



**Short essay in Italian thesology.
Contribution to the emergence of Landscape
Sciences**

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Summary

This text aims to define, based on the analysis of PhD research theses in Italy, the perimeter of landscape sciences and to identify the knowledge and savoir-faire related to landscape architecture and garden architecture.

The academic knowledge collected in the fields of landscape and garden are not identified as an and unique coherent academic field by most of the European Universities; as it has been done for example for the sciences of health, geography, history or agronomy. The numerous disciplines, which raise the notions of landscape and garden and which have emerged during the last 20 years, are not confined anymore to social, historical and cultural geography, to history of gardens and to the painting of landscape. The most famous - ecology, archeology, law, economics – remain not much visible in the academic curriculum and in the research results. The discipline, known under the name of landscape architecture, based on old professional practices (*planning, design, management, and gardening*) refers to a scientific content still undetermined.

Can this knowledge, ancient and emerging, collected by the PhD research theses and the researchers, constitute a coherent academic ensemble? The answer to this question is important for at least three reasons. The dispersion of disciplines leads to the dissemination of publications in numerous reviews. Around fifteen international publications (from an average to an excellent international value) with a title including the words “landscape” or “garden” have been identified (see Appendix 1). This dispersion enhances the lack of visibility of the field for the scientific community, which is divided between independent fields (planning, historical, geographical and sociological studies, etc.). Secondly, it is not possible to identify without any ambiguity the carriers of researchers, and researcher/teachers in this field. This field cannot be indeed limited to geographical, ecological or historical sciences or to the fields of landscape architecture or bioengineering. Last but not least, without a coherent scientific field identified, it seems difficult to develop a Europe of research in the field of landscape, when the European Landscape Convention - Firenze has been ratified by European countries and the first researches have been published.

That is why, in order to identify the coherence between these disciplines, 450 Italian PhD theses on landscape and garden between 1985 and 2005 have been analyzed.

1. A model according to Aristote¹

Aristote may not have known the concepts of garden and landscape, as they are defined today; however, he was concerned by the classification of knowledge, as well as the classification of animals and plants. In *Les Topiques* and *Métaphysique*, he identifies three types of sciences: - theoretical sciences (precisely *théorétiques*, aiming at universal and disinterested knowledge) with the objectives of knowledge and truth: mathematics, physics and theology; - practical sciences whose object is the action: ethics, politics, economics; -and poetical sciences (or *poiétique*) whose object is the production of a work. Aristote seems to suggest, that human knowledge is organized in two poles: on one part, the knowledge which describes and theorizes the modes of material creations (a discourse on praxis which explains how to make the objects for the interests of those to who it is dedicated to); on the other part, the theoretical sciences which analyze facts and things independently of any project of action and so of any direct interests and which aim at disinterested truth. Between these two poles, the practical sciences analyze the reasons of human actions, by raising the double question of why and how the human works and nature facts. Which rules organize the material and symbolic exchanges and under which human values?

Fig 1: Three categories of production of knowledge

	Praxis, interest	Rules and human values	Disinterest and truth
Finalities	How? Savoir-faire	How and why? Which rules?	Why?
Sciences according to Aristote	Poiétique	Practical	Theoretical
Contemporary Sciences	Applied Engineering and art	Research- action Political decision	Fundamental Falsifiable truth

This first axis organizes the continuities between the *savoir-faire* (of the landscape architect for example), the *savoir-decider* (of the political elected representative) and the multidisciplinary knowledge of the production processes on material and immaterial landscapes (of the geographer). Knowing that, it is mostly agreed today that scientific knowledge and political decision are independent one to the other.

A second axis with two poles exists and precises the modalities of social practices in each of the three precedent categories. On one side, the pole of materiality of facts, which reports physical objects (building, river, relief) and on the other, the pole of ideality of the study object (the dream world of painting, of poem or the sense of historical facts). Between these two poles, lay the study objects, subject to the dialectical interaction of the material and immaterial facts (the conception of landscape project for example).

¹ The epistemological notions of this article are based on C. Chomarat-Ruiz publications, in particular: «Qu'est-ce que les jardiniers, les paysagistes et les artistes nous transmettent du paysage?», dans *Les Cahiers Jean Hubert*, n°3, Actes du Colloque de novembre 2007, sur le thème *Patrimoine et paysages*, Direction des archives, du patrimoine et des musées de Seine-et-Marne, 2009, pp. 179-189; «Une science du paysage favoriserait-elle la rencontre entre artistes et politiques?», Presses Universitaires de Rennes, Actes du Colloque des 5 et 6 juin 2008, sur le thème "Paysage et politique : le regard de l'artiste", 2009 (à paraître) ; «What is a doctorat concerning landscape? », dans *Projets de paysage*, le 30/03/09 : http://www.projetsdepaysage.fr/fr/qu_est_ce_qu_un_doctorat_en_paysage

Fig 2

Level 3	Ideality (in French <i>idéalités</i>)	The imaginary, the aesthetical and ethical values and the ideas	Speculating, criticizing, evaluating
Level 2	Ideo-materiality (in French <i>idéo-matérialités</i>)	Human facts (political, social, etc.)	Designing, modelling, assisting in decision
Level 1	Materiality (in French <i>matérialités</i>)	The material realization, material exchanges, the physical facts	Methodically knowing

This epistemological matrix frames nine categories of knowledge which can be summarized as followed by applying them at the field of landscape and garden.

