



Project for a Temporary Façade for San Salvatore
in Lauro, Rome, for Festivities in Connection with
the Recovery of Queen Christina of Sweden, 1689

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A DRAWING OF LARGE SIZE and particularly refined execution; rare evidence of a “presentation” project for an ephemeral structure, executed with great care and a wealth of detail to be examined by the patron to obtain his approval for the work (Fig. 1). This is a precious drawing, then, to be understood as a valuable collector’s piece preserving the memory of an event destined to last only a few hours; it is a non-technical drawing, therefore, because it was destined neither for the design process nor for use on the worksite, which generally entailed the destruction of all drawings. An engraving was later made after the presentation drawing to disseminate the magnificence of the event to a vast audience and prolong its echoes over time.

The sheet shows the structure designed by Simone Felice Delino (1655–1697) in March 1689 for the church of San Salvatore in Lauro and commissioned by the “Professori et Artefici che attualmente servono la Sacra Reale Maestà della Regina” on the occasion of the recovery of Queen Christina of Sweden from an illness. The



Fig. 1 Simone Felice Delino (1655–1697),
*Project for a Temporary Façade for San Salvatore
 in Lauro, Rome, for Festivities in Connection with
 the Recovery of Queen Christina of Sweden, 1689.*

Pen and brown ink, grey wash,
 over traces of black chalk, 570 x 395 mm.
 Purchase: Sara and Johan Emil Graumann Fund.
 Nationalmuseum, NMH 3/2015.

