

History of Scenography in the seventeenth century. Heirs of Buontalenti: Giulio Parigi.  
Historia de la Escenografía en el siglo XVII. Herederos de Buontalenti: Giulio Parigi.

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#### RESUMEN:

A mediados del siglo XIX, coincidiendo con la liberalización de la cultura, la apertura de las colecciones privadas, la creación de museos y de bibliotecas estatales, se fundó la Biblioteca Nacional de España. Grandes fueron las aportaciones de distinto origen, como la de Pascual Gayangos o la de los fondos provenientes de la Colección Real, cedidas desde la Biblioteca de Palacio. De ambos casos se nutrió la nueva institución con un inestimable patrimonio, en el que se puede resaltar el material gráfico tanto como escrito y especulativo, referido a lo que forma parte de la Historia de la Escenografía. Lo que se desgrana a continuación era una muestra del trabajo ya publicado y analizado minuciosamente, fruto de la creación de uno de estos Escenógrafos y de Tratadistas del siglo XVII, italianos fundamentalmente, que permiten establecer un *continuum* desde el siglo XVI, con la configuración de la caja escénica, o sea el edificio polifuncional, independiente y estructuralmente concebido para albergar todos los posibles formatos de celebración de lo que terminó por conocerse como la *Fiesta Barroca*. Además, a finales del *Cinquecento* se definió la figura del Escenógrafo profesional, como la mejor expresión de las capacidades e intereses globales del artista renacentista de raíz humanístico, que podía solventar todas las necesidades propagandísticas de los príncipes y señores de los estados modernos, con la creación de programas decorativos de notable erudición y técnica, y uno de cuyos mejores exponentes fue Bernardo Buontalenti, al servicio de los Grandes Duques de Toscana, precisamente de quien fue discípulo y muy notable heredero, Giulio Parigi.

Palabras clave: Escenografía teatral italiana, iconografía barroca, festival barroco, arte efímero. Giulio Parigi. *Guerra d'Amore*.

#### SUMMARY

In the mid-19th century, coinciding with the liberalization of culture, the opening of private collections, the creation of museums and state libraries, the National Library of Spain was founded. Great were the contributions of different origins, such as that of Pascual Gayangos or that of the funds from the Royal Collection, loaned from the Palace Library. In both cases, the new institution was nurtured with an inestimable heritage, in which graphic material can be highlighted as well as written and speculative, referring to what is part of the History of Scenography. What follows was a sample of the work already published and meticulously analyzed, the result of the creation of one of these 17th century Scenographers and Tratadists, mainly Italian, who allow establishing a continuum since the 16th century, with the configuration of the stage box, that is, the multifunctional, independent and structurally conceived building to house all possible formats for the celebration of what came to be known as the Baroque Festival. In addition, at the end of the *Cinquecento* the figure of the professional scenographer was defined as the best expression of the capacities and global interests of the Renaissance artist with humanistic roots, who could solve all the propaganda needs of the princes and lords of modern states, with the creation of decorative programs of remarkable erudition and technique, and one of whose best exponents was Bernardo Buontalenti, at the service of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, precisely of whom he was a disciple and very notable heir, Giulio Parigi.

#### KEY WORDS

Italian theater stage, baroque iconography, baroque festival, ephemeral art. Giulio Parigi. War d'Amore.

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### **The theatricality of the Baroque.**

