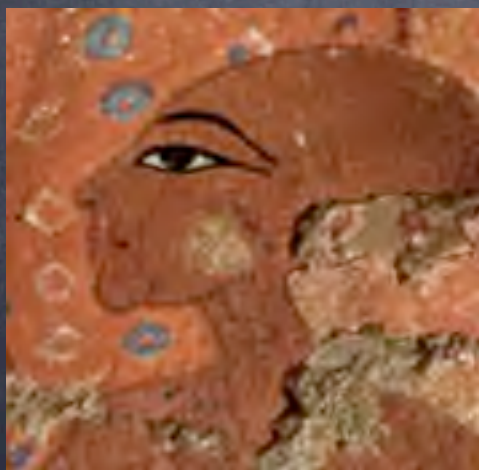


Antoine Laulhère & Giovanna Chitto' *Violin makers in Paris*



Today, an artisan has
to be curious.
But not only...

Les tailles de violons



I) A beautiful story... Sad, and newly beautiful



Also called
"La Grande Bande"

This famous orchestra was also called "la grande bande". it can't be translate "the big band"?

or les "violons ordinaires de la chambre du Roy"

I don't try to translate but *This royal Orchestra only play for the King and for the royal court's official ceremonies.*

and until his end in Seventy sixty one

Or:
"Les Violons Ordinaires de la Chambre du Roy"

This royal
royal

King and for the



From his creation in 1577, during the reign of Charles IX...

...until his dissolution in 1761



This one of the first ex-official" orchestra in the world.

also many testimonials from the past show us that this orchestra was typical, original and performant

Voltaire (Louis XIV's century):

"The 24 violins was all the music from France »



But the reason because this orchestra was so famous and special.

the music was wrote for five different voices. So the middle parts were 3:

the haut de contre
the tailles
and the quintes

The reason why this orchestra & Three middle parts played by: successful.

• *les haute-contres*

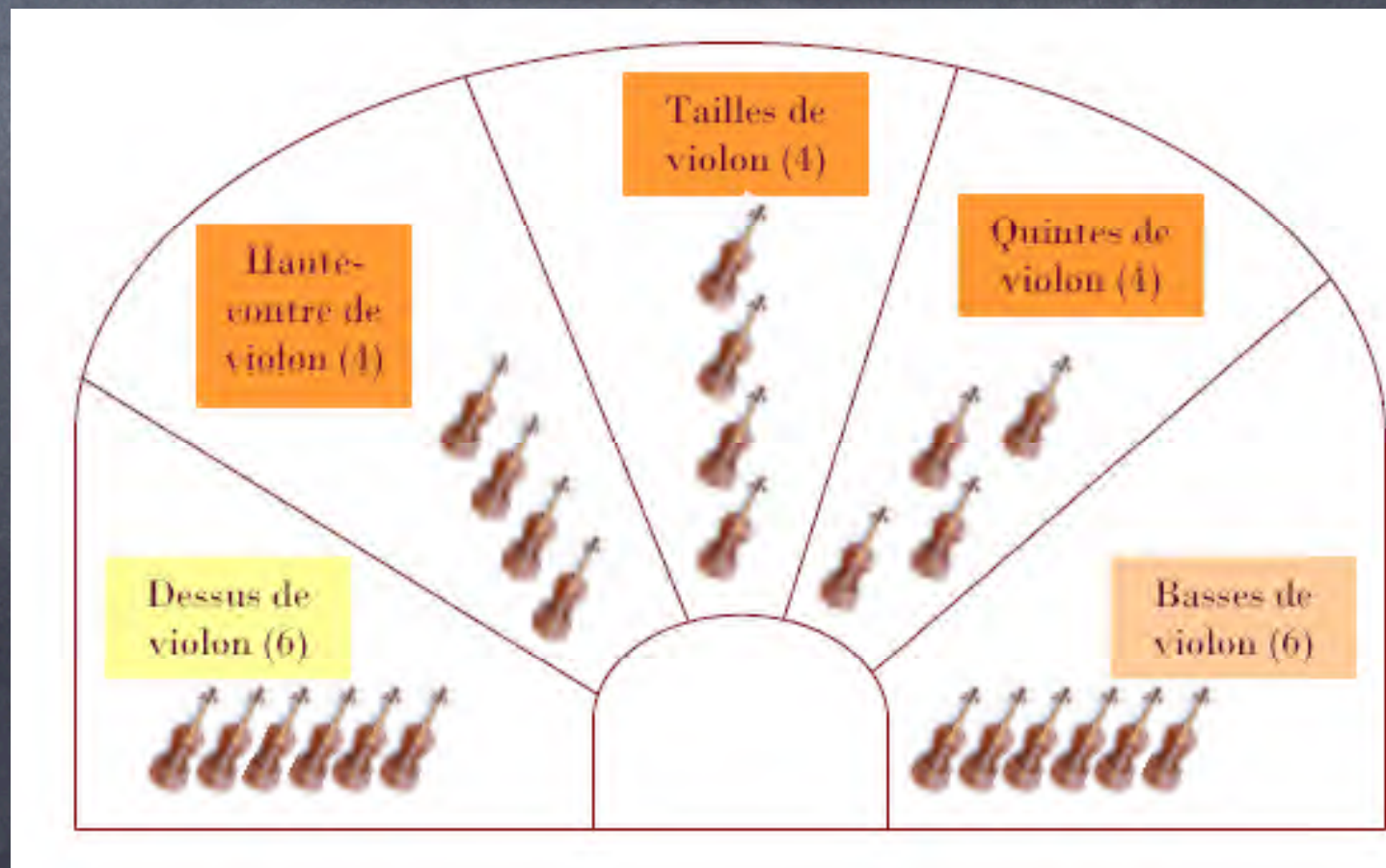
• *les tailles,*

This orchestra is the one which
organizes strings ,

• *les quintes de violon.*

creating five parts for

instruments with bows.





*The success of this orchestra
Is also the reason of its end.*

about 1720 : the European orchestra
represented by second violin

became the reason of his death in 1761...

