

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture
Honors theses

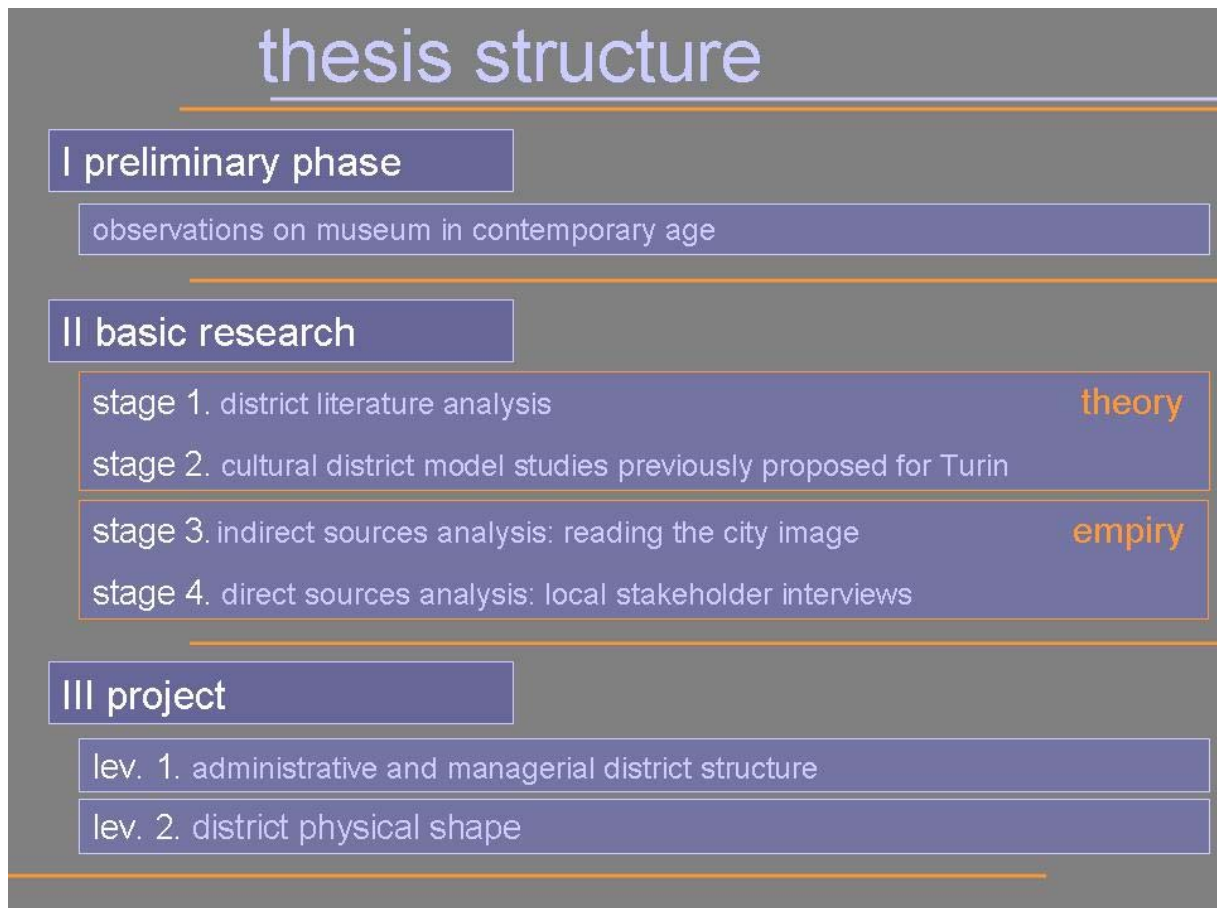
Urban Cultural Districts: a museum district in Turin. Project strategies