The magnificent collections of the National Library of Spain allows establishing a line of argument from the works and the meaning of Buontalenti's creations for the Medici, as a prototype settled in Italy and disseminated to other European courts, to the works of his successors, such as Giulio Parigi, also in Florence, through the engravings of the frenchman Jacques Callot, and thus be able to understand both the formulas and the semiotics learned from such sources, by the stage designers of the aulic power of Philip IV and his successors in the Iberian Peninsula, Cosme Lotti and Baccio del Bianco. For all these reasons, it is fair to highlight the importance of the old collection of the BNE, as regards one subject, this one of scenography or stage history, within the framework of ephemeral art and the generic Baroque Theatricality, which serves to understand the significance of an advertising instrument at the service of the Absolute Monarchies, in its aspect of playful public manifestation, as well as the understandable reason for the interest in Spain in this type of artistic manifestation. On the other hand, there are very few works in Spanish, dedicated to deepen the aesthetics, science and experience of the great figures of the Italian Scenography of the s. XVII. And yet, there are many terms that have tried to capture the meaning of "excess" Baroque: "bombastic rhetoric", "too human" said Nietzsche, "rhetorician" identified as false<sup>1</sup>, "empty colors of the parrot".<sup>2</sup> In addition, it must be realized that the Baroque Set designer was not only the creator of theatrical decorations. He was the artist of the staging and perhaps the best representative of the integration of the Arts, of the "unity and diversity of artistic language"<sup>3</sup>, since he could use all the supports of the plastic arts to propagate the persuasive message of the absolutist monarchies. Precisely, one of the recurring metaphors of the time to describe the field of court development, was that of Theatricality, the main actors being courtiers and subjects in general, with the monarchs as the center of such universe. The ceremonies, the Feast and especially the theatrical decorations, both inside and outside the versatile building that the Theater ends up becoming, are one of the representative channels of the expressive globality of the Grand Goût. The gesture of the professional actor overflows the scene and becomes the defining aspect of the way of presenting himself in society. One is nothing but what is shown in the public image of him, and this becomes important if it is assumed that even the class perception was determined by the performance on the social scene. The importance of the uses and customs of professional theatrical practice lies in the fact that the theater provides the aesthetics and the lexicon of the show it cannot be denied that the illusionism of the Albertian window is the antecedent of the Baroque Theatricality, in a dizzying career of consolidation of experiences and behaviors, which leads to obsessive practices, such as perspective investigations and disquisitions on the point of view, the outcome of which can be seen, precisely, in the creations of Ferdinando Tacca as a follower of Parigi, Torelli, both in Italy as in his French journey, of the Burnacini and the Bibiena, sanctioned and codified by the Sabbattini treatise. Quadratturas, Glorias, Flights, Apotheosis are some of the terms coined to name the instruments that were used in the creation and decoration of the frame, movement and semiotics of the shows. However, the playful

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<sup>1</sup> Oscar CORNAGO BERNAL, "Nuevos enfoques sobre el barroco y la Posmodernidad" (upon two studies of Fernando R. de la Flor), *Dicenda*, Cuadernos de Filología Hispánica, 2004, 22, pp. 27-51.

<sup>2</sup> Fernando CHECA, "Del gusto de las naciones", *Arte barroco e ideal clásico: aspectos del arte cortesano de la segunda mitad del siglo XVII*, Conferencias, Roma may-june 2003, SEACEX, 2004, pp. 1-18.

<sup>3</sup> CHECA, 2004, p. 26.

component per se did not exist except as a mere secondary dressing. The essential thing was the didactics of Power and Glory.<sup>4</sup>