Fig 3

IDEALITY (In French <i>idéalités</i>)	Knowledge on artistic and literature critic	Knowledge on ethical and aesthetical evaluation	Knowledge on speculation and <i>connaissance</i> (history, epistemology)
IDEO-MATERIALITY (In French <i>idéo- matérialités</i>)	Knowledge on project design (architecture, urbanism, landscape)	Knowledge on decision, moral and political sciences (right of landscape)	Knowledge on modelling (landscape ecology and landscape anthropology)
MATERIALITY (In French <i>matérialités</i>)	Knowledge on realization (Engineering on landscape, ecology, urbanism and agronomy)	Knowledge on exchange (landscape economics)	Disciplinary knowledge (geography, landscape archaeology, geo-agronomy)
	Poetical Sciences (<i>poétique</i>)	Practical Sciences	Theoretical Sciences (<i>Théorétiques</i>)

2. The categories of the science “landscapetics” (in French « *paysagétique* »)

If landscape sciences exist, we could call them «landscapetics »: because it would not be confused with a “landscaping” (in French “*paysagère*”) or “landscapistic” (in French “*paysagistique*”) science (it cannot be reduced neither to the geography or the art of garden); or with a landscaper (in French “*paysagiste*”) science, the adjective referring to the landscape professionals and landscapers notably in France and United Kingdom.

The corpus of Italian theses relating to landscape and garden has been classified according to the nine theoretical classifications (see above), based either on their titles, sub-titles and key words or on the categories of the theses classification used by the Firenze University.

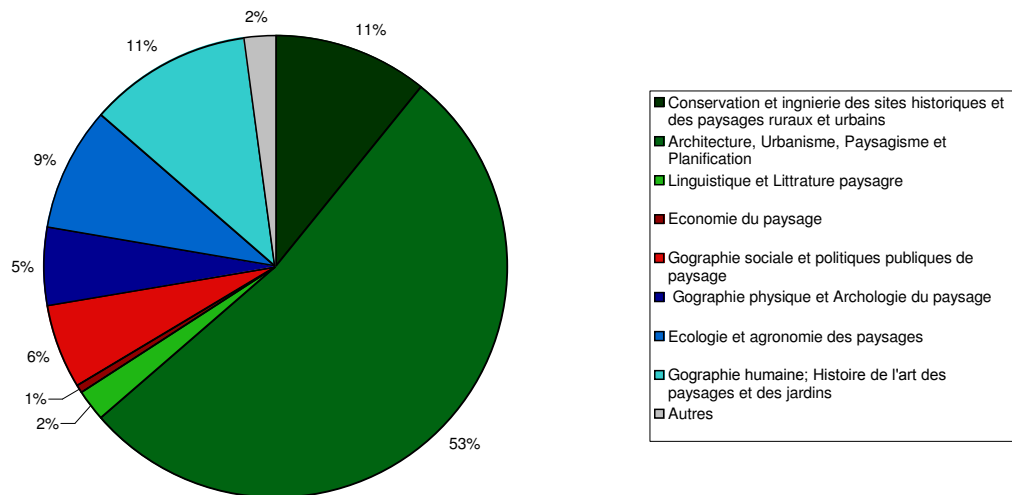
The first classification (Fig 4 below) reveals that all the categories - except one (ethics and aesthetics) – encompass a number of theses in a variable quantity. (See the following graphic)

Fig 4

IDEALITY (In French idéalités)	FINE ARTS ART OF LANDSCAPE, LANDSCAPE LITERATURE	ETHICS/AESTHETICS	THEOLOGY METASCIENCE OF LANDSCAPE HISTORY AND EPISTEMOLOGY ART HISTORY ON LANDSCAPE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY
IDEO-MATERIALITY (In French idéo-matérialités)	APPLIED ARTS DESIGN OF PROJECTS OF LANDSCAPE, GARDEN AND CITY LANDSCAPISM/LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBANISM/URBAN PLANNING/ URBAN DESIGN	ECONOMICAL, POLITICAL AND LAW SCIENCES SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND PUBLIC CONFLICTS	MATHEMATICS MODELLING OF ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES LANDSCAPE ECOLOGY
MATERIALITY (In French matérialités)	TECHNIQUES/TECHNOLOGIES RURAL LANDSCAPE ENVIRONNEMENTAL ENGINEERING RESTORATION OF GARDENS, LOCAL AREAS AND HISTORICAL SITES	ECONOMICS LANDSCAPE ECONOMICS	PHYSICS, CHIMICS AND BIOLOGY LANDSCAPE ARCHAEOLOGY PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Fig 5

