



THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
BULLETIN

SUMMER 2000







# **FIREWORKS!**

FOUR CENTURIES OF PYROTECHNICS IN PRINTS & DRAWINGS

Suzanne Boorsch

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Fireworks are inherently celebratory, and thus for the Metropolitan to mark this millennial year with an exhibition and publication of images of fireworks is entirely appropriate. Today we tend to take fireworks for granted—though millions watched on television as the arrival of the year 2000 was greeted hour by successive hour around the globe by spectacular pyrotechnics. But at least until the end of the eighteenth century, fireworks were rare. Even the most sophisticated observers were impressed by them. André Félibien, official chronicler for Louis XIV, wrote of a display presented on August 18, 1674, during one of the king's magnificent festivals at Versailles: "Thousands of rockets rose incessantly from everywhere to crown the heights of the sky with an infinity of sparkling stars, while others, even larger, and rising even higher with a tremendous noise and intensity, seemed to attack the very stars."

In Europe, from the early fifteenth century, fireworks had been staged for special occasions, and most of the images included here are official records of such productions. In focusing on each

event in turn, this *Bulletin* illuminates, if you will, a string of particular moments in history: in Florence in 1579 Grand Duke Francesco de' Medici is finally able to marry the woman he loves; in 1689 exiled French Huguenots in Amsterdam rejoice at the accession of William of Orange to the English throne; and in 1883 New Yorkers and Brooklynites celebrate the triumph of engineering that links their two cities across the East River.

That the exhibition consists almost entirely of works on paper from the Museum's own collection is a measure of the extraordinary range and depth of the Metropolitan's Department of Drawings and Prints. Among many specialized areas within its holdings, the festival material is outstanding, including some three hundred fête books and additional hundreds of separate prints and drawings. Many of these were gathered by the first two curators of the Department of Prints, William M. Ivins Jr. and, especially, A. Hyatt Mayor, who was enthralled by the "stupendous diversity of printed images"—the phrase is that of Lincoln Kirstein, donor of the charming toy theater reproduced on page 50.

It was John J. McKendry, successor in 1966 to Hyatt Mayor, who conceived the idea of a book featuring these images of fireworks. John had selected numerous objects, gathered considerable relevant material, and drafted some entries, but the project came to a halt with his untimely death in 1975. Suzanne Boorsch, associate curator in the Department of Drawings and Prints, has based the present *Bulletin* on John's beginning, and she has dedicated it to his memory.

The Metropolitan continues to add fireworks material to the collection. In 1999 we were fortunate to acquire, through the generosity of Marianne and Paul Gourary, an extremely rare print by Claude Lorrain—one of the most vibrant and spontaneous of all treatments of the fireworks theme (see p. 19). The Gourarys have also lent some uncommon prints and books from their personal collection to the exhibition. No fewer than seven additional acquisitions made during the past year can be seen in the galleries, two of them on these pages. Each one enhances our celebration.

Philippe de Montebello  
*Director*

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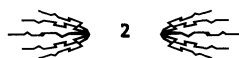
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On the cover: Detail of *The Girandola at the Castel Sant'Angelo*, by Francesco Piranesi and Louis-Jean Desprez (p. 39). Inside front cover: Detail of *Entry of Louis XIII and Anne of Austria: The Lion*, by Pierre Faber (p. 16). Inside back cover: Detail of *Entry of Maximilian II*, by Jost Amman (p. 11). Back cover: Detail of *Opening of the Brooklyn Bridge* (p. 49)





# INTRODUCTION

*Fireworks had no other purpose than amusement and endured no longer than the kiss of a lover for a lady, if as long.*

Vannoccio Biringuccio, *Pirotechnia* (Venice, 1540)

About 1630 the Parisian printmaker Abraham Bosse published a set of etchings of the Four Elements. To exemplify fire, Bosse did not show a person sitting close to a hearth to keep warm, or roasting meat on a spit—he chose fireworks. The young man in the foreground of Bosse's print (fig. 1) holds a rocket and a fuse, and the spectators in the background enjoy eruptions from a typical fireworks set (traditionally called a "machine," following the Italian usage of the word *macchina*) in the form of a castle. Bosse illustrated the element of fire as *feux d'artifice*—the parallel term "artificial fire-works" was used in English well into the eighteenth century—which existed solely to provide pleasure, wonder, and awe.

Everybody loves fireworks. Transience, however, is one of their principal attributes, as Biringuccio noted in his metallurgical manual, and to render their fleeting visual effect on a flat surface is a challenge for an artist; to do so in a black-and-white print might seem close to impossible. And yet from the sixteenth to the end of the nineteenth century hundreds of such prints were made—some in color but most of them in black and white—recording fireworks displays and illuminations to celebrate weddings and births, coronations and military victories, national holidays, and even engineering feats such as the successful completion of the Brooklyn Bridge. The prints and drawings on these pages—a selection from those presented in the exhibition "Fireworks!

Four Centuries of Pyrotechnics in Prints and Drawings"—demonstrate the wide variety of methods artists have used to try to capture the appearance of fireworks in the act of exploding, as well as the perhaps surprising diversity of celebrations in which they were included.

The Chinese were the first to realize the explosive property of the mixture of sulfur, charcoal, and saltpeter (potassium nitrate), in the ninth century or earlier—but it may have been as late as the fourteenth century that this knowledge reached Europe. (Europeans, however,



Fig. 1. **The Element of Fire**, ca. 1630. Abraham Bosse (French, 1602–1676). Etching, 5 3/4 x 4 5/8 in. (14.6 x 11 cm). The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1951 (51.501.2280)



quickly found another use for this mixture, commonly known as gunpowder, in firearms.) Fireworks, which usually combine combustible materials with propellants, are documented in Rome for the election of Pope John XXIII (one of the antipopes) in 1410, and in Florence for the visit of Galeazzo Sforza, duke of Milan, in 1471. A number of manuscripts made in Nuremberg in the mid-sixteenth century record the rudimentary pyrotechnics of the so-called Schembart, an annual Shrovetide festival going back at least to 1449. The celebratory quality of fireworks suited joyous occasions of every kind, aristocratic or popular, secular or religious, lavish or modest. Fireworks were usually the culmination—the grand finale—of a rich program of events, which sometimes continued over several days.

Festivities that included fireworks can be divided into two categories: the recurring, such as saints' days or national commemorations, and the onetime occasions. The former were more common, but there are more images of the latter because they were unique, historic events, and the authorities who organized them often commissioned a record, as text, image, or both. If the record was to be widely distributed, it would have to be produced in multiple, and for this reason the images were usually

prints—woodcuts, engravings, etchings, or lithographs.

Many of these prints were published in official accounts known as festival or fête books. The earliest printed fête book is probably that describing the entry of Charles VIII, king of France, into Tours in 1483. The earliest extant example with illustrations is the account of the entry of the future emperor Charles V into Bruges in 1515. The genre flourished, increasing in both elaboration and size, to approach an apogee with the volume describing the festivities for the marriage in 1739 of Louise-Élisabeth of France and Don Philip of Spain, the pages of which measure 25 ½ by 18 ½ inches (see pp. 30–31). The genre may have reached its limit with the monumental tome commemorating the coronation of Alexander II of Russia in 1856, which exceeds thirteen square feet when opened (see p. 46). Beyond being a record of the event for posterity, a lavish publication, like the event itself, was an affirmation of the power and wealth of the commissioning entity. About one-quarter of the images in this *Bulletin* were created for such fête books.

Most fireworks today are admired against the night sky, relying for their impact on the height attained by the shells, the succession of bursts, the variety of colors, and the loud noise. Early

displays, however, were more like stage presentations than sky shows. An allegorical narrative unfolded, or at the minimum a symbolic tableau was presented. There was usually dramatic conflict, more often than not in the very basic form of a clash between good and evil—and the forces for good invariably won. The authors of the early classic pyrotechnic manuals assumed that to stage a fireworks display one would need a battle. In 1630 Jean Appier Hanzelet illustrated his idea of an appropriate battle on a ship, with men fighting on deck and, simultaneously, a multitude of explosions on the vessel, in the water, and in the air (fig. 2). John Babington in 1635 showed a dragon in combat with a horseman emerging from a castle; in another illustration (fig. 3) the dragon's inner workings are partly visible, below a diagram of eight dancers on a music box, with its mechanism revealed as well.

References to the gods of antiquity imparted the authority of classical culture to these presentations. In 1650, in a third great fireworks manual of the seventeenth century, Casimir Siemienowicz not only expounded the history and properties of the major pagan gods and goddesses at learned length but also included two engravings of Bacchus, god of wine, sitting on a barrel: in one he is shown whole; the other, seen as if by



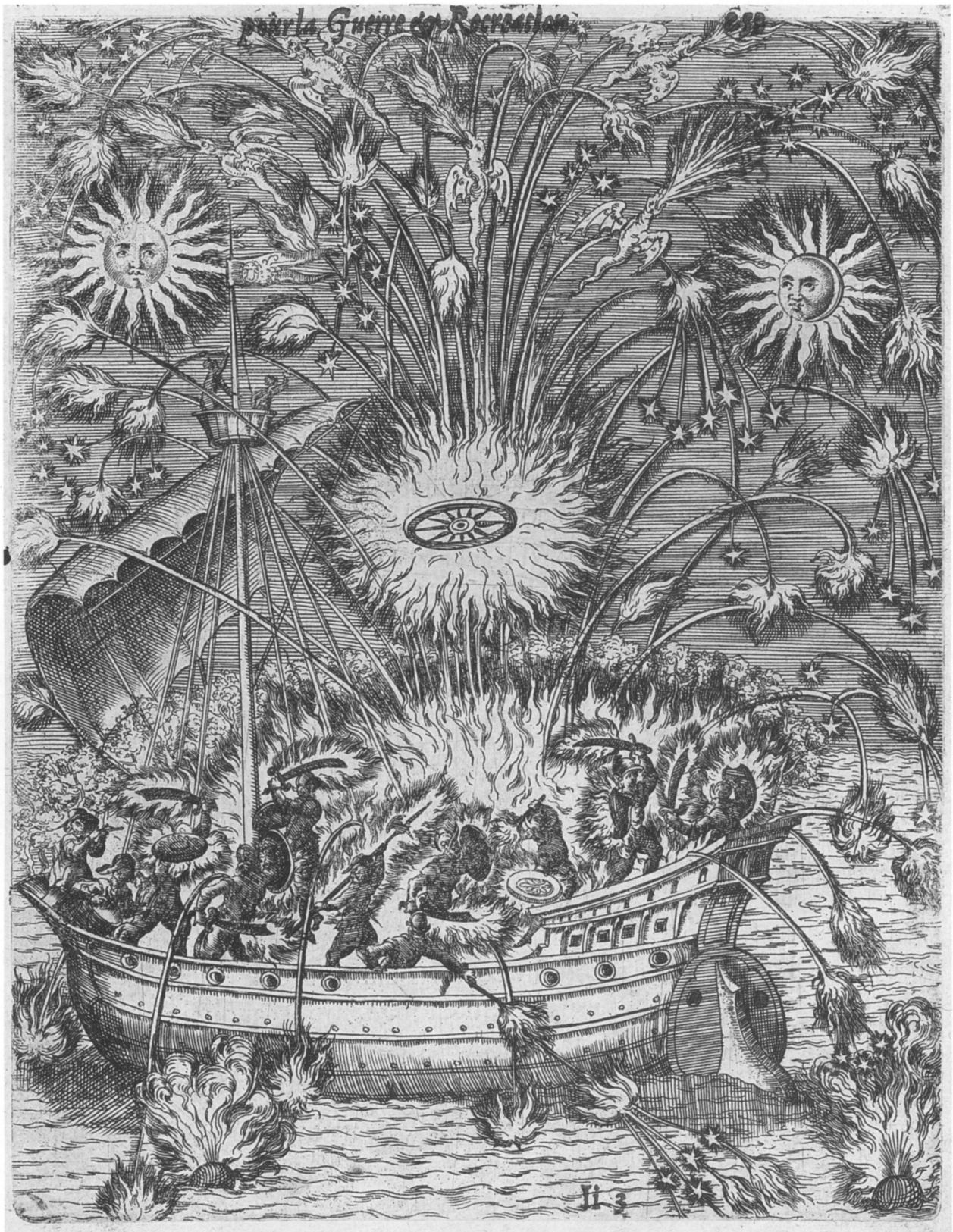


Fig. 2. **Fireworks Battle**, in Jean Appier Hanzelet, *La pyrotechnie* (Pont-à-Mousson, 1630). Etching, 7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 5<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (20 x 15.2 cm). Arms and Armor Library, Bequest of Stephen V. Grancsay, 1980



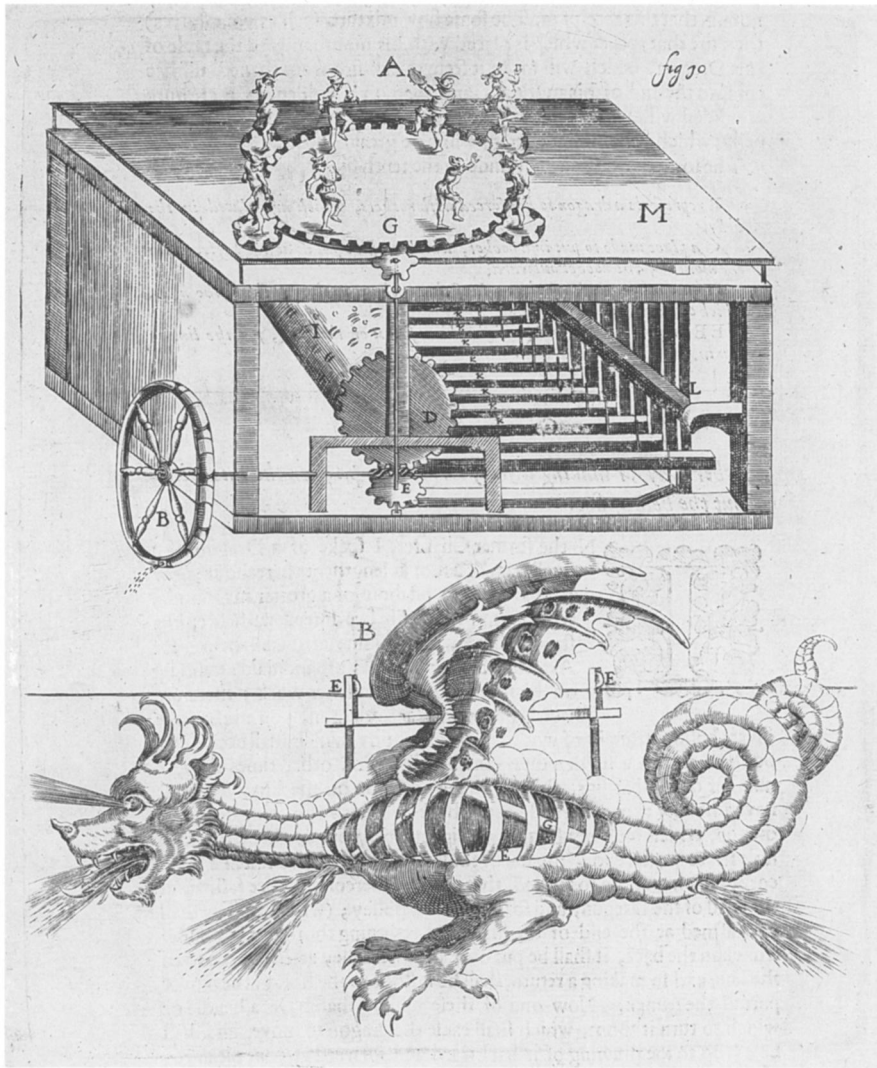


Fig. 3. **Music Box and Dragon**, in John Babington, *Pyrotechnia* (London, 1635). Engraving, 11 7/8 x 11 3/4 in. (30.1 x 29.6 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1952 (52.506.2)

military victories over the Ottoman Turks, who were menacing western Europe throughout this period. A century later Louis XIV made manifest the power and magnificence of a strong centralized monarchy with lavish entertainments at Versailles. The fête of 1664 was titled “The Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle” (see p. 21), and in fact the palace of Versailles and the green theater of its grounds did make a seemingly magical enclave for the king and his court. When in 1814 London staged an extravaganza in the city’s three major parks to celebrate—prematurely, as it turned out—the end of the Napoleonic Wars (see p. 43), the ambition and complexity of the festival were a measure of the fear engendered by the “tyrant of France.”

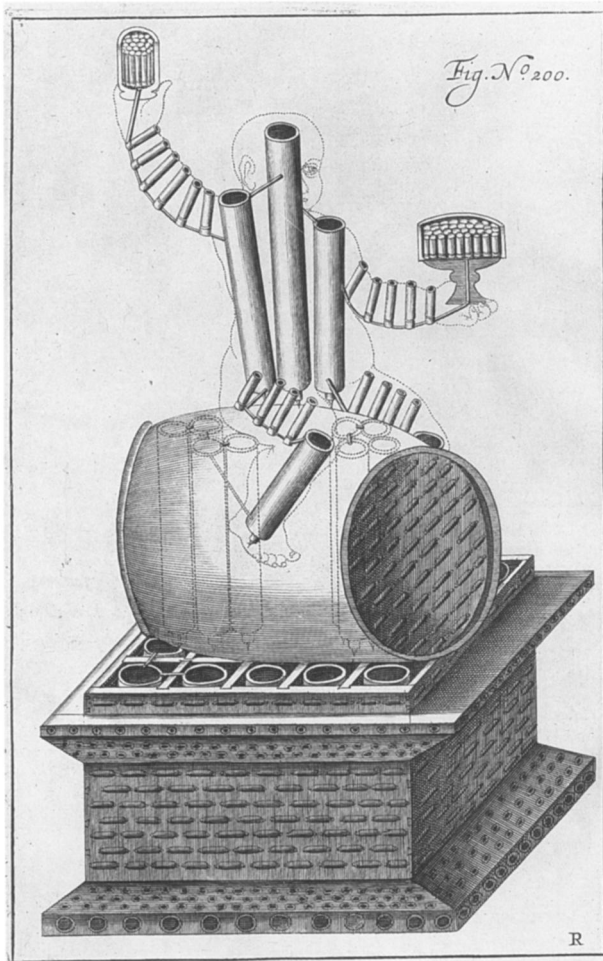
The strategies used by artists to convey the experience of watching fireworks varied, of course, according to individual ingenuity. They also to some extent followed national styles. In Italy the explosions were often rendered as spontaneous agitated lines, as in the illustrations for the festival of Saint Placidus in Messina in 1589 (see p. 13). In northern Europe renditions of fireworks tended to be more controlled and decorous; a typical example is the mezzotint of the pyrotechnics staged in 1747 by the elector of Saxony for his fifteen-year-old

X ray, reveals the explosives within (figs. 4, 5). Sometimes allegorical content could be quite recondite, as with the festivities for the 1579 wedding of Francesco de’ Medici and Bianca Cappello (see p. 12) or the Florentine feast of Saint James in 1619 (see p. 15). To enlighten the onlookers at the latter occasion, perhaps for the first time one thousand copies of a printed sheet explicating the story were issued beforehand. This idea caught on, and in the mid-eighteenth century the French author of a treatise on fireworks asserted that “one must take pains to instruct the public by printed explanations

distributed among the audience; . . . for otherwise one’s wit would be completely lost on the majority of the spectators.”

Each of these renditions of fireworks, then, represents much more than an attempt to capture a delightful but fleeting visual experience. Most commemorate momentous occasions in the lives of notable individuals, and many of these events had significant national or international implications. When two Holy Roman Emperors were welcomed into cities of the realm—Charles V into Munich in 1530 and Maximilian II into Nuremberg in 1570 (see pp. 9, 11)—both cities staged displays representing





Figs. 4, 5. **Bacchus Figure with Explosives Visible** and **Bacchus Figure, Exterior View**, in Casimir Siemienowicz, *Grand art d'artillerie* (Amsterdam, 1650). Engravings, each image 10 ½ x 7 ¾ in. (26,5 x 17 cm). The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1954 (54.628)

daughter, just before she left Dresden to marry the dauphin of France (p. 33).

The focus of the prints also reflects historical change. In the early centuries the displays were carefully depicted; it was taken for granted that audiences would admire them. During the mid-nineteenth century, however, both Daumier and Homer made images in which the spectators—and unhappy spectators at that—are the principal subject (pp. 45, 47). Even the lithograph in the mammoth book commemorating the imperial coronation in Moscow in 1856 focuses on the varied reactions of the immense crowd (p. 46).