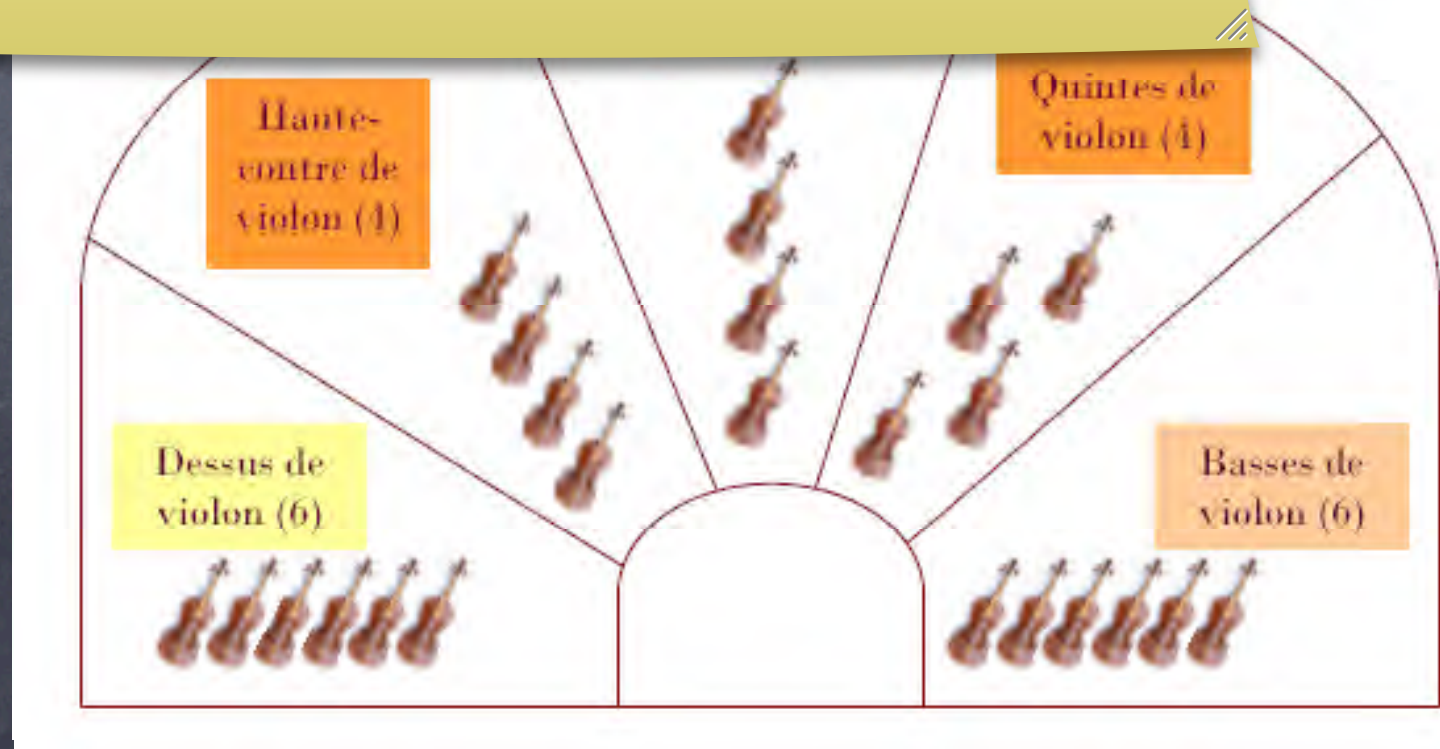
because of it was so "typically frenchy" with his 3
strange violas, this orchestra lost completely sa raison
d'exister as soon as the compositeurs wrote their
music in the italian style: with four violin family parts.

parts

It is common:
in Italia,

in Germany,
in England,

then, in France...



And the hautes-contre, the tailles et the quintes de violon,

So, in the end, in spite of their royal origins, the haut de contre, tailles et quintes violins, became soon out of order and forgotten...



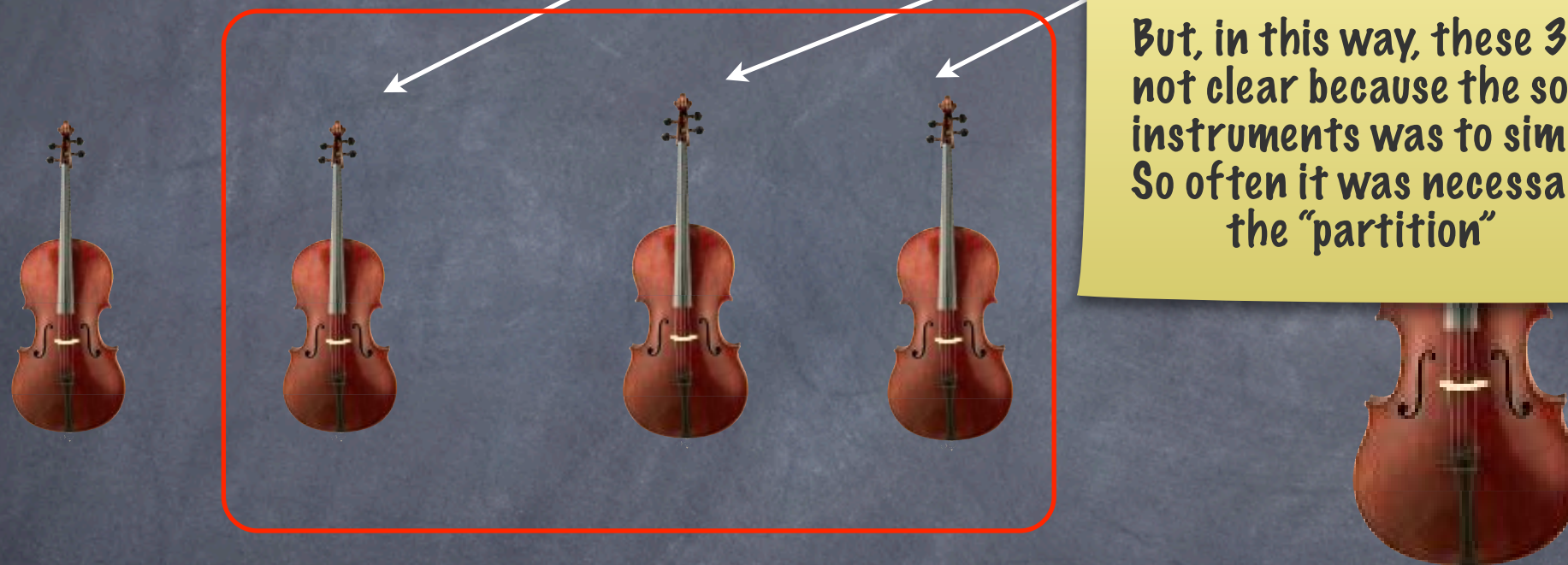
became rapidly “has been”... then forgotten, in spite of their royal origins.

For a long time,

*The life of these tailles remained in
background,
as if nobody made these instruments*

and during two
century, the history
of these instrument
was forgotten as if
they were never
existed .

