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Architecture for archaeology: critical devices to mend history

Case study: the Kerameikos in Athens

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On the cover Isadora Ducan between the Parthenon columns,

photo by E. Steichen

Al professor Federico Bucci,

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Partendo da un'analisi urbana della città di Atene ci si può accorgere di come solamente una minima parte dei parchi archeologici risulta fortemente valorizzata e ben inserita nel tessuto urbano contemporaneo.

Studiando i siti meno conosciuti si è andati ad indagare storicamente il loro valore e si è scelto di concentrare il progetto nel solo sito del Kerameikos, preso come esempio per l'applicazione di un metodo e di una teoria profondamente ricercata. Inserirsi con un progetto dichiaratamente contemporaneo all'interno di un parco archeologico diviene un pretesto per indagare il passato e un campo di sperimentazione per un nuovo metodo di approccio alla storia.

Ciò viene fatto tramite lo studio e l'ideazione di dispositivi critici che divengono avvertimenti e promotori di domande direttamente rivolte ai visitatori.

La passeggiata dalla città ai resti diventa, quindi, un percorso processionale, una narrazione, che come meta ha la conoscenza e la riscoperta di sé e della propria sensibilità. Il progetto si suddivide in due porzioni distinte: i dispositivi sulla strada contemporanea e quelli nello scavo archeologico stesso.

In questo modo si vuole ricucire profondamente il presente con il passato tramite un progetto cumulativo non rappresentabile solamente dalla somma dei singoli elementi inseriti.

Abstract

Starting from an urban analysis of the city of Athens, it's possible to see how only a fraction of the archaeological parks are highly valorised and well integrated into the contemporary urban fabric.

Studying the lesser known sites, their value was investigated historically, and it was decided to focus the project on the Kerameikos site, taken as an example for the application of a deeply researched method and theory. Placing an openly contemporary project within an archaeological park becomes a pretext for investigating the past and a field of experimentation for a new method of approaching history.

This is done through the study and conception of critical devices that become warnings and promoters of questions directly addressed to visitors.

The walk from the city to the remains becomes a processional route, a narration, whose goal is knowledge and rediscovery of one's own sensitivity. The project is divided into two distinct portions: the devices on the contemporary street and those in the archaeological excavation.

In this way, the aim is to deeply stitch together the present with the past through a cumulative project that cannot be represented only by the sum of its individual elements.

INTRODUCTION

Architecture for Archeology

fig 1. photographic elaboration of the path to the slopes of the Acropolis

«*L'Antico è la Vita stessa, Non v'è nulla di più vivo dell'Antico, e nessuno stile al mondo ha saputo nè potuto raffigurare la Vita nello stesso modo. (...) è la trasfigurazione del passato in qualcosa di eternamente vivo.*» [1]

Architects of all historical epochs have always been confronted with their past, but unlike artists, they have been obliged to hold firm and unchanged some of the fundamental principles with respect to the discoveries of their predecessors. They have always been interested in understanding and discovering what were the rational, theoretical or ideal rules that guided the construction of the buildings and monuments that preceded them. Even if the style changed, even if they wanted to articulate proportions or decorations, the foundations of architecture can only be traced from the great architects of ancient civilisations, who were able to have insights and a perception of space for man that, even today, is astonishing and undeniable.

We are not able to trace back to the first hut, to the person who first thought about how a bridge could be made, how a wall could be built, very often we are called upon to contemplate works without knowing for certain the actual architect, without materially seeing his signature on the stone. Architecture is not an autographed canvas, nor just a signed drawing, it is a discovery and emotion that is perpetuated over time and that, in a sometimes inexplicable way, is also able to strengthen and renew itself in different historical epochs, becoming a symbol and an identity. It is poignant to note how architecture as such, turns out to be the only art capable of enduring with unchanged value over time. Historically, we know that the growth of the role of the architect and his elevation to a social level can be traced back to the Italian Renaissance, where personalities such as Brunelleschi, Michelangelo, Bramante and numerous others also began to present themselves to the world as real architects. Not just draughtsmen, no longer master builders, but connoisseurs of the past thanks to numerous theoretical treatises and representations and redesigns of great monuments. Inventors projected into the future and men of their time, willing to leave a mark that represented not personal glory, but something else, and eager that this should not only be linked to their figure or their name.

Consequently, a second point can also be deduced from this art contaminated by technical knowledge: architecture hardly ever needs a name, because in inexplicable ways it is able to give it. By becoming historical, geographical and social symbols, monuments or buildings can and do make the identity of a place or its inhabitants known in a totally autonomous and lasting way. A place without monuments, on the other hand, is a place without history, without memory and which, sooner or later, will be forgotten. We do not want to go into issues involving restoration or the current condition of cultural

1. A. Rodin, La lezione dell'Antico, S. Esengrini (a cura di), Miniature n.62, Abscondita, Milano, 2016, pg. 11

fig 2. photographic elaboration of some details of the Pikioni's paths

heritage, especially in relation to the new generations, but we wanted to make this reflection in order to start approaching a fundamental theme for the work of this thesis: the architecture of the past as a symbol and its recovery in order not to lose memory.

It is certain that in the virtual, immediate and consumerist society contemporary to us, these principles may appear somewhat anachronistic and almost utopian. We are aware that the concept of 'citizens of the world', of 'liquid society', of 'branding' for profit, are issues that, although theoretically not dangerous, carry with them consequences that are particularly important with respect to local culture, traditions, and the overall vision of the present heritage as opposed to a singularist view of the most marketable. Although these may appear much more psycho-social than artistic spheres, it must be remembered that architecture was born and developed fundamentally for the life of man: to serve his needs in the private sphere and to guide it in the public sphere. For this reason, it was decided to go and study how architecture can and must today go to work once again for the society in which it is located, managing to collaborate with the more or less historical, but above all more or less renowned pre-existences, trying to bring fragmentary and dispersed traces back to express themselves equivalently and chorally to the few territorial and monumental emergencies and exceptions. Today, architecture for the social and

cultural heritage has not only the task of maintaining, conserving and restoring, but also of becoming an instrument at the service of memory and community identity. Remaining "nameless" should not imply a position of servility or denial of self and of contemporary intervention in favour of the ancient, but it is our duty to be able to maintain our own identity and strength, while signalling the importance of the "other than self", of the different.

If these aspects in particular are to be declined in the relationship of Architecture with archaeological remains, it is worth emphasising how the binomial can take place and develop following numerous facets starting from the unique and singular needs of the place, the site and the remains (be they in elevation or traces).

The subject of Architecture for Archaeology has already been dealt with by us as the main topic for the three-year thesis, with the title: *"L'architettura contemporanea nella preesistenza archeologica".* Thanks to this previous work, it was also possible for us to focus on aspects of this relationship that we had not dealt with until now, but at the same time remain aware of what we had already learned and explored. What is different is the aim of the present architectural work and approach: if the first research was a thematic classification of the main interventions carried out for the musealisation of archaeological sites around the world (the categories taken into consideration were the following the insertion of new volumes, the roofing, the enclosure, contemporary anastylosis projects, internal routes and interventions of an urban nature), the one we will present in the following chapters aims not at a work on the archaeological element for itself, but seeks to mend through the design of contemporary elements that historical fracture that is violently evident between the urban fabric and the site. Although attempts have been made several times in the past century in this direction, very often what was achieved was a timid step towards a reconciliation for the coexistence of territorial stratigraphy, while at the same time obtaining numerous other fractures that contemporary architects are required to conserve, respect, but also improve and implement in order to be able to conceive past and present as the identity of a population. In this sense

and as a guide, we will take the words of D. Pikionis, in his work "Aesthetic Topography": *«Nothing exists in isolation, but everything is part of a universal Harmony. All things interpenetrate into one another, and one another suffer, and one another transform. And it is not possible to understand one, except among the others».* Mending the fractures between the past and the present, but also and above all between those traces of the same territory that are too often disconnected today and, consequently, illegible and incomprehensible in their entirety, wants to be set as one of the main objectives, which will be declined, in our specific case, in the city of Athens, so rich in the past, but also with numerous problems in its contemporary management and understanding.

«Costruire dove è già costruito, (...) dove nuove esigenze hanno modificato l'aspetto del manufatto sino al limite del resto archeologico è per l'architetto un impegno morale (...). Ricordo di allora il desiderio di tramandare, e un'idea del tempo che è di contemporaneità, dove passato e presente coesistono e sono già domani»[2]

fig 3. sketch study by Pikionis of the historical context of Athens with graphic reflection on historical traces

2. A. Bruno, Comprensione, conservazione e manutenzione, in M. Mastropiero, "Oltre il restauro", Lybra Immagine, Milano, 1996, pg. 12-13

Starting point
Piranesi prix de
Rome et d'Athènes

The project site on which the thesis we developed was based was provided by the international university competition 'Piranesi Prix de Rome et d'Athènes 2022-23', whose theme was '*design for the Acropolis of Athens and its surroundings in the UNESCO buffer zone*'.

We were able to participate in the above-mentioned competition as student thesis students of the team representing the territorial pole of Mantua and, during this work, we came into close contact with the city and its various characteristics and problems.

Below we will present both the structure of the competition and how it was carried out by our team, explaining the salient points. First of all, it is good to go on to specify what a design competition is and how the call document and its parts are subdivided, so that we can present its structure. It was decided for ease and clarity to take the example of the Piranesi competition as an example, so as to also have consistency of content with the subsequent parts of the thesis work.

The call for entries document is an official document deliberated and published by the organising body and is intended to clarify and specify not only the project themes, but also the different stages of delivery and the bureaucratic elements/features and prerequisites that must be met in order to participate. In this sense it is therefore subdivided as follows:

1. **Subject of the scientific competition named "Piranesi Prix de Rome et d'Athènes 2022-2023". International design call for the Acropolis of Athens:** here the actual title of the competition is clarified with a very brief anticipation of the themes of the call and the body instituting the international call.

2. **Objectives of the international call:** in addition to the main objective of "elaborating a series of project proposals aimed at the redevelopment and re-signification of the main monumental, archaeological and landscape features present within the perimeter of the UNESCO Buffer Zone of the Central Area of Athens". The secondary objectives that derive from it are also presented below, namely: the understanding of the role and identity of the archaeological site of the Acropolis with adequate design solutions for the present needs, the understanding of the state of the art and the hypothesis of a conscious design with respect to the place of historical and cultural relevance on which one intervenes, the ability to present the developed project by exposing its salient points and the the-

oretical approach that allowed its development.

3. **Target of the international call:** it is sanctioned and clarified who can participate in the competition, specifying who the design team that will be enrolled can be composed of and indicating the mandatory and optional figures within it. In the case taken into consideration, the fundamental requirement is that the team be composed of university members belonging to a School of Architecture or a University Department of Architecture, allowing for the inclusion of a partnership with professional studios of international standing that nevertheless have a stable relationship with the university world. In our case, at university lecturer level, the team was composed as follows: Prof. Bucci Federico (group leader), Prof. Rossi Corinna (archaeologist), Kogan Marcio (MK27 studio, visiting professor), Prof. Bricolo Filippo and Prof. Boeri Elisa. Other architects, already collaborators of some of the professors mentioned above, were also present: Nicolò Galeazzi and Martina Salvaneschi (Associates Architecture), Valeria Righetti, Vladimir Boaghe, Federica Chizzoni, Davide Burro, Lorenzo Gaspari, Suzana Glogowski (studio MK27), Renata Scheliga (studio MK27), Eduardo Radomysler (studio MK27). The group was then integrated with a number of students, who took part in the competition in all its phases and provided support for the production

of the final works: Caterina Volontè, Marco Pilon, Mattia Massa, Mattia Tardarelli, Riccardo Omacini.

4. **Participation:** explanation of how to submit the application and addresses to which to send it.

5. **Evaluation methods: the evaluation in this specific case has two phases:** the evaluation of the project team's curriculum and then the evaluation of the actual project in relation to the project themes and areas in the call for proposals. The following point also specifies the bodies and individuals who will take part in the evaluations, differentiating them according to the stages and clarifying the actual evaluation methods.

6. **Prizes:** specifically, the prizes up for grabs are listed, in this case they are "three prizes, to be considered ex aequo as well as three special mentions" with the possibility, if winners, of being awarded the "Piranesi Prix de Rome et d'Athènes 2022-23" with the possibility of being enrolled in the Golden Register of the Prize, a contract for the monographic publication of the project both in print and digital form.

7. **Submission of first phase works:** a list of the works to be included in the group's presentation curriculum, with specifications concerning the maximum number of pages, cover, page and file format, the e-mail address to which the document is to be sent, and the precise deadline date and time.

8. **Submission of second phase works:** a precise list of the works to be delivered within the deadline of the second phase is provided, specifying: 3 tables in ISO A0 format, i.e. one per area (table 1_Masterplan Buffer Zone UNESCO, table 2_Peripatos and slopes of the Acropolis, table 3_Plateau of the Acropolis), a CD or DVD containing the folders with the relative files: tables, images and texts, project report, open files, DWG, presentations. Also in this case, the precise day and time on which to deliver everything is specified.

It is also worth emphasising the presence of a fundamental chapter that we deliberately did not include in the previous list, as it requires a more in-depth exposition: the subject of the competition consultation and contents.

The following point turns out to be a fundamental portion for the conduct of the competition, as it specifically describes the main theme, with the secondary areas into which it is divided, and the project objectives.

First and foremost, work is proposed on the Acropolis in general, but also on its perimeter areas, called the 'UNESCO Buffer Zone', to stimulate an innovative interpretation of the archaeological site, also taking into account other 19th (excavation of the *Perserschutt*) and 20th century interventions (Pikionis paths). What is to be achieved is a new interpretation of

architectural design in the archaeological context, responding to practical needs, cultural and identity issues of universal resonance. For this reason, the competition is divided into three areas (each university team is free to choose one or all three):

A_ Strategic connections: in this sense, it is suggested to work on the vertical connection between the Agora and the Parthenon by resuming the processional route of the Panathenaean Feasts; the accessibility and exploration of the Areopagus Hill thanks to its visual control over the Archaeological Park below; the musealisation of the Pnice Hill, which brings with it the need for new design thinking at the museum level that remains in harmony with the landscape.

B_ Redevelopment of the Peripatos: the main aim will be the provision of services for restoration activities and the dissemination of the discoveries made here, as well as becoming a new support for performances and/or exhibitions. The elements suggested, in particular, are: the tracing of the north slope with the design of a new lift system (also for the disabled); the arrangement of the Acropolis Restoration Centre to provide new laboratories for both restoration and the processing of stone materials; the reconstruction of the Odeon of Pericles to be understood as a new multifunctional community space.

C_ Reconstruction of the Plateau, reorganisation of the construction site on the *Perserschutt* and of the

Old Museum: it is proposed to carry out a reflection on the entire surface of the Fortress both with regard to the paths of use of the same, but also with respect to the green area, the reconstruction or renovation of the Old Museum, the restoration sites, with the possibility of also hypothesising excavations in the portion of the *Perserschutt.*

Within our working group, we initially carried out historical research work referring mainly to the Plateau area, the Acropolis and the reconstruction restoration work carried out over the centuries in this archaeological area. Subsequently, we were divided into subgroups with respect to the topic of investigation and the area of reference, to develop the project as a whole and in its entirety. General comparisons were made to then be able to set out and implement a coherent and shared strategy, which guided all the sub-groups and ultimately resulted in a series of choral interventions, albeit individually elaborated. Personally, after having developed in particular the theme of the Acropolis Plateau (Area 3) and in greater depth, we preferred to broaden our gaze and take a general interest in the complexity of the system of archaeological sites in the fabric of the city of Athens. This decision derives from an awareness we acquired during the competition, namely of the problems present in the portion indicated in the competition notice, but also of the general difficulty of connecting and recognising all the areas of the past as parts of a single large urban and city complex, capable of giving a complex and complete identity to the city and its inhabitants. In this sense, departing from the competition areas, did not imply a departure from the objectives and main purpose of the call, but only a declination of it with respect to a different area.

fig 5. loggia of the Caryatids, detail of the Erechtheion placed on the Acropolis

Athens: the ancient city and the modern city

fig 6.Athena and Cecrope libanti: Attic red-figure goblet crater (part.), Painter of Cecrope, 410-400 b.C.

The city of Athens conceals within itself a complex and intricate history that over and over again has undergone drastic changes involving numerous modifications in the textures of the urban fabric; here it is complex to be able to manage fully what is the evolutionary history of such a complex urban organism, especially given the great span of time that sees the city of Athens as a protagonist of the Mediterranean basin; a history that finds its first signs of activity between 13000 and 5000 b.C., and that still to this day continues to fascinate for its richness.

In the analysis that follows, the attempt is not so much to develop a didactic description of the events that took place in the urban development of the city, but to try to draw conclusions from the study of history, extrapolating reflections on the urban-architectural-territorial elements that represented fixed points and on which then developed the instances of evolution of the surroundings that surrounded them. This is because in the reflections that led to the subsequent design proposals, the *datum* of contact between the realities of the ancient city and the contemporary city go in direct accord with what are due reflections on the two dimensions of the city in our days. While it shows its more contemporary aspect

as a XXI century European metropolis, it also lives in a dimension suspended in time, protected by the remains of the ancient city.

It is precisely within the enclosure, at the highest point of the Acropolis, where the development of the city of Athens begins; indeed, we can consider the Acropolis area as the generative core of the future layout of the city to come. This is an important reflection to understand how it is precisely in the "upper part," from which the Greek name ἄκρος-akros, i.e., "at the top," is derived, with πόλις-polis, "the city," where the main functions of the social arrangement that governed civilizations were located. *«Sull'Acropoli, nell'intervallo tra la fine del mondo miceneo (con tutte le incertezze sulla reale entità della preesistenza di una regalità in quest'area) e le prime attestazioni di una probabile destinazione sacrale dell'Acropoli (verso la metà del VIII secolo a.C.), sappiamo ora della scoperta di tombe della prima Età del Ferro (Gauss, Ruppenstein 1998) che segnalano il perpetuarsi di funzioni abitative ancora fino al IX-VIII sec. A.C.»* [3].

It is no coincidence how the spatial dimension of the Acropolis hill marked a fixed point for urban development and in particular how the walled enclosure marked the gravitational center of Athens' urban history. It was an element that found a turning point in the ancient city with the transition from a place of habitation to a place of worship, sig-

naled by the appearance of votive tripods, attributable to the VIII century b.C.. Subsequent to these first steps toward the conformation of the political and urban structure, the VII century b.C. marks one of the most intricate epochs in Athenian history, especially with regard to the different transitions of power over the city, which generally saw the replacement from a traditional monarchy to an elective one organized by the oligarchy. In parallel with the changes in the social order, the places of living consequently followed the new needs of the ruling classes; new buildings designed to house the offices of the magistrates were developed and grafted onto the slopes of the Acropolis. It is from here that the second centralizing element of the city's urban layout, the Agora, takes shape. On this it is important to cite the reflections put forward by Jean-Marc Luce in the Athenian polarity between the pole of the Acropolis, as the site of the city's sacred memories, and instead the slopes of the Acropolis, or to this day we would say the ancient Agora, as the repository of the city's political campaigns and public sphere. In the case then of Athens it turns out to be even more special given the dual, then later triple copy of the Athenian Agora
«[...] l'Agorà 'letteraria' - se mi è permesso chiamare così quella ad est – e l'Agorà del Kerameikos, che è anche essa (e come!) letteraria, ma, per di più, essendo stata quasi interamente portata alla luce e scavata in profondità, fornisce dati materiali di primissimo ordine.» [4] to which we would

3. E. Greco, Acropoli, Areopago, tra Acropoli e Pnice, "Topografia di Atene: sviluppo urbano e monumenti dalle origini al III secolo d.C.", Tomo 1, Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene-SATAA 1 Pandemos, Atene-Paestum, 2014, pp. 21

4. Ibidem, pp. 24

then superimpose the market and meeting place of the Roman Agora, built by Octavian in memory of his 'father' Caesar, to this day known as the Roman Agora.

In Athens, in fact, three different phases of development converge on the urban plan of the same typology that is inscribed in the word "Agora." The three different ways of understanding the main square of the *polis* testify to the political evolution of the city of Athens, once again affirming on the surface of the land the close link between urban development and the social dimension. Here we cannot fail to keep in mind these large urban dimensions, which in them accommodate much broader meanings than those that can be visually grasped and appreciated for archaeological and/or architectural value; consequently going to enrich what are the satellites that surround and flesh out the dimensions of ancient Athens. It is consequently in the dimensions of the 'Acropolis (understood as the symbolic place of ancient sacredness) and the Agora (containers of civil and public evidence), that we can find the pivotal elements of the ancient city.

Consequently, it is easy to be able to follow the steps led by Emanuele Greco, in "Topografia di Atene: sviluppo urbano e monumenti dalle origini al III secolo d.C.," in reconstructing the elements that characterize the city of Athens in the Greek Roman period. The maps well clarify what were the city limits and especially the roles that the various spatial

actors had in the urban theatre of antiquity. For simplicity's sake, we can understand the ancient city according to this logic: in the center the Acropolis and its slopes; to the south with the valley of the Ilissus containing the monuments and temples; to the north with the various institutional, craft and commercial areas; to the northwest outside the walls with the road that passed through the *Dypilon* to Plato's Academy, the ancient cemetery and the ceramics area; and to the northeast the area of the residential quarters and the road to the Lyceum. This macro-subdivision makes it possible to grasp how the city amalgamated within the interstices between the three hills: the Acropolis, Pnice and Philopappus; developing around obvious architectural imprints that took on an urban scale such as: the *Olympeion*, the *Stadium*, the Theater of Dionysus and the *Odeon* of Herodes Atticus.

The next table also introduces the relationship the city had with Piraeus, that is, the maximum seaport 5 km from the city center, Piraeus is characterized as a natural inlet overlooking the Saronic Gulf; it was divided into three basins: *Munichia* with the fortress of the same name, *Zea* with the arsenal, and *Cantarus*, which was used as a commercial port. In the time of Pericles it was connected to Athens by means of the so-called Long Walls, attributed to *Hippodamus* of Miletus.

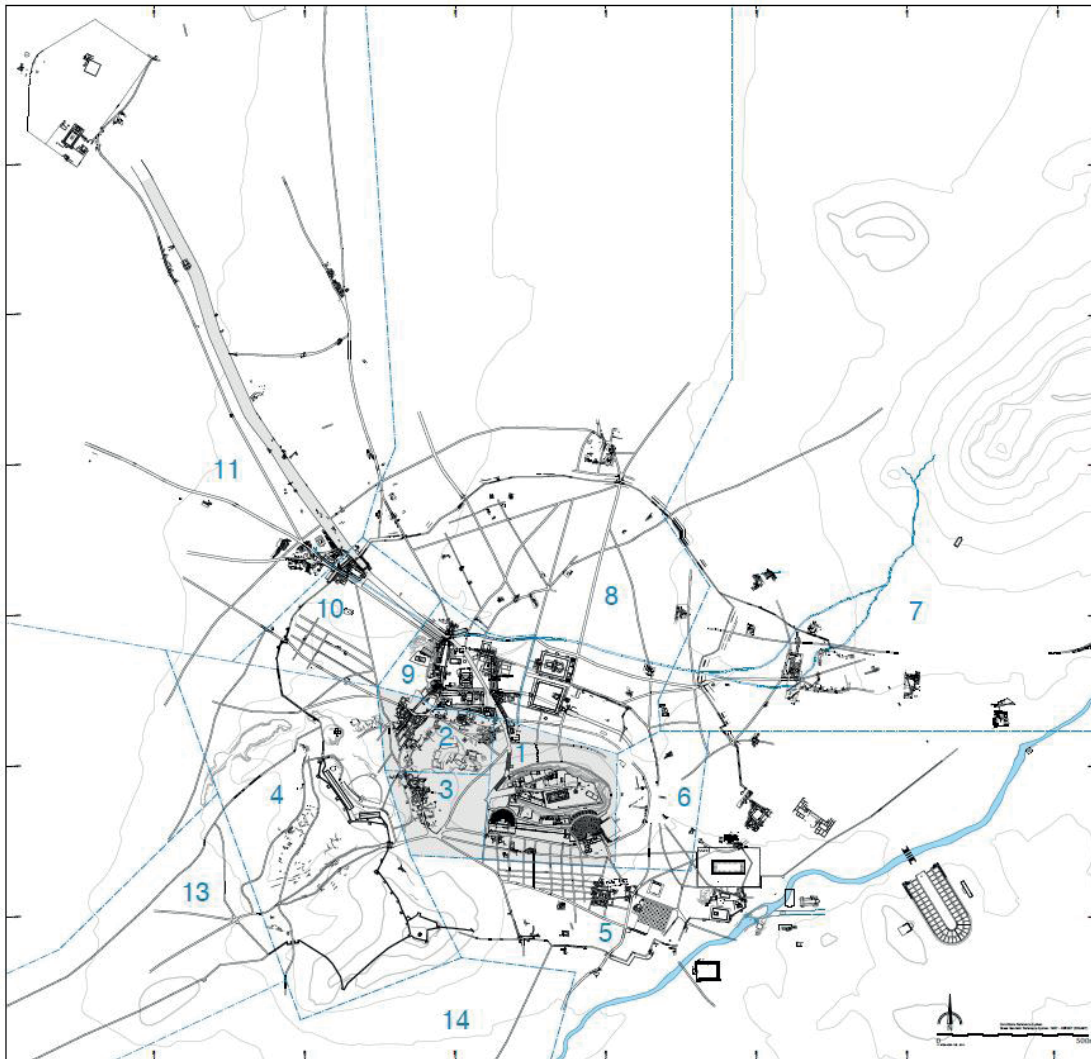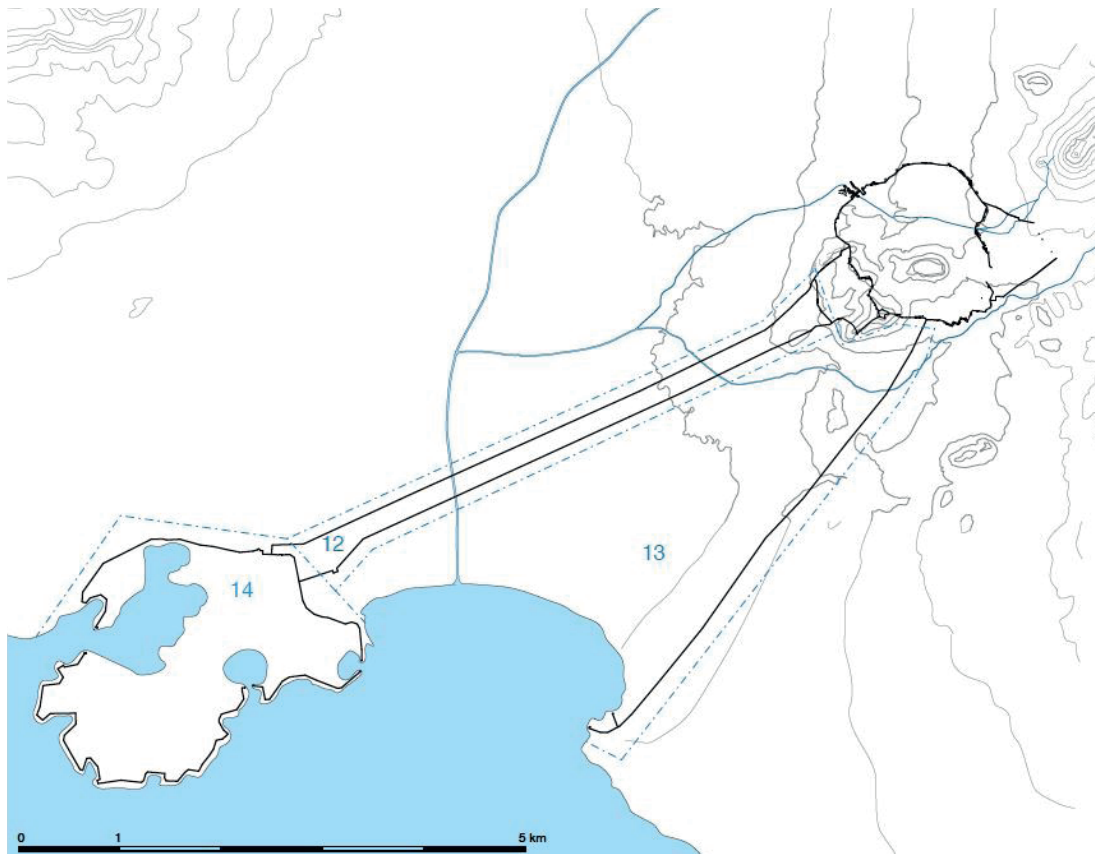Of course, the history of the city does not end at this juncture, and there are many

fig 7. plan of the territory of the city of Athens and its outline. Ancient road axes and major monuments are highlighted.

causes that have followed in the centuries to come, but in our case it is important to be able to define in principle a general dimension and understanding of what can be ascribed as the Ancient City of Athens. Here, in fact, the historical dimension of urban memory must settle down in a given spatial surroundings, in order to be able to then confront the modifications and discrepancies that have come to form with the new city. From simply viewing a satellite photo of the city of Athens in the present day, it is easy to intuit the metropolitan scale that the city has assumed, and the role it plays in Europe and the world in the XXI century.

