The 'cello' in the Low Countries : the instrument and its practical use in the 17th and 18th centuries

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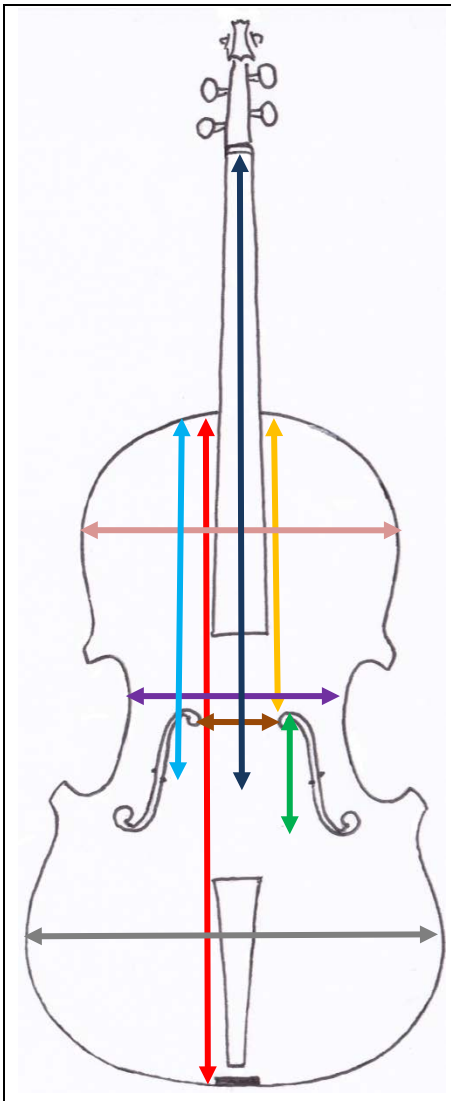
3 Instruments and their makers

3.1 Research corpus: instrument collections with NN and ZN cellos

The list in the following pages and Table 12 contain all NN and ZN instruments I have been able to trace. Of some violin makers I have been able to identify quite a few instruments, of others only one or two. In total 72 instruments have been included in the research corpus.
For measurements of all instruments, see Appendix 4. I measured the instruments at the Muziekinstrumentenmuseum in Brussels and at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague myself. The following measurements were taken:



	Body length (front & back)
	Length from top of body to top of sound holes
	Length from top of body to notch in sound holes
	Length of sound holes
	Maximum width front and back: top bout
	Minimum width front and back: at c bout
	Maximum width front and back: lower bout
	String length from nut to bridge
	Distance between tops of sound holes

Figure 217 Cello measurements taken at the musical instrument museums in Brussels and The Hague. Colours of arrowed lines in drawing correspond with explanation in the right column.

The measurements of the other instruments I received from other parties. Unfortunately the latter measurements are often incomplete,[565] and I also do not know exactly how they were done.

[565] The degree of incompleteness differs from one instrument to the other: of one instrument I have only the length, of another instrument I have dimensions of, for example, length and width. The measurements received, however, were hardly ever as complete as the ones I did myself.

The abbreviations below are used in the text and also in Appendix 4.

Amsterdam: Nationaal Muziekinstrumenten Fonds (NMF)[566]
Cuypers, Johannes Theodorus: ca. 1770
Jacobs, Hendrick: ca. 1690
Lefèbvre, Jean Baptiste: 18th century
Rombouts, Pieter: ca. 1690, 1699
Snoeck, Egidius: ca. 1715
Boston: Museum of Fine Arts (MFA)
Snoeck, Marcus: 1720[567]
Brussel: Muziekinstrumentenmuseum (MIM)
Anonymous, Brussels: 1701-1750
Anonymous, Flanders: 1733-1755
Borbon, Gaspar: 1670, 1671, 1688, 1702, 1707
Boussu, Benoît-Joseph: 1752, 1757
Comble, Ambroise de: 1745, 1751, 1755, 1757, 1782
Ligne, Laurent Joseph de: 1752, 1761
Simonet, Etienne: 1730, 1739
Snoeck, Egidius: 1734
Snoeck, Marcus: 1718, 1721, 1722, 1733, before 1762
Snoeck, Marcus/Egidius: 1761
Steveny, Pierre Joseph: 1738
Willems II, Hendrick: 1717, between 1701-1750
Website of Christie's auctions (CW)[568]
Cuypers, Johannes Theodorus: ca. 1775
Haine, M. & Meeùs, N.: *Instruments de musique anciens à Bruxelles et en Wallonie* (HM)[569]
Boussu, Benoit Joseph: 1755
Fred Lindeman: *The Rebirth of the Baroque Violin* (FL)[570]
Borbon, Gaspar: 1691, 1717
Cuypers, Johannes Theodorus: 1761, 1779, 1782
Rombouts, Pieter: 18th century
Snoeck, Marcus: 18th century
Den Haag: Gemeentemuseum (GM)
Boumeester, Jan: 1676
Cuypers, Johannes Theodorus: 1787, 1793
Jacobs, Hendrick: 1675-1705, 1705
Lefèbvre, Jacques Baptiste: 1772
Rombouts, Pieter: 1722, undated
Private Collections (PC)[571]
Comble, Ambroise de: 1752
Cuypers, Johannes Theodorus: 1766
Kleynman, Cornelis: ca. 1675
Rombouts, Pieter: 1705
Website of Sotheby's autions (SW)[572]
Cuypers, Johannes Theodorus: ca. 1775

[566] Information taken from the website of the NMF, last accessed: 2015, September 12 and from an email by Frits Schutte (collection management), dated: 2015, September 14.
[567] Information on measurements for this instrument received from Darcy Kuronen (Curator of Musical Instruments), email dated: 2015, June 30.
[568] www.christies.com, last accessed: 2015, September 10.
[569] Haine & Meeùs (1985), p. 54.
[570] Lindeman (2011), pp. 117, 119.
[571] The names of the owners of these instruments are known to the author. I thank them for measuring their instruments.
[572] www.sothebys.com, last accessed: 2015, September 10.

Website of Tarisio and Cozio Archive (TW)[573]
Comble, Ambroise de: 1756, 1761, 18th century
Cuypers, Johannes Theodorus: 1760, 1763, 1766, 1770
Hofmans III, Matthias: 1700
Jacobs, Hendrick: 1690, 1703
Rombouts, Pieter: 1715, 1722
Sijde, Willem van der: 1690
Snoeck, Egidius: ca. 1720
Sachs, C.: *Sammlung alter Musikinstrumente* (CS)[574]
Comble, Ambroise de: 1741
Lefèbvre, Jacques Baptiste: 1770

Apart from the collections listed above, I have, unsuccesfully, contacted many other museums. A list of these museums can be found in Appendix 3.

In the table below the violin makers were ordered by the cities they worked in:

	Production place	**Violin maker**	**Dates of production**	**Number of instruments**
NN	Amsterdam	C. Kleynman (1626-1686)	ca. 1675	1
		H. Jacobs (ca. 1629-1704)	1675-1705, 1690, ca. 1690, 1703, 1705	5
		J. Boumeester (ca. 1629-1681)	1676	1
		W. van der Sijde (ca. 1663-1692 or later)	1690	1
		P. Rombouts (1667-1728)	ca. 1690, 1699, 1705, 1715, 1722, 1722, 18th century, undated	8
		J. B. Lefèbvre (ca. 1730-1775)	1770, 1772, 18th century	3
	Den Haag	J. T. Cuypers (1724-1808)	1760, 1761, 1763, 1766, 1766, 1770, ca. 1770, ca. 1775, ca. 1775 1779, 1782, 1787, 1793,	13
ZN	Brussel	G. Borbon (ca. 1635-1710)	1670, 1671, 1688, 1691, 1702, 1707, 1717	7
		E. Snoeck (ca. 1660-after 1730)	ca. 1715, ca. 1720, 1734	3
		M. Snoeck (1694-1762)	1718, 1720, 1721, 1722, 1733, before 1762, 18th century	7
		E./M. Snoeck	1761	1
		Anonymous	1701-1750	1
	Etterbeek & Brussel	B. J. Boussu (1703-1773)	1752, 1755, 1757	3
	Antwerpen	M. Hofmans III (??-??)	1700	1
		L. J. de Ligne (1715-1780)	1752, 1761	2
	Gent	H. Willems II (fl. 1715-1745)	1717, between 1701-1750	2

[573] www.tarisio.com, last accessed: 2015, July 6. I owe many thanks to Naomi Sadler (Head of Cozio) for allowing me free access to the private part of their website.
[574] Sachs (1922), column 140.