By the beginning of the twentieth century the function of the documentary print had been largely taken over by the photograph. As both cameras and film advanced technologically, the colors of fireworks could be recorded with a high degree of fidelity and their explosions stopped in the sky in a split second. Better still, they could be captured in motion pictures. And yet, even though images made with a camera can provide a level of accuracy unobtainable in prints and drawings, the price of this gain in precision is steep. Brambilla's *Girandola* of 1579, Kuchler's Stuttgart procession of 1609, Lepautre's fêtes at

Versailles, Moreau le Jeune's joyous celebration in Reims in 1765, the felicitous view of the 1883 opening of the Brooklyn Bridge—each has a distinctive look, each is animated by a personal vision. These artists in effect made it possible for posterity—for us—to share with them the particular amusement they found in watching the fireworks. Surely Biringuccio would have agreed that the pleasure derived from these images has endured much longer than even the most passionate kiss.





1504, 1506 NUREMBERG  
**Carnival Pageants**, in Schembart  
 manuscript book (Nuremberg, ca. 1540)  
 Watercolor, each double-page spread  
 8 1/4 x 12 1/4 in. (21 x 31 cm)  
 Lent by Marianne and Paul Gourary

The Schembart, a Shrovetide festival with roots in folk customs and pre-Lenten revelry, took place in Nuremberg at least sixty-four times between 1449 and 1539; after that it was forbidden by the city council as too rowdy. Fools, heralds, and devils led a procession of

masked dancers—in uniform costumes designed especially for each year's celebration—on a prescribed route through town, stopping along the way at taverns and at a brothel to perform a dance. The dancers swung their pikes and at intervals shot fireworks hidden in ever-green sheaves. As the culmination of the festival, the pageant float was pulled into the main square, where it was attacked amid exploding fireworks until it went up in flames.

A number of mid-sixteenth-century illustrated manuscripts similar to the

one above record the different costumes and floats of these festivals. In 1504 the float consisted of twin towers representing a fortress, shown as though in the midst of a fiery battle. In 1506 a boat on wheels, with a pyrotechnist and a trumpeter in the crow's nest atop a thick mast, perhaps alluded to the Ship of Fools—this was twelve years after the publication of Sebastian Brant's famous satirical poem—although in the illustration the participants are not wearing fool's motley.





1530 MUNICH

**Entry of Charles V**

Hans Sebald Beham (German, 1500–1550)

Woodcut from five blocks on five sheets,

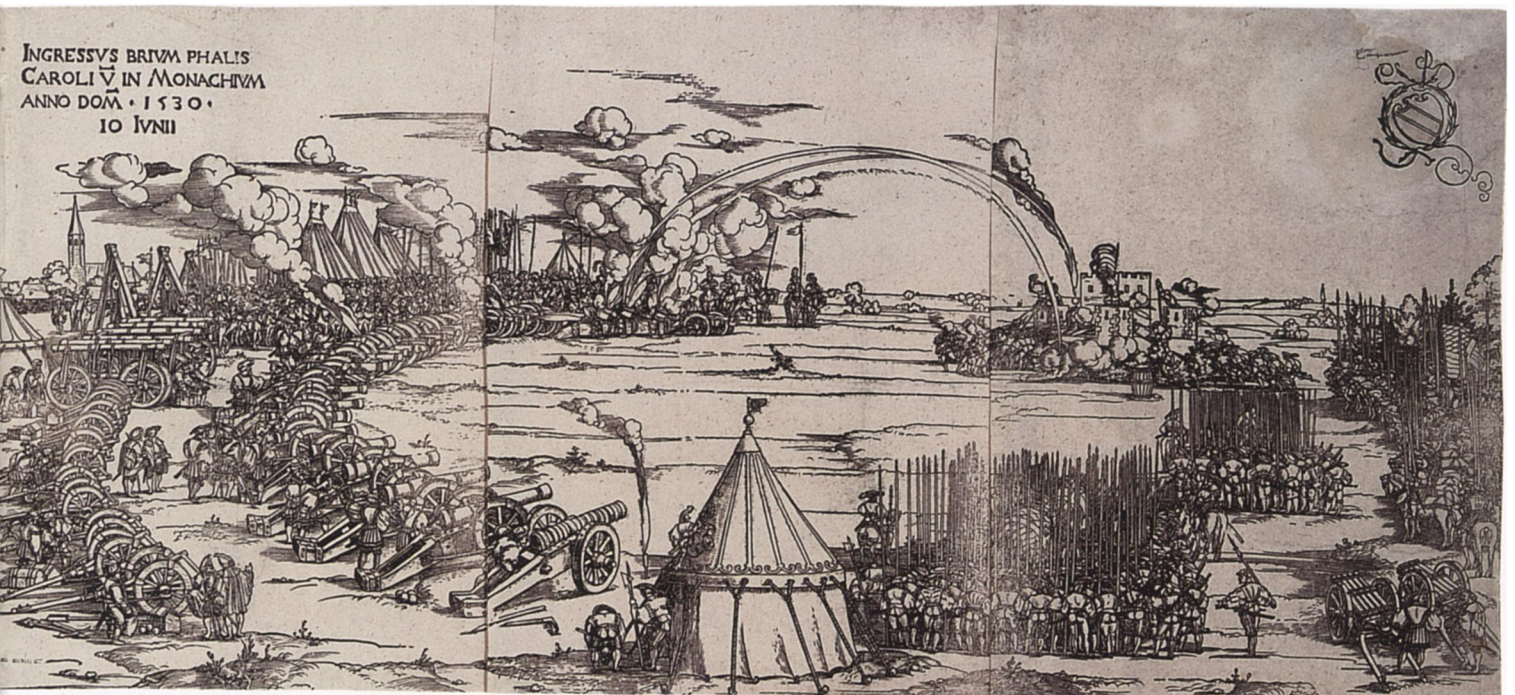
13 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 52 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (37 x 133.5 cm)

The Elisha Whittelsey Collection,

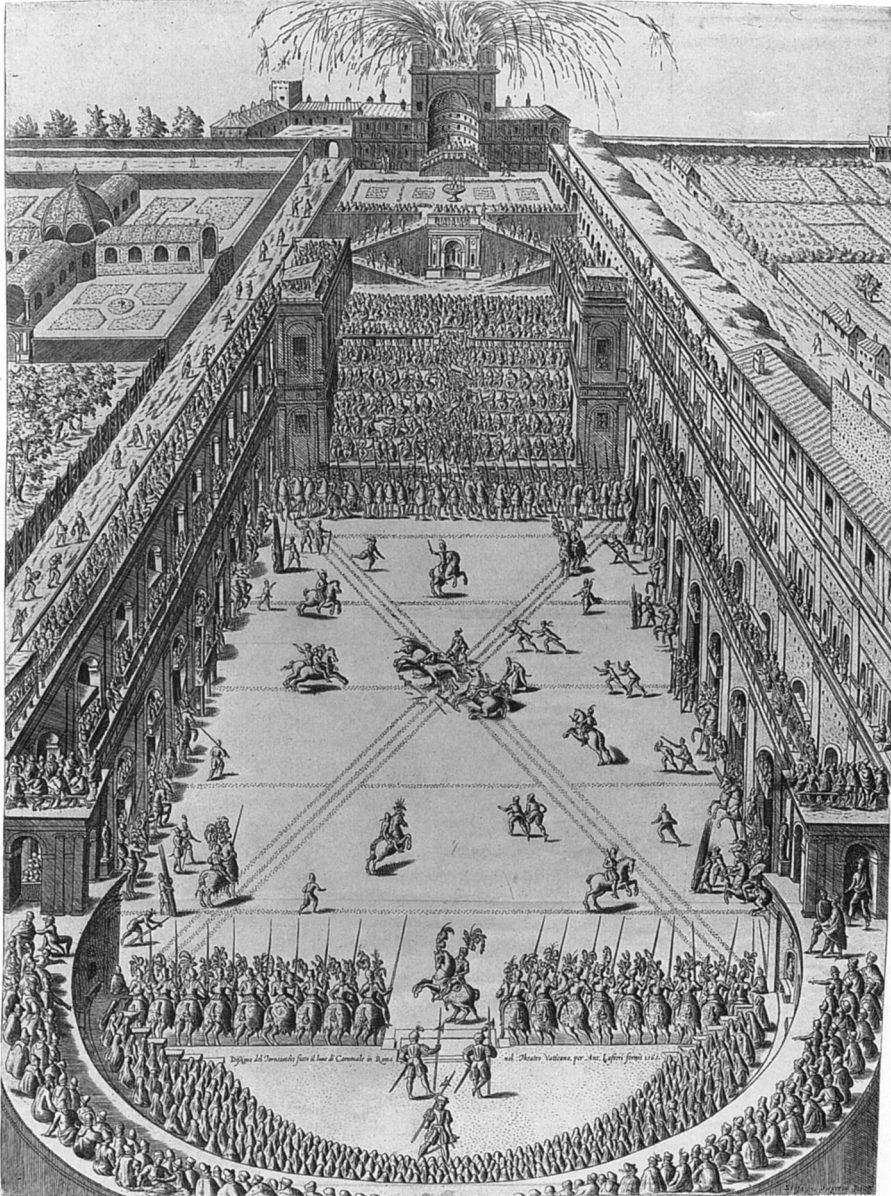
The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1954

(54.539.9a–e)

Charles V was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1519 after the death of his grandfather Maximilian I, but his official coronation did not take place until February 1530 in Bologna. After the ceremony he traveled north to attend the Diet of Augsburg, convened in the hope of persuading the German states, which were torn by religious dissension, to stand together against the Ottoman threat. He stopped at a number of Italian cities and reached Innsbruck in May. From June 10 to 14 the imperial party stayed at Munich—which remained loyal to the Catholic faith throughout the Reformation—and the dukes of Bavaria staged a vigorous military salute to the emperor. Although, strictly speaking, the event was not a fireworks display—since cannon were shot directly at a stage set of Turkish-looking buildings—this monumental woodcut is an impressive early example of the images of explosive celebrations to welcome rulers that continued to be made over the next several centuries.







1565 ROME

**Marriage of Annibale Altemps and  
Ortensia Borromeo**

Étienne Dupérac (French, ca. 1525–1601)

Engraving, sheet 20 1/4 x 14 3/4 in.

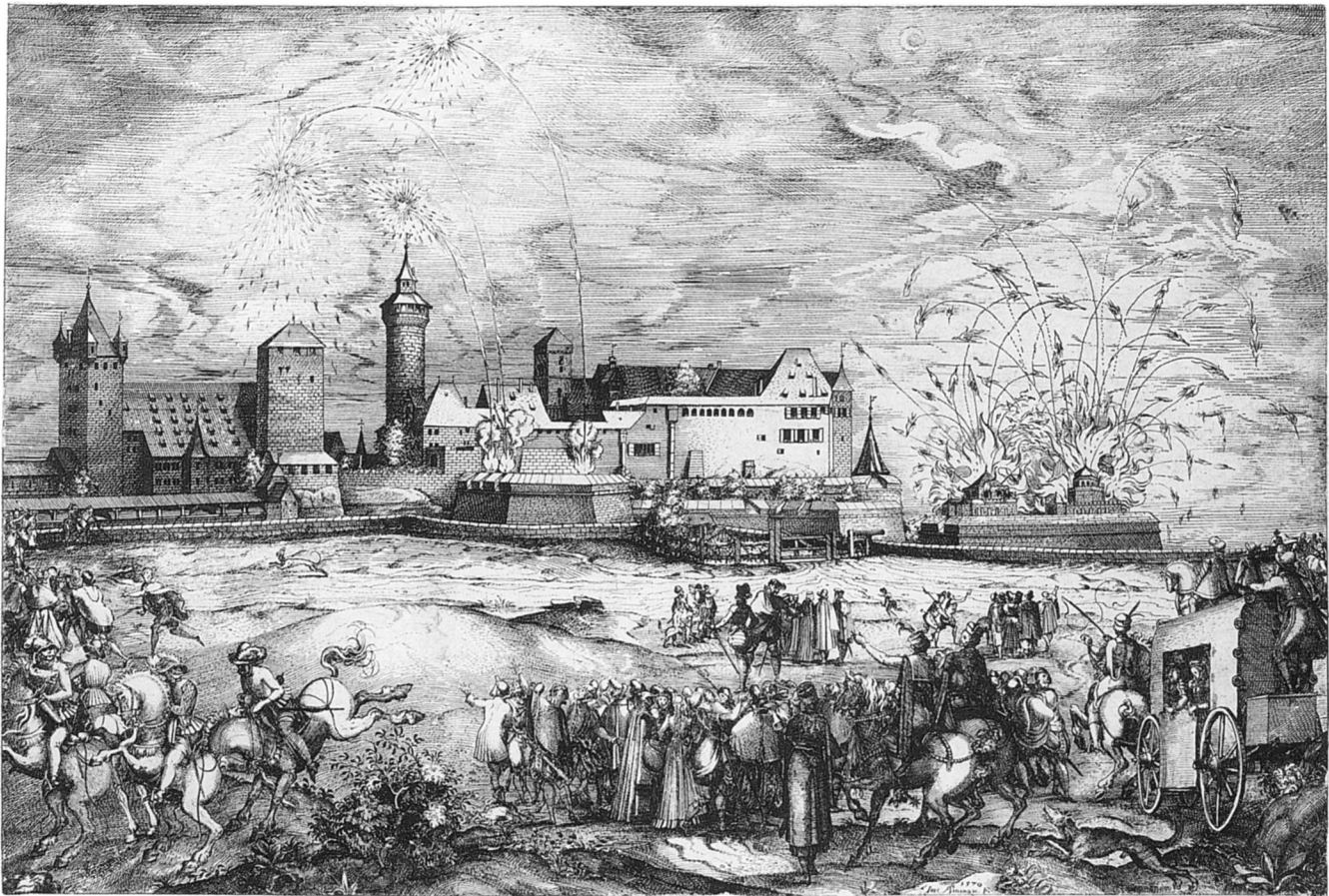
(51.4 x 37.2 cm)

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1941

(41.72[3.73])

Pope Pius IV, with an eye to consolidating the power of his family, early in 1565 united in marriage one of his nephews and the thirteen-year-old half sister of the brilliant and influential cardinal Charles Borromeo, another nephew. The ensuing festivities ended on March 5 with a daylong entertainment in the Vatican's newly completed three-level Cortile del Belvedere, which during the sixteenth century was called the Atrio del Piacere (Hall of Pleasure). The high points of the spectacle are shown as though happening simultaneously. In the lower court, or theater, a tournament in medieval style is under way, and people are running to the aid of riders whose horses are on the ground. In the middle distance, above spectators seated on the colossal steps, several acrobats are in the air—somewhat difficult to discern against the background. After dark the festivities were capped by fireworks, set off at the northern end of the *cortile* from the top of Pirro Ligorio's Nicchione (literally, “great niche”).





1570 NUREMBERG

**Entry of Maximilian II**

Jost Amman (German, 1539–1591)

Etching and engraving, sheet 9 x 13 3/4 in.  
(23 x 34.8 cm)

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953  
(53.600.585)

Both the depiction of the scene and the fireworks themselves are more sophisticated in this etching than in the large woodcut of Charles V's entry into Munich (pp. 8–9), created some forty years earlier. When Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II made his formal entry into Nuremberg in June 1570, he was honored with a triumphal arch, pageantry, gifts, and finally a display of fireworks. In this realistic view of the city from a grassy plain just outside the walls,

where spectators have gathered along with agitated dogs and bolting horses, rockets are exploding high in the air above the castle. To the right of the actual buildings two temporary structures of Islamic design are being consumed by flames, a flattering reference to Maximilian's campaign against the Turks.

Completing the print with amazing speed, Amman presented an impression of it to the Nuremberg city council about two weeks after the event.



1579 FLORENCE

**Marriage of Francesco de' Medici and Bianca Cappello: The Maga and the Dragon**, in *Feste nelle nozze* (Florence, 1579)

Etching, 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 8<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (12.2 x 21.8 cm)  
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1931 (31-34)

When Grand Duke Francesco de' Medici fell in love with Bianca Cappello, she was a poor man's wife. By the time her husband died, Francesco was married to Joanna of Austria, sister of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II. Two months after Joanna died, Francesco and Bianca were married in secret; propriety decreed a longer wait until the public ceremony.

This took place in October 1579 and culminated in a *sbarra*, or pageant, in the courtyard of the Pitti Palace. Three mountains, a temple, a painted city, and two huts containing lifelike elephants were part of the scenery. At the outset

of the action, a maiden in rich foreign dress related the story of her lost knight. Apollo appeared, one of the mountains was struck by a thunderbolt, and an evil maga (female magus, or sorceress) astride a fantastic beast was disgorged, followed by a five-headed dragon "looking as though a mountain of fire were moving." Enfolded in the dragon's wings was the maiden's knight. The reunited lovers lived happily ever after; Francesco and Bianca had nine years together before they died within hours of each other.



1589 MESSINA

**Festival for Saint Placidus: Fireworks**

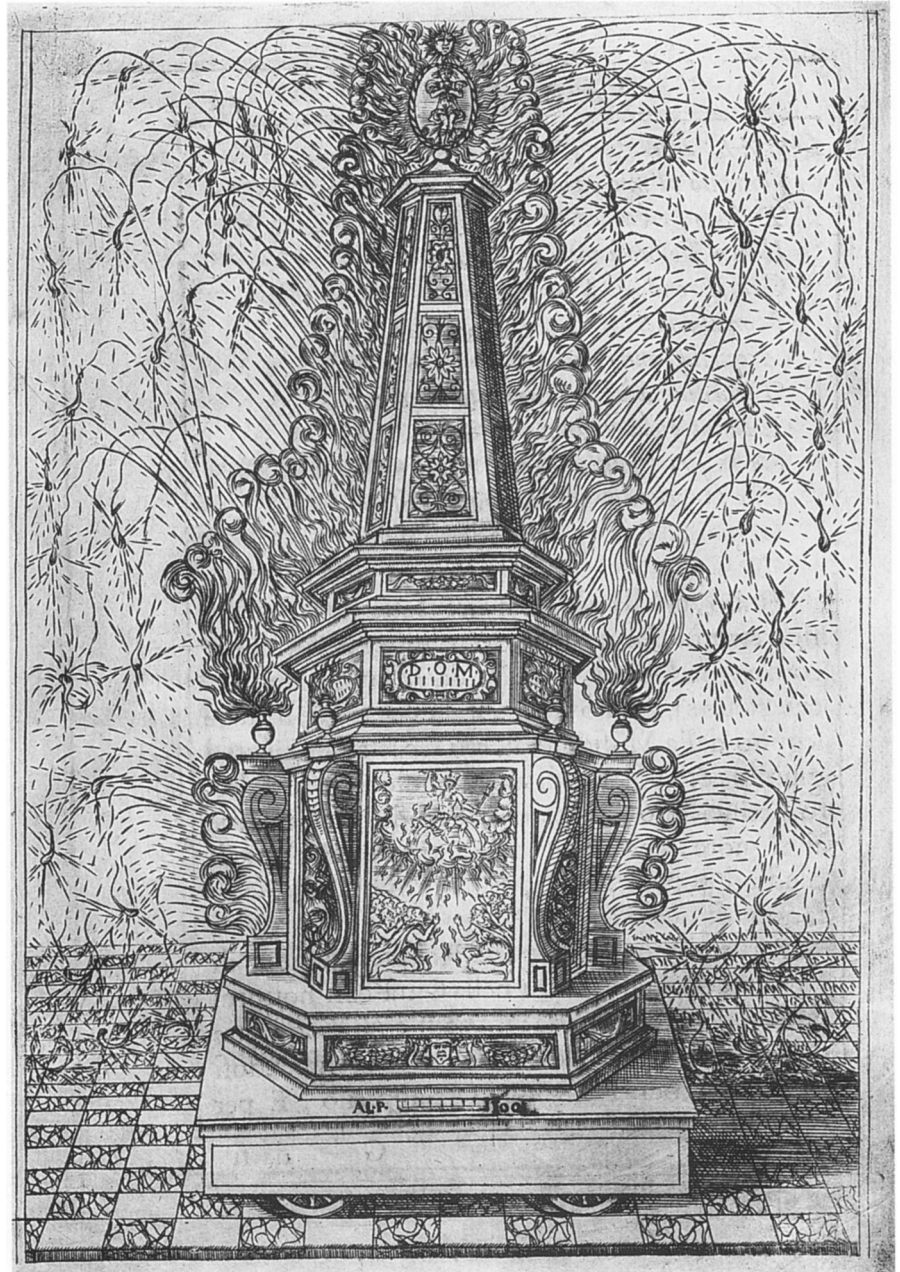
**Obelisk**, in *Breve raguaglio*

(Messina, 1591)

Etching, 8 3/8 x 6 in. (21.2 x 15.4 cm)

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1936 (36.79)

The visit to Sicily of the thirteen-year-old Habsburg prince who was to ascend the Spanish throne as Philip III was marked by three days of festivities in honor of the martyred Saint Placidus and his companions. Remains discovered the previous year during the rebuilding of a church had been identified as theirs. It was later learned that their martyrdom by pirates was a twelfth-century fabrication, but in 1589 citizens of Messina were enthusiastic celebrants. The book commemorating the occasion has twenty-seven plates—of the harbor, the churchyard where the bones had been buried, decorated triumphal arches, and the procession, which included biers with tableaux of the martyrdom, the figures probably made of papier-mâché. This obelisk on wheels, described in detail in the text, was decorated with painted panels alluding to fireworks; Jupiter hurling thunderbolts is on the visible side. The rendition is typically Italian: stylized flames surround the structure, the rockets' outward movement is shown as distinct arcing lines, and the individual explosions are rendered by bursts of short dashes.



