

The Guadagnini Family

by Ernest N. Doring

Part VIII

The preceding chapter presented a few paragraphs from the introduction to Count von Lütgendorff's survey of the violin-making craft, a subject which occupied the greater part of the first of the two volumes of the last editions of his work.

* * *

Various topics are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs; mentioned in lengthy detail, famous collections and the names of individuals who owned fine instruments appear, of foreign countries and the U. S. A. As in American possession we find the following: "the richest possession in the world," the Crosby-Brown Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City; the Leslie Lindsey-Mason collection at the Boston Museum; the Stearns Collection at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; also the names of A. J. Hipkins, D. J. Partello, and Morris Steinert. R. D. Hawley's name is coupled with "The Hawley Collection of Violins. Published by Lyon & Healy, Chicago 1904." Although the complete list of names possesses considerable interest as well as value because many are associated with particular instruments, its inclusion here, as well as other matter not pertinent to our subject is inadvisable.

Following the introduction the survey opens with a review of the *Lauten und Geigenmacher* of Füssen in the Tyrol. A short historical sketch tells of the antiquity of the town and names as one of the earliest lute makers working there, Jörg Wolf, in 1493. In such manner, the story progresses, covering in sequence, Brescia, Cremona, then Milan, second only to Venice as the richest city of Italy in former times. A well presented picture of Milan, telling of its greatness in art and music as well as its early lute and violin makers, first brings us to our subject of the Guadagnini. Milan having been the second city in which Giambattista (J. B.) Guadagnini tarried for a considerable period, the data presented in Lütgendorff's narrative will be discussed in its place in the sequence of his wanderings.

In the order of presentation, Mantua comes next in the book then to be followed under one heading, by Parma, Piacenza, and Pavia, three cities in which the Guadagnini produced. As our present interest lies with Giambattista, and as his story begins at Piacenza, a review of what is recorded by von Lütgendorff follows here, Milan and Parma to be discussed later. With respect to Parma, we have read that he worked there for a very short period during the year 1750, before taking up residence at Milan.

Regarding Piacenza, we read (translated):

"Piacenza was founded by the Romans during the same years as was Cremona and in the middle of the XVI century federated with Parma. The influence of Cremona and the attraction of Parma were felt by the resident Piacenza violin and lute makers. The very first makers had their apprenticeships at Cremona and also worked at Parma. These were the brothers Giambattista and Lorenzo Guadagnini (Illustrations 15c, d, 75). The younger, Lorenzo, of course was the better; he records himself as a pupil of Stradivari, and his work is no dishonor to him. Giambattista, as already remarked, also learned at Cremona and later from his brother, so that he lacked but little as his equal. While, however, Lorenzo tarried at Piacenza, Giambattista went to Parma and later to Milan, but never, in the text of his labels, named it to Hamma & Co., Stuttgart, to whom I am indebted for the photographs from which our plate was made. The modeling of the violin is flat, the varnish of red color.

Another very fine example of the year 1752 is a violin which Emil Herrmann sold to Professor Victor Popoff. The latter was the former owner of the "Baron Khevenhuller" Stradivari violin of 1733, which Mr. Herrmann sold to Yehudi Menuhin.

As the method of including individual examples of the works of Giovanni Battista Guadagnini in previous chapters of this review as part of the columned matter does not provide an easy means for reference, this and future installments will contain individual listings of instruments, in the same form as that followed in my review of Stradivari's productions. Examples previously named, and some others, will appear in review.

There is no definite record which indicates in what year the master first dated his work. Some authorities contend that 1741 was the earliest, but three violins exist, to my knowledge, dated 1740, vouched for as original and authentic by reputable judges. These, then, will be recorded here as the earliest known examples of the work of J. B. Guadagnini.