*And, to play french music of this era ,we
use violins and violas*

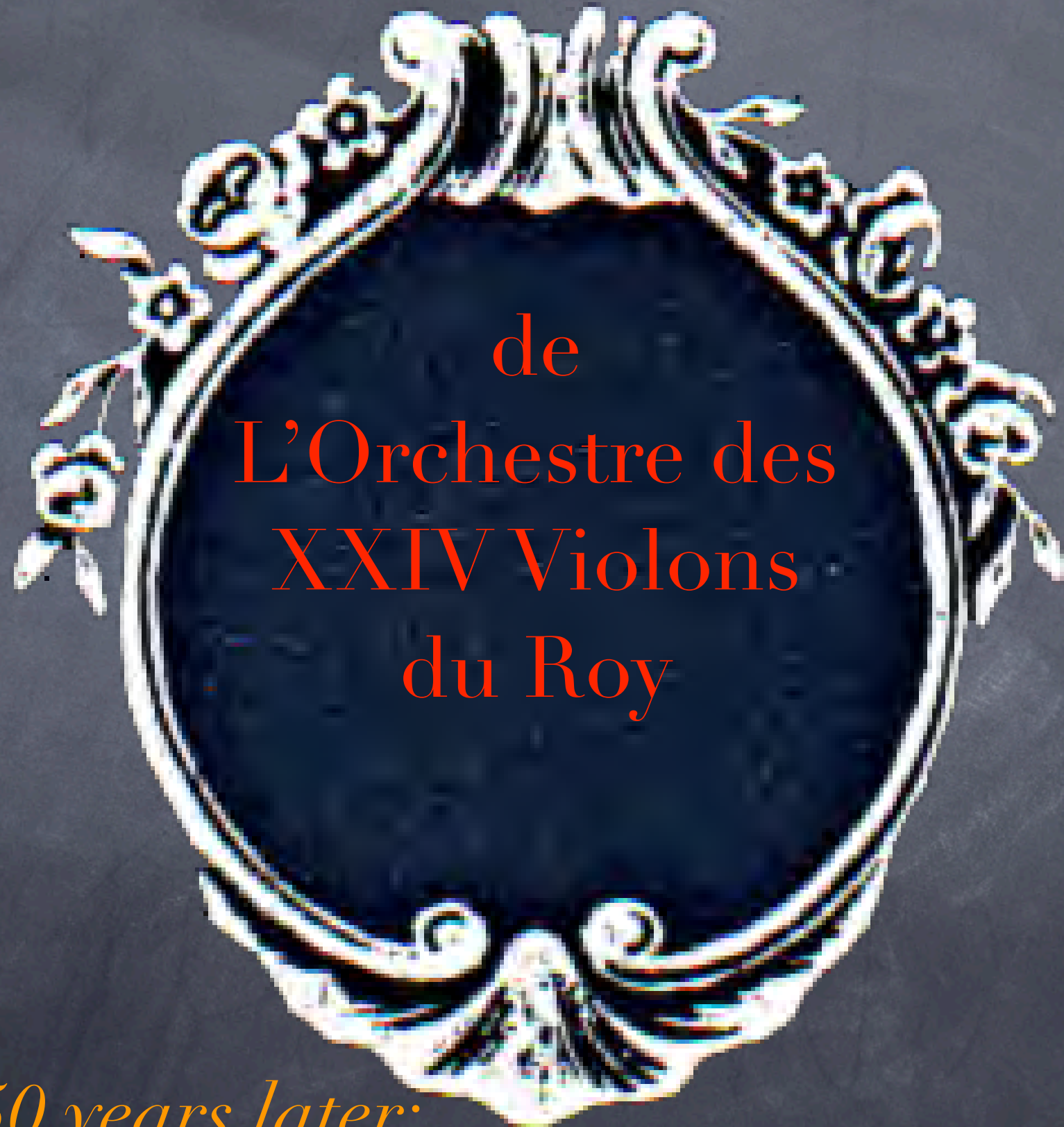


and during these times the french baroques music with these 3 middle parts was played with violins and the viola .

But, in this way, these 3 middle voices was not clear because the sound of the instruments was to similar
So often it was necessary to change a little the "partition"

*The « three middle parts » are not renforced by
the tone's specificity of these tailles de violons
anymore.*

Les tailles de violons



II) 250 years later:

In search of a tone's restoration.

Patrick Cohen-Akénine,
conductor of the Folies Françaises



“To come back to the sound of the old french
orchestra comprising five violins parts ...”



This will, required the “recreation” of these
tailles de violons which disappeared.

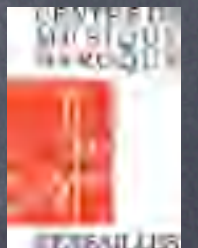


THIS strong artistic objective required another
“deficit”
the recreation of these tailles de violon with
their own specific tone.

So in 2007
M. Herve Burckel de Tell, director of the baroque
music institut of versailles

Hervé Burckel de Tell,
Director of the Centre M
Versailles

Patrick Cohen- Akenine
Director et First violin of the Orchestre des Folies
Françaises



ordered from the violin makers

Antoine Laulhère & Giovanna Chitto'



The construction of the
12 tailles de violons disappeared
and, in a second time,
the 6 dessus de violon

that means to re-invent these instruments to re-create
this missing orchestra with its own specific sonority