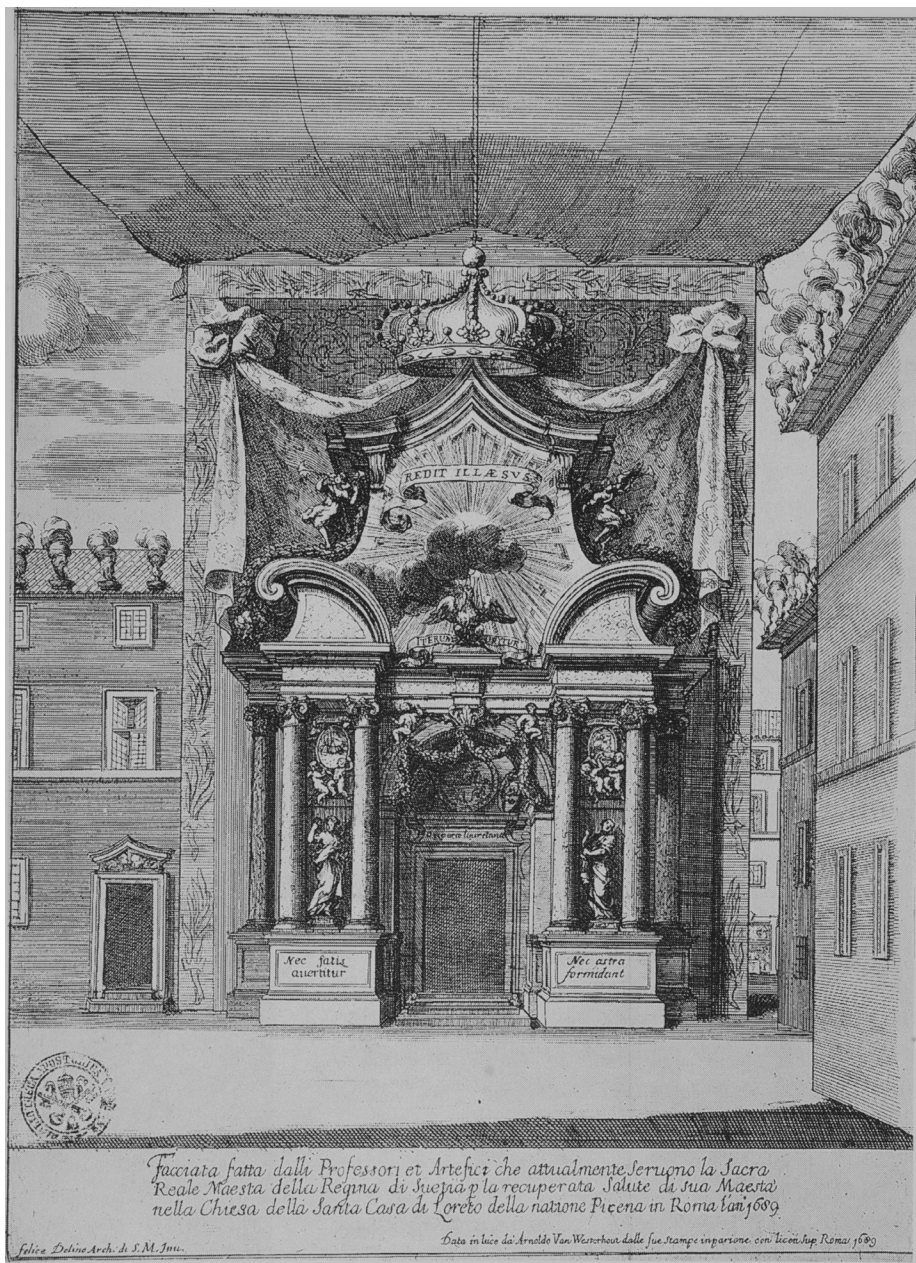


Fig. 2 Arnold van Westerhout (1651–1725), *Temporary Façade Designed by Simone Felice Delino (1655–1697) for San Salvatore in Lauro, Rome, for Festivities in Connections with the Recovery of Queen Christina of Sweden, 1689*. Engraving. Vatican Library.

choice of this church, to which Christina of Sweden was devoted, was made at the behest of Cardinal Decio Azzolino, Secretary of State, counsellor and later heir to Christina, who in 1669 became the cardinal protector of the *Nazione Picena*. It was he, a member of a noble family from the Marche, who acquired the ancient church and donated it to the community of the Marche in Rome, renaming it after the Madonna of Loreto. This exceptional festival, reserved for a major figure of 17th-century Europe, also involved the erection of an allegorical triumphal arch on the façade of the adjacent Palazzo Lorenzani (on commission from the Palazzo's owner), designed by Antonio Colli who had trained under Andrea Pozzo. Both these installations were later engraved by Arnold van Westerhout.

After abdicating from the Swedish throne, Christina was welcomed to Rome by Pope Alexander VII in 1655 with all the honours due to a sovereign, in part dictated by political considerations and her conversion to Catholicism, openly exploited for propaganda purposes. Christina set up home with her luxurious court in Palazzo Riario alla Lungara, where over the decades she devoted herself to a ceaseless activity as a patron of the arts, theatre, music and literature, promoting the work of the major artists of her time, including Bernini, Baciccio and Carlo Fontana, and contributing to the establishment of the *Accademia dell'Arcadia*. With the help of the loyal Azzolino, Christina also began an annual exhibition of paintings in San Salvatore in Lauro, an event of enormous importance for the Roman art world.

Trained in the workshop of Carlo Fontana, Simone Felice Delino was an architect at Christina's court (in the queen's "ruolo della famiglia", "Simone de Lini" is listed with the monthly salary of 5 *scudi*). His design for the installation on the façade of San Salvatore in Lauro (at the time still lacking its marble facing, executed in the 19th century) openly imitates compositional schemes devised by Carlo Fontana: the pairs of coupled columns supporting the



Fig. 3 Simone Felice Delino (1655–1697), *Ephemeral Decoration for the Façade of Trinità dei Monti, Rome, for the Recovery of Louis XIV of France from an Illness, 1687*. Pen and brown ink, grey wash, 62.0 x 57.5 cm. Galerie Tarantino, Paris.