The phenomenon of Athens' growth and development can be ascribed to the last great destruction of the city that occurred with the conflicts over gaining independence during the 1820s. Repeated bombardments, especially those from 1826 to 1827, had left deep wounds in the dense eighteenth-century urban fabric; in the words of Ludwing Ross one can read all the despair at the physical and moral loss that the war had brought, comparing the city to *«a monotonous mass of dust and debris»* (Papageorgiou-Venetas, 1989, pg.54, note 2). As is often the case, however, it is in the rubble that the city draws strength to grow; three years later in June 29, 1833, Athens was designated as the capital of the new state. It was in these later years that the fate of the modern city of Athens would be shaped, particularly with the first proposed master plan for the rebirth of the city by the visionary architects Stamatios Kleanthis and Eduard Schaubert. The plan promoted the emergence of the modern city to the north of the ancient one, contributing to the emergence of wide avenues and public spaces, flooding the space with squares and gardens. Most interesting was the proposal to keep the area around the Acropolis constrained, allocating the entire space to an experimental field for archaeology and future discoveries. Following the indicative lines of the plan, we read how the idea of the two architects was to emphasize the distinction between the ancient and modern city, understanding them as two detached and autonomous elements. On the one hand, the ancient city would maintain its characteristics surrounded by the hilly conformations of the area, waiting to be brought to light; on the other hand, the modern city would be developed according to a principle of inclusion and rationalization, following simple geometric dictates that would mark out the predominantly public character dimension from the private one. It was certainly a very visionary first project with utopian traits in the thought of keeping the city constrained in urban triangles that were difficult to extend and adapt to possible future needs.

The fate, however, of this first proposal ended before it was even begun, chased by the various protests of the inhabitants over the large numbers of expropriations that this plan would bring about. In fact, a new plan was proposed in 1834 by Ba-

fig 8. planimetric representation showing the ancient layout of the long walls that continued from the city of Athens to Piraeus.

varian architect Leo von Klenze. The second master plan for the city drastically reduced the size of public urban voids and street axes, emphasizing instead the size of blocks. Similarly following geometric principles and the rationalization of urban space, the new modern pole was mirrored with respect to the axis of the Acropolis, slightly reducing the constrained area of the ancient city.

Comparing the two nineteenth-century proposals, the projects seem to have a distinct focus with respect to the identities of new city and ancient city, always finding in the latter the center of propagation for the former. Along with these ideals what emerges with the new state is the interest in bringing together the city's different temporal spirits *«the new state showed its interest in the antiquities preserved in its soil, as early as 1833, when it appointed a "Superintendent of Science and Antiquities" and his three deputies, while in May in 1834 the first archaeological law on the discovery, preservation and use of antiquities was passed, by the Bavarian jurist G. Maurer»* [5].

From these suggestive proposals in the 1830s, little remains in memory of the contemporary urban fabric, so complex is it to be able to read the changes made in later years and in the 20th century. As of today, the comprehensible dimensions in the archaeological area of Athens include not only the Athens cliff, but also the Greek Agora and Areopagus, the Roman Agora and Hadrian's Library, the

slopes of the Acropolis, the Pice, Philopappus Hill, and the Hill of the Nymphs. This territory, which we would go on to understand as the grounds of the ancient city, has experienced little of the nineteenth-century will, steadily undergoing the growth of the modern city around its ancient core, the triggering cause of countless rifts between the plots of history. If in the projects of von Klenze or Kleanthis-Schaubert, the bond between history and contemporary reality was sharp and insuperable, to date the situation is certainly different and critical.

The rational new city has in fact morphed into a complex urban system, which cannot be ascribed to a single geometric dimension; neighborhoods such as the Plaka, Ano Petralona, Neos Kosmos have in fact invaded the areas around the fortress in most cases submerging antiquities or creating real rifts between the connections of the ancient city. What we are talking about after the post-war revival in Athens is a sad event of loss of the city-landscape relations, which characterized the streets of Athens since ancient times, of corruption of urban relations caused on the one hand by the reiteration of anonymous typologies such as the *polykatoikia* (the apartment building), and on the other hand by the out-of-bounds growth and crisis of modern times.

For if the classical Athenian city has constantly experienced an evolution more within its boundaries than outside, the new city has expanded like wildfire, at
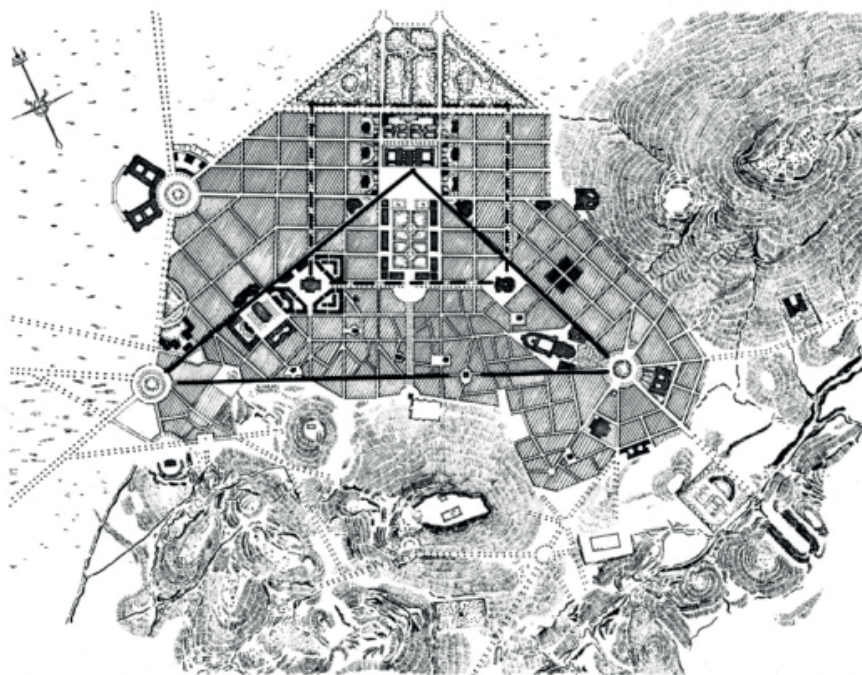
fig 11. comparison between the current development of the city of Athens and the outline of the first masterplan of 1833, architects Stamatios Kleanthis and Eduard Schaubert

fig 12. comparison of the current development of the city of Athens with the outline of Leo Von Klenze's 1834 second masterplan

fig 13.the boundaries of the ancient city in comparison with the current urban dimension

the ancient city

0   0,5   1   2 km

times overwriting the vestiges of its own past. From these events first among all to suffer has been the fragile core of the ancient city, the place par excellence where time has stood still and which struggles to coexist spontaneously with the needs of a cutting-edge metropolis.

These are the prerogatives for which in the last decade, the entire territory of the ancient city has in fact been involved in the program of "Unification of the Archaeological Areas of Athens" initiated in 1998 and continued until 2004; a project that seeks to recover the nineteenth-century projects of the rediscovery of the city north of the Acropolis and that of the creation of a *boulevard* south of it, proposed as early as 1847. A project that in the urban history of Athens, marks an awareness of the precarious condition that must hold the heavy boulder of the memory of the place. It is in this climate that the first ideas are born to heal the disconnections created in the previous years; first among them is the redevelopment of the large pedestrian island formed by *Dionisiou Areopaghitou Street* and *Apostolou Pavlou Street*, two important streets that until 2001 were a corridor for the city's automobile traffic. The two streets marked for many years a clear cut, not only visually but also physically, within the territories of the archaeological park.

To date, the road's closure to automobiles has remedied the problem of the physical disconnect between the modern city and the treasures of archaeology, giving sub-

stance to the boulevard so much desired in the XIX century.

The developments that led to Athens becoming a major metropolis in Europe and the Mediterranean caused the city to grow unconditionally, blurring from time to time what were the forbidden boundaries of the sacred city. *«[…] nel contesto archeologico ateniese, in cui rimangono ancora senza risposta molti quesiti sui luoghi ed edifici importanti dell'antica città di Atene, non ancora riportati sulla mappa archeologica e noti soltanto attraverso le fonti, si ripropone spesso la problematica della convivenza tra antico e moderno. Questa problematica, tradotta sin dall'Ottocento nella possibilità di esproprio delle proprietà private della zona, per poi procedere con indagini archeologiche, ha avuto come conseguenza un suo progressivo degrado, che negli anni '60 del '900 finì per trasformarla in un luogo di dubbia qualità.»* [6].

Although the unification of the archaeological areas has brought drastic changes from the previous condition, there are many problems that need to be addressed, such as the fragmentation of the Roman Agora and Hadrian's Library or the isolation of the *Kerameikos* area with the Acropolis archaeological complex. Dynamics that have yet to be addressed concern the dialogue between contemporary city spaces and thresholds, that is, points of contact with archaeology. Special places in the city of the present, unique in their character, preservers

6. N. Tsoniotis, La città antica a nord dell'Acropoli e le sue sopravvivenze nel paesaggio urbano di Atene contemporanea, A. Ancona, A. Contino, R. Sebastiani (a cura di), "Archeologia e Città: riflessione sulla valorizzazione dei siti archeologici in aree urbane", Palombi Editori, Roma, 2012, pg. 112

of remote memories that must at the same time serve as communicators with the present without presenting obstacles to the constant progress of the city or even creating ruptures in the understanding of the very memory it contains.

fig 14. photo area of the territory of I Ephoria to Prehistoric and Classical antiquities, through the pedestrian axis formed by D. Aeropaghitou and A. Pavlou Streets

Dimitris Pikionis

The actions carried out by the program of unification of the archaeological areas of Athens sought to respond to the internal problems caused by the previous years and development of the contemporary city. These actions on the one hand sought to remedy the causes triggered by actions, which did not take into account the polycentric nature of the city, responding instead to the unique needs related to the events that were part of the new metropolis. Programs such as those of Dionisiou Areopaghitou and Apostolou Pavlou streets undoubtedly altered the morphology of the city and erased the subtle relationships that underlay the Acropolis and the landscape. The earliest date of street mapping was in 1857, years in which we saw the urban layout was being modified by the assumptions of the new master plans. In our century the initiatives brought forward, have on the one hand sought to respond to and mitigate what were the relationships of the new infrastructures with the great archaeological site of Athens.

The latest interventions, have found as a main point the attempt to consider the possibility of unifying the, now dispersed, archaeological areas of the ancient city, having to meet the requirements of a planning capable of being able to support the large amount of tourism that flows to the Greek capital every year. This has involved a gradual loss of control of the small scale, working in a more comprehensive and generalizing way on the thresholds of contact with the city's history. It is a symbolic case in point, the pedestrianization of the Kerameikos site. A project that on the one hand tries to heal the wound caused by traffic between the distant archaeological area and the Acropolis sites, but on the other hand loses control over the scale of intervention, working on a wide corridor brutally closed by a high fence that rather than creating links with the ancient city, excludes it from dialogue with the present.

These various contemporary interventions arise, however, from a past sentiment that has always affected the Athens area, that of giving back body to the slumbering spirit of history and reconnecting it with everyday life. Angelo Sikelianos and his wife Eva Palmer, conceive the Delphic idea, aimed at creating a dialogue between the past and the present. Alberto Ferlenga writes *« The idea will have its acme in the festival put on in 1927 in Delphi at the basis of which there is the conviction that in the sacred city the ancient values have never completely disappeared and that bringing them back to light, through gymnastic games, dance, theater, and thought, can restore meaning to a place condemned to tourist trivialization, but also contribute to the rebirth of Greece and the resumption of its role in the world.»*, evoking the universal values of Greece , through the arts.

This idea will be, the driving force behind a strong regaining of values in the 20th century, which will also be joined by architect Dimitris Pikionis.

His early training in painting, under the tutelage of Cézanne and in the participation of Kandisky's "The Blue Rider" maga-

«The first days as I stood there my body was as nothing and my soul was scattered; but gradually called by byt the great inner voice of the Temple, came back the parts of my self to worship it: first came my soul and looked upon the Doric columns, and then came my body and looked – but in both were silence and stillness, and I did not dare to move, for I realized that of all the movements my body had made, none was worthy to be made before a Doric Temple. And, as I stood thus, I realized that I must find a dance whose efort was to be worthy of the Temple – or never dance again. Neither Satyr nor Nymph had entered here, neither Shadows nor Bacchantes. All that I hade danced was forbidden this Temple – neither love nor hate nor fear, nor joy nor sorrow – only a rhythmic cadence, those Doric columns – only in perfect harmony this glorious Temple, calm through all the ages. For many days no movement came to me. And then one day came the thought: These columns which seem so straight and still are not really straight, each one is curving gently form the base to the height, each one is in flowing movement, never resting, and the movement of each is in harmony with the other. And, as I thought this, my arms rose slowly toward the Temple, and I leaned forward – and then I knew I had found my dance, it was a Prayer.»[6]

fig 15. Isadora Duncan between the Parthenon columns

zine, would take him through the fervent years of the European avant-garde. Later Pikionis would become a professor and editor in the magazine "To Trito Mati" between 1935-1937, years when he, like many, was pinning his hopes on the new modern language, with the hope that rationalism would create the much-needed bridge between past and present. Greece itself of those years was fighting hard in the search for a modern language, under the leadership of Eleftthèrios Venizèlos; a country then marked by linguistic differences and a sad past of subjugation. Unfortunately, the rationalist myth of Pikionis would be burned in a few years: during the Lycabettus school project. In the design of the school itself, Pikionis embraces a language common to the ranks of nascent modernity, with clean lines and white volumes, a complete architectural machine suited to support the needs required of it; those lines, however, in his design lack the soul of the land, the formal rigidity and the rationalist language itself in fact soon come to lose the revelatory value so much hoped for, deemed unsuitable by the architect to narrate a space as rich as Athens and unable to be able to bear the weight of a past history too severe.

The turning point in personal research would come very late with the commission he received between 1954-1958, for the re-functionalization of the Acropolis in the face of the release of tourist flows after World War II. Although the requests from the commission were limited to the simple redevelopment of the Athenian ar-

chaeological area, what was triggered in the architect's mind was of a larger and deeper design aimed at regaining the lost harmony of the Acropolis. This employment will lead him to devote his whole self to the realization of the project, specifically the architectural intervention is measured against the landscape with the goal of restoring to the landscape a value that has slumbered over the centuries. According to Pikionis, the slow and steady destruction of the landscape of Athens is in direct consequence of the new city of Athens, he writes in "In defense of the landscape" *«At the time of the construction of the new capital, the hills began to be used as quarries, that marvelous set of hills that begins at Tourkovounia, and including Lycabettus, the Acropolis, the Hill of the Muses, the Pnyx and the Nymphs, extends to the Sikelias and shift toward the maritime plain of Faliro».* Immediately the premises of the intervention and its complexity are clear: the project thus becomes a wall in defense of the values of authentic Greekness, which for Pikionis reside in the stone, in each and every step that accompanies the discovery of the ancient cradle of civilization.

Discovery and movement are the two pillars that guide the prefiguration of the place, as he writes in "Sentimental Topography," with the eyes of himself as a child, looking at the stones along the path and the landscape, reconstructing with imagination that landscape as mystical as it is invisible to our eyes. Thus are born the prerequisites for the project that will see Pikionis engaged in the understanding of
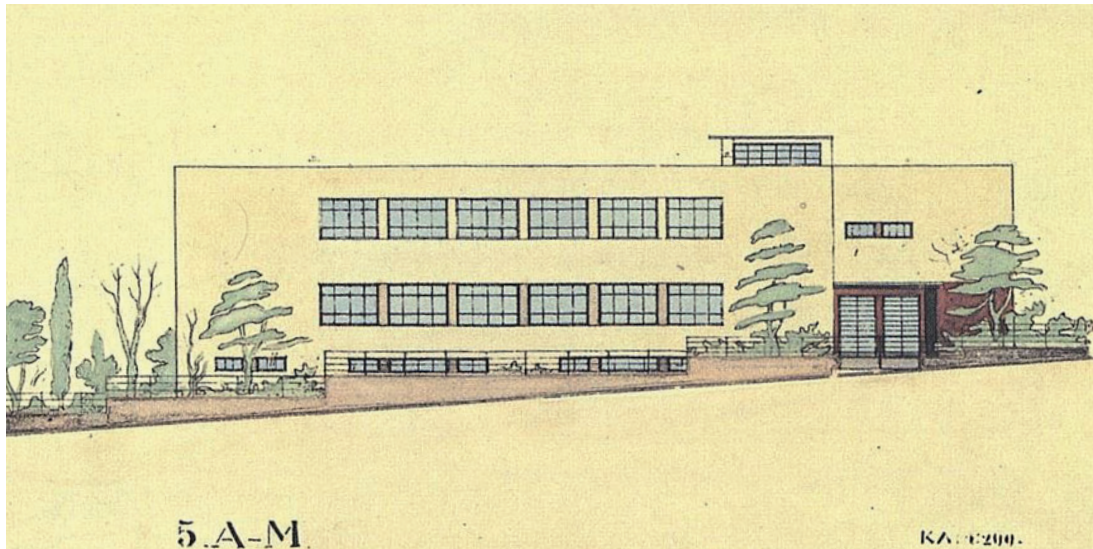
fig 16. D. Pikionis, project for the school at the foot of the Lycabettus Hill, façade
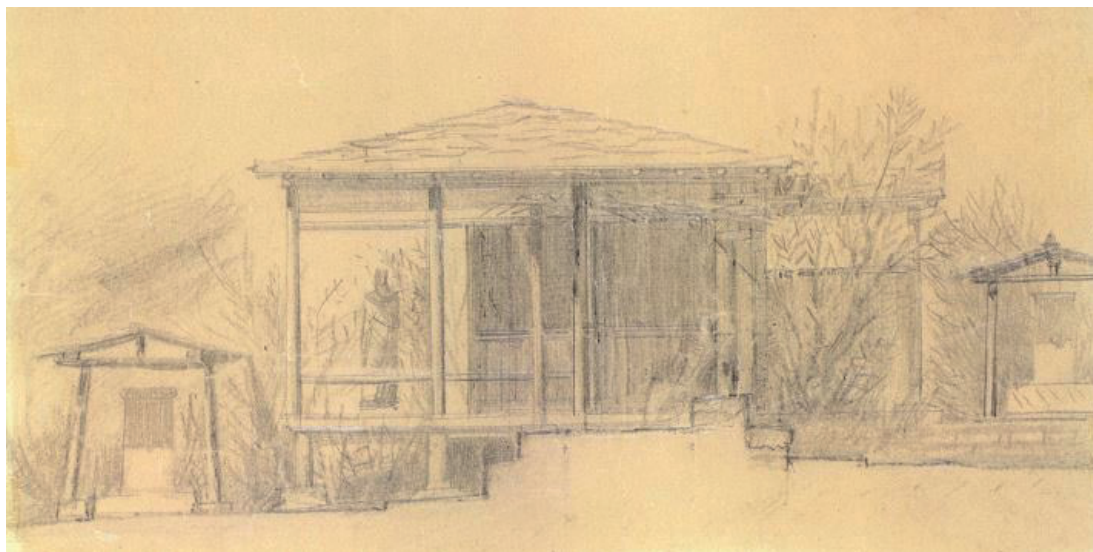

fig 17. D. Pikionis, sketches for St. Dimitrios Loumbardiaris reception center

a complex mosaic, in which from the single element to the grand scale, from the hill to the interstitial space between the contact of two rocks, lies the true understanding of the spirit of place. It is in these drawings that his line becomes dirty, his line is no longer linear and straight, but follows the morphology of the landscape. *«There is no doubt with respect to the fact that the project cannot be carried out mechanically using conventional construction methodologies whose application is practiced on a daily basis. Instead, it is an essentially artistic project, requiring at the same time a great deal of manual labor. The difficulty of achieving a good outcome is made more arduous by the historical nature of the area.»* ("Dimitris Pikionis, Architect, 1887-1968: A Sentimental Topography").

The two paths created for the Hill of the Muses and at the foot of the Acropolis abound with these elements, in which, as he writes, *«In the part is hidden the whole. And the whole is the part. You stone draw the diagrams of a landscape. You are the landscape itself. Even more you are the time that stands above the uncorrupted stones of your Acropolis.»* (from "Dimitris Pikionis, Architect, 1887-1968: A Sentimental Topography"). The path recovers its dimension of Greek discovery, an ancient perception of space made up of rejects and unconstrained views, as Pikionis' pupil Constantinos Doxiadis studies in his text, in which the analysis of the system of construction of perception within the Acropolis is envisaged. Pikionis' attempt

to reconstruct the thin line between past and present, after the contemporary destruction, is carried forward and put on the shoulders of the fragments; it is in the individual elements, even the smallest ones, that Pikionis' project is concentrated, as the figures inserted in the paving stones along the pathway, which compose a mosaic of stone along the slopes of the hills of Athens, are a testimony.

These elements make themselves the spokesmen of ancient references, seeking to evoke mystical symbologies that mingle with the nature of the place, trying to counteract the impoverishment of space caused by the ever decreasing sensitivity. *«Sight.. Or rather the multiple synchronic views of the Cosmos, past, present, future .. you who cast a magical net, more subtle than air, over things. The perceptible Cosmos of the visible –form, color- arises and exists in this infinitesimal space between the object and the vibrations of our soul. The visible has its origin in this invisible, from the revelation of the hidden meaning of things, from wonder, from their magic.»* ("Dimitris Pikionis, Architect, 1887-1968: A Sentimental Topography").

The intervention thus becomes a constant dialogue between the part and the whole: the fragment becomes the symbol to shake up and recompose the balance between the fracture and the conjunction between past and present, a way of recalling and synthesising an inner landscape; the set of fragments builds and articulates, instead, the total geography of space.

fig 18.D. Pikionis, figures inserted in the paving of the Philopappos Hill.

In this complex journey, which will engage the architect and the workers called in to carry out the site, the keeper of the understanding of the entire philosophy behind Pikionis' project can be read in the walls of the 16th-century church Agios Dimitrios Loumbardiaris, in which Pikionis will carry out various restoration works. The very nature of the church is that of being a collection of fragments, a map in which the vision of the landscape and geometries used by the same architect for the composition of the other interventions is synthetically expressed. According to the same scheme, the small set of stone and wood buildings designed as a reception area for Agios Dimitrios Loumbardiaris also continue the same research, developing a calm and relaxed, timeless space in the central courtyard, in which one can contemplate the sacred rock of the Acropolis from afar.

fig 19. D. Pikionis, restoration of St. Dimitrios Loumbar-diadis

fig 20. D. Pikionis, wall of St. Dimitrios Loumbardiadis

ARCHITECTURE,
CITY AND
LANDSCAPE

Architecture, city and landscape

fig 21.D. Pikionis, first plan for the study of the site. It's important to notice the presence of some optical cones studied

Following the initial general considerations on the theoretical theme underlying the work, the historical analysis of the city and the interventions that have characterized it, we proceeded in making an initial large-scale approach on the archaeological area of Athens.

During this urban-scale analysis, general considerations about the current state were extrapolated and, consequently, more specific ones were drawn for the different areas identified. The purpose of this first part of the work was to be able to get to know the macro-problems present in the sites that make up the archaeological portion of the city, but also to go and identify their inherent and, to date, untapped potential.

As a result of these considerations and studies, it was first possible to go on to develop a general museological project that would include the ideas and studies carried out on a broad scale, and then go on to choose a single case, taken as an example of work and intervention, declining it in the specific case.

Identification of the archaeological areas:

Realizing that the city of Athens must respond to the inherent presence of archaeological remains dispersed in numerous and disparate areas of its urban fabric, we began with the identification of those archaeological parks best known to visitors and the masses while remaining aware

that this research would not be exhaustive. The different areas, in fact, do not appear to have received the same degree of appreciation by the city and the collective culture and this, unfortunately, led to the creation of the identification of Athens through a collective *unicum*: the Parthenon.

The fact that this monument, certainly fundamental to human history and identifying to the people who built it, has become not only the symbol of the city, but has also overridden and stripped other elements of their inherent importance as well, has led to a sublimation of other areas. Mass tourism and the financial policies behind it have certainly enabled a particularly high level of development of the Acropolis summit and certainly also allow for a number of revenues that are essential for financing the preservation and ongoing restoration work that this architectural element of human history needs.

To date, the critical reflection that is to be brought, makes us ask questions that can then be extended to other monuments-images present in the world. Suffice it to think also of the Colosseum, interpreted by most "average visitors" and universal symbolic culture as the symbol of Rome, or the Bell Tower of the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta in Pisa (popularly known as the Tower of Pisa), the Cathedral dedicated to the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Milan, ... These examples which, for simplicity's sake have been taken only from Italian cities, effectively render the concept that we want to communicate here. One is aware that the identification of a city or a territory with a single monument does not in itself represent a conceptual or practical problem, but its exaggerated strumentalization and subsequent branding typical of recent decades risks becoming the beginning of a practice and a change in understanding and knowledge of the territory that is not indifferent.

Today's misunderstanding of all forms of community and identity heritage is, unfortunately, widespread, glaring examples are the order of the day and widespread heritage risks being within the reach only of a social elite of scholars or that portion of visitors who, tired of the usual typical visits to the world's cultural capitals, push themselves to discover the "other." Certainly the free will to culture left by this policy is more than fundamental, but to date it is fair to ask whether this, over time, has not led and will not lead to more and more declines of the so-called "minor monuments." How soon will the obliteration and non-understanding of these elements become a problem that can no longer be ignored? Why does common sentiment lead to disregard for the very concept of the monument? How can we succeed in relaying the fundamental and due respect for all forms of identity heritage that has led to the development and definition of different peoples?
Numerous other doubts and questions could be expressed with respect to this concept, and, certainly, studies are moving in this regard in an attempt to respond

in a practical and effective way to these issues. The problem, however, persists at the moment and, especially among young people, the very concept of a monument does not appear to be so ingrained as to allow its development and define a sense of proud belonging.

These questions and this *forma mentis* guided the first approach with respect to the city of Athens, and, while aware that the policies in place are not in total error, it was decided to also go out and identify all those portions of the urban fabric and archaeological areas that, in reality, cannot be considered as minor or minority, even if currently perceived as such by the masses.

Identification of the hills:
A second fundamental element in the city of Athens turns out to be the topography and geology of the place. It is easy to identify the hills present in the urban area: the Areopagus the Acropolis, the Pnice and the Philopappus. This set of natural elements has dictated the development and approach of land appropriation since the origin of the *polis*. The natural element of the hills turns out to be an additional characterizing factor of the territory and is traced in all studies of the city from the earliest approaches of historical-archaeological research.

As it is easy to consider, this landscape heritage is to be considered as a totality of separate elements that, however, is to be enhanced and re-integrated into those urban and archaeological routes that now exclude them. On a geological and topographical level, they can become an additional symbol of the city, as prominent elements by their nature and green emergencies for the area untouched by the urban fabric proper. Their rocky composition typical of the geographical area has made it almost impossible for them to be built today, but sporadic traces of the past can be traced.
The ancient Greeks, in fact, idealized them as fundamental points for the location of those sacred or sacramental places proper to their culture. The top of the Acropolis, in fact, became the city of the gods, the Philopappus was the hill of the Muses, the Pnice was the seat of the *Ecclesia* (assembly of Athenian citizens), and the Areopagus was the seat of the oldest court of the city of Athens.