Disciplines des Thses



Legend

Vert clair/light green : Conservation et ingénierie des sites historiques et des paysages ruraux et urbains/ Conservation and engineering of historical sites, urban and rural landscapes

Vert moyen/middle green : Architecture, urbanisme, paysagisme et planification/ Architecture, urbanism, landscapism and planning

Vert foncé/ dark green : Linguistique et littérature paysagère / Landscape linguistics and literature

Rouge foncé/ dark red : Economie du paysage/ Landscape economics

Rouge vif/ bright red : Géographie sociale et politique publiques du paysage/ Social geography and public policies on landscape

Bleu foncé/ dark blue : Géographie physique et archéologie du paysage/ *Physical geography and landscape archaeology*

Bleu moyen/ middle blue : Ecologie et agronomie des paysages/ *Ecology and agronomy of landscapes*

Bleu clair/light blue : Géographie humaine : histoire de l'art des paysages et des jardins/ *Human geography : Art history on landscapes and gardens*

Gris/grey: Autres/ *Others*

According to this repartition, a bit more than the half of the theses (53%) refers to the field of project design, i.e. the disciplines of landscape architecture and urbanism (urban project and urban planning). Inside the *poiétique* sciences (65% in green), this category is predominant. Then, follows the category of project engineering (11%) which includes themes such as the conservation of historical sites and gardens, rural and suburban landscapes, and literature and linguistics relating to landscape and garden (2%).

The category of theoretical sciences (25% in blue) encompasses physical geography and landscape archaeology (5%), landscape ecology (9%) and the history of gardens and landscapes (11%). Lastly the practical sciences (essentially the fields of public policies and sociology of conflicts) remain particularly minority (7% in red); maybe because the theses addressing the ethical and aesthetical issues come under the field of philosophy and the words "landscape" and "garden" do not appear in their key words and titles.

This first result points out the predominance in Italy of the research topics relating to projects of city, garden and landscape and to urban planning, in the "landscapetics" research at a PhD level (and probably at all level of research in this field. This should be verified.) Small room is given to the practical sciences of Human and Society, but the research does exist in the field. The absence of theses in the ethical and aesthetical fields is surprising as far as numerous of research issues in landscape cannot avoid the aesthetical and phenomenological question. Notable Italian works have indeed been developed in this field, in particular those of Rosario Assunto and Massimo Ferriolo.

Is this typology coinciding with the one developed by the Firenze University librarians? The figure 6 distributes the Italian categories of indexation according to the « landscapetics » categories.