two fragments of inverted pediment, the large crown held up by drapes (identical to that used for the queen's box erected on the corner of Piazza Venezia and the Corso to watch Carnival processions and to that used as a symbol of royalty in the funerary installations, also designed by Delino, at Santa Maria in Vallicella in 1689). The composition enhances the monumental

appearance of the church's central door, alluding to a triumphal arch scheme. The upper part of the façade, by contrast, ends in a mixtilinear pediment with a triangular tympanum with inflected sides, inside which is a radiate glory – an obvious allusion to the “splendour” of Bernini's Throne of St Peter – where between a crown-cartouche and an eagle, we see the image of the Holy



Fig. 4 Vincenzo Mariotti (1675–1738), *Fireworks Display at Trinità dei Monti on 20 April, 1687, for the Recovery of Louis XIV of France from an Illness, with Simone Felice Delino's Ephemeral Decoration of the Façade of the Church*. Engraving, 80.4 x 55.3 cm. Galerie Tarantino, Paris.

House of Loreto. At the sides, two groups of putti support draperies that cover the upper order of the unfinished façade (in the drawing we glimpse the semicircular profile of the coping), whilst a large royal crown completes the composition. Also very interesting is the information provided on the lighting, achieved with a large number of candles arranged in the upper registers of

the architecture. The drawing, rich in detailed indications on the decorative scheme, probably painted in grisaille on the pedestals of the columns, on the out-turned scrolls and on the spaces between the columns, is completed with groups of figures in the piazza in front and in the doorway of the church, and, below, by a cartouche between palm branches and a large central coat of arms. It is the latter feature, left out of the engraving, which confirms that the drawing was executed with a view to translation into print: the cartouche, as usual, was to hold the title and the dedication; the central coat of arms, lacking any heraldic details, was surmounted by a cardinal's hat supported by two winged putti, a detail that confirms the hypothesis of a commission from Cardinal Azzolino.

The drawing is certainly an autograph by the architect-designer of the apparatus; the engraving by Arnold van Westerhout (1651–1725) presents some significant variants, showing that in the transition from design to execution it had become necessary to simplify some decorative features, and to replace others, like the representation of the House of the Virgin at Loreto replaced by the *impresa* with the sun hidden by a cloud and the Biblical mottoes “Redit illaesus” and “Iterum oritur”, alluding to recovery from an illness (Fig. 2). The engraving does not focus exclusively on the façade, but shows the arrangement of the whole square in front of it: the roofs of the surrounding houses are lit by large torches and the whole urban space is rendered uniform and turned into a sort of “theatre” by covering it with a huge fabric awning.

Simone Felice Delino is still a little known but extremely interesting figure of the late Roman Baroque; he must have enjoyed a solid reputation, specifically in the field of the design of major ephemeral installations. Trained in the important and authoritative school of Carlo Fontana, he always kept in close contact with the master. Delino also engraved various plates with views of villas and Roman palaces included in the reprints of the extremely

popular series by Giovanni Battista Falda, and architectural plates for the large scholarly volumes published by Fontana (*Templum Vaticanum*, 1694). He worked for some important patrons: alongside Christina of Sweden, they included Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, Cardinal Flavio Chigi and the Marquises Lancellotti. A designer and creator of wooden architectural models of buildings and altars, the only work currently known by Delino is the little Palazzo Panizza near Santa Maria in Monticelli, a minor aristocratic residence that stands out for its refined details, like the elegant triangular staircase. A designer of several installations for the *Quarant'ore*, Delino was also responsible for one of the most grandiose and celebrated ephemeral structures of Baroque Rome, that erected at Trinità dei Monti on 11 April 1687 for the recovery from an illness of Louis XIV of France (*Rejouissance pour le retablisement de la santé de Louis XIV*), shown in several engravings and printed books (Figs. 3–4).

The design for the installation celebrating the recovery of Christina of Sweden is among Delino's very few known drawings. Its quality confirms the artist's talent, recorded in a concise but effective way in the biography published by Lione Pascoli in his *Vite de pittori, scultori, ed architetti moderni* (1730–36): “disegnava benissimo, ed aveva abilità, e spirito” (“he drew very well, and had talent and wit”).