

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture Heritage Preservation and Enhancement
Honors theses

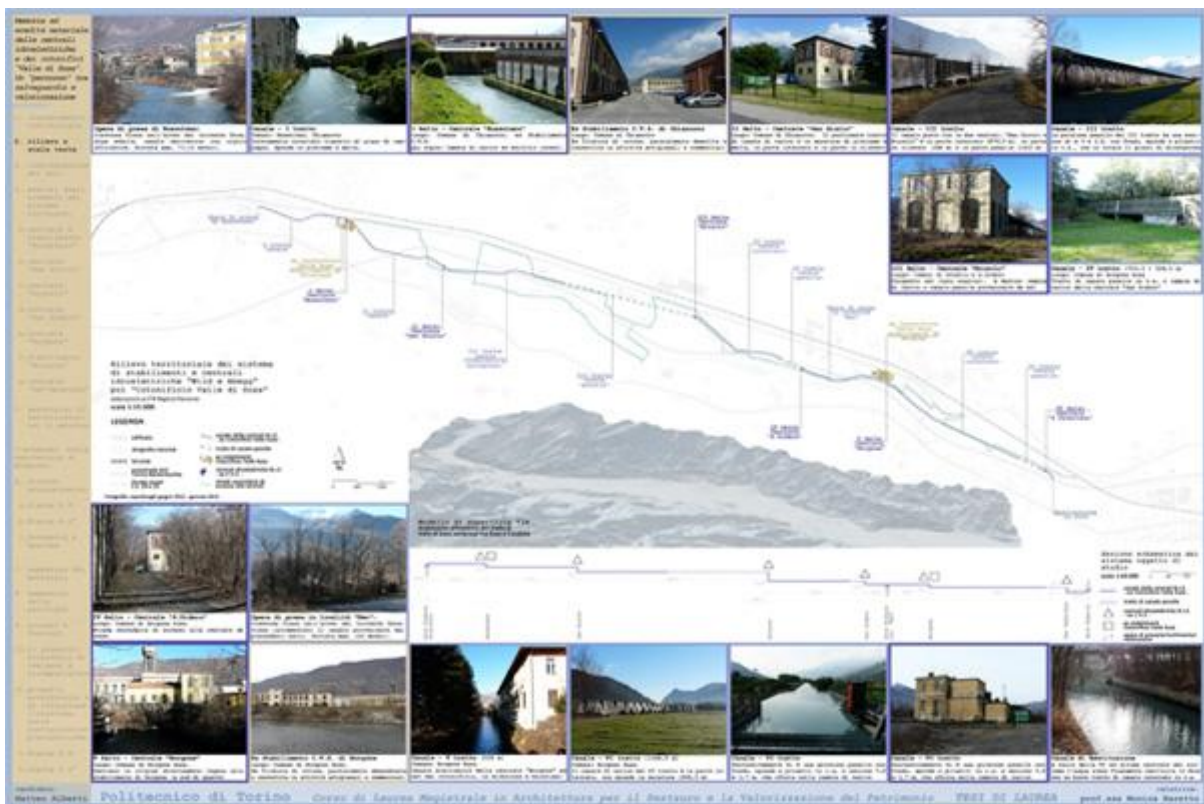
**Memory and material legacy of hydroelectric power plants and cotton mills
"Susa Valley."**