### **Giulio Parigi (1571-1635)**

Son of Alfonso di Santi Parigi, Giulio is responsible for the design of the *Isolotto* of the Boboli Gardens, between 1618 and 1620, within the parameters of late Mannerism<sup>5</sup>, influenced by Giambologna, through his teacher Pietro Tacca (1577-1640). The same impressive and expressive style, which he derived as a student of Bernardo Buontalenti (1523-1608), when configuring the decorations for the celebrations promoted by and for the Medici. And, if Parigi is the creator of the corpus of content and of the semiotics of the Holidays, the frenchman Jacques Callot<sup>6</sup> was the one who disseminated the celebratory iconography, the framework and the characters, whose florentine models served as a reference for the inspiration of the creators of the power decoration and the theatrical stage designs of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. As a cultural “valid” for the Medici, one of his first assignments was the organization of the festivities for the scenery of a courtly themed tournament, known as “Mostra della Guerra d’Amore Festa del Serno. Grand Duca di Toscana fatta l’anno 1615 and 16”. The carnival-tournament on Holy Thursday before Lent was a public event for the entire city of Florence. Cosimo II chose in honor of his wife, Maria Magdalena, a triumphal parade, an equestrian ballet and several simulated warlike encounters, all of which were displayed in the form of a Tournament in the Piazza de Santa Croce, on February 11, 1616. The history of the War of Love was written by Andrea Salvadori, and published as a “souvenir” of the Festival. It narrated the battle between King Indamoro of Narsinga, whose role was played by the Grand Duke himself, and King Gradamento de Melinda, played in turn by his brother Lorenzo, partner of Lucinda, Queen of India. The music intoned an adulatory meter of the Medici family and was performed by singers on elaborate floats. The theme of the two contenders fighting for the hand of a beautiful lady undoubtedly alluded to Maria Magdalena, but Salvadori's verses included a message of political propaganda, in order to glorify the power and prestige of the Grand Duke, as well as they implicitly claimed the role of Tuscany in European geopolitics. In fact, as in the famous *Naumachia* of 1589, designed and organized by Buontalenti, it was Cosimo's wish to recover the shows of Greco-Roman antiquity, with this equestrian ballet, as well as in a similar celebration, the *Rostra dei Venti*, with which those attending their own betrothal were delighted in 1608. By this time, the tournament formula had already lost its warlike essence, coming to be understood as a softened choreography rather, on an elliptical design in imitation of the *Colosseum* plan o Flavio *Amphitheater*, focusing on the latin stylistic debt, with which florentine shows are related in general lines.

The origin of the models of influence of Parigi for these shows on the occasion of the visit of the Urbin entourage, are not only the *Sbarras* de Buontalenti, but also the *Masquerades* devised by Vasari in the middle of the previous century<sup>7</sup>, in which his successor in the The direction of the

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<sup>4</sup> E. GOMBRICH, *Historia del Arte*, título del Capítulo 22, Debate, Madrid, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> Rudolf WITTKOWER, *Arte y Arquitectura en Italia 1600-1750*, Manuales Arte Cátedra, Madrid 1979, p. 132.

<sup>6</sup> *Jacques Callot (1592-1635)* Actes du colloque organisé par le Service Culturel du Musée du Louvre et la ville de Nancy á Paris et á Nancy les 25, 26 et 27 juin 1992, bajo la dirección científica de Daniel TERNOIS, Paris, Louvre Klincksieck 1993. In this interesting reference work on the French engraver it is said that he was not a mere illustrator of the festivities, but that his graphic work was inspired by his predecessors, such as Scarabelli, in a way that they contributed to the evolution of the Stage History “par sa capacité á traiter les arguments d’un spectacle, en les fixant avec cette efficacité de la transcription synthétique qui est propre aux seuls arts figuratifs et en particulier á la gravure, art de la légèreté alerte et des multiples”, p. 207.

<sup>7</sup> An example of Vasari's ingenious ability can be seen in costume designs, such as the *Bufolata* of 1566, one of the fashion festivities in the Florentine 16th century. It was a celebration that recreated a hunting party, a masquerade in which the groups of participants, horsemen, with their corresponding entourages and all related to the aforementioned theme. practiced a raid, dressed as historical and mythological figures or even personifying allegorical concepts, and having the Tuscan capital as the scene of the persecution. *La Fiesta en la Europa de Carlos V*, Exhibition Catalog (Real Alcázar de Sevilla 2000), SEACEX 2000, cat. 103, p. 419.