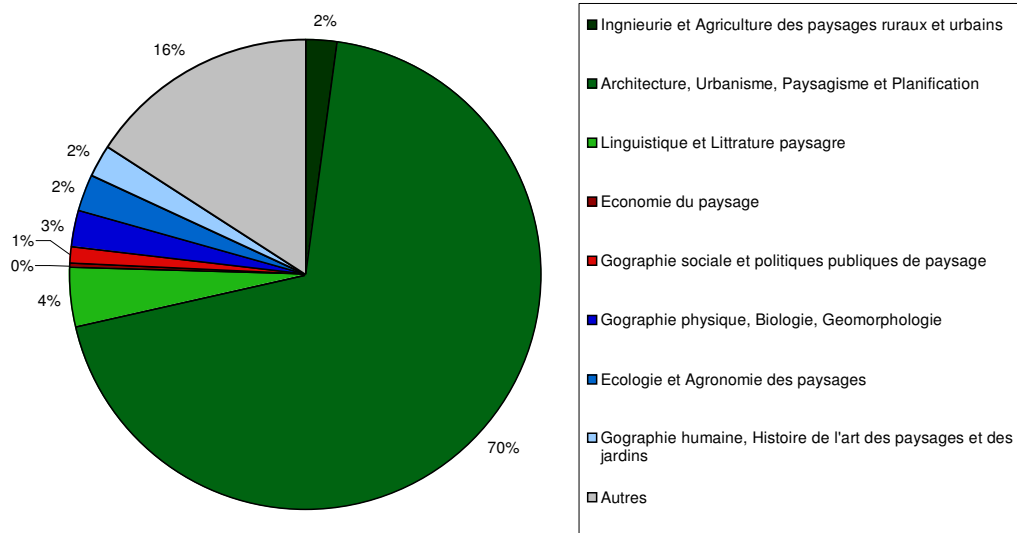
Fig 6

C	Belle arti e decorative Letteratura tedesca Storia e descrizioni i più letterature Geografia e viaggi Litterature inglese Lingue romanze Letteratura italiana		Storia della Grecia antica Storia del mondo antico Storia dell'arte Storia d'Italia
B	Architetture Urbanistica e arte del paesaggio Pianificazione territoriale e urbana Architettura, trattamento storico e geografico Sistemazione del paesaggio Architettura del paesaggio Costruzione architettonica Tecnica e pianificazione urbana Urbanismo e costruzione del paesaggio Paesaggismo e architettura del paesaggio Architettura, tecniche, procedure, apparecchi, attrezzature, materiali	Architettura, Storia, Geografia, persone Interazione sociale Situazioni e condizioni economiche	Ecologia vegetale
A	Agricoltura, tecniche e strumenti Orticoltura e ortaggi Scienze forestali Farmacologia e terapeutica Ingegneria idraulica	Economie Sviluppo economico	Geologia e economia Biologia e ecologia Geomorfologia e idrografia Geologia strutturale Botanica Fisica applicata Geomorfologia Pedologia Economia della terra e dell'energia
	23	14	6

The table reveals the nature of the disciplines, as they are proposed by the librarian who indexes the theses. The new disciplines of the landscapetics science do not appear as landscape ecology and landscape economics. This modifies the relative proportions of the nine categories. However, the disciplines of the *poiétique* sciences predominate (23 sections), the theoretical sciences (14) and the practical sciences (6). This dominance can also be found in the figure 6, which indicates the part of landscapetics categories: 70% refer to *poiétique* sciences relating to the design of landscape and urban projects. In comparison with the first classification based on the titles, the Italian indexation gives more importance to the sections referring to this category. However, the insufficiency of the category engineering suggests that part of the theses has gone from one category to the other. It is indeed very difficult, to distinguish with titles and key words, the respective part of the technical aspects from the design aspects, which are always linked when the notion of landscape globalizes the analyses and the intentions of the project.

Fig 7

Catgories thses selon la Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze



Legend

Vert foncé/dark green : Ingénierie et agriculture des paysages ruraux et urbains/ *Engineering and agriculture of urban and rural landscapes*

Vert moyen/ Middle green : Architecture, urbanisme, paysagisme et planification/ *Architecture, urbanism, landscapism and planning*

Vert clair/ light green : Linguistique et littérature paysagère / *Landscape linguistics and literature*

Rouge foncé/ dark red : Economie du paysage/ *Landscape economics*

Rouge vif/ bright red : Géographie sociale et politique publiques du paysage/ *Social geography and public policies on landscape*

Bleu foncé/ dark blue : Géographie physique, biologie et géomorphologie/ *Physical geography, biology and geomorphology*

Bleu moyen/ middle blue : Ecologie et agronomie des paysages/ *Ecology and agronomy of landscapes*

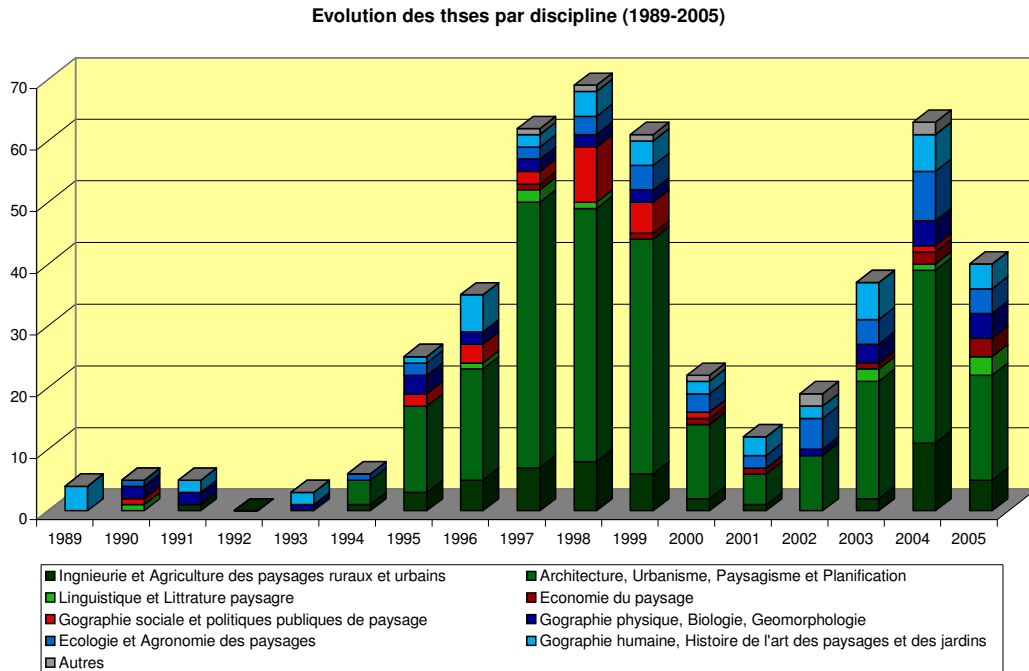
Bleu clair/ light blue : Géographie humaine, histoire de l'art des paysages et des jardins/ *Human geography, Art history on landscapes and gardens*

