

## ERIDANO

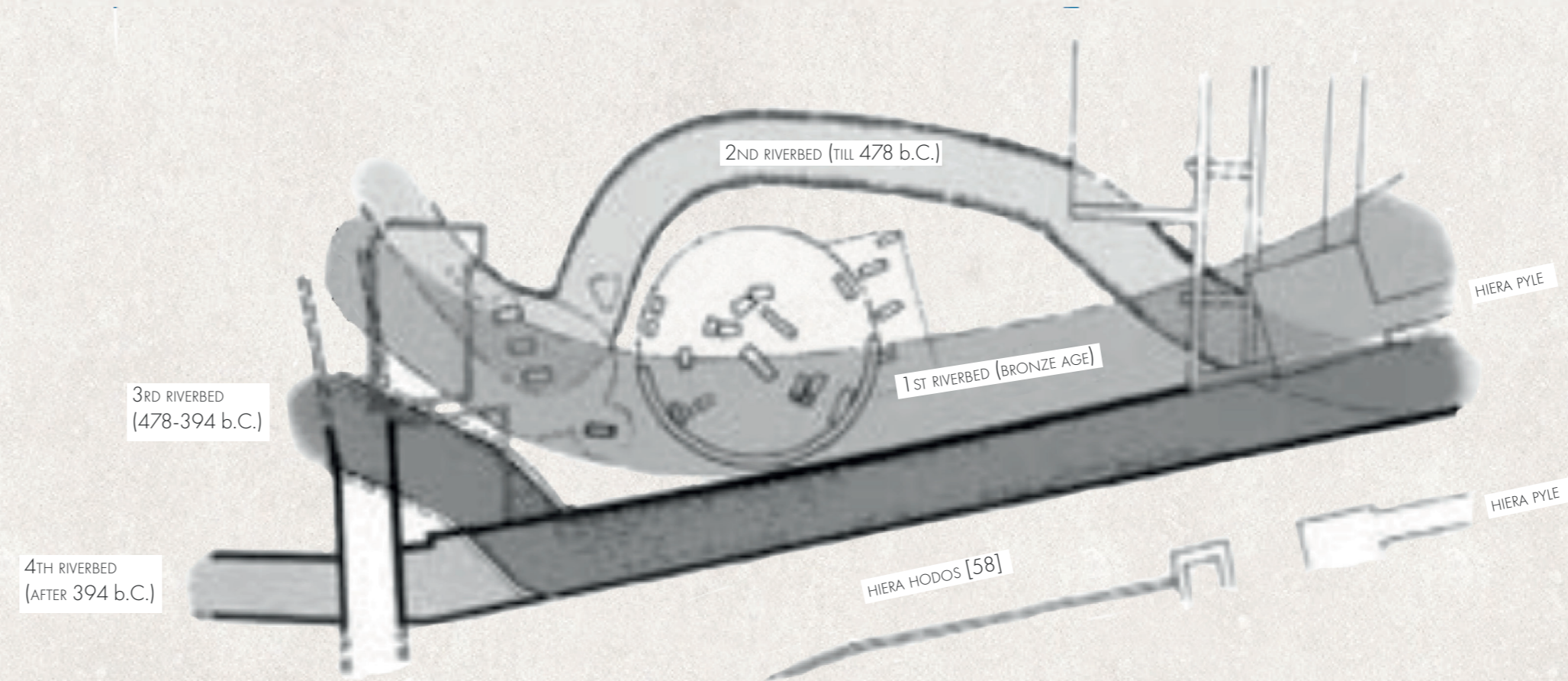
Eridano river was one of the two fundamental water reservoirs for the city, together with the Ilisso, so much so that it was probably depicted on the pediment of the Parthenon.

After being well dammed, it was buried in Roman times and later completely forgotten. Its memory was therefore lost until 1888, when part of its riverbed was rediscovered and unearthed by W. Dörpfeld.

The Eridano river historically entered the city through the Sacred Gate (Hiera Pyle), only later joining the Ilisso. Its course had a torrential character with numerous micro-floods, marshy and

unstable banks that caused fairly frequent shifts and changes in the course, as well as numerous floods in the surrounding area.

It was only from the Mycenaean period that it took on a more regular character, and in the Classical period canals and drainage channels were built to avoid the flooding during the construction of the Themistoclean wall, in 478 a.C., and its course and passage through the gate was definitively channelled and defined.



Reconstruction of the variations in the course of the Eridano River in different historical periods, original design E. Greco

## HIERA PYLE

The Hiera Pyle, also known as the Sacred Gate, is one of the two entrances that historically allowed entry into the city of Athens from the Kerameikos quarter.