by Sarah Chiodi

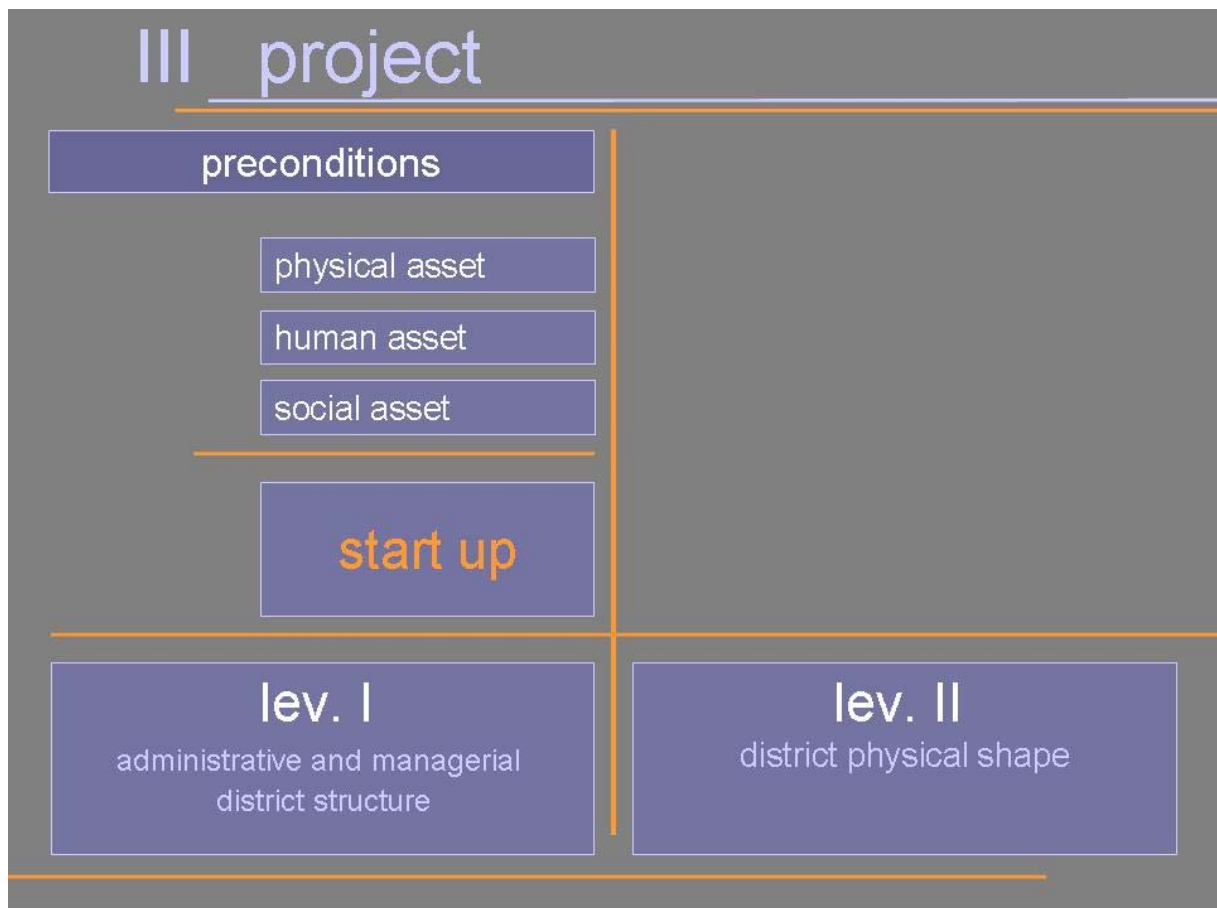
Tutor: Luca Dal Pozzolo

Co-tutor: Luca Davico

The museum is a symbol of our age, with all that it involves: the centrality of cities on a supranational scale, globalization that increasingly requires action on the international scene, the cultural tourism, and the spasmodic search of a personal identity. Museums today represent the business card of a metropolis; a city without museums is without soul, incapable to sell itself, unconscious of its positioning on the tourist market.