1609 STUTT GART

**Marriage of Johan Friedrich, Duke of Württemberg, and Barbara Sophie, Margravine of Brandenburg, in *Repraesentatio der . . . Aufzug* (Stuttgart, 1611)**

Balthasar Kuchler (German, d. 1641)

Etching, 11 1/2 x 14 1/4 in. (29.2 x 36 cm)

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1939 (39.6.2)

Elaborate allegorical floats were common in both religious and secular processions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but this mountain of fire may have been exceptional. The marriage celebration of the duke of

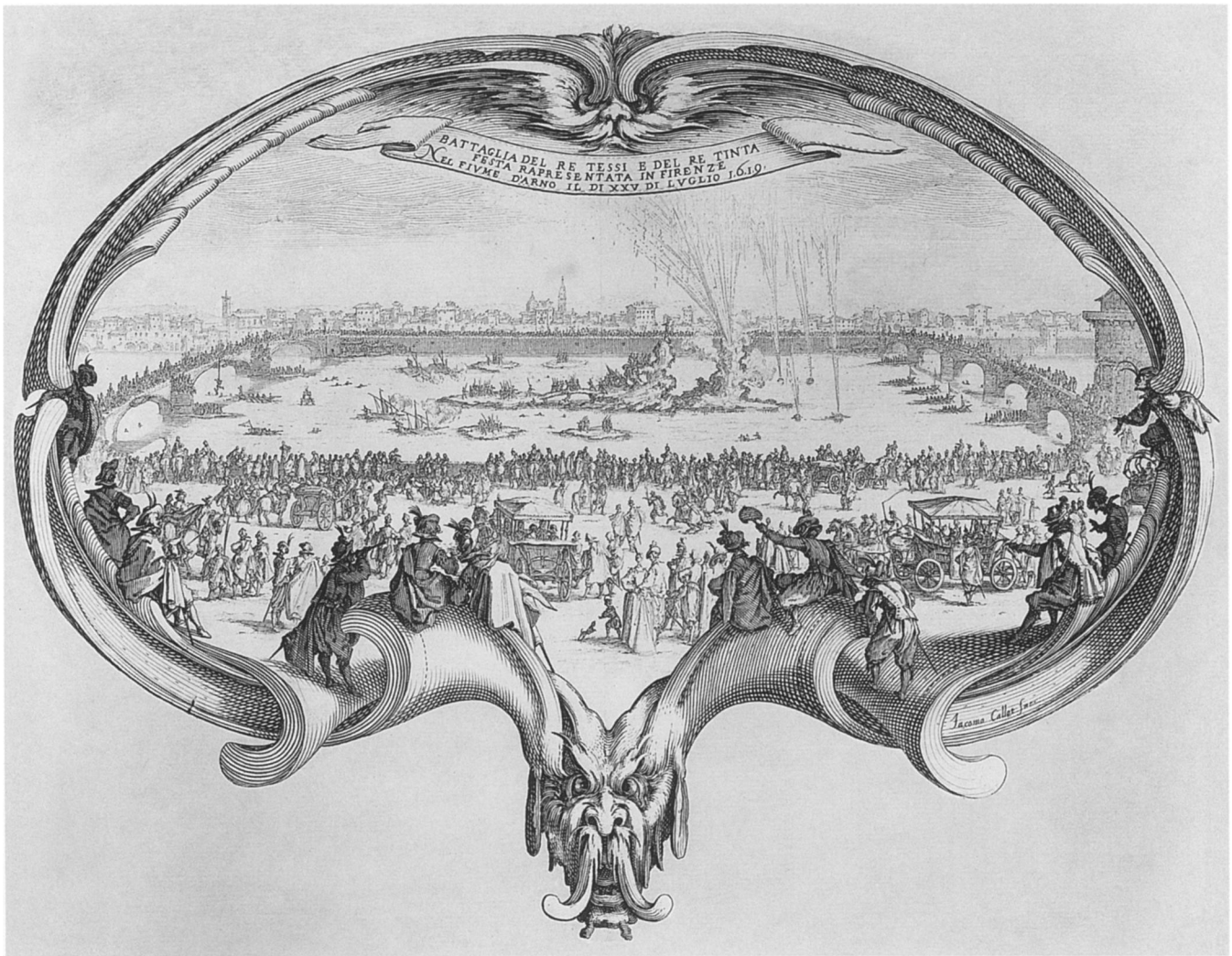
Württemberg and the margravine of Brandenburg on November 6, 1609, included some thirty different presentations. Each was sponsored by one of the attending nobles, who competed in richness and invention. Personifications of Time, Truth, Peace, and Abundance and riders meant to be mythical or historical heroes were interspersed with musicians and fools. Four floats representing the elements were provided by Joachim Ernst, the bride's father. Mars stood for earth, Neptune for water, and Mercury for air.

The float seen here represented fire. Apollo, god of the sun, is at the top, but

he is not the usual beardless youth, for the participants were the nobles themselves. A salamander, believed to thrive on fire, stands firmly in the center of a blazing sun. The attendants wear masks painted with wild expressions, and even their horses are outfitted in the sun's rays. The float itself would have been a wheeled platform supporting a stove and a scaffold covered by canvas or papier-mâché; metal pipes let out the smoke. Although it is impossible to tell from the etching, probably only a few of the holes would have been outlets for smoke, while the rest would have been painted imitations.







1619 FLORENCE  
**Festival for the Feast of Saint James**  
 Jacques Callot (French, 1592–1635)  
 Etching, sheet 8 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 11 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.  
 (21.9 x 29.5 cm)  
 The Elisha Whittelsey Collection,  
 The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1961  
 (61.546.2)

Callot's etching was unprecedented in recording a fireworks celebration in fan shape, meant to be mounted onto cardboard, and perhaps also in having been produced before the event it depicts. A spectator, seated on the scrolling cartouche in the foreground, actually holds a fan presumably bearing this etching. The Medici grand duke Cosimo II commissioned the print in anticipation of the feast of Saint James, July 25, which was celebrated with a spectacle on the Arno River.

Fifty members each from the guilds of dyers and of silk weavers staged a mock battle between Re Tinta (King Dye) and Re Tessi (King Cloth), vying for the hand of a queen. The armies fought on

an island, shown with two huge outcroppings; the dyers won, threw the weavers into the river, and stole the sacrifice prepared for Vulcan in order to offer it to the queen. The god of fire, angered, caused a great eruption in the form of a fireworks display that illuminated the riverbanks and brought the festival to a close.

Callot recorded the townscape accurately but greatly exaggerated the width of the Arno and the apparent distance between viewers and pageant. He may have been making a deliberate reference to optical distortion, as he also included a spectator peering through a telescope, with which Galileo, who was then living in Florence, had made his revolutionary discoveries.



1600–1625 ITALY

**Fireworks in a Piazza**

Giovanni Francesco Barbieri,  
called Guercino (Italian, 1591–1666)  
Pen and brown ink with brown wash,  
7 1/8 x 10 1/8 in. (18.1 x 25.5 cm)  
Rogers Fund, 1912 (12.56.12)

Guercino's drawing would seem to be the record of an actual fireworks display, but the locale has not been identified, and thus the depiction cannot be associated with a particular event. Because

Guercino spent much of his life in Bologna, it is tempting to suggest a connection with the election of the Bolognese Alessandro Ludovisi as Pope Gregory XV in 1621, but the piazza combines disparate elements, including a distinctive Palladian palace at the left, and seems to be imaginary. The scene nonetheless has a sense of immediacy. Spectators watch Catherine wheels spinning on the medieval tower and rockets being shot from it, while a worker kneels to light a bonfire at the left.



1622 LYONS

**Entry of Louis XIII and Anne of Austria:  
The Lion, in *Réception de . . .***

*Louis XIII* (Lyons, 1623)

Pierre Faber (French, active first half  
of the 17th century)

Engraving, 7 1/8 x 10 1/8 in. (18.1 x 25.5 cm)  
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1940 (40.39.1)

In December 1622 Louis XIII and his queen, Anne of Austria, both twenty-one years old, made a triumphal entry into Lyons after a military campaign against the Huguenots in southeastern France. The book commemorating the visit explains, in the ornate and flattering prose typical of this kind of publication: "All our archways, pyramids, columns, temples, fountains, and other decorations . . . have had no other object . . . than to represent by the sun at the sign of its celestial lion our king, who, traveling through the cities of his realm like the king of the planets through the signs of the zodiac, has at last arrived at the one that . . . justly deserves to be called on earth the sign of the lion."

The fireworks based on this astrological conceit were witnessed by the king and queen from the residence of a Monsieur d'Halincour: "Torches were lit in all the windows on both sides of the river, and floating from under the bridge of the Saône came a huge lion all brilliant with fireworks; these burst out partly from its gaping jaw, and partly from its back, upon which it carried also three fleurs-de-lis of flame. . . . The air was filled with rockets, some discharging stars to represent the fall of the firmament; others, accompanied by firecrackers, set off a great thunder; others caused an infinite number of serpents to hover in the air; and still others scattered a golden rain, less rich than that of Danaë, but brighter and less dangerous."



1635 ANTWERP

**Entry of the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand,**  
in *Pompa Introitus* (Antwerp, 1642)

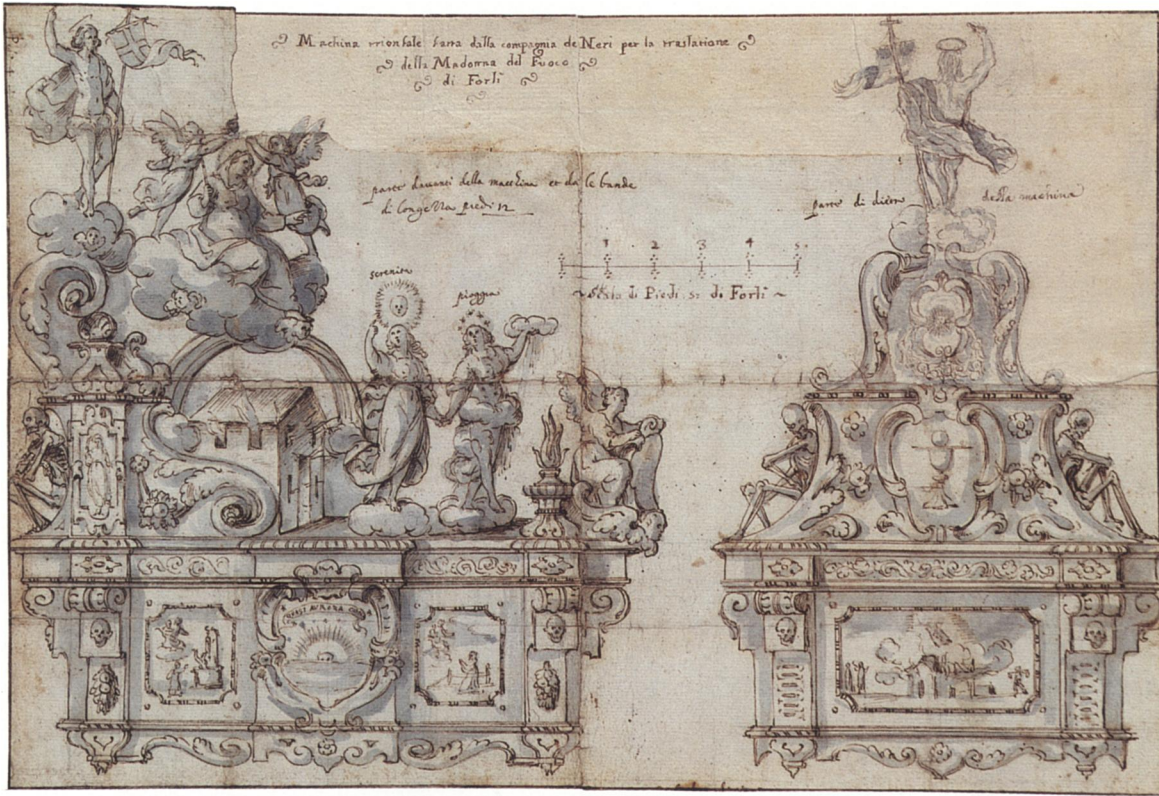
Engraving, 17 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 11 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.

(43.5 x 29.5 cm)

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1945 (45.81)

"Today I am so overburdened with the preparations for the triumphal entry of the Cardinal-Infante . . . that I have time neither to live nor to write," Peter Paul Rubens complained in December 1634 to his friend Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc in Paris. "The magistrates of this city have laid upon my shoulders the entire burden of this festival." Ferdinand, the younger brother of Philip IV of Spain, had succeeded his aunt Archduchess Isabella as governor of the southern Netherlands, and the traditional entry was scheduled for January 1635. However, the visit was delayed by several months and Rubens had time to conceive an elaborate program, a judicious blend of adulation and petition, in brilliant visual terms, which was carried out by virtually the whole artistic community of Antwerp. There were fireworks presentations on two successive evenings. This engraving, the last plate in the lavish volume documenting the event (and the only plate not after a design by Rubens), shows the most spectacular display, which silhouetted the cathedral spire and illuminated a large *F* at its top. Lamentably, both Rubens and Ferdinand had died by the time the book was published, in 1642.





1636 FORLÌ

**Procession Carrying “Madonna of the Fire”: Float of the Fraternity of Death**

Pen and brown ink with blue wash,  
12 ¼ x 18 in. (31 x 45.7 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1964 (64.180.1)

In 1636 a woodcut called the Madonna del Fuoco (Madonna of the Fire) was transported in procession through the decorated streets of Forlì to a new chapel specially built to house it in the cathedral. According to the book describing the occasion, in 1428 the woodcut had blown out of a burning house, escaping destruction although the house was

entirely consumed. The print immediately became an object of veneration, and by the seventeenth century its cult had outgrown its original simple chapel, so a larger and more elaborate shrine was built. This drawing shows the right side and the back of the float made for the procession by the Fraternity of Death, whose members consoled condemned criminals and buried paupers and plague victims. The Madonna is seated on a rainbow above the burning house, with the triumphant Christ behind, telling the faithful that as the sun follows rain, Christ grants eternal life after death.





1637 ROME

**Election of Ferdinand III as King of the Romans: The Round Tower Ruptured**

Claude Lorraine (French, 1604/5?-1682)

Etching, 7 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 5 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in. (19.4 x 13.9 cm)

Purchase, Marianne and Paul Gourary Gift, 1999 (1999.361)

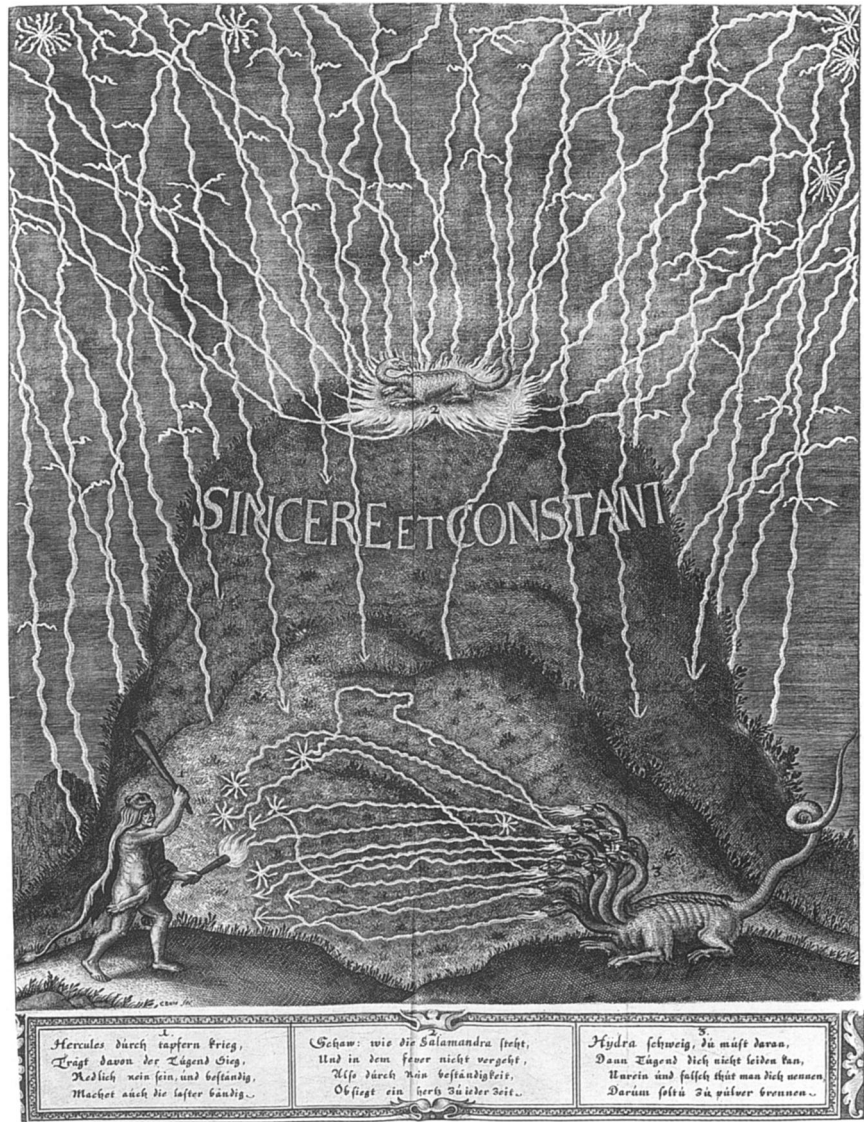
Toward the end of 1636 Ferdinand III, already king of Hungary and Bohemia, was elected King of the Romans, an honorary title that guaranteed his succession as Holy Roman Emperor. Because of the pattern of alliances in the Thirty Years War, this was welcome news both in Rome and in Spain, and the Spanish ambassador organized a celebration with fireworks in Rome's Piazza di Spagna on two consecutive Sundays, February 1 and 8, 1637. Claude, who lived nearby, made a series of ten etchings recording the fireworks. These are not only most unusual in his etched oeuvre—otherwise mostly landscapes—but they are the only fireworks prints by any artist that attempt to convey the experience of the rapid-fire successive stages of a presentation. Five etchings, the fourth through eighth, depict the most dramatic sequence: a square tower, surrounded by allegories of the Four Continents, with the double-headed imperial eagle and the imperial crown above, is shown intact and then in flames; it collapses, and a round tower is exposed. This tower in turn is set on fire; then, as shown here, it ruptures, revealing a statue of the King of the Romans. Eventually, the statue is carried to the ambassador's residence.