Gris/ grey : Autres/ *Others*

3. Evolution of the categories in the time

The precedent analysis is global. It does not integrate the evolution of the theses themes in the period (1985-2005). This is represented in the following figure n° 8.

Fig 8



Legend

Vert foncé/dark green : Ingénierie et agriculture des paysages ruraux et urbains/ *Engineering and agriculture of urban and rural landscapes*

Vert moyen/ Middle green : Architecture, urbanisme, paysagisme et planification/ *Architecture, urbanism, landscapism and planning*

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Gris/ grey : Autres/ *Others*

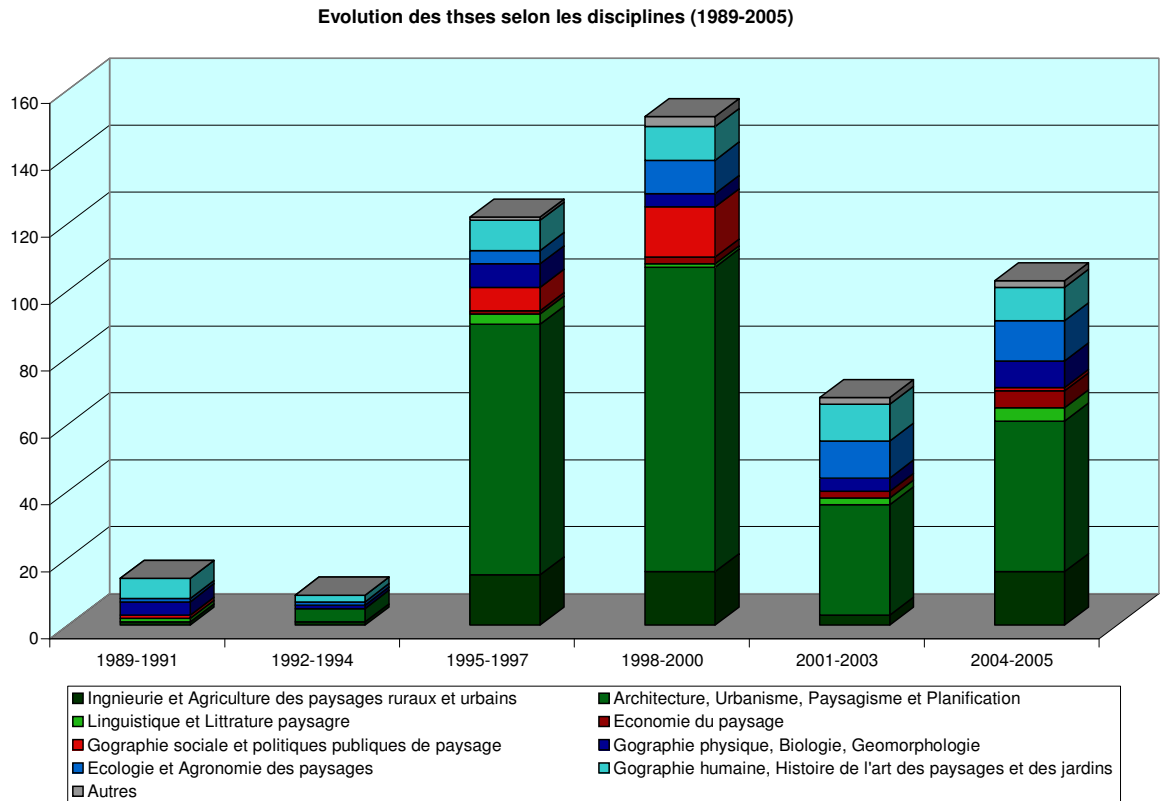
From the observation of this graph we can deduce:

-The theses in the field of landscape and garden have developed since 1995; the categories *poétique* (in green) and particularly project design have appeared with two peaks of production between 1997 and 1999 and then in 2004.

