

ELENCO DI SAGGI
DE' PRODOTTI
DELLA INDUSTRIA NAPOLITANA
PRESENTATI
NELLA SOLENNE MOSTRA
DEL DI' 30 MAGGIO 1844.
GIORNO DEL NOME
DI
S. M. FERDINANDO II.
RE DEL REGNO DELLE DUE SICILIE.

From the end of the 18th century to the political unification by the house of Savoia (1860), the southern part of the Italian peninsula – the so called Kingdom of the two Sicilies - was governed by the enlightened despotism of the house of Bourbon. The government of King Ferdinand II (1830-1859) looked after the institutions promoting economic activity in the country (earlier supported by King Francis (Francesco) I, 1816-1826) including every kind of employment carried out by the indisputable creativity of so many Neapolitans as well as foreign entrepreneurs. Naples was then one of the most densely populated and industrious towns in Europe¹. The most important institution was the Regio Istituto d'Incoraggiamento alle Scienze Naturali di Napoli (Royal Institute for the Encouragement of Scientific Researches in Naples), from 1806. Apart from the reports of periodical exhibitions of the most varied products of Naples and its environs, long lists of craftsmen or owners of medium-sized workshops (manufactories commonly called 'industries') were published in special handbooks (*Atti del Regio Istituto d'Incoraggiamento; Elenco di saggi dei prodotti . . . ; Indirizzi dei negozianti . . .*) where the 'industries' were listed according to the categories of their activities. In the 1844 'Saggi' yearbook appears the commercial list of *Corde armoniche dell'antica fabbrica di Salvatore Avallone fu Domenico, sita nel largo Zecca de panni al Pendino N.°30* (Musical strings from the old factory of Salvatore Avallone son of the late Domenico, located at the square called 'Mint of the Cloth by Pendino' no. 30).

The list is interesting for the number of specimens produced and the precise description of each of them. There were different types of the same specimen (e.g. first violin strings) fit for various instruments (violin, mandolin, harp) which could be chosen according to the number of twisted strands and consequently to price bands². The prices depended on the number of the twisted strands in the same type of string.

The manufacturing of gut strings is to this point known only to have been done by twisting a maximum of 9 strands³, while 2, 3 or 4 strands of is the number commonly referred to in a few sources⁴.

*Corde armoniche dell' antica fabbrica di Salvatore
Avallone fu Domenico, sita nel largo Zecca de' panni
al Pendino N.º 30.*

Ogni mazzetto è di 30 corde, a 3 tirate da violino,
bianche, blu, e rosse, tutte unite perfettamente,
e senza giunte. Gli armaggi da violino, violoncel-
lo, chitarra, ed arpa sono composti come siegue:

PRIMA QUALITA'.

Prime da chitarra, mandolino ed arpa ad 1 filo e 3 ti-
rate, per ogni mazzetto grana 30.
dette ad 1 filo e 1 tirata grana 15.

Elenco dei saggi... (List of the exhibits ...), p. 60

Gut strings made in the ancient workshop of Salvatore Avallone fu Domenico,
largo Zecca de panni al Pendino n.30
(Corde armoniche dell'antica fabbrica di Salvatore Avallone fu Domenico, sita nel
largo Zecca de panni al Pendino N.º30)

Each bunch is of 30 strings, of triple length for violin, white, blue and red, perfectly
twisted in their length without extensions (knots?). The sets for violin, cello, guitar
and harp consist as it follows:

(Ogni mazzetto è di 30 corde, a tre tirate da violino, bianche, blu e rosse, tutte unite
perfettamente, e senza giunte. Gli armaggi da violino, violoncello, chitarra ed arpa
sono composti come siegue:)

**FIRST QUALITY
(PRIMA QUALITA')**

First string for guitar, mandoline and harp made of an unique strand and triple
length; each bunch costs 30 grana; the same of an unique strand and single length 15
grana; the same of two strands and tripe length 60 grana;
the same of two strands and single length 30 grana;
(Prime da chitarra, mandolino ed arpa ad 1 filo e 3 tirate, per ogni mazzetto grana 30
dette a 1 filo e 1 tirata grana 15
dette a 2 fili e 3 tirate grana 60.
dette a 2 fili e 1 tirate grana 30.)

First string for violin or second string for guitar and harp made of three strands and
triple length 90 grana; the same of four strands and triple length 1.20 ducats; the
same of three strands and quadruple length 1.20 ducats;

the same of four strands and quadruple length 1.60 ducats;
(Prime da violino, o seconde da chitarra ed arpa, a 3 fili e 3 tirate grana 90.
dette a 4 fili e 3 tirate duc. 1. 20.
dette a 3 fili e 4 tirate duc. 1. 20.
dette a 4 fili e 4 tirate duc. 1. 60.)

For violin of three strands and single length 30 grana.
(Da violino da 3 fili e 1 tirata grana 30.)

Second strings for violine or third string for guitar and harp of four strands and triple length 1.20 ducats;
(Seconde da violino, o terze da chitarra ed arpa, a 4 fili e 3 tirate duc. 1. 20.)
the same of five strands and triple length 1.50 ducats;
(dette a 5 fili e 3 tirate duc. 1. 50.)
the same of four strands and single length 45 grana;
(dette a 4 fili e 1 tirata grana 45.)
For guitar of three strands and single length 45 grana;
(Da chitarra 3 fili e 1 tirata grana 45.)