1653 HAMBURG

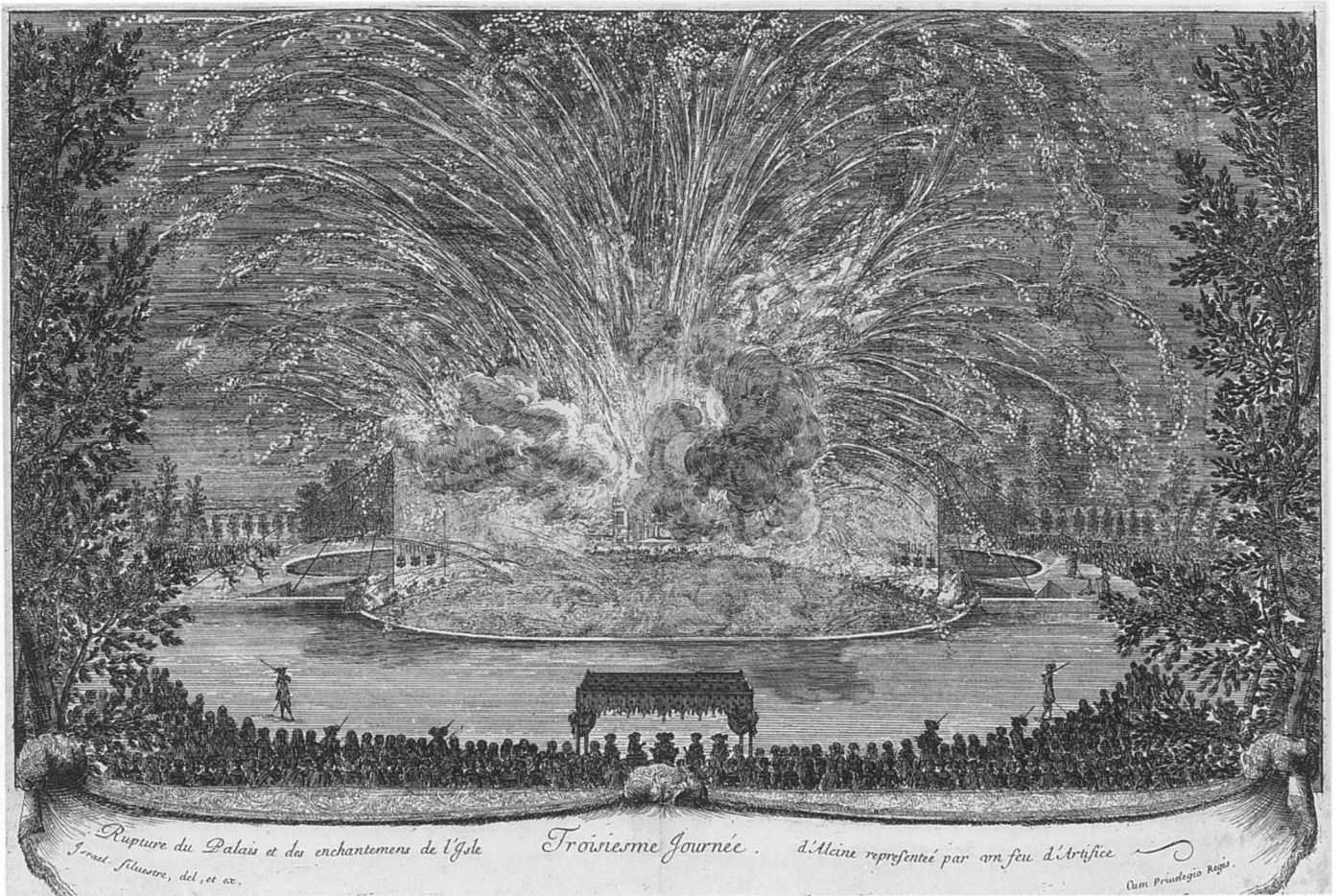
**Marriage of Christian Ludwig, Duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg, and Dorothea, Duchess of Schleswig-Holstein, in *Die triumphirende Liebe* (Hamburg, 1653)**  
Konrad Buno (German, ca. 1610–1671)  
Etching and engraving; large plate (image) 16 x 13 7/8 in. (40.7 x 35 cm); small plate (poem) 1 7/8 x 13 7/8 in. (4.8 x 35 cm)  
The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1955 (55.515.5)

This exuberant explosion, with trails of rockets looking much like crepe-paper streamers, ended a ballet, “The Triumph of Love,” which was part of the celebration for the wedding of the duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg to the duchess of Schleswig-Holstein on October 12, 1653. In the ballet love triumphs over evil and its attendant vices and follies. As often in northern Europe, the performers were not professionals but nobles, and the duke himself played Hercules. Although the story imputed the qualities of the arch-hero to the duke, the artist did not flatter him physically but showed him with a paunch and a small, well-kept mustache, fighting a hydra with not just seven but a dozen heads. The verses keyed to the illustration can be loosely translated as follows:

1. Hercules through valiant fight  
Triumphs in the name of right.  
Being just and pure and steady,  
Tames the vices ever ready.
2. See how the Salamander stands,  
And flames of fire he withstands;  
Thus through purest constancy  
The heart prevails eternally.
3. Silence, Hydra, get away!  
Virtue cannot endure your stay.  
Impure and false are names you earn,  
Therefore like powder you should burn.



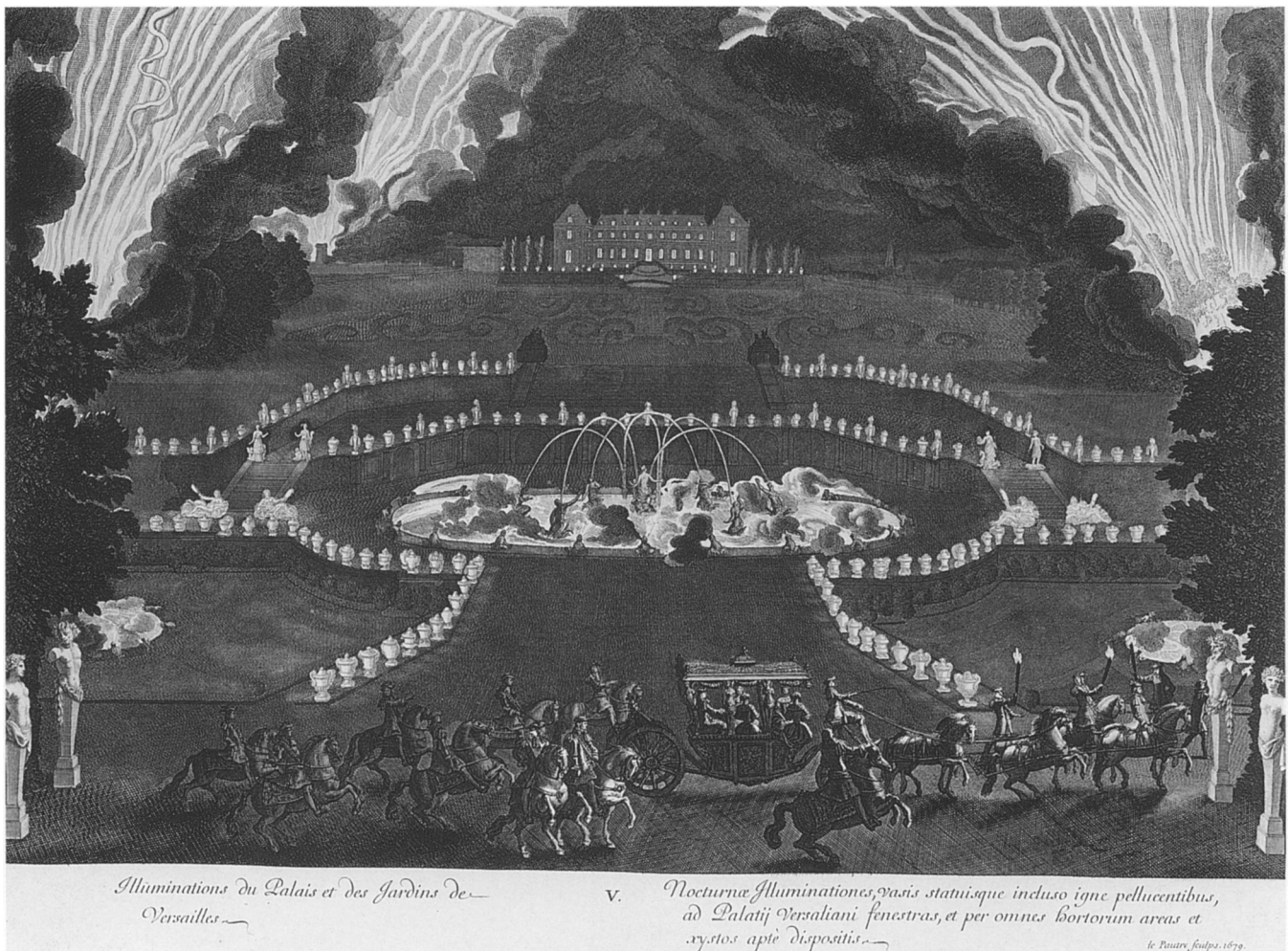




1664 VERSAILLES  
**The Fête of 1664, “The Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle,” Third Day: Destruction of the Palace of Alcina**  
 Jean Lepautre (French, 1618–1682)  
 After Israel Silvestre (French, 1621–1691)  
 Etching and engraving, 11 1/4 x 17 in. (28.5 x 43.1 cm)  
 Purchase, Anonymous Gift, 2000 (2000.141)

Louis XIV reigned for seventy-two years, consolidating power and the functions of government and making good his famous youthful statement to the parliament, “L’état, c’est moi.” The scale and lavishness of his entertainments at Versailles, such as this and the two that follow, manifested his power as well as his genuine love for such festivities. The fête in 1664, in honor of the king’s mistress Louise de la Vallière, was based on an episode from Ariosto’s 1516 epic poem

*Orlando Furioso*. The twenty-five-year-old Louis himself danced as Orlando in a ballet. On the third night, May 9, the king, seated under a canopy and attended by dozens of courtiers to right and left (portrayed by Lepautre in near-perfect symmetry), watched as the hero, Roger, escaped from Alcina’s enchanted island palace. A magic ring placed on Roger’s finger by the good witch Melissa broke the evil spell, and the palace exploded in flames.



1668 VERSAILLES

**The Fête of 1668: Fireworks in the Gardens**

Jean Lepautre (French, 1618–1682)

Etching and engraving, 12 x 16 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.

(30.3 x 42.3 cm)

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1930

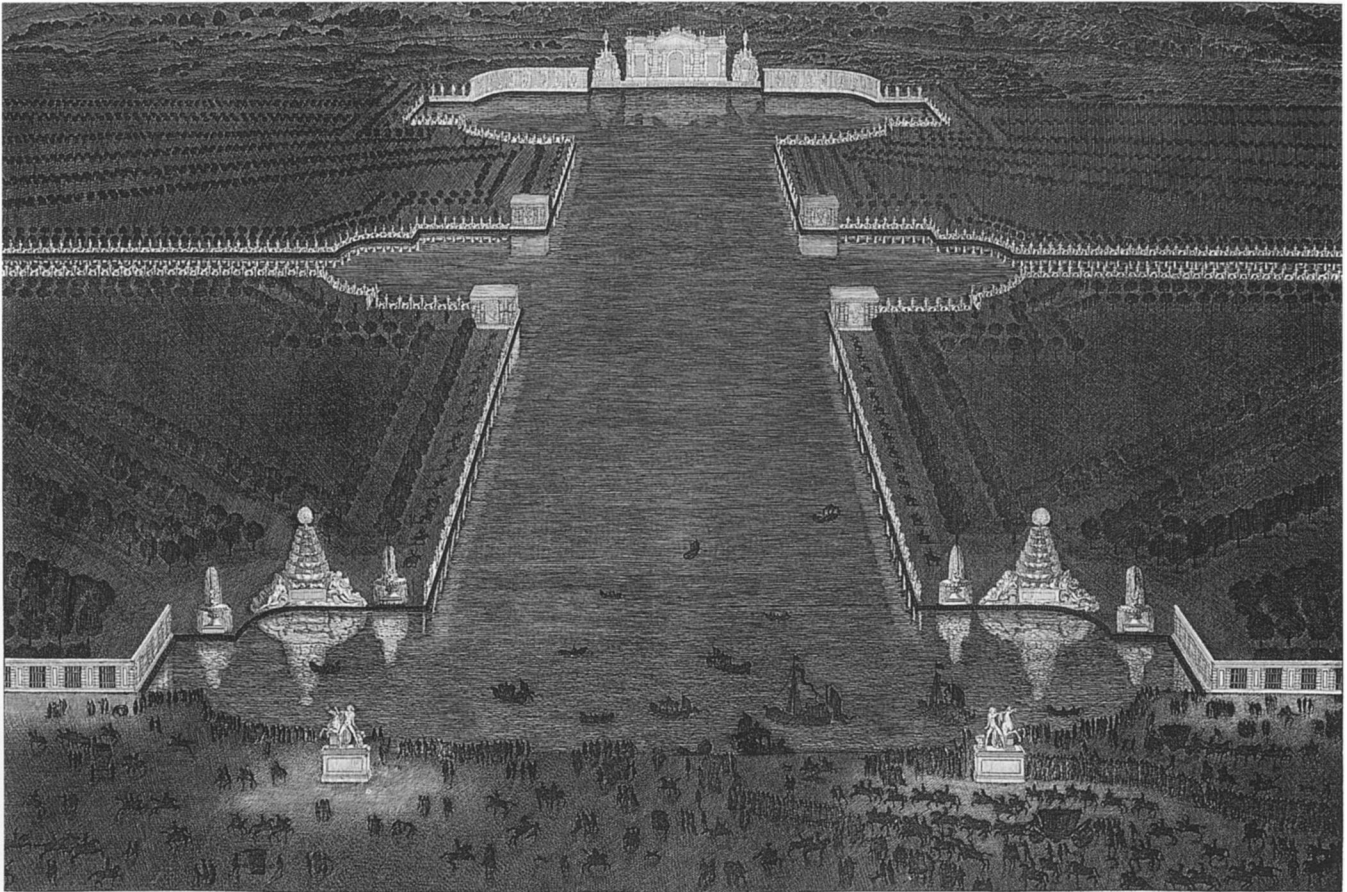
(30.22[32.52])

The romantic fête of 1664 was followed four years later by another of even greater splendor. Held ostensibly to celebrate the end of the War of Devolution, it more truly celebrated the grandeur of Versailles. According to the official chronicler André Félibien, preparations for the fireworks were carried out so discreetly the courtiers never saw them. After the ball the edge of the horseshoe-shaped garden and the castle itself seemed to burst into flames: “This surprise caused an agreeable disorder

among all; not knowing where to go, some hid in the thickness of the groves, others threw themselves on the ground.” Fireworks continued until, in Félibien’s words, “day, jealous of the advantages of such a beautiful night, began to break.”

The last fête, held in 1674, was the most extravagant of all, spread out over six different days during the summer. This, too, celebrated a military victory, France’s annexation of the Franche-Comté region. The fifth day, August 18, was marked by spectacular explosions,





*Sixieme Journée*

*Illuminations autour du grand Canal de Versailles representant des Palais, des Pyramides, des Fontaines, des Statues, des Cerces, des Poissons &c.*

*Dies Sextus*

*Nocturna Illuminationes circa majorem Versaliarum Alueum, seu varia Palatiorum, Pyramidum, Fontium, statuarum, Terminorum, Piscium &c. figuræ, incluso igne, fulgentes.*

*J. Lepautre, 1674.*

erupting from behind an obelisk with a sun above. For the final day, August 31, a more subtle and serene visual delight was prepared—a panorama of illuminations along the parterres, ramps, fountains, and Grand Canal, as far as the eye could see. Gondolas silently carried the royal party on the canal, which was lit by 650 terms, each nine feet high, and a palace of crystal 128 feet long and 38 feet high. Félibien wrote: “Out of the deep silence of the night we heard the violins following His Majesty’s vessel. . . . While

the vessels slowly drifted, we glimpsed the lake glistening whitely all around, the oars striking it with soft measured strokes. . . . Then there was only the water, immured within the night’s obscurity.”

In the late 1670s Louis came under the influence of the severely devout Madame de Maintenon, and the age of festivities came to an end.

1674 VERSAILLES

**The Fête of 1674, Sixth Day:**

**Illuminations around the Grand Canal**

Jean Lepautre (French, 1618–1682)

Etching and engraving, 12 x 16 7/8 in.

(30.6 x 42.9 cm)

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1930

(30.22[32.58])

1667 LEIPZIG

**Celebration for the Elector Johann  
Georg II: Fireworks Display by Day and  
Fireworks Display by Night**

Top: Etching and engraving,

10 1/2 x 14 5/8 in. (26.7 x 37.1 cm)

Bottom: Etching and engraving,

11 5/8 x 13 5/8 in. (29.5 x 34.6 cm)

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953

(53.600.3605, .3604)

These two prints show a fireworks display at Pleissenburg Castle in Leipzig (replaced by the Neues Rathaus in 1899–1905). The celebration honored Johann Georg II, elector of Saxony from 1656 to 1680, whose initials, IGS, and doubtless his portrait, are on the central obelisk. The banderole in the daylight view, which normally would have designated the occasion, has been left blank, and the iconography—Neptune at the left on a small island in the Pleisse River and twelve men wearing classical armor framed in oval wreaths—is not distinctive enough to identify the exact event.

The particular interest of this pair of prints is their realistic rendition of the same scene in daylight and at night with the fireworks going off. The orderliness of the setting carried over into the display itself, in which the rockets, water bombs, and Catherine wheels—one of which surrounds the initials of the elector—seem to be performing in well-tempered harmony.





A Representation of the FIREWORKS upon the River of Thames, over against WHITEHALL, at their Majesties CORONATION A<sup>o</sup>. 1685.



1685 LONDON

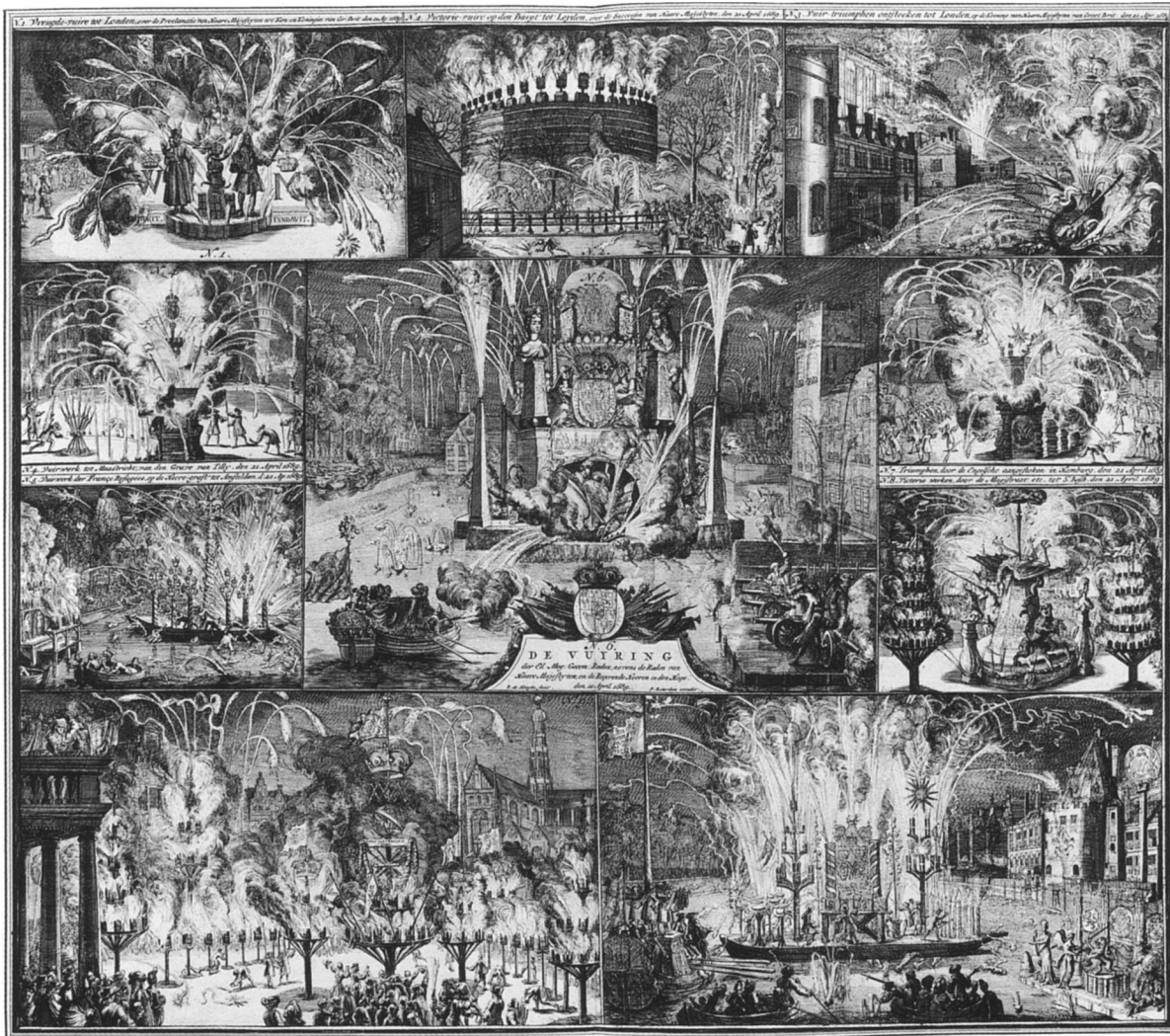
**Coronation of James II**, in *The History of the Coronation* (London, 1687)

Engraving, 16 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 17 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (43 x 45 cm)

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1943 (43.95)

Evocative verbal descriptions abound of royal festivities on the Thames from the fifteenth through the eighteenth century, but visual documents of these events are surprisingly rare. This engraving, which commemorates the coronation of James II in 1685, was among the earliest to depict a fireworks display on the river, although the screen created by nearly symmetrical sprays and rockets, while extremely decorative, gives no concrete idea of the setting. Personifications of

Country and Monarchy flank two obelisks—frequent accoutrements of fireworks displays—entwined with laurel. Between the obelisks the initials of James and Mary, his queen, are surmounted by a crown and a sun shining on the new king and his country. Like many fête books, the one containing this print was slow to appear, and within a year of its publication, William of Orange had landed in England and the Glorious Revolution was under way (see p. 26).