- The theses in theoretical sciences (in blue) have increased but in smaller proportion. It can represent 20 to 50% of the annual production. The theses in vegetal ecology (probably in landscape ecology) have developed from 1994.
- The theses in practical sciences (in red) (social geography) are irregular and remain in very moderate number (0 to 15% according to the year).

The evolution trends are clearer if we group the databases in sections of 3 years (Fig 9)

Fig 9



Legend

Vert foncé/dark green : Ingénierie et agriculture des paysages ruraux et urbains/ *Engineering and agriculture of urban and rural landscapes*

Vert moyen/ Middle green : Architecture, urbanisme, paysagisme et planification/ *Architecture, urbanism, landscapism and planning*

Vert clair/ light green : Linguistique et littérature paysagère / *Landscape linguistics and literature*

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Bleu moyen/ middle blue : Ecologie et agronomie des paysages/ *Ecology and agronomy of landscapes*

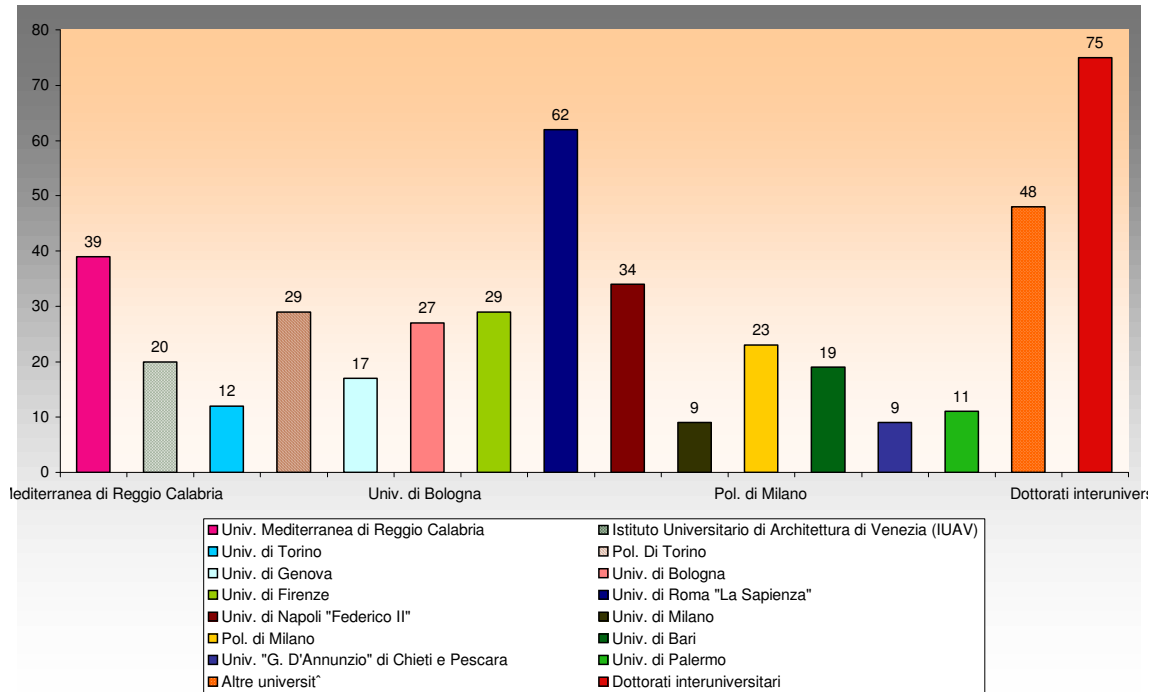
Bleu clair/ light blue : Géographie humaine, histoire de l'art des paysages et des jardins/ *Human geography, Art history on landscapes and gardens*

Gris/ grey : Autres/ *Others*

4. Attempt to a socio-geographical analysis

Where have these researches been realized? According to the graphic below (fig 10), a large number of Universities are concerned. 14 have produced more than 9 theses in 20 years and some (Roma) produced more than 3 a year.

