

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO  
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE 2  
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***Honors theses***

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**The fluvial landscape of the Seine: un certain regard**

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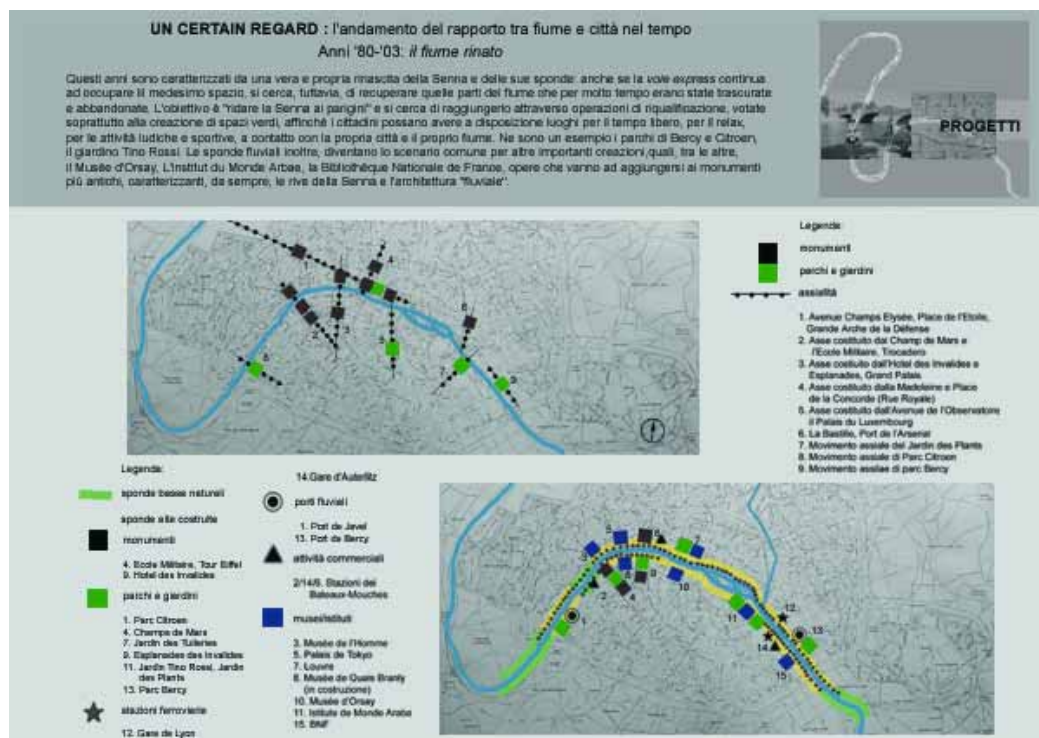
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The fluvial landscape of the Seine: this is the title of our thesis, the main objective of our research, spanning the period from the eighteenth century until today, and with a “certain regard” observing the river over time, perceiving the continuous changes in its relationship with its surroundings. Our work required observations and documentation in the field, supported by a large repertory of iconographic material. Our main objective was, on one hand, to study the succession of different phases which constitute the rapport between the Seine and Paris, between nature and urban nucleus; on the other hand, to examine how the perpetual alternation throughout history between moments of “openness” and others of “rejection” of the Seine by the city of Paris, has had a determining influence on the relationship between these two elements, complementary and antithetical at the same time. For each of the historical eras analyzed in our work, we have tried to determine the importance of the river, past and present, in the development of Paris, its urban policies, and the habits and customs of its citizens, who perceive the presence of the Seine with ever-changing eyes depending on the succession of events both large and small.



In our analysis, we define the river as “free” in the epoch immediately preceding the first half of the eighteenth century, “dominated” in the second half of the same century, “abandoned” in the nineteenth century under Haussman’s policies, “mistreated” in the twenty-year period of the 1960s and 70s when building damaged the fluvial landscape, and finally “reborn” in recent years, from the 1980s until today.



This last phase is another important objective of our study: we explore the relationship between the Seine and contemporary urban policies of the City of Paris, which promote the renewal and creation of new spaces, particularly green areas, dedicated to the citizens’ free time and leisure needs – spaces which acquire greater attractiveness through their proximity to the river.

Thus in the last two chapters of our thesis, we analyze Parc di Bercy and Parc Citroën. These two recent creations are examples of the successful union between city and river, important testimonials to the changes taking place in Paris’ urban policies, aimed at renewing certain parts of the city, improving the inhabitants’ quality of life, and restoring the rapport with the river and its natural landscape.



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