



**Politecnica
di Torino**

Honors Thesis

Master's degree Architecture for Heritage

Abstract

**The ephemeral building site in the Duchy of Savoy in the mid-seventeenth century.
The marriage of Margherita Violante and Ranuccio Farnese**

Tutor

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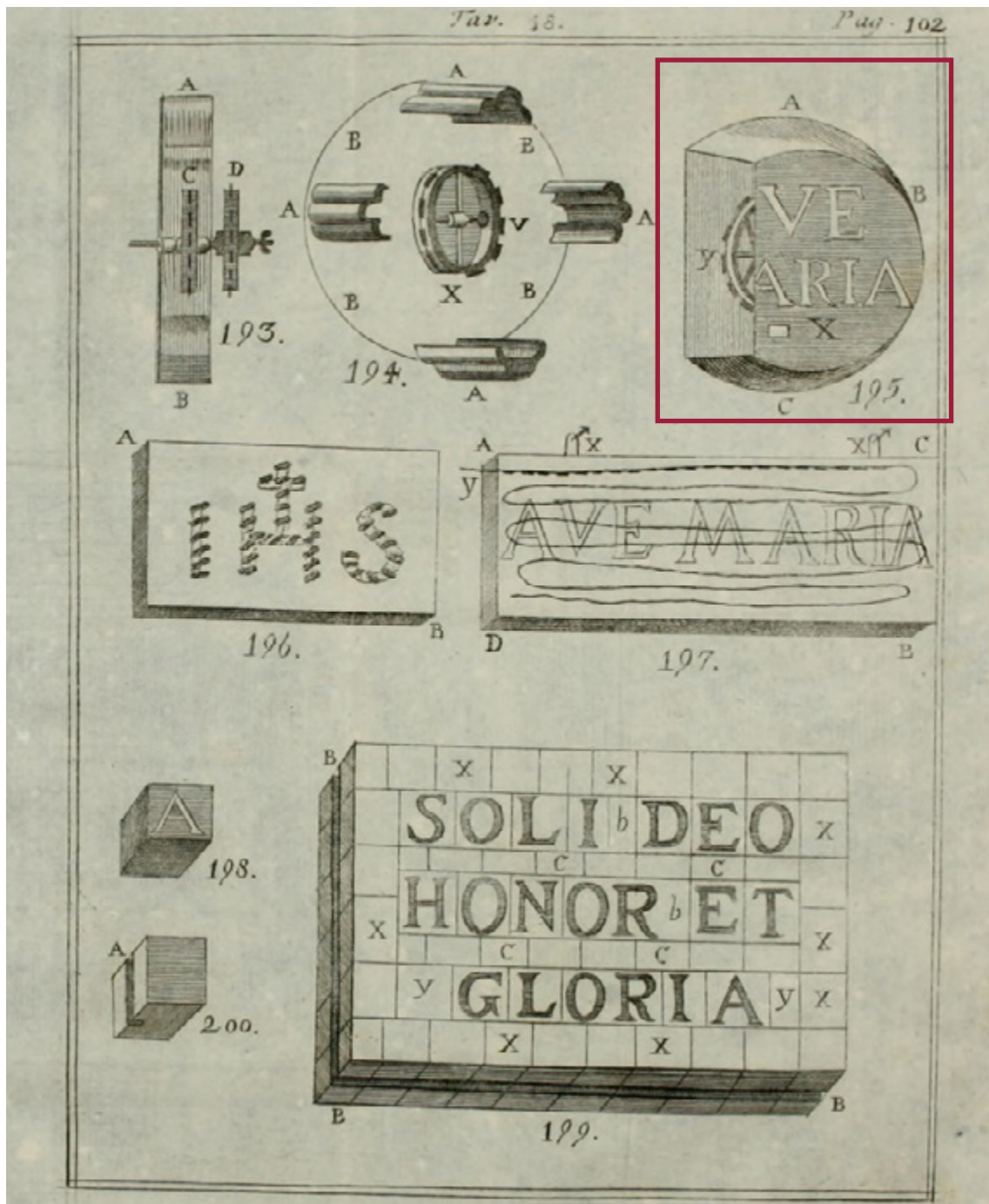
Candidate

Simona Caterina Abate

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This thesis examines mid-seventeenth-century architecture in Turin through the lens of courtly ephemeral constructions, focusing in particular on the apparatuses created for ducal weddings following the arrival of Christine of France in the city. The study is grounded in the premise that ephemeral architecture, traditionally confined to analyses of allegory and the spectacular dimension of court festivities, should instead be understood as a political, technical, and organizational instrument, closely interwoven with the representational strategies deployed by the Duchy of Savoy. Despite a substantial historiography addressing the symbolic and iconological dimensions of dynastic celebrations, a significant gap persists regarding the material and operational processes that underpinned the construction of these temporary structures. Contemporary printed sources, such as festival booklets and celebratory accounts, are invaluable for reconstructing the spectacular meaning of these events, yet shed little light on the organization of the building sites, the technical procedures, and the decision-making mechanisms that enabled their realization.

The analysis of the French context, adopted as a comparative framework, clarifies the network of relations connecting the courts of Turin and Paris, revealing a circulation of skills and resources that contributed to the renewal of Savoyard ceremonial traditions. Christine of France's arrival in 1620 introduced a new model of court festivity and a spectacular language closely aligned with French aesthetics. The study underscores the continuity between ephemeral and permanent construction sites, both entrusted to the same technical figures, most notably the Court Architect Amedeo di Castellamonte, whose role was central to the management of temporary works. Festivities were governed by a rigorous organizational structure, regulated by institutions such as the Council of Buildings and Fortifications, while the craftsmen involved, often the same individuals active in the construction of ducal residences, confirm the deep integration of the two spheres. Castellamonte's *Instructions* constitute a key source for reconstructing the organizational frameworks of ephemeral construction at court. The 1660 marriage between Margherita Violante of Savoy and Ranuccio II Farnese provides a case study that allows for a precise reconstruction of the planning and execution of the ceremonial apparatus, conceived within tight time constraints and designed to project a powerful image of ducal authority. The *Instructions* related to these installations form an exceptionally valuable documentary corpus, shedding light on the operational logics, materials, and construction techniques that shaped an ephemeral building site in seventeenth-century Turin.