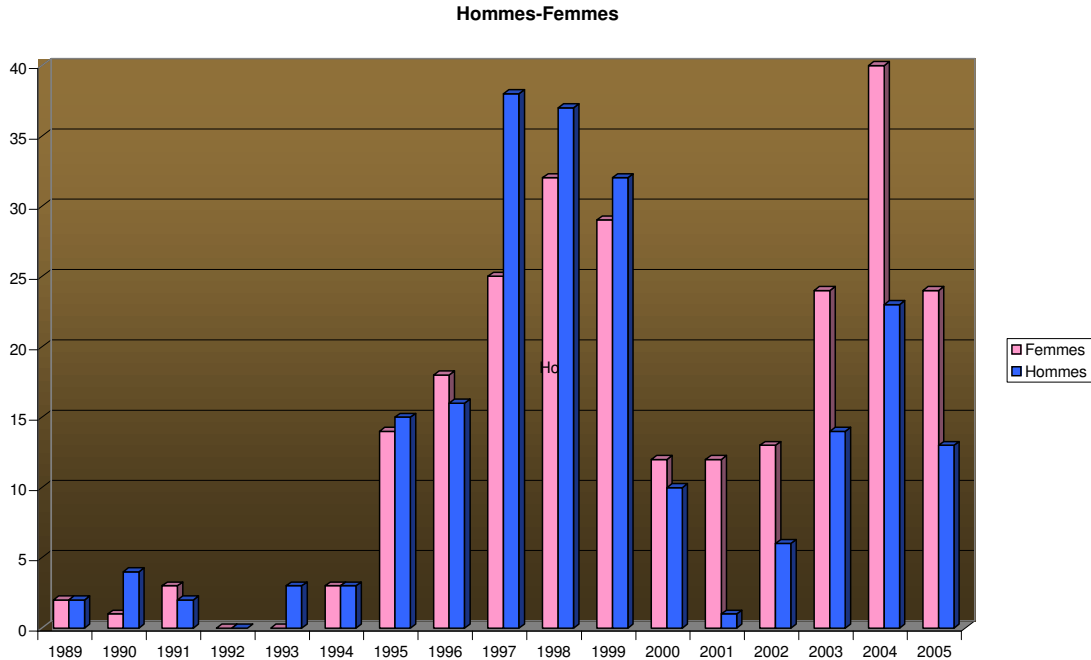
Fig 10



Seven Universities remain at the top with 191 thesis : Roma « la Sapienza » (62), then Reggio di Calabria (39), Napoli (34), Firenze (29), Torino (29) and Bologna (27) if we do not count the doctorates realized in the frame of interuniversity collaboration (75). Some of these Universities propose landscape architecture studies at a Master Level and *laurea specialistica* (Firenze, Torino, Roma, and Napoli). However, it is still difficult to establish a link between the curriculum of the second and the third cycles (except Firenze which proposes an explicit doctorate in landscape project since 1997). Most of the Italian academic structures propose PhD studies. For the last 15 years, the majority of the theses refer to the *poïétique* field of project design. Although it is pioneer in the field of landscape training, the Genoa University has produced only few theses in this field. (17)

Lastly, who has realized these PhD researches? The origins of the PhD students are not well known; even though we could have predicted – from the large number of researches on design of urban, architectural, garden and landscape projects – a large number of graduates in architecture, landscape architecture and urbanism. According to the figure 11, women have become, since 2000, majority. This trend of feminization in the doctoral studies is occurring in most of the European countries.

Fig 11



Legend
 Femmes/ Women
 Hommes/ Men

5. Discussion

Can these first results allow us to conclude to a possible coherence of the “*landscapetics*” field? What exists, with certitude, is an ensemble of disciplines, having for object landscape and garden: two paradigm notions which connect - either in terms of knowledge or action, or in order to establish the relationships between the two (practical sciences) - the human relations to the space and nature.

If coherence - a connection - between the nine fields exists, it is introduced by the two matrix axes: materiality/ideality; interest in action/disinterest in knowledge.

Poïétique sciences exist only in the relationships developed between the capacity to design the works, the technical capacity to realize them and the capacity to discuss the results (to criticize). Likewise, practical sciences, highlighting the action and the decision of action, exist, only if they refer to the knowledge relating to economical exchanges and to moral and aesthetical values which motivate them.

Lastly, theoretical sciences -founding the relative truth of the “*landscapetics*” knowledge- exist, only if they refer to the methods and paradigms peculiar to each discipline of knowledge; and only if they question the validity of the cultural models, which at the level of History, allow to interpret the social and spatial practices and the material and immaterial landscapes which result from them.

Likewise, in the three horizontal fields:
 Sciences of landscape materiality (in French “*matérialités*”) exist only if they encompass the interested knowledge of urban, forestry, agronomical and naturalist engineering, of the economy of landscape

goods and profit/nonprofit services and lastly of fundamental sciences such as physical geography, vegetal and animal biology and agronomy.

Sciences of landscape ideo-materiality (in French “*idéo-matérialités*”) can only be defined if they encompass the *poiétique* sciences of landscape project (through, on and for the landscape project) with the practical sciences of action (law, sociology, social geography) and more fundamental sciences of mathematics modeling (geo-ecology, geo-agronomy and landscape economics for example).

Lastly the sciences of landscape ideality (or immaterialities) can be founded on the connection of knowledge provided by the critics of art and literature, the ethics and the aesthetics, the epistemology and the history of ideas and sciences.