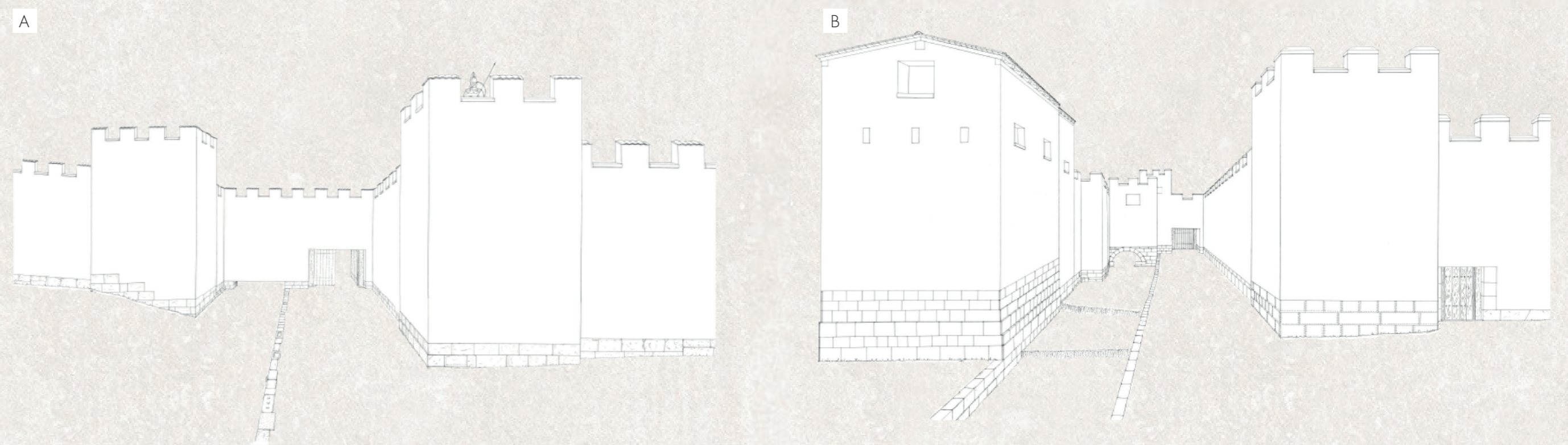
It can be defined as a 'courtyard gate', i.e. a monumental entrance portal not aligned with the walls, but set back from the main defensive curtain, with an open space in front of it for standing or waiting before the actual entrance threshold.

The element that made this access even more important was the passage of the Hiera Hodos [58], or Via Sacra, into which the so-called Street of the Tombs [60] converged. In this case, it had a pair of towers,

useful for defending the respective access portals, but the peculiarity of this access was that it provided not only a pedestrian road, but also the passage of the local waterway, the Eridanos.

It has eight evolutionary phases due both to the expansion and evolution of the city's defensive structure, but also to the continuous flooding and re-channelling of the Eridano river.

The gate relatively lost its importance in Justinian times when the river was channelled below ground level and the Hiera Hodos lost importance in favour of the Dromos.



Hypothetical elevation reconstruction of the Hiera Pyle door, first (A) and fifth (B) phases, original drawing G. Kuhn

## DIPYLON

The gate of Dipylon has been described as the largest and most monumental gate of the city of Athens and of all Greece, as the complex took into account the immense importance of the road on which it was built.

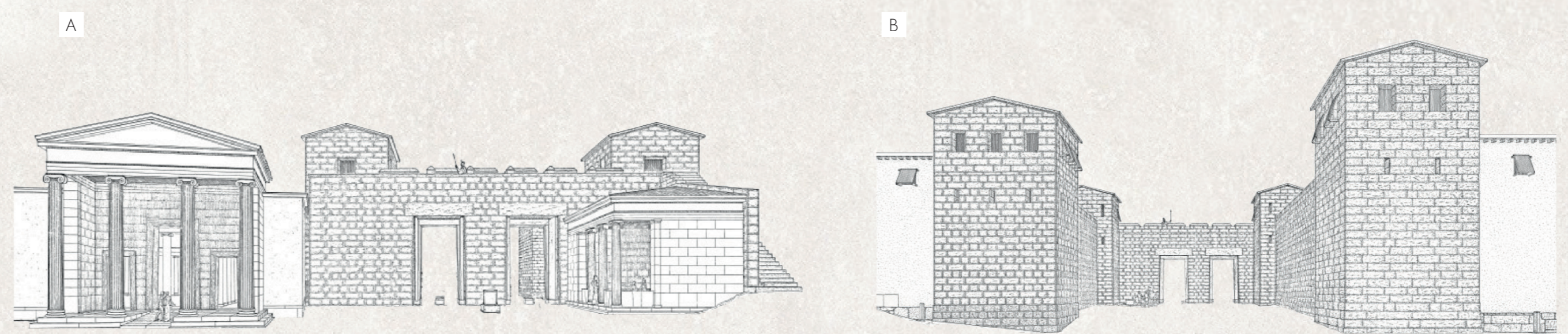
In general, the Dipylon provided access to the city, also thanks to the passage of one of the city's main thoroughfares: the Academy Street [62], which took the name Dromos along the section near the Kerameikos quarter, and then became Panathenaic way near the Agora.