1749

GIUSEPPE ANTONIO ALBERTI

La pirotechnia, o sia, Trattato dei fuochi d'artificio, Tavola 18.

Illustrazione (195) di un esempio di illuminazione statica nelle macchine sceniche barocche

(Online, accessed November 21, 2025, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=gri.ark:/13960/t6zw5db7t&seq=5>)



*Cinquième Journée.
Feu d'artifice sur le Canal de Versailles.*

*Chaquin.
Dessiné par Chaquin et gravé par Chaquin.*

1676

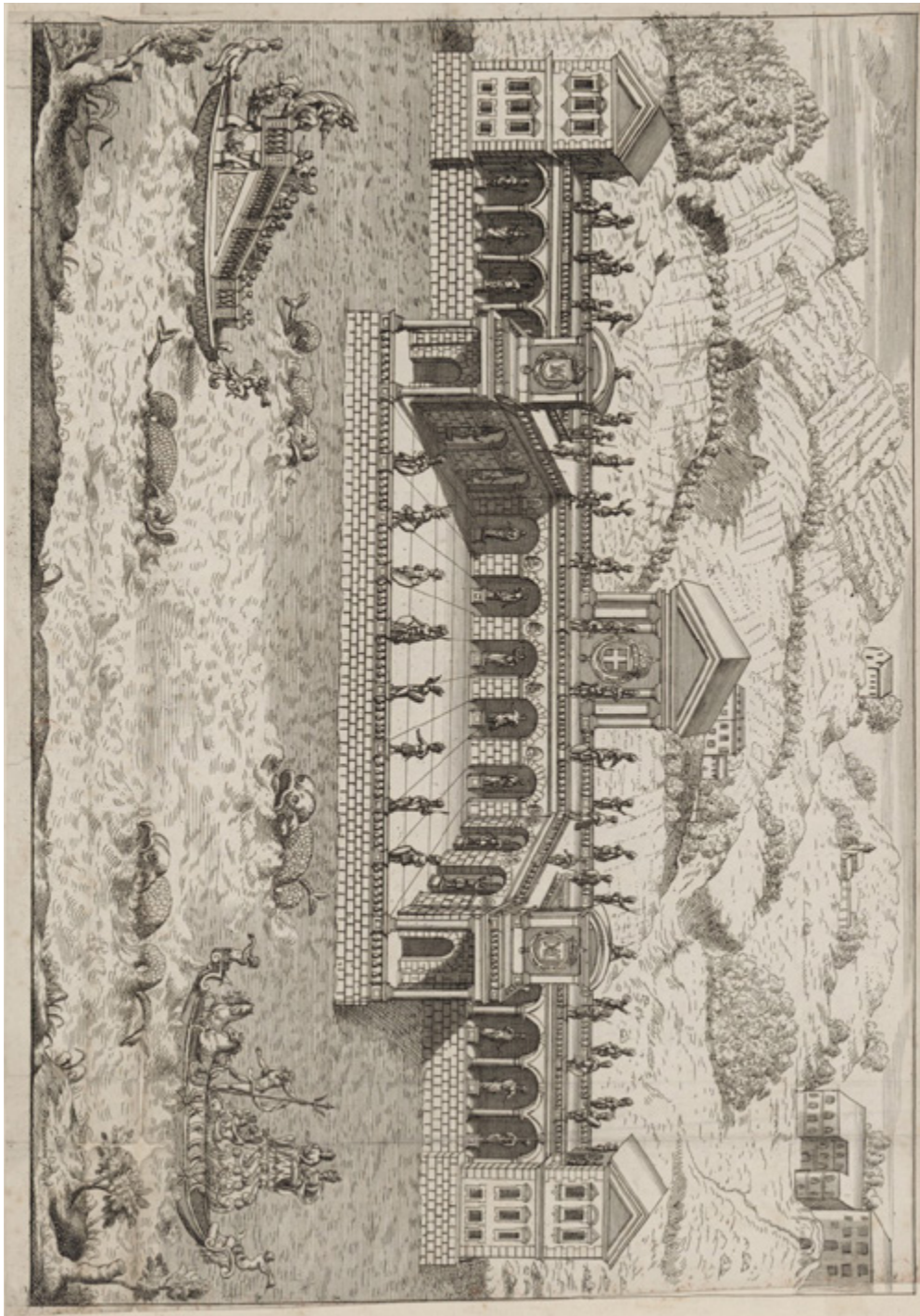
ANDRÉ FÉLIBIEN

Les Divertissemens de Versailles donnez par le Roy au retour de la
conquête de la Franche-Comté en l'année M. DC. LXXIV.

"Cinquième Journée. Feu d'artifice Sur le Canal de Versailles"

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(Online, accessed November 21, 2025, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8626218b/f51.item>)



[s.d]

[GIOVANNI ABBIATI]

["I portici di Atene", festa di fuochi di gioia sulla riva del Po al Valentino per la nascita del duca Vittorio Amedeo II di Savoia nel 1678]

BNF, département Estampes et photographie, RESERVE FOL-QB-201 (72)

(Online, accessed November 21, 2025, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84072925/f1.item#>)

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