1689 LONDON, HAMBURG,  
& NORTHERN NETHERLANDS  
**Accession of William and Mary  
to the Throne of England**

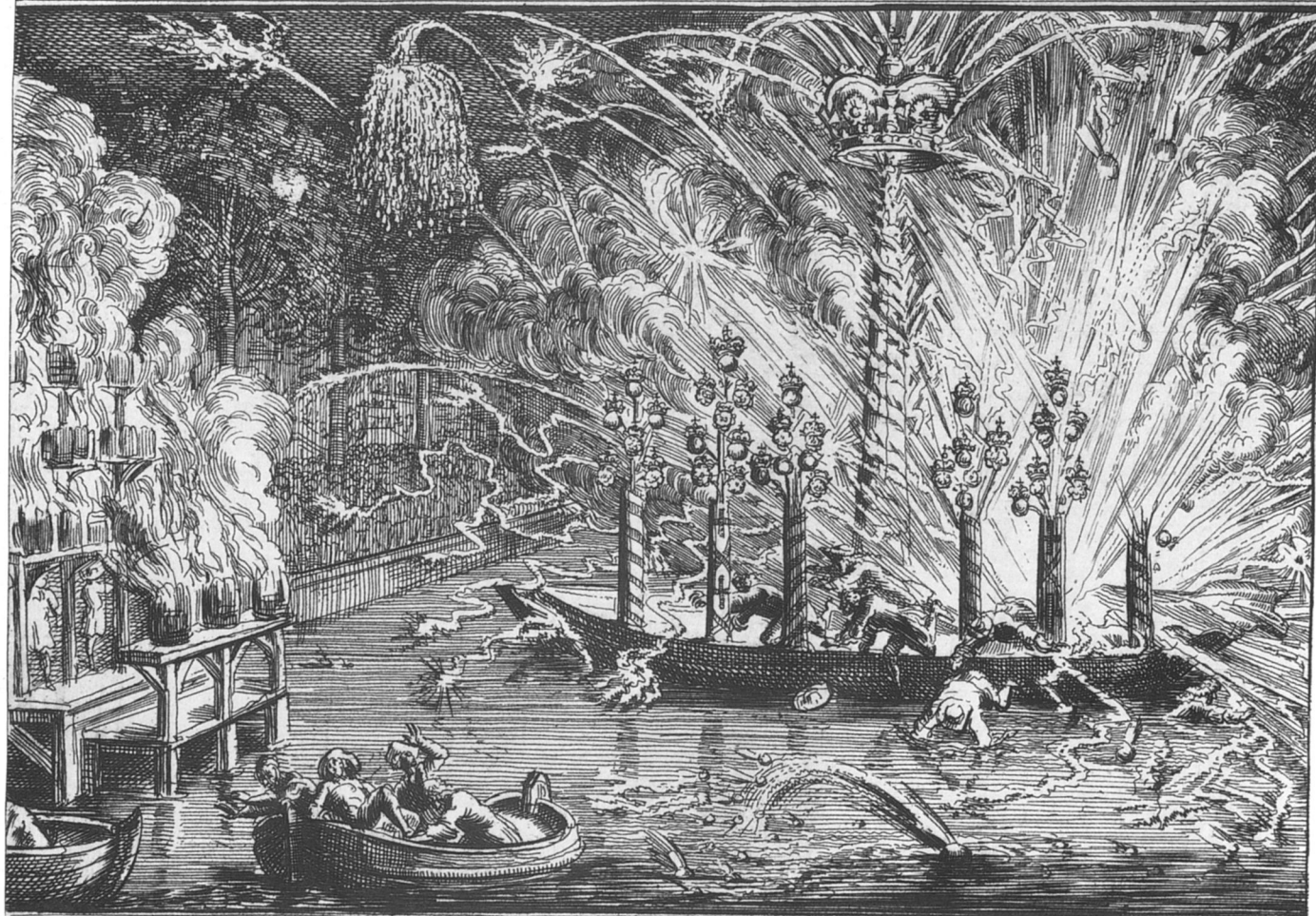
Romeyn de Hooghe (Dutch, 1645–1708)  
Etching, 19 5/8 x 23 in. (50 x 58.6 cm)  
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1944 (44.30)

William of Orange watched carefully as Protestant opposition to the Stuart monarch James II grew. In November 1688 he landed on England’s southern coast. After irresolute resistance James escaped to Catholic France, and in February 1689 William and his wife, Mary—James’s daughter—were proclaimed king and queen. The fanfare in England was equaled by that in the Netherlands, and this etching shows simultaneous celebrations in London, Leiden, Maastricht, Amsterdam, The Hague, S’ Bosch, and Haarlem, as well as in Hamburg, where there was a substantial community of English merchants.

Four years earlier Louis XIV had revoked the Edict of Nantes, ending tolerance for French Protestants, and the Huguenots had fled, many to Amsterdam. The great nineteenth-century historian Macaulay wrote: “Even the ruined Huguenots of France could contribute the aid of their ingenuity. One art which they had carried with them into banishment was the art of making fireworks; and they now, in honor of the victorious champion of their faith, lighted up the canals of Amsterdam with showers of splendid constellations.” In the detail at right, French workers dive into a canal as a blast goes off.



N. 5. Vuirwerk der France Refugées, op de Heere-graft tot Amfteldam. d. 21. Ap. 1689.





1702 THE HAGUE

**Fireworks for the Dutch Victory over the French and Spanish at Vigo Bay**

Jan van Vianen (Dutch, 1660–1726)

Etching and engraving, 20 1/4 x 23 5/8 in.

(51.5 x 60 cm)

The Elisha Whittelsey Collection,

The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1965

(65.614.1)

The War of the Spanish Succession

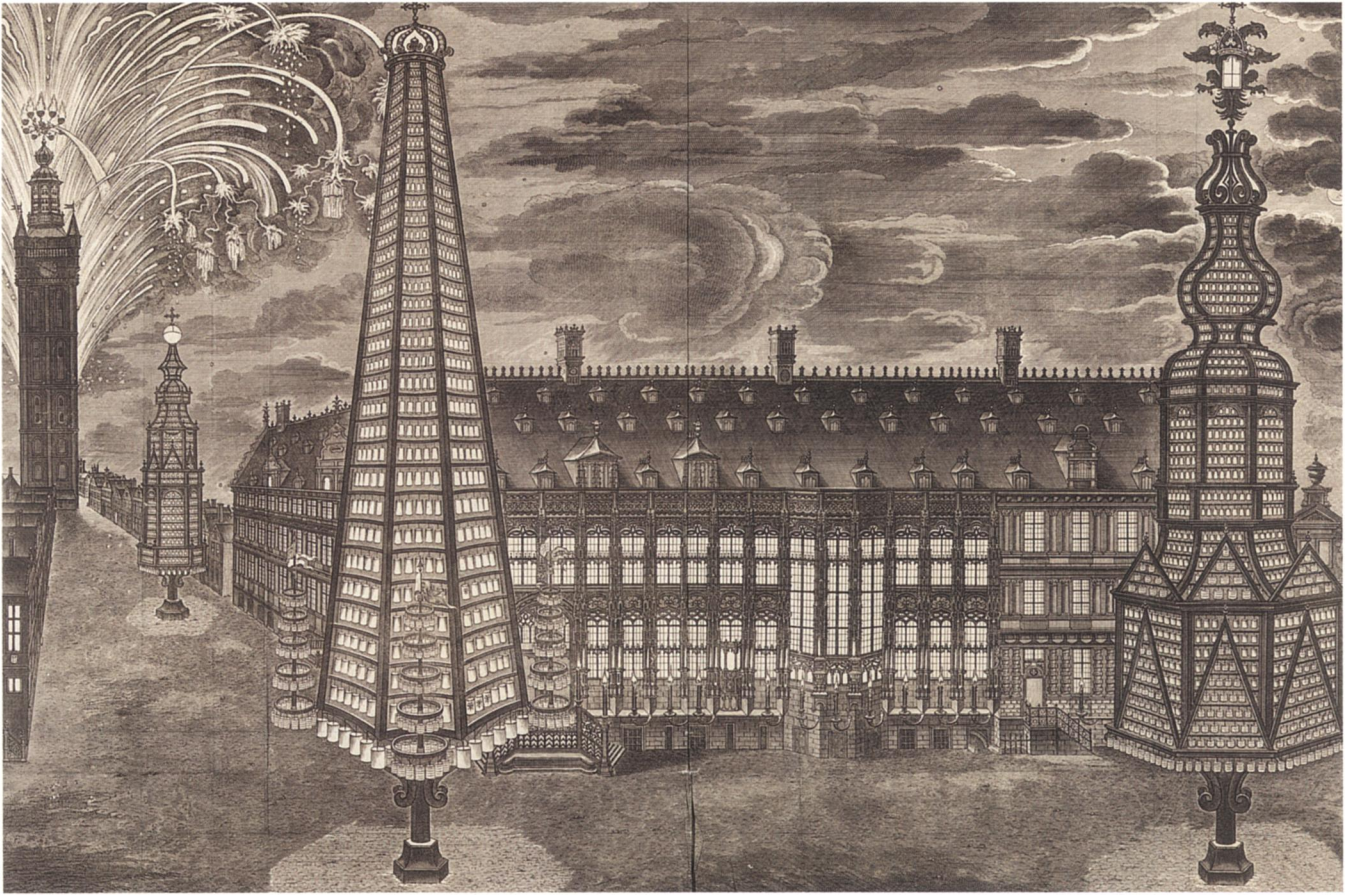
(1701–14) began on the death of the Spanish king Charles II: Louis XIV of France wanted his grandson to ascend the throne, but the Protestant powers feared an alliance of France and Spain. The elaborate allegorical setting depicted here was one of a pair commissioned as backdrops for fireworks on the Vyver, the lake next to the legislative chambers in The Hague, to celebrate the “glorious victory over the French and Spanish” by the English and Dutch at Vigo Bay in December 1702. Freedom sits on a pedestal before a column supporting a

heavenly sphere; Fame flies above.

Various trophies and captives appear on the level below. The lion of Holland with sword and spear and the overlapping initials of Holland and West Vriesland (modern Friesland) are centered on the fence enclosing the structure. The allegory is completed by statues of the four secular virtues (Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance) and of Mars and Neptune—emphasizing that this victory was on land and on sea. All the fireworks and artillery are shown going off simultaneously, producing a joyful if chaotic effect.







1717 GHENT

**Inauguration of Charles VI as Count of Flanders: Illuminations at the Hôtel de Ville and Fireworks behind the Belfry,** from *Relation de l'inauguration* (Ghent, 1719)

Jacob Harrewijn (Flemish, ca. 1660–after 1732)

Etching and engraving, 18 ½ x 27 ¼ in. (47 x 69.2 cm)

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1948 (48.66)

When the War of the Spanish Succession ended, the southern Netherlands were placed under the sovereignty of Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI of Austria. As the principal city of the historic county of Flanders, Ghent welcomed Charles and honored him with the title of count of Flanders. As always, the city fathers took seriously the job of devising festivities that not only would flatter the ruler but also, in both their liberality and their specific symbolic content, would reaffirm reciprocal rights and responsibilities. For three nights buildings throughout town were illuminated. According to the official account, “the citizens vied to demonstrate their zeal, and most of the houses were decorated with inscriptions

and verses praising his Imperial and Catholic majesty and the very august House of Austria.”

The investiture took place on October 18, 1717. After the religious ceremony in the cathedral of Saint Bavo, a cavalcade made its way to the large *Marché du Vendredi*, the traditional site of important political gatherings, for the civil ceremony. Fireworks were later set off from four pyramidal structures on the square. Harrewijn’s print shows similar structures supporting lanterns and imperial emblems in front of the Flamboyant Gothic north facade and more classical east side of the Hôtel de Ville. A wild burst of rockets silhouettes the twelfth-century belfry.

1739 PARIS

**Marriage of Louise-Élisabeth of France and Don Philip of Spain**, in *Description des festes* (Paris, 1740)

Jacques-François Blondel (French, 1703–1774)

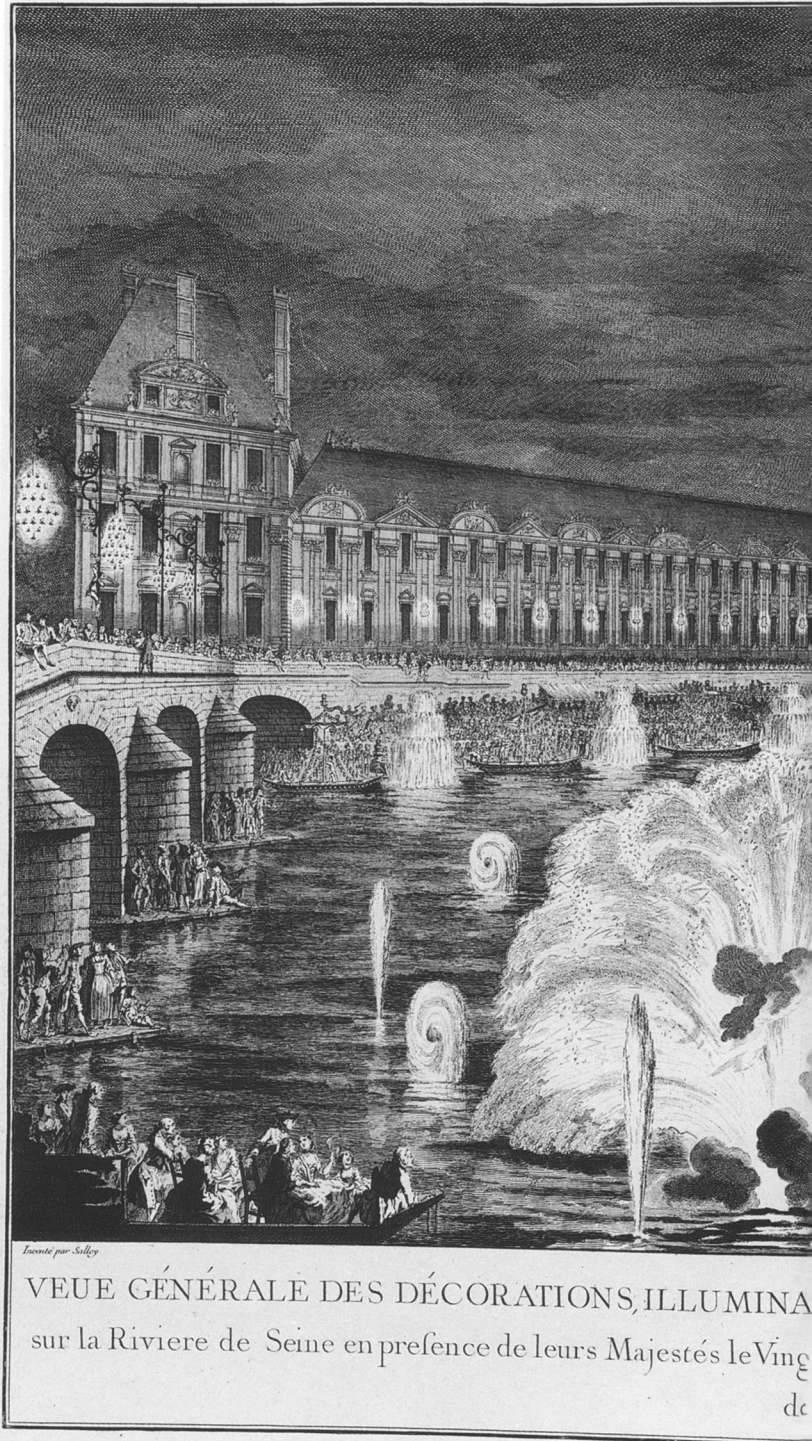
Etching and engraving,

20 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 33 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (51.9 x 84.2 cm)

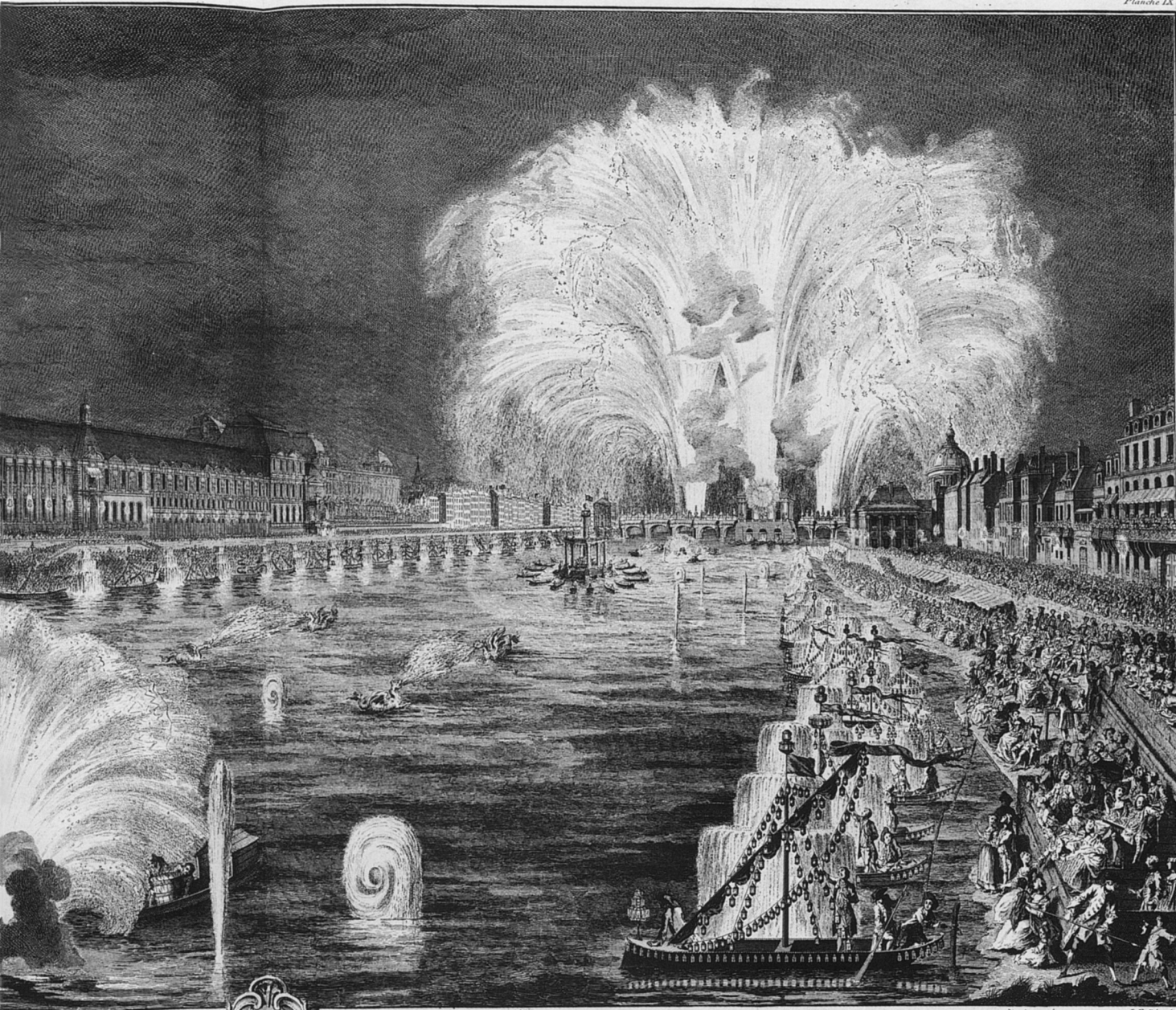
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1941 (41.68.2)

The celebration of the wedding of Louis XV's eldest daughter to the youngest son of Philip V, king of Spain, was probably the most spectacular of the eighteenth-century fêtes. The bride was twelve, the groom eighteen. A small army of architects and craftsmen, led by Jean-Nicolas Servan, who styled himself Cavaliere Servandoni (see also p. 34), worked on the decorations. A temple of Hymen was constructed at the center of the Pont Neuf, an elaborate viewing stand for the royal party was installed against the facade of the Louvre, and the quais were jammed with a crowd estimated at five hundred thousand. Jousts between sailors on boats began before six in the evening. Sixty vessels of different exotic forms started at the Pont Neuf in pairs and took their assigned places along the riverbanks.