	Bergen	E. Simonet (fl. 1730)	1730, 1739	2
	Nivelles	P. J. Steveny (??-??)	1738	1
	Turnhout	A. De Comble (1723-1796)	1741, 1751, 1752, 1755, 1756, 1757, 1761, 1782, 18th century	9
	Flanders	Anonymous	1733-1755	1
Total number of instruments:				**72**

Table 12 Number of instruments in the NN and ZN, ordered by production place.

3.2 String instrument makers in the Noordelijke Nederlanden

As early as the 15th century string instrument makers were active in the NN. These early makers mainly produced lutes and citterns.[575] According to the musicologist Karel Moens the violin type instruments were developed and made by musicians in the 16th century and not by professional instrument makers.[576] Two viols made by Johan Roos are the first evidence of the presence of string instrument makers in the NN.[577]

Violins and cellos were seen as inferior instruments and at first they were mainly played in streets and pubs.[578] These 'inferior' instruments were made in an archaic[579] form. This type of instrument was made almost everywhere north of the Alpes, sometimes even until the end of the 18th century.

From the NN, however, none of these archaic cellos has been passed down to us.[580] In NN visual art from the 17th century, however, this type of instrument is depicted many times, mainly by painters from Haarlem and Utrecht.[581] This makes violin maker Fred Lindeman conclude that it goes without saying that these instruments must have been made in the NN as well.[582] I will come back to this in Section 3.4.1.

At the beginning of the 17th century professional instrument makers started making string instruments too. At the start they still called themselves lute, cittern or musical instrument makers. The earliest mention of the profession of violin maker is that of Gerrit Heinrixss as 'fijoelmaker' in 1622.[583]

Everywhere in Europe violin making was very much influenced by the Italian violin makers. In contrast to the ZN this influence was noticeable in Amsterdam at an early stage for several reasons. Amsterdam, at the time, was the centre of the world trade; Amsterdam had trading links with, for example, Venice, an Italian city with a rich musical tradition; and the whealthy, music making, merchants wanted the best and most modern instruments of the time and during that period the Italian instruments were considered the best.[584]

Although Italian instruments were considered best, instruments made by makers living in the Low Countries followed suit. The best instruments made in Amsterdam and other NN cities, equaled their Italian examples. Organologist Christiaan Vlam, for example, considers the

[575] Fuchs (1960), p. 177. Giskes (1987), p. 56. Lindeman (1999), p. 118. Giskes has done extensive research in the Amsterdam City Archives. He discovered the following descriptions for string instrument makers: luitmaker, citermaker, instrumentmaker van snarenspel. Giskes (1987), pp. 57-60.

[576] Moens (1990), p. 103.

[577] Giskes (1987), p. 57. One viol is dated 1585, the other one 1587.

[578] This is also shown in 17th century visual art: for example in the theme of the prodigal son and in bordello scenes. Giskes (1999), p. 53.

[579] In this sense archaic means primitive, made without mold and made not only with glue joints but also with one part anchored in another part. Moens (2000), p. 8.

[580] Lindeman (1999), p. 121.

[581] Giskes (1999), p. 61. Of the artists Giskes mentions, Pieter Claesz, Dirck Hals, Jan Miense Molenaer (Haarlem), Gerard van Honthorst and Dirck van Baburen (Utrecht) have produced representations of cellos or bass violins.

[582] Lindeman (1999), p. 119.

[583] Giskes (1987), p. 58.

[584] Giskes (1999), p. 54 & Lindeman (1999), p. 121.

instruments made by Jan Boumeester (1629-1681) as good as those of important Italian makers.[585]

It is not certain where instrument makers active in Holland learned their trade and if they studied Italian instruments outside of Holland.

It has been suggested that the Amsterdam violin maker Hendrick Jacobs spent some time in Italy, but this has never been proven. It is far more plausible that he and his fellow instrument makers studied these Italian masterpieces in Amsterdam.[586]

Italian instruments were indeed present in the NN. In a deed dated April 27, 1660, the amount of 10 guilders is mentioned for the insurance of one or a few Italian instruments.[587] Almost a century later, Italian instruments, including several 17th century ones, were offered for sale in an auction in 1759.[588]

The period between 1650 and 1728 is considered the first heyday of Dutch violin making and Amsterdam was the place to be, although in Leiden there were also a few makers. Well-known cello makers from Amsterdam from this period are Hendrick Jacobs (ca. 1629-1704) and his stepson Pieter Rombouts (1667-1728). At the death of Rombouts this period came to an end.[589]

During this first heyday there were many talented violin makers; they had very good technical and artistic skills (with adequate transfer of knowledge) and there was a mutual competition, which was also a hugely stimulating factor. Added to this, there was a high demand for instruments and people also had the capital to buy them. And furthermore, in Amsterdam there were several music publishers active, publishing Dutch and foreign music. It was very fortunate that there was printed music available to be played.[590]

Up to 1670, during a period of around 70 years, the population of Amsterdam increased from circa 30.000 inhabitants to more than 200.000. This vast increase was caused by waves of immigration by people from Flanders (after 1585 many fled Antwerp when it was captured by Spain), Jews from Spain and Portugal, and after 1685 also by Huguenots from France. Added to these refugees, there were also people searching for a better life, attracted by the whealthy city.[591] All these new citizens of Amsterdam soon formed a very large consuming market for musical instruments built in the Low Countries.

Several violin makers active in the Low Countries came from abroad as well. Andries Asseling was born in Uytstede (Pommern), but active in Leiden. Several others were born in Quakenbrück (Westfalen). Of these Hendrick Aerninck, Jan and Johannes Boumeester were also active in Leiden, and another Jan Boumeester (1629-1681) worked in Amsterdam.[592] Gerrit Menslage, brother in law of Jan Boumeester of Amsterdam, was born in Essen (Germany).[593] Of these makers no cellos are known to me, except for 2 instruments made by Jan Boumeester. The first is

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[585] Vlam (1968), p. 108.

[586] Vlam (1968), p. 103 & Giskes (1987), p. 12.

[587] Giskes (1987), p. 77, footnote 23.

[588] Selhof (1759), p. 25. Among those Italian instruments, there were cellos from Nicoló Amati (Cremona 1660), Maria Peuscher ("très bon Instrument", Cremona 1686), Floriano Guidanti ("très bonne", Bologna 1711) and Theordor Gofriler ("dans une Caisse, très bon Instrument", Venezia 1733). Some of the names of these makers have been badly spelled. Maria Peuscher has been identified as Maria (Mario?, Marco?) Penscher by the art educator and historian Willibald von Lütgendorff (1922), p. 376 (violin maker Jurriaan van Roon, however, thinks it is highly unlikely that in that time there were female violin makers (email: 2017, June 30). Given this fact Von Lütgendorff's suggestion of Mario or Marco could well be right); Floriano Guidanti is identified by Von Lütgendorff (1922), p. 143 as Guidante Floreno and Theordor Gofriler must be Matteo Goffriller.

[589] Information from Hubert de Launay, violin maker in Amsterdam (researching string instruments from the NN), email: 2015, September 10.

[590] Giskes (1999), p. 51.

[591] Giskes (1987), p.61 & Giskes (1999), p.51.

[592] Vlam (1968), pp. 103, 108.

