

POLITECNICO DI TORINO  
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE  
Master of Science in Architecture (Rehabilitation and Revaluation)  
**Honors theses**

---

**Historical palimpsest / Film palimpsest:  
New path of urban reading around Turin**

by Cristina Bardelli, Guido Corino and Monica Merra

Tutor: Maria Adriana Giusti

Co-tutor: Maurizio Boriani

The decision to consider the city of Turin as the subject of our analysis has been a natural conclusion of a study path deeply focused on this urban reality. And among all the possible urban areas, in a logic of challenging problems related to the themes of restoration, no subject could reflect the complexity better than the Porte Palatine area.

It is in fact an extraordinarily layered place, in which monumental emergencies are isolated fragments apparently devoid of meaning, like separated snippets of a speech hard to understand.



This image highlights the perceptive difficulties arriving in the archaeological area from north: the Bastion, with its imposing shape, conceptually and physically obstructs the path leading from Regina Margherita Avenue to Piazza Castello

Because of the density of contents it has been necessary to define some milestones in the knowledge process. Understanding the place, acquisition, interpretation and elaboration of data has been for us the tools of creative process of design. With this knowledge we have therefore approached the analysis of the present situation of this area with its problems, and it led us to a new hypothesis of project that was eventually aimed to prove and test the skills that we acquired in the field of urban renewal in these years of studies.

Starting from the selection call of 12 March 2002 we drew up a new draft that doesn't have the presumption to be a valid alternative to the controversial project signed by Isola, Durbiano and Reinerio, but it's only our "method exercise".

The critical examination of the project results was conducted on the base of the issue acknowledged in these years without the illusion of being able to, nor to know how, give a judgment of value on the project results, if not basing ourselves on the contemporary shared theories in the field of restoration.

If the recent project intent could appear based on valid theories, factually the archaeological park is today another episode in an very complex picture, and fails to dialogue with the context it is inserted in.

If, as claimed by Salvatore Settis, restoring means making choices to promote the heritage read in its historic dimension, for us the goal of valorisation has to be the restitution and the readability of the history conduct.

And the layered history of the archaeological area, interpreted for centuries as an obstacle to its global redefinition, is in our urban renewal project the starting point and overall the latent potential of a possible re-reading of the city through urban routes which will restore those bonds that are today imperceptible.

The key concepts used in the definition of our project guidelines are three:

- archaeological park
- film language
- Museum of the City

The archaeological park aims to the reconstruction of the connective tissue between the archaeological emergencies and the surrounding context, in order to make understandable and useful all the fragments and architectural emergencies.

The film practice is useful to revise a lot of points of view and unknown urban perspectives in a *continuum* up to compose a clear path, through the reading of the historical palimpsest.

The Museum of the City, the transformation engine, is finally the place where the city is described and analysed and where the relationships that give meaning to historical facts are rebuilt.

If the establishment of an archaeological park and the historical signs recovery are elements shared by our hypothesis and the recent intervention, profoundly different are the design tools that we have exploited.

Our restoration project at the urban scale aims to spatially redefine the area through the recovery of those signs today forgotten that historically characterized the northern portion of the ancient city in a logic of context agreement.

The intent of the project are:

1. Re-establish the routes hierarchy, recovering the trace path crossing the “zona di comando”
2. Bring to light the relationship between the Royal Gardens and green spaces available north of Porte Palatine, through the symbolic evocation of the trace of St. Ottavio Bastion and the recovery of the sign of the Water Castle, hydraulic building taken as a symbol of this interdependence between the parts
3. Establish a path that, as a film reel, rolls and wraps through the narration of historical facts, and finally ends in an open-air hall where the user / spectator becomes aware of the complex spectacle of the city of Turin. A path which takes place on the urban space and in the urban space, a series of images of the city to which the walking practice pace and returns the appropriate time to understand the transformations and the history of the area, in a logic of dialogue between historical palimpsest and film palimpsest.



Global view of our urban renewal project



Details of our urban renewal project

And through the creation of a video that present our project, the film palimpsest becomes for us a communication tool for the complexities of a restoration project.

For further information, e-mail:

Cristina Bardelli: [cribard@hotmail.com](mailto:cribard@hotmail.com)

Guido Corino: [coricchio@hotmail.it](mailto:coricchio@hotmail.it)

Monica Merra: [mon.merra@gmail.com](mailto:mon.merra@gmail.com)