The Italian thesology shows that the categories exist (except one: the aesthetics) and that the context of the development of urban culture has encouraged since 15 years the works on “urban and territorial construction” in terms of landscape (a bit like the American *landscape urbanism*, expression which has appeared in 1997). However, no neologism has been proposed to name this new field – in another way than landscape – for example in France where the landscape architect interests on these issues have been raised by the State for the last 30 years.

However, the field of landscapetics sciences seems to be able to exist as metasciences or metadisciplines. It refers to the connection of the six horizontal and vertical categories defined above. What is not resolved is to know if the landscape architecture expression, as defined by the IFLA, encompasses all the knowledge and savoir-faire of these sciences or if it is confined to the *poiétique* and ideo-material category of the landscape project design.

6. Conclusion

A field of proper knowledge on landscape and garden exists in Italy and has developed during the last 15 years, in particular in the production of doctoral researches. The *poiétique* and ideo-material field of the practice is predominant; however the fields of practical and theoretical sciences start to strengthen with landscape ecology, sociology and historical geography.

These first results are the early stage of a research which aims now to know if in other European countries, the doctoral researches encompass the same type of knowledge and in which proportion.

It will also be necessary to precise which conceptions of doctoral researches raising the field of savoir-faire (landscape and garden project, engineering) are developed in Italy, notably in comparison with France where this field does not exist or with the United Kingdom.

The comparative thesology is a very new discipline which is not much developed; it should be encouraged if we aim to develop a Europe of research in the fields concerned.

APPENDICE 1

The revues which publish the research articles relating to the themes of landscape and garden are classified according to the landscapetics category (green: *poïétique* polarity; red: practical polarity; blue: theoretical polarity). The list is not exhaustive.

REVUE TITLE	PROCUCER	WEBSITE	LANGUE
Anthos	Federation Suisse des Architects Paysagistes – FSAP	http://www.bsia.ch/fr/publications/index.php	Français, Allemand, Italien
Carnets du Paysage (Les)	Ecole Nationale Supérieure du Paysage de Versailles / Actes Sud	http://www.ecole-paysage.fr/publicat/p_index.html	Français
Espace géographique (L')		http://www.mgm.fr/PUB/EG/EGPre1.html	Français
Gartenkunst (Die)		http://www.die-gartenkunst.de/home/index_home.html	Allemand
Garten + Landschaft		http://www.garten-landschaft.de/index.php	Allemand
Global Environment. A Journal of History and Natural and Social Sciences	Università degli Studi di Firenze – Consiglio Nazionale della Ricerca – Istituto di Studi sulle Società del Mediterraneo	http://www.globaleenvironment.it/	Anglais
JoLA – Journal of Landscape Architecture	European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools – ECLAS	http://www.info-jola.de/	Anglais
Etudes rurales	Laboratoire d'anthropologie sociale - Ecoles des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS)	http://etudesrurales.revues.org/	Français
European Planning Studies	Association of European Schools of Planning – AESOP	http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aesop/main.htm	Anglais
Histoire Urbaine	Société Française d'Histoire Urbaine	http://www.sfnu.org/Publication_Revue_Presentation.php	Français
Historic Gardens Review	Historic Gardens Foundation	http://www.historicgardens.org/current.php	Anglais
Landscape	The Landscape Institute UK	http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/journal_and_publications/	Anglais
Landscape and Urban Planning	Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company	http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/503347/description#description	Anglais
Landscape Journal	University of Wisconsin Press	http://www.wisc.edu/wisconsinpress/journals/journals/lj.html	Anglais
Landscape Research Journal	Taylor & Francis Group	http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/online/0142-6397.asp	Anglais
Living Reviews in Landscape research		http://landscaperesearch.livingreviews.org/	Anglais
Natures Sciences Sociétés	Association Natures Sciences Sociétés-Dialogues	http://netx.u-paris10.fr/nss/revue.htm	Français
Polia. Revue de l'art des jardins		http://www.polia.fr/Polia_la_revx.html	Français, Anglais
Recherches en Esthétiques	Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches en Esthétique et Art Plastiques - CEREAP	http://pagesperso-orange.fr/recherches.en.esthetique.cereap/revues.htm	Français
Ri-Vista. Ricerche per la progettazione del paesaggio	Dottorato di Ricerca in Progettazione Paesistica Università di Firenze	http://www.unifi.it/ri-vista/	

'SCAPE. Landscape Architecture and Urbanism	Blauwe Kamer. Landschapontwikkeling en stedenbouw	http://www.scapemagazine.com/	Anglais
Studies in the history of gardens and designed landscapes	Taylor & Francis Group	http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/14601176.html	Anglais
Urbanisme		http://www.urbanisme.fr/	Français

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P. Donadieu, C. Santini, *Short essay in Italian thesology. Contribution to the emergence of Landscape Sciences*, www.topia.fr, may 2009.