

Basic Detail Report



Viola

Date

1559 ca.

Primary Maker

Andrea Amati

Description

This viola bears a motto on the ribs, QVO VNICO PROPVGNACVLO STAT STABITQVE RELIGIO, "by this one bulwark religion stands and will stand." For many years scholars have searched for this motto as that of an individual, but in light of the surviving viola in Paris with the same motto and combined armorials of Phillip II and the Valois family, it was more likely made for the marriage of the Spanish king and the daughter of the French king, unifying the great French catholic royal courts against the incursions of Protestantism. The remains of the original armorial of King Phillip partially remain toward the edges of the current central painting on the back, which may be the monogram of his sister-in-law Marguerite of Valois. The viola was cut down in size in the 19th century, while preserving the original corners in the new outline.

Instrument reduced in size Top: four-piece, quarter-cut

spruce: fine grain broadening toward the edges; wings on lower bass bout; the top may have been three piece with a single center section before the instrument was reduced in size Back: four-piece maple cut off-the-quarter: prominent, narrow curl descending from center joint; wings at lower bout edges; original corners repositioned when instrument was reduced in size; other areas of edging replaced; later button and ebony button cap Ribs: maple cut off-the-quarter: prominent, narrow curl; lower rib divided by later 5-ply dark and light hardwood purfling strip Head: maple: faint, narrow curl; scroll spine does not continue under volute Neck: maple: faint, narrow curl; later, grafted Decoration: painted on scroll, sides, and back with gold paint over a black base; slight remains of the original center armorial (flames) - see Andrea Amati viola in the Paris Cite de la Musique for the original full armorial; later blue and gold armorial proposed to be that of Marguerite de Valois by Renato Meucci Varnish: medium red-brown; some of this varnish is later, dating to reduction of instrument Fingerboard: ebony; later Nut: ebony; later Tailpiece: ebony; later Tailgut: black gut Pegs: four rosewood with pink gold four-lobed lozenge pins on ends of heads Saddle: ebony; extends into lower rib with convex outline; later; same as type on Andrea Amati violin 5260 Endpin: decoratively turned ebony with ivory inlaid section; later F-holes: narrow wings; large eyes;

rounded notches; wings and area around upper part of f-hole slightly channeled; inside edges stained black Linings: poplar or willow; later Corner blocks: spruce; possibly original Top block: poplar or willow; later Bottom block: poplar or willow; later Bassbar: spruce; later

Dimensions

Total length: 662 mm Back length: 407 mm (16") Back Upper bout width: 186 mm Back Center bout width: 126 mm Back Lower bout width: 240 mm Top length: 407 mm Top Upper bout width: 184 mm Top Center bout width: 126 mm Top Lower bout width: 240 mm Back Upper rib height: 37 mm Back Center rib height: 38 mm Back Lower rib height: 40 mm Top Upper rib height: 37 mm Top Center rib height: 37 mm Top Lower rib height: 38.5 mm Stop length: 218 mm Neck length (bottom of nut to ribs): 146 mm Vibrating string length: 364 mm