decorations reaches the maximum possible tension in the difficult balance between creativity and propaganda, which end up leaning towards that side, thanks to compositions in the scenic setting that the urban planning of the city supposes, as well as the figures in that catalog. compilation of many of the figures found in the prints engraved by Callot. Not only the purely theatrical representations serve this laudatory purpose, but the *Carrozas*, these articulated mobile machines, constitute an indispensable chapter for the understanding of all this spelling of power. Traditions of the past are recovered, from the primitive ones of Antiquity, which carried the impedimenta of military administration and trophies of the defeated, adorned and figurative, to display the message of Victory in processions and triumphal processions of generals and emperors. Passing through the chariots, sometimes of incomprehensible or directly impossible use, of the designs of artists such as Dürer, within the glorification campaign of one of these visionaries of the Princes and Lords of the humanistic Renaissance, such as Maximilian I of Austria. Even the lavish carriages of the Apotheosis of the Baroque, whose bases are based on creations such as these, emanating from the worked originality of Parigi, which served the purpose of highlighting a social circumstance, which, beyond being a reflection of a reality, were ephemeral exponents of a kind of illusion, of a Social Theater, which ends up becoming the society of the six hundred. As was the case in many states that declined as the century progressed, the further one progressed toward decline, the more visible were the displays of ostentation, of ornamental as well as an anamorphic image.

The globalization of the massive digitization of a large part of the documentary collections of museums and libraries, accelerated with the crisis of the universal pandemic, has facilitated online access to dispersed material and in this case<sup>8</sup>, related to the subject, of the booklet of this celebration, in the British Library where you can view detailed descriptions of all the components of the show, clothing, choreography, including some character designs that were finally discarded in the synthetic scenes of Callot's prints and whose sketches are even more interesting, if possible, to understand the totality of the final assembly that could be seen on the stage of the Piazza di Santa Croce, as an early example of the ludic classroom.

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<sup>8</sup> Alert about it the profesor of the University Rey Juan Carlos from Madrid and Scenics Arts Academic of Spain, Eduardo Blázquez Mateos.