[593] Giskes (1979), p. 55. When checking the map of Germany for Quakenbrück, I discovered that some 8 kilometers north of that village, there is a village called Essen (Oldenburg), and some 8 kilometers west of Quakenbrück there is a village called Menslage. I wonder if Gerrit Menslage comes from this area, rather than from the larger Essen close to Duisburg and Bochum. I have not been able to find an answer to this question, but the thought is not unrealistic since Menslage and Boumeester were close family and knew each other.

a cello ("une Basse, *très bonne*") produced by Joh. Boumeester (Amsterdam, 1675)[594] and sold in the before-mentioned 1759 auction;[595] the other is a 'violoncello piccolo' (1676), which was part of the Carel van Leeuwen Boomkamp collection (now in GM).[596]
There were also other violin makers of which we have proof that they made cellos or bass violins. A certain Thomas Verhoeven from Utrecht made a "Basje" in 1650.[597] Another "Basse", made by G. Stevens (Leiden 1743), is sold in the Selhof auction in 1759.[598]
After Rombouts' death not much happened, although there were makers building good instruments. We could speak of a second heyday, though smaller than the first one, with the instruments made by the Cuypers family in Den Haag, starting in the middle of the 18th century and spreading over 3 generations.[599]
These two heydays can also be seen in Appendix 4. I have not been able to find any instruments built between 1722 (Rombouts) and 1760 (Cuypers).

3.3 String instrument makers in the Zuidelijke Nederlanden

Despite social and religious troubles in the 16th century in the ZN, up to 1555 there was a case of unprecedented economical prosperity, especially in Antwerp. In 1555 Philips II, who was not in touch with the Low Countries, took over the reign from his father Charles V and all the events arising from this finally led to the break-up of the Low Countries in the Noordelijke and Zuidelijke Nederlanden. At the start of Philips' reign, a large part of the court musicians working in Brussels moved or rather were forced to move to Madrid. Only after 1570 there are again notifications of violinists working full time for the court. As already mentioned in Sub chapter 3.2 many people fled from the ZN, also to Amsterdam in the NN, because of religious reasons (Philips II was catholic). This, together with famine and diseases, halved the Antwerp population. In this environment the violin making in the ZN slowly grew to its heyday of the second half of the 17th century.[600]
In Brussels and Antwerp it was very common for professional fiddlers to make their own instruments. As early as the end of the 14th century a certain Lodewyk van Vaelbeke is called "fiddler and fiddle maker" ("vedelaar en vedelmaker").[601] In the inventories made at the decease of the Antwerp (city) fiddlers Peeter van Billioen (1617-1652) and Gillis van Gewelde alias vander Locht (before 1602-1648) not only (partly brand new) instruments were found, but also unfinished instruments and tools for making instruments. For example: "a quantity of drills and other tools" ("Een quantiteyt van booren ende ander gereetschappe"), "[tools] serving to make all instruments" ("[gereedschap] dienende tot het maeken van alle de instrumenten"), "some wood to make bass violins and flutes" ("Een deel hout om veloncen ende fluyten te maecken") and "a workbench" ("Een werckbanck").[602]
From the early period, however, no cellos from the ZN have been passed down to us. Only from around 1600 onwards written sources explicitly mention the fact that violins are made in Brussels. One therefore has to rely on images of cellos, which I have thoroughly done so in

[594] The usual name of the Amsterdam-based Boumeester is Jan, but in the auction catalogue he is called Joh., which is short for Johannes. In Leiden there were a few more Boumeesters active as violin makers, one of whom was called Johannes. The Boumeester in this catalogue, however, must be Jan from Amsterdam, because Johannes from Leiden actually died in April 1670. Information on Johannes Boumeester taken from: Vlam (1968), p. 108.
[595] Selhof (1759), p. 252.
[596] Leeuwen Boomkamp & Meer (1971), pp. 19-21, 46.
[597] Vorsterman van Oyen (ed., 1895), p. 45. The instrument is named: "Basje" (small bass). I do not think a bass viol is meant, because also a "viool di gamba" (viol) and a "cleyne viool di gamba" (small viol) are being auctioned. This small bass was owned by L. van Beken or Beke, who died in Delft in 1708. Van Beke(n) was "Castellijn in 't D'schen Gemeentelands Huis" (caretaker of the building of the polder board Delfland).
[598] Selhof (1759), p. 252.
[599] Information from Hubert de Launay, email: 2015, September 10.
[600] Moens (1994), pp. 53-54 & 170.
[601] Moens (1994), pp. 55 & 170.
[602] Spiessens (1994), pp. 55-56, 124-126 & Moens (1995), p. 115.

Chapter 2.[603] The oldest cello in my research corpus dates from 1670 (MIM inv. no. 2856) and was made by Gaspar Borbon, who worked at the Brussels court.
According to Moens it was customary for musicians to make their own instruments up to as late as the French revolution (1789-1799). Laureys Van der Linden (flourished from before 1600-after 1653) is mentioned by him as the first known violin maker, violinist and lute player at the Brussels court. Van der Linden was the teacher of Peeter I Borbon, who, in his turn, was the grandfather of Gaspar Borbon. Five of his 5 cellos or bass violins are part of the collection of the MIM in Brussels (to be discussed in Section 3.4.2).[604]
Around 1650 instruments were not only made by musicians anymore, but professional lute makers also made instruments of the violin family. An example of this is the Antwerp lute maker Mathijs IV Hofmans (1622-before 1679), who was called "vilonsmaeker" in 1660.[605] Compared to the instruments made by the Borbons in Brussels and the Borlons in Antwerp, his instruments are of a superior quality.[606] He still made his instruments in more or less the same (archaic) way as the fiddlers did. Lute makers, however, most probably had a better artisanal training than fiddlers/violin makers. This could well be a reason that Hofmans' violins are much more refined and much better finished than the instruments made by fiddlers.[607]
During the first half of the 17th century the Borlon family (not to be confused with the Borbon family in Brussels) dominates the violin making in Antwerp. Father and son, both called Peeter, were violin makers and fiddlers. An inventory is made at the passing in 1669 of Peeter II. This inventory includes: "5 blocks of maple",[608] "2 work benches with tools to make instruments"[609] and "5 bass backs and wood to make the fronts of basses".[610] Peeter II's son Francis Borlon (ca. 1628-1683) was also violin maker and fiddler, and in 1658 he is called "violmaecker".[611] As far as I could establish, no cellos from their hands have survived.
Apart from the before-mentioned Mathijs Hofmans, also the violin maker and player of the "dobbelen bas" Laurent Joseph de Ligne (1715-1780) worked in Antwerp.[612] Two of his cellos are part of my research corpus. Whereas the quality of the violins and cellos in 17th-century Antwerp was very high, the quality of the instruments made there in the 18th century went downhill very quickly (due to the fact that in Antwerp there were no professional violin makers). The instruments made by de Ligne are among the better ones made in Antwerp, but compared to instruments made by his Brussels (professional) colleagues, they are of far less quality: De Ligne's instruments are a mixture of archaic and more classic elements.[613]
As already mentioned in Sub chapter 3.2 there was no direct Italian influence in the ZN. In the mid 17th century the first Italian violinists appear in the accounts of the court chapel in Brussels (quite possibly bringing along their Italian intruments).[614]
Whereas in Brussels between 1562 and ca. 1650 the instrument makers were not only a member of the guild of St Job (the guild of musicians), but also a member of the guild of the carpenters, in Antwerp the cittern and violin makers (who were often fiddlers as well) were mostly only a

[603] Moens (1995), p. 17.
[604] Moens (1994), pp. 55-56.
[605] Two of his violins are in the collection of the MIM and one is in the collection of the NMF. For characteristics of these archaic instruments, see Section 3.4.1.
[606] Moens (1995), p. 118.
[607] Moens (1993), p. 74 & Moens (1995), pp. 117-119 & Möller (1955), p. 141. There is one cello in my research corpus, which, according to www.tarisio.com (last accessed: 2015, July 6), is made by Matthias Hofmans III (according to Tarisio: 1594-1675; Moens (1993), p. 76 states: 1594-after 1665). The cello has been dated 1700. Regardless whether the cello was made by Matthias III or Mathijs IV, this date cannot be right. Von Lütgendorff ((1922) p. 222) mentions that there were two violin makers with the same name: one working 1660-1691, the other one 1700-1725. I have tried to research this further, unfortunately without result.
[608] "5 blokken esdoorn"
[609] "2 werkbanken met gereedschap om instrumenten te maken"
[610] "5 basruggen en hout voor basdaken"
[611] Moens (1995), p. 114.
[612] Spiessens (1992), p. 68.
[613] Moens (1993), pp. 74-75.
[614] Moens (1994), p. 58.

