

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
Degree in Architecture
Honors theses

The village of Rivoli in modern and contemporary times

by Maria Beatrice Calandri

Tutor: Vera Comoli

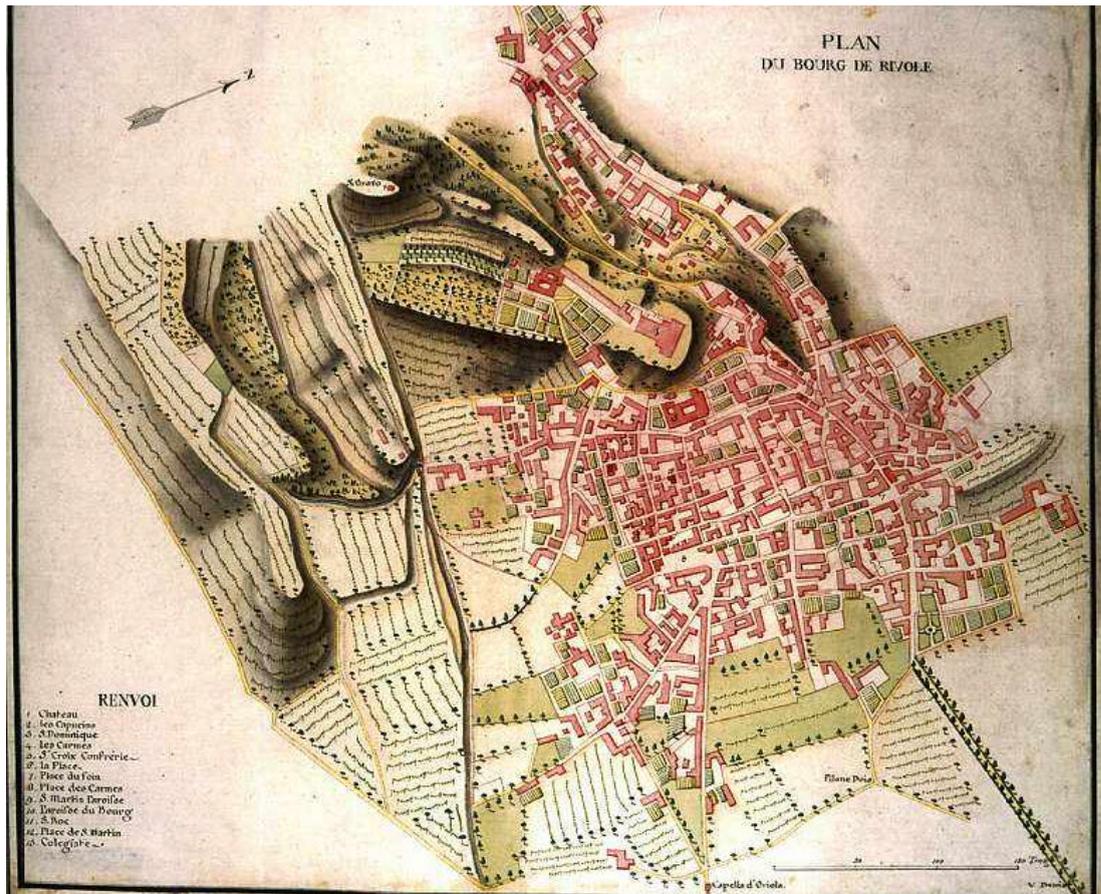
Co-tutor: Rocco Curto

The historical analysis of the urban changes of the city of Rivoli during the government years of Vittorio Amedeo II entailed a complex research study that I pursued at the Historical Archives and Library of the town, at the Record Office, at different Libraries in Turin and at the Library of the Architecture Faculty.

I mainly tried to understand how the vicissitudes of the royal family, the building of a new main road to France and, finally, the grandiose transformations to the structure of the Rivoli castle could have biased the growth of the city.

