

and seems to be quite a poorly regulated form, giving rise to the suspicion that this was not copied directly from an original, but was worked up from accumulated information. The materials are cleverly used, the maple of the back being just the sort of lightly flamed maple commonly used by the Gaglianos, and the front is made from good-quality spruce, not the coarser grained fir seen in some of the Vollers' cruder work. The very thin linings are authentically made from beech, running into small, deeply hollowed corner blocks.

The soundholes are not particularly convincing, being rather broad and crudely shaped, with excessively deep flutes in the lower wings, a feature of 'looser' Voller efforts. The head is crude, but then so would the original have been. The varnish is also remarkably close in colour and texture to the thin, spirity golden yellow-brown Gagliano recipe, and the ground, too, captures the rather dry, greenish-grey of the original. The whole surface is busy with lightly touched scratches and dints, all evocative of a well-used late eighteenth-century violin. As is often the case in Voller instruments, a compass point is clearly visible in the centre of the back button, see below, and the neck root, as in so many Vollers that still retain their original necks, is at a very vertical angle, set deep into the top block at the base.

THE HART INSTRUMENTS

The violin representing a Brothers Amati instrument (page 58) was made originally for Hart & Co. in Wardour Street, London, and, although unlabelled, bears the Hart stock number 389 pencilled on the interior of the back. Most of the instruments made for Hart wore Hart labels and were numbered: number 22 was made in 1893, 35 is dated 1894, and by 1899 the number had reached 164. This makes it unlikely that the pencilled number relates to a label, but to a more general cataloguing system. Part of a collection previously held by W.E. Hill & Sons, this violin was exhibited in Stuttgart in 1984 in a special collection of copy work from all over Europe. It is relatively crude in workmanship, but a very good impression of an early Amati, with typically narrow wings to the soundholes and rounded arching, matching very closely a violin by the brothers dated 1611.

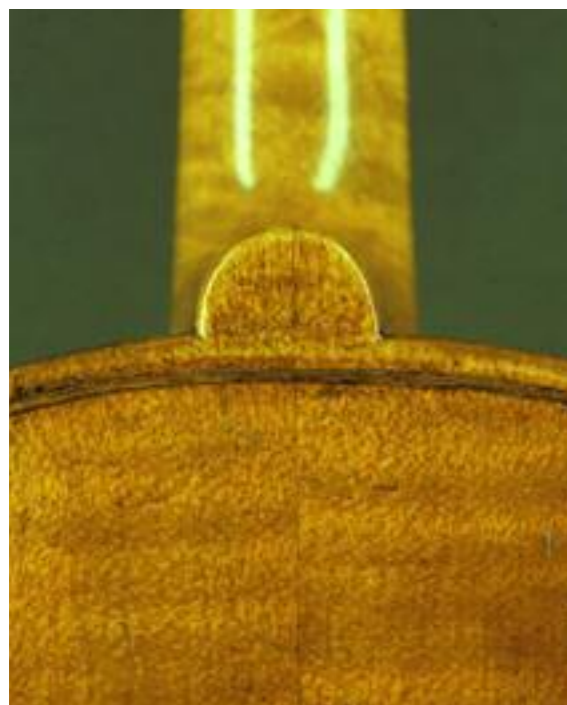
The most striking feature of this copy is the reversed wood of the back; one side of the jointed two-piece back is flipped over so that the flame appears to be continuous across the centre joint, rather than sloping symmetrically. This is an authentic and idiosyncratic feature of genuine Amati instruments, and dates from a period when violins were more commonly made with

one-piece backs – this way of jointing two pieces was presumably intended to imitate the effect. The scroll is made from slab-cut wood, another common feature of Amati instruments, and has a faint but visible scribe line running around the centre (see left), which is a more noticeable feature of Voller instruments than of genuine Amatis. As with a lot of Voller work, the scroll is the least convincing aspect of the instrument; although neat and effectively carved, it lacks the lightness and delicacy of the original. The front is of rather coarse wood with a hard reed-line, perhaps chosen to show well under the slightly drab and intransparent varnish, or possibly this was old wood reclaimed from another source, primarily for its dark colour. The varnish is thin and rather disappointing, with little in the way of an adequate and reflective ground. Laboratory analysis has revealed a pigmented layer, possibly with the addition of wax in the upper coats. The UV reflection shows a pale brown colour superimposed over a grey ground. The purfling is the ebony habitually used by the brothers, in this case not a bad approximation for the very intense and distinctive black seen in early Amatis. Location pins are fitted in the upper and lower blocks just inside the purfling, but there are no internal centre pins as would be found on a genuine Amati. The linings are rather thin willow pieces, fitted to pine blocks. The top block is

very quickly cleaved and not smoothed to a regular form.

From the same ex-Hill collection, although not associated with Hart, comes the violin (page 60) described as a Joannes Tononi copy. The origin of the model is not entirely clear, and the workmanship exhibits few decipherable clues. It is not what could be described as a close, or 'bench' copy. Like the Amati, the top wood is of heavily reeded softwood of distinctive and decidedly non-alpine appearance, but the back is of unconventionally beautiful wild grain maple, with matching ribs. Jointed from two matched slab pieces, it does reflect the type of wood sometimes used by Carlo Tononi in Venice, which may have given rise to this attribution. The violin also has high rib linings, a typical feature of Tononi's construction. In other respects it appears to be a typical Voller piece, with ebony purfling which is also inserted in the lower rib joint, as is often the case in Voller work. The varnish is thin, but a bright and reflective orange-brown. The soundholes are barely and crudely fluted, and the circles show chatter marks from knife cutting. Most significantly, the scroll appears ill-matched to the rest of the instrument. It seems to have been a habit of the Vollers' to use parts salvaged from old instruments, either to save work, or to enhance the general impression of age which they wished to impart to their work. They evidently stocked up on 'spare parts' salvaged from damaged instruments for incorporation into their own. A beautiful Camillus Camilli copy (not illustrated in this book) appears to have been made using a genuine set of ribs as the basis, with a front (dendrochronologically matched to the 'Red Cross Knight' (page 68) and the back fabricated to match. Many other similar examples have been observed, and several Hill diary entries remark on this practice, which was also employed by many earlier English and French makers.

During the period of the Vollers' association with George Hart, the 'D'Egville' Guarneri del Gesù was owned by the singer Ernest Nicolini, a violin enthusiast who had frequent dealings with Hart. In this way, the Vollers were able to examine the 'D'Egville', and made several copies for Hart's shop. They, or most likely William the artist, also painted views of the violin and others, including



LEFT
Back button of
Gagliano copy

RIGHT
Head of Amati copy
showing scribe line



Distinctive grain and knife-cut lower hole of Tononi copy