member of the guild of St Job and Maria Magdalena, which was the poorest guild in the city of Antwerp.[615]
Father and son Egidius (ca. 1660-after 1730) and Marcus (1694-1762) Snoeck were both violin makers at the Brussels court. Von Lütgendorff speaks highly of their instruments.[616] According to the MIM website, Marcus still built all his instruments in an archaic way.[617]
As said before, the quality of the instruments in Brussels in the 18th century was still high. This high quality was mainly reached by violin makers who had emigrated to Brussels. One of these violin makers was Benoît-Joseph Boussu. He was born in Fourmies in France (just a few kilometers from the border), where he had worked as a notary until his mid 40s. He then moved to the ZN where he worked as a violin maker for 12 years. He possibly even worked in Leiden or Amsterdam for a short while.[618] Three of his cellos are part of my research corpus.
The only ZN cello in the Selhof catalogue was made by Ambroise de Comble (1723-1796).[619] According to Von Lütgendorff de Comble was one of the most famous Flemish violin makers. Möller praises his beautifully carved scrolls, his refined purfling and the high quality varnish. His cellos are of excellent quality.[620]

3.4 Instrument collections in museums

As is shown in Sub chapter 3.1 there are just a few museums in the world which house cellos from the NN and ZN. From private collections I have been able to track down a few instruments as well. I am convinced, however, that more instruments must be held in these kind of collections and must also be played by professionals, but I have not been able to find more. Unfortunately I thus had to base my conclusions on this fairly small overall number of instruments (ZN: 40, NN: 32).
Other complications have also arisen. The oldest surviving instrument in my research corpus dates from 1670 (ZN: Gaspar Borbon, length and width not original anymore), whereas in Chapter 2 I have given evidence that instruments were made as early as during the second half of the 16th century.
Another issue is that the instruments which have indeed survived were made by only a handful of makers. As shown in Sub chapters 3.2 and 3.3 there is proof that there have been more violin makers in the NN and ZN, but either they did not make cellos or their instruments have not survived for one reason or another.
Of the instruments which have survived, only a handful has survived without too many alterations. The Egidius Snoeck basse de violon in the NMF collection, for example, still has its original length, but the width has been made smaller.[621] The 1702 basse de violon by Gaspar Borbon in the MIM is referred to by many modern violin makers as being in its original state.
Moens warns against drawing too fixed conclusions when only using surviving instruments because of the (changed) state they are in, and he even states that the instruments are not the most important source for revealing their own history. He combines the instruments with images. Combining these two sources gives more security.[622]
As I have only seen and handled the instruments in the collections in The Hague and Brussels myself, I will mainly discuss these instruments in the following Sections.

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[615] Moens (1994), pp. 55 & 170 & Moens (1995), pp. 112, 113. Aert Borlon (ca. 1540 - ca. 1620) was an exception to this; he, as a cittern maker ("syetermakere") and musician, was a member of the guild of St Luke. Information from: Moens (1995), p. 18. In modern Dutch 'citer' and 'cister' are both used for the English cittern. Giskes (1984) uses citer, on the RKD website citer and cister are used for the same instrument (last accessed: 2017, August 2).
[616] Von Lütgendorff (1922), p. 472.
[617] www.mim.be, last accessed: 2017, July 2.
[618] Verberkmoes (2013).
[619] Selhof (1759), p. 252.
[620] Möller (1955), p. 135.
[621] Confirmed to me by Frits Schutte of the NMF, email: 2015, September 14.
[622] Moens (1990), p. 102.

3.4.1 Instruments from the Noordelijke Nederlanden

In the beginning the instruments in the NN were built in an archaic form. As none of these archaic instruments from the NN has survived, one necessarily has to rely on images for more exact characteristics of these instruments. I will discuss these characteristics here, and I will point out the differences between the 17th and 18th-century instruments. On the following pages the characteristics will be shown.[623]

On these archaic instruments the neck was usually attached almost at a right angle (Figure 219). This practice was taken over by some professional makers and in the NN used until at least the first half of the 18th century. In the course of the 18th century the angle slowly changed, which resulted in a higher bridge and a higher tension of the strings. When this tension increased, and thus more pressure was executed on the front of the cello, the bass bar had to be made longer and thicker than it was before, in order to resist this higher tension.[624]

In the 17th century the neck was also a bit shorter and thicker than it was in the 18th century (Figure 219). For a player this thick neck made it difficult to go into higher positions. On the cello only the first position will have been possible. In the 18th century with the changing musical taste and the wish to play higher up the string, the neck had to be made thinner and longer.

The front and back of many archaic instruments had quite a high arching with pronounced corners (Figs. 225-227). Combined with this high arching one often finds double purfling (Figure 223).[625]

The fingerboard was made out of maple, as was the tailpiece, sometimes with inlay or with a veneer of hardwood (Figure 223). Until the mid 18th century, the fingerboard on the cello was no longer than one octave.

Because of the straight angle of the neck, the bridge was also lower (Figure 223). Lindeman states that the baroque bridge was between 82 and 85 mm high, whereas the modern bridge has a height of 90 to 92 mm.[626]

On many archaic string instruments, also on viols, one finds a peg box with thick sides. Close to the nut however, the sides become thinner, possibly to enable the outer strings to have more space (Figs. 220 & 229). The tuning pegs have a different shape than the later ones. The tops of the tuning pegs have a concave form, sometimes with a little button, and the pegs are usually placed close to the peg box (Figure 229).[627]

The inside of archaic instruments was also different from that of 18th-century instruments. The corners were glued together without corner blocks, which resulted in longer corners (visible on the outside, see Figs. 220, 221 & 223), because one needed enough surface to glue.[628]

In the NN the purfling in front and back was almost without any exception made of whalebone. In the ZN this was not the case, the reason for which has not been unravelled yet.[629]

At some point instrument makers will have changed the way they built violins and cellos and will have changed to a classical type of instrument. The experts differ from opinion whether Hendrick Jacobs and Pieter Rombouts already built classical instruments (and were ahead of their time) or whether they still used archaic elements.[630] There is not an unambiguous answer to this, because not all attributions are certain and for example peg boxes possibly have been cut down. There is good reading to state that during the second heyday in the NN, the Cuypers family built instruments with a more classical appearance.[631]

In Figs. 230 & 231 some of the 'new' charcateristics can be seen: a longer neck and fingerboard and an inclination of the neck. These images, however, are not as accurate and naturalistic as

[623] Many thanks to Fred Lindeman, who browsed through my database and helped me choose the best examples.
[624] Lindeman (2011), pp. 40-42.
[625] Moens (1990), p. 106.
[626] Lindeman (1999), p. 125 & Lindeman (2011), pp. 35-39.
[627] Raymaekers (1989), pp. 99-100.
[628] Lindeman (1999), p. 119
[629] Balfoort (1931), p. 23 & Lindeman (1999), pp. 128-129.
[630] The Rombouts cellos in Figs. 226 & 227 definitely show some archaic elements.
[631] Moens (1990), pp. 106-107.

many of the 17th century images. In Figs. 232 & 233 a cello by Johannes Theodorus Cuypers has been reproduced. The corners of this cello are not archaic anymore.

Figure 218 NN: Jacob Gerritsz. Cuyp: *Putto blowing bubbles standing beside a table with a vanitas still life* (ca. 1629).

Figure 219 Detail of Figure 218. Archaic elements: neck attached at right angle, thick and short neck.

Figure 220 NN: Roeloff van Zijl: O*rgan door of the Jacobichurch in Utrecht* (1608-1609). Archaic elements: long corners, short fingerboard, peg box with thick sides.

Figure 221 Hendrick Jacobs, violin (1650). Archaic element: long corners.[632]

Figure 222 NN: Pieter Claesz.: *Still life with musical instruments* (1623).