ITALIA

violino



1,5 cm minus



dessus de violon



FRANCE

ITALIA

violino



1,5 cm minus

dessus de violon



FRANCE

violoncello



10 cm more

Basse de violon



ITALIA

violino



1 viola



violoncello



1,5 cm minus

10 cm more

3 Tailles de violon

dessus de violon



Basse de violon



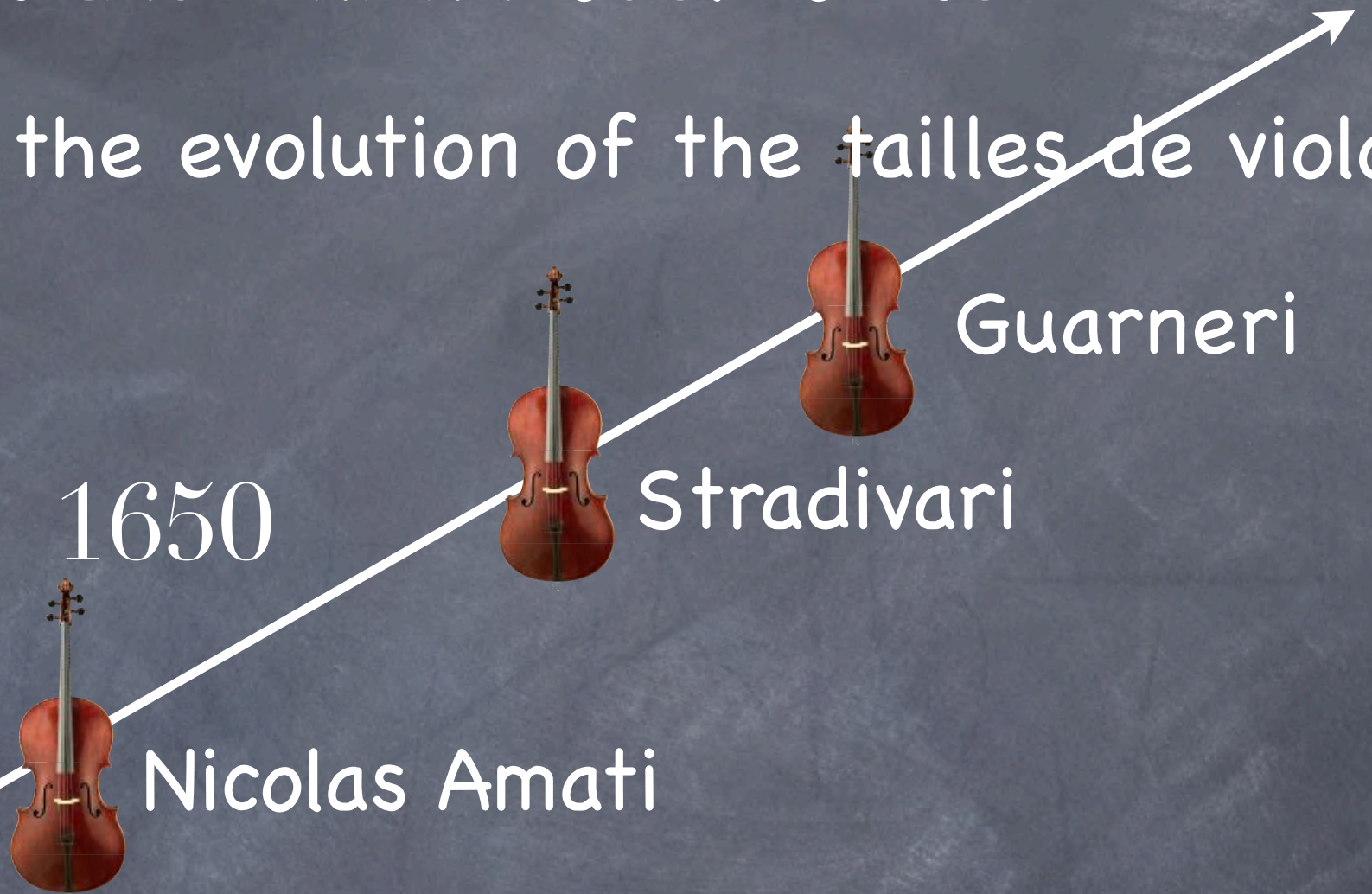
FRANCE

This 24 Violins Orchestra along two centuries of evolution of the violin
To understand which model to use 1761

We need to imagine the evolution of the tailles de violons



Les XXIV
Violons
du Roy



1577

we've got a lot of instrument testimonies

So we know very well the evolution of violins in Italy...



Andrea Amati
(violins origin)

So how well as the evolution of these tailles
As well as the tailles were evolving too
In France during all this time ?



1708 : Lully
(our date target)

1761

???

1650

???

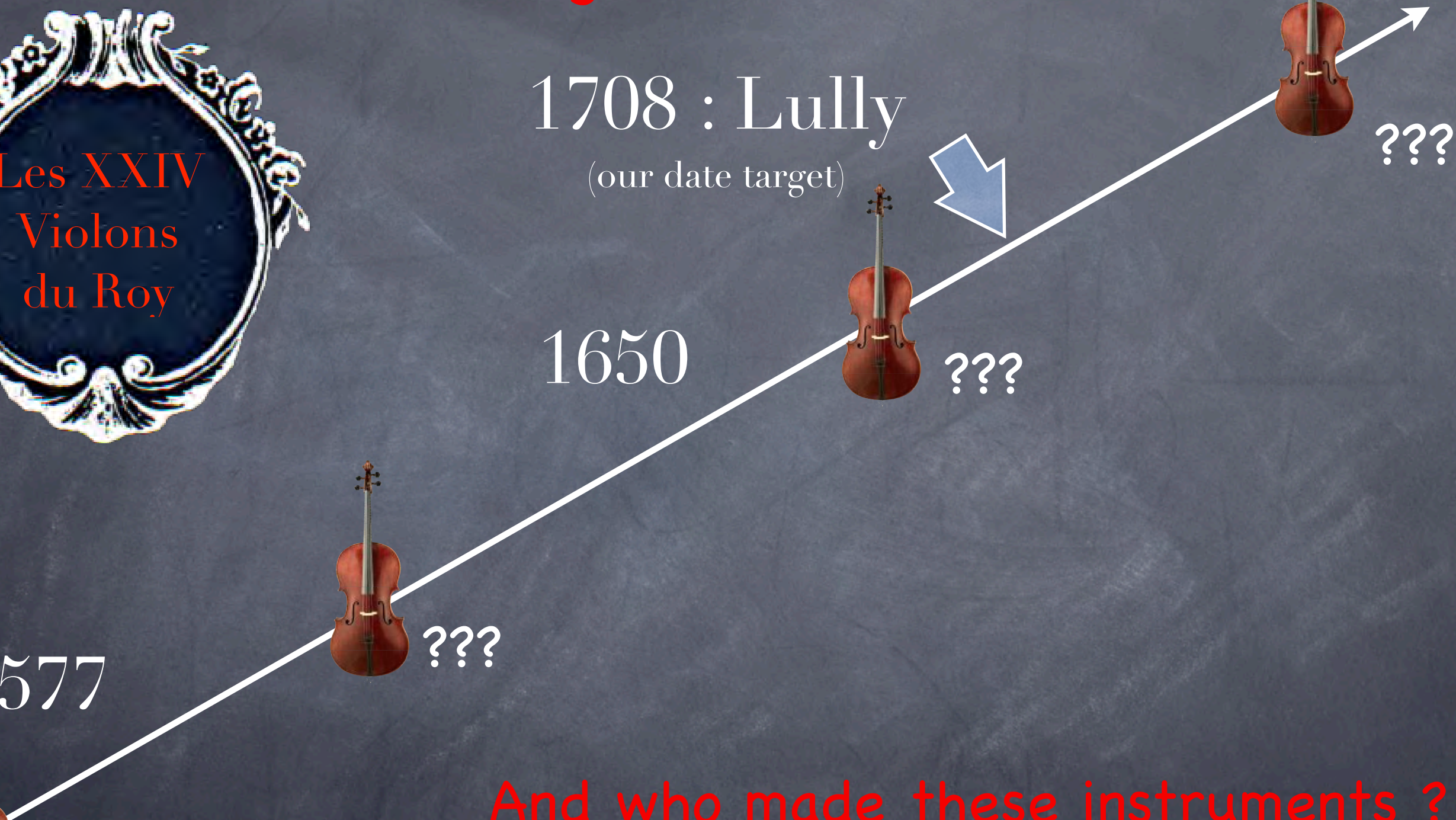
1577

???

