

POLITECNICO DI TORINO  
FIRST SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE  
Master of Science in Architecture (Construction)  
**Honors theses**

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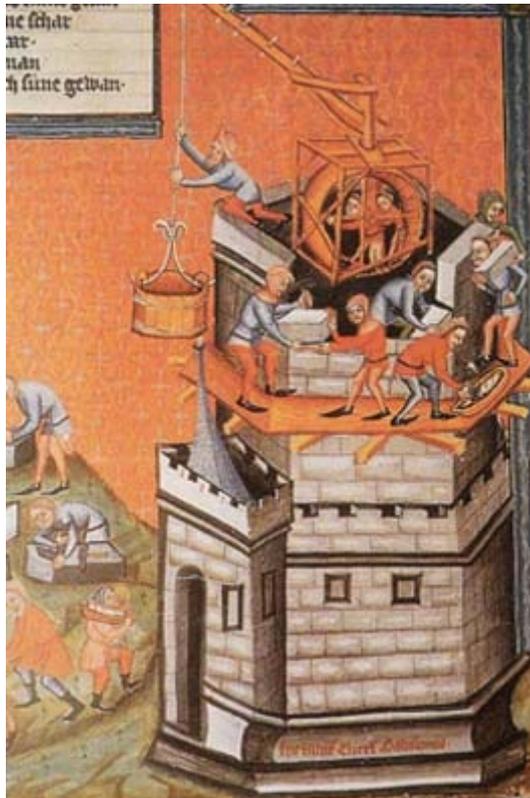
**Yard in the late Middle Ages works of art**

by Elisa Rolland

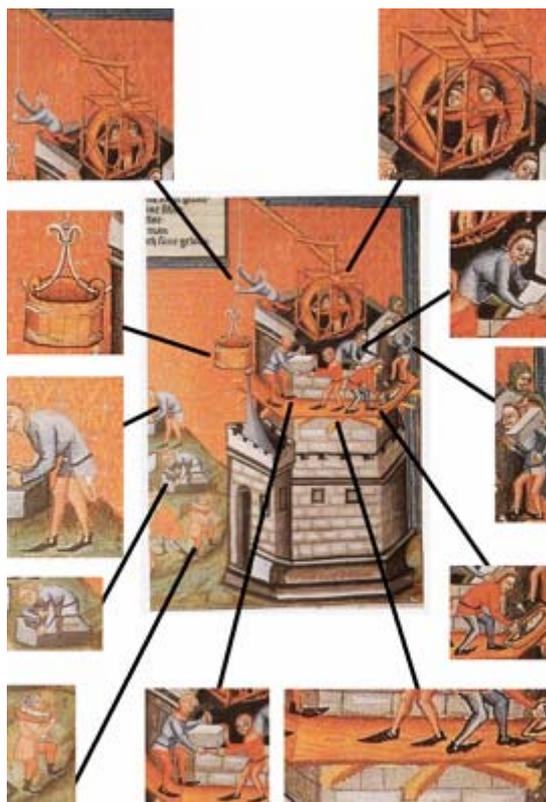
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My thesis is a study about the representations of medieval yards, in order to understand the technological evolution of tools, site preparation works but also the changes of the professional figures acting into the yards. I developed my research work starting from the analysis and the interpretation of 28 images (miniatures, mosaics, frescos and paintings).



The images analysis was conducted adopting a specific template, consisting in an introductory part with informations concerning the historical and geographical data of the work art. First of all the images were analyzed just looking at them then focusing more attentively on particulars identified, attempting to describe the represented actions, the professional roles, and the possible machinery or tools figured in the scene.



At the beginning naming items properly resulted very difficult therefore I decided to create a sort of visual dictionary: in the final part of the thesis it's available a word list (Lemmario) where it is possibile to find definitions often supplemented with explanatory figures. The naming activity was central in my thesis since it implicates an interpretation of the iconographic contents.

Here is a simplified example of analysis of a work, the most ancient one; it is a fresco situated in the church of Saint Savin sur Gartempe, datable around 1050, representing the building of the Tower of Babel.



At the center of the scene there is the tower made up of an order of walled arches at the top of which there are two men working. The man inside the tower on the left uses a case connected to a machinery for lifting the building materials, formed by a pulley placed on a wooden structure. The other man (inside the tower but on the right side) holds a square. According to some studies this tool identifies the architect or the *appareilleur*. The square was also overworked by lapicids for defining the regularity of ashlar they rough-hewed. This one is peculiar because it is made up of two arms apparently not set with 90 degrees, perhaps used for ashlar definition. Through the analysis of the images it is possible to find out structural elements handed down to posterity prevalently by oral tradition; in addition to the interpretative filter of whom perceives the work of art it is necessary to consider also the one introduced by the artist during the realization of his work, which could be not reliable. The originality of this thesis consists in the suggestion of a method of analysis and in the starting of a study of the images, not necessarily with text, that it still barely applied and deepened.

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