PIACENZA PERIOD

VIOLINS

- 1740 A fine example in the possession of Rubi Davis, well known Chicago violinist. Certified by W. E. Hill & Sons.
- 1740 ex-HILL. From the Wurlitzer collection, passed to Nicolas Garagusi; again, later, through Wurlitzer, acquired by Miss Clara Reisenberg.
- 1740 Illustrated in Max Möller's "Italiaansche Vioolbouw." Recorded as having been in the possession of A. Plate in 1938.
- 1741 Known as "THE VENUS" because of its beauty of wood and rich varnish, Variousy owned in this country by Emil collection 1927-28.
- 1743 Illustrated in our Chapter IV. Formerly in the collection of Hamma & Co., Stuttgart. Now in the possession of Jani Szanto,
- 1744 Formerly in the Emil Herrmann collection from which it was acquired by Leon Goldwasser of Los Angeles.
- 1744 Acquired from the Herrmann collection by Mrs. M. Margulis, Portland, Ore. Formerly in possession of Richard Burgin, concertmaster of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.
- 1744 Owned by Camillo Foltzer in 1937 and loaned by him for exhibition at the Stradivari Bicentenary in Cremona. Plates illustrate the violin in the book issued subsequent to the commemorative affair.
- 1744 Contained in the Friedrich Collection in 1921 and illustrated in a catalogue issued at the time.
- 1745 Once in the collection of the French dealer Chanot, who sold it in 1875 to M. de Crevillion. It later passed from Caressa & Francais to the Wurlitzer collection and sold into private ownership.
- 1745 Once contained in the collection of Hamma & Co., and illustrated in a catalogue issued-at Stuttgart.
- 1745 Contained in the Friedrich collection in 1924 and listed in a catalogue distributed in that year.
- 1746 The "D'AMBROSIO." Once owned by the noted Italian composer/violinist Alfred D'Ambrosio. Acquired from Maucotel & Deschamps, Paris, by Erich Lachmann the violin later was in the Wurlitzer collection and at last accounts in the possession of Emil Herrmann. Illustrated in Part III of this recording.
- 1748 Formerly in the Lyon & Healy collection and listed in their catalogue of 1909.
- 174- Exact date not known to the writer, a fine example of the period acquired from W. E. Hill & Sons by the fine artist Willy Hess.
- 1749 The ex-"MAX LAWRENCE." A fine example sold to a member of the Toronto Symphony orchestra by Wurlitzer.

VIOLONCELLOS

- 1743 A magnificent specimen, illustrated in Part VII of this recording. In the possession of Professor Lennart von Zweyberg of Bloomington, Ind.
- 1743 From the Hill collection, this superb 'cello was brought to this country by a well known private collector. It is now in the Wurlitzer collection. Illustrated in Part VI.
- 1743 An excellent example which was in the possession of Schreiber & Lugert at Hamburg prior to the outbreak of the last war.
- 1743 A fine example which was sold by Albert Caressa to Baron Kohner of Budapest, in 1906. Emil Herrmann bought the 'cello from the Baron in 1927 and sold it in Berlin. More recently Mischa Schneider, of the Budapest Quartet, acquired the 'cello from Mrs. Elizabeth Gerson, of San Francisco.
- 1744 Now in the possession of the Lewisohn family of New York, this 'cello was acquired from Emil Herrmann.
- 1746 A beautiful and well preserved example now contained in the collection of Emil Herrmann.

1748 In the possession of C. Bakaleinikoff, eminent 'cellist of Los Angeles. Acquired from the Wurlitzer collection.

1749 Known to have been in the collection of Jean Werro, prominent dealer /collector of Berne, Switzerland.

EARLY MILAN AND PARMA PRODUCTIONS

VIOLINS

17-- ex-VIEUXTEMPS. Fine example in possession of Robert Pollak, mentioned in Part V. Recorded as an early Milan work which was sold by Vieuxtemps to a pupil from whom it was acquired by Carl Flesch (who is, at the time of this writing, teaching at Lucerne), and from him passed to Mr. Pollak.