[632] http://tarisio.com/cozio-archive/property/?ID51156, last accessed: 2015, September 20.

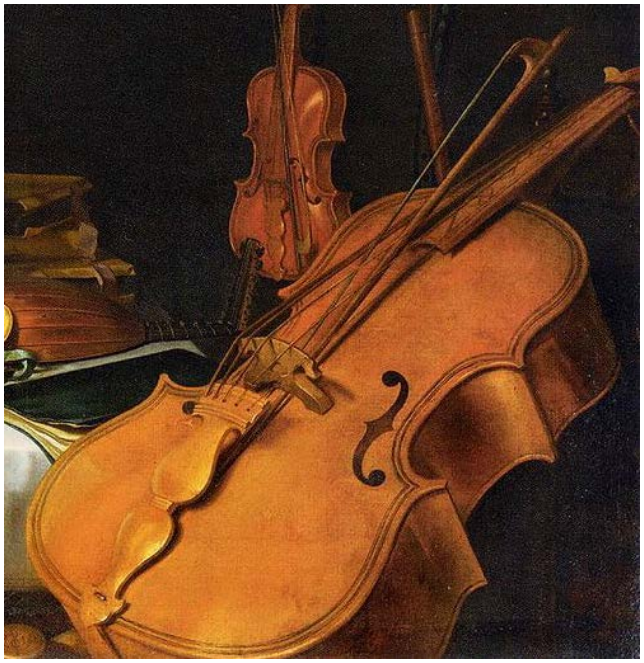

Figure 223 Detail of Figure 222. Archaic elements: long corners, low bridge, short maple fingerboard with inlay, double purfling.

Figure 224 NN: Pieter Cornelisz. van Slingelandt: *A music party* (ca. 1675).

Figure 225 Detail of Figure 224. Archaic elements: high arching (shown by reflection of the light on right upper corner of front of cello), long corners and short fingerboard.

Figure 226 Pieter Rombouts (undated). Archaic element: pronounced corners.[633]

Figure 227 Pieter Rombouts (1705). Archaic element: high arching.[634]

[633] GM: inv. no. MUZ-1941-0021.
[634] Private collection.

Figure 228 NN: Jan Miense Molenaer: *Portrait historié of an young man with vanitas symbols*.

Figure 229 Detail of Figure 228. Archaic elements: peg box with thick sides and concave tuning pegs. Also note the 5 tuning pegs.

Figure 230 NN: Anonymous: *A man playing cello with overhand grip, while the cello leans on a block of wood* (ca. 1780). Long neck and fingerboard.

Figure 231 NN: Franz Lippoldt: *Portrait of Philip Damiaan Ludovicus Ignatius Victorius Graaf van Hoensbroek* (1762). Longish fingerboard.

Figure 232 Johannes Cuypers (1763). The corners are not long anymore.[635]

Figure 233 Johannes Cuypers (1763). The back of the cello.

In Chapter 2 it is shown that in the NN, instruments on paintings and engravings in the first half of the 17th century were mainly large in size. Such instruments, however, I have not been able to track down.[636]

The oldest NN instruments in my research corpus date from around 1675 (Jacobs & Kleynman). Both cellos, however, have more or less 'modern' (meaning: standard in our days) proportions in length and width. The third cello from around the same time is in fact a very small cello (Boumeester). It is therefore difficult to say how large exactly instruments in the NN have been.

Although the surviving cellos from the ZN are not so much older, it is wise to consider the instruments from the ZN as well when reconstructing NN instruments. It is likely that, at least into the 2nd half of the 17th century, there were many similarities between the instruments from the ZN and the NN.[637] As will be shown in Section 3.4.2, the size of the earliest surviving instruments from the ZN is much larger than the ones from the NN. It seems that makers in the ZN kept on building in the old tradition much longer than in the NN.

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[635] www.tarisio.com, last accessed: 2015, July 6.

[636] Violin maker Lindeman also does not know of any large existing NN instrument. Conversation: 2015, September 18.

[637] Moens (1990), p. 105. There was much contact between Antwerp and Amsterdam. The Amsterdam violin maker Artus Burlon for example came from Antwerp. Family members (who stayed in Antwerp) were also musicians.

An attempt has been made to reconstruct the Amati "King" cello, which is considered the earliest still surviving example of a cello.[638] The reconstruction shows that the King cello was originally much larger.[639] The reconstruction is shown in Figure 234.

Figure 234 Reconstruction of the Amati 'King' cello (left: the instrument as it survived; middle: computer animation of streching the cello to fill in the missing parts of the painting on the back of the instrument; right: the reconstruction of what the instrument could have looked like). The length of the cello increased from 754mm to 782mm, an increase of less than 4%. The upper width increased from 340.5mm to 391mm (almost 14% increase), and the lower width increased from 439.5mm to 489mm (just over 11 % increase).[640]

As late as 1839, the cellist Bernhard Romberg writes the following about this practice in his *Violoncell Schule*:

> "The instrument, which I play on, is made in 1711 by Antonio Stradivari, and is of a small size (pattern). This small size does not mean that the instrument is too small; it only means that Stradivari also made instruments of a large size, which, however, are far too large for our modern way of playing. Apart from the instruments from Stradivari, the instruments from Nicolò Amati are the best, in sound as well as in shape, followed by instruments from Giuseppe Guarneri. His instruments however are too wide in size, therefore they are uncomfortable to play and must be cut down."[641]

When examining the Amati cello and its reconstruction closely it shows the same problem as Romberg mentions in his cello method about the instruments made by Guarneri. The original

[638] The original instrument is held by the National Music Museum of the University of South Dakota, inv. no. NMM 3351.

[639] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UlglpppukSw (last accessed: 2015. June 4) and www.nmmusd.org (last accessed: 2017, June 19). This Amati cello was cut down in 1801 by the Parisian luthier Sébastian Renault.

[640] Images and information taken from: http://infoluthier.free.fr/francois%20denis/resources/Reconstitution.pdf last accessed: 2015, June 4.

[641] Romberg (1839), p. 4. Original: "Das Instrument, welches ich spiele, ist von Antonius Straduarius [sic] vom Jahre 1711, klein Patron; dieses klein Patron will aber nicht sagen, dass es zu klein ist, sondern deutet nur an, dass Straduarius [sic] auch gross patron gemacht hat, die aber für unsere jetzige Spielart viel zu gross sind. Nächst den von Straduarius [sic] sind die von Nicolaus Amati die besten, sowohl im Ton als auch in der Form, dann kommen die von Joseph Guarnerius, die aber zu breit im Format sind, deshalb im Einsatz nicht bequem umspant werden können, und zerschnitten werden müssen."

Amati cello primarily was much wider,[642] which would have made it, as Romberg points out, uncomfortable to play. This might have been the reason to make the Amati cello smaller. An increase in length of a few centimeters does not make as much difference in playing as does the increase in width.
A NN example of decreasing the width of a cello is the Rombouts cello in the collection of the NMF (see Figure 235). On this cello the distance between the upper eyes of the f-holes is only 7.5 cm, whereas something between 9 and 10 cm is more common for an instrument of its length.

Figure 235 Pieter Rombouts: cello (ca. 1690).[643]

Figure 236 Pieter Rombouts: cello (1722).[644]

A cello with its original dimensions is reproduced in Figure 236. It is clear that this Rombouts cello is much wider than the one from the NMF. Rombouts is known for his wide cellos, but for many cellists this is not very comfortable, and some cellos have therefore been cut down in size.[645] Unfortunately I could not find this instrument available for measurement.
The trend of instruments getting smaller which can be so clearly seen elsewhere in Europe, is not so obvious in the NN, simply because the really early instruments are missing. In Figure 237 the length of the still existing NN instruments is shown, of which some have probably been cut down in size. The only instrument of which it is very evident that it has been cut down in length was made by Gaspar Borbon in 1670 in the ZN.
As will be shown in Section 3.4.2, in the ZN the length of the cello will decrease by about 5 cm between 1670 and 1760. In the NN it is not so extreme.

