

The building site of Turin's citadel

by Silvia Bertelli

Tutor: Vera Comoli Mandracci

Co-tutor: Vilma Fasoli

Contributor: General Guido Amoretti

The site of Turin's Citadel: the title itself clearly explains the path that I followed for my thesis.

As a matter of fact, my analysis starts from the very beginning of the works in 1564, and comes up to 1572, taking into exam the most intensive period, when the defence system of the Citadel was finished by means of countermine tunnels.

All what comes before and after this lapse of time is an outline that better defines the central and historical role of the Citadel with respect to the town, an interpretation of the place both as a building and a symbol.

In fact, it represents the building that conditioned the successive development of Turin as well as the Savoy's power on the international scene over the 16th and 17th centuries.

The starting date is 1559 with the Treaty of Cateau Cambresis up to 1630, year of Charles Emanuel I's passing away.

Emanuel Filiberto, through a centralising policy, planned a strategic defence of the whole territory obtained precisely thanks to the Treaty of Cateau Cambresis, and aimed at building a true town-capital, handing on to his son the pursuit of the goal. My research focused on the original documents of the time: records, manuscripts and drawings, while the bibliography allowed for a deeper understanding of the period and its most salient events.

Turin's State Archive most important document on the site of the Citadel is *Conti, fabbriche e fortificazioni* (Accounts, buildings and fortifications), articles 178, 203, 207. Absolutely crucial for an outline reconstruction are *Contratti, Patenti Piemonte, Materie militari, Protocolli di notai ducali, Paesi per A e per B, Lettere particolari, Biblioteca antica, Carte topografiche per A e per B, Carte topografiche segrete*; then, in Turin's Historic Archive we also find *Carte sciolte, Collezione Simenon* and *Ordinati*.

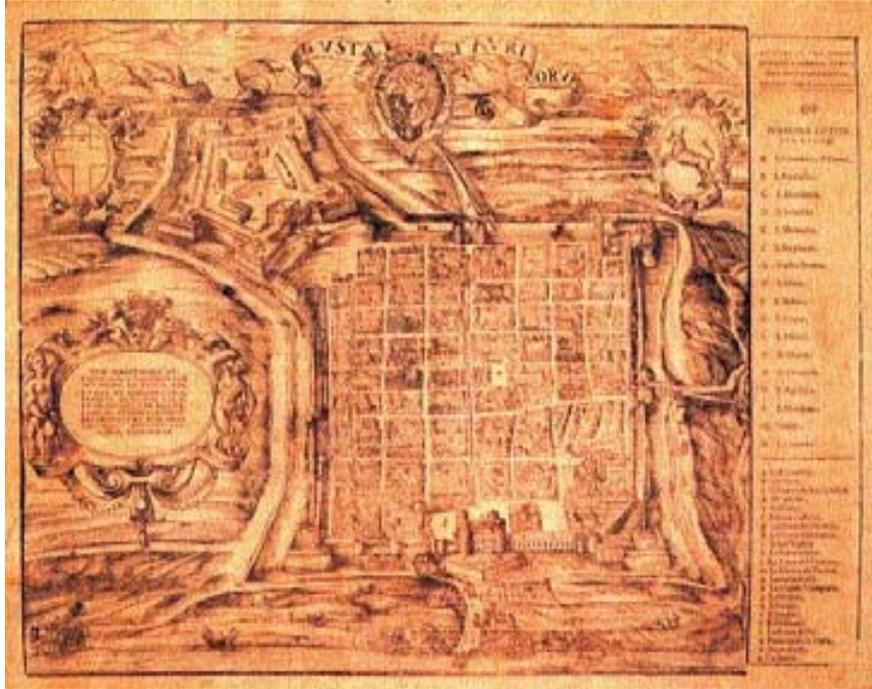
Most drawings were accompanied by scale maps, in Piedmontese or "lineal" TRABUCCHI; however, they did not bear the date and author's name, and especially for those belonging to the 16th century it was accepted the dating suggested for by scholars.

A study of archive records and iconography provided an in-depth analysis of the site, tracking the Citadel's different building phases going from 1564 to 1630, the handiwork and actions taken during this period.

The construction of Turin's Citadel "head and centre of this delightful and fertile state", was one of the first interventions by the Duke, who entrusted it to architect Francesco Paciotto from Urbino (1521-1591).

Planned all over again in 1564, Turin's pentagonal Citadel was to be a fundamental means of keeping the Duchy; planned with great care, it fosters a regular geometric shape and time endurance of its wall structure.

Paciotto, in less than two years, ended up the town wall, the counterscarp with the glacis (SPALTO), the moat, the donjon (keep- MASTIO), the casemate, the shaft, the warehouse, and the barracks. Together with his brother Orazio, he ended up the building phases by joining the city with the Citadel (picture 1) through the demolition of San Pietro ramparts and the construction of two tenails.