In order to clarify this point my analysis followed two directions: on the one hand I concentrated on every study and publication concerning the history of Rivoli, Piedmont and the Savoias; on the other hand, I examined all the old documents that could have been pertinent to the city itself.

At the Historical Archives of the city of Rivoli the research focused on the analysis of the most important administrative acts, especially those regarding the municipal administration, public properties, administration of public finances and works (such as the building of new roads), private properties, government, administration of justice, "National Guard", public services, management of agriculture, industry and commerce, public security, charitable institutions, the police and sanitary inspectors. At the Record Office of Turin I compared different ancient cartographies of the city of Rivoli, especially the surveys made between the end of the 18th century and the 19th century (picture 1).



Author: V. Denis, Title: *Plan du Bourg de Rivole*, Date: [1800],
Dimensions in cm: 50 x 61, Technique and support: water - colour
Scale: 1/9400 approximately

Explanations: *RENOVOI*, 1. Chateau, 2. Les Capucins, 3. S. Dominique, 4. Les Carmes, 5. S. Croix Confrerie, 6. La Place, 7. Place du foin, 8. Place des Carmes, 9. S. Martin Parisse, 10. Paroisse du Bourg, 11. S. Roc, 12. Place de S. Martin, 13. Colegiate.

Present placement: AST, Corte, *Carte Topografiche Segrete*, 26. A. V.

An unpublished iconography of the city was discovered at the Royal Library of Turin. The work is entitled *Carte idéale de Rivole et de ses environs, faite en 1778 par Rombeàu (Luigi Antonio)*, and it is a free-hand drawing that shows a bird's-eye view of the city of Rivoli.

A small plan of the city castle is shown on the left corner of the picture.

Investigating the subject was not an easy task: on the one hand, I had to face the difficulty of comparing the data collected at the Archives with the already published material on the same subject. On the other hand, I had to reflect on every information, in order to be able to identify the urban changes of the city.

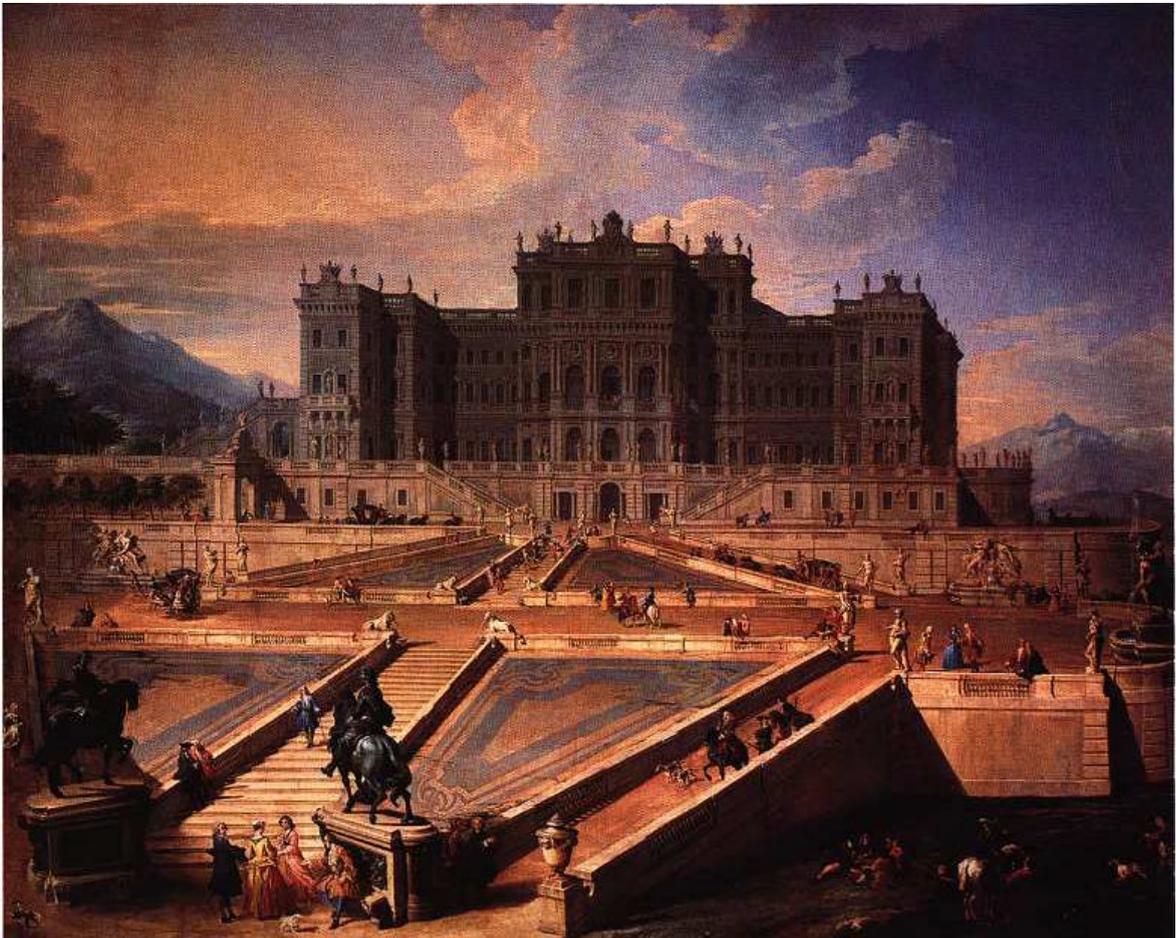
The co-ordination of the whole analysis was also very difficult, both for the absence of a "summary," considering every aspect of the city taken as a body, and because of the detailed knowledge that each question of the study needs.