[642] Roland Houël and François Denis were able to make this reconstruction by reconstructing the painting on the back of the cello. Part of the letter K is missing and the figure of Justice is clearly missing her waist and left arm.
[643] Rombouts, P. (ca. 1690). http://www.muziekinstrumentenfonds.nl/289/collectie/instrumenten/instrument/?id=122, last accessed: 2015, September 20.
[644] Rombouts, P. (1722). Illustration from: Möller (1955), p. 97.
[645] Lindeman: 2015, September 18, & Romberg (1839), p. 4.

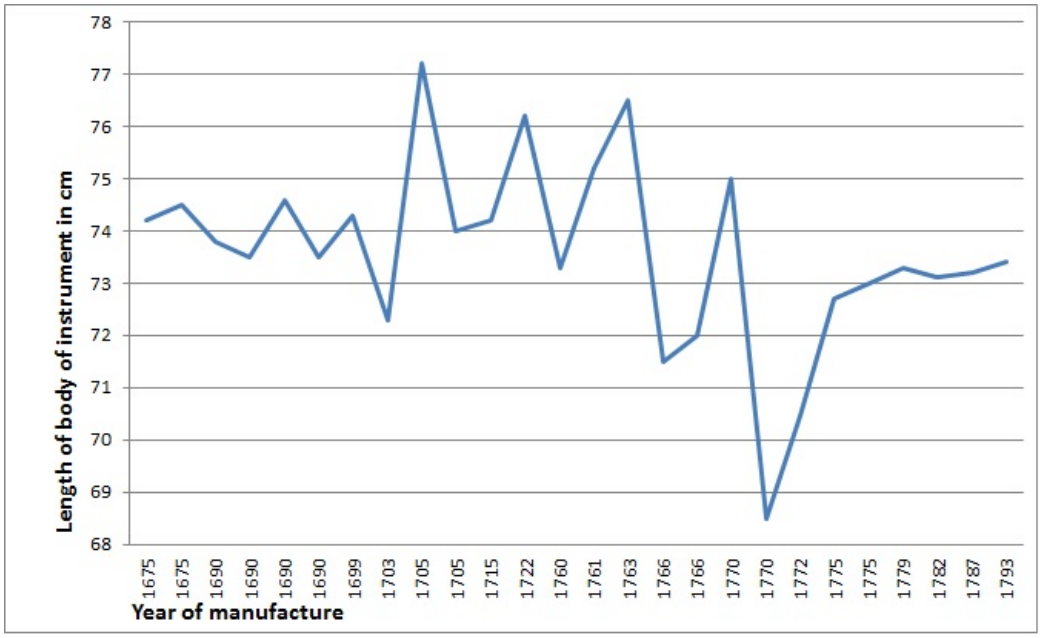

Figure 237 The length of the body of dated NN cellos in the GM and other collections.[646]

Of the Amsterdam-based violin maker Hendrick Jacobs early cellos are not known. There are only early violins known made by Jacobs. He worked together with his stepson Pieter Rombouts. From around 1685 the presence of Rombouts in Jacobs' workshop becomes visible in Jacobs' cellos. First of all, the purfling, always made of whale bone, becomes wider, which is very typical for Rombouts (Figs. 238 & 239).[647]

Figure 238 Hendrick Jacobs (1675-1705).[648]

Figure 239 Pieter Rombouts (1715).[649]

Secondly, the f-holes get more and more the Rombouts' shape (Figs. 240-244). The first f-hole comes from a violin dated 1650. This f-hole has the Jacobs' shape. Over time, the pieces of wood in the eyes of the f-holes get more and more the shape of a beak of a bird.[650]

[646] A few instruments have not been included in this diagram: 2 instruments without any measurements (Rombouts (1722) & Cuypers (1770)) and the 1676 Bouwmeester piccolo cello. The last one has been left out because it will give a distorted picture of the size of the normal cello of that period. Also 3 undated instruments (2x Rombouts & 1x Lefèbvre), even though they have measurements, have been left out.
[647] Lindeman: 2015, September 18.
[648] GM: inv. no. MUZ-1938-0026.
[649] http://tarisio.com/cozio-archive/property/?ID=71972, last accessed: 2015, September 20.
[650] Lindeman: 2015, September 18.

Violin

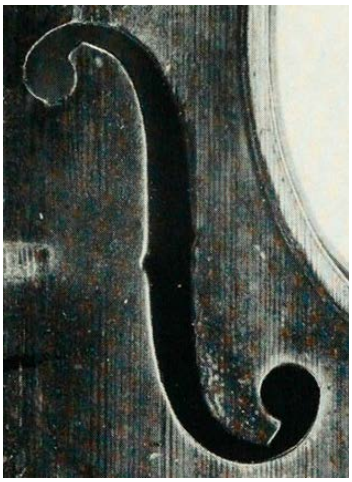

Figure 240 Hendrick Jacobs (1650).[651]

Cellos

Figure 241 Hendrick Jacobs (1675-1705).[652]

Figure 242 Hendrick Jacobs (ca. 1690).[653]

Figure 243 Hendrick Jacobs (1705).[654]

Figure 244 Pieter Rombouts (1690).[655]

In Chapter 2 it was shown that some cellos had a differently shaped scroll. On one of the Rombouts' cellos a scroll with a satyr's head has been found (see Figs. 245-247). Möller writes about these scrolls: "Some of his cellos' heads are carved in the shape of lions' or satyrs' heads. Those cellos are usually high-arched and not always as finely finished as those which have the usual heads."[656] The body which belongs to the scroll reproduced below is shown in Figure 226. The way the light falls on the back of the cello shows that this cello is indeed highly arched.

[651] Jacobs violin. http://tarisio.com/cozio-archive/property/?ID51156, last accessed: 2015, September 20.
[652] GM: inv. no. MUZ-1938-0026
[653] Collection NMF
[654] GM: inv. no. MUZ-1962-0008
[655] Collection NMF
[656] Möller (1955), p. 149.

Figure 245 Pieter Rombouts (undated). The scroll with a head of a satyr.

Figure 246 The sides….

Figure 247 …. and back of the peg box are also beautifully carved.

3.4.2 Instruments from the Zuidelijke Nederlanden

The Muziekinstrumentenmuseum in Brussels holds 28 instruments dating from 1670 until at least 1762. A few of these instruments have no label inside and have therefore been dated very loosely. According to the MIM, all these instruments originated in the ZN.
I have seen and measured all these instruments (see for measurements Appendix 4; the instruments without label and without exact date of manufacture have been positioned at the bottom of the Appendix).
Many of the instruments are in quite a bad condition with many cracks and holes. Some of these instruments have at some point been repaired but this has been done in a very rough way.
It is difficult to be absolutely certain if some instruments have been cut down or have been changed in any other way.
Quite a few instruments showed signs that the angle of the fingerboard has been changed to create more tension on the strings. This was either done by placing a small wedge between the neck and fingerboard (see Figure 248) or by putting on a new fingerboard with the wedge built in.

Figure 248 Neck and fingerboard of a cello made by Gaspar Borbon (1671). A small wedge has been placed between the neck and fingerboard to change the angle of the fingerboard.[657]

Several instruments do not have their original neck anymore; the scroll and peg box, however, have mostly been kept and they were put on a new neck.
One instrument (Gaspar Borbon 1670) was very clearly cut down in size, which is shown in Figs. 249 & 250.
At some point the original f-holes have been filled in with wood and new ones were cut out at a different spot. The original holes were larger than the present ones and also placed a little bit lower.
In the bottom left corner also traces of the original corner can still be seen.

[657] Collection MIM: inv. no. 2857.

Figure 249 Gasper Borbon (1670). The original f-holes were filled in and new holes were made. The original holes were about 13.6 cm in height, now they are around 13.15 cm.

Figure 250 Gaspar Borbon (1670). Left corner of the front of the cello. The corner and the filler of the original f-hole are clearly made from a different piece of wood than the rest of the instrument. [658]

The whole body of the instrument with original f-holes and modern f-holes is shown in Figs. 251 & 252. The original f-holes were clearly placed lower, which is an indication that at least the bottom part of the body was (much) larger. Two other Borbon instruments manufactured in the same period are 2.5-3 cm longer than the Borbon 1670 cello; a Borbon instrument of 1702 is even 4.5 cm longer. It can be assumed that the 1670 instrument used to be longer and wider too.