To date, during our research, the impression is that these elements, partly because of their natural conformation, unfortunately turn out to be difficult to reach by the great masses. If the case of the Acropolis becomes the exception, the other hills suffer from the centralization toward the hill of the gods, especially if we take into consideration the Pnice and Philopappus on which the few historical and archaeological traces present do not emphasize their image.
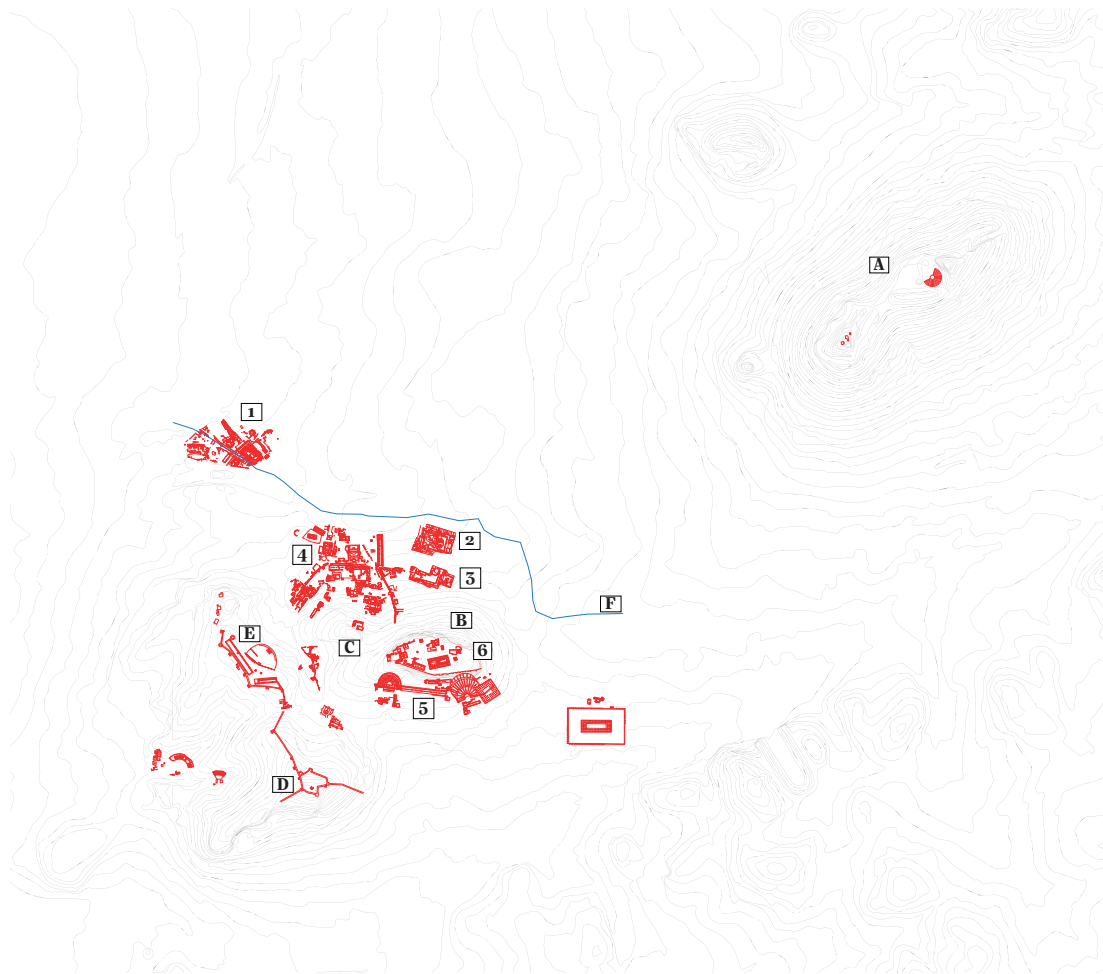
fig 22. diagrammatic map of the archae-ological areas of the city of Athens and the hills that make up its topography

[A] Licabetto hill, [B]Acropoli hill, [C]Areopago hill, [D]Filopappo hill, [E] Pnice hill, [F] Eridano river, [1] Kera-meikos, [2] Adrian's Library, [3] Roman Agora, [4] Greek Agora, [5] Acropolis' slopes, [6] Acropolis' summit

Identification of the macro-areas:
Through this initial impressionistic and perceptive analysis of the city and its main elements, three macro-areas and macro-categories were identified whose main problems were analysed and, as a result, initial goals were set for solving the weaknesses.

- Archaeology:
difficulty for visitors to understand the archaeological elements due to the numerous historical stratifications in all areas (understandable only through the presence of external elements and the loss of some traces over the centuries) and the perception of the Parthenon as an exhaustive monument of the whole park

- Landscape: difficulty in ascending the hills for both ordinary and exceptional visitors (handicapped). Examples include: sacred caves of the Acropolis not interested in musealisation interventions and in most cases not accessible, Pnice and Philopappus hardly accessible and without a distinct or recognized identity

- City: fragmentation of archaeological areas in the urban fabric with consequent difficulty in perceiving them as a whole, the new route to the south (from the New Tshumi Museum) actually turns out to be the opposite of the ancient Panathenaean route

In this sense, the goal that could be derived from this first study is that: the landscape must be evoked and recomposed by fragments and episodic relationships through the highlighting of parts that can represent the whole.
Therefore, a first general museological project was developed, encompassing all these considerations and being a first theoretical basic structure explanatory of the method of study and approach that was then held in the course of the actual project

fig 23. diagram of the different components take into consideration for the museological project

The museological project of the Acropolis' park in Athens:

1. abstract:

The main goal of the museological project for the Acropolis of Athens is to build a new narrative of the complex system of the archaeological park and its surroundings, trying to connect all the elements that have characterized the site so far. This narrative is based on two fundamental principles: to try to resolve the complex dialogue between Archaeology and Landscape, so that they coexist in an egalitarian manner and giving rise to a true Archaeological Landscape, and to give new body to the perception of the Greek sacred space that, starting from the Agora develops in an ascending path full of discoveries to reach the Acropolis.

The museological project, should not respond to the need to choose which works to exhibit, but focus on the paths that can connect the pre-existing elements. Fundamental must also be the relationship with the landscape, its re-involvement within the concept of a diffuse museum, so that it is possible to read the complex stratigraphic system and this can be well inserted within the urban and community fabric, while preserving its strong identity.

2.problem analysis:

Three macro-categories can be traced and summarized in the defined problems:

A_ problems related to archaeology and its understanding by a visitor.

- In some cases, historical stratifications are understandable only through the help of external elements, caused by the loss of traces in the course of history, as in the case of the historical evolution of the Parthenon, the reading of the complexity of the ancient Agora as a centre for public life.

- Loss of the original route of access to the fortress, North-South, from the Agora to the Acropolis via the Panathenaic Way.

- The average visitor tends to perceive almost solely the Parthenon as an exhaustive element for understanding the archaeological park.

- Lacking a relationship between the continuous construction site of the Acropolis with the museum route, the works are more perceived as not only a physical but also a visual obstacle.

B_ Problems related to the archaeology-landscape relationship.

- Natural caves, water sources etc. They are not affected by musealization interventions capable of understanding them as constituent elements of the nature of the place.

- The natural hills of the Pnice and Filopappo, likewise lack their own expressive identity in the archaeological site.

C_ Problems related to the development of the city around the archaeological park.

- Fragmentation and dispersion of the different areas due to the lack and/or loss of connections, especially the area of the Ceramico (starting point of the ancient route of the Via Panatenaica is separated to the

ancient Agora by a railway. The hills of Pnice and Filopappo are truncated by the Apostolou Pavlou road.

- The new southern access route, in direct contact with the new Acropolis museum, risks losing the natural perception of the entrance to the sacred city.

3.unexpressed potentialities:
The three macro-categories of problems defined, are directly interconnected to what are the dormant potentials of the archaeological park, which consequently would lead to an enrichment of the museum visit in the considered influential terms of Archaeology-Landscape-City

- Possible enrichment of knowledge of the Acropolis through the multidisciplinary exchange enabled by the presence of the sites *in situ*
- Elements surrounding the landscape of the Acropolis may shift attention not only to the artefact but also to its logic of understanding with the territory, broadening the museum conception more.
- Ability to conceive of the connections present on several distinct levels: a common network or distinct units; differentiating the visitor experience.

4.vision:
In the museological project, the archaeological park of the Acropolis of Athens is seen as a complex dialogue between: Archaeology and Landscape. In our vision these elements coexist in an egalitarian manner: Archaeology on the one hand must be considered as a series of ele-

ments on the same plane of values, with the possibility of including together the restoration interventions that are implemented *in situ*; Landscape, on the other hand, must regain its own identity, trying to conceive it as a foundational part of the archaeological park, heading that idea of unity defined by the term Archaeological Landscape.

Together with these two aspects, the museological project cannot alienate itself from what is the evolution of the contemporary city. The archaeological park cannot and should not be seen as an urban void, but experienced as a space to be in, always respecting the historical value of the site.

5.script:
The script emphasizes the highlights of the museological project, selecting the areas deemed interesting following the logic of being able to perceive the Acropolis again following the kinesthetic characters that would have guided the ancient Greeks to the discovery of the sacred city. It was deemed necessary to add a commentary on each individual area.

Route 1_From the beginning of the Panathenaean sacred path, through the ancient Agora:
The idea behind this route is to trace the foundations that lie at the beginnings of the Panathenaean Way, a sacred path, which since antiquity has characterized the process of man's approach to and understanding of the sacred rock. Specifically going to investigate the two

main elements that make up the beginning of the path: the area of the *Kerameikos* and the Agora.

1) The area of the *Kerameikos*, is the site used for the necropolis of the city of Athens, as well as the initial starting point of the ritual ascending path to the Acropolis. The archaeological site is considered as the first point of interest, as it presents interesting and multiple views of the city's history.

Following the archaeological excavations carried out between the second decade of the XX century a.C., only to be resumed in 1926, brought to light countless pottery works that allowed the understanding of the evolution of the art of Attic pottery, crossing the styles of Protogeometric and Geometric. The area is also considered for its high testimonial and mythical value, due to the presence of some remains of the ancient city walls built by Themistocles in the fifth century B.C. that allowed access or exit into/from the heart of the *polis*, marked by two city gates: *Dipylon* and the "Sacred Gate." The first led those leaving the *polis* to Plato's Academy; the other connected Athens with Eleusis. To date, the complex is further supported by a small *in situ* museum, which preserves various remains found during excavations.

"The ideal connection inferred from the historical character of the area, however, is not to this day easily attainable and legible; in fact, the growth of the surrounding city has created major gaps between the area of the Kerameikos and that of the Acropolis park, generating several points of disconnection, which have led to the complex not being perceived as one of the elements that made up a single path."

2) Visit the remains of the ancient Agora in order to gain a greater understanding of the political and civic role within Greek society. The focal point of the social life of the *polis*, is condensed precisely in the space of the public square, and it is in this set of exchanges that the path to the city of the gods continues. Excavations that took place in the XX century a.C. have brought to light the urban complex of the area, understanding how the general layout has remained almost unchanged, succeeding through restoration and preservation interventions in the original layout.

The area of the Agora takes on a twofold significant value in this sense: on the one hand the opposite pole of the Acropolis, confronting the role of man and his relations for the development of society, the context in which the roots of an idea of society are generated that we carry on to the present day; its reading in relation to the sacred fortress as a stage along the path to reach the gates of the sacred city.

"The role of the city of men and the relationship to the summit Acropolis, must again be understood. To date the elements comprise mainly overlapping remains, which can hardly be understood with a clear and linear key. At the same time, the area is in direct contact with the

contemporary city, interfacing with the theme of the difficult dialogue between archaeology and the city."

3) Hadrian's Library and Roman Agora constitute two other elements that, in this case are included, in a cognitive journey that seeks to investigate the places of public life in ancient Athens, in this case under Roman rule. The remains of the Roman Agora along with the centre of Hadrian's Library are an important chapter in understanding the shift of the administrative and commercial centre of the city from the ancient Agora to the Roman Agora. Over the years, the place became increasingly characterized as celebratory/museum-like, slowly losing its strong social character.

Route 2_The hills of the archaeological park of Athens, a natural trail:
Within the archaeological park of Athens great value has the geological and natural character related to the significant hilly areas. These conformations define, in fact, the steep character of the area and, as in the case of Mount Pentelicus, give rise to mythical imagery that stimulates the human mind.
Similarly, the three hills: of the Pnice, Areopagus and Filopappo, are included within the archaeological area, not so much for the presence of significant archaeological elements but for their natural value and the interesting relationship they establish with the Acropolis. Precisely for this reason, in the museological project, the hills of the Pnice and

Filopappo are intended to be included in a reciprocal and constant relationship that affects more the western side of the park. These emergencies not only offer interesting natural paths but would allow the entire area to relate to the adjacent urban fabric, offering a different route to the Acropolis, connecting with the paths designed by Dimitris Pikionis on the Areopagus Hill.

Route 3_Discovering the Acropolis from the Areopagus through the Pikionis trails
Connecting the two Pikionis routes would mean being able to create a system of connections for the three hills that coexist in the archaeological area of the Acropolis. While one might think of Filopappo and Pnice as a system in their own right, a perimeter part that almost enshrines one of the boundaries between the Acropolis and the contemporary urban fabric, the Areopagus, on the other hand, turns out to be totally immersed and almost in the geographic heart of the ancient area of the city under consideration.
Although this peak is located at a lower elevation than the Sacred Rock, it allows countless preferential viewpoints of the same and induces a different understanding of the complex. At the same time the feeling of proximity and distance of the plateau, entices the model visitor to descend in order to finally experience that space seen and known from afar. In this sense, one goal is to try to reconnect the Pikionis paths to the

descent path from the Areopagus and to the other two hills, as if the work of the Greek architect would become not so much a multi-directional junction point, but a gathering point for these great natural paths.

The use of existing routes, in this case, allows to work in relation to a well-defined and functioning project that was able to engage visitors in a new way of experiencing and perceiving the spaces of the Acropolis and the entire archaeological area by going to add similar elements that do not aim to replicate, but to understand the logic and decline appropriately in other similar contexts.

A key element in the conjunction of all those three routes turns out to be the ancient Peripatos route. This last section of the Sacred Way for the ascent to the city of the gods turned out to be the most impervious part of the route starting from the city Agora, but at the same time the one that allowed the ultimate physical and spiritual ascent. The entire route develops in a circular fashion, following the topography of the rock and walls, and on a purely theoretical and simplifying level, it can be separated diametrically into two halves. In its northern part, the route takes on a strong religious and almost mythological connotation, full of symbols, vows and purifying elements. The juncture points between the two halves turn out to be: the Propylaeans entrance to the west and the Aglaurus Cave to the east,

two important and opposing elements. If the former composes an artificial and triumphal entrance, the latter is concealed within the natural element that composes it and proves to be much more linked to the northern portion of the sacred walk. To the south, on the other hand, the ritual walk continues through a succession of architectures of a public rather than a religious character, contrasting with the strict sacredness previously exposed.

These presences, however, turn out to be fundamental in that they are the last elements before access to the Rock via the Propylaea and go to accustom the visitor to the appearance of human action within nature and the world of the gods.

Although originally the Peripatos was connected only with the Panathenaean Way and turned out to be the only possible route, to this day an almost diametrically opposite situation is present, in that of the ancient processional route coming from the Agora the entire route is not preserved, while another series of more direct accesses to the Propylaea have developed even from directions totally different from the original one. In this sense, the Peripatos ring is important that it summarizes its original importance as the only and final part of the sacred and ascending route that prepares the visitor for access to the sacred city. All the caves present, the fountains, altars and temples in the northern part, but also the theatre, the Odeons and the

Stoa in the southern part are elements that are fundamental for a general understanding of the site and that enrich the stratification and composition of the Rock itself. Using the Peripatos as a junction point for these different arteries to converge allows us to restore its lost historical importance, but also to give visitors the most complete experience of the site.

Route 4_From the New Acropolis Museum to the southern area of the Acropolis

The study and proposal concerning the southern route of the area is intended to draw attention to the possible expansion of the connection between the New Acropolis Museum in Athens and the southern slope of the Acropolis Hill.

The second fundamental point of this route is the continuation of the walk along the Peripatos, the continuous discovery of a succession of monuments guided by this ancient road, within which one would hypothesise the insertion of the new route with the Tschumi Museum.

1.The southern area of the Acropolis has a more architectural character than the northern portion of the Acropolis hill and was mainly dedicated to public and commercial activities, thus being potentially less sacred than the rest of the context. It can also be noted that all the buildings were arranged along the Peripatos route, which allowed the citizens to be directed and to experience a suc-cession of places and spaces well inserted in the landscape, but not necessarily in the open air, before finally reaching the top of the Sacred Rock.

If for the northern part of the route the gaze is directed upwards, also as a sign of imploration and prayer to the deities, on this slope it is instead directed downwards, towards the world of men, also thanks to the arrangement of the buildings along the sacred way.

The four main elements that make up this portion of the archaeological park are: the Odeon of Percles (to this day, only scant traces of it are preserved and in fact its architectural appearance remains a major debated issue), the Theatre of Dionysus with the adjoining Sanctuary of Dionysus and the Stoa (an element closely connected to the Odeon, not only because of their proximity. It is the first theatre built and serves as a prototype for all others that followed in both the Greek and Roman worlds), the Sanctuary of Asclepius (site of the third sacred fountain of the Acropolis), the Stoà of Eumene (an element built in a similar manner to the Stoà of Attalus found in the Agora, but with the function of connecting the theatre, Herod's Odeon and Peripatos) and finally the Odeon of Herod Atticus (one of the largest theatres and still used by the city today).

"The architectures along this side of the Acropolis are well defined in their position along the Peripatos. Apparently concluded in themselves, it seems difficult to create a connection with a new

route that could be grafted onto them, almost breaking the consequentiality of the ancient spaces."

2.The New Acropolis Museum requested by the city in the early 2000s and designed by B. Tschumi and M. Photiadis, seeks to respond to some of the needs that have arisen as a result of the great excavation and urban redevelopment campaigns of the city.

First and foremost, the aim of the project is to be able to project the ancient that it contains, but also that with which it is visually confronted (the Parthenon) within the forms, architecture and the contemporary era. The landmark that is thus created is in continuous dialogue with its context and its surroundings, both urban and archaeological, so that it is never an object estranged from its urban context, nor even a mere copy of ancient matrices.

This new architectural element has, however, a fundamental importance for the Acropolis, as it is the home of all the remains found on the Plateau and also in other parts of the archaeological park, which have finally been gathered here in one large location and offered to the public. It is also interesting to note that Tschumi does not focus on a single historical age, but takes his visitors on an ascending chronological path (as ascending is the Peripatos) from the most archaic to the most recent age, in an attempt to communicate and make them understand that historical stratification and complexity that to date is not clearly

readable once one has reached the culmination of the ancient sacred path.

"The New Acropolis Museum turns out to be a project that may risk closing in on itself, losing that strong connection with the neighbouring archaeological park. Although it exhibits the finds of the Acropolis, one problem could be that this museum context is not properly integrated through physical connections with the actual historical environment."

The arrival at the House of Gods_The treasures of the Plateau

At the conclusion of the visit to the archaeological park, at each point where the various routes analysed above are to be tackled, there is the discovery of the Plateau of the Acropolis, with the crossing of the threshold of the sacred city of the gods and the conclusion of the ascending climax of the routes.

1) The path of discovery of the Plateau allows a free visit between the various elements that make up the overall picture, following the visual and kinaesthetic criteria that guided the formation of the sacred complex. Passing through the Propylaea and visiting the Erechtheion, the Parthenon, the Tholos, the remains of the Chalcotheca and those of the ancient temple of Athena, the visitor must constantly remain in contact with what is the relationship with the city's landscape, offered by the peculiar conformation of the rock.

2) The visit is integrated with what is the continuous construction site of the Parthenon, in this case the possibility of enriching the discovery of the site with a closer look at what are the daily interventions and new technologies of restoration, so as to offer an ever new look at the scenery of the Acropolis.

Choice of the *Keramekos* site:

Following the general analysis carried out on a large part of the urban fabric, it was then decided to focus on a single archaeological site among those identified, which could serve as a practical example for the complex of thoughts previously set out and investigated. It was decided to focus on the *Kerameikos* quarter, an area to the north-west of the Acropolis.

First and foremost, this neighbourhood appeared to us to suffer the most from the fracture of the city and the separation from the other archaeological parks, but also from the lack of care or perception of the site by visitors. Other problems of the site were found through more in-depth investigations, consultation of tourist websites and also other platforms where the publication of posts allows visitors to compare themselves to each other. It was thus discovered that *Keramekos* is not perceived as a place to visit, let alone known or suggested by most of the proposed tours of the city.

It is included in the cumulative card for archaeological areas, but is actually difficult to reach as it is detached from the centre and separated from the railway. Due to this less branding and perception, the understanding of the site is particularly complex for visitors as the history of the place is not actually known, but is only displayed through totems or infographics on the site.

Although there is a small museum referring to the remains found *in situ* and their

display is done chronologically, so that all the historical periods in which the gate complex developed can be effectively analysed, they are poorly valorised in terms of urban signage or even along the pedestrian axis immediately adjacent to the entrance to the archaeological area.

The objectives that have been hypothesised, with respect to these factors and also to the further reviews read, are as follows:

- **Enhance the accesses:** to date, the main entrance is not signposted and is a simple entrance at the end of a dubious fence that acts as a boundary to the park
- **Direction of the paths:** the walkways or the beaten track in the site do indeed allow ample movement in the area, but at the same time there does not seem to be a basic plan that refers to the history of the place or that allows an understanding of the archaeological park in question also through spatial movement
- **Reconnection with the urban fabric:** Ceramics needs not to be seen and experienced as an ancient cross-section within a contemporary fabric, but the duty of the project intervention is to try to mend the fracture that has been created over the years and that has not yet been fully resolved

Following these very first considerations and objectives that began to be developed, a second museological project was drawn up, which this time would respond to the desire to intervene on a specific site and which would effectively guide the design and architectural choices of the intervention without giving practical directives, but theoretical and thoughtful ones.

fig 24. group of sculptures found in the Hiera Pyle, view from the north-east

The museological project for the *Kerameikos* site:

1.abstract:

The museological project for the Archaeological Park of the Ceramic Quarter in Athens aims to improve and develop a better narrative of the site in the entirety of its complexity of stratification and history. This should be achieved through a new theoretical approach to several themes, such as: the enclosure, the paths and the threshold.

The first theme is fundamental for the direct and primary perception of the site; it is the first element with which the tourist-visitor comes into contact and which allows him to perceive the archaeological park even without entering it.

The paths within the archaeological area should not only be understood as a functional element for the walkability and permeability of the place, but need a poetic relationship and a design that also offers a deep and historical spatial reading and perception, without falling back into the recollection of the past.

Finally, the theme of the threshold is perhaps the one most characteristic of the site itself, as it is linked to the remains present and the ancient existence of the two main gates of the *polis* of Athens. Today, these elements seem almost totally illegible due to their ancient function, and it is also difficult to communicate them to the public. In this sense, the new involvement of the public by directing it to a new perception is fundamental in order to then also re-valorise the site and re-generate the ancient importance of the access portion of the city.

2.problem analysis:

A_Problems related to archaeology and its understanding by a visitor

- In some cases, historical stratifications can only be understood with the help of external elements, caused by the loss of traces in the course of history. To this day, the reading of the two gateways to the polis, the Dipylon and the Hiera Pyle, appears almost completely lost.

- There has been a loss of understanding of the fundamental road routes of the past that crossed the site and allowed it to develop throughout history: the Dromos and the Hiera Hodos. There is also the loss of their continuation inside the city, especially of the entirety of the Panathenaean Way that connected the exterior of the city of Dromos to the summit of the Acropolis.

- The 'visitor-medium' tends to perceive the archaeological site as a minority compared to others in the city and tends not to take an interest in the history of the site, walking through it in a superficial way.

- Lack of a permeable relationship and connective element that facilitates the approach to the site from the street and invites entry

B_Problems to the urban perception and walkability of the site:

- Total fragmentation and separation of the site from the central archaeological area of the Agora and the Acropolis. The site is almost unknown to the masses who become aware of it almost always by pure

chance

- Coming from the present pedestrian road, the site does not appear to be characterised or enhanced by the present fence and the same appears for the Museum
- The fence and the perimeter boundary of the archaeological park do not encourage tourists to stop or contemplate the remains from the perspective of the road, suggesting instead only a quick urban route
- The present routes appear to be mainly functional elements for the walkability of the site and do not appear to follow a precise design scheme
- The materiality of the routes does not allow, in most cases, a strong identification, so much so that visitors adapt to move around the site even externally and freely with respect to the pre-established routes
- Some routes appear unfinished or with problems of access and practicability for visitors with disabilities

3.unexpressed potentialities:
The problems encountered can serve as a starting point not only for a future project, but also to investigate what potential is already inherent and present in the site, but which today appears unexpressed. The development of these elements and a project that develops and validates them could lead to a renaissance for *Kerameikos*.

- Possible enrichment of the history and knowledge of the site through the presence of a specific archaeological site on the site, composed of professionals highly specialised in the history of the ancient district and its development over the centuries
- The perception of the area as a fundamental part of the ancient *polis* can lead to an understanding of the complexity and ancient urban extension, making the various city archaeological parks perceived as points of a unique and particularly rich and complex design
- The possibility of mending the fracture between site and contemporary urban fabric through a new conception of the theme of the enclosure and, consequently, a new method of approaching the area in today's city.
- Narration of historical elements that are not too in-depth and references to remains found in other parts of the city, also allowing for themed tourist development on currently little-known elements: the walls of Athens, the city gates, ancient streets, ...

4.vision:
In the museum project, the archaeological park in the *Kerameikos* district is seen as a complex interrelationship between: Archaeology and the City. In the theoretical vision of the project, these two elements are weighed equally: the traces of history are to be seen as the *incipit* of the narrative of the site and the evolution of the ancient capital of Greece, understanding its secular developments and stratifications; the de-cohesion and subsequent re-stitching of its urban limits through the enclosure is intended to allow citizens

and visitors to re-appropriate a portion of history and culture that has been isolated and closed in on itself.

Another fundamental factor of the vision and basic objective is to communicate how this urban portion on particularly important not only for development, but also for the daily life of the ancients. A fundamental crossroads for the regional and local road system, it was also a characteristic point for major religious rites and sacred processions.

In the same way, the contemporary city must re-appropriate this local identity, mending the fractures in the fabric that have inevitably been created in the continuous progress of history.

The new archaeological complex and the set of interventions that will be implemented and developed on an architectural-design level must not be seen as urban voids, but experienced as places to be and to know.

fig 25. archaic fune-
rary marker, kouros,
ca. 600-590 b.C.

KERAMEIKOS
IN ATHENS

Kerameikos: the site of the project

fig 26. vase represen-
ting two panathenaic
festival runners about
to perform lampepe-
dromies (races with
torches). Assumed
epoch is ca. 420 - 400
b.C., attributed to the
painter Nikia

With the term *Kermeikos*, we go on to identify a specific neighbor-hood of the present-day city of Athens, located northwest of the ancient heart of the polis, the Agora. Although this area was of key importance in ancient times due to its arrangement within the urban fabric, to this day it is almost forgotten and is detached and disconnected from other major archaeological sites.

The construction of the railroad tracks for the metro line and the railway have definitely detached and made it even more difficult to read this complex in re-lation to the remaining and more famous central ones, such as the Agora and the Acropolis. In addition to presenting these readable problems at the urban level, others of a more architectural and design aspect, approach to the site and direct understanding of the remains are also detectable. To date, the weaknesses de-tectable in this area are certainly numer-ous, but this does not mean that it can be relegated to a secondary point for the city's history or should not be enhanced.

The archaeological site of Kerameikos is called upon to protect and pass on the knowledge of some fundamental traces of the past: the city walls with its gates, two of the most important road axes both for the polis itself and for all of Greece, and the end the Eridanus stream.

Studying the etymology of the name of this ancient neighborhood, it can be seen that it can be linked to two elements: *keramos* [7] (whose cult was present in the area) and *keramist* (because of the presence of ceramic artisans). In both cases the root *keramos*, κεραμική or pottery, can be found, from which not only the area, but also its road axes, were initially named, as evidenced by the various *horoi* on which the *Kerameikos* inscription appears. Experienced archaeologists have debated a great deal because of these remains in that they were not certain from the outset about the naming of the road axes exiting from the district under consideration and, consequently, were unable to determine from the outset whether the term *Kerameikos* identified only the streets, the district, or both. To date we know, thanks in part to the numerous excavations that have continued over the years, the certain name of the *Hiera Hodos* and the *Dromos* - Panathenae Street and, consequently, the correct name to identify the archaeological site.