And who made these instruments ?

Andrea Amati

(violin and tailles origin)





Looking for the sound of this Royal Orchestra.

- a “specific” sound: effective strong and admired throughout Europe...
- to re-create this orchestra we worked in 3 ways:

1- Historical approach (Mersenne’s 1636 treatise, a few instruments and painting)

2- Artistic approach (Baroque musicians have an interpretation and also a complexive sound in their mind...)

3- to rediscover and manage ancient artisans’ techniques and culture (our quest since 20 years...)

Sizes and measures of these tailles are described by old

Mersenne Marin
1588-1648, France



Firstly it is helpful to see that these instruments are not so strange: They are violins. Not and the usual size not tuned necessary in the same way that we can imagine but their form, their construction is the same than violins.

Only, the sound and the tone, and the ergonomics change

Some rare descriptions of these instruments exist on ancient treatises:

In particular Marin Mersenne a Jesuit **moine** give us some ideas about the size of these instruments (I can't explain anything in English about that), and about their tuning accords.

Mersenne writes clearly that these tailles are all accorded in the same tune.

Looking after their parts on the musics "C, G, D, A" had been chosen by the musicology. And I think it makes sense because in France these instruments are "all together" the **ancetre** of the viola.

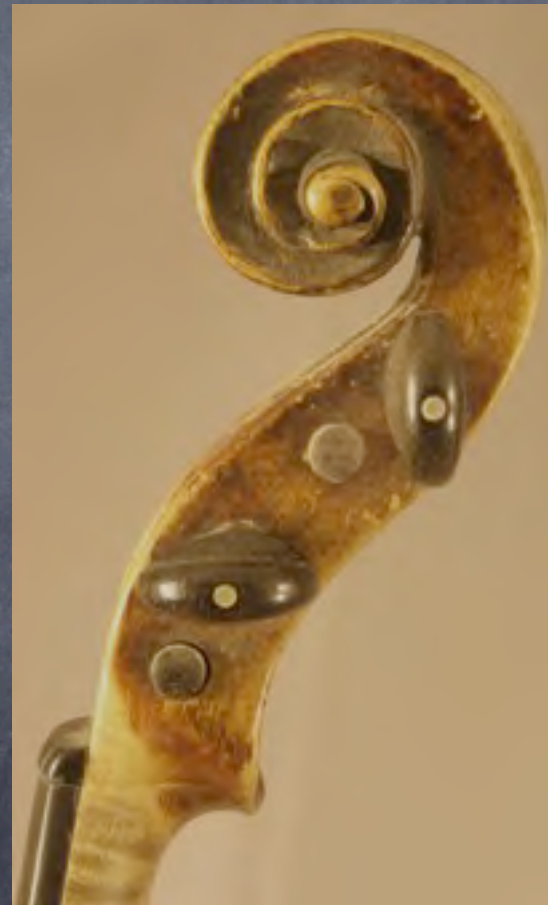
These instruments tuned in the same note, was very interesting for us. Because necessarily the sound and the character of these 3 instruments have to be various only



A decisive moment

We found in 2006, an "unusual" violin built in Paris around 1700.

This anonymous violin generously unveiled a lot of characteristics that we had imagined when we were designing the hautes - contre.



The drawing of our three tailles models were based on this instrument.



Looking for the sound of the era.

- a “specific” sound and admired the
- to re-create the sound that worked in 3 ways

- To be able to approach such a sound we needed a real complicity with the first musicians, with Patrick Cohen Akenine and with Jean Duron and all the CMBV.
- it was necessary a subjective and an artistic approach: they imagine the sound character of each taille. In the same way than theatre registers:
- and they helped us to “see” the sound characters of these instruments showing us their role in this French music harmony.

1- Historical approach (Mersenne’s 1636 treatise, a few instruments and paintings)

2- Artistic approach (Baroque musicians have an interpretation and also a complex sound in their mind...)

3- to rediscover and manage ancient artisans’ techniques and culture (our quest since 20 years...)

It's an artistic approach and these choices are subjective.

(Patrick Cohen Akénine and Jean Duron helped us to "see" the sound characters of these instruments showing us their role in this French music harmony.





Looking for the tone
of this Royal Orchestra.

Comedy:

the role
on the text



actor caracteres

The good



the bad



The ugly





Looking for the tone
of this Royal Orchestra.

Music:

the harmony
on the score



sound characteres
of the instruments

Haute-contre



Taille



Quinte



*A warm collaboration between
Makers-Musicians-Musicologists*



- *A historical proposition*
- *An artistical point of view*

*A warm collaboration between
Makers-Musicians-Musicologists*



- *In the chateau de Versailles,*
- *with all its history... (a dream)*



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the lost of « savoir-faire artisanales »

A tenacious work to adapt these gestures and these savoir-faire to our job, led us to carry out this forgotten varnish process.

Our most original contribution to this reconstitution project was the use of our rediscovered varnish process for these tailles de violon.

Gestures and varnishes

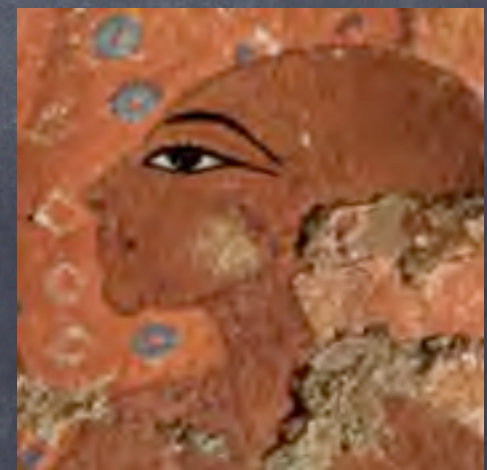
an ancient varnishing process

There is a strong relation between sound and texture of the materials that we use.

