

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO
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Honors theses

Architect Giovanni Maria Molino's work

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The dissertation is about the reconstruction of Giovanni Maria Molino's professional activity. He worked in Asti and its borderland during the period between 1760 and 1771.

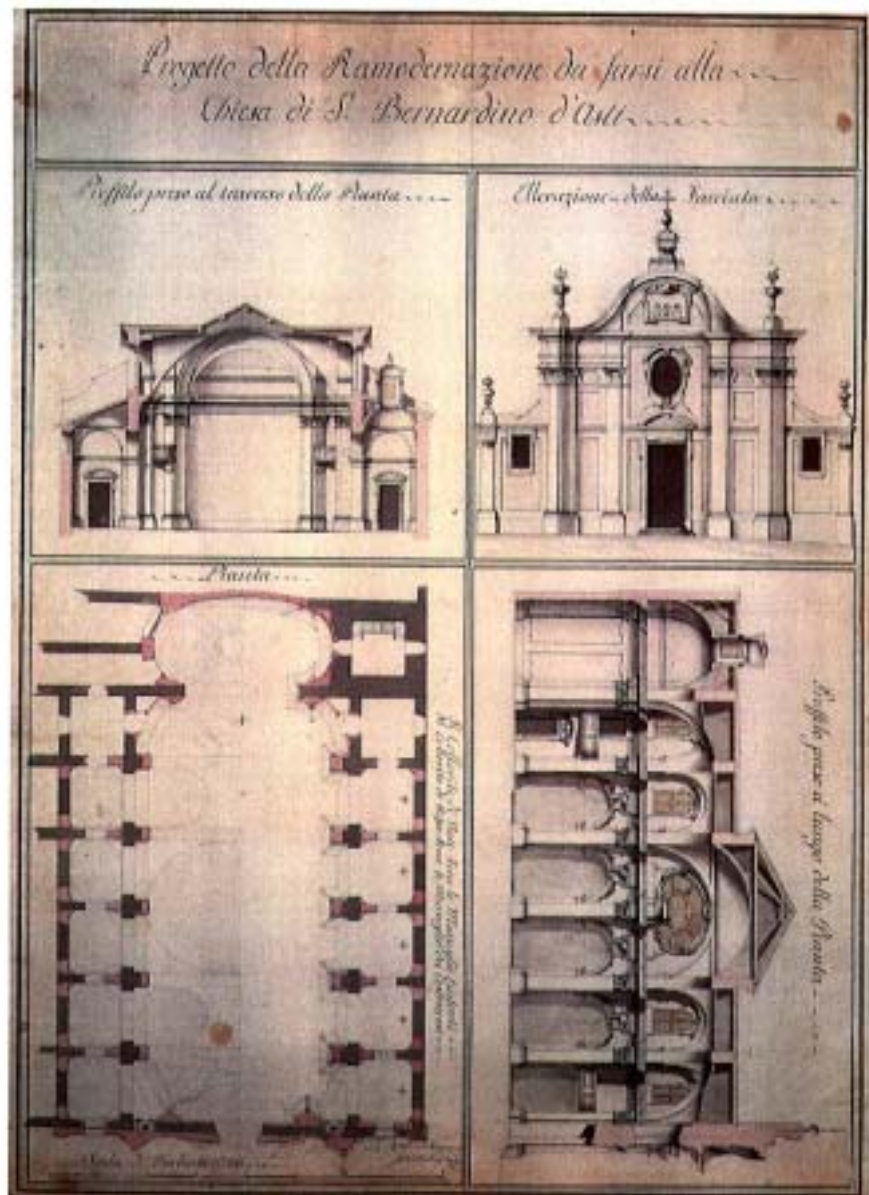
The thesis develops in two different volumes. The first one presents the architect's own career in three distinct approaches : first of all a register puts in chronological order his activity, then a series of thematic chapters describes Molino's tasks. Each chapter is about a different kind of commission : from the land-surveying to the real projection, or to the plans of altars ; the last part is a drawing catalogue. This part of the thesis offers a tidy scheme of all the found drawings, elaborated by Molino or other professional men, strictly connected to his activity.

The second volume contains the transcription of the main documents concerning the subject.

The architect's career reconstruction is only based on research and analysis of archive sources. This research is very important because the bibliography about the argument is really limited and, most of the times, wrong. The purpose of the long transcription work is to attest with documents the whole conduct of an unknown character.

The dissertation main aim is to place the activity of a "minor" architect in the wider scene of the XVIII century piedmontese architecture ; for this reason for each task we tried to show which were Molino's relations with public and private customers, or with his well-known contemporaries.

He lived and worked in Asti in the second half of the XVIII century which is a period of great development for the city that will change its image : Asti becomes rich of remarkable buildings, harmonically connected in the medieval urban context, thanks to religious corporations or aristocratic families that provide to build or totally remake churches and buildings. After the second part of the century many yards are opened in the west part of the city : Bernardo Vittone is working at the enlargement of the cathedral, Benedetto Alfieri is building the new Seminary and Giovanni Battista Ferroggio has just projected a new plan for the important church of S. Caterina. Molino moderately works besides these well-known architects and he is present at least in two of the mentioned yards : in 1763 he has to inspect the Seminary yard, between 1766 and 1771 he constantly directs the construction of S. Caterina. Moreover from 1762 to 1765 he gives new aspect to the conventual church of S. Bernardino and in 1768 he reorganizes the plan of the old monastery called "del Gesù".



Arch. Molino, project for the new church of St. Bernardino in Asti
 Turin Historic Archive , Simeom Collection, D. 1400

With these two last engagements he proves himself able to work alone on quite big and noteworthy buildings.

Besides these tasks, he works for the "Ordine Mauriziano" and for the city of Asti, for which he surveyed tracts of lands or parts of the city.



Arch. Molino, drawing of the Royal Road Asti-Annone
Turin Statal Archive , Corte, *Carte Topografiche, Serie III, Asti 1, Inv. 252*

Molino works also for small villages in the country near Asti : for instance he planned and realized the parish churches of Aramengo e Brusasco; he draws the ancient church of Moncucco and S. Stefano Belbo.



Arch. Molino, drawing of the ancient parish church of Moncucco
Turin Statal Archive , Corte, *Carte Topografiche, Serie III, Moncucco 1*

Molino's architecture is included in the XVIII century piedmontese tradition, marked by Guarini, Juvarra and Alfieri's important contributions.

He models the space through harmonic shapes, enriched with an architectonic decoration, he creates close and extremely agreeable ambients, in which he exceeds baroque virtuositities through a more personal style.

Molino comes from a humble family and he dedicates all his energy to his work. The autographic documents analysis reveals the passion he had for his own profession : the official reports are drawn up in a clear handwriting and with extreme care, the yard instructions are methodically compiled and explained with sketches, the projects are drawn with care of details and following the XVIII century good drawing rules.

At the end of the research work we can affirm that Molino has always held a secondary role in the history of architecture not for lack of qualities, but because he died young. Infact he died at the age of forty after a short career of only ten years when the tasks were becoming more prestigious.