



POLITECNICO  
DI TORINO

# Honors thesis

---

Master in Architecture Heritage Preservation and Enhancement

*Abstract*

**Ephemeral at the House of Savoy. The architecture of the  
court parties and temporary ballrooms (1722-1791)**

*Tutor*

by

Prof. Paolo Cornaglia

Natan Albanese, s254789

February 2021

---

In the eighteenth century, the dance party consolidated its connection with architecture and scenography thanks to the profusion of settings that reinterpreted and adapted the spaces of the court residences, still lacking spaces for the exclusive use of dance. Ephemeral architecture was a means to devise and promote new constructive and formal solutions, as well as to affirm the image of solemnity of the ruling families in the face of foreign citizens and courts.

This work traces the history of the eighteenth-century festive architecture of the Kingdom of Sardinia, with a focus on the ephemeral apparatuses of dance, a very representative art form of the Ancien Régime society. The final purpose is to draw new arguments and general interpretations from a large repertoire of case studies, deepened through careful examination and bibliographic archival research.

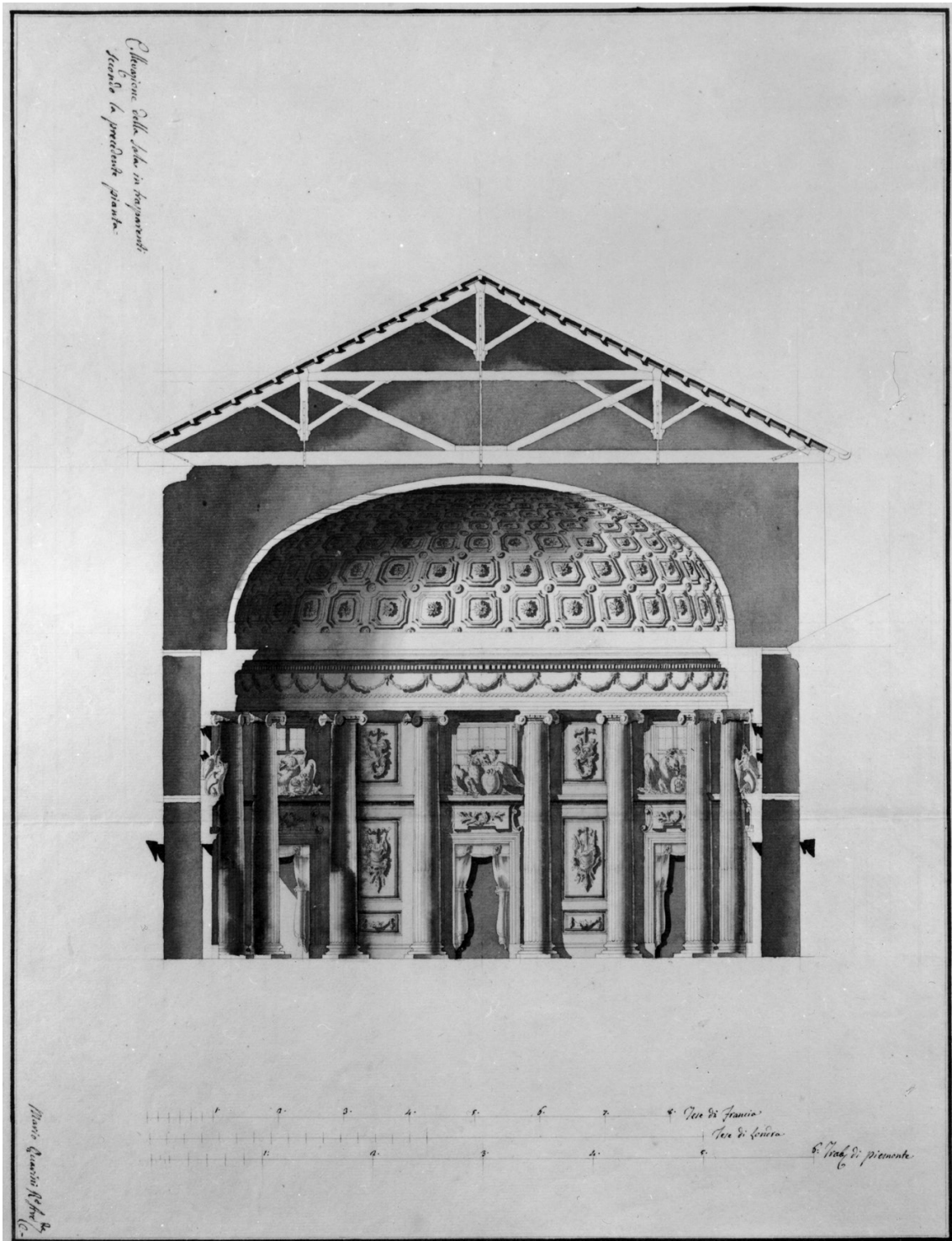
The first part of the thesis is a historical framework on the dance party, on the respective places and on the settings in some main European centers, such as Paris, Versailles, Vienna and Naples. In continuation, there is a concise discussion on the written and iconographic sources of reference and on the traditions of the dances at the Savoy court.