In our quest for a “lost ancient sound”, we have to pay attention to wood texture

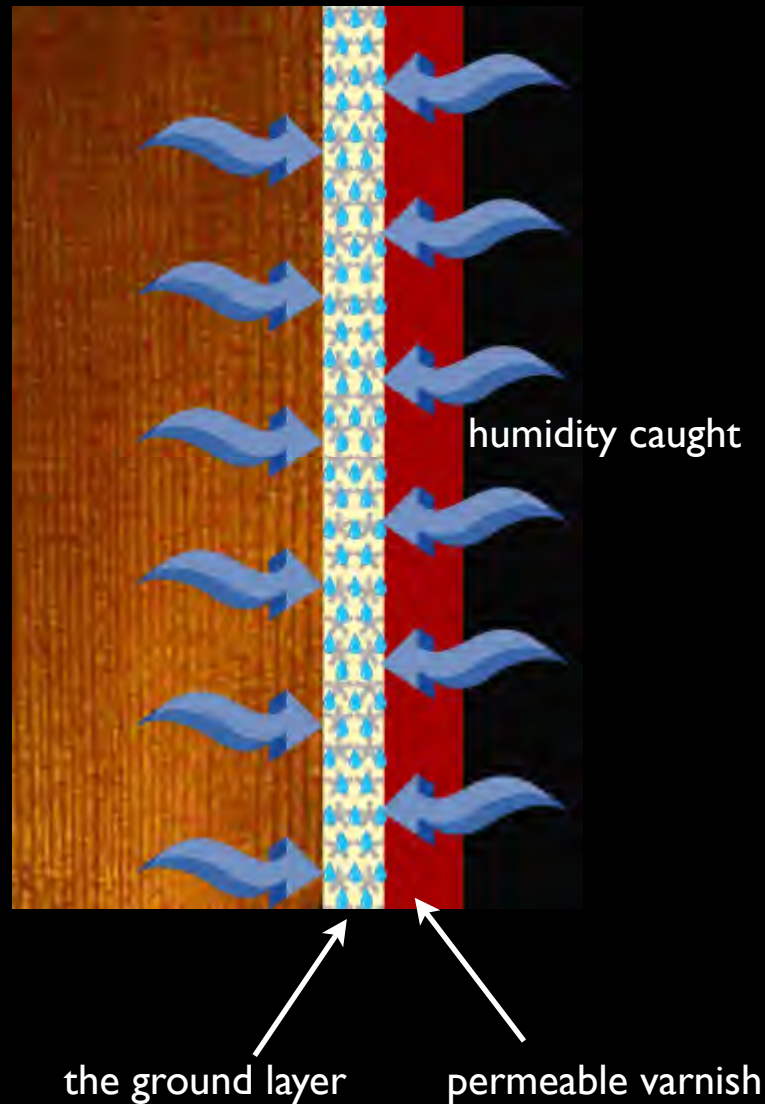
Finally the characteristic of the wood depends on basic techniques of varnishing like wood treatments and varnishing processes.

Our process of varnishing
“fresco style”

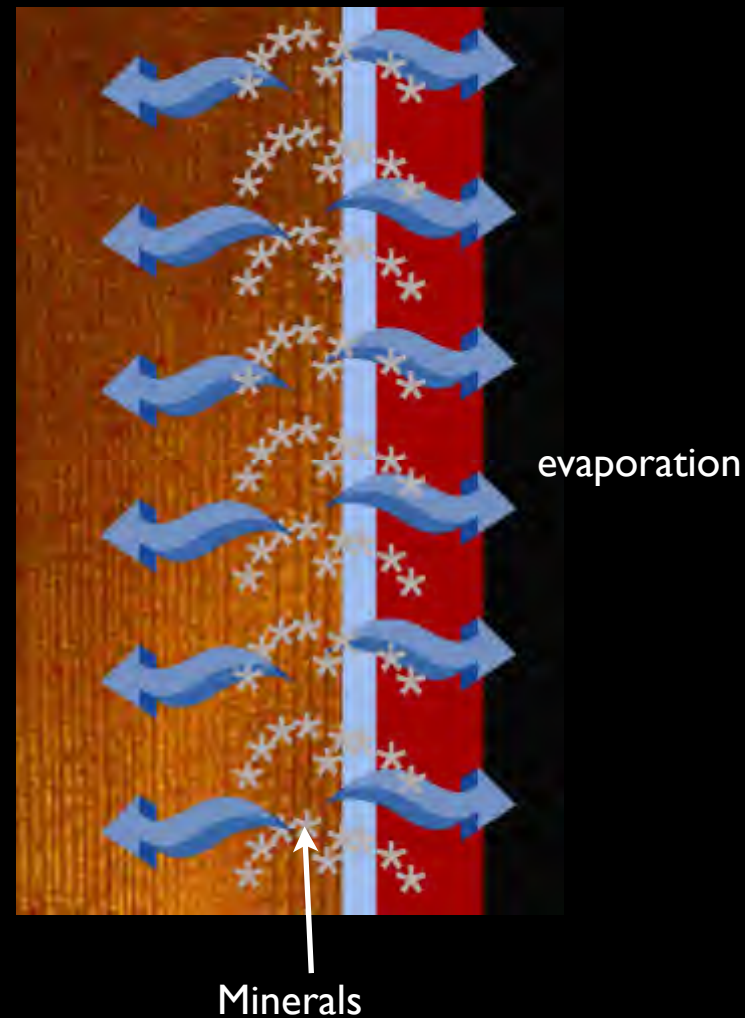


Steps of a varnish drying applied as “fresco style”

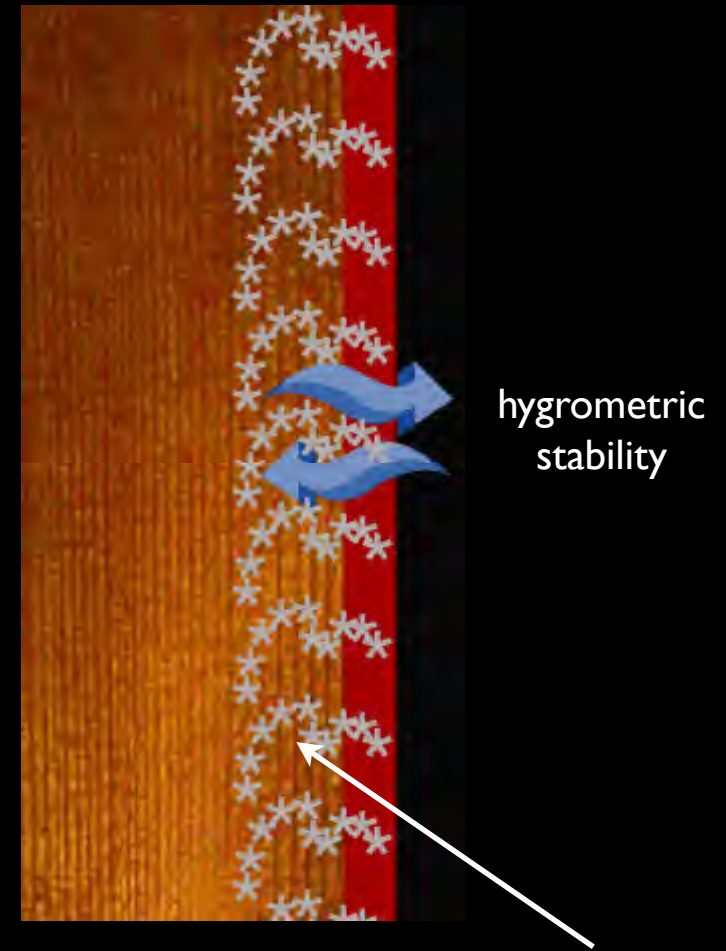
1 - the ground layer catches the humidity



