 violin</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>16.85</td>
<td>11.07</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>10.97</td>
<td>12.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joannis (Giovanni) Tononi 1705 c. violin</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td>7.35</td>
<td>10.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giuseppe Guarneri ´filius Andrea´ 1710 violin</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>11.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giovanni Battista Grancino 1710 c. violoncello</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>23.8</td>
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<td>Jacobus Horil 1757 violin</td>
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*The dimensions are taken with the slide calliper rule.

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**Note:**
- **Dimensions of the Instruments**
- **Table of the Measurements (in cm)*
- **Dimensions are taken with the slide calliper rule.
Italian & French Violin Makers