

Tarisio

FINE INSTRUMENTS & BOWS

12th January 2020

Dear Bojan,

It is my pleasure to send you a brief summary of the Tononi family of violin-makers and some information on the instrument you are purchasing from Tarisio.

The two most important makers of the Tononi family are Giovanni (Johannes) and Carlo Annibale, his son. Very little biographical information is known about Giovanni except that he was born around 1640 in Bologna; details about his training or early formation are scarce, but we do know that his instruments are strongly influenced by Nicolo Amati, the dominant Italian luthier of his day. Carlo Annibale was born in 1675 and worked alongside his father, presumably also joined by his elder brothers Felice and Antonio Maria. In 1713, Giovanni died and Carlo inherited the workshop. There are strong similarities between the work of Giovanni and Carlo, and indeed much of the output of the Tononi workshop in the early 1700s is considered to be a collaboration of the two makers.

The violin you are purchasing is dated to c. 1700-1710 and we believe it is primarily the work of Carlo while working in his father's employ. As you know, it was convention in the 17th and 18th centuries for shop owners to label as their own production all instruments that came out of their workshop even if other hands were principally responsible for their manufacture. In Cremona, the Amati, Guarneri and Stradivari workshops all labeled instruments as the master's work and for this reason we see Giuseppe Guarneri 'filius' violins with original labels of his father and 'del Gesù' instruments with original labels of 'filius'.

Several technical aspects separating the work of Carlo from his father are evident in this violin. The wood selection of Giovanni tended to favor plainer maple which was often cut on the slab. Carlo's

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instruments follow a more conventional tonewood selection with the two piece backs usually being joined to mirror the flame. Although both makers worked from an Amati pattern their interpretation is somewhat different. Giovanni's violins tend to have a higher arch and a wider 'scoop', their corners tend to be slightly longer, the edge margin is narrow, and the sound-holes are more slender and set closer together. Carlo's model is bolder and broader, particularly at the waist, a trend which continued once he left Bologna for Venice. Carlo's soundholes are larger and rounder with wider stems.

A dendrochronology examination found latest annual rings of 1648 and 1680 for the bass and treble sides respectively. Although not conclusive to either maker this corroborates the general attribution and date of the instrument. The 1932 certificate from Lyon & Healy ascribed the violin to Giovanni but expertise has evolved greatly in the past 90 years and I am confident that my expert colleagues of today will also identify the instrument as the work of Carlo Annibale. It has always been our policy to convey previous documents when they bear historical significance, even if their attributions have since been revised.

Please don't hesitate to let me know if I can be of further assistance and congratulations, we wish you many years of enjoyment and success with this instrument.

Yours sincerely,



Jason Price