### Appendix 2: A note on the research of Eric Paul[[1]](#footnote-1)

For most Vivaldi scholars of recent decades, information reported second-hand from the research of Eric Paul can be difficult to reconcile with the current family portrait that emerges from more recent discoveries. A historian, Paul was the first person to report two basic facts that still stand: Vivaldi was baptized in 1678 (not 1675, as had previously been claimed) and his family was from Brescia. Much of the rest is insupportable. Yet a glance at his aims shows they were admirable.

The post-war period brought forth many efforts to revive the music of Vivaldi. Several of these initiatives were in Belgium. A Cercle Vivaldi sponsored several performances of music by Vivaldi based on original sources. The most ambitious performances were mounted in Brussels in 1958 in conjunction with the Exposition Universelle of that year. Motivated by the corrected year of birth, the 1962-63 season recognized what was now marked as the 250th anniversary of the composer’s birth. One stated objective was to promote professional performances of the composer’s most admired works. These festivities concluded with a day dedicated to “Vivaldi a Sanct Marc” (16 December 1963).[[2]](#footnote-2) Among the scholars, performers, and collectors who attended were Charles Van den Borren, Marc Pincherle, Angelo Ephrikian, Antonio Fanna, Walter Kolneder, Giovanni Pirelli, and Albert Vander Linden.

It was at this gathering that the little-known British historian Eric Paul announced his discovery (1962) of a baptismal record for Vivaldi’s baptism (5 May 1678) in the Venetian church of San Giovanni in Bragora.[[3]](#footnote-3) Paul’s interests seemed explorative, for he followed leads on many composers who lived in Italy prior to the advent of Haydn and Mozart. In 1960 he had started making visits to archives.[[4]](#footnote-4)

It was Walter Kolneder’s idea to establish a Centre de Documentation to bring together miscellaneous findings on Vivaldi from diverse sources. His idea was endorsed by Antonio Fanna, founder and long-time head of the Istituto Italiano Antonio Vivaldi at the Fondazaione Giorgio Cini, Venice. Marc Pincherle accepted the presidency. A (Belgian) royal charter was granted in 1965. The following year a Semaine Vivaldi formed part of the Bruges Festival.[[5]](#footnote-5)

In 1964 the group issued a summary of Paul’s 1963 talk in a publication called *Vivaldiana*. It bore the imprint of the newly founded Centre International de Documentation Antonio Vivaldi. The transcript was necessary because in the few months since the December gathering Eric Paul had died. It appears, in fact, that he did not give the 1963 talk in person but instead sent draft material.

Paul was correct in holding that the Vivaldi family came from Brescia. Other “findings” from the Brussels *Nachlass* support the adage that a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing. Paul’s suggested family tree is little more than a sketch. He said that Agostino I was employed in a bakery, but here he was hypothesizing on the basis of the Vivaldis’ long-time residence on the Calle de’ Forni. Paul reported that Giovanni Battista Vivaldi was eleven when his family moved to Venice, but in fact he was nine. Paul’s account of the numbers of children in the families of Agostino I and subsequent generations are substantially incomplete. Paul was correct in establishing that Giovanni Battista became first a barber [or at least played music in a barber shop], then a violinist. He was incorrect in claiming that the Iseppo Vivaldi, who was banished by Venice in 1729, was unrelated to the composer. Iseppo was one of Gio. Battista’s ten children.

Paul’s most regrettable claim is that Agostino I and Margherita were married in 1642,[[6]](#footnote-6) when in actuality they had several children by that year and could well have wed in 1632. This lapse suggests that Paul’s candidate was a different Agostino Vivaldi (*c*1621-1666), who married another Margherita in 1642 but could not possibly have been the father of children cited above who were born in the 1630s.

1. We are indebted to Marie Cornaz of the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, for locating the elusive remnants of Paul’s research. They consist mainly of an anonymous three-page report of the talk he gave in December 1963. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In the interest of honoring “historical precedent”, the organizers were pleased to offer all the numbers on the program with two organs. They seemed not to realize that none of Vivaldi sacred vocal music or his concertos Opp. 3 and 4 were ever performed in the ducal basilica. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Gastone Vio (“Antonio Vivaldi e i Vivaldi,” *Informazione e studi vivaldiani*, 4 (1983), pp. 82ff) praised Paul’s report on Vivaldi’s baptism, while Vivaldi bibliographer Peter Ryom, insisted in “La Situation actuelle de la musicologie vivaldienne,” *Acta Musicologica*, 53/1 (Jan.-Jun. 1981), 120-144, that what Paul reported was already available in other sources. Vivaldi’s date of birth was 4 March. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The major obstacle to evaluating what Paul learned is that he did not write up an account of his findings. He may have regarded his work as incomplete. Several people who heard his talk wrote individual accounts that diverge somewhat. Some were circulated privately, in typescript. According to verbal reports, his sources were jotted down in a small notebook and, by current standards, were not sufficiently complete to support third-party confirmation. Some of Paul’s misinformation may have come from a cursory look at the alphabetical scheme in Brescia’s Archivio Storico Comunale, which may have been in the Biblioteca Queriniana when he visited Brescia. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Vivaldiana*, p. 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Op. cit., pedigree chart, p. 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)