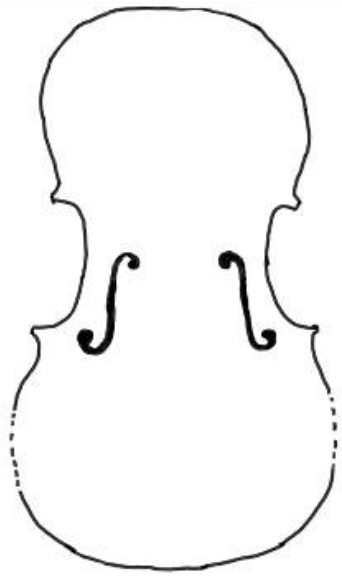

Figure 251 The outlines and f-holes of the Borbon 1670 instrument. [659]

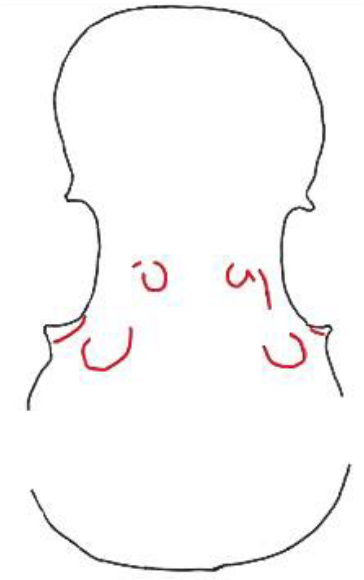

Figure 252 The outlines of the present instrument and the traces (in red) of the original f-holes and corners.

[658] Collection MIM: inv. no. 2856.

[659] Part of the corner is drawn with dotted lines. The instrument is badly damaged at those spots.

What stands out in this instrument is the vertical crack above the right f-hole. This is situated at a spot where it normally would not be. In a reconstruction made of the original f-hole (Figure 253), this crack is situated at more or less the expected spot.[660] The reconstructed f-hole looks quite similar in shape to the f-holes in other Borbon cellos, specially the one from 1702 (Figure 254), which is said to be still fully original.[661] The f-holes all have large eyes at top and bottom, much larger compared to f-holes of other makers. The sound holes stand upright, which, together with the large eyes, is typical of Borbon instruments.[662]

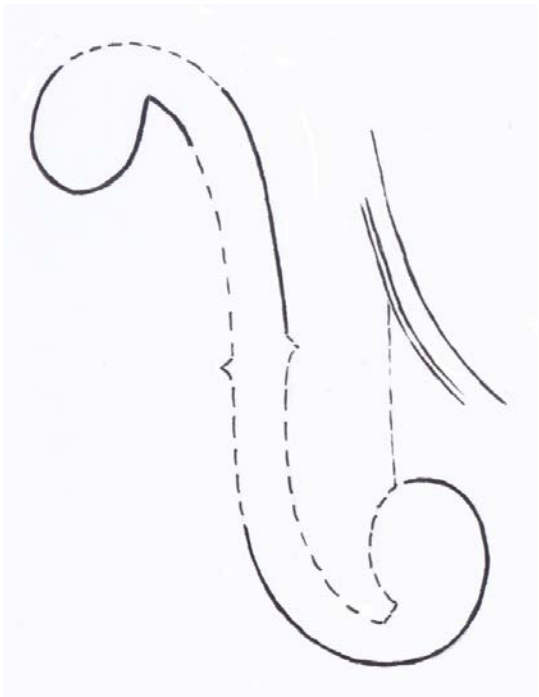

Figure 253 The reconstruction of the right f-hole of the 1670 Borbon cello. The traces of the original f-hole still present are drawn in black, the reconstructed outlines are drawn with dotted lines.[663]

Figure 254 The right f-hole of the 1702 Borbon cello.

These f-holes used to be depicted in paintings and drawings from the ZN as well as the NN, even into the 18th century (Figs. 255-257).

[660] Part of the corner is drawn with dotted lines. The instrument is badly damaged at those spots.
s the top of the f-hole towards the purfling and the side of the instrument.

[661] Communicated to me by Jan Strick, violin maker in Brussels: 2015, August 10. According to the website of the MIM (last accessed: 2017, July 4) this cello is dated 1692, but the label in the instrument clearly reads 1702.

[662] Moens (1994), p. 57 & Moens (2007), p. 163.

[663] Reconstruction kindly made for me by Marietta Schwarz.

Figure 255 NN: Roeloff van Zijl: *Organ door of the Jacobi-church in Utrecht* (1608-1609).

Figure 256 NN: Jan Miense Molenaer: *Portrait historié of an young man with vanitas symbols*.

Figure 257 ZN: Gillis van Tilborgh: *Portrait of a family in a 'Kunstkammer'* (ca. 1650-1675).

Figure 258 ZN: Jan Josef Horemans I: *Young man playing the cello in a landscape with classical statue and ruins*.

As was already documented in Section 3.4.1, in the ZN instruments decreased in length during the 18th century. This trend is shown in Figure 259.

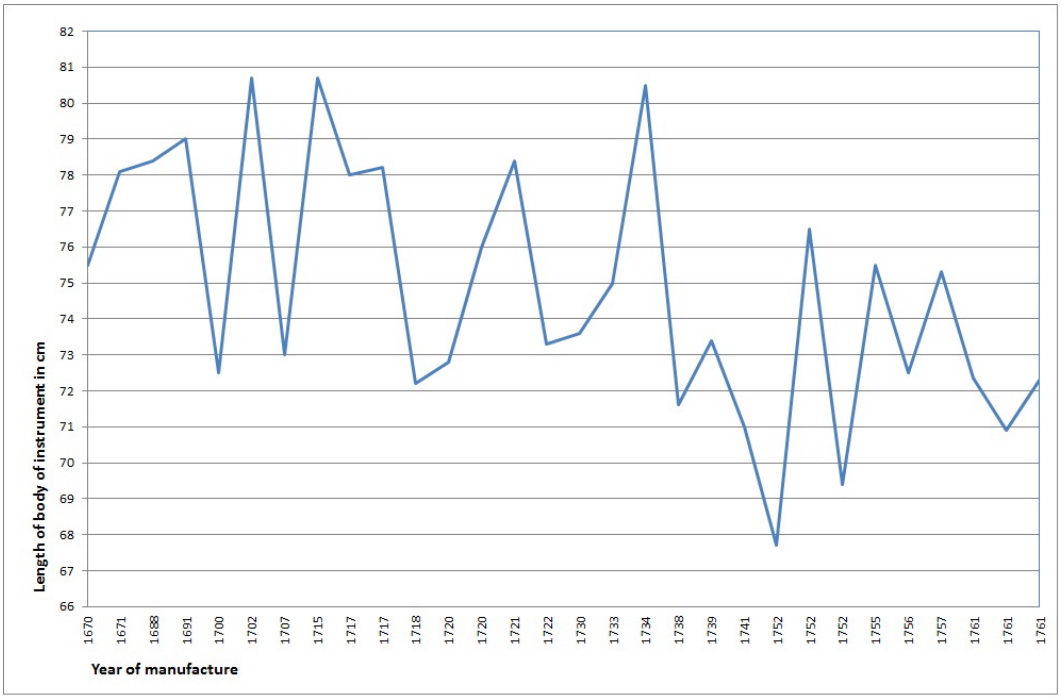

Figure 259 The length of the body of dated ZN cellos in the MIM and other collections.[664]

It is natural that every instrument is (slightly) different in size, even within a short time span and even with different instruments from the same maker, but the overall trend is that in the ZN, in almost a century, the instruments became shorter by at least 5 cm.
This trend can also be seen in the width (top, middle, bottom, see Figure 260). Over a century the average width has decreased with at least 2.5 cm if not more for some instruments.

[664] In this diagram several dated cellos made by Ambroise de Comble (1745, 1751, 1755, 1757 & 1782) have been left out, because I only had the measurements for the entire cello and not for the body. Also 6 undated or very roughly dated instruments have been left out (Snoeck (before 1762), Willems, Brussels bass violin, an instrument from Flanders, Marcus Snoeck, de Comble).