It is worth noting that archaeological excavations in this area were of paramount importance over time in being able to identify the site and to derive its different historical phases, going on to enrich the historical and monumental landscape of the city and to better understand some of the sacred routes and rituals fundamental to ancient Athens. Works began in the 1800s by the Greeks, but the greatest discoveries took place from 1914, when the site passed into the hands of the **Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI)** and the necropolis near the Themistoclean walls came to light. In this sense, there were mainly four phases of work on the tombs: from 1928 to 1936 (directors: Brüeckner, Kraiker, Kübler), from 1966 to 1972 (directors: Gruben, Hoepfner), and from 1991 to the present (director: Stroszeck). The recovered finds were catalogued and classified into three categories and assigned to the historical phases of *Kerameikos*: the "cist" and "pit" graves date to the sub-Mycenaean period (I-III phase), while the incinerations belong to the Protogeometric (IV phase). In 2002, it was recalled how, during the hollowing phase for cleaning the outflow channels outside the *Hiera Pyle*, several statuary or monumental fragments used after the Persian destruction for reconstruction were found by DAI archaeologists.

7. Son of Dionysus and Ariadne, hero of Greek mythology and creator of the potters' (or ceramists') trade.

fig 27. photo of one *horoi* found near the *Kerameikos*. The one shown here appears to be preserved in situ at the Dipylon, ca. mid-4th cent. b.C.

We then also mention other in-depth studies that have been carried out in recent years (2017-18) in particular on the development and modifications of the two entrance gates to the ancient city at the site. For consultation of these writings and also for additional information, we referred to the director of the archaeological excavations in the *Kerameikos* area, Jutta Stroszeck, who kindly directed us to the most appropriate sources of consultation. Support in our research for the archaeological knowledge of the site was also provided to us by the Italian Archaeological School of Athens (SAIA), which likewise made available its knowledge and some of its theoretical materials.

fig 28. map of Athens
in the 5th century
A.D. with the location
of the *Kerameikos*
archaeological park
highlighted

the history
Iron–Archaic Ages

Thanks to the archaeological studies carried out in the area, it is possible to subdivide the genesis of the site according to the different historical periods it went through:

Iron Age-Archaic Age (XI-VII cent. b.C.):

The foundation of the *Kerameikos* district most likely dates back to the XI century b.C., during the Iron Age, with the function of an extra-urban necropolis although, from this period lasting until the VII century b.C., few traces are preserved.
The burial grounds found and belonging to this time frame were arranged along the marshy banks of the Eridanus stream, a watercourse of the city of Athens passing through this district, but also in the area that would later be occupied by *Pompeion*.

It is certain that this necropolis stood out from the others in the city in terms of importance; the remains of the burial monuments and the fragments of the burials indicate the use of rich and valuable materials for the time; this characteristic of the site will be maintained throughout the period of the *Kerameikos*' use with this function.

However, it is already possible to identify the presence of important road axes in this period as well, and to find that it was already a crucial junction point for regional and extra-regional roads.
The necropolis function combined with its road importance made possible the identification of this area as a "sacred" place, and this, over time, was increasingly recognized and corroborated also by the sacred processions and the rich and articulate funeral rituals that were performed.
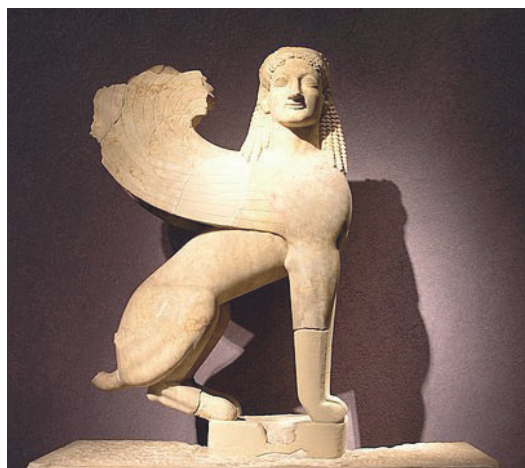
fig 29. archaic fune-
rary markers, lion
(ca. 580 b.C.) and
sphinx (ca. 560 b.C.)

fig 30. reconstruction
of the plan of the *Ke-
rameikos* necropolis
between the submi-
cenean and geometric
ages, ca. 1050-700 b.C

the history
from VI to II cent. b.C.

8. the so-called Persian Wars were a series of battles between the armies of the Persian Empire and the Greek Empire, given by the alliance of several poleis. This series of battles began in 499 b.C. and continued for a good twenty years, until 479 b.C.. The Persian Wars can be divided mainly into three major phases: the First War (492-490 b.C.), the Second War (480-479 b.C.), and the Greek Reconquest (478-449 b.C.). In the first moment, after a wide series of victories for the Persian empire, the famous Battle of Marathon took place, in which the Greek army inflicted the first major defeat on a strategic and human level on the foreigners and prevented them from conquering the city of Athens. In the second phase of the clash the Persian army was once again very close to the final conquest of the Greek peninsula, but once again there were three key clashes: the Battle of Thermopylae gloriously lost by the Spartans, the Battle of Salamis resulted in a crucial victory for the Greeks with a subsequent momentary retreat of Xerxes. The last major moment before the Greek reconquest of the territory was the Battle of Plataea in that the Greeks succeeded in finally defeating the invaders, who also gradually left the peninsula because of the reconquest of the Alliance Army among the poleis.

9. the term asty is used to refer to the urban center of the city of Athens; the suburbs and countryside were referred to as chora instead. At the territorial level asty and chosa together constitute the polis and are, therefore, inseparable.

10. see note 8.

VI cent. b.C. - Persian Wars (480 b.C):

Between the 6th century b.C. and Persian Wars [8] (480 b.C.) the so-called Sacred Street or *Hiera Hodos* [58] gradually became one of the main streets of the city and, partly for this reason, the burial of the city's prominent and elite continued and intensified more, coming to be a status symbol of social importance.

Thus began the process of incorporating this district more and more into the city's urban plans, so much so that in the tyranny period (650-500 b.C.) it was gradually integrated into the asty [9].

The so-called Academy street, which later also takes on the name *Dromos* and so-called Panathenaean street [62], also turns out to assume a privileged role after the sacred ritual reform of 566 b.C..

After this pivotal date, the Panathenae festivity becomes the main moment dedicated to the polyadic deity, namely Athena, and the main moments of the procession and ritual took place between the Academy and the *Kerameikos*.

As a result of these interventions and changes at the social and religious levels, the district began to take on the characteristics of a suburban portion of the city as well, so much so that it also attracted the first activities of potters who began to build their own workshops and production centers along the *Dromos* (this can be affirmed with certainty thanks to the discovery of kilns and waste pits of defective artifacts on the site).

Another key intervention that has taken place in recent years is definitely the reclamation of the area between the two ancient gates.

V cent. b.C. (480-400 b.C.):

A sharp caesura for the history and also the urban evolution of the site occurred with the construction of the Themistoclean walls (478 b.C.) following the victory of Plataea[10] and the subsequent final expulsion of the Persians. Given the haste required by the defensive intervention, many reused materials were used for the foundations, and numerous tomb monuments became architectural material used for this project. Although the foundations turned out to be so composed, the walls above were composed of mud brick and were about 8 meters high with a parapet and summit walkway. To this day this original portion of the walls is not visible, as it is totally buried, but from the archaeological excavations carried out we also know the layering of the foundation plinths of the later walls established from this layout. The construction of this new perimeter wall to the city led to the subdivision of the *Kerameikos* quarter into two portions (inner and outer), as well as a general urban rearrangement of the north-west portion of the *asty*.

The construction of this new defensive element also became essential for the construction of the two main city gates, traces of which can still be read on the site

fig 31. evolution of the layouts of the walls of Athens according to Dörpfeld. The Themistoclean walls whose layout is known and 3 different hypotheses for the walls prior to the Persian wars: Dörpfeld, Judeich, v. Wilemowilz

today: the *Dipylon* and the *Hiera Pyle*. In this sense, the inner-city portion of the district gradually lost its function as a necropolis and an attempt was also made to find a solution with respect to the continuous and numerous overflows of the Eridanus, going to rectify the course of its riverbed by means of masonry baffles.

The three main road axes assumed their final arrangement, the only changes coming from the narrowing of the width of the road axis, but nothing more. The *Dromos* [62], the *Hiera Hodos* [58] and cd. the Street of the Tombs [60] assumed their final physical and cultural identity that persisted for many centuries before their final abandonment.

In the middle of the V century b.C. occurred the total reclamation of the area and the construction of an aqueduct (cd. Cimonian aqueduct) that most likely served for the supply of water to the fountain [11] in the interior of the wall circle and just outside the gate of *Dipylon*, a fundamental sign of the centrality of this gateway, but also for the well placed in the courtyard of the passage itself.

This general improvement even at ground level allowed the *Dromos* to assume its greatest width at the historical level (a measurement of about 40 meters is found), totally out of scale even with respect to the other road axes, but consistent with the purely ceremonial and processional function it was gradually assuming.

During this historical period, in fact, a secondary axis of considerably smaller

dimensions also came to be laid out, and of which very few secondary traces remain today. To the route [61] was relegated the common traffic of wayfarers and merchants, and thanks to its proceeding parallel to the Dromos, it could converge there near the entrance to the *Dipylon*.

At the extra-urban level, the *Kerameikos* district continued to host potters (who took advantage of the presence of the watercourse and the clay soil present), but also the elitist necropolis, basically establishing itself as Athens' main political burial space (tombs of Ambassadors at public expense, distinguished figures for the city's culture, ... could be recognized).

IV - II cent. b.C.:

Between the IV and II century b.C., there were further changes at the level of the walls, as the previous defensive set-up is made more complex: a second defensive line of the city, outside the main walls, called the proteichisma, is built, protected in turn by a series of palisades.

The purpose was to impose a safe distance and prevent enemy war machines from getting too close to the walls, greatly decreasing the damage done. A further reinforcement, only of the main enclosure, took place in 338 b.C., following the defeat at Chaeronea [12], as the Athenians feared a sudden attack by their enemies.
Again the wall reinforcement took place very quickly and with reused materials

11. In ancient Greece, the presence of water at the entrance to large cities was a key element. Fountains or wells stood for an essential passageway for travelers, who could replenish themselves with water before or after their journey, could wash themselves before arriving in the city center, or could refresh themselves. The presence of a rather large fountain at the exit of the *Dipylon* reminds us how fundamental this gateway was not only for the flow of wayfarers to the city of Athens, but also on a sacred level. Indeed, this water source also served a fundamental purpose during the ritual of the Panathenaeans and other funeral rites.

12. the Battle of Chaeronea was a battle between the Macedonian army of Philip II and the army given by the alliance of Athens, Thebes and other minor poleis. Element that makes this battle fundamental is the birth and first field application of the so-called "Macedonian tactics," later fundamental to the victories of Alexander the Great, which involved the fundamental cooperation between infantry and cavalry. After the defeat of the Greeks, the Macedonian king imposed membership in the League of Corinth, thus preventing the Greek cities from warring with each other.

taken from funerary monuments in the nearby necropolis.

Around 307-304 b.C., it was found that the section of ditch between the *Dipylon* and the *Hiera Pyle* was filled in to unify the portion of land in front of these two key passages. Extensive land fills also extended into the rest of the *Kerameikos* area and led, for example, to the halving of the width of the *Dromos*, especially in the vicinity of the *Dipylon*, but also of the so-called Tombs Street. This change in topography and street layout was probably due to the modernization work on the city walls that lasted until the III century b.C..

Despite the dismantling of funerary monuments, wealthy families were able to rebuild them or order new ones. In this same period, archaeological excavations have revealed a decrease in the number of monuments to the fallen and, on the other hand, an increase in those dedicated to the illustrious figures of city politics. In this sense it can be said that the so-called Academy Street had the role of a monumental cemetery for the inhabitants of the *polis*, while the *Hiera Hodos* took on similar characters, but referring to the international elite. Unfortunately, in these centuries of we also find a gradual abandonment by artisans and potters with their consequent displacement to other areas of Athens.

fig 32. fragment of frieze from the Parthenon showing the horsemen's race in the Panathenaean procession

fig 33.reconstructive type section of the fortifications in classical times, following the construction of the Themistoclean Wall

city wall

proteichisma

palisade

ring road [110 b]

moat

0 m   5
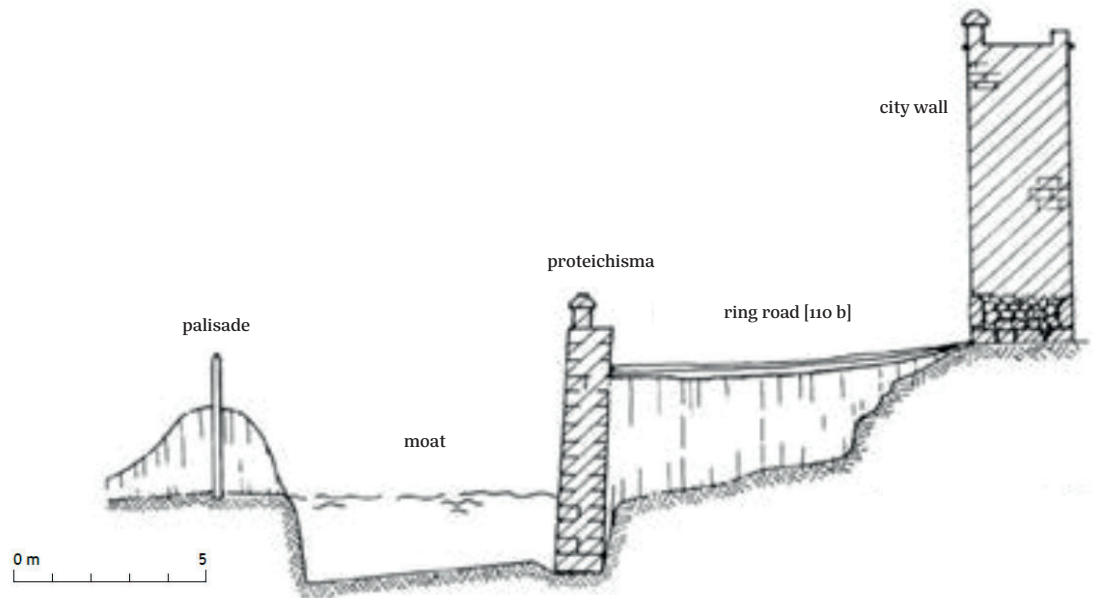
The presence of two additional elements can be noticed and they could be compared to the previous phase: the *proteichisma* and the palisades.

city wall

proteichisma

9. 35

ring road [110 b]

2.60

moat

7. 05

4.35

0   5   10   15
M.

I. T.
1968
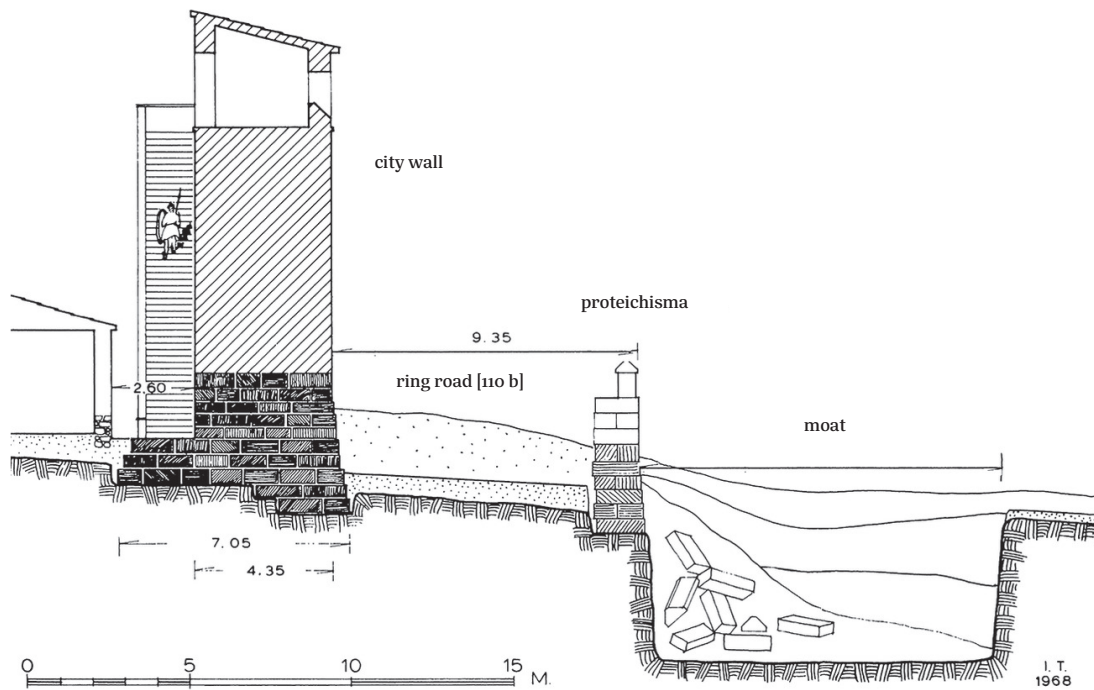
fig 34. schematic
section of the city
walls with the various
levels and different
materials used, as
well as a very cer-
tain analysis of the
contour and the area
adjacent to them

The moat is filled in between *Hiera Pyle* and *Dipylon*
using fill soil and re-used material from the necropolis

Roman Age (I cent. b.C - V cent. a.C.):

In 86 b.C., the city of Athens was conquered by the Roman Empire under Silla, the defensive walls demolished in the portion between the Piraeus Gate and the *Hiera Pyle* and the *Pompeion* razed to the ground and totally destroyed. Following this event, ceramists and metalworkers settled in the area of the former *Pompeion*[15] and Building Z, adapting these spaces for their new functions and needs. Two *stoai* were also built in the inner part of the *Dromos*, which ran from the *Dipylon* to the Agora and definitively changed the layout and scope of this road axis.

Only in the II century a.C. did the suburban areas resume a central role, in particular the *Kerameikos* partially returned to its former glory in the Hadrianic age (117-138 a.C.) and later thanks to the interest of Herod Atticus. The former supported the construction of a building with the same function as the *Pompeion* (to this day there is no certainty about its plan or elevation due to a lack of traces), the latter revived the Panathenaean festivities, inaugurating the stadium with the processional ceremony of 143-144 a.C..

It is worth noting that the Roman people also recognised the sacredness of the *Kerameikos* area, so much so that they buried some illustrious persons or members of the upper classes of society along the *Dromos* or the *Hiera Hodos*, in some cases making these roads the destinations of pilgrimages and tomb visits.

From the sack of the Heruli[14] (267 a.C.) until the V century a.C., there were a series of periods of successive destruction and abandonment of the *Kerameikos* area, a fixed element of the neighbourhood were the artisanal installations of ceramists and later of oil-lamp makers.

13. ceremonial building used for the preparation of sacred processions that passed by the Kerameikos. According to studies, it does not appear that it was a consecrated place, but was open to all and also served for some periods as a meeting place for young citizens.

14. the Heruli were a population of Germanic origin who, joining together with the Goths, plundered a number of Roman provinces both by land and sea, even striking the city of Athens. In the capital of the Greek peninsula, they destroyed not only the defensive walls, but also numerous monuments, including Hadrian's Library, near the Greek and Roman Agora.
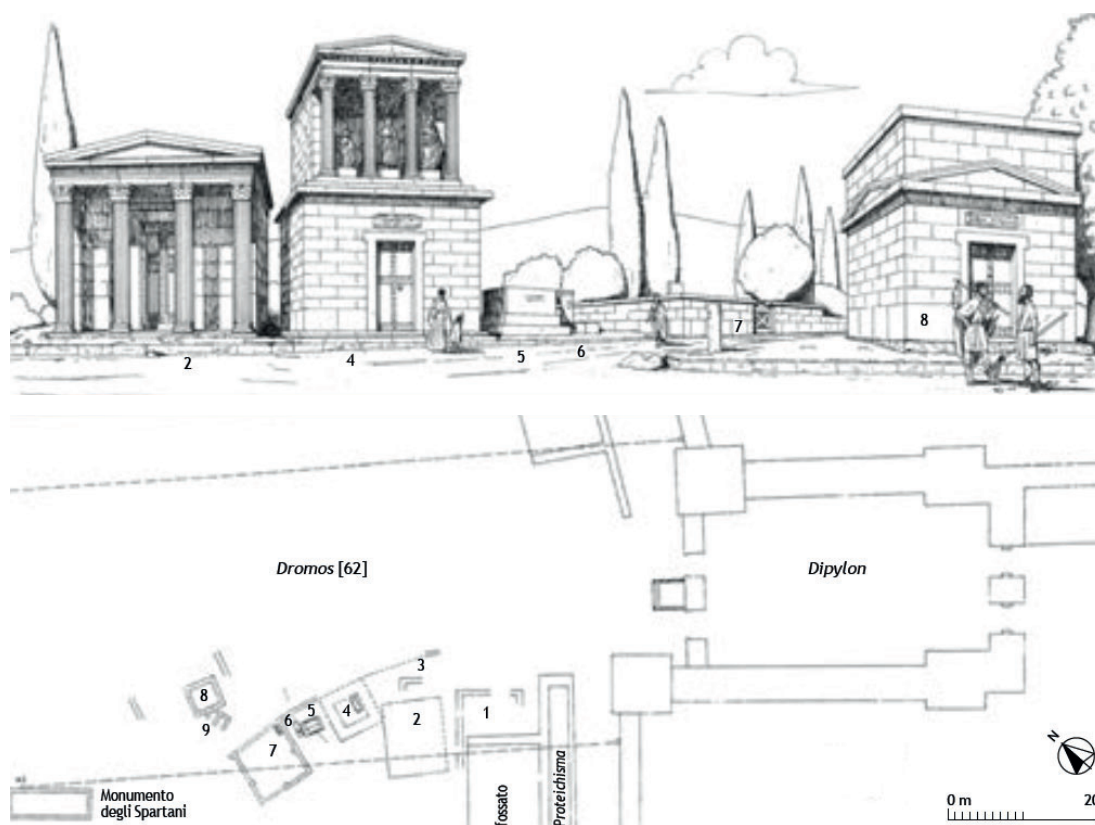
fig 35. reconstruction and plan of the Roman funerary monuments found in front of the *Dipylon*, along the south-western side of the *Dromos*
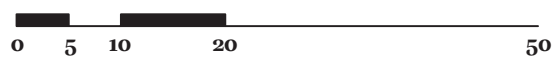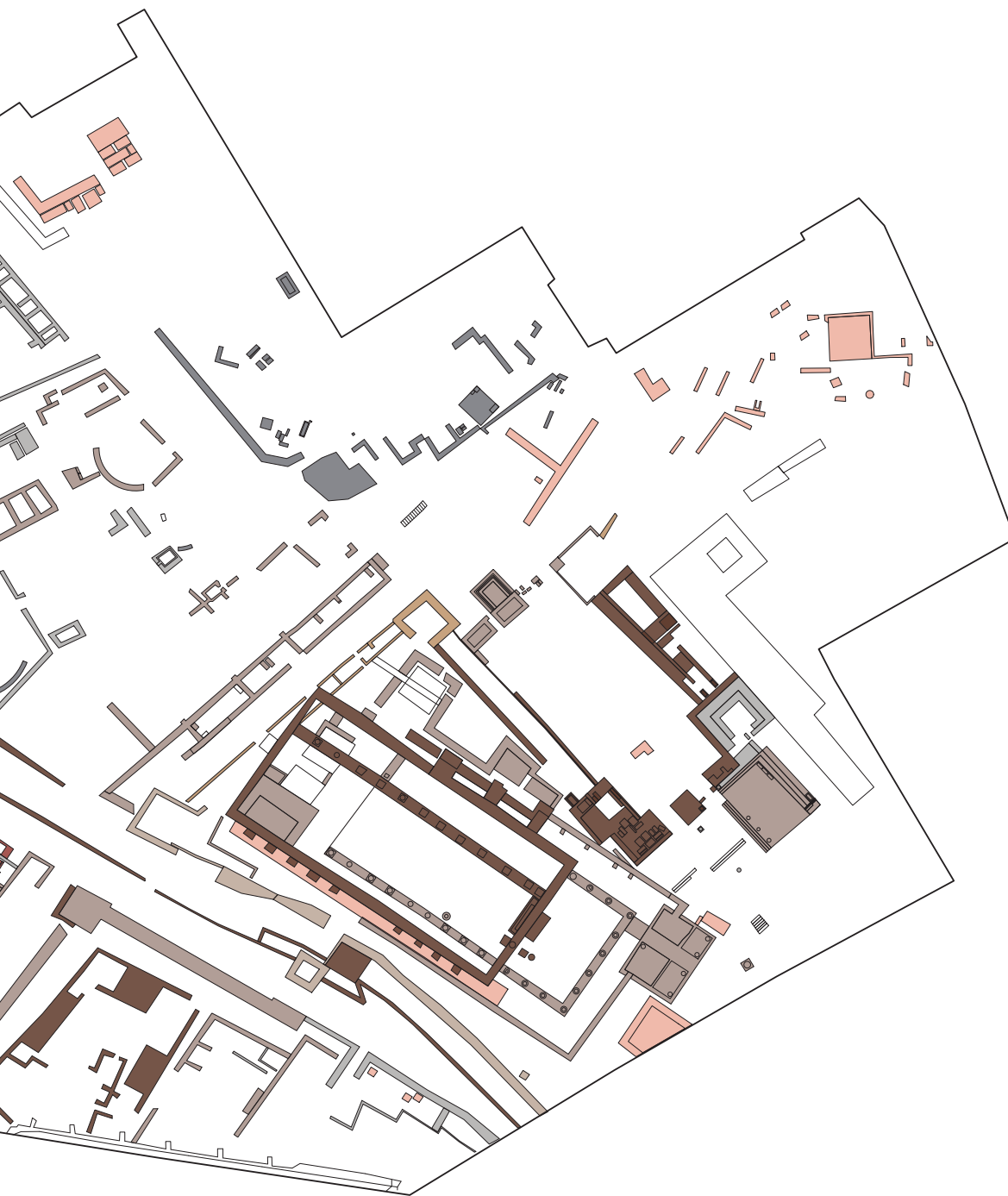
fig 36. current plan of the archaeological remains with mapping of them and classification into historical periods

Archaic Age_ VII-V b.C
V century b.C.
IV century b.C.
III century b.C.
II century b.C.
I century a.C.
II century a.C.
Roman Age_I b.C.-V a.C.
inadequate informations
Modern Age

the elements
of the site

Within the site, a number of basic elements have been identified that characterise it in a fundamental way and which, from the very beginning, establish its identity and give it importance.

The River Eridano:

The etymology of the name of the watercourse in the *Kermeikos* district derives from mythology: *Eridanus* was the son of Oceanus and Thetis and, linked to the myth of Phaeton, was located in northern Europe (identifiable with the Po or the Rhone).
The watercourse in Athens was thus the less famous and traditionally the minor one, but it was nevertheless one of the two fundamental water reservoirs for the city, together with the Illissus, 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 Illisso. 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.