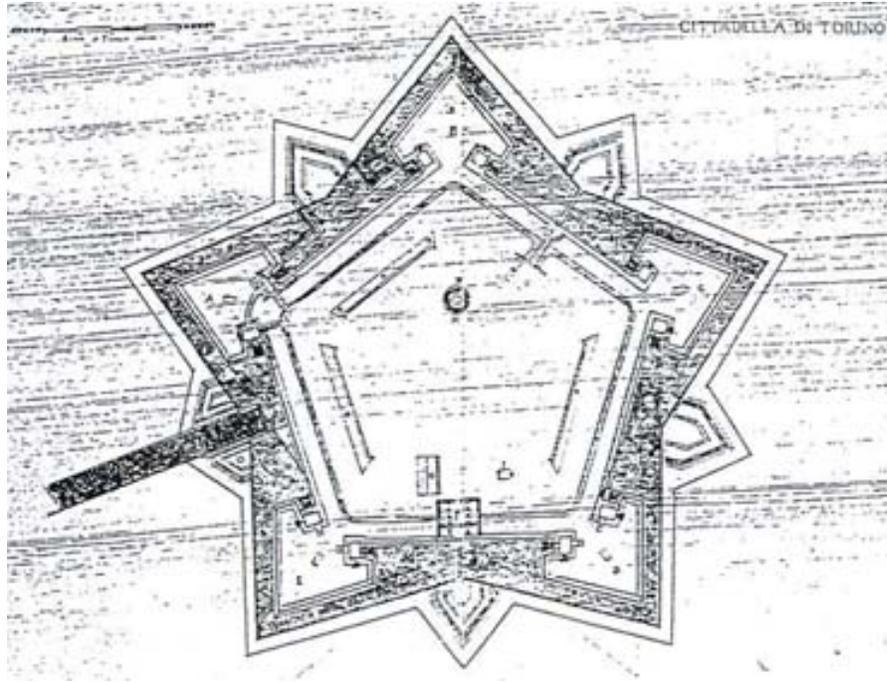
Around 1570 the work was taken over by Ferrante Vitelli, who finished the fortress defence system.

Further on new roles were added in the construction phase: architects or military engineers, measurers, supervisors and other professionals complete the hierarchic structure of this "city into the city".

Plans, contract works and the choice of building materials further define the features of both site and building.

At this stage we come to the description of the fortress, thanks to coeval-contemporary records as well as to recent archaeological findings.

Turin's Citadel is defined as a model and symbol in the writings by Venetian ambassadors at the Savoy Court and by military engineers such as Gabriele Busca and Carlo Morello.



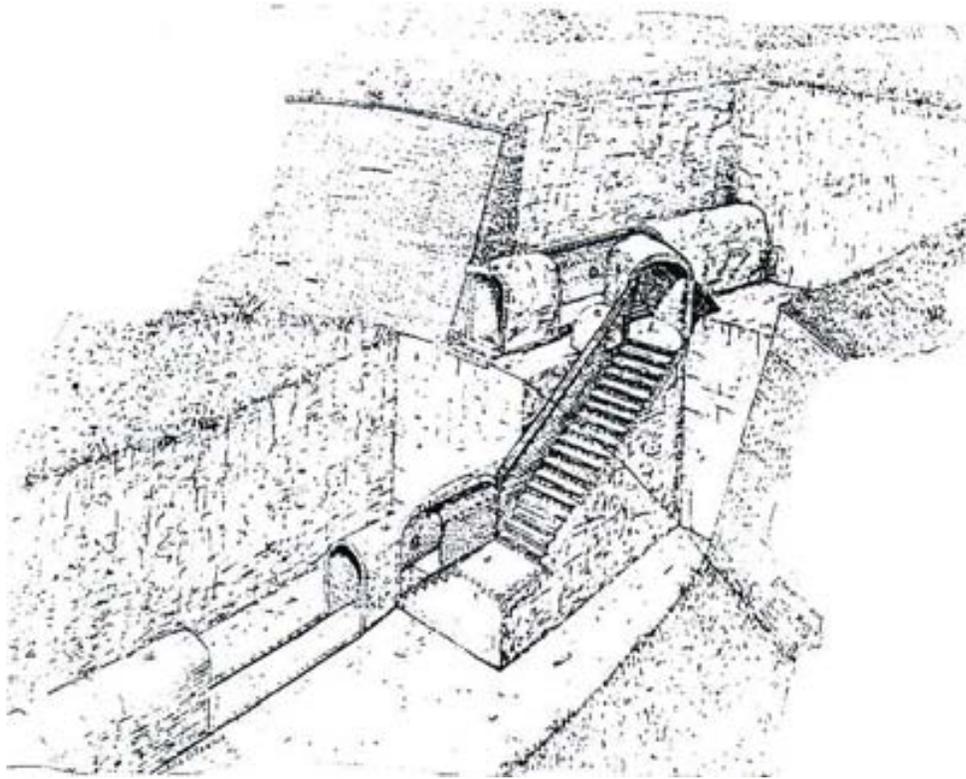
The rule of Emanuel Filiberto was particularly centred on the defence of the reconquered State and the construction of the Citadel inside the capital. During the Duchy of Carlo Emanuele I, a 50-year rule, the Savoy's policy took on more shades and, unfortunately, more wars.

The works were mainly restoration and widening of the fortifications. Practically no change was made with respect to the original layout.

The fortress faced three important sieges: in 1640, 1706 and 1799. Also Napoleon Bonaparte spared it from demolition; yet, in the mid-19th century, it had to make room for some civil and military buildings.

In fact, the destruction of the Citadel was ordained in 1852 but, starting from 1893, thanks to the studies carried out by engineer Riccardo Brayda, the donjon was kept, though already deprived of some parts. After restoration, this became the seat of the National Museum of Artillery. The cistern was buried by the construction of the school building "E. Ricardi di Netro" in 1899.

The Citadel's underground countermine tunnels (almost 14 kilometres) are still lying underneath present Turin, though at Pietro Micca Museum it is now possible to admire some 1,500 metre of tunnels, and the Mezzaluna di Soccorso branch (picture 3).



The graphic reconstruction of the Citadel gives an idea of the fortress location with respect to modern Turin.

The image was taken from archive records, as well as drawings and plans like those by Morello, early 19th-century territorial surveys by Mariano Borgatti, Riccardo Brayda, colonel Pietro Magni, still drawn on by general Guido Amoretti.

Pictures show the Citadel's still existing buildings: the donjon, the big cistern, the "pastiss" and the countermine tunnels.

For further information, e-mail: TO9996@biblioteche.reteunitaria.piemonte.it