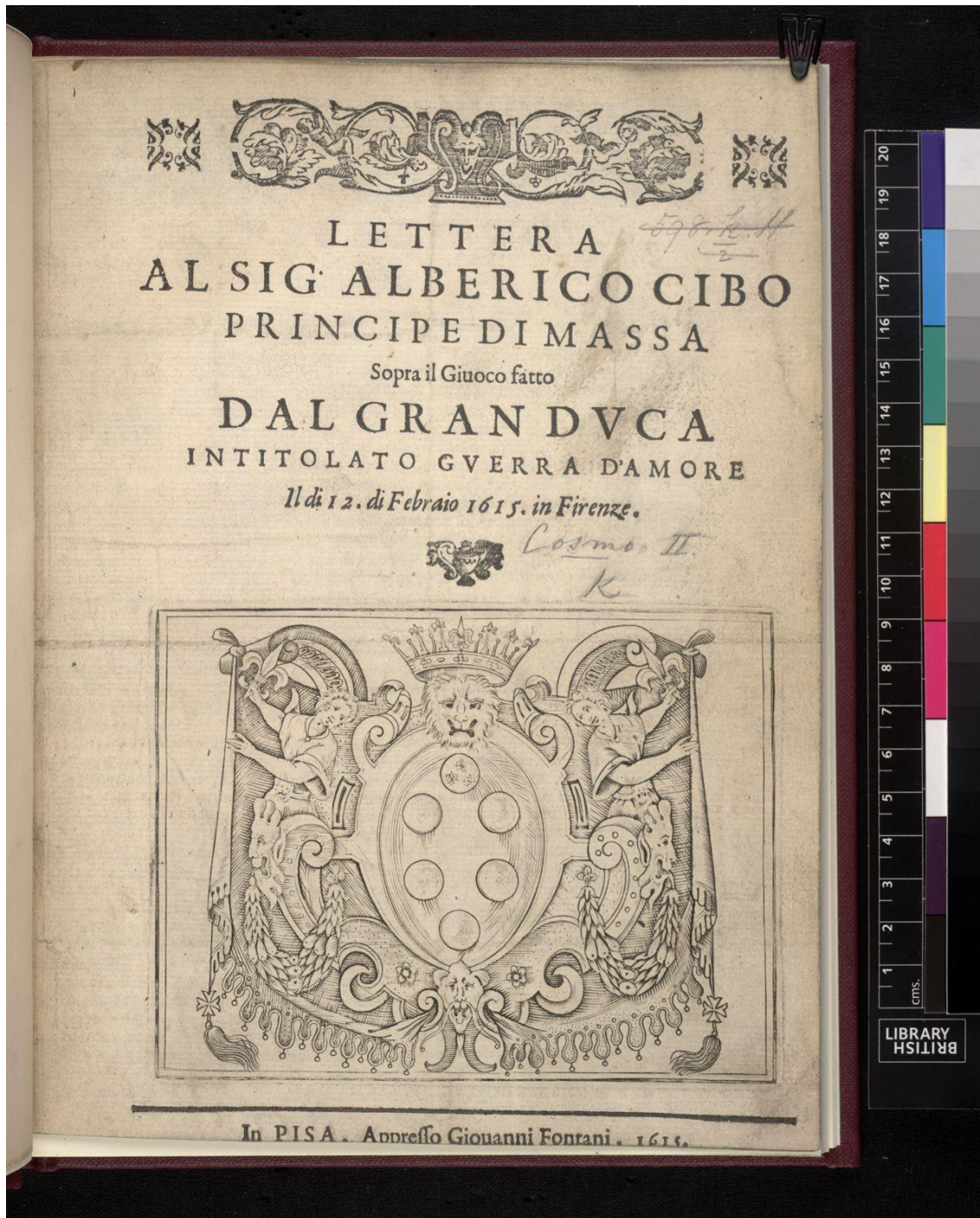


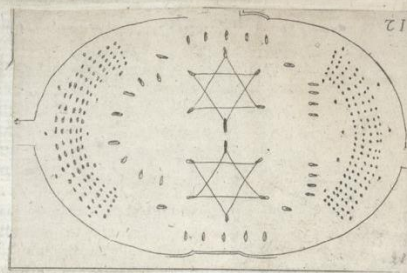
Fig.1. Portada o *Frontis* del libreto. Giulio Parigi stage designer. *Guerra d'amore*, British Library.

ne: presso all'Vna hauèua vn'Elefante: l'habito era d'oro sparso di perle, e gioie, si come ne haueua anco ornata la barba, & la chioma, che l'vna, & l'altra appariaua di essere come di fila d'oro. La Monarchia Indiana vestiu d'habito più ricco, e più vario di tutte le altre: Portaua l'arco alla foggia del paese, & la Targa con vn Sole, che surgeua dell'Onde. Il resto del Carro haueua all'intorno effigiato con ricco lauoro i più principali fatti, & i più gloriosi di Trofei di queste quattro Prouincie. All'intorno del Carro veniuano otto Giganti, alcuni con pietre in mano, che mostrauon di tirare, & altri con l'arco di quando in quando faceuan vista di scaricare, & eran accomodati con tal arte, che con trapassar ciascuno quasi la metà dell'humana ordinaria grandezza, haueua con tutto ciò, & mostraua, & adoperaua ciascuna parte, e ciascun membro del corpo, & a suoi proprij, & misurati luoghi, & vffitij. La vista di questi, & del Carro, era assai simile alla picciola forma, che qui sene mostra.