The data were organised in order to create an orderly plan of the whole information. Moreover, each element of the research was deeply analysed to understand "natural" connections in accordance with the urban changes of the city.

For the purposes of this analysis, each monument of the town was studied by following a concise method, partially "incomplete" but, at the same time, effective to single out the chief factors concerning the urban changes.

I subsequently compared several historical documents and directly explored the castle in order to determine the stages of its construction. The study of city-council reports between 1660 and 1757 was carried out carefully and helped me find out how the development of the castle during the works of the royal architect Filippo Juvarra contributed to certain urban choices for the future growth of the city.

The analysis of the plans, the paintings and the model of the castle designed by Juvarra, which should have been the new royal palace in Rivoli, reveals a grandiose design (picture 2). Unfortunately, it was never finished because of many reasons: the war with France (1705), the extra expenses caused by the royal palace of Venaria and the church of Superga (which were too heavy a burden for the Savoias) and, finally, the imprisonment of Vittorio Amedeo II at the same Rivoli castle.

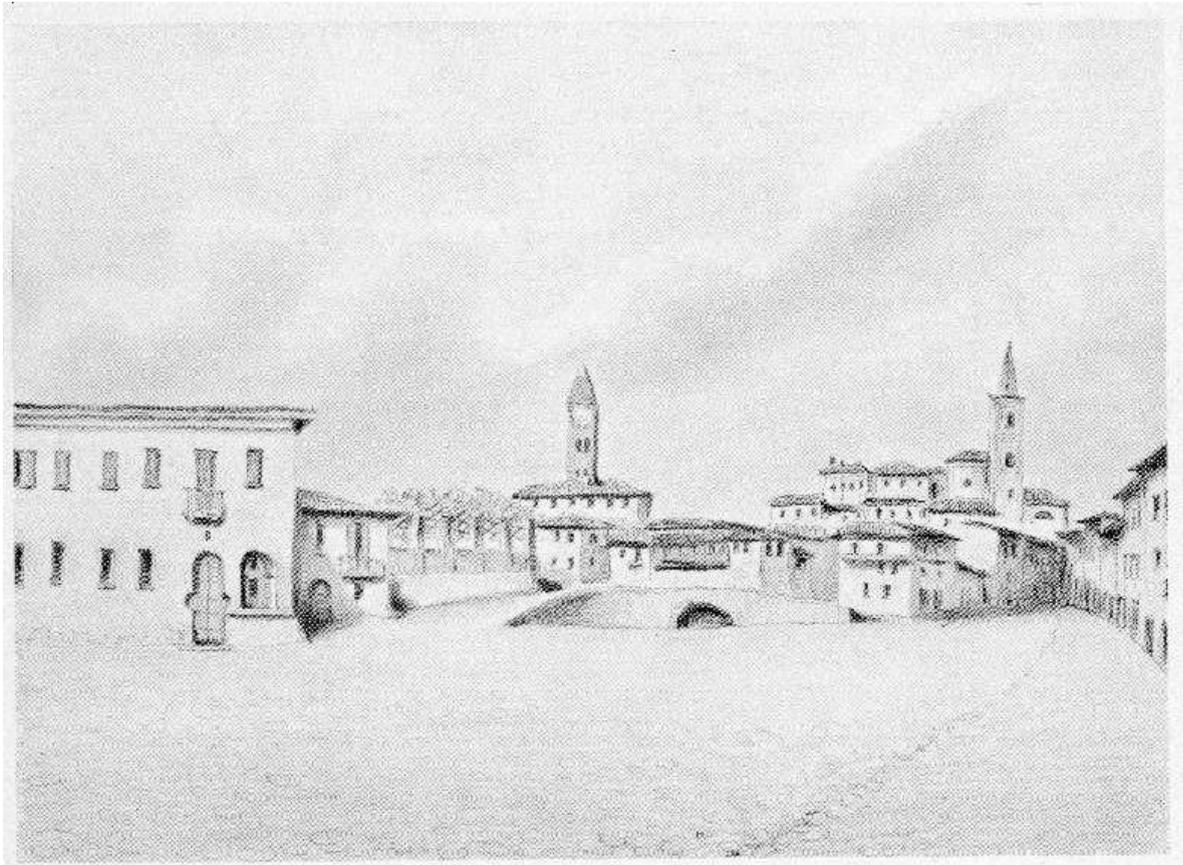


Author: Gian Paolo Pannini, Title: Oriental sight of Rivoli Castle
Date: [1724], Dimensions in cm: 300 x 335, Technique and support: oil - painting