In the second chapter the chronological events and the festive apparatuses of the Savoy wedding celebrations are exposed, to which we owe most of the ephemeral architectural production of the Piedmontese eighteenth century.

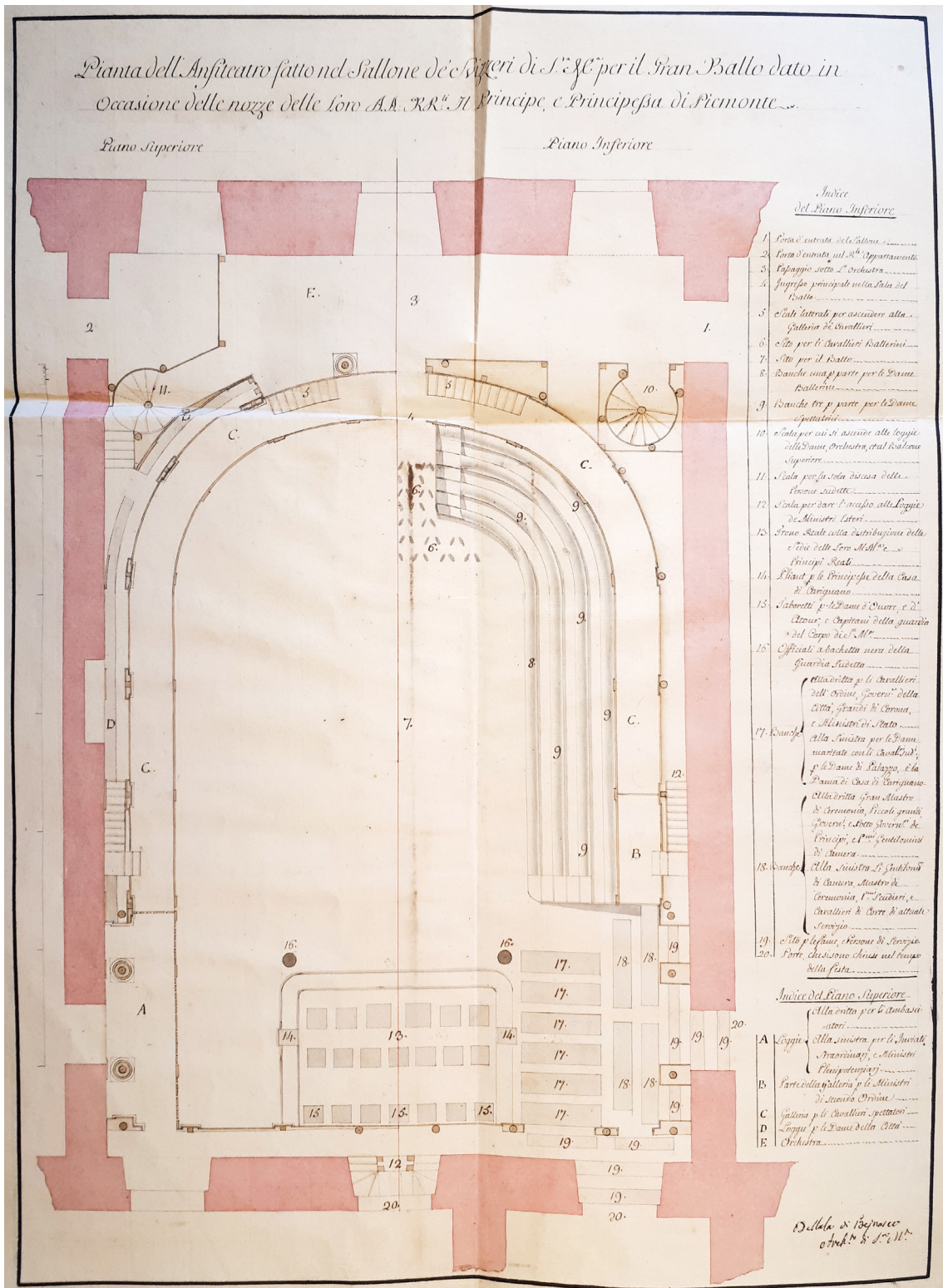
The last section describes the scenographic interventions for the preparation of temporary rooms and spaces dedicated to dances that took place over several years, in a period of time between 1722 and 1791.

The epilogue of the work highlights above all the stylistic evolution of the provisional settings and structures, then the transition from the languages of the late Baroque and Rococo to the neoclassical ones, which established themselves in the last pre-revolutionary years. From 1750 one of the most significant phenomena was the spread of the architraved colonnade, compared to the traditional use of the arch on columns. Over time, many experimental architectural choices saw a progression into fully consolidated models, therefore also re-proposed in a way that is no longer merely ephemeral, since the beginning of the contemporary age. Over the course of the century a considerable heterogeneity emerged in the choice of rooms dedicated to the great court dances. Above all, the amphitheater structure was established, surrounded by stands and raised false loggias, organized according to a methodical hierarchical system. Respect for the etiquette of the ceremonial and for the differences in rank required a well-planned division of the spaces, since the dance in all respects is also a show that is sometimes extended to the middle class as well.