A "path" between preservation and enhancement

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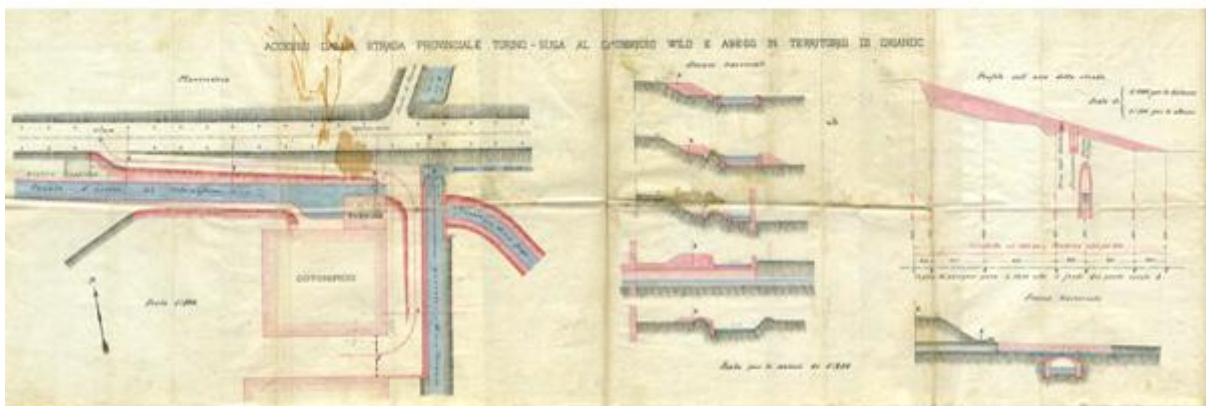
The industrial system of the former Susa Valley cotton mills (previously Wild and Abegg) is characterized, with regard to the lower Susa Valley, by the presence of four plants of production, now dismissed, and by a system consisting of six hydroelectric power plants still in operation, with their canals and hydraulic distributed in a valley portion of about 10 kms. What makes the former complex of cotton production different from other industries is the system of hydroelectric power stations in support of the industrial plants, built in conjunction with them, from the last two decades of the nineteenth century; the complex work of installation of both power and industrial plants has made changes on a territorial scale, with the inclusion of architectures, hydraulic and road works that still characterize the landscape of the lower valley.



Surveying on a large scale of the system of hydroelectric power plants and cotton mills "Susa Valley"

During this thesis work has had access to the “Susa Valley” company archives and steps were taken to digitization and scanning most of the material, obtaining over 80 scans of large format documents, such as tables, drawings and registers, and more than 900 scans of acts, correspondence and other kinds of documents.

All scanned drawings have been cataloged with “drawing-tabs” while all descriptive documents and the collected texts have been analyzed; together with the examination of drawings and tables, we proceeded with the preparation of a chronological document summary of events showing 133 related entries in facts and information with dating between 1806 and 1982. After the analysis of the historical sources, we proceeded with surveys inside the power stations and in some portions of industrial plants, realizing new photographic campaigns, proceeding, in a second step, updating and implementing surveys of the current state of affairs.



CESARE MEANO ENGINEER, *The Wild & Abegg cotton mill in Chianoc*, 1886, Company N.I.E Archive.

CESARE MEANO ENGINEER, *Access from the main road Torino-Susa to the Wild & Abegg cotton mill in the territory of Chianoc*, 1900, Company N.I.E Archive

Parallel to the work of archival research and survey of the state of affairs, was carried out a survey on the existing literature on the Susa Valley cotton mills. It should be noted the extreme scarcity of the material available concerning the system of hydroelectric power stations in Susa Valley; Nevertheless the bibliographic survey has allowed us to know the latest events concerning the company "Susa Valley Cotton Mill", and has enabled the acquisition of material utilized in the phase of preparation of the of Cotton Mills system enhancing project.

Then we proceeded with the identification of enhancement operations of systems similar to the one in question, to plan its inclusion in a "network". The enhancement project has developed on two fronts: on the territorial, and on the architectural scale, with the identification of a pole where to concentrate the power and usability of the analyzed system. This choice has focused on a part of the building complex of the Borgone cotton mill, with special architectural features, also related to its position and currently in disuse.



Gennaio 2013, Borgone, *The former cotton mill south facade on the Dora Riparia river*

It was then upgraded a part of the existing survey of Borgone cotton mill, and then proceeded with the drafting of a restoration and reutilization project of the building, to make it the center of attraction and usable cultural system, which will be valorized, with the establishment of a Living Museum of hydroelectric power plants and cotton mills "Susa Valley" and of a "path" in the territory.

The final phase of this thesis was the design of the predicted museum complex layout, phase in which the large project of knowledge has been conveyed in the project for the preservation and enhancement of the rich heritage of memory and material legacy of hydroelectric power plants and cotton mills "Susa Valley."

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