Finally, around eight, the king gave the signal: bombs went off, then cannon, then flares and firecrackers. The official account omits it, but the duke of Luynes recorded an unplanned delay of a quarter hour at this point, and then every kind of firework erupted. From the Pont Neuf came a storm of rockets and a gigantic sun, along with the initials of the young couple in blue lights. "With this prodigious explosion that seemed to inflame the sky, accompanied by a new barrage of rapid-fire artillery, the fireworks display came to an end." The event cost the city of Paris the equivalent of one year's revenues, which the king later reimbursed.







*dessiné & gravé par J.F. Blondel*

TIONS ET FEUX  
 Neuf Aoust Mil  
 France, et de Dom



D'ARTIFICE, DE LA FESTE DONNÉE PAR LA VILLE DE PARIS  
 Sept Cent Trente Neuf a l'occasion du Mariage de Madame Louise Elizabeth  
 Philippe Infant d'Espagne.



### Convalescence of Louis XV

Jacques de Lajoüe (French, 1686–1761)  
and François Le Moyne (French,  
1688–1737)

Pen and gray and brown inks with gray  
wash and watercolor, over black chalk,  
14 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 14 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (37.5 x 37.9 cm)  
Edward Pearce Casey Fund, 1999  
(1999.359)

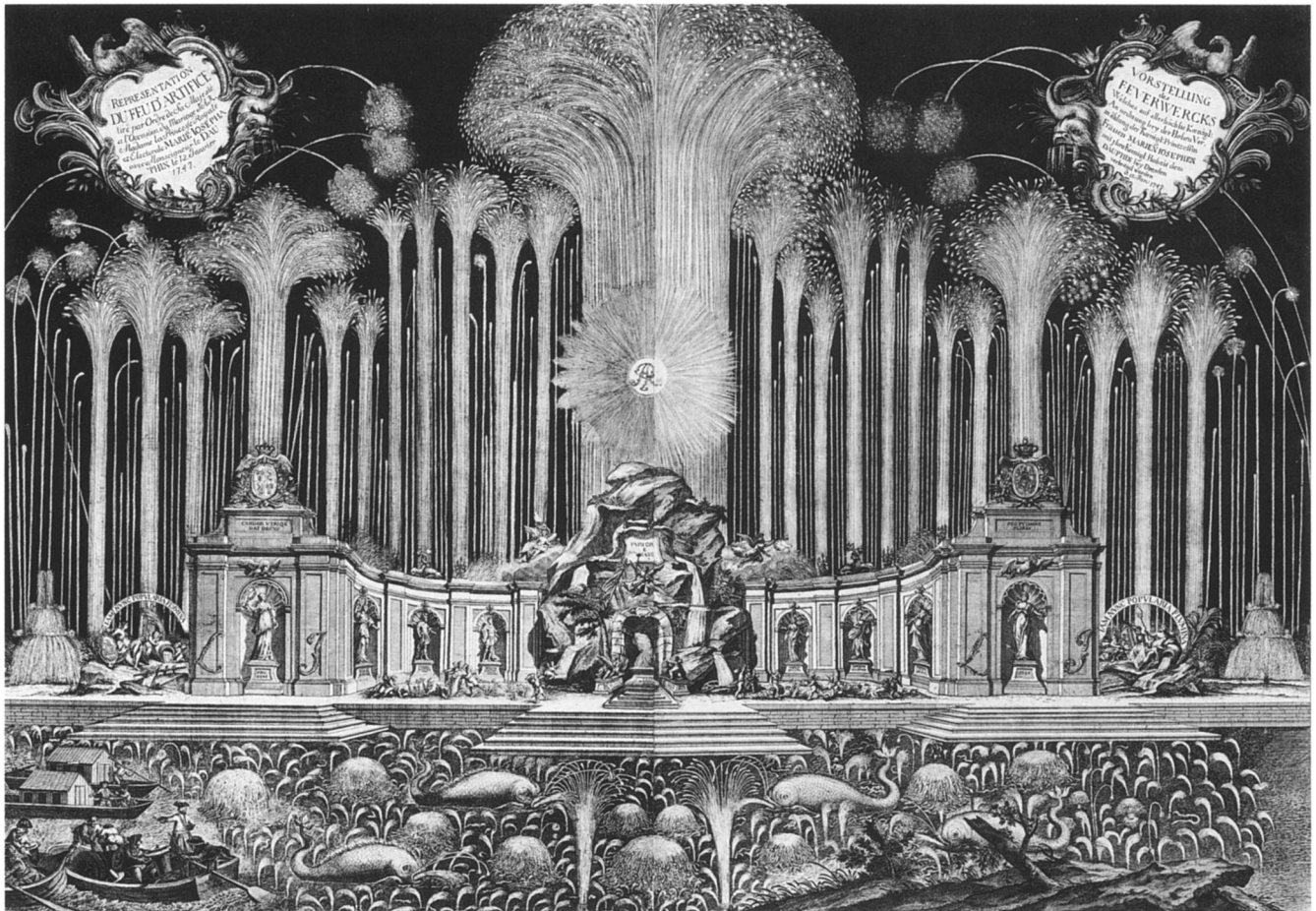
Most of the images in this publication are associated with fireworks displays that actually took place. This elegant drawing is a purely hypothetical scene, submitted by Lajoüe for the competition held to fill the post of designer to the king's chamber and cabinet, left vacant on the death of Jean Berain II on July 3, 1726. The subject set by the judges was a backdrop for fireworks to celebrate the recovery of the fifteen-year-old Louis XV after an illness in August 1725. Lajoüe's monumental Rococo architectural conception comprises a massive concave wall with an arched opening leading into a vaulted space. Above, an obelisk rises, flanked by pavilions laden with vases, putti, and sphinxes. Partway

up the obelisk angels hold a portrait of the king; nearer its top is a ring of flying putti, and at its pinnacle a sun blazes forth.

The figures are by Le Moyne, later first painter to the king. Although the allegory they represent is not entirely clear, a figure with a caduceus on the middle level looks down as, presumably, illness is cast out. Except perhaps for the sun, there is no sign of fireworks. Instead, the artists portrayed the "machine" to be admired by day, which would be the setting for an eruption of fireworks once darkness fell.

This drawing did not win the competition; Juste Aurèle Meissonnier was awarded the post.





1747 DRESDEN

**Marriage of Princess Marie-Josèphe of Saxony and Louis Auguste, the Dauphin of France**

Moritz Bodenehr (German, 1665–1748)  
 Mezzotint, 31 7/8 x 46 1/2 in. (81 x 118 cm)  
 Lent by Marianne and Paul Gourary

Louis XV had six daughters and one son, who in 1745 married Marie-Thérèse, a daughter of the king of Spain, as his eldest sister had married Don Philip in 1739 (see pp. 30–31). Marie-Thérèse died in childbirth in 1746, and before the end of that year a second marriage had been arranged. The new dauphine was the fifteen-year-old Marie-Josèphe of Saxony, daughter of Augustus III, king of Poland and—as Frederick Augustus—elector of Saxony. The princess was married by proxy on January 10, 1747,

and two days later her father staged a fireworks display to celebrate.

The fireworks are depicted in this print with a degree of order and symmetry surely not achieved in reality. Allegorical figures are framed in niches: the dauphin's coat of arms is above Prudence at the left, and that of the princess above Hope at the right. Behind a purifying altar at the center is a rock (*saxum* in Latin), and dolphins (*dauphins* in French) swim in the water below. Although the seventeen-year-old dauphin was still mourning his first wife at the time of the wedding, the two were eventually very happy together. The dauphin died in 1765, before Louis XV, and thus he and Marie-Josèphe never reigned, but they had eight children, three of whom became king of France—Louis XVI, Louis XVIII, and Charles X.

1749 LONDON

**Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle: A Plan and Elevation of the Royal Fire-Works**

George Vertue (British, 1684–1756)

After Jean-Nicolas Servan, called Cavaliere Servandoni (French, 1695–1766)  
Etching and engraving, 16 x 21 1/2 in.  
(40.6 x 54.6 cm)

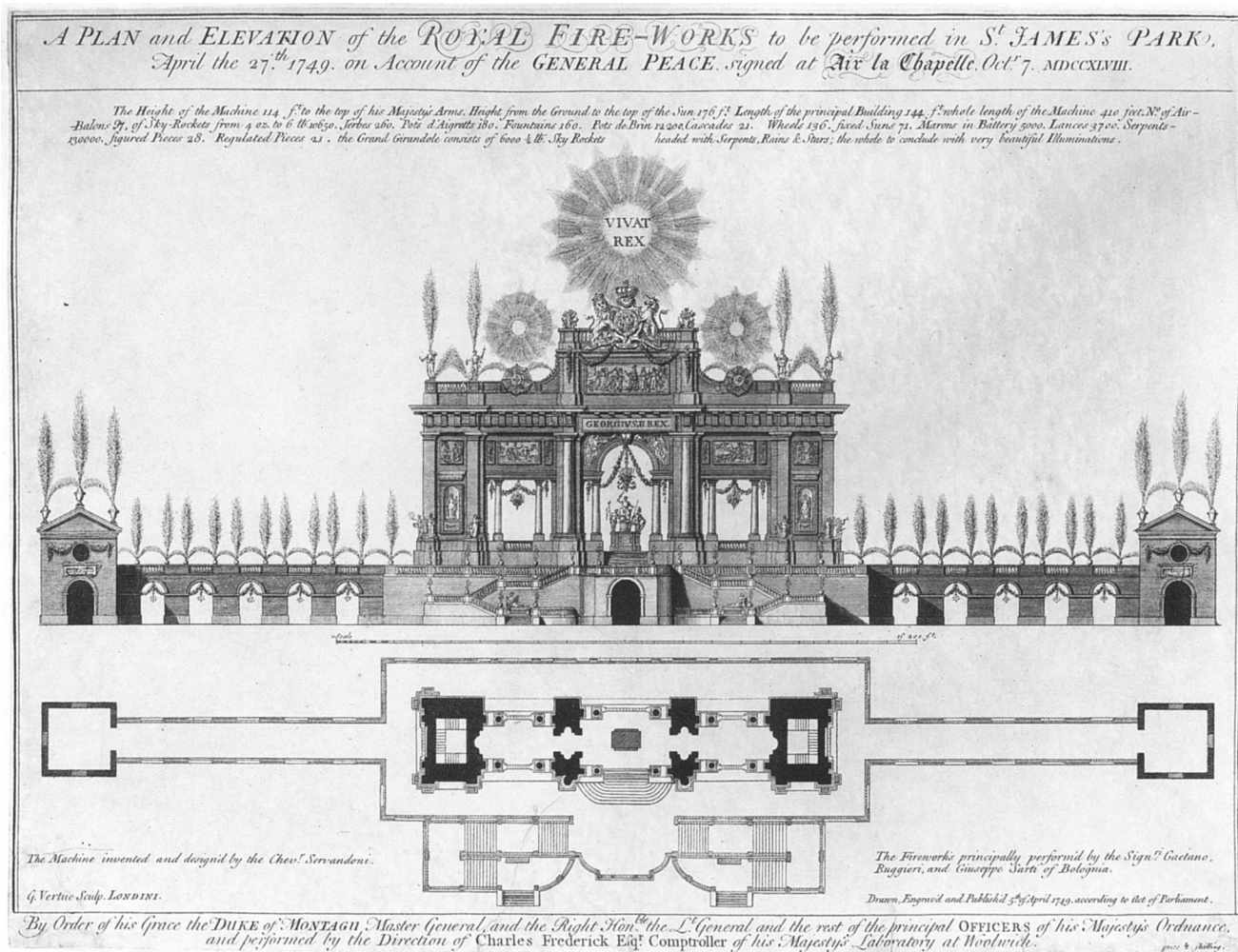
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953  
(53.600.3598)

On October 7, 1748, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed, ending the eight-year War of the Austrian Succession. Just a month later, construction began on a setting for a tremendous display of fireworks, to take place the following April. The designer was the same Servandoni whose temple of Hymen had bedecked

the Pont Neuf in Paris in 1739 (see pp. 30–31), and the new structure was in the same Neoclassical style. This print, published three weeks before the event, describes it as 410 feet long and 176 feet high to the top of the sun. According to Horace Walpole, the noted man of letters and member of Parliament, “for a week before, the town was like a country fair, the streets filled from morning to night, scaffolds building wherever you could or could not see; and coaches arriving from every corner of the kingdom.”

It was this celebration for which the suite known as Music for the Royal Fireworks was written. George Frideric Handel had served George I when both were still in Hanover, and now under George II he provided ceremonial music

for England. On the night of April 27, 1749, the overture led off, followed by the royal salute, and fireworks lit up the structure. During the largo a set piece representing Peace was illuminated, but in the next movement disaster struck. Walpole’s account is surprisingly casual: “What contributed to the awkwardness of the whole, was the right pavilion catching fire, and being burned down in the middle of the show. . . . Very little mischief was done, and but two persons killed.” Servandoni attacked the duke of Montagu, who was in charge of the fireworks, and was jailed overnight until he apologized. In 1981 Prince Charles and Princess Diana chose to pattern the fireworks for their wedding after this ill-fated event.







1765 REIMS

**Erection of a Monument to Louis XV**

Jean-Michel Moreau, called Moreau le Jeune (French, 1741–1814)

Pen and gray ink with colored washes, 17<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 24<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (45.2 x 63 cm)

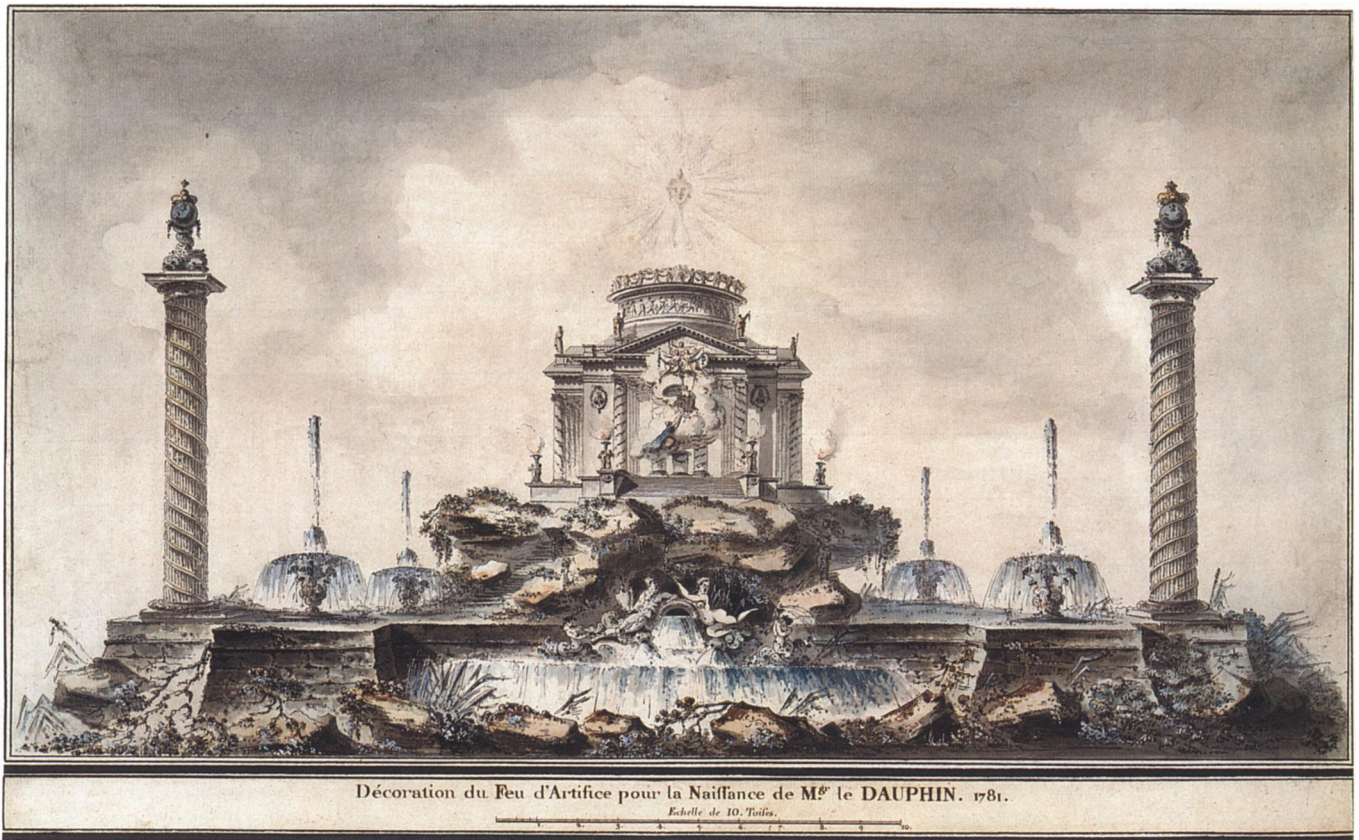
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1967 (67.524.1)

On August 27, 1765, a monument to Louis XV by Jean-Baptiste Pigalle was unveiled to much fanfare in the new Place Royale in Reims, the city where French kings were crowned. This drawing by the young Moreau le Jeune was made expressly to be engraved to commemorate the event—although the related engraving was not published until 1771. The towering structure shown here, illuminated from top to bottom by candles and flanked by yew trees, consisted of a triumphal arch and a huge lyre topped by an Ionic capital and a star. It lit the open square near the Porte de Mars, about six hundred yards from the

new monument. The arch and lyre opened onto an allée leading to the ballroom. At the left of the drawing musicians play, and some people dance as bread and other foodstuffs are tossed to the eager crowd.

The queen, Maria Leszczyńska, had been scheduled to stop at Reims for the festivities on her way to Lunéville to visit her father, the dethroned Polish king Stanislaw I Leszczyński, but at the last minute her trip was canceled. The revelry went on without her. Pigalle's statue of Louis XV did not stand long; it was destroyed during the French Revolution.





1782 PARIS

**Birth of the Dauphin: The Fireworks Machine**

Louis-Gustave Taraval (French, 1739–1794)

Pen and black ink, with gray, brown, and colored washes and gouache, 15 x 23 3/4 in. (38.1 x 60.3 cm)

The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1965 (65.607)

The last great fête of the ancien régime in France was for the birth of the dauphin, on October 22, 1781. Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette had been married eleven years before a son was born, and the long-awaited event inspired lavish celebrations over several days, with no regard for difficulty or expense. The date chosen for the fireworks was January 21, 1782. The structure from behind which the fireworks would be shot off, erected on the Place de la Grève in front of the Hôtel de Ville, is depicted in this charming presentation drawing by

Taraval, following the design of the city architect Pierre-Louis Moreau-Desproux. A Neoclassical temple rises from a rocky mound on a large terrace with four fountains and fluted columns decorated with spiral garlands at the front corners; male and female river gods preside over another fountain in the center foreground. Before the temple, Hymen hands the infant dauphin to the figure of France as smoke billows from an altar.