2 - the ground layer reacts in the presence of water



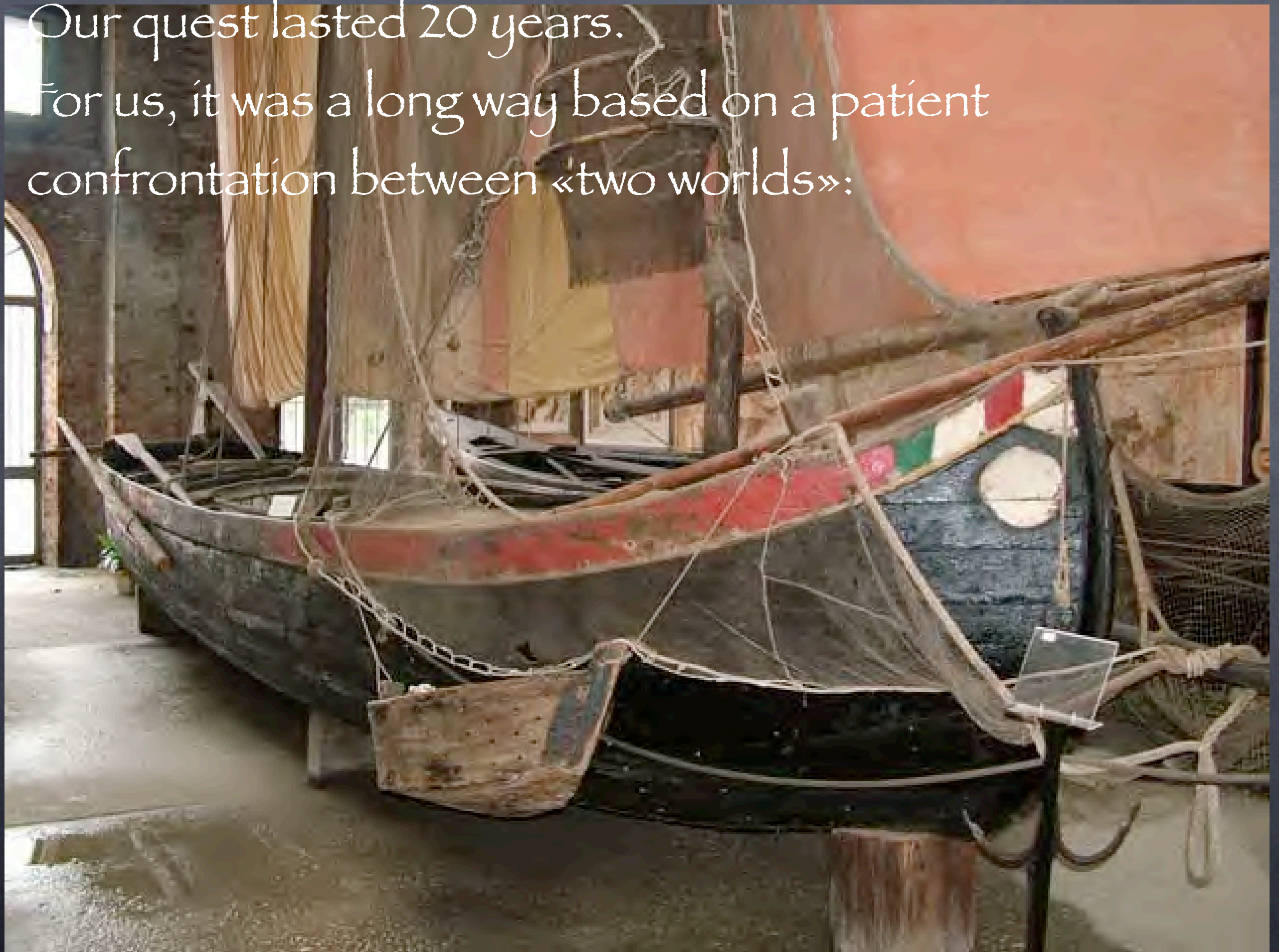
3 - the wood base gets mineralized after 1 year



Technique of the antique fresco adapted to our varnish process.


Our quest lasted 20 years.

For us, it was a long way based on a patient confrontation between «two worlds»:

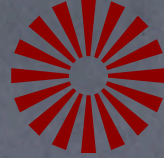



Artisan know-how recovered:


Science

 “surprising ingredients” detected by analysis of old varnishes. (C. Barlow nature 1989 ...ect)

Artisanship

 traditional practices and knowledges that we collected from craftsmen and workers.

 by accrossing these acknowleges and informations we adapted these technics for our violins.

 by «cooking» varnish, we are appropriating ourselves these informations from Science and also from popular forgotten cultures. The 17th c. is the apogee of the violin but also of an artisanship having started in Antiquity and fading away with the Industrial Revolution.