1749 Milan label. Although there is no record of the master's visit to Milan during 1749, the possibility exists that he spent a short time at that city, as he did at Parma during the following year, before establishing himself at Milan. This violin was acquired by Erich Lachmann in 1932, at Vienna; it was sold by him to Miss Broadbent of Los Angeles. Recently it was purchased by Mark Levant of Los Angeles through Faris M. Brown, representing Wurlitzer.

1750 Parma label. The "ARMA SENKRAH." Illustrated in Part IV. Once owned by the gifted American violinist, Anna Loretta Harkness, who toured Europe with great success under the name Arma Senkrah, her family name reversed. Long owned by a Chicago amateur player, W. H. Winslow the violin later passed to the Wurlitzer collection and is now in the possession of the brilliant violinist, Isaac Stern.

MILAN PERIOD

VIOLINS

1750 ex-WIENIAWSKY. Once in the possession of the famous Polish violinist, Henri Wieniawsky, this violin was a highly prized item in the collection of Albert Caressa. Now in the Herrmann collection.

1750 Variousy owned in this country by Nathan E. Posner, Erich Lachmann, from whom it passed to Marie Caslova, then through Wurlitzer, to Manuel Compinsky, of the Compinsky Trio.

1750 The "CHARLES READE." Brought to England by the famous novelist and violin fancier, the violin later was sold by George Hart. Illustrations and its story were presented in "The Strad" in its edition of November, 1925, at which time the violin was in the possession of Gustavo Herten, of Buenos Ayres. Again returning to English ownership, it was then acquired by Lyon and Healy, to be sold, recently, to a Californian.

1750 Owned by Rudolph Mangold, prominent violinist of Chicago. See article in February, 1943 edition.

VIOLINS

1750 Formerly in the Hamma collection, Stuttgart, and sold to Sinsheimer, Mannheim.

1750 Formerly in the Hamma collection, Stuttgart, and sold to Dr. Schmidt, Darmstadt.

1750 Formerly in the Hamma collection, Stuttgart, and sold to Siegler, Stuttgart.

1751 Illustrated in the 1926-27 catalogue of Emil Herrmann; at one time owned by Gilbert Ross, now resident at Ann Arbor, Mich., the violin was resold by Herrmann to Vladimir Resnikoff, Boston Symphony orchestra, in 1924.

1751 ex-HUBERT LEONARD. Recorded in the 1925 catalogue of the Wurlitzer collection. See data Part VI.

1751 Also recorded in the 1925 catalogue of the Wurlitzer collection.

1751 Once in the Friedrich collection, this violin passed to Lyon & Healy and is recorded in the 1917 catalogue of their collection.

From Violins and Violinists December 1943

1751 Mentioned in Part V and again in Part VII (in which it is pictured), a magnificent violin which was sold by Wurlitzer to Nathan Abas, subsequently to return to Wurlitzer, then to England to Hill & Sons' possession.

1751 ex-MAURIN. Illustrated in Part VII and, like the aforementioned example, commented upon in Parts V and VII. An excellent specimen, variously contained in the collections of Dr. Eugenio Sturchio, John Hudson Bennett, and at last accounts in the possession of Mrs. Esther Coplin, Mt. Vernon, N. Y.

1751 ex-ADOLF BRODSKY. An outstanding example, mentioned in Part VII, now in the possession of Anton Maaskoff, of Los Angeles.

1752 ex-HAVEMANN. Formerly in the possession of Gustav Havemann, a fine German violinist, this violin was in the Wurlitzer collection from which it was acquired by Stanley Nickerson.

1752 Illustrated in this chapter. A fine example which was in the possession of Erich Lachmann, from whom it passed to Hamma & Co., Stuttgart.

1752 ex-BARON KOHNER. A very fine specimen sold by Emil Herrmann to Professor Victor Popoff, former owner of Yehudi Menuhin's "Khevenhuller" Stradivari violin.

(To be continued)