The print by Moreau le Jeune (opposite) shows the spectacular fireworks—rockets, pinwheels, stars, and sunbursts—





exploding against the night sky. The Hôtel de Ville and the pavilion built for the royal family at the left are fully illuminated. Moreau exaggerated the perspective, portraying a relatively small space as though it were a vast expanse, thus magnifying the grandeur of the occasion and the size and excitement of the crowd.

The dauphin died on June 4, 1789, at the age of seven. On January 21, 1793, eleven years to the day after these sumptuous celebrations, Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette were guillotined.

1782 PARIS

**Birth of the Dauphin: The Crowd Watching the Fireworks on the Place de la Grève**

Jean-Michel Moreau, called Moreau le Jeune (French, 1741–1814)

Etching and engraving,  
20 ½ x 30 in. (52 x 76 cm)

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1930  
(30. 22[34.50])

1579 ROME

**The Girandola at the Castel Sant'Angelo**

Ambrogio Brambilla (Italian,  
active 1579–99)

Etching, sheet 19 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 15 in.

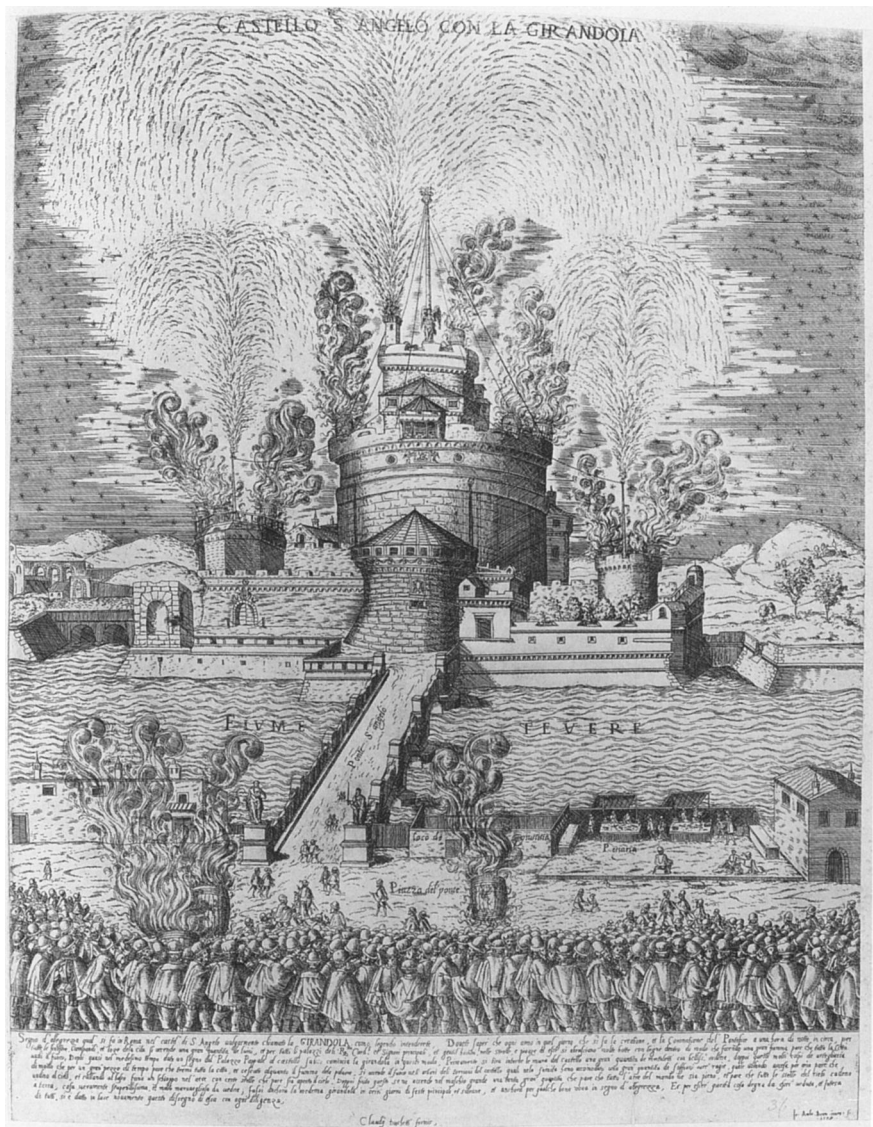
(49.8 x 38.1 cm)

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1941

(41.72[3.46])

From the fifteenth well into the nineteenth century, the Girandola at the Castel Sant'Angelo was Rome's most famous fireworks display. Two elements make it immediately recognizable: the massive cylinder of the castle and the explosion of rockets. The first documented exhibition of fireworks in Rome took place in 1410, but it was only in 1471, at the coronation of Sixtus IV, that fireworks began to be set off at the Castel Sant'Angelo, the fortresslike structure originally built as Hadrian's mausoleum. The earliest published description of the Girandola was in 1540, in Vannoccio Biringuccio's *Pirotechnia*: "They make use of the whole castle, which is indeed a very pleasing shape. . . . They shoot many rockets that are a *palmo* [about nine inches] long and hold three to four ounces of powder each. These are constructed so that after they have moved upward with a long tail and seem to be finished they burst and each one sends forth anew six or eight rockets. Fire tubes are also made and small girandolas, flames, and lights, and even the coat of arms of the pope is composed in fire."

These two prints, one from the sixteenth and one from the eighteenth century, are among at least twenty that depict the display. The etching by Brambilla, probably the earliest print of the Girandola, has an inscription describing the order of events, as enthusiastic as it is lengthy. It reports that "all the windows, bell towers, and balconies of the city are illuminated." At a sign from the papal palace the Girandola begins with



mortars and artillery "such that the whole city trembles"; when the rockets are unleashed, "it seems as if the sky has opened, and that all the stars are falling to earth, a truly stupendous thing and most marvelous to see."

The spectacular etching by Piranesi and Desprez (opposite) was part of an ambitious project announced in 1783: some nineteen large Italian views and twenty-nine smaller ones were to be produced, designed by Desprez and

etched by Piranesi; Desprez would then hand-color them. Only a few subjects were realized, but this was one of the first made, and numerous impressions of it exist, which vary greatly in effect because of Desprez's quite different colorations.

This extraordinary sight was recreated every year at Easter and on June 28, the eve of the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, as well as for the election and coronation of a new pope. The





1784 ROME

**The Girandola at the Castel Sant'Angelo**

Francesco Piranesi (Italian, 1756–1810)

and Louis-Jean Desprez (French,  
1743–1804)

Etching with colored washes,  
sheet 27 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 19 in. (70.2 x 48.3 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1969 (69.510)

Girandola remained a high point on the itinerary of visitors to Rome until the late 1800s, when it was feared that continuing the explosions could do irreparable damage to the fabric of the building. Many nineteenth-century English writers described it. Charles Dickens, in 1845, wrote not only of the spectacle but also of the aftermath: “The show began with a tremendous discharge of cannon; and then, for twenty minutes, or half an hour, the whole castle was one incessant

sheet of fire, and labyrinth of blazing wheels of every color, size, and speed. . . .

In half an hour afterwards, the immense concourse had dispersed; the moon was looking calmly down upon her wrinkled image in the river, and half a dozen men and boys, with bits of lighted candle in their hands, moving here and there, in search of anything worth having, that might have been dropped in the press, had the whole scene to themselves.”



1790 PARIS

**Anniversary of the Fall of the Bastille**

Aquatint printed in brown,

6 7/8 x 9 5/8 in. (17.5 x 24.4 cm)

The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1962 (62.520.243)

On Wednesday, July 14, 1790, the first anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, a great gathering took place in Paris on the Champ de Mars, the vast drill field between the École Militaire and the Seine. The object was to give formal expression to the nation's unity under the new constitutional monarchy. National guard units from each of the newly created *départements* would swear an oath of loyalty to the nation, the law, and the king. Despite a downpour the crowd was estimated at several

hundred thousand. The festivities continued for a week, and from the eighteenth to the twentieth citizens rejoiced on the site of the Bastille itself. A green arcade outlined the precinct of the destroyed prison. In the center a pole as tall as the former building flew a blue, white, and red banner bearing the word "liberté"; the pole was crowned with a Phrygian cap, the ancient symbol of liberty. Lanterns illuminated the immense, open interior, and a sign outside proclaimed "Ici l'on danse" (Dancing here).



1801 MOSCOW

**Coronation of Czar Alexander I**

Lieutenant-Captain Cheleyev

(Russian, active early 19th century)

Watercolor, sheet 13 1/8 x 19 3/4 in.

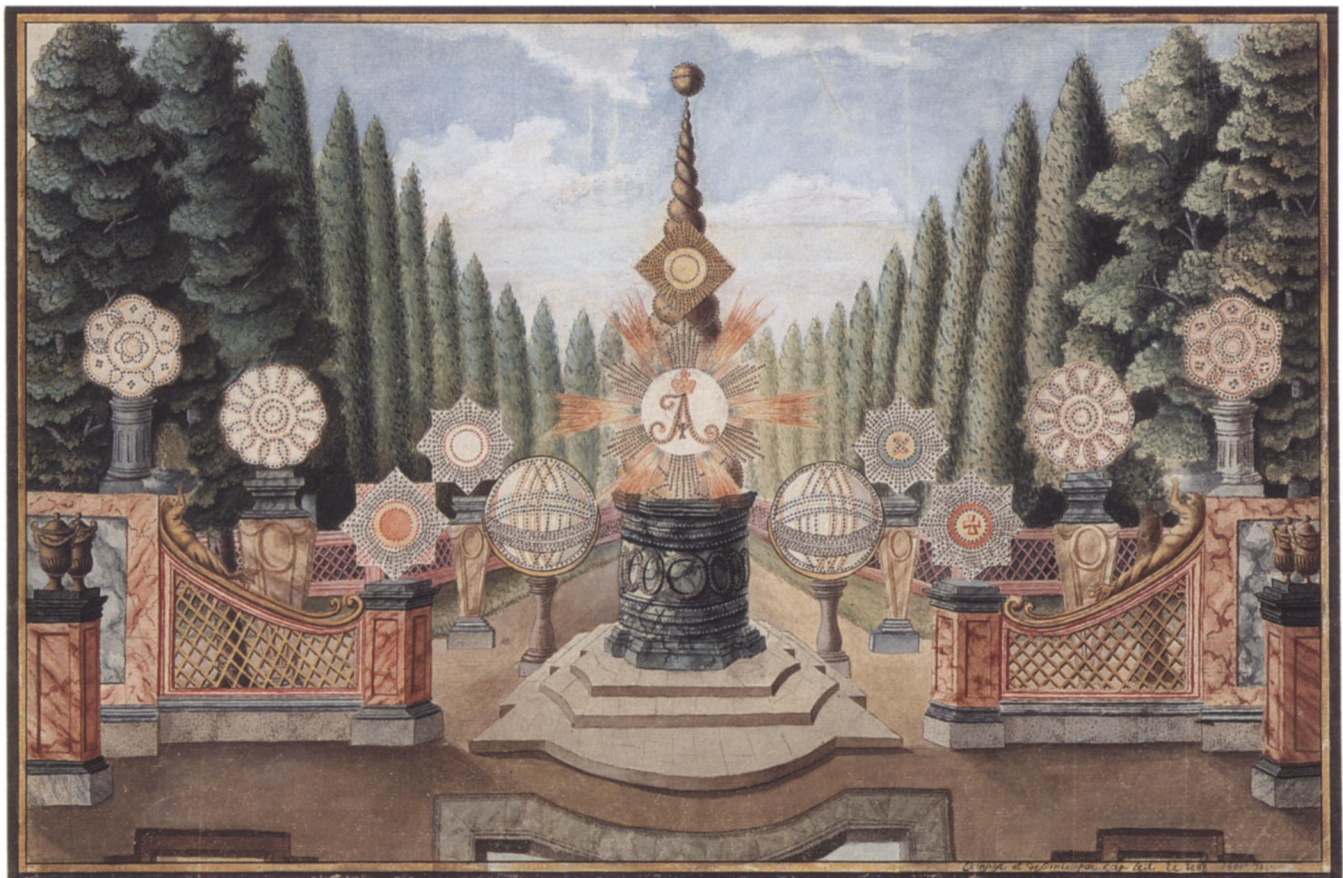
(33.2 x 50.2 cm)

The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1962 (62.647)

This enchanting drawing, unmistakably Russian, was made in connection with Alexander I's accession to the throne following the assassination of his father, Paul I. The joy of a coronation often has an undertone of sorrow in deference to the previous ruler, but this occasion had a special darkness. The insane Paul, refusing to abdicate, had been strangled by court conspirators. Alexander was aware of the conspiracy but unable to prevent it and was haunted by bouts of guilty melancholy for the rest of his life. He became emperor in March 1801, at age twenty-three, but it was not until September that he and his empress,

Elisabeth, journeyed to Moscow to be crowned in the Uspensky Cathedral. A week of banquets and receptions preceded the coronation itself, a five-hour ceremony heavy with traditional ritual.

The young emperor and empress spent over a month in Moscow, fêted at innumerable banquets and balls. In a letter to her mother, Elisabeth mentioned fireworks at the villa of a Count Chremetiev, two miles outside the city, but there is no way of knowing if that was the location of this elegantly symmetrical array of globes and stars—with a crowned A in the center topped by a twisted spire supporting an orb.











1814 LONDON

**Peace of 1814 and Centennial of the House of Brunswick: A View of the Temple of Concord in Green Park**

Frederick Calvert (British, active ca. 1814–44)

Etching and aquatint with watercolor, sheet 16 1/2 x 19 3/8 in. (41.7 x 49.2 cm)

The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1963 (63.607.2)

London's celebration of the apparent end of the Napoleonic Wars was planned to outdo the festivities of 1749 for the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle (see p. 34), and it was in fact the most elaborate fête staged in Britain to date. In Hyde Park there were fireworks and a grand fair. The *naumachia* (simulated naval battle) on the

Serpentine was a brilliant success, ending of course in a British victory. In Green Park a castle had been constructed, to be converted into a temple of Concord as the focus of the evening's pyrotechnic display: "At ten o'clock, a loud and long continued discharge of artillery announced the commencement of the fireworks. . . . From the battlements of the castle, at one moment, ascended the most brilliant rockets. . . . Each rocket contains in itself a world of smaller rockets: as soon as it is discharged . . . it bursts and flings aloft . . . innumerable parcels of flame, brilliant as the brightest stars. . . . These several smaller rockets then burst again, and a shower of fiery light descends to the earth."

After two hours of fireworks spectators became impatient for the castle to

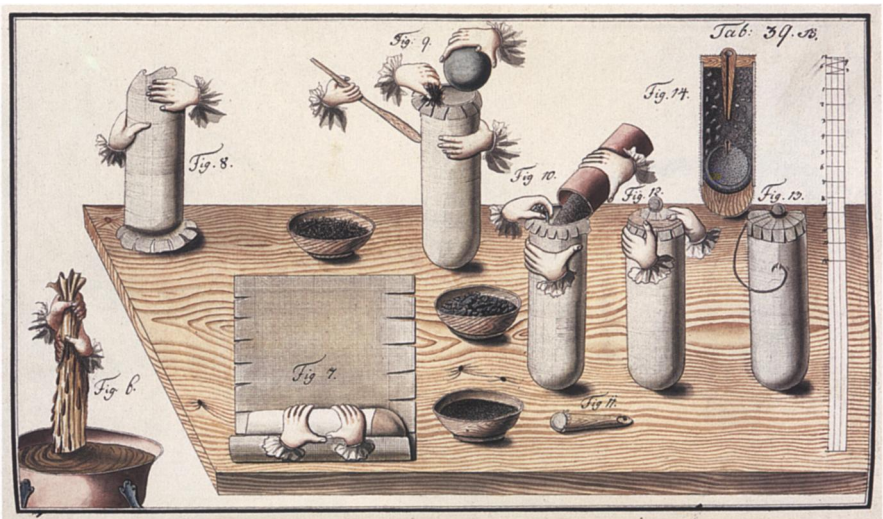
metamorphose into a temple. After it did, a specially built Chinese pagoda and bridge in Saint James's Park unexpectedly caught fire. This aquatint includes the whole range of events: the fireworks to the right are in the direction of Hyde Park; the temple of Concord, with its allegorical paintings of the Regent and the Triumph of Britannia, is in the center; and at the left the top of the pagoda can be seen in bright flames.

All this jubilation proved premature: Napoleon escaped from Elba in March 1815 and mustered an army of 360,000 by late spring. It was not until summer, at the Battle of Waterloo, that he suffered his final defeat.

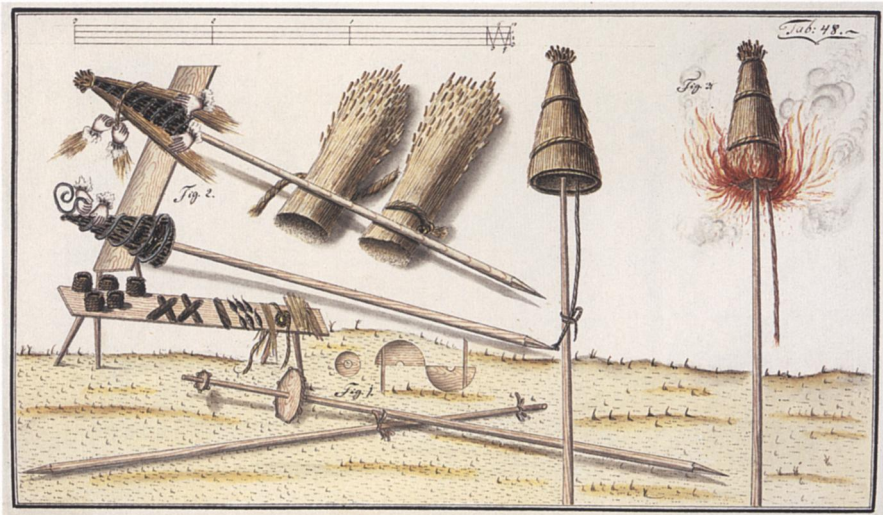
**Fireworks Manual: Making a Powder Sack and Making a Spiral Wheel, in *Practische Abhandlung* (Vienna?, ca. 1820)**

Top: Pen and black ink with watercolor, image 7 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 13 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (19.8 x 34.1 cm)

Bottom: Pen and black ink with watercolor, image 7 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 13 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (19.3 x 33.1 cm)  
 Spencer Collection, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations (ms. 184; pls. 39B, 48)



These two illustrations are part of an extraordinary manuscript, consisting of eighty-six pages of text in German and seventy-eight full-page illustrations, presumably intended for publication, which, however, was not achieved. The first part of the text, by Polly Graffenberger, is a detailed explanation of the preparation and assembly of fireworks. The second part, by Colonello Pillzupner, describes the specifications and equipment of a laboratory where fireworks are manufactured. Both authors are described as chief pyrotechnists. Many illustrations include the disembodied hands seen here, which add a surrealist touch to the images. Plate 39B (top) shows the making of a powder sack, with the finished product in cross section in the upper right. In plate 48 (bottom) sheaves of wheat are bound around spirals of small firecrackers; when the sheaves were kindled, the firecrackers would have gone off one after the other, making a tremendous and sustained racket.







1844 PARIS  
**The National Holiday, July 29,**  
 from *Le Charivari*, August 21, 1844  
 Honoré Daumier (French, 1808–1879)  
 Lithograph, sheet 10 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 8 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.  
 (27.8 x 22 cm)  
 Gift of Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer,  
 1918 (18.35.3)

The revolution of July 1830 finally ended France's Bourbon rule. After the violent clashes of July 29–31, which came to be called the Three Glorious Days, Charles X abdicated, and on August 7 the citizen-king Louis Philippe, of the Orléans branch of the royal family, was elected to the throne by the chamber of deputies.

The king, a self-proclaimed supporter of the *juste milieu* (happy medium), was acceptable to monarchists and welcomed by republicans, but soon reneged on his liberal promises. The newly free press—the victory over censorship, even if short-lived, was perhaps the most significant accomplishment of the 1830 revolution—quickly began to publish cartoons attacking him.