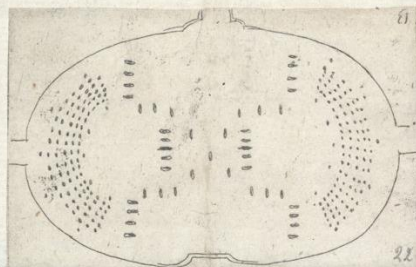


Il Principe Don Lorenzo rappresentaua la persona del Re Gradameto, l'esercito suo era del medesimo numero, & qualità di persone, & armate dell'armi medesime, & secondo, che appariaua sulla piazza la gente d'Indamoro dalla banda d'Oriente, così compariuua con equal corrispondenza dalla porta di Ponente, quella di Gradameto; ne vi hebbe altra diuerfità di figura, se non nella forma della squadra della fanteria, laqual era sola due squadroni l'vn d'auanti, e l'altro adietro, & quelli d'Indamoro, come habbiamo raccontato, ne mostrauon quattro; Di più quella di mezzo che circondaua il Re Gradameto, fù in forma quadrata, doue quella d'Indamoro era ouata. L'altra differenza fù nel colore, sendo questo di Gradameto incarnato, e nero. Della prima squadra incarnata, fù capo il Sig. Niccolò Giugni, li quattro Cavalieri, il Marchese Francesco Malaspina, il Sig. Alessandno de Bardi, il Sig. Ortauio Piccolomini, & il Sig. Alfonso de Ricci. Della seconda, fù capo il Cavalier Girolamo Strafaldo, & i suoi Cavalieri, il Conte Alessandno Bentiuogli, il Conte Ernesto Monte Cuccoli, il Conte Niccolò Caprari, & il Sig. Pio delli Obizzi. Alle due squadre nere, della prima, fù capo il Sig. Giulio Vitelli, e suoi Cavalieri, il Sig. Bartolomeo della Staffa, il Sig. Balduino de Monti, il Sig. Horatio dal Monte, il Sig. Bartolomeo Panciaticchi; Et della seconda, il capo fu, il Sig. Paolo Scierengh, & i suoi Cavalieri il Sig. Girolamo Colloredo, il Sig. Cesare Cauennaghi, il Sig. Niccolò Orlich, & il Sig. Benedetto Pichi. Il color della fanteria, fù il medesimo a liste incarnate, e nere, & la foggia dell'habito era all'vso della Prouincia; & qual dalla seguente picciola imagine si possa raccorre

Fig. 2. Giulio Parigi stage designer. *Guerra d'amore*, British Library.



Girarono poi galoppando parecchie volte, serbando sempre la figura medesima, & tornatisene con li altri quattro al lor posto, usciron quattro del ballo dalle bande di fuora, & fecero tutti insieme vna volta stretta a man dritta, poi vna passata in croce, & voltandoci indietro pur a man dritta fecero vna volta intera a man manca, & andando alle quattro cantonate de i corni, & seguendo le altre squadre con bisce, & rigiri con quattro passate si ritirarono a i posti loro. Nell'istesso tempo li altri sei, doppo hauer fatte a fermo alcune coruette, si auanzarono in mezzo, facendo vn girò sù la man dritta, & andarono coruettando tanto sù quella mano, che li due Principi si trouarono al rincontro per il lungo della piazza; Poi tutti sei fecero vna volta a man dritta, con vna treccia di tre in tre, & sen'andorono con li altri quattro alle loro squadre, restano tutti nella seguente figura.



Quiui fermati a riposare le quattro squadre di mezzo, si mossero girando vna volta in cerchio attorno alle due del ballo. Et poi che furon fermati si spinsero auanti le quattro squadre de i corni, vna incontro all'altra, & li Cavalieri in fila vn doppo l'altro s'andarono intrecciando, & con vna passata tornò ciascuno al suo posto. Poi si voltarono le squadre di dietro, & tornarono nella figura, che al principio del combattere haueuan formato, & fu la prima che si vede di sopra.

Doppo questo fecero il giuoco de Caroselli spingendosi auanti lanciando, dando carica, & ritirandosi squadra a squadra fino a quattro volte; Et alla quinta le due squadre, che si trouarono in mezzo, & all'incontro cominciarono a darsi dietro l'vna all'altra, caricandosi in giro due a due, & cercando di farsi prigione: Et doppo molti giri si sulupparono, & tornarono a i luoghi loro, li Principi s'andarono incontro, & auuicinatosi a dodici braccia si posero in coruette, & si passarono fino alla distanza medesima l'istesso fecero li altri quattro Cavalieri, & si posero a i lati a loro Principi. Poi tornarono i Principi, & poi li sei a far il medesimo. Poi di nouo andarono i Principi ad incontrarsi, & auuicinatosi volò ciascuno a man dritta in trauerso della piazza. Et li altri sei fecero il medesimo. Ritornati a incontrarsi prefero la volta in tondo a man dritta poi a man manca; Li altri quattro nello stesso tempo fecero vn cerchio maggiore attorno a ilor

Fig. 3. Giulio Parigi stage designer. *Guerra d'amore*, British Library.