It is worth noting that the crossing of this watercourse was planned from the earliest version of the *Hiera Pyle*, and over time it was designed to be fortified and defensible in its own right in relation to the footpath next to it.
In the Hellenistic period, the previously so important watercourse had already been reduced to a simple drainage channel for city water, and during the Roman work on the general water supply system, it became an underground channel covered by brick vaults.
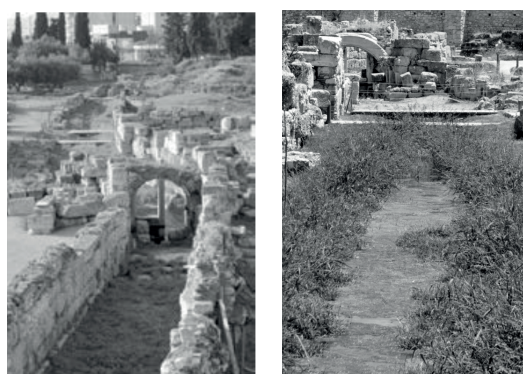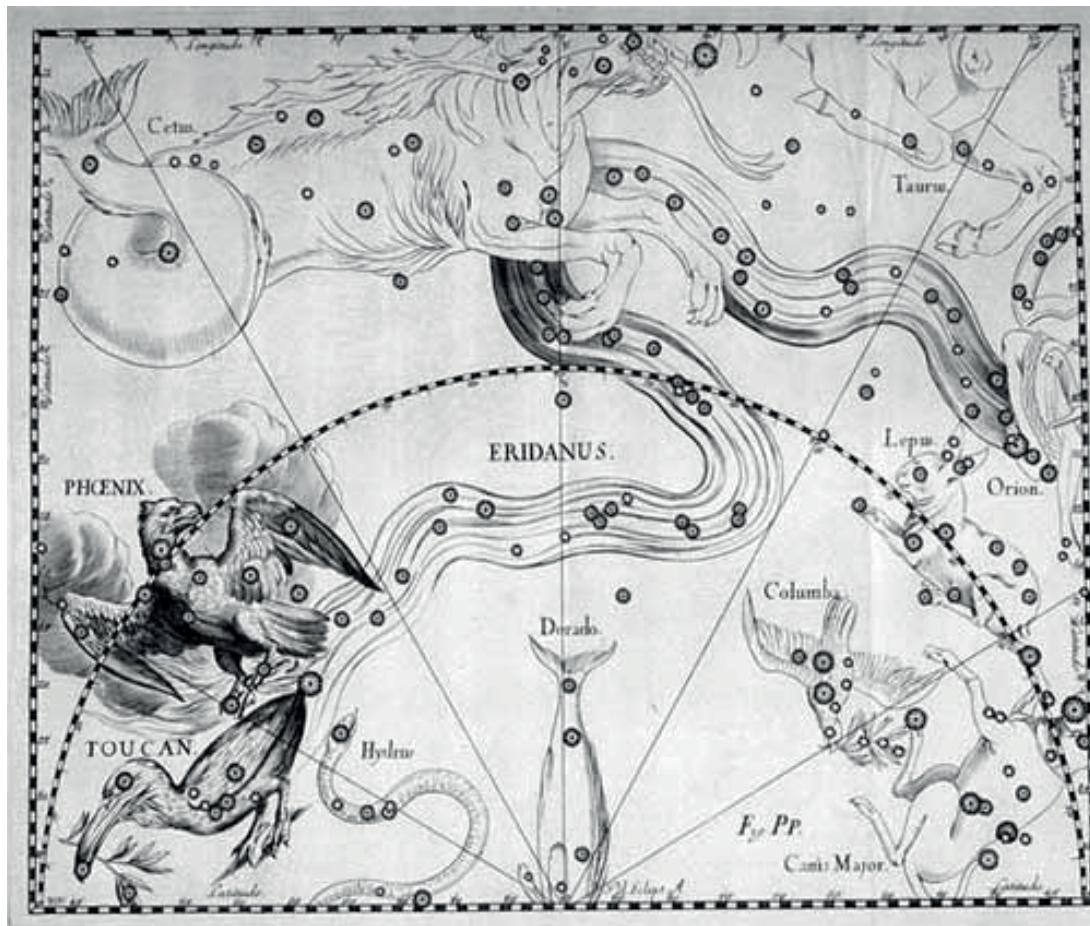
fig 40. astronomical table by J. Hevelius representing the Eridanus constellation, 1690

The *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 area dedicated to the city necropolis in sub-Mycenaean times was used in Archaic and early Classical times as a spot for temporary commercial installations or tribunes used during processions and festivals.

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 constriction was begun during the IV century b.C., in the inner portion of the walls located between the *Dipylon* and the *Hiera Pyle*, as an additional stratification of the ancient city necropolis in the sub-Mycenaean period.

It underwent changes in its layout and internal structure as early as the I century b.C., although the perimeter structure and plan were not altered.

With the Sillan destruction of 86 b.C., the building from the Classical period was razed to the ground and 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.

The dimensions were certainly smaller than in the previous version and the south-west corner was incorporated within the new walled enclosure.

The third phase opens with the destruction in 267 a.C. of the new *Pompeion* following the sack of the Heruli, with the consequent installation on the remains of artisanal complexes and ovens for various productions. It was only between the IV and V centuries a.C. that building was resumed on the traces still present, although the plan and elevation can only be hypothesised today as the archaeological remains and literary sources are minimal in this regard. It was most likely that two long *stoai* were built with a purely commercial function, although a kind of three-arched entrance portal was maintained to identify the site.

Use for city festivals became only sporadic.
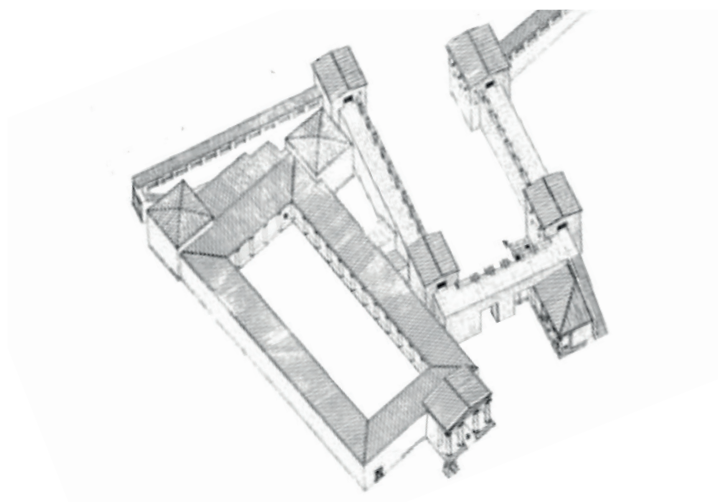
fig 41. reconstructive view of Pompeion, first phase, W. Hoepfner
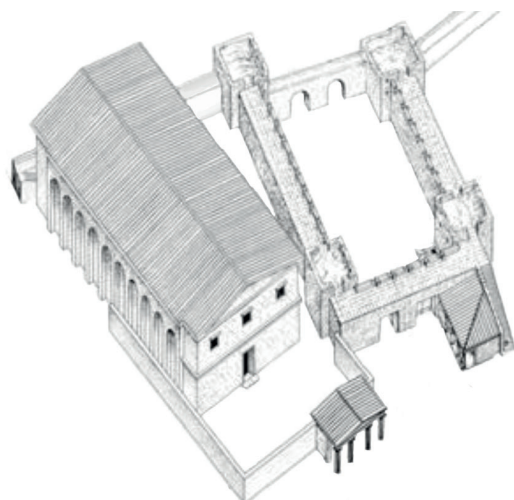
fig 42. reconstructive view of Pompeion, second phase, W. Hoepfner
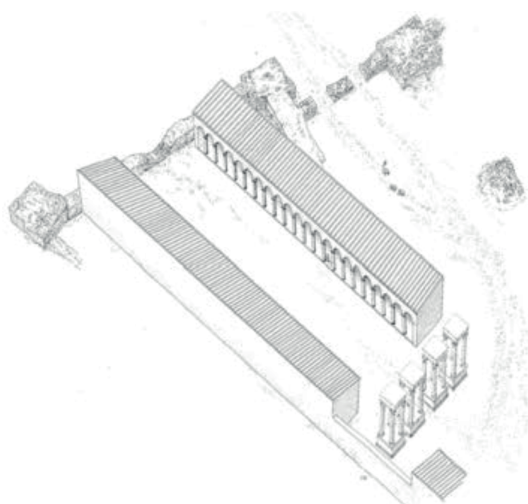
fig 43. reconstructive view of Pompeion, the colonnaded street and the gate, third phase ca. IV cent. a.C., W. Hoepfner

**fig 44. plan of the
Pompeion, first phase,
W. Hoepfner**
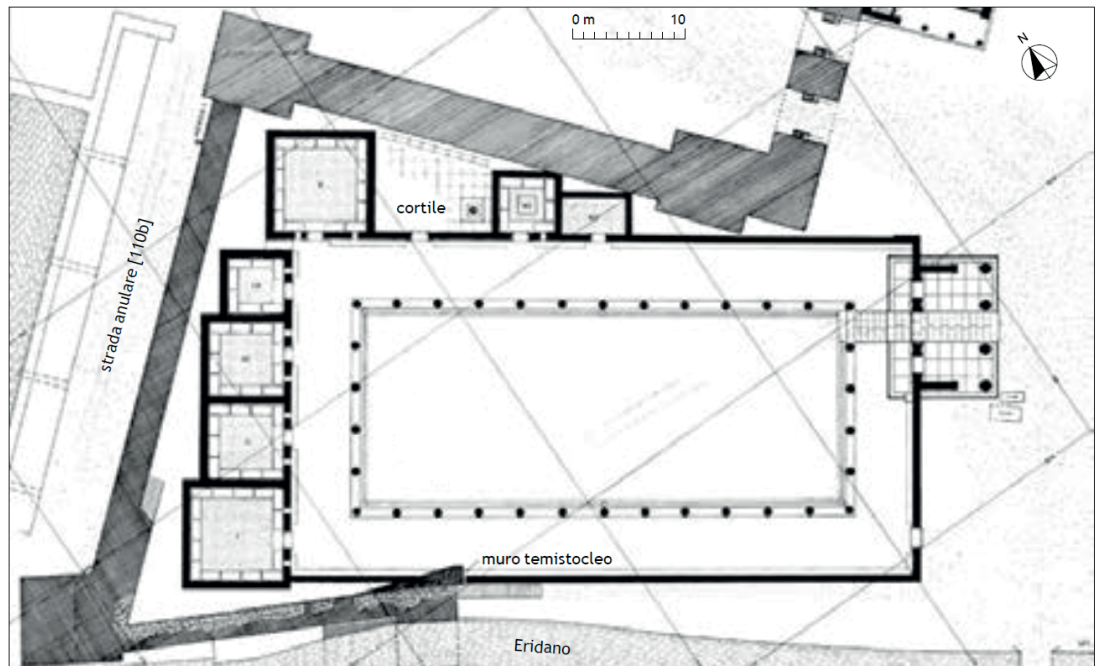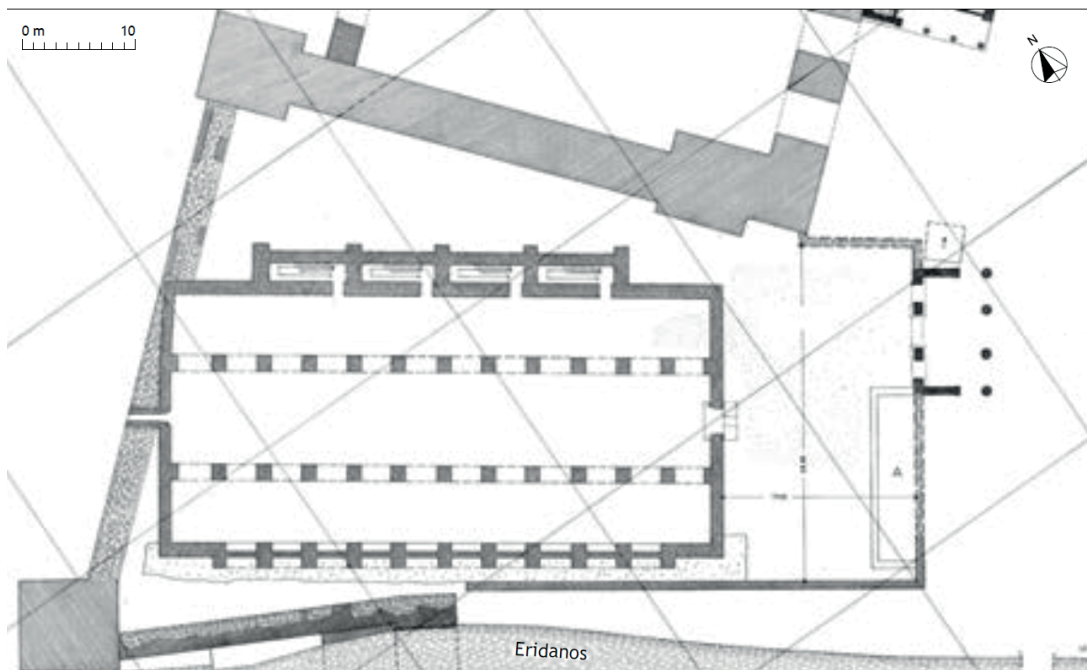
fig 45. plan of the
Pompeion, second
phase, W. Hoepfner

The *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 Eridanus. On an archaeological level, the Holy Gate and the *Dipylon* were discovered in 1872 during excavations by the Archaeological Society of Athens, in particular S. A. Koumanoudes (discovered the *Dipylon*) and F. Adler (discovered the Sacred Gate).

Of the eight phases of the gate's composition, the remains are always legible in a vertical and also horizontal sequence, with the exception of the two late antique buildings, as the ascending masonry is missing and a certain planimetric-volumetric reconstruction is difficult.

- I phase:
The first phase dates back to before the construction of the Themistoclean walls and comprised a single pair of defensive towers and two simple passages: one for the river and the other for wayfarers. It was built directly on the local stone and the inclination of its walls derives from the natural course of the Eridanus and, consequently, both converge towards the city.

- II phase:
It was only around 431-421 b.C. that the number of gates was doubled and a sort of inner courtyard was created that was twice the size of the previous one. The first crossing outside the river also dates back to this period, responding to the need for continuity of the ring road that surrounded the wall.

- III phase:
Around the end of the V century b.C. the ancient gates were dismantled, in favour of the use of the newer ones, and around 390 b.C. underground conduits were also built to bring some of the water from the Eridanus to the defensive moat.

- IV phase:
During the later period the changes only affected the southwest flank of the *Hiera Pyle* as they were elevated according to an elaborate design. Temporally we are around 300 b.C., also corresponding to the period of the early Hellenistic *Dipylon*.

- V phase:

Some major changes occurred during the fifth phase, that is, between 307-304 b.C., corresponding to the filling of the moat present between the two gates. The northern portion of the gate was rebuilt along with an extension of the adjacent tower (the outer tower was 13.5 meters deep) and the watercourse was permanently channeled.

- VI phase:

Shortly before the Sillan destruction of 86 b.C., the walls were raised and the tower south of the Eridanus made more defensive.

- VII phase:

Although it was not until the beginning of the IV century a.C. that real restoration work took place in addition to the covering of the watercourse by a series of marble vaults, and the ancient courtyard was also re-tiled in stone and its shape slightly modified.

- VIII phase:

Ultimately, at the end of the VI century a.C. (Justinian period) the river was finally covered with brick vaults and closed, remaining mainly used as a drainage channel for the city; in addition, the width of the watercourse was significantly narrowed. This historical period also corresponds to the gradual abandonment of the area and in particular also of this gateway, in favor of the *Dromos* road axis.

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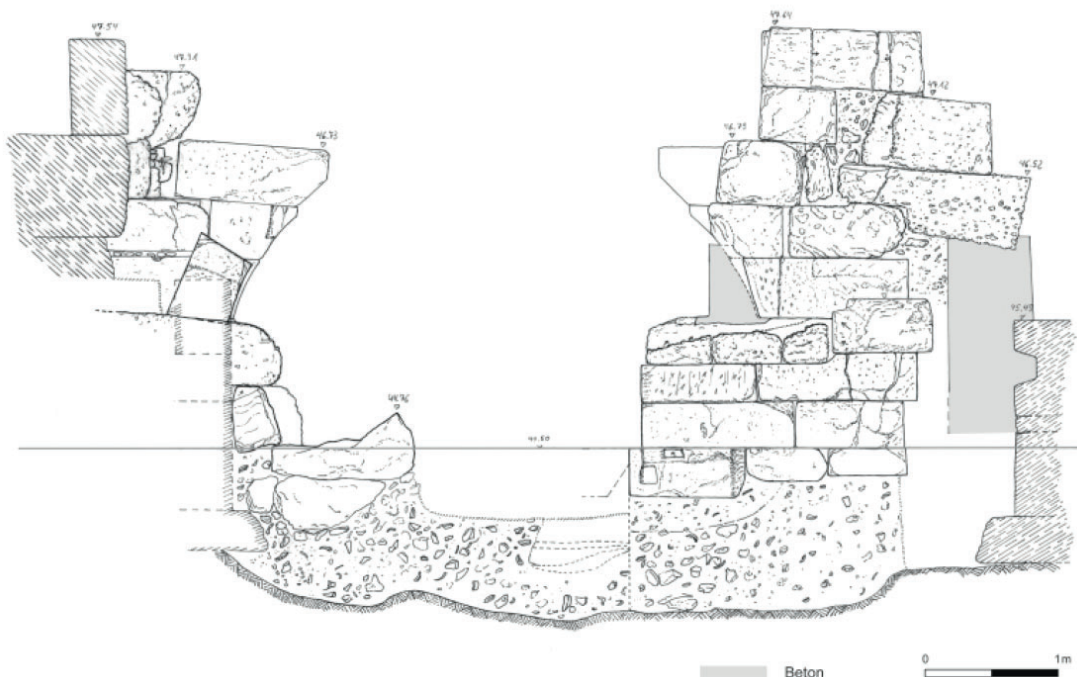
fig 46. north-west side of the fifth and sixth phase vaults and Eridanos retaining wall

fig 47. *Hiera Pyle* plant, first phase

fig 48. hypothetical elevation recon- struction of the *Hiera Pyle* gate, first phase
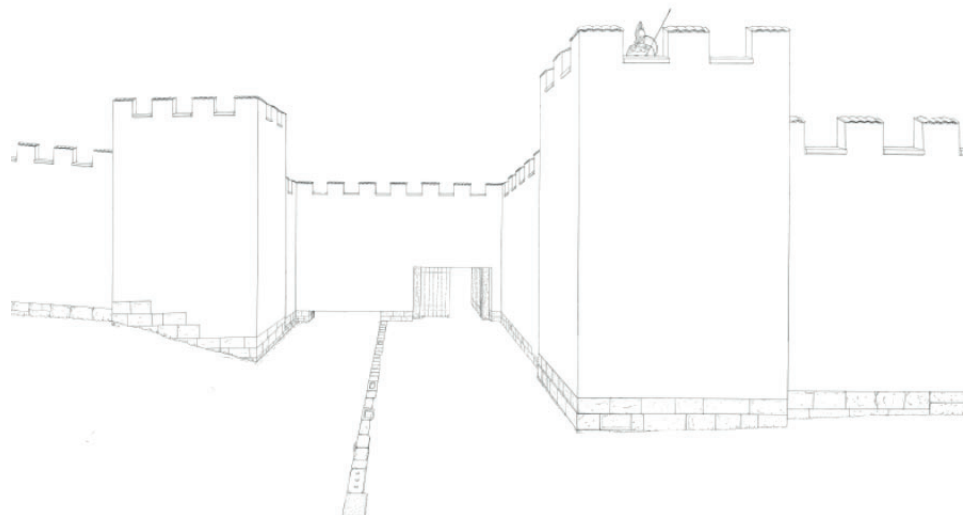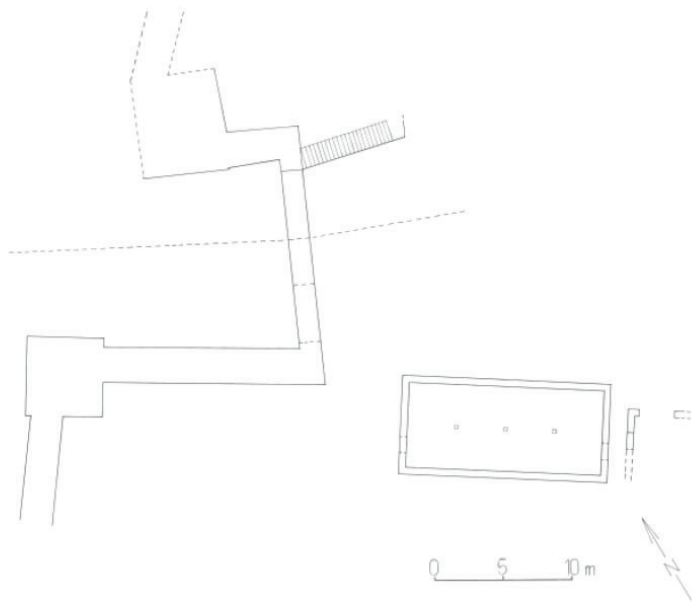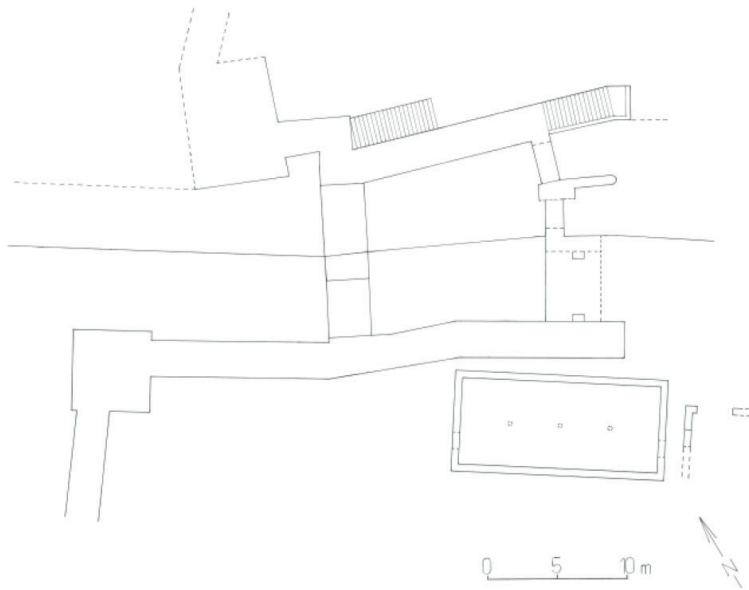
fig 49. *Hiera Pyle* plant, second phase

fig 50. hypothetical elevation reconstruction of the *Hiera Pyle* gate, second phase
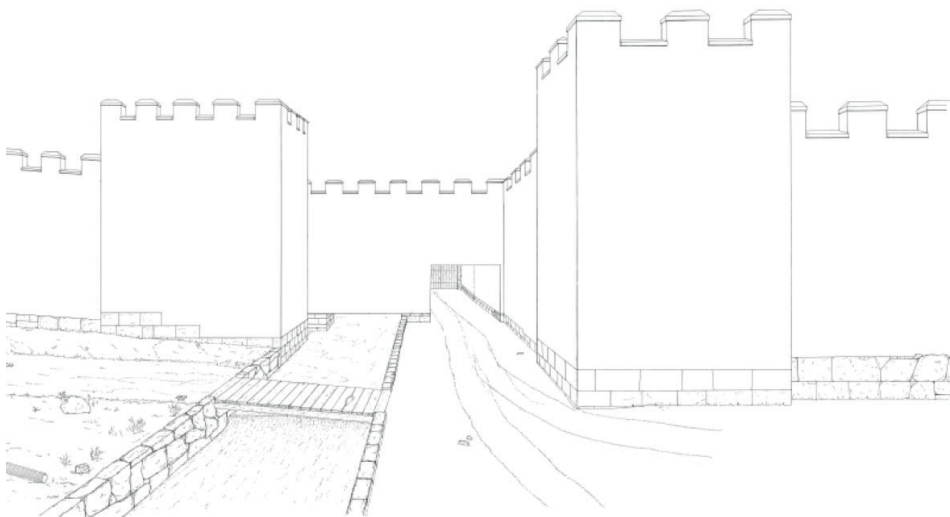
fig 51. *Hiera Pyle*
plant, third phase

**fig 52. hypothetical
elevation recon-
struction of the** *Hiera
Pyle* **gate, third phase**
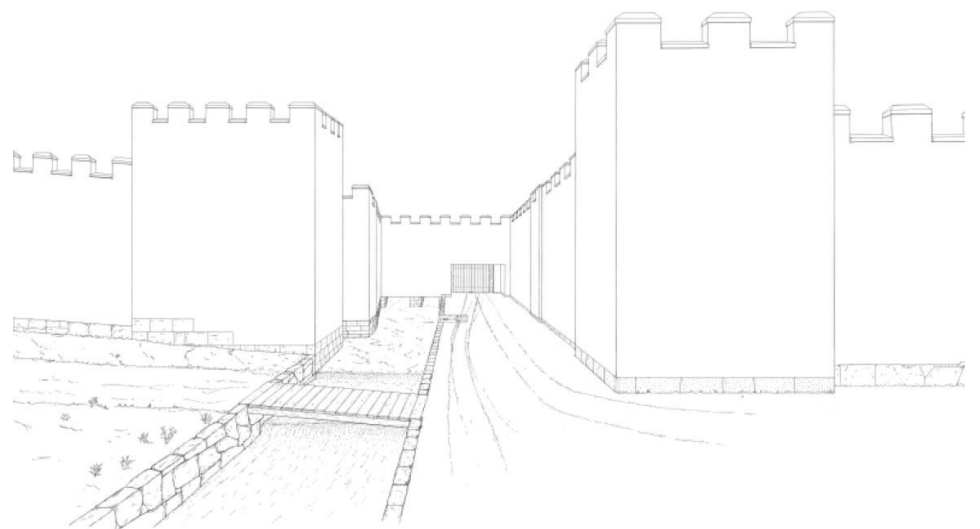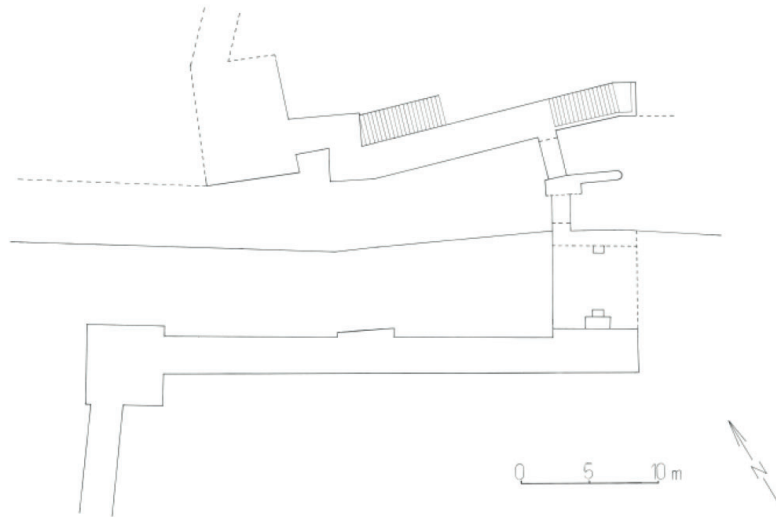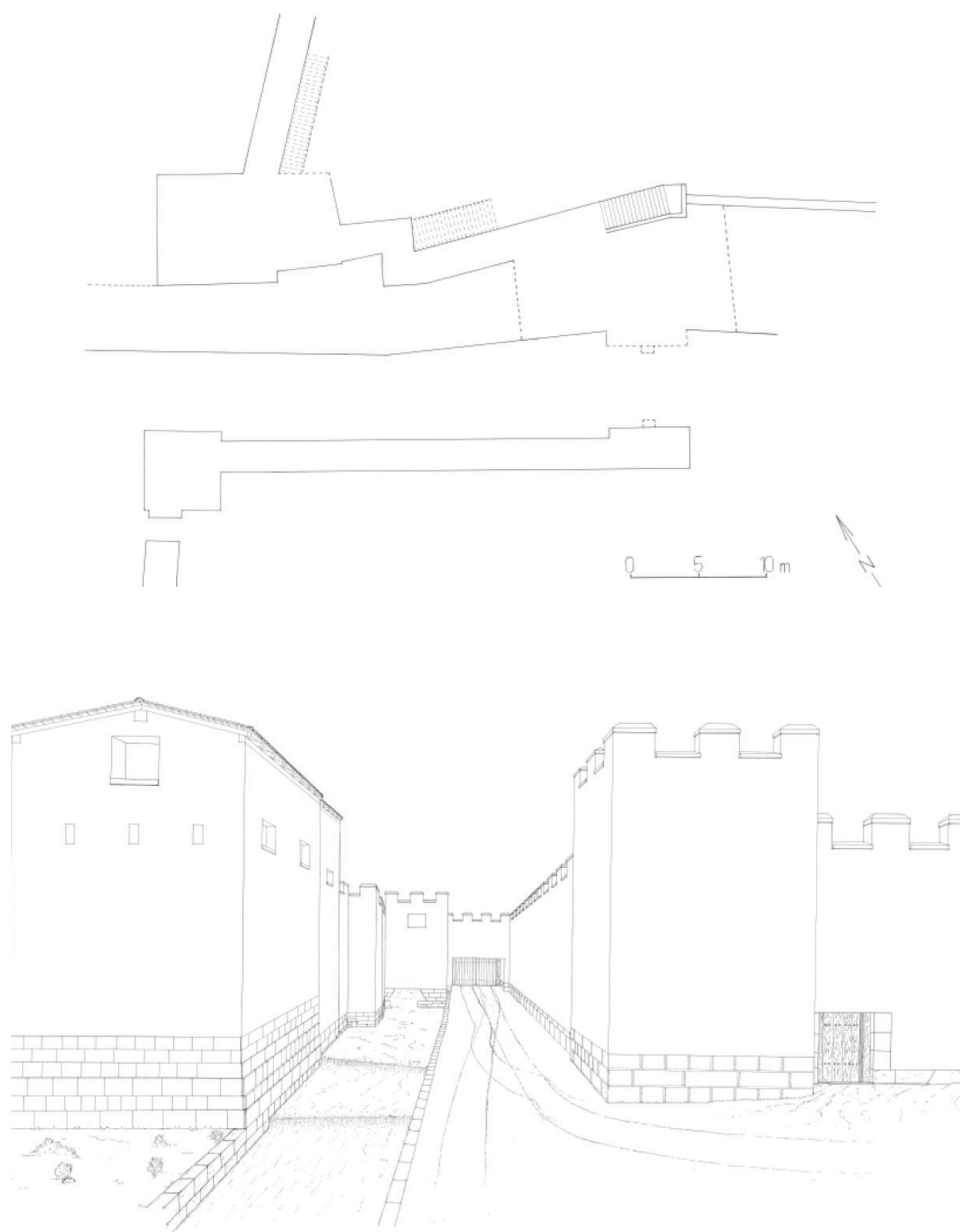
fig 53. *Hiera Pyle* plant, fourth phase

fig 54. hypothetical elevation recon- struction of the *Hiera Pyle* gate, fourth phase