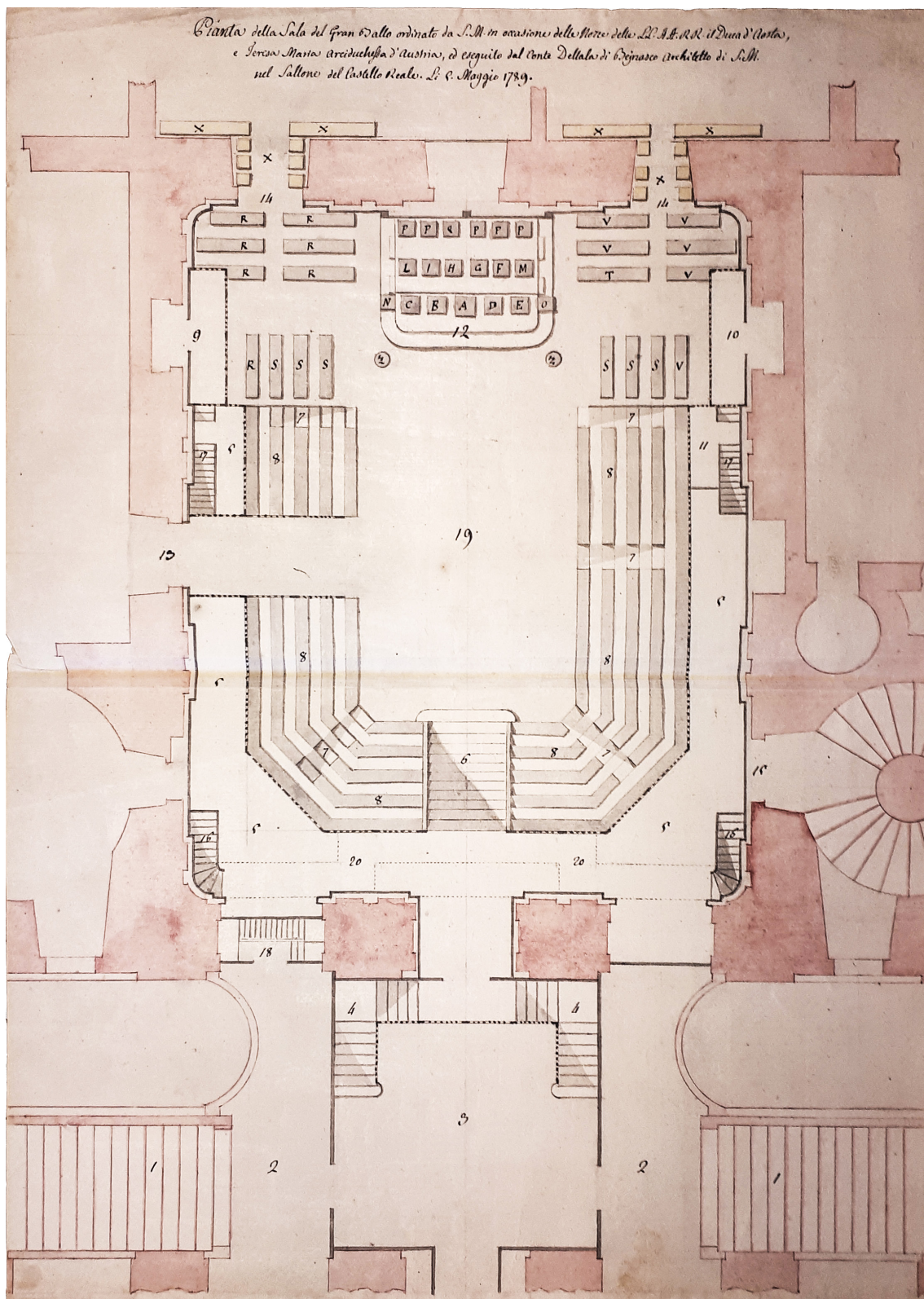
---



Mario Ludovico Quarini, *Ellevezione della Sala in trasparenti secondo la precedente pianta*, Prospectus-section of the hall set up for the ball feast in honor of the king of Sweden, 1784, drawing in pen, ink and watercolor, cm 59,5 X 46,4, (Archivio di Palazzo Madama, inv. 5019/DS, granted by Fondazione Torino Musei).



Francesco Valeriano Dellala di Beinasco, *Pianta dell'Anfiteatro fatto nel Sallone de' Svizzeri di S. M. per il Gran Ballo [...]*, 1775, disegno a penna, inchiostro e acquerello, (granted by © MiBACT – Musei Reali, Biblioteca Reale di Torino, Storia Patria 726, (9-1)).



Francesco Valeriano Dellala di Beinasco, Plan of the historic Salone degli Svizzeri in Palazzo Madama (currently Sala del Senato) set up for the grand court ball, 1789, drawing in pen, ink and watercolor, (granted by © MiBACT – Musei Reali, Biblioteca Reale di Torino, Storia Patria 726, (9-3)).