Third strings for violin or first for cello and harp of six strands and triple length 1.80 ducats
(Terze da violino o prime da violoncello ed arpa, a 6 fili e 3 tirate duc. 1. 80.)
the same of seven strands and triple length 2.10 ducats
(dette a 7 fili e 3 tirate duc. 2. 10.)
the same of eight strands and triple length 2.40 ducats
(dette a 8 fili e 3 tirate duc. 2. 40.)
the same of seven strands and single length 60 grana
(dette a 7 fili e 1 tirata grana 60.)
For guitar of four strands and single length 60 grana
(Da chitarra a 4 fili e 1 tirata grana 60.)

Bass strings for harp of ten strands and triple length 3 ducats
(Bassi per arpa a 10 fili e 3 tirate duc. 3.)

Second strings for cello of twelf strands and triple length 3.60 ducats
(Seconde da violoncello a 12 fili e 3 tirate duc. 3. 60.)
The same of fourteen strands and triple length 4.20 ducats
(dette a 14 fili e 3 tirate duc. 4. 20.)
The same of sixteen strands and triple length 4.80 ducats
(dette a 16 fili e 3 tirate duc. 4. 80.)
The same of eighteen strands and triple length 5.20 ducats
(dette a 18 fili e 3 tirate duc. 5. 20.)
The same of twenty strands and triple length 6. ducats
(dette a 20 fili e 3 tirate duc. 6.)

Fourth strings for violin wound with silver over gut of single length 75 grana
(Quarte da violino con filato d'argento sopra budella di una tirata, grana 75.)

For guitar over silk of single length 75 grana

(Da chitarra sopra seta a 1 tirata grana 75.)

Fifth gut strings of single length 90 grana

(Quinte di budella a 1 tirata grana 90.)

Sixth strings of a single length 1.20 ducats

(Seste a 1 tirata duc. 1. 20.)

Bass strings wound with silver over silk, gut or steel of single length each string 30 grana

(Bassi con filato di argento sopra seta, budella o acciaio a 1 tirata, ogni corda grana 30.)

Third string for cello wound with silver over gut of single length 13 grana.

(Terze da violoncello con filato di argento sopra budella a una tirata, grana 13.)

Fourth string of single length 22 grana.

(Quarte a 1 tirata grana 22.)

First string for double bass of single length 40 grana.

(Prime da contrabbasso a 1 tirata grana 40.)

Second string of a single length 60 grana.

(Seconde a 1 tirata grana 60.)

Third string of a single length 1 ducat.

(Terze a 1 tirata duc. 1.)

Strings for beating cotton according to the custom of Neaple and Sicily of 22 palms grana 40.

(Corde da battere cotone, all'uso di Napoli e Sicilia, di palmi 22 grana 40.)

Strings for beating cotton according to the custom of Basilicata and Puglia grana 5.

(Corde da battere cotone, all'uso di Basilicata e puglia, grana 5.)

Set of strings for harp consisting of 90 strings all of triple length without any wound string 6 ducats.

(Armaggio di arpa, contenente corde 90 tutte di 3 tirate, senza corde filate duc. 6.)

The same for cello with the two strings wound over gut 54 grana.

(Detto da violoncello con le 2 corde filate sopra budella, grana 54.)

The same for violin with the fourth string wound over gut 15 grana.

(Detto da violino con la quarta filata sopra budella, grana 15.)

The same for guitar with three strings wound 15 grana.

(Detto da chitarra con 3 corde filate, grana 15.)

SECOND QUALITY
(SECONDA QUALITA')

First strings for guitar, mandolin and harp of a single strand and triple length, for each bunch 20 grana.

(Prime da chitarra, mandolino ed arpa, a 1 filo e 3 tirate, per ogni mazzetto grana 20.)

The same of double strands and triple length 40 grana.

(dette a 2 fili e 3 tirate grana 40.)

The same for violin and second for guitar of three strands and triple length 60 grana.

(dette da violino e seconde da chitarra a 3 fili e 3 tirate grana 60.)

The same of two strands and triple length 60 grana.

(dette a 2 fili e 3 tirate grana 60.)

Second strings which can be used also as third strings for guitar of four strands and triple length 80 grana.

(Seconde che servono anche per terze da chitarra, a 4 fili e 3 tirate grana 80.)

Third strings which can be used also as first strings for cello and harp of seven strands and triple length 1.40 ducats.

(Terze che possono servire pure per prime di violoncello ed arpa, a 7 fili e 3 tirate duc. 1. 40.)



¹ One piece of evidence for the large production of musical instruments is that every kind of pianos was made in Naples, by about 200 'industries' during the 19th century. The activity of several Neapolitan string makers is known but none of their lists has been preserved. A population census held in 1871 still listed 5 string makers (*Napoli Nobilissima*, vol, 7, Napoli 2006). See also M Peruffo, *Italian violin strings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ... Recercare IX* (1997), *passim*.

² The coins used were ducato, grano (1/100 of ducato) and cavallo (or callo, 1/1000 of ducato). See G. Guidi, *Ragguaglio delle monete, dei pesi e delle misure attualmente in uso negli stati italiani*, Firenze 1839. ... Le Monnier 1839. It impossible to state the exchange rate with modern coins.

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⁴ See other quotations from old and recent authors in M Peruffo, *Ibidem*, *passim*.