Scale: not found, Explanations: not found
Present placement: Racconigi, Castello

These reasons persuaded Carlo Emanuele II, the successor of Vittorio Amedeo II, to give up the plan for Rivoli and the castle remained as it is today.

However, historical studies have paradoxically revealed that smaller and less important monuments than the castle itself have especially influenced the growth of the city.

For example, a change in position of San Domenico's Church (1799), determined by the passage of the religious building from the St. Dominic Fathers to the Fathers of the Collegiata, caused the origin of a new important city centre facing piazza Bollani.



Author: Clemente Rovere, Title: Piazza Bollani square, Rivoli, Date: [1850]
Dimensions in cm: not found, Technique and support: pencil - drawing
Scale: not found, Explanations: not found

Published in: ROVERE, Clemente, *Il Piemonte antico e moderno delineato e descritto*, ms. con disegni, Torino 1826-1858 (now in *Il Piemonte antico e moderno delineato e descritto da Clemente Rovere*, composition and critical study by C. Sertorio Lombardi, 2 voll., Torino 1978).

Therefore, the city itself was the real protagonist of the history of Rivoli, much more than its castle, that was and is only a symbol, an emblem with an uncertain identity, for both its ambiguous paternity and because of the different destinations characterizing the royal palace during the centuries: fortress, erecting yard, country-seat, refuge, museum...

For further informations, e-mail: beatrice.calandri@tiscalinet.it