In September 1835 strict new censorship laws were enacted, so by the time Daumier treated a fireworks celebration he could complain only about the rain. Balzac wondered whether bad weather for the 1844 anniversary might augur the end of Louis Philippe's good

luck. The next day it cleared up, and he wrote, "One can't imagine the effect of this palace of fire of three colors, metamorphosing the entire two-kilometer length of the Champs-Élysées into a ball-room. This must be seen. And what seems extraordinary is that the illumination was made of thousands of fluted and faceted glasses, and not one was taken. These fragile things, within reach, since the illumination of all the pilasters began at the base, on the ground, were not even disturbed or bumped by the million people swarming between the Arc de Triomphe and the Tuileries."



1856 MOSCOW  
**Coronation of Alexander II**, in  
*Description of the Holy Coronation*  
 (Saint Petersburg, 1856)  
 Achille Isidore Gilbert (French,  
 1828–1899)  
 After Pharamond Blanchard (French,  
 1805–1873)  
 Lithograph, 20 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 27 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.  
 (52.7 x 70.5 cm)  
 The Elisha Whittelsey Collection,  
 The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1954  
 (54.566.5)

“The coronation of the Tsars took place in Moscow and was occasion for the most extraordinary display of

pageantry,” wrote Sacheverell Sitwell in *Valse des Fleurs* (1941), his evocation of nineteenth-century Russia. “The most magnificent of all was that of Alexander II in 1856, at a time before criticism upon such expenditure had become general. The details of this wonderful display are to be studied in a volume of such immense size that the term ‘elephant folio’ has no meaning, and, indeed, this may be the largest book that has ever issued from the printing press.” Three feet high and over two feet across, this book was printed in only two hundred copies, for presentation to members of the imperial family, foreign guests, and imperial dignitaries. Its 108 pages

had 37 illustrations in wood engraving, plus 17 full-page color lithographs printed in Paris, and its type had been specially cut at the printing office of the Imperial Academy of Science.

The fireworks took place in front of the building of the corps of cadets and were accompanied by a chorus and orchestra two thousand strong. The illustration of this scene is the last one in the book. Its panoramic sweep, with explosions coloring the sky red over an immense plain, a horse rearing in fright, and a man with arms raised in amazement, succeeds in conveying the sense of awe and dread that such spectacles were meant to inspire.



1868 NEW YORK

**Fourth of July**, from *Harper's Weekly*,  
July 11, 1868

After Winslow Homer (American,  
1836–1910)

Wood engraving,

9 1/4 x 13 7/8 in. (23.5 x 35.2 cm)

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1938 (38.43)

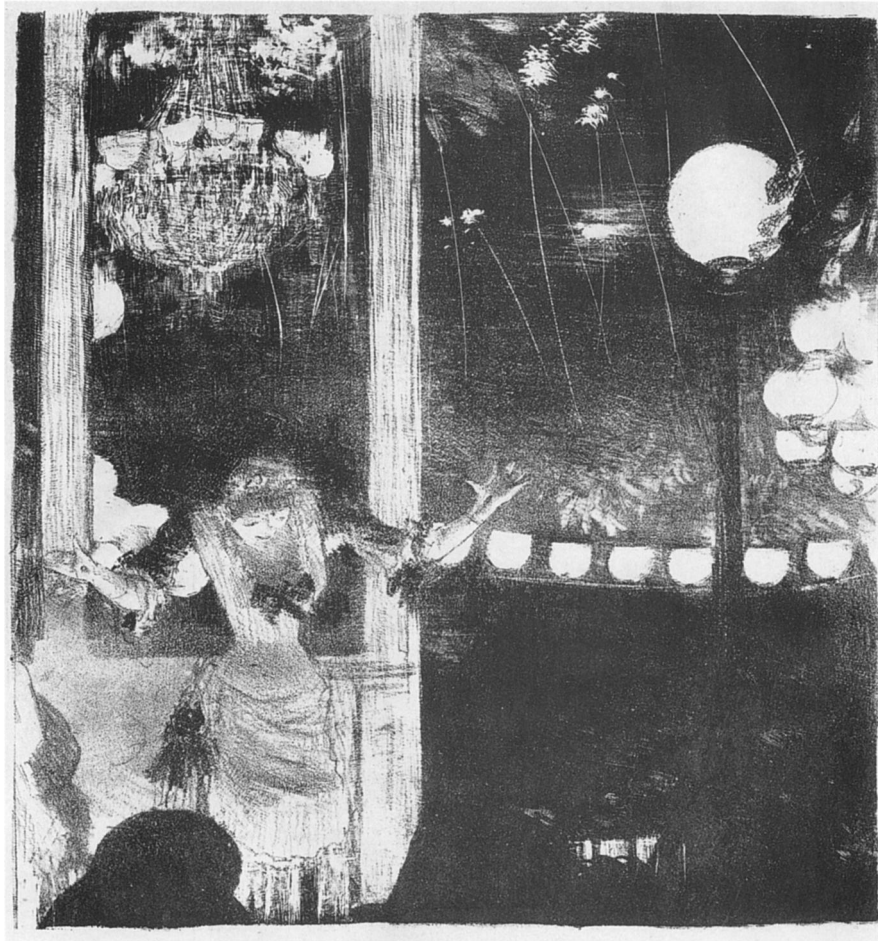
The democratization of fireworks was well established by the time novelist Frederick Marryat visited New York from England in 1837. His visit coincided with Independence Day: "The commemoration commenced . . . on the evening of the 3rd, by the municipal police going round and pasting up placards, informing the citizens of New York that all persons letting off fireworks would be taken into custody, which notice was immediately followed up by the little boys proving their independence of the authorities, by letting off squibs, crackers, and bombs. . . . Unless you are an amateur,

there is no occasion to go to the various places of public amusement where the fireworks are let off, for they are sent up everywhere in such quantities that you hardly know which way to turn your eyes."

Three decades later, however, Homer's design for *Harper's* shows a crowd—filled with "amateurs," one supposes—densely packed in a large, open area, presumably the recently completed Central Park. Homer chose to emphasize the spectators rather than the spectacle, giving the celebration of the national holiday an affectionately comic touch.



FIRE-WORKS ON THE NIGHT OF THE FOURTH OF JULY.—DRAWN BY WINSLOW HOMER.—[SEE PAGE 446.]



1875 PARIS

**Mlle Bécât at the Café des  
Ambassadeurs, 1877–78**

Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917)

Lithograph, 8 1/8 x 7 5/8 in. (20.7 x 19.4 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1919 (19.29.3)

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century cafés had become the focal point of public life in Paris, and the Café des Ambassadeurs on the Champs-Élysées was a renowned gathering place on summer evenings. A simple pavilion open at the front, it had a raised stage for performers; spectators sat at tables outside. Émélie Bécât, a singer famed for her sudden movements and jumps—termed “le style épileptique”—appeared at the Ambassadeurs from 1875 to 1884. A fellow performer wrote: “She seemed to have quicksilver in her veins, she ran, she leaped, she twisted, with vulgar, cajoling

gestures that always carried. . . . She sang ‘The Turbot and the Shrimp’; it was idiotic, incomprehensible; the audience didn’t care a bit; they needed to understand only one thing: that the performer was charming and they gobbled her up!”

These evenings culminated in fireworks. Flaubert described a similar scene in a dance garden: “Squibs went off; Catherine wheels began to revolve, the emerald gleam of Bengal lights illuminated the whole garden for a moment; and at the final rocket the crowd gave a great sigh.”





1883 NEW YORK

**Opening of the Brooklyn Bridge**

A. Major, publisher

Lithograph, image 15 3/8 x 24 1/2 in.

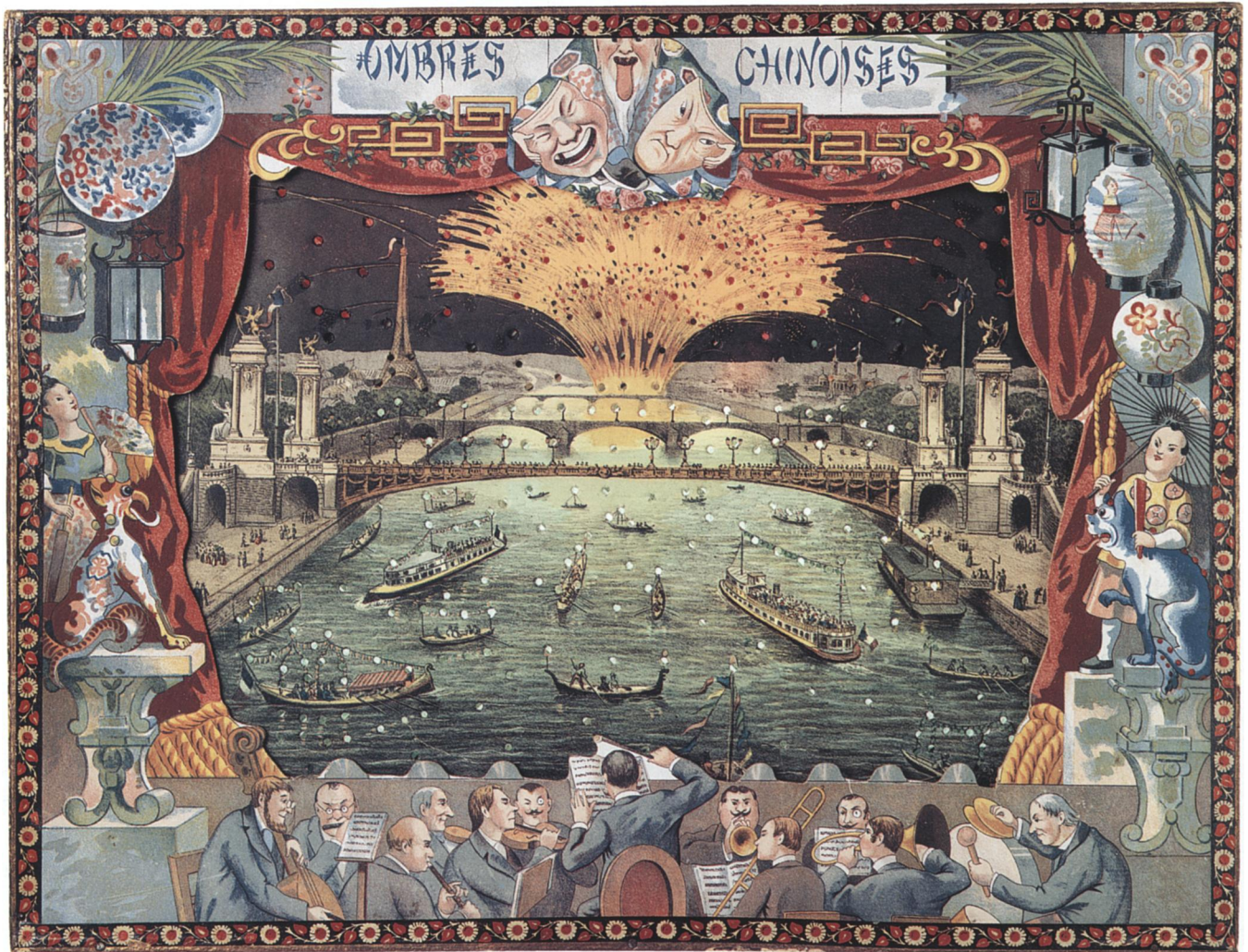
(39 x 62.4 cm)

The Edward W. C. Arnold Collection of  
 New York Prints, Maps and Pictures,  
 Bequest of Edward W. C. Arnold,  
 1954 (54-90.709)

The Brooklyn Bridge was far and away the greatest engineering feat of its day. Perhaps 50,000 visitors came from outside the city for its opening on May 24, 1883, and the *New York Times* estimated that in the evening there was a crowd of 150,000 near City Hall. The official publication declared: "It was a holiday for high and low, rich and poor; it was, in fact, the People's Day." About eight in the evening a rocket shot up from the house of the mayor of Brooklyn and burst into a spray of blue stars. Then fifty rockets

exploded over the main span of the bridge, and twenty bombs burst even higher. For a full hour rockets and bombs continued; gas balloons nearly sixteen feet in diameter were sent up loaded with fireworks. When the uproar stopped, bells rang, bands on the excursion boats played, and men and women shouted themselves hoarse. President Chester Arthur and Governor Grover Cleveland held a reception at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and at midnight the bridge was declared open.





1900 PARIS

**Exposition Universelle**, shown inside "Ombres Chinoises" toy theater  
 Mauclair-Dacier, Paris, publisher  
 Chromolithograph mounted on plywood support, inserted in wooden box covered with printed paper; overall H. 14 in. (35.7 cm), W. 17 3/8 in. (44.2 cm), D. 3 1/4 in. (8 cm)  
 Gift of Lincoln Kirstein, 1970  
 (1970.565.508)

The great Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900 ended a century that had seen continuous expansion of such fairs, which combined amusement and education following progressive and idealistic principles. Over a seven-month span more than 50 million people attended the Paris exposition. The fairgrounds covered 350 acres, including the Eiffel Tower, erected for the Exposition Universelle of 1889. Fireworks had traditionally been staged on one of the bridges over the Seine (see pp. 30–31); here they seem to be coming from the footbridge near the Eiffel Tower. They are framed in the monumental double pillars of the Pont Alexandre III, built for this exposition.

The toy theater set shown above came with seven lithographed scenes. (Some of the other scenes show the dancer Loie Fuller, a confetti fight outside the Opéra, and French sailors being welcomed at Saint Petersburg.) The lithographs, mounted on plywood supports, fit into a slot on the top of the box; when viewed from the front, the image is framed by stage curtains, and an orchestra plays in the pit in the foreground. Perforations in the surface allow light to shine through from behind, and the light's hue changes as a paper screen of different colors is rolled behind the image.



## SOURCES FOR BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS

- P. 5 Jean Appier Hanzelet, *La pyrotechnie* (Pont-à-Mousson, 1630), p. 253.
- P. 6 John Babington, *Pyrotechnia* (London, 1635), p. 38.
- P. 7 Casimir Siemienowicz, *Grand art d'artillerie* (Amsterdam, 1650), pls. r, s.
- P. 12 Raffaello Gualterotti, *Feste nelle nozze del serenissimo Don Francesco Medici . . . et della sereniss. sua consorte la sig. Bianca Cappello* (Florence, 1579), opposite p. 22.
- P. 13 Filippo Gotho, *Breve raguaglio dell'invention e feste de gloriosi martiri Placido* (Messina, 1591), p. 50.
- P. 14 Balthasar Kuchler, *Repraesentatio der fürstlichen Auffzug und Ritterspil* (Stuttgart, 1611), leaf 53.
- P. 16 bottom: *Réception de . . . Louis XIII . . . et . . . Anne d'Autriche* (Lyons, 1623), before p. 33.
- P. 17 Jan Caspar Gevaerts, *Pompa Introitus Honori Serenissimi Principis Ferdinandi . . .* (Antwerp, 1642), opposite p. 169.
- P. 20 *Die triumphirende Liebe . . . Christian Ludowigs hertzen zu Brunswig und Lüneburg . . . mit . . . Dorothea, hertzen zu Schleswig-Holstein . . .* (Hamburg, 1653), leaf 26.
- P. 25 Francis Sandford, *The History of the Coronation of . . . James II . . .* (London, 1687), between pp. 124 and 125.
- P. 29 *Relation de l'inauguration solomnelle de . . . Charles VI, empereur des Romains . . . comme comte de Flandres* (Ghent, 1719), between pp. 18 and 19.
- Pp. 30–31 *Description des festes . . . à l'occasion du mariage de Madame Louise-Élisabeth de France, & de Dom Philippe . . . d'Espagne* (Paris, 1740), pl. ix.
- P. 44 Polly Graffenberger and Colonello Pillzupner, *Practische Abhandlung von dem Laboratorio* (Vienna?, ca. 1820), pls. 39B, 48.
- P. 46 *Description of the Holy Coronation of Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Alexander II and Empress Marie Alexandrovna* (Saint Petersburg, 1856), opposite p. 94.

## NOTES

- P. 2 “Thousands of rockets”: André Félibien, *Les fêtes de Versailles: Chroniques de 1668 & 1674*, ed. Martin Meade (Maisonneuve and Larose, 1994), p. 152.
- P. 3 “Fireworks had no other purpose”: Vannoccio Biringuccio, *Pirotechnia*, trans. Cyril Stanley Smith and Martha Teach Gnudi, 3rd ed. (Cambridge and London, 1966), p. 441.
- P. 6 “one must take pains to instruct”: Amédée Frézier, *Traité des feux d'artifice* (Paris, 1747), p. 394.
- P. 12 “looking as though”: Raffaello Gualterotti, *Feste nelle nozze* (Florence, 1579), p. 22.
- P. 16 “All our archways”: *Le soleil au signe du lyon* (Lyons, 1623), p. 4.
- P. 16 “Torches were lit”: *Réception de . . . Louis XIII* (Lyons, 1623), pp. 29–30.
- P. 17 “Today I am so overburdened”: *The Letters of Peter Paul Rubens*, trans. and ed. Ruth Saunders Magurn (Evanston, 1991), p. 393.
- P. 22 “This surprise caused”: Félibien, *Les fêtes de Versailles*, p. 90.
- P. 22 “day, jealous of the advantages”: *ibid.*, p. 91.
- P. 23 “Out of the deep silence”: *ibid.*, pp. 167–68.
- P. 26: “Even the ruined Huguenots”: Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England* (New York, 1856), vol. 3, p. 3.
- P. 29 “the citizens vied”: *Relation de l'inauguration* (Ghent, 1719), pp. 17–18.
- P. 30 “With this prodigious”: *Description des festes* (Paris, 1740), p. 16.
- P. 34 “for a week before”: Horace Walpole's *Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann*, ed. W. S. Lewis (New Haven, 1960), vol. 4, p. 47.
- P. 34 “What contributed to the awkwardness”: *ibid.*
- P. 38 “They make use”: Biringuccio, *Pirotechnia*, pp. 442–43.
- P. 39 “The show began”: Charles Dickens, *Pictures from Italy* (New York, 1846), p. 157.
- P. 43 “At ten o'clock”: Francis William Blagdon, *An Historical Memento . . . of the Glorious Peace of 1814* (London, 1814), p. 58.
- P. 45 “One can't imagine the effect”: Honoré de Balzac, *Lettres à l'étranger* (Paris, 1906), vol. 2, p. 407.
- P. 46 “The coronation of the Tsars . . . the printing press”: Sacheverell Sitwell, *Valse des Fleurs* (London, 1941), p. 64.
- P. 47 “The commemoration commenced”: Frederick Marryat, *A Diary in America*, ed. Sydney Jackman (New York, 1962), pp. 58, 61.
- P. 48 “She seemed to have quicksilver”: Jean-Paul Habans, called Paulus, *Trente ans de café-concert* (Paris, 1908), pp. 214–15.
- P. 48 “Squibs went off”: Gustave Flaubert, *A Sentimental Education*, trans. Anthony Goldsmith (London, 1956), p. 69.
- P. 49 “It was a holiday for high and low”: *Opening Ceremonies of the New York and Brooklyn Bridge, May 24, 1883* (Brooklyn, 1883), p. 8.

## FURTHER READING

The first history of fireworks published in English was *A History of Fireworks* (London, 1949), by Alan St. Hill Brock, whose family had been working in the pyrotechnics industry in England since the eighteenth century. After this, no general book was written in English until George Plimpton's *Fireworks* (New York, 1984). The author is the honorary Fireworks Commissioner of the City of New York; among other things, he shares his first-hand knowledge of the fireworks families of this country, and his own experiences producing fireworks. His book includes a glossary and even a guide to planning a vacation around fireworks.

Kevin Salatino's *Incendiary Art: The Representation of Fireworks in Early Modern Europe* (Los Angeles, 1997) accompanied an exhibition of the same name to celebrate the opening of the new J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. It consists of two long, thoughtful essays, generously illustrated, and it includes an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources. Published just as this *Bulletin* was going to press, *Festivals and Ceremonies: A Bibliography of Works Relating to Court, Civic, and Religious Festivals in Europe 1500–1800* (London, 2000), by Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly and Anne Simon, is a catalogue of about three thousand fête books in thirteen languages, with bibliographical details and notes on participants, artists, composers, and historical circumstances. It postdates Salatino's bibliography, and although essentially for the specialist, its significance in the field dictates its inclusion here.

## DEDICATION

This publication is dedicated to the memory of John J. McKendry (1933–1975), generous mentor and captivating friend, for too short a time.

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