 Empirism + scientific informations, help us to rdiscover this artisan's culture gave us a new process of varnishing



*An interpretation of the existence
of minéraux éléments on the wood
of violins until the 18th Century:*

Gestures and varnishes an ancient varnishing process

Our process of varnishing
“fresco style”

*the Davia cement performance with this varnish
open new questions and perspectives*



*But now, the Davia cement performance with this varnish
open new questions and perspectives*

Laboratoire de Chimie Organique, Bioorganique et Macromoléculaire (COBM)- Prof C. Delaite

ENSCMu – UHA

Conclusions des analyses d'un vernis posé «en affresco» sur un apprêt minéral (extrait)



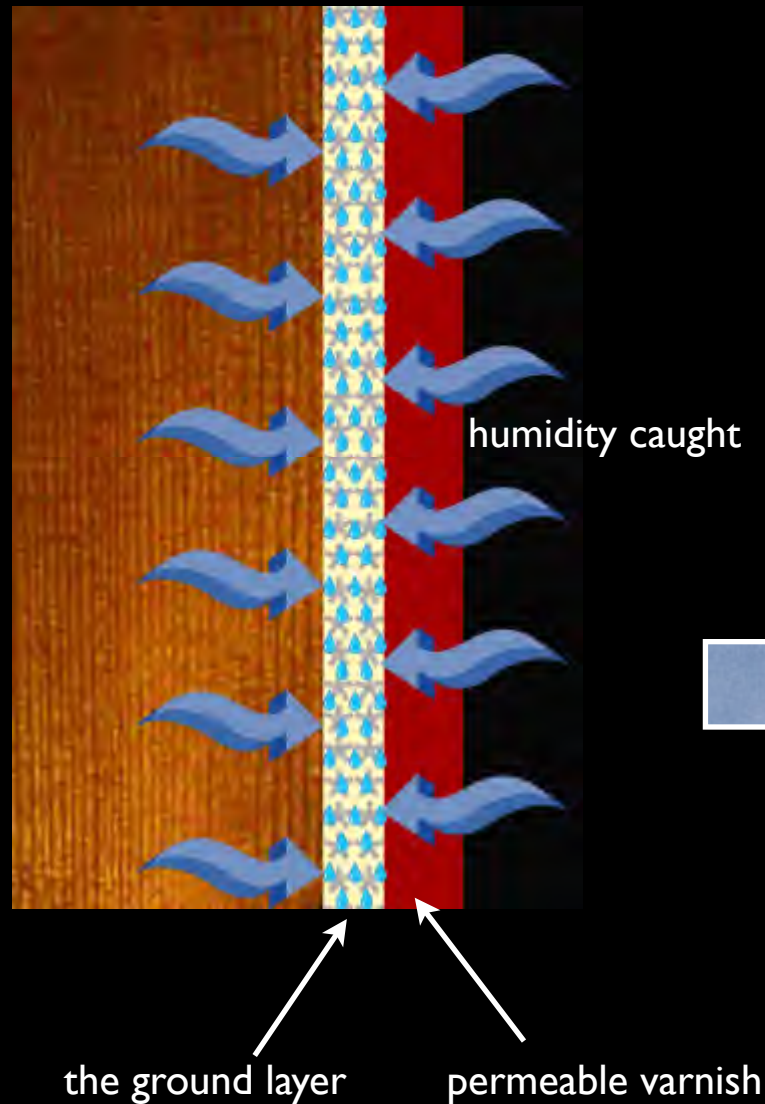
La nature de la première couche de vernis joue bel et bien un rôle sur les propriétés de ce dernier. L'usage de composé Davia dans cette première couche permet, en effet, d'apporter un caractère hydrophobe à la surface ainsi qu'une meilleure imperméabilisation ou encore une plus grande résistance à la chaleur. Pour ce qui est de la minéralisation du bois ou la création de liens entre l'apprêt minéral et le vernis, il sera utile de procéder à d'autres analyses comme l'usage d'un microscope électronique à balayage ou encore d'effectuer un suivi des échantillons au cours du temps

.../...

La présence de ciment Davia modifie donc bien les propriétés du vernis, ceci a pu être démontré par les différentes analyses. La structure de surface (observée au microscope) est bien différente et semble plus épaisse, et les analyses de mouillabilité montrent un caractère hydrophobe bien plus prononcé. Cette observation est également confirmée par la fiche technique, qui précise qu'un ciment Davia sec ne contient aucune eau d'hydratation et que son durcissement est possible en milieu aqueux, sans absorption d'eau (le matériau est donc bien hydrophobe).

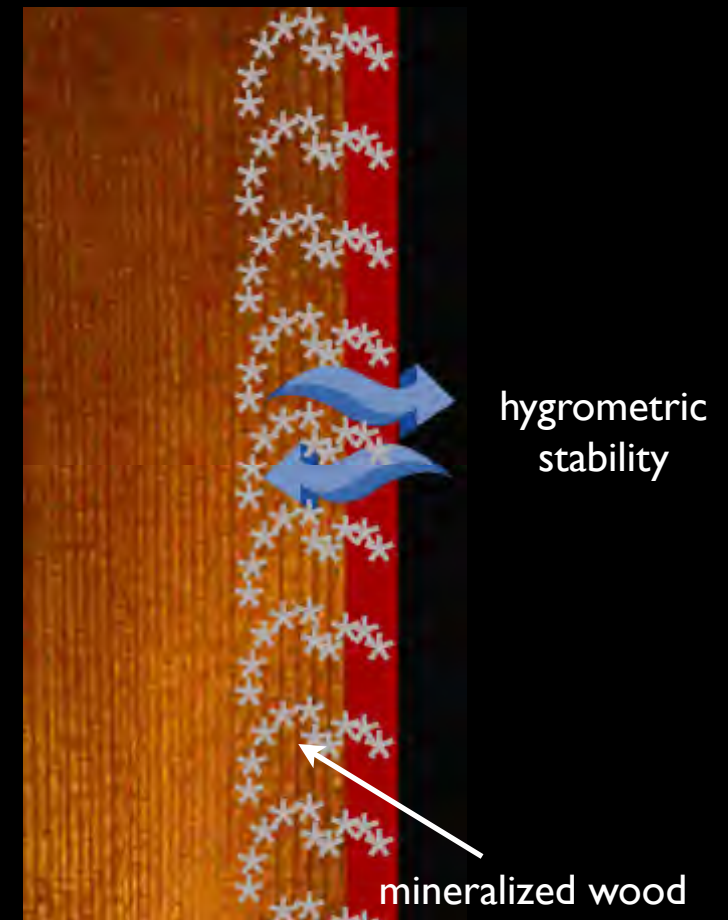
Steps of a paint or varnish drying applied as “fresco style”

1 - the ground layer catches the humidity



with minerals and Davia...

3 - the wood base gets mineralized after 1 year



Technique of the antique fresco will offer with davia a new waterploff and breathable paint.

*But now, the Davia cement performance with this varnish
open new questions and perspectives*

Project and perspectives (help ! ..):

- 🌀 Regarding our varnish: (an artisan's secret zone)
to see better the link between the ancien wood mineral traitment and the antique artificials stones process
- 🌀 Looking for a new modern painting process: (a shared collaboration)
to find some partners in order to realise a modern painting formulae that link the varnishing in affresco process an the Davia cement.

*A new «gortex» varnish or painting is near to be borned ?
...to continue ...*

THANK YOU...



Antoine Laulhère & Giovanna Chitto' *Violin makers in Paris*



Empiricism is not such
an old think...