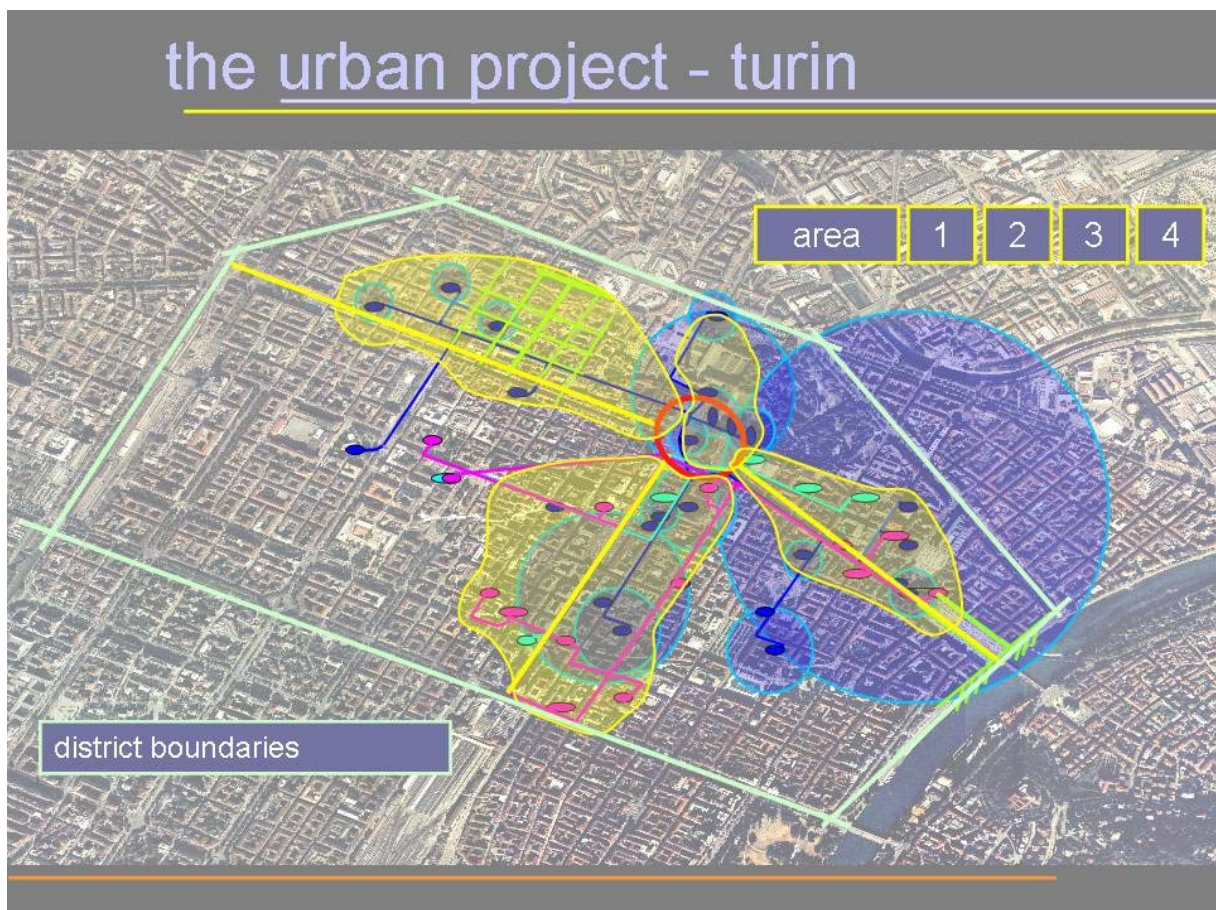


This is the sparkle from which the plan of the thesis originates: its final goal is to formulate a proposal of investment in museums, with the realization of a district, like a process of convergence between cultural policy and socio-economic policy of development; a policy aimed at supporting an effective city marketing, like a "local" strategic promotion for the "global" cities competition. "Metropolitan cultural districts are carrying new sap to the local communities using artistic and cultural services to attract people, to contrast the industrial and economic decline and to trace a new image of the city" (Santagata, 2001, p.42, our translation).



However, it would be illusory to imagine that the cultural function of the museums originates an immediate economic function; surely, some direct consequences can exist, but, above all, there is a possibility to trigger off a positive process where museums in Turin can have a central role (Fitzcarraldo, 1997, our translation). The creation of a museum district can contribute to place the city among the best destinations of cultural tourism in Europe; however this result cannot be expected exclusively from museums. Such district strategy, in fact, would be part of a general situation of openness and welcoming that would involve several sectional policies (museums, infrastructures, tourism, etc), and of course would include architectural and open space projects.

The goal of this thesis is to propose a museum reorganization plan integrated with real architectural project, able to equip itself with a personal identity, spatial and morphologic. The object is to bring to light a new cultural centrality, on one hand, through the planning of museum heritage, and, on the other hand, a physical one by "exploiting" existing resources on the territory. Therefore museum heritage emerges like an important, effective and precious resource in the complex constructing of a local development strategy.



Starting from the observation of museum changes in our contemporary age (chap.1), after the analysis of the district literature (chap.2), we proceeded to trace a general model of the functioning of a *museum cultural district* (chap.3) capable to read museums through a system logic. This approach allows to go beyond the static idea of a museum and highlight its complexity and its dynamic nature.

This district theory analysis was concluded with the cultural district model studies previously proposed for Turin museums (chap.4). It follows the empiricist analysis, that has been finalized both to assess the existence of the necessary conditions to create a district, and to identify an appropriate plan (according to Turin's specific context) in order to pursue such object.

It comprises two stages: the first one realised through the examination of indirect sources, which has observed Turin urban reality (chap.5); the other one through the interviewing of direct sources (i.e. local *stakeholder*), (chap.6).

Chapter 7 illustrates in detail the *museum cultural district* project for Turin, distinguishing between its managerial structure and its physical shape.

For further information, e-mail:

Sarah Chiodi: sarahchiodi@tin.it