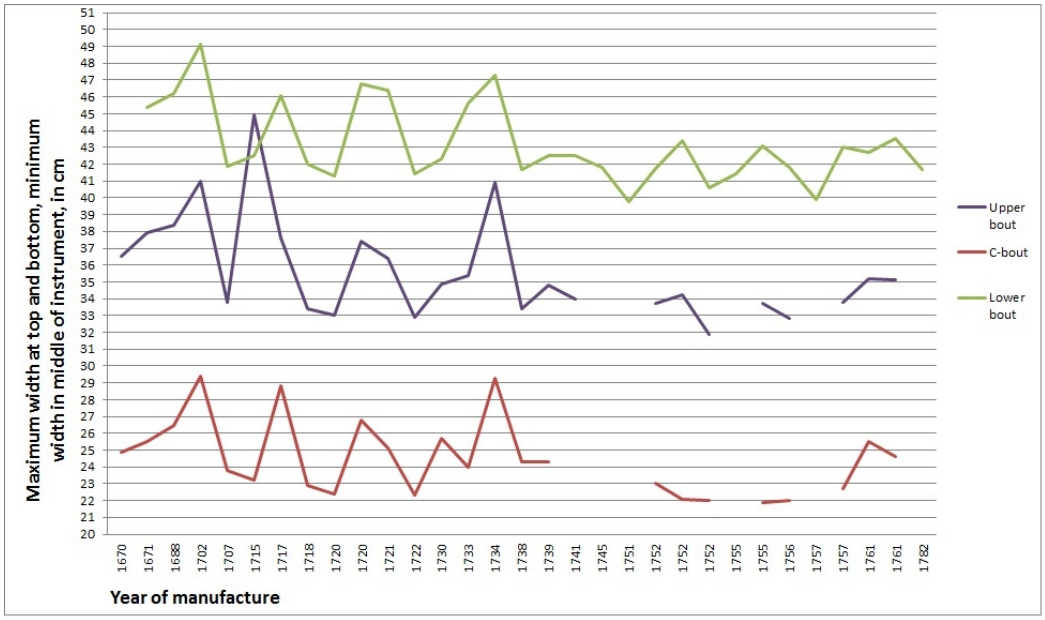

Figure 260 Width of dated ZN cellos in the MIM and other collections.[665]

What stands out is that until around 1735 the extremes in width are far apart, whereas from 1735 there is not that much difference between the instruments anymore.
Most instruments have normal purfling, except for three: two by Etienne Simonet (1730 & 1739; see Figs. 261 & 262) and a very heavy and roughly built anonymous instrument from Flanders, dated between 1733 and 1755. On all three instruments the 'purfling' is painted on the instrument.

Figure 261 "fait par Etienne Simonet amons 1730"[666]

[665] In this diagram several dated instruments have been left out (Borbon (1691), Hofmans (1700), Borbon (1717), de Comble (1761)), because I did not have the measurements for the bouts. The holes in all three diagrams are the result of missing measurements for 1 or 2 of the bouts. The undated or roughly dated instruments mentioned in footnote 664 have been left out here as well.
[666] amons = à Mons = in Bergen. Collection MIM: inv. no. 2866.

Figure 262 "Etienne Simonet a mons 1739"[667]

An instrument by Hendrick Willems (1717) is fitted for 5 strings. This is interesting, because, as was shown in Section 2.2.6, this was not as common in the ZN as it was in the NN, and in the 18th century it was not common at all.
As was discussed in Section 3.4.1 one of the archaic elements is a peg box with thick sides, which diminish in thickness towards the nut. A few images were shown, but none of the NN instruments showed such a peg box. The Willems' cello mentioned above slightly shows this archaic element (see Figure 263).

Figure 263 Hendrick Willems (1717). Archaic element: peg box with diminishing thickness towards nut.[668]

[667] Collection MIM: inv. no. 3994.01.
[668] Collection MIM: inv. no. 2876.

Another instrument (attributed to Willems, without label) has 5 holes in the peg box, but only 4 markings on the nut and bridge; nut and bridge however could have been added at a later date. Max Möller considers Willems as one of the outstanding violin-makers of the Belgian School, and praises his long corners, beautiful purfling and excellent varnish.[669]
Eight of the instruments in the MIM have their front and/or back made out of more than 2 pieces of wood (Figs. 264 & 265). This practice is also described by Moens. He mentions that the front and back of the larger instruments were made out of 5 pieces of spruce at the most.[670]

Figure 264 Gaspar Borbon (1702). Front made out of 4 separate pieces of wood.[671]

Figure 265 Egidius/Marcus Snoeck (1761). Back made out of 4 separate pieces of wood .[672]

This practice is not only exclusive of the ZN, in Italy this was done as well. It was rather a practical solution for the unavailability of the right size of wood. The makers in the ZN were censorious of the wood they used. They would rather use four pieces of good wood, than two of a wood of a lesser quality wood.[673]
Moens also mentions that sometimes even the sides of instruments were made out of three strips of wood.[674] As far as I could establish, the cellos in my research corpus do not have such sides. Two paintings by David Teniers II do indeed show this practice.[675] The instruments in these paintings, however, are of a mixed shape; possibly these sides are part of the viol shape?
As discussed in Chapter 2 I have found a few images showing a cello with a different scroll (1x 16th C., 4x 17th C. & 4x 18th C.).

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[669] Möller (1955), p. 153. The corners on the front of the Willems 1717 instrument have unfortunately all been replaced by new wood.
[670] Moens (2007), p. 163.
[671] Borbon, G. (1702), MIM: 2879
[672] Snoeck, E./M. (1761), MIM: 2872
[673] Lindeman: 2015, September 18.
[674] Moens (1994), p. 57. In his article Moens shows a viola made in the ZN between 1640 and 1660, with the sides consisting of three strips of wood.
[675] KWN 3225 & KWN 250738.

In the MIM there is one instrument which has a scroll shaped like a human head (Figure 266).

Figure 266 Gaspar Borbon (1671).[676]

Figure 267 ZN: Theodor Boeyermans: *Allegory of the City of Antwerp* (ca. 1660).

Several instruments[677] in the MIM have carving on the peg box (as does the NN Rombouts' peg box reproduced in Figure 245). This is so subtle that it is difficult to establish whether the cellos represented in images have this as well. I have been able to find one (Figure 267). This is clearly the same kind of carving as on the Borbon 1671 cello (Figure 266).

Two remarks on instruments by Ambroise de Comble. In the Oxford Music Online Jaak Liivoja-Lorius writes that the backs of the De Comble's peg boxes often are flat.[678] As a matter of fact two of the instruments in my research corpus have such flat backs (Figure 268).
Möller states, when speaking of De Comble's instruments, that "the eye is immediately struck by the very low position of his sound-holes".[679] The 1761 cello in my research corpus has indeed very low sound-holes (Figure 269).

[676] Collection MIM: inv. no. 2857.
[677] Borbon 1671, Borbon 1702, bass violin 1701-1750, Snoeck 1734, Steveny 1738.
[678] www.oxfordmusiconline.com, last accessed: 2017, July 2.
[679] Möller (1955), p. 135.

Figure 268 Ambroise de Comble (1752). Note the flat back of the scroll.[680]

Figure 269 Ambroise de Comble (1761). Note the placing of the sound holes.[681]

On the Boussu instruments the violin maker Geerten Verberkmoes states that his scrolls have "an additional half turn."[682] And Möller states that "[…] the scrolls are strongly hollowed out along the sides."[683] The scrolls in Figs. 270 & 271 show both aspects beautifully.

Figure 270 Benoît-Joseph Boussu (1752).[684]

Figure 271 Benoît-Joseph Boussu (1757).[685]

[680] Private collection.
[681] www.tarisio.com, last accessed: 2015, July 6.
[682] Verberkmoes (2013), p. 118.
[683] Möller (1955), p. 135.
[684] Collection MIM: inv. no. 2863.
[685] Collection MIM: inv. no. 1372.