0 5 10 m

fig 55. *Hiera Pyle* **plant, fifth phase**

fig 56. hypothetical elevation recon-struction of the *Hiera Pyle* **gate, fifth phase**
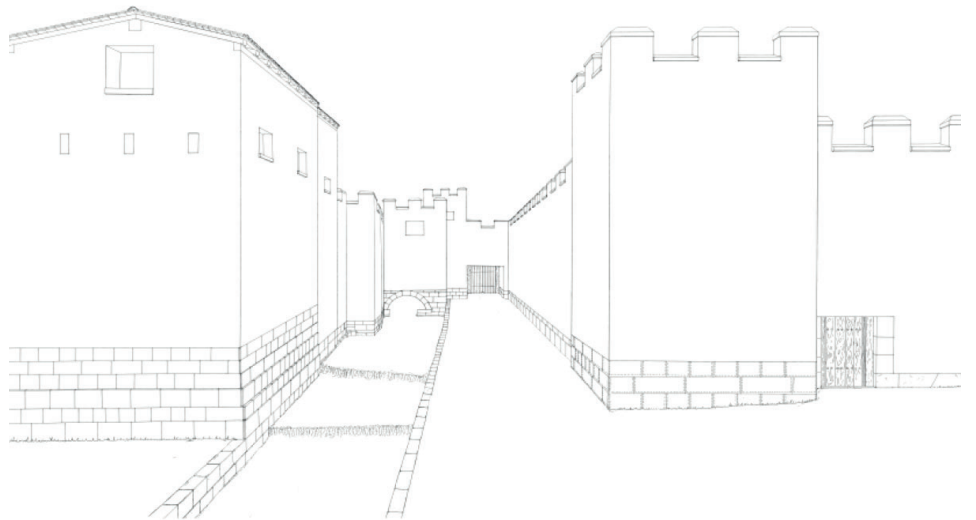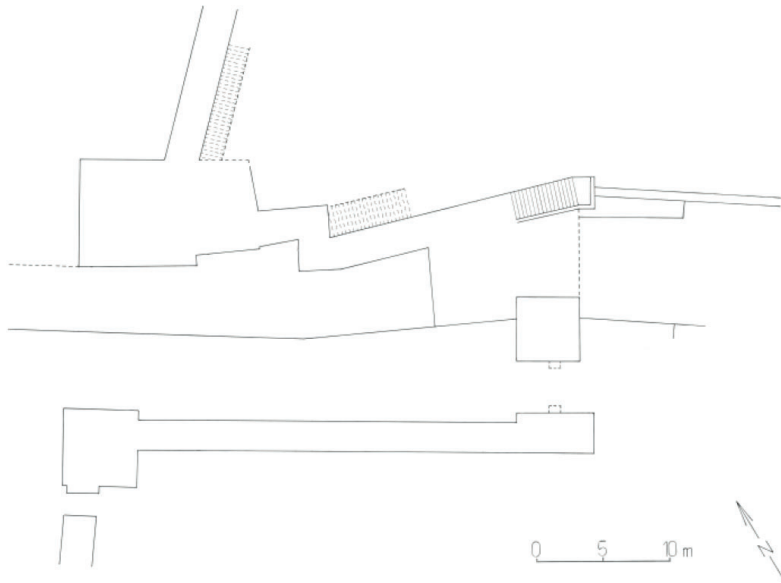
fig 57. gutter board in the north-west half of the alley during Noack's excavation. View from the SO

The *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.

The etymology of the name of this gateway to the city allows us to understand its nature directly. In fact, the term διπυλον (*dipylon*) literally means 'double gate' and its existence was first attested in the III century b.C., although there was most probably an older, but still imposing gate called *Thriasia* that was probably already built following the victory at the Battle of Salamis. Archaeologists have speculated that this term was also used to define the earliest archaic version of the *Hiera Pyle*, but there are no definite sources in this case.

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. Unlike the *Hiera Pyle*, the *Dipylon* underwent few changes over time so that, after the definition of the **Themistoclean version in 478 b.C.**, the gate was restored in the Cononian period[15] and rebuilt 304-307 b.C.

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.

The Themistoclean complex followed aspects of fortification, but also of representation, so much so that the dimensions were particularly specific and related to the canons of ancient Greece (the dimensions of the gate wall were 1:5 compared to those of the inner complex, while the length of the courtyard was twice the size of the lateral dimension).

In the Cononian period (410-390 b.C.), however, a new fortification programme for the *Kerameikos* was implemented. One of the towers (outer east tower) was demolished and rebuilt with a wider plan in order to meet the requirements of the new weapons.

In the Hellenistic period, the reconstruction of the new building had to take into account the pre-existing buildings already on the site, which were, however, skilfully integrated into the new construction (location of the gate wall is erected in relation to the position of the ancient fountain,...).

Three phases in particular are recognisable from this period: renovation of the Themistoclean gate wall, construction of the western flank wall, and construction of the wall on the field side. This outer wall was indeed built later than the main Themistoclean phase, but it followed the one towards the city: it had two gates

15. Conon was an important Athenian general born around 444 b.C. and belonging to the tribe of Antiochides. A strategist for the city on several occasions, he was first forced to leave the Greek peninsula, but later performed heroic deeds in this capacity to bring about the total emancipation of Athens from Sparta, making it the leading power in Greece. Because of his use of Persian wealth to achieve this end, and in return for his not submitting, let alone that of his city, he was executed by the Persians themselves, and his ashes were transported and laid to rest in the *Kerameikos*.

separated by an important portion of wall.

According to archaeological studies, the construction materials used are very different: the foundation plinth was made using re-used material from the previous neighbouring necropolis and subsequent layers of mud bricks (as were the Themistoclean walls), while the later phase featured the use of conglomerate blocks entirely covered with limestone from Piraeus. Overall, the walls between the two pairs of towers that bordered the inner courtyard of the gate were also 8 or 9 metres high and 4 metres wide.

Their termination consisted of a crenellated walkway, while the towers also had a roof. The composition of the defensive elements and their arrangement near the *Dipylon* made the one through the gate an obligatory passage for enemies and the inner courtyard made them vulnerable to attacks from above the battlements. In peacetime, the space between the two gates became a central place for processions and sacred festivals, for the annual celebrations of the war dead buried along the *Dromos* and for the distribution of meat, a typical passage of the Panathenaean festival.

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 (traces of which are not visible today) dedicated to *Zeus Herokeios* (protector of the courtyard), *Hermes* (protector of travellers) and *Akamas* (hero of the *Kerameikos* tribe). In 267 a.C., following the sack of the Herulians, the *Dipylon*, together with the entire quarter, fell into ruin and was destroyed, so that by the IV century a.C. only its foundations were in ruins and the gate was forgotten.

Archaeological excavations of this important find began in 1872, by the Hellenic Society in the area of Kerameikos under the direction of A. Koumanoudis, during which both the Dipylon and the Sacred Gate were discovered. The first plans of the remains of the walls referring to these ancient elements were first published in 1873-74 by I. Panadakis, although more systematic and more precise discoveries had to wait for the more scientific and in-depth investigations carried out by G. Gruben between 1960 and 1972.
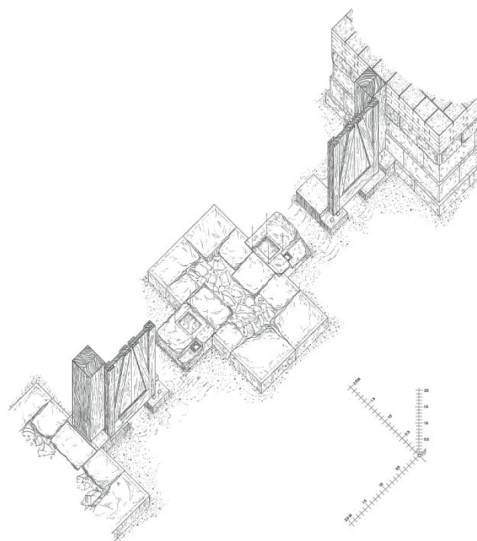
fig 58. Themistoclean wall, structure of the *Dipylon* gate, hypothetical reconstruction

fig 59. plan of *Dipylon* in the Themistoclean period

THEMISTOKLEISCHER TORBAU

ERHALTEN,   1 FUSS = 32,8 cm

ERGÄNZT

DIPYLON, ENDE 4.JH.

POMPEION

Alternativ:
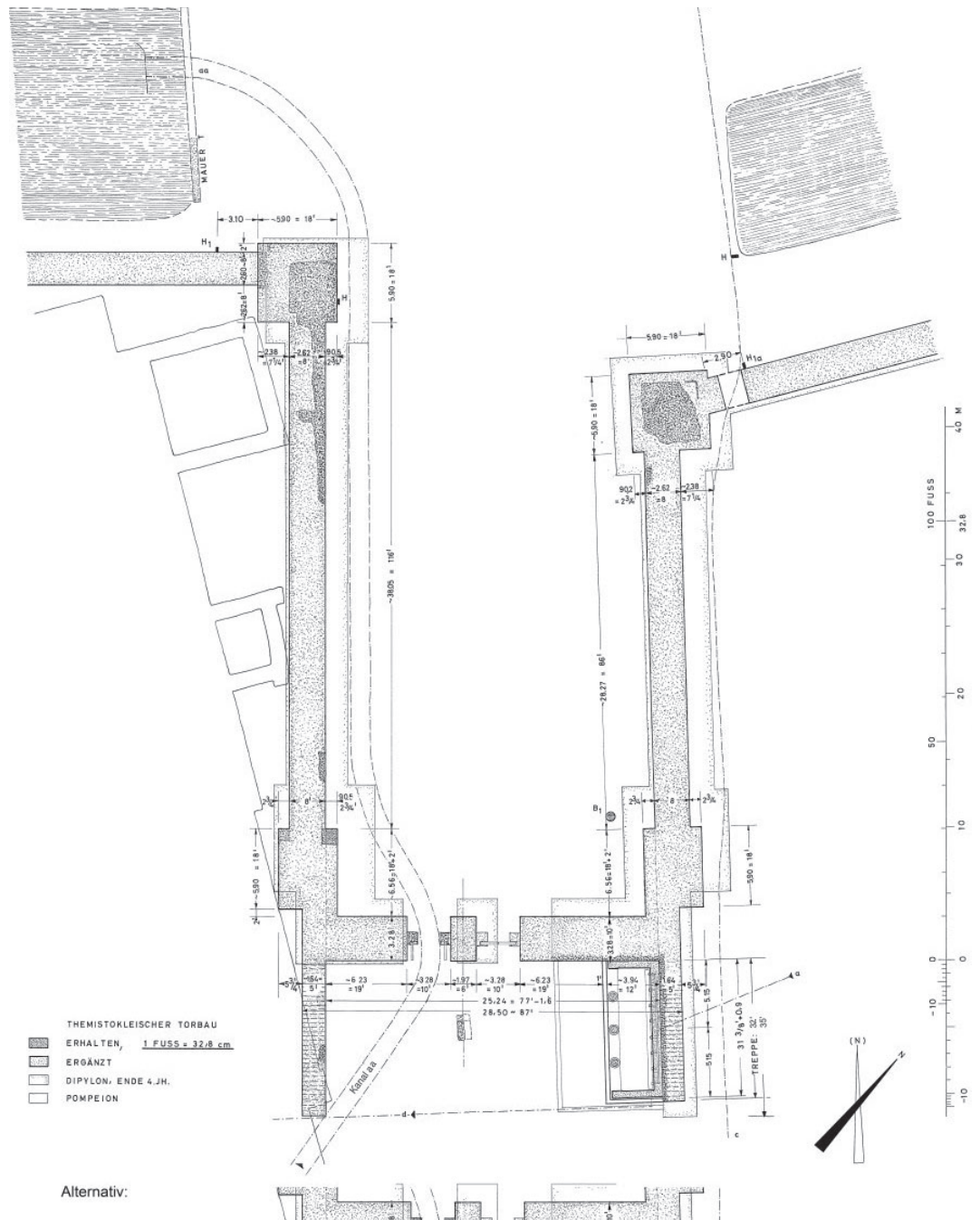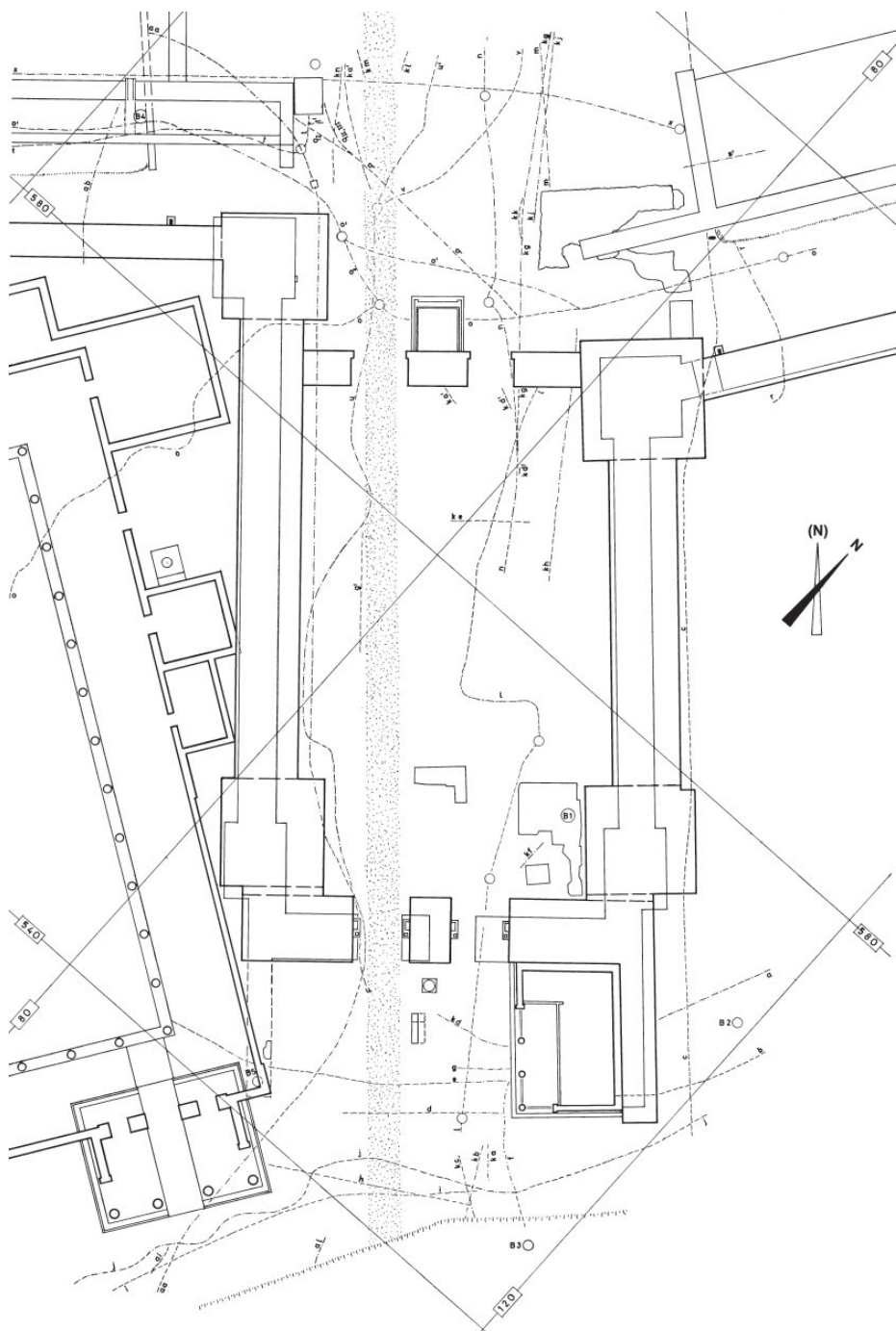
fig 60. general plan of the canals in the *Dipylon* area, late period

fig 61. reconstruction, general perspective view of *Dipylon* from outside the walls, Hellenistic period

fig 62. reconstruction, general perspective view of *Dipylon* from the city, Hellenistic period

hypothet. Ergänzung mit
Kopfprofil Kat.-Nr. 34

ΔΙ ΟΣ
ΕΡΜ ΟΥ ΑΚΑΜΑΝΤΟΣ

(1.27)

37.3

51

0   100 cm
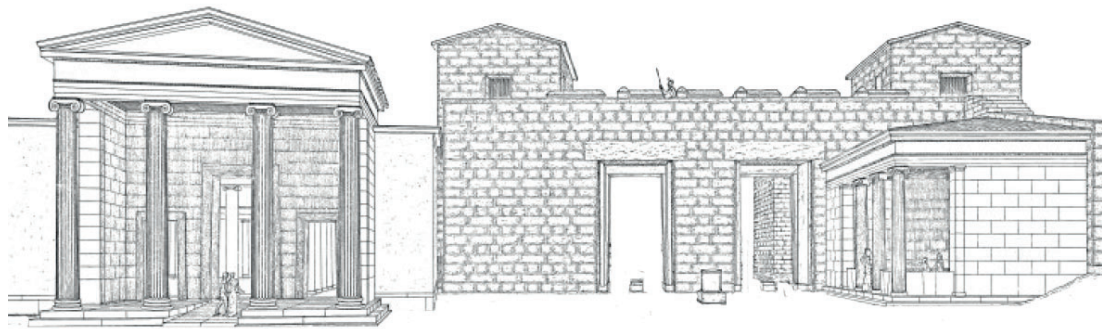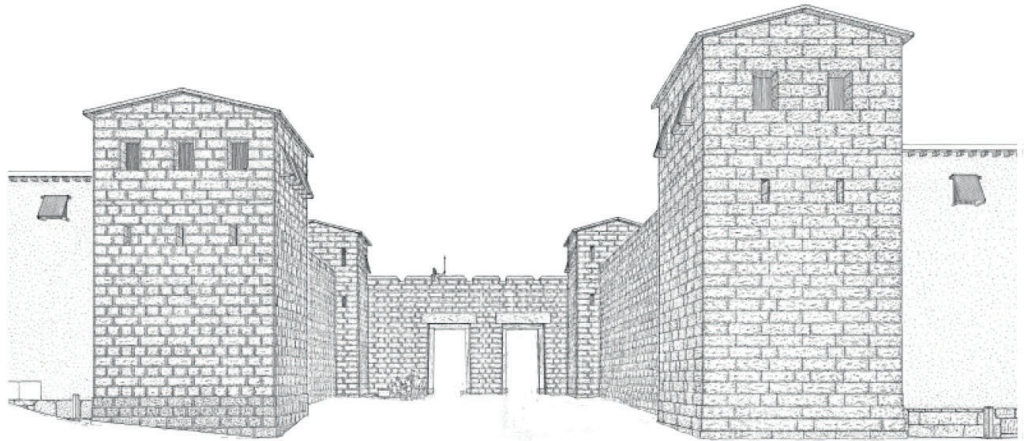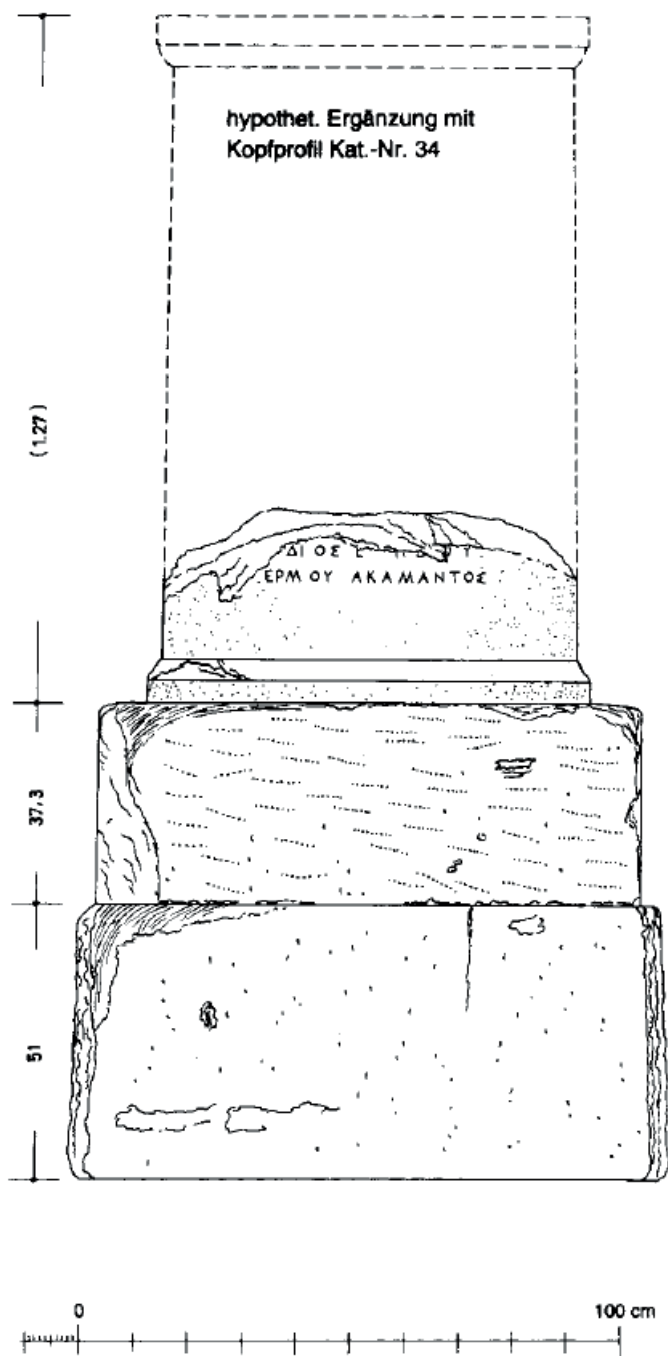
fig 63. drawing of the round altar in front of the wall of *Dipylon*

The ancient streets:

Analysing the urban fabric of ancient Athens, the element of the street, too often left in the background in relation to monumental emergencies, is fundamental.

In Greek cities, in fact, the road network had a primary value and also had a predominant influence on the location and positioning of certain public buildings. In this region, consideration of this urban element can be traced as far back as the late archaic period, although it is not easy to identify the public offices whose task it was to manage and maintain the city streets.

What is certain is that all routes had a hierarchy and identified οδος, or main roads, and στενωπος, the secondary ones. This difference was mainly based on the width of the carriageway and the relationship that individual routes had with the general network of roads, but also on the social and religious role played. It is only in Roman times that the presence of another typology is documented, that of the πλατεια, a wide axis crossing the city from one end to the other.

Although this pattern can be found in all Greek-influenced cities, for the purposes of this research it is best to focus more on the case of Athens, capital of the ancient world and site of our project areas.

For simplicity of exposition and consistency with the work that will be presented next, the analysis will focus on the city's main north-west street axes, near the ancient *Kerameikos* quarter.

The two main routes that allow us to follow this route from north-west to southeast are the *Hiera Hodos* [58], also known as the Street to the Helusi and the Street for the Panathenae [62], also including the urban and suburban section called *Dromos* as well as the extra-urban section that was instead named Street to the Academy.
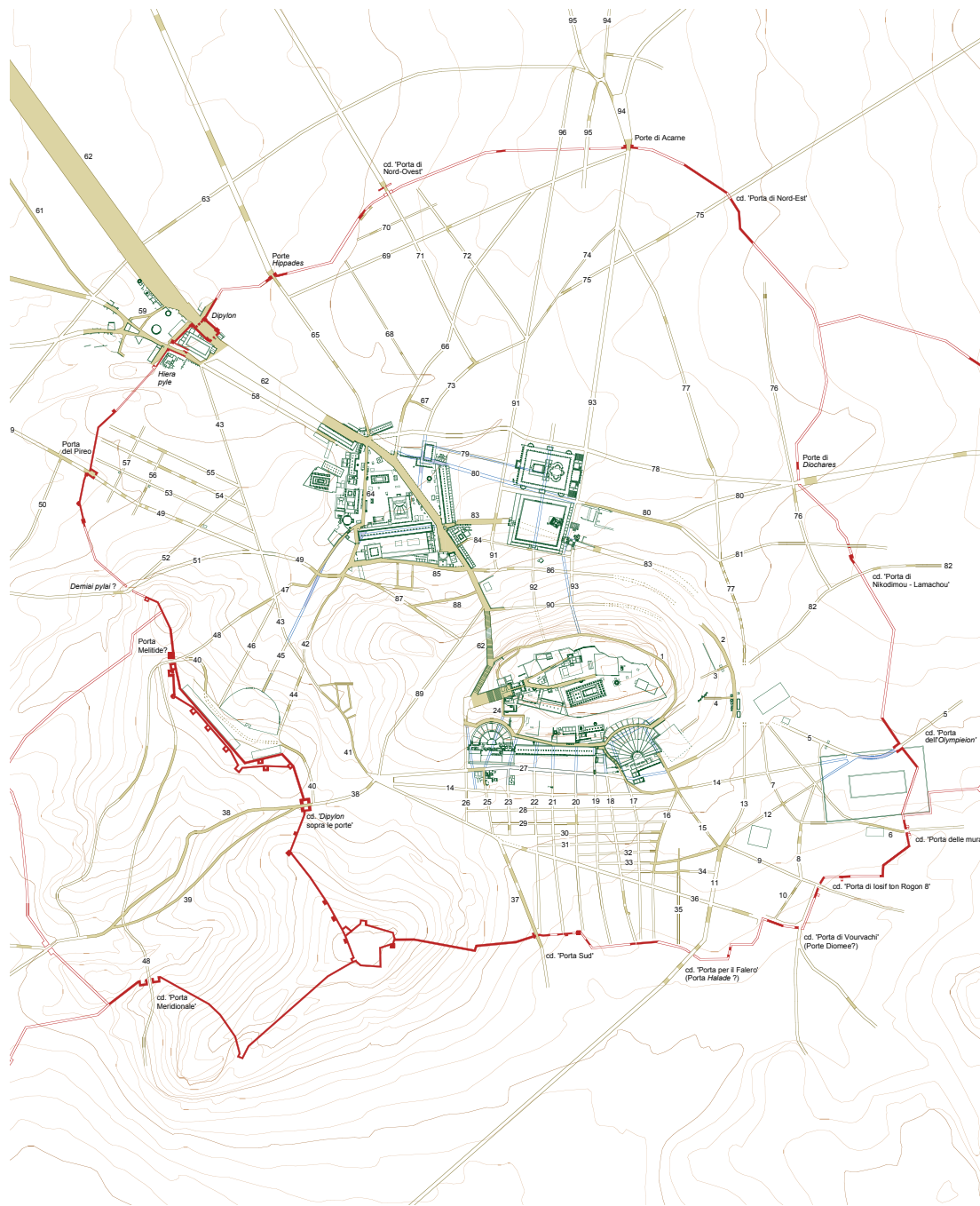
fig 64.planimetry of Athens, the numbers marked correspond to the routes of ancient roads

fig 65. schematic diagram showing the route between the main areas of the city of *Hiera Hodos*
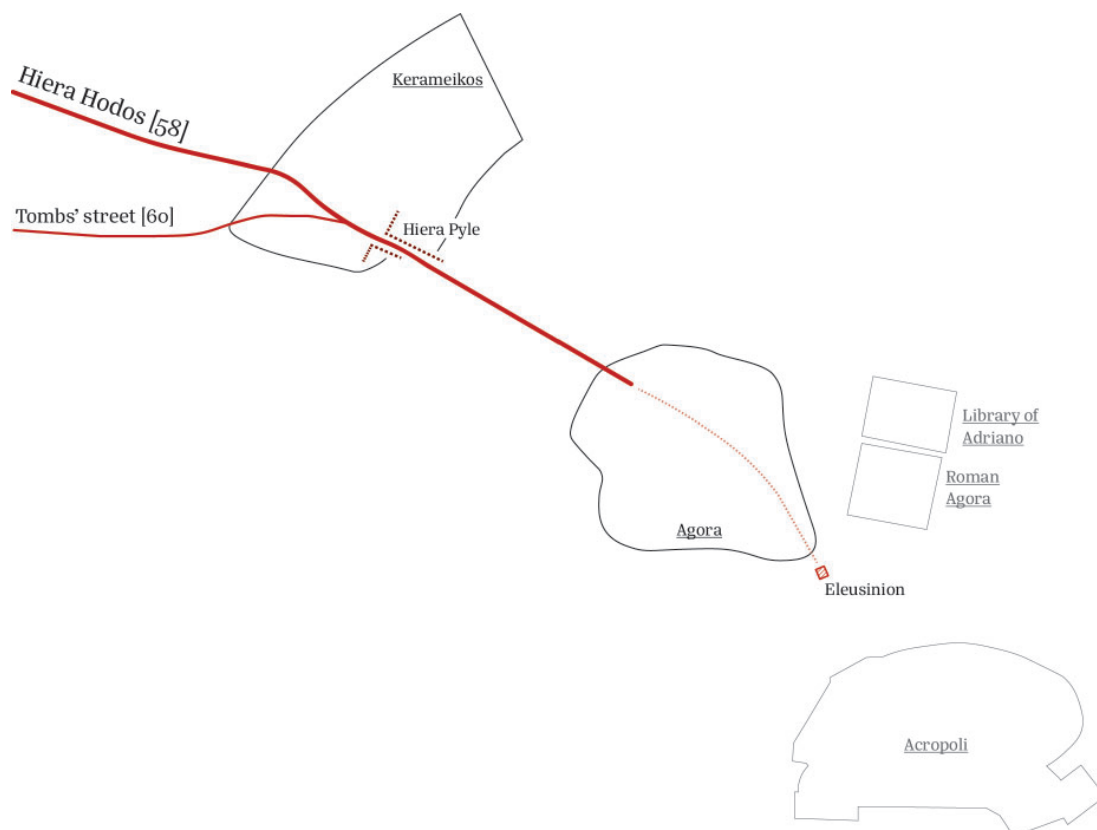
The *Hiera Hodos* [58]:

The former is archaeologically identified with several names and was travelled by initiates to the Mysteries who completed the procession that ended at the sanctuary of Demeter, near the city of Elusi, while the starting point was the *Eleusinion* sanctuary, south of the New Agora and, in particular, the South *Stoà*. Starting from the extra-urban section, we find several overlapping road levels and also the change in the size of the road axis in different historical periods. It is worth mentioning that these constant interventions along this road axis over time are due to its importance un-

til the Roman age. Coinciding with the entrance to the *Kerameikos* quarter, the *Hiera Hodos* owes its route to that of the Eridanos river, and secondary branches, such as the Street of the Tombs [60], also converge here.

Once past the *Hiera Pyle,* the route took on a very important urban significance, as it is probably the oldest route in Athens, probably even dating back to the Mesohellenic and Geometric periods. It was originally intended to extend along the left bank of the city river, following its course, but following the road's interruption due to the diversion of the river bed, it was relegated to a secondary route, used only for religious and pro-

cessional purposes, until its re-mon-umentalisation in the Augustan age.

It must be emphasised that the creation of the *Dromos* and its markedly larger scale and dimension also caused this ancient route to succumb in favour of a large new connection between the Agora and the *Dipylon*. Due to these vicissitudes, the urban section known today only dates back to the Roman period of the city of Athens and corresponds to one of the interventions commissioned by Augustus for the reorganisation of the road and urban layout. In this same period the *Dromos* underwent a considerable narrowing and a Double *Stoa* was erected between these two parallel main axes near their junction with the Agora.

fig 66. schematic diagram showing the route between the main areas of the city of *the Panathenaic Way*
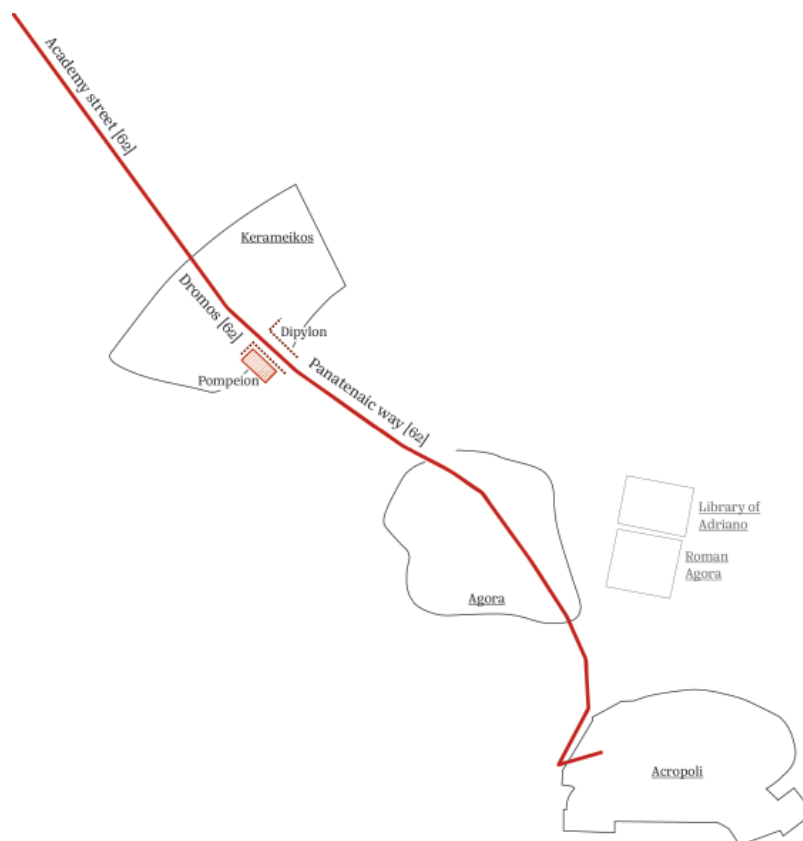
The Panathenaic way and the *Dromos* [62]:

With regard to the Panathenaic Way, however, the analysis is more articulated as this entire street axis can be broken down into three basic segments: the Street for the Academy with tombs and funerary monuments of illustrious personalities, which was connected to Plato's ancient Academy, the *Dromos* that ran from the *Kerameikos* to the New Agora and where the *lapadedromie* races took place during ceremonies in honour of Athena before the construction of the Panathenaic stadium and hippodrome.

The creation of the ceremonial route is traditionally dated to 566 b.C., although there are reservations about the certainty of the date. In the suburban section, i.e. in the vicinity of the *Dipylon*, the route is of late antiquity and was much wider than the remainder within the Themistoclean walls. Near the gate, its capacity was halved due to the flooding of the Eridanus in the IV century b.C., which rendered part of it unusable and submerged. The *Dipylon* was nevertheless the main entrance to the city of Athens as it was directly connected to the New Agora and also to other important regional axes.

The road segment between the Double Gate and the Agora remained in use until late antiquity (VI-VII century a.C.), albe-

it with a considerable narrowing due to Byzantine residential facilities, and was mainly used as a route for sports competitions in conjunction with festivals to Athena, thus taking the name *Dromos*. The entrance of this road axis into the square was in a north-westerly position, and then continued diagonally out of it to the south-east, near the South *Stoa* and the *Eleusinion*. It is in this central section that the Panathenaic Way had some important branches towards the east, i.e. towards the monumental areas of the Roman period. Once out of the central public space of the city of Athens, its sacred character became preponderant, as this portion was only used during religious festivals to the goddess Athena (the Panathenaics), and allowed the ascent to the summit of the Acropolis thanks to its insertion with the *Peripatos*, at the height of the *Klepsydra*.

THE PROJECT

Critical Devices
the design method

16. P.P. Pasolini, 10 giugno, Poesia in forma di rosa, Garzanti Editore, Milano, 1964

Un solo rudere, sogno di un arco,
di una volta romana o romanica,
in un prato dove schiumeggia il sole
il cui calore è calmo come un mare,
e, del mare, ha il sapore di sale,
il mistero splendente : lì ridotto,
sulla schiuma del mare della luce,
il rudere è solo : liturgia
e uso, ora profondamente estinti
vivono nel suo stile – e nel sole –
per chi ne comprenda presenza e poesia.
(...)
Io sono una forza del Passato.
Solo nella tradizione è il mio amore.
Vengo dai ruderi, dalle chiese,
dalle pale d'altare, dai borghi
abbandonati sugli Appennini o le Prealpi,
dove sono vissuti i fratelli.
Giro per la Tuscolana come un pazzo,
per l'Appia come un cane senza padrone.
O guardo i crepuscoli, le mattine
su Roma, sulla Ciociaria, sul mondo,
come i primi atti della Dopostoria,
cui io assisto, per privilegio d'anagrafe,
dall'orlo estremo di qualche età
sepolta. Mostruoso è chi è nato
dalle viscere di una donna morta.
E io, feto adulto, mi aggiro
più moderno di ogni moderno
a cercare fratelli che non sono più.[16]

Living in the world makes man's nature complex. Rich in facets, it gets tangled up in the moments and succession of facts that affect our most innocent being.

Everyday reality implies a *forma mentis* setting that compulsorily leads to the use of a standardised language potentially understandable by anyone. The constraint in which humanity finds itself thus limits any alteration in the conception of the other from itself and does not spur man to develop and bring back to the centre of himself that innate element that lies at the heart of his own evolution: the capacity to ask questions. It can be said that, by now, there is a process of distortion of man proposed and imposed by man himself through the society established with and by his peers.

It is necessary, then, to start again from a single and simple question that can really shake the slumbering chaos and insecurity that can unbalance man from the state of stillness in which he has wished to form himself, in order to return to a motion that inevitably also implies research and restlessness.

In the linearity of the present, where one prefers an almost superficial approach to reality seen as an unstoppable succession of elusive moments, uniqueness is being able to pause in the presence of reality to discover the depth of the moment. To remain in search of the question leads one to develop a personal critical sense capable of stimulating one's own sensitivity in order to experience the world individually and uniquely. In this sense, the idea of the 'critical device' has been picked up and developed as an element that generates questions and issues and whose purpose is not to explain itself or the past with which it is confronted, but instead to generate reflections born out of a personal dialogue with the individual. This relationship with a ruin or any trace of the past thus becomes an indefinable and unstandardised perceptual *unicum*, conceived in a specific way with respect to the experience and above all to the questions that have moved the 'inner self' of the architect himself.

The design of these devices stems from a fundamental premise: the will of the author of the intervention not to be a protagonist in the first person, nor the desire to impose a single univocal vision of the site and history. Everyone then becomes a connoisseur of the past and the world as much as they are willing to challenge their comfort zone and in proportion to their sensitivity to inner restlessness.

This free will left, to the visitor or any kind of user of the designed element, allows this 'thought made material' to pose as an intimate protagonist without becoming a usurper of the remains on the site.

Declining what has been described in an archaeological park, the result is a design system made up of various elements that are apparently unconnected, but have the same provocative origin. The devices are not intended, in this particu-

lar environment, either to impose themselves as protagonists or to reconstruct the void whose only clues are the traces of the past left by time. Although there have been different approaches to ruins in contemporary times, the desire is not to imitate either the past or other great architects, but rather to propose a new approach that can also become food for thought on a theoretical-conceptual level. While respecting the ruins and the purely scientific and sectorial work of the archaeologists, the unequivocal experts of the site, we wish to place ourselves on a different plane.

First of all, it is essential that the visitor interrupts his or her frenetic way of living everyday life, seeking to immerse themselves in a spatially delimited environment with its own time. Fundamental will be the open-mindedness of the subjects and their predisposition for childlike curiosity, rediscovering their inner selves that allowed them to grow into adulthood, guided by the will to also accept questions without direct answers, but which basically lead to living an experience as an end in itself to self-knowledge.

Hence, a project of questions without answers is born, the foundation of which is the question itself, which acquires body through a critical device dropped specifically in a single point of the site, immovable and not placeable anywhere else. The function is not to irrevocably expose the past, nor to try to become scientifi-

cally expert disseminators like archaeologists or historians, but to take on the role of "*domandatori*"[17], subjects whose aim is to no longer render the users impassive, but to shake them to their core by succeeding in making them different people. The change brought about can then also be extended in the approach to life, to the other from oneself and to the many everyday situations thanks to the new ability to face reality in a critical sense and to get to the bottom of the human experience, no longer remaining superficial.

The series of designed critical devices does not have a directionality of its own, nor does their determined succession imply a greater or lesser understanding of history and remains. Notions are simply communicated by other displays dedicated solely to this purpose, which can scientifically and historically convey the history of the site, but are not intended as answers to the indispensable questions raised by the critical devices. The intervention will therefore result in a continuous succession of provocations and doubts: critical devices do not propose themselves as answers to the questions they provoke, they make the users search for them within themselves.

17. domandatore, def. by Lucia Onder.
Deverbale from 'domandare'; with the value of the present participle of the verb.
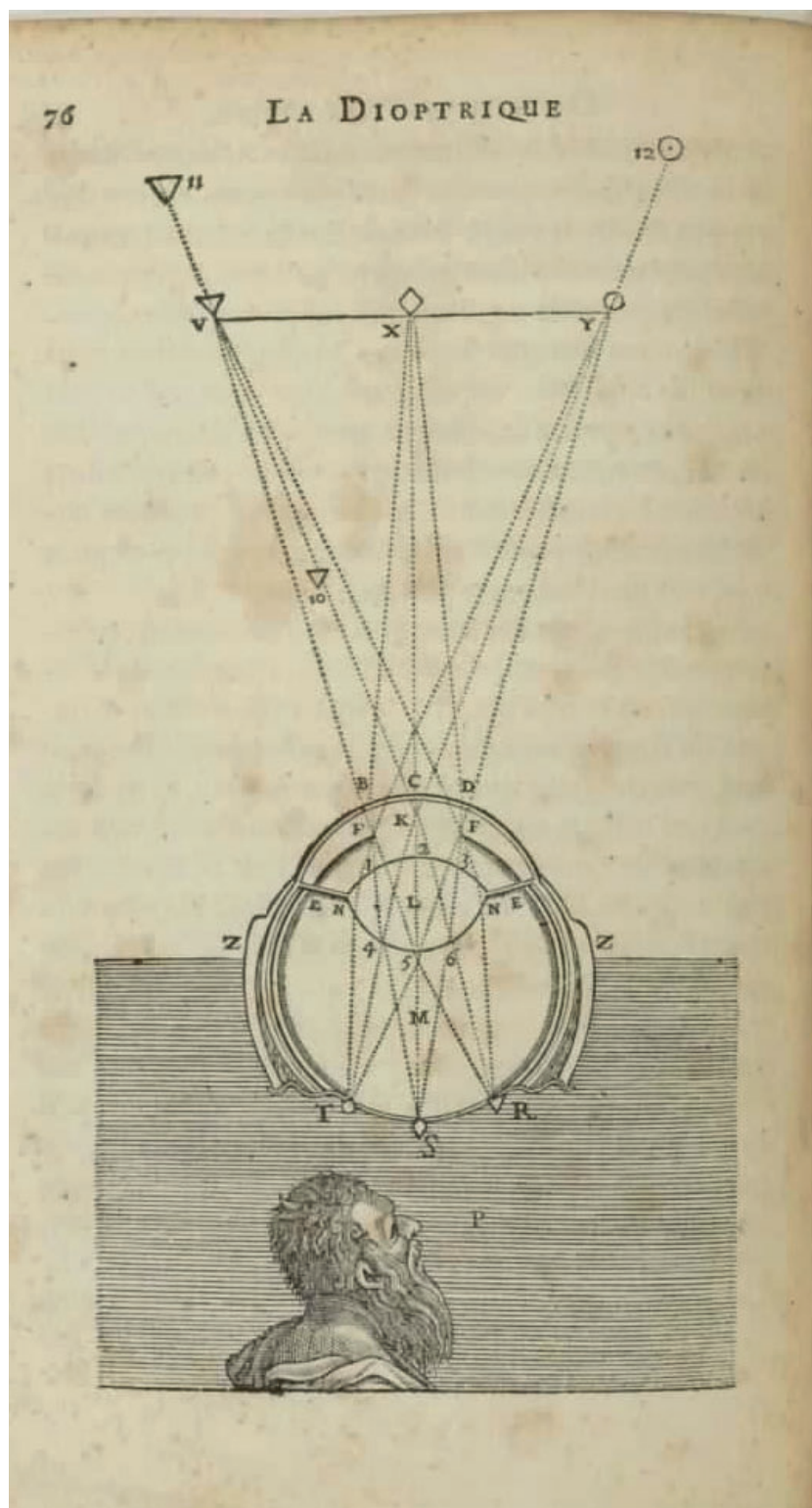
fig 67.immagine esplicativa della formazione dell'immagine retinica nell'occhio dei vertebrati secondo Cartesio, Cartesio, 1637

Project themes
the threshold

«There was a priestess, walking in her garden, in springtime, it was of course a beautiful day. After walking through the garden observing everything she came to the doorstep, and there she stood in astonished admiration, motionless on the threshold, looking in. And his handmaiden came up to him exclaiming, 'Mistress, mistress look outside, what a wonder God created. And the mistress replied, "Yes, yes, but look inside and you will see God!"». [18]

There is a thin line running through space, invisible to the eyes but perceptible to the body and mind, to this line is given the task of distinguishing what is "inside" from what is "outside".

In fact, a line drawn on a white sheet of paper is enough to create a division of the same into two distinct parts, as if to sanction a boundary more resistant than a wall in conferring characteristics to a space A and characteristics to a space B.

Though arbitrary and subtle, the line can grant or take away properties, if in fact the line we draw is a closed line then we will limit space A within a boundary, while space B will be free in the sheet but excluded from space A.

Similarly, if the line is closer to the edge of the sheet at the lower end, we could say that space A has greater ownership of the sheet than B, and so on.

If we then imagine taking this line and placing it in front of us we will create a sign that will distinguish where we are in relation to the sign and between us and

what lies beyond it. If the whole is understood as a white infinity around us, now that line has definitely changed this perception, creating a boundary, this is what we call the threshold.

It is in this gesture that, according to Pierre Von Meiss in 'Dalla Forma al Luogo' (P. Von Meiss, Dalla Forma al Luogo, Hoepli, Milano, 1996), defines the action of constructing from the delimitation of a finite portion of the rest of the universe around us.

If, in fact, human nature itself is finite and cannot comprehend the dimension of infinity by its very nature, the first action one takes in defining one's own space is to draw a finite nature of what surrounds us, and the threshold becomes both the symbol and the vehicle of passage between the finite dimension of the interior and the infinite dimension of the exterior. Picking up the analogy with a blank sheet of paper, let us now imagine that the edges of the page do not exist, let us therefore extend the blank infinitely in the dimension of the plane, what would we do in order to make a space within it our own?

We can say with certainty that the action would certainly be to draw an enclosure, of arbitrary shape and size, that is, to define a finite space interrupted at an equally arbitrary point to allow passage from the inside to the outside, that is, a threshold.

In this form, if the two spaces that are defined have their own clearly delineated features in being inside or outside

fig 68. conceptual diagram of the threshold theme: the line creates division between two parts
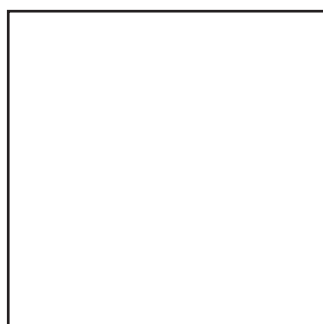
fig 69. conceptual diagram of the threshold theme: closed line limits a space with respect to the outside
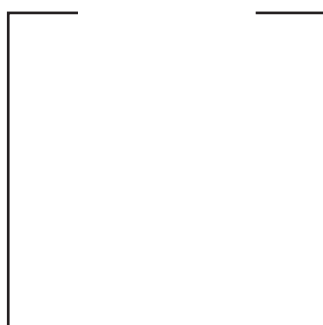
fig 70. conceptual diagram of the threshold theme: the openness of a closed perimeter allows the two spatial identities to converge with each other, but at the same time maintains their division

our enclosure, the opening between the two has instead an ambiguous nature, it is neither inside nor outside, neither finite nor infinite, it is on a special plane in which "the world turns inside out" (P. Von Meiss, Dalla Forma al Luogo, Hoepli, Milano, 1996).

We can therefore understand these transitional spaces as fundamental mediators between the discontinuity of different spaces that, by allowing the crossing and becoming elements of annunciation of hidden treasures, become a kind of introduction capable of synthetically explaining the content of the text. At the moment when two different realities find themselves in proximity to one another, the infinite or limited space between them becomes a point in tension, and it is in this space that the theme of the threshold develops.

Returning to the theme of the drawing, we can better visualise the different natures of relationships that the threshold can establish between different realities. In fact, if we consider again our previously drawn enclosure, the border that makes up the figure of the space mediates the relationship it has with the blank page and an alteration of the same border can alter this exchange.

If the border that makes up the figure is continuous and without interruptions we will have a relationship of closure between the two environments, and thus we will speak of a limit of expansion of the enclosure and a limit of ownership of the blank sheet; if instead we wanted

to allow a form of communication and exchange we would have to at one point break the border's boundary and create precisely a threshold. From this simple schematisation, it is easy to understand how the nature behind the special place of communication is much more complex than it appears.

In "Il Sacro e il Profano" by Mircea Eliade (M. Eliade, Il Sacro e il Profano, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 2013): *«Una funzione rituale è attribuita alla soglia delle abitazioni umane, ed è per questo che essa gode di tale considerazione. Numerosi riti accompagnano il passaggio della soglia domestica: qui ci si inchina o ci prosterna, la si tocca devotamente con la mano, ecc.»*

From the initial depiction of the more abstract meaning of the subject matter, it can be said that the complex religious or profane ritual mechanisms that characterise human action are intertwined at the threshold.

The ritual or gesture thus becomes one of the pivotal elements established with the element of the threshold, in this system that we have defined outside the possible internal/external categorisation, complex systems of different relationships develop that take place in ritualistic actions.

In Japanese culture, the 玄関 (pron. lett. *genkan*), is the space in front of the entrance door used as a storeroom for shoes and as a filtering element between outside and inside; it becomes the formal

and specifically cultural declination of the threshold and, in modern times, signals the ritual gesture that then allows access to the domestic environment. The same term is used to describe the passage to profound knowledge, or the entrance space of a temple, the crossing of which implied for monks the beginning of the path to enlightenment.

In the stoup immediately after or before the entrance of a Christian church, dipping one's fingers and then recreating the symbol of the cross is the ritual of purification before entering the house of the Lord.

Similarly, at the entrance of a mosque, one is required to slip off one's shoes in order to then enter the heart of the inner sacred space.

Cultural diversities, different ways of using space, different ways of acting in the face of the divine, but all with the same recurring theme: the threshold becomes the space of division between places, in these cases between the sacred and the profane, and it is precisely at this juncture of 'gap' that man is required to purify.

The threshold and its emphasisation arise, therefore, from a complex ritual relationship that is established in the gesture of entering a place, in crossing a profane space to enter a sacred one. In this sense, our line takes on body, rises to something more complex, gains depth and entity by taking on the semantic role required. Even if the line is constructed and becomes a column, a door, a lintel, etc. What definitively separates the inner divine space from the outer world is a
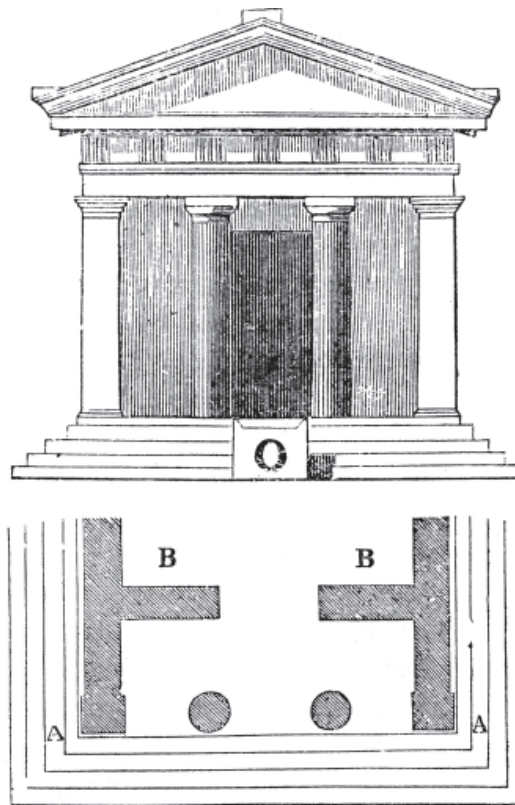
fig 71. view of the great gate of the Pantheon by Marcus Agrippa, L. Rossini, 1822

S T R E E T

**fig 72. photo from the
steps of Holocaust
memorial**

**fig 73. photo from the
main street looking
towards the museum**

**fig 74. photo from the
main street looking
towards the museum**

fig 75. photo from the steps of Holocaust memorial

**fig 76. photo of the
museum entrance
space**

**fig 77. photo of the en-
trance of the museum**

Critical analysis
the actual situation of the site
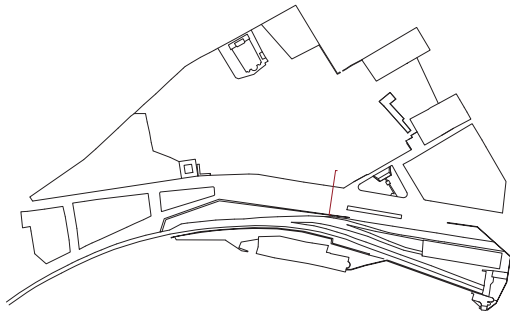
Perception inside the archeological site is to be in a large hollow surrounded by the enclosure

