

Francesco de Marchi, 1599

Della architettura militare

del capitano Francesco de' Marchi
 bolognese, gentil'huomo romano, libri tre:
 nelli quali si descrivono li veri modi del
 fortificare, che si usa a' tempi moderni
 con un breve, et utile trattato, nel quale si
 dimostrano li modi del fabricar l'artiglieria,
 & la pratica di adoperarla, da quelli che
 hanno carico di essa

Synthetic Index

Libro I - Principi Generali e Cosmografia - *Book One - General Principles and Cosmography*

Libro II - Materiali, Tecniche e Geometria della Costruzione
 - *Book Two - Materials, Techniques and Geometry of Construction*

Libro III - Piante delle Fortezze e Difese Avanzate - *Book Three - Plants of Fortresses and Advanced Defences*

Libro IV - Artiglieria e Tecniche militari - *Book Four - Artillery and Military Techniques*

Introduction to the volume

Author

Francesco de Marchi

Year

1599

Shortened bibliographic reference

Marchi_Della architettura militare

Place & Publisher/ Printer

Brescia
Comino Presegni (request of Gasparo dall'Oglio)

Brief Publishing history 1 [Annotation on pg. 03](#)

de Marchi F. (1599). Della architettura militare. Brescia: Comino Presegni.

de Marchi F. (1810). Della architettura militare. Roma: Mariano de Romanis & figli.

Link to resource consulted

[↗ Internet Archive](#)
(last consultation 08/01/2026)

Scientific Analysis Data

Identified Units of Measurement

Ancient Roman system:
1 *canna* = 10 Roman palm
1 Roman palm (*palmus*) = 0.074 m

1 *pertica* = 6 Ancient *braccio* (*ulna or cubitus*) = 2.659 m
1 Ancient braccio (*ulna or cubitus*) = 0.443 m

Ancient geometric pace (*passus*) = 5 feet
1 Ancient Roman foot (*pes*) = 0.295 m

Sites Dissertation

Yes

Geometric Constructions

Yes

Construction Techniques and Materials

Yes

Second Flank Applications

Yes

Dissertation of Outworks

Yes (tenailles, demi-lunes, hornworks and ravellins)

Irregular Fortification Geometric Construction

No

Earth-only Fortifications

No

References to existing or demolished fortifications

Ferrara e Mantova;
Orvieto, Perugia, e San Leo;
Castel Sant'Elmo in Naples;
Castello Sforzesco in Milan;
Venice;
Fortezza di Piacenza e Orzinuovi.

Additional information

Other works of military architecture by the same author

De Marchi, F. Trattato d'Architettura militare, vol. I, ms., sec. XVI-XVII, cart., in-folio, mm 408 × 272 (Firenze, BNCF, Fondo Nazionale II.I.277)

↗ [Internet Archive](#) (last consultation 08/01/2026)

↗ [Internet Archive](#) (last consultation 08/01/2026)

Essential critical bibliography

Lamberini, D. Dizionario bibliografico © Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana fondata da Giovanni Treccani (reserved reproduction).

↗ [Treccani](#) (last consultation 08/01/2026)

Mauri, G. (1599). Francesco de Marchi e le navi di Nemi - Della Architettura Militare.

↗ [Academia](#) (last consultation 08/01/2026)

Annotations

- 1 Francesco de Marchi's treatise 'On Military Architecture', published posthumously in 1599, had a significant influence on the evolution of European military architecture. The work, which brings together de Marchi's experiences and innovations in the field of fortifications, was particularly appreciated by French military engineers, contributing to the spread of new defensive techniques across the continent (TRECCANI). The treatise was initially completed by de Marchi around 1545, but was only published after his death. The first printed edition dates back to 1599, published in Brescia by Comino Presegni on the initiative of Gasparo dall'Oglio. Subsequently, in 1810, a deluxe edition was produced in Rome, printed by Mariano de Romanis and sons, which featured detailed illustrations and particular attention to typographical quality.

- 2 The title is that of the first of four issues. See Mortimer.

The appendix on the construction of artillery is labelled as Book Four in the caption title, [dagger]1r.

Plate I bears the legend that de Marchi began this work in August 1546, while Dall'Oglio's dedication to Vincenzo Gonzaga is dated 12 May 1600. Dall'Oglio published an edition consisting solely of the plates in 1597. In the present edition, they are grouped together to form Book 3, and the legends indicating their position in the preliminary edition have been largely covered up. See Mortimer.

Mortimer provides 161 numbered plates to describe the Harvard copy, engraved on 157 copper plates (CXXXVII-CXLVIII appear twice for each plate). Note that some copies have plate LXXVIII bound after 3K2. This plate corresponds to the text in 3K1r and 3K2v, while the view of the siege of Malta in 1565 in 3K1v-3K2r does not.

In this copy, plates 155-161 are not numbered. Both plate LXXVIII added after 3K2 and the view of Malta are missing, as 3K1v-3K2r are blank. However, four additional double-page plates follow Book 3, the fourth of which is the missing view of Malta.

Device on title page signed B.V.F. (Virtù). Initials, some signed M.S. Initials. Figurative initials (saints, cherubs), as well as floral and arabesque initials; some factotums.

Mortimer, R. Italian 16th century.

1st plate in Getty copy bound on the reverse side.

Binding: 19th-century purple grained cloth, spine and corners in goatskin. Author and title in gold on red leather label. An oval cut in the fabric in the centre of both boards reveals the arms, stamped in gold on leather, of Dominique de Vic, Archbishop of Auch (c. 1588-1629); cf. Olivier, Reliures armoriées, 472. Page edges sprinkled with red. In the centre of the frontispiece is the label of Giovanni Muzio engraved by Giacomo Manzù.



Additional information

Two ownership inscriptions appear on the title page. Above the apparatus is the donation inscription in five lines of Latin, dated 12 October 1680, by: Magister Aegidius Dez Defontaine, doctor and companion of the Sorbonne and advisor to Philippe, Duke of Orleans, etc. At the top, in the same hand: pour La bibliotheque de la maison professe de St. Louis, des RR PP. de la Compagnie de Jesus

- 3 Francesco de Marchi's treatise, published in 1599, is a fundamental work in the field of military architecture of the Italian Renaissance.

Francesco de Marchi was a military engineer and architect in the service of the Farnese family and the popes. In the treatise, de Marchi explores in detail the art of building fortifications, with a particular focus on the new techniques and geometries that had to withstand firearms. De Marchi introduces and explains various types of bastions, redoubts, polygonal layouts and wall profiles, highlighting the need to adapt defensive architecture to the threats posed by modern artillery.

An innovative aspect of the treatise is the use of technical and descriptive language by de Marchi, together with detailed drawings illustrating the different types of ideal fortifications and their structural characteristics. This visual and methodical approach made the treatise extremely valuable for the training of military engineers of the time and for anyone involved in the design of territorial defences. Its influence spread throughout Europe, providing models and techniques that would form the basis of military design until the 18th century.