Again, the passage can be defined as a 'courtyard gate' set back from the defensive walls.

The Dipylon was architectonically defined in its Themistoclean version, the gate was then restored in the Conanian period<sup>19</sup> and rebuilt during the Hellenistic period.

Fundamental was the constant presence of two pairs of defensive towers, underlining the presence of a double passage, one pair aligned with the walls, the remaining ones set back.

As in all the largest Athenian cities with access from the most important roads of the peninsula, the Dipylon also had a well in the courtyard and an external fountain, but the religious aspect of the threshold and gateway to the capital was also strong, so much so that it required the presence of a small circular altar dedicated to Zeus Herokios, Hermes and Akamas.



Reconstruction, general perspective view of Dipylon from the city (A) and from outside the walls (B), Hellenistic period, original drawing K. Müller

## POMPEION

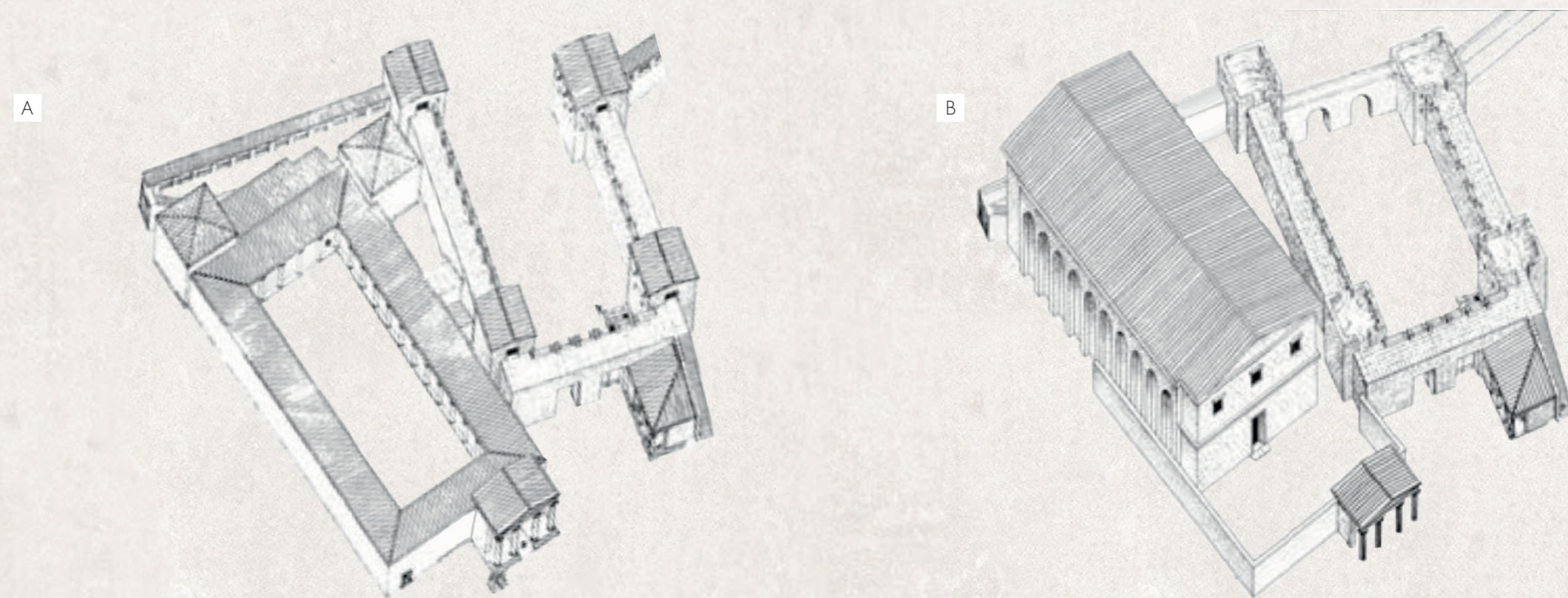
The Pompeion was built following the erection of the Themistoclean walls, immediately inside the defensive circuit, between the two gates in the Kerameikos district: the Dipylon and the Hiera Pyle.

The building's main function was to house the preparations for the religious processions and festivities that took place there, but it was also used as a grain store and town gymnasium. Entrance to the building was therefore permitted to all free citizens of the polis. Although it underwent numerous alterations due to various destructions and reconstructions, three phases of the building can be identified.

The construction was begun during the IV century b.C., as an additional stratification of the ancient city necropolis in the sub-Mycenaean period.

After the Sillan destruction of 86 b.C., it was only re-erected around the II century a.C., when it took on more of the character of a warehouse specifically dedicated to the preparation of processions and the dimensions were certainly smaller.

After the sack of the Heruli, the third Pompeion was built in the IV and V centuries a.C. It was most likely that two long stoa were built with a purely commercial function, although a kind of three-arched entrance portal was maintained to identify the site. The use for city festivals became only sporadic.



Reconstructive view of Pompeion, first (A) and second (B) phases, original design W. Hoepfner