The current shape of the fence indicates a break between the ancient city and the new city
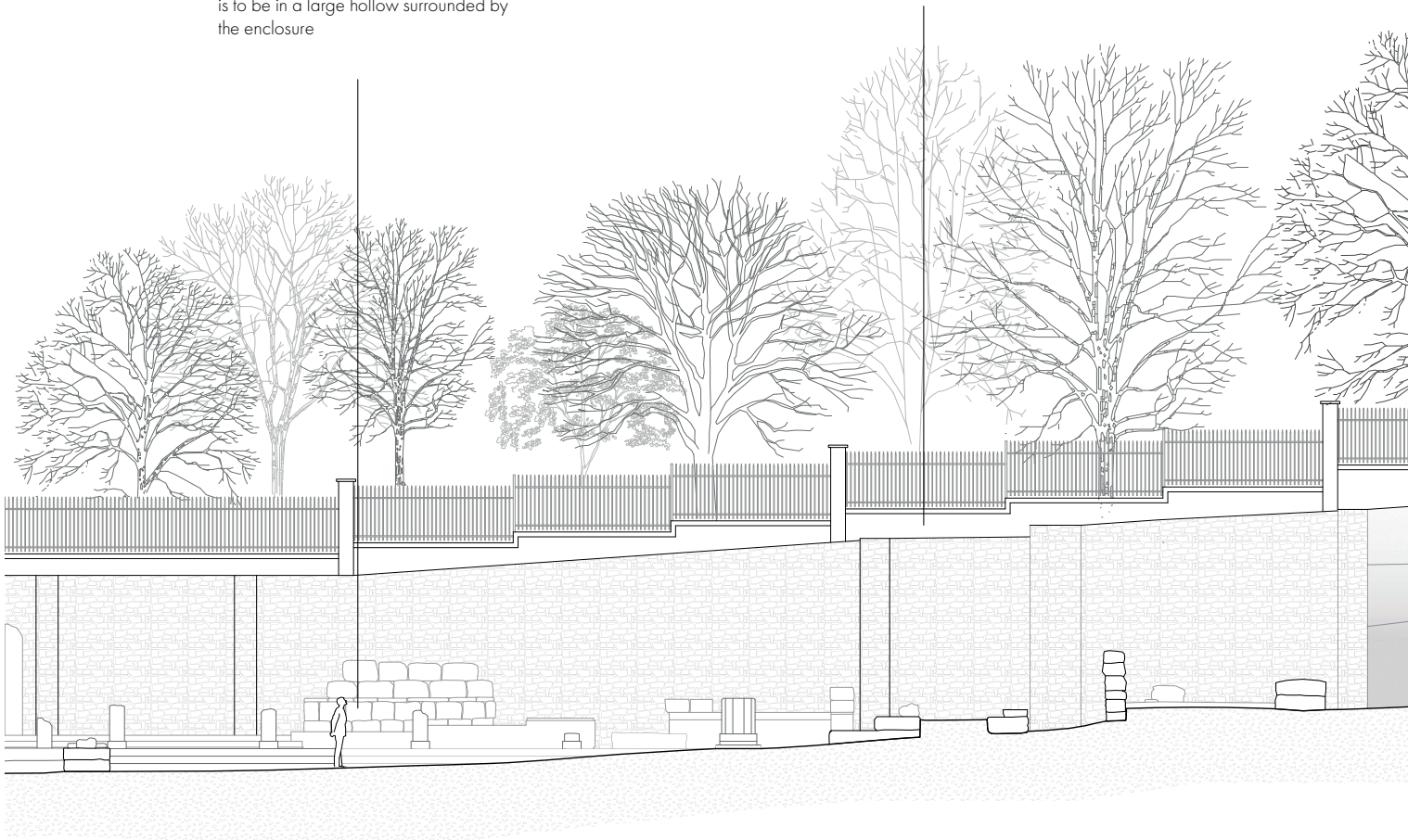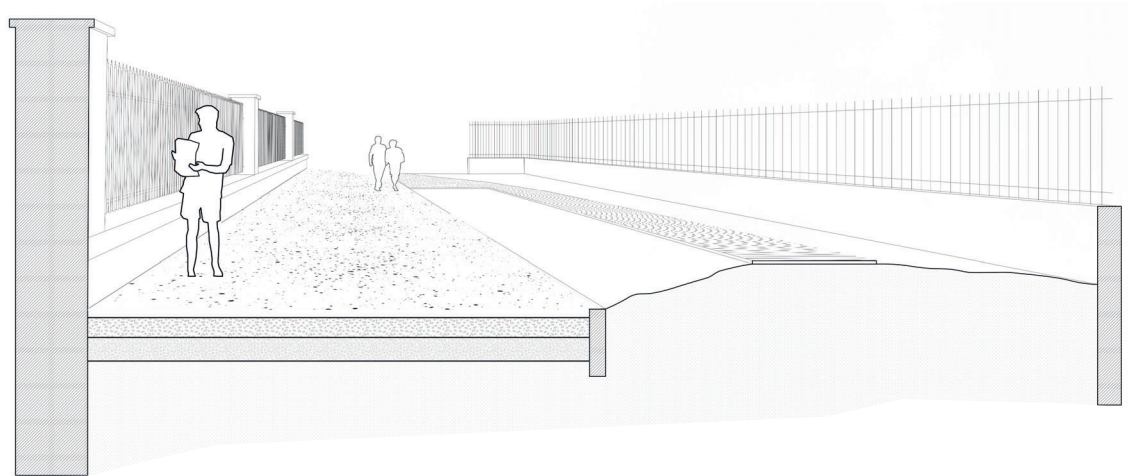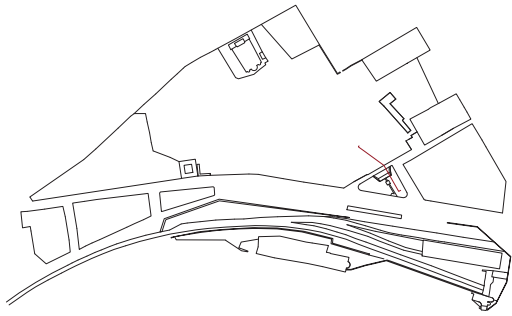
The view towards the site is currently blocked by the high cut, marking a physical as well as visual obstacle to the landscape

Public open spaces are not adequately equipped with seating and rest areas
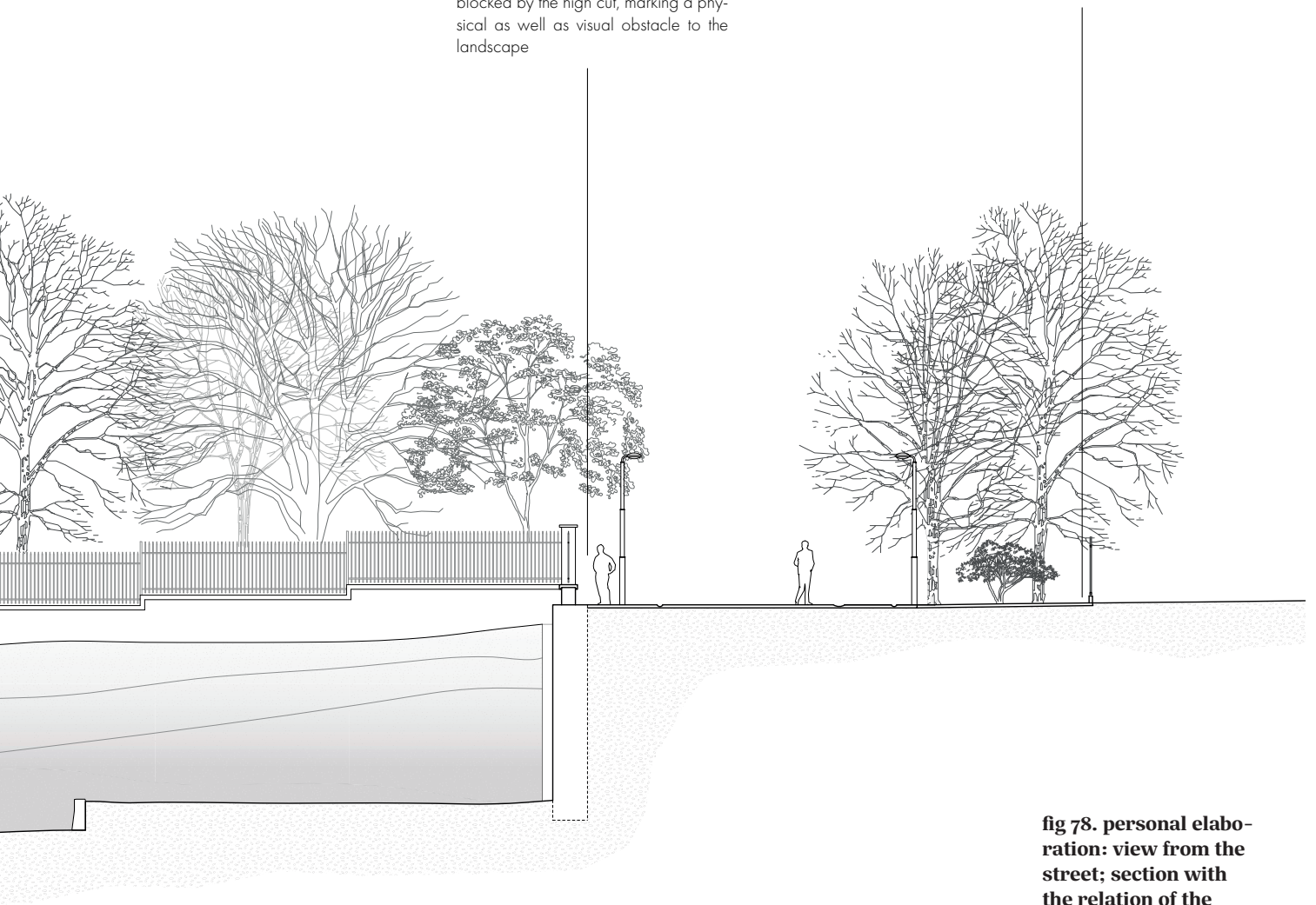
fig 78. personal elaboration: view from the street; section with the relation of the archaeological site
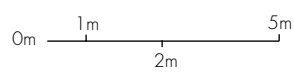
0m 1m 2m 5m

The possible
interrupted b
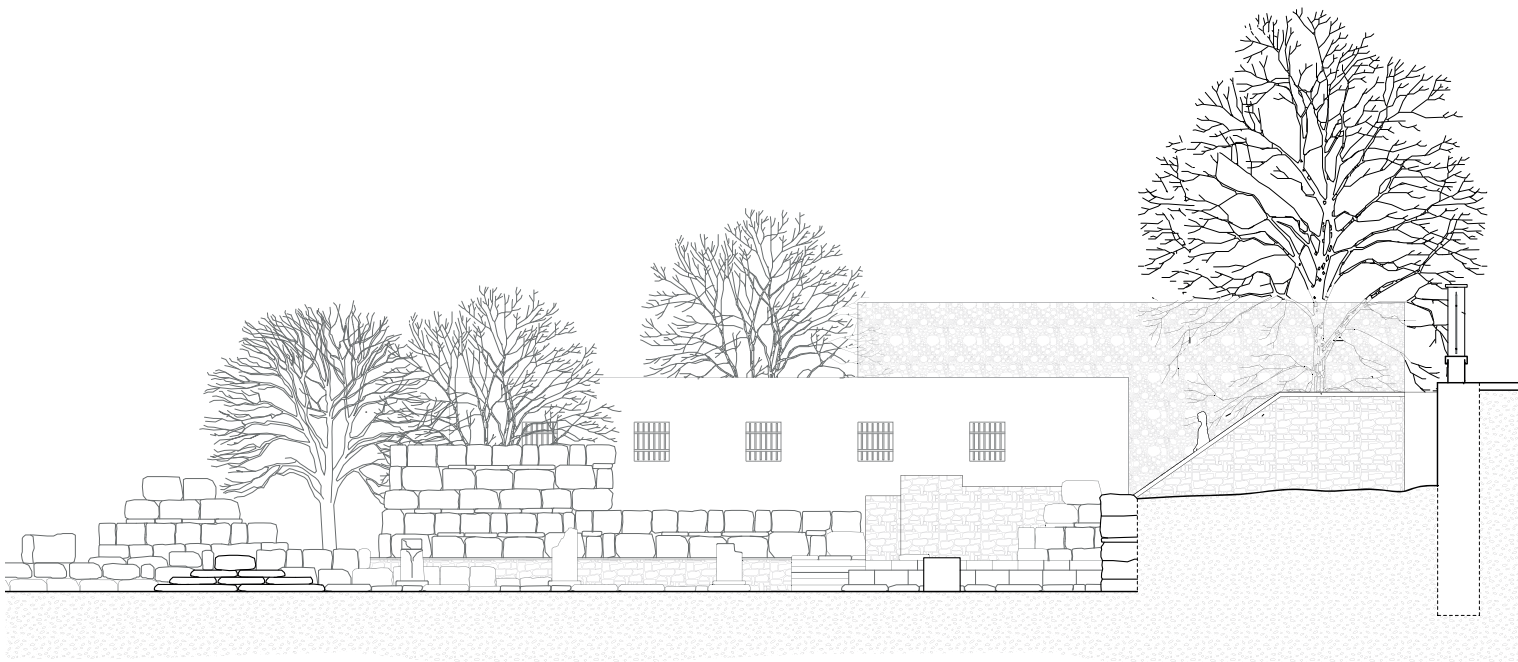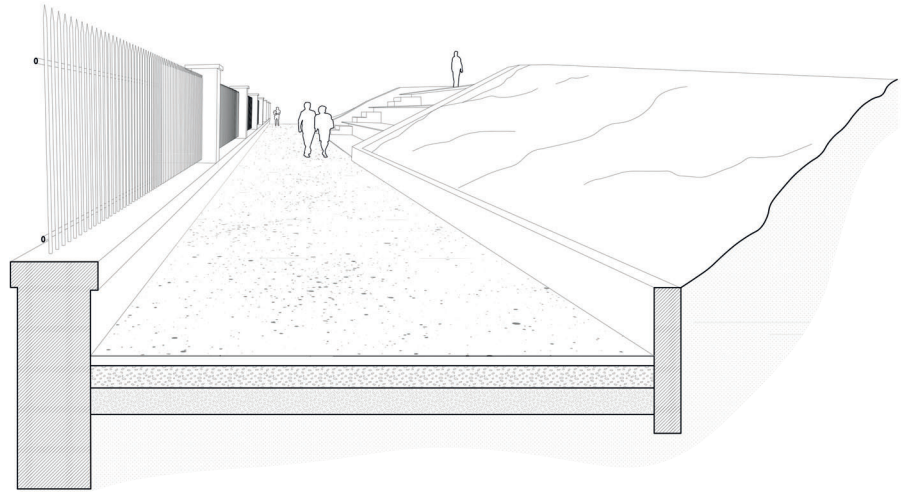
view on the *Pompeion* is
the fence

The possibility to enjoy the view sitting on
the steps of the Holocaust Memorial is
denied
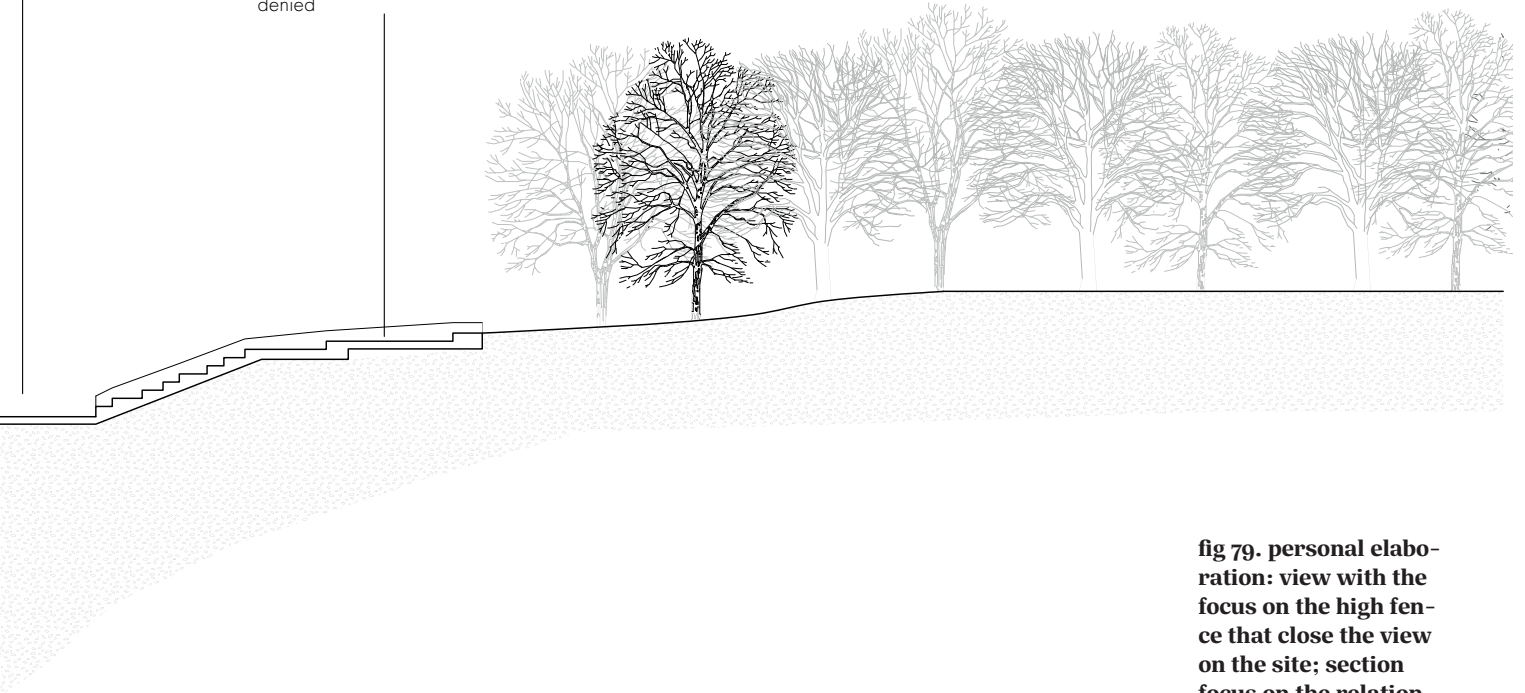
fig 79. personal elaboration: view with the focus on the high fence that close the view on the site; section focus on the relation between the steps of the Holocaust memorial and the traces of Pompeion

0m   1m   5m
      2m
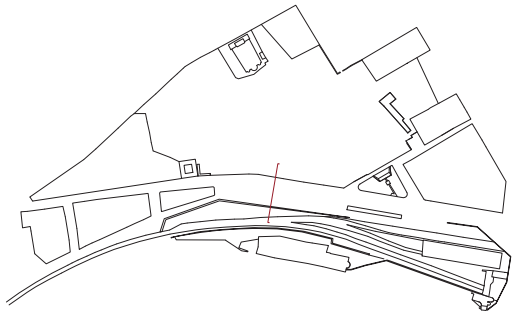
The relationship with the natural elem
of the hill is interrupted by the road

The long route that develops in the south
of the archaeological site is monotonous
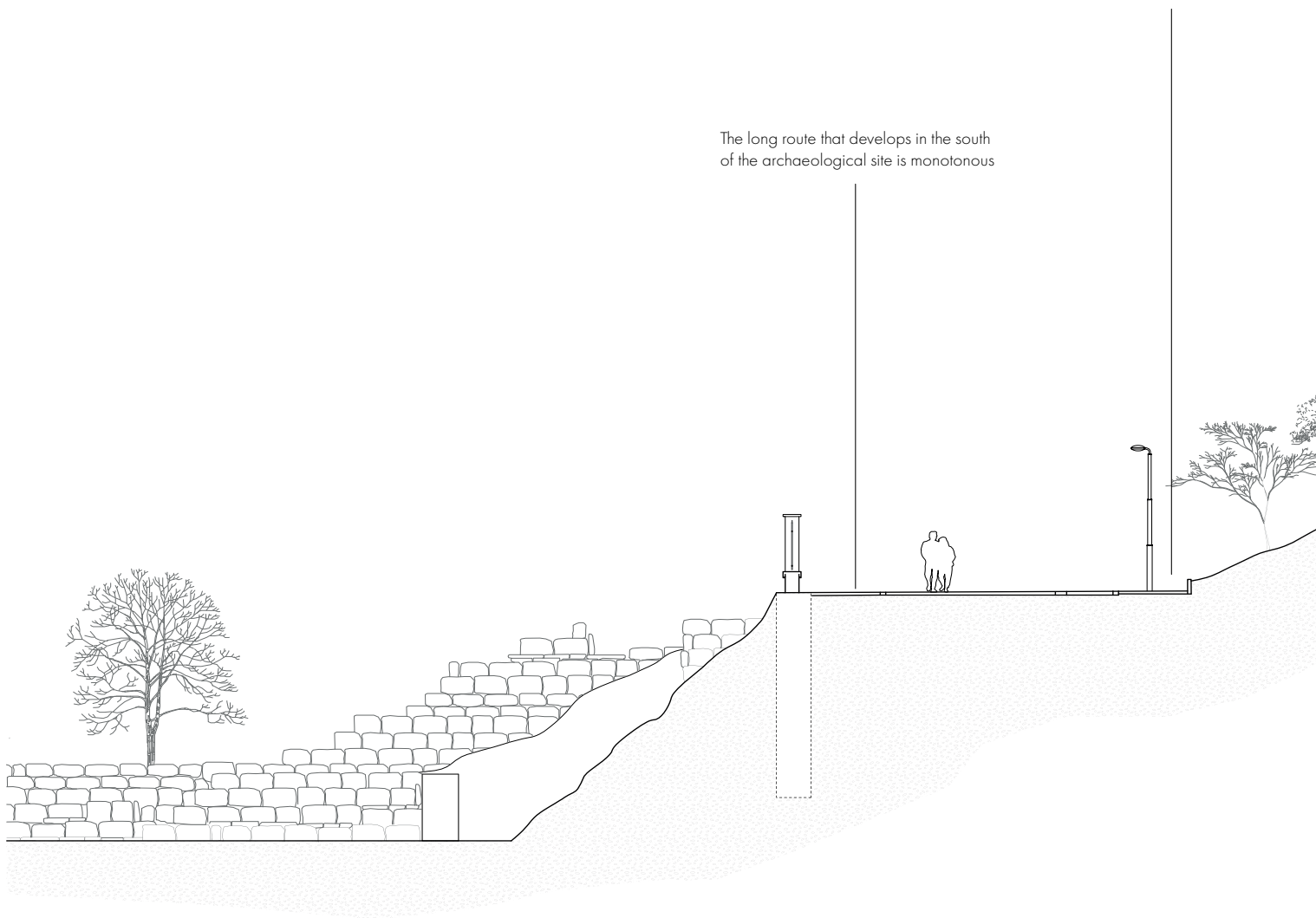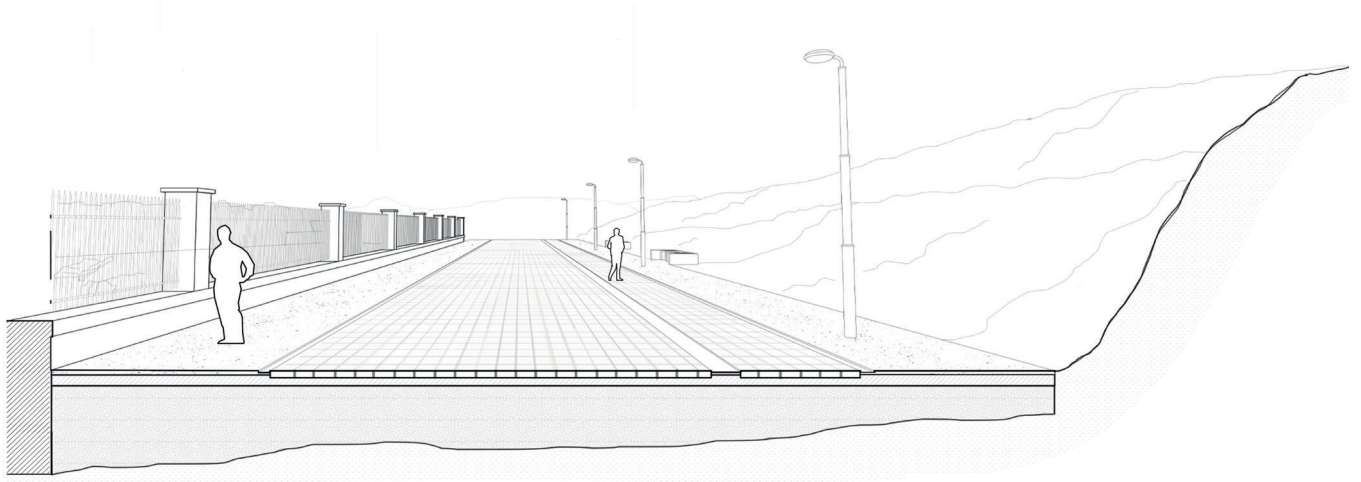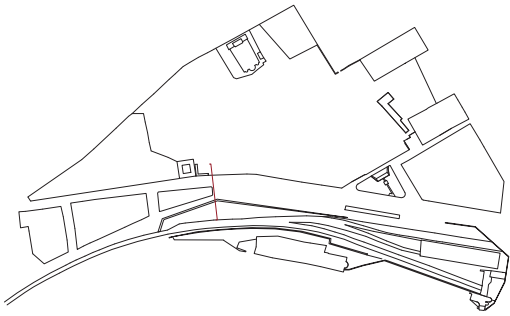
ent

fig 80. personal elabo-ration: view from the street showing the interruption of the hill against the road; section with the relation of the archa-eological site - street - railway

0m 1m 2m 5m

The entrance to the archaeological area and museum is hidden and doesn't really involves
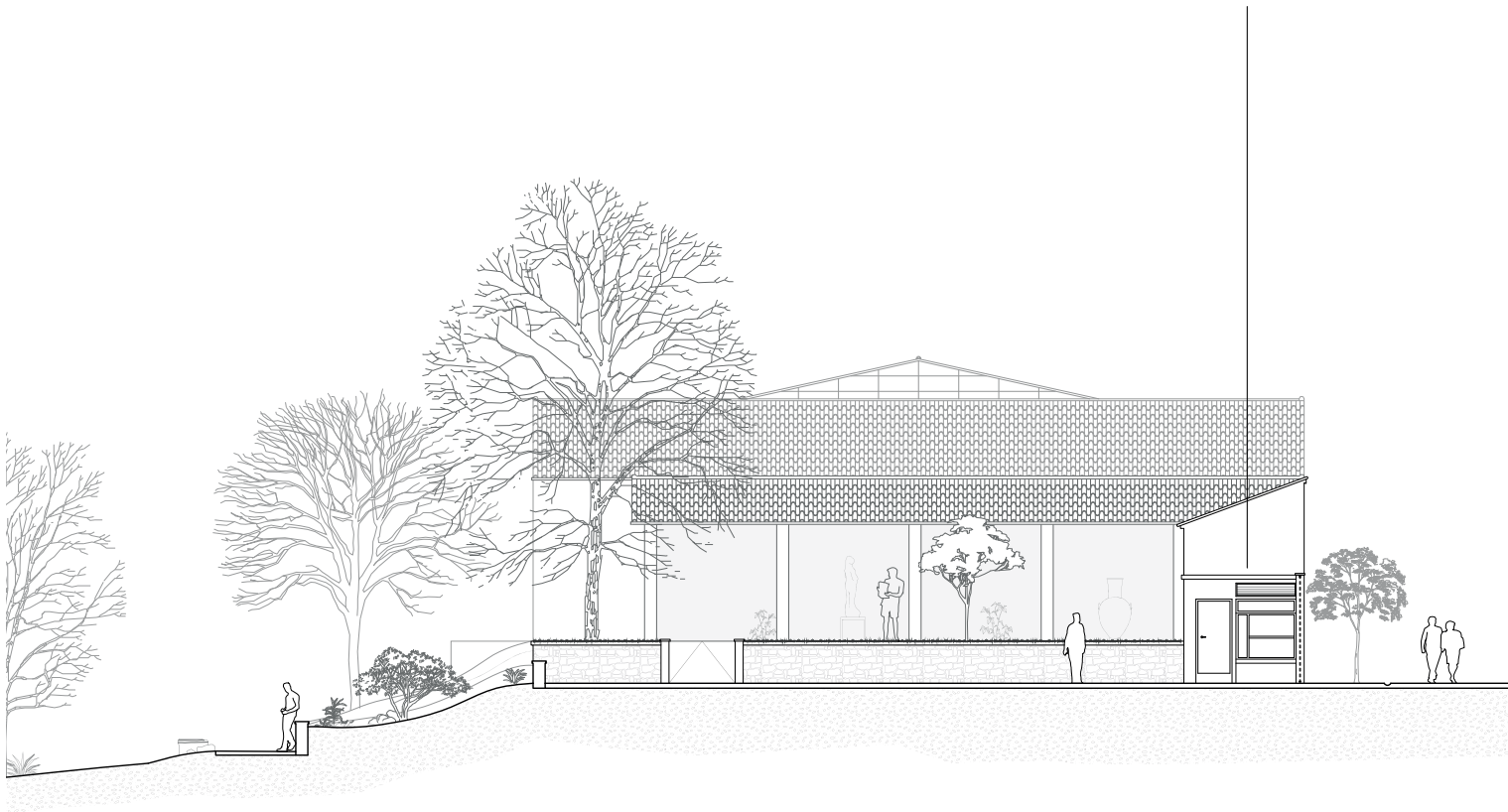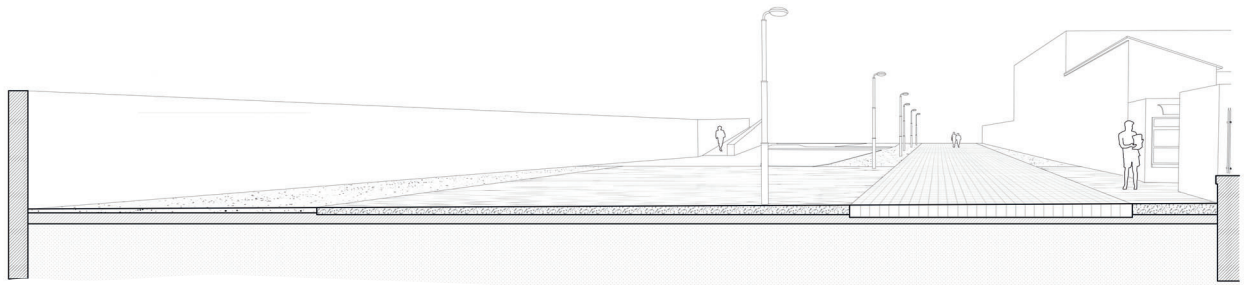
The proximity to the railway implies many problems of sharing the urban space

The public space in the museum is not fully defined and the continuity between the entrance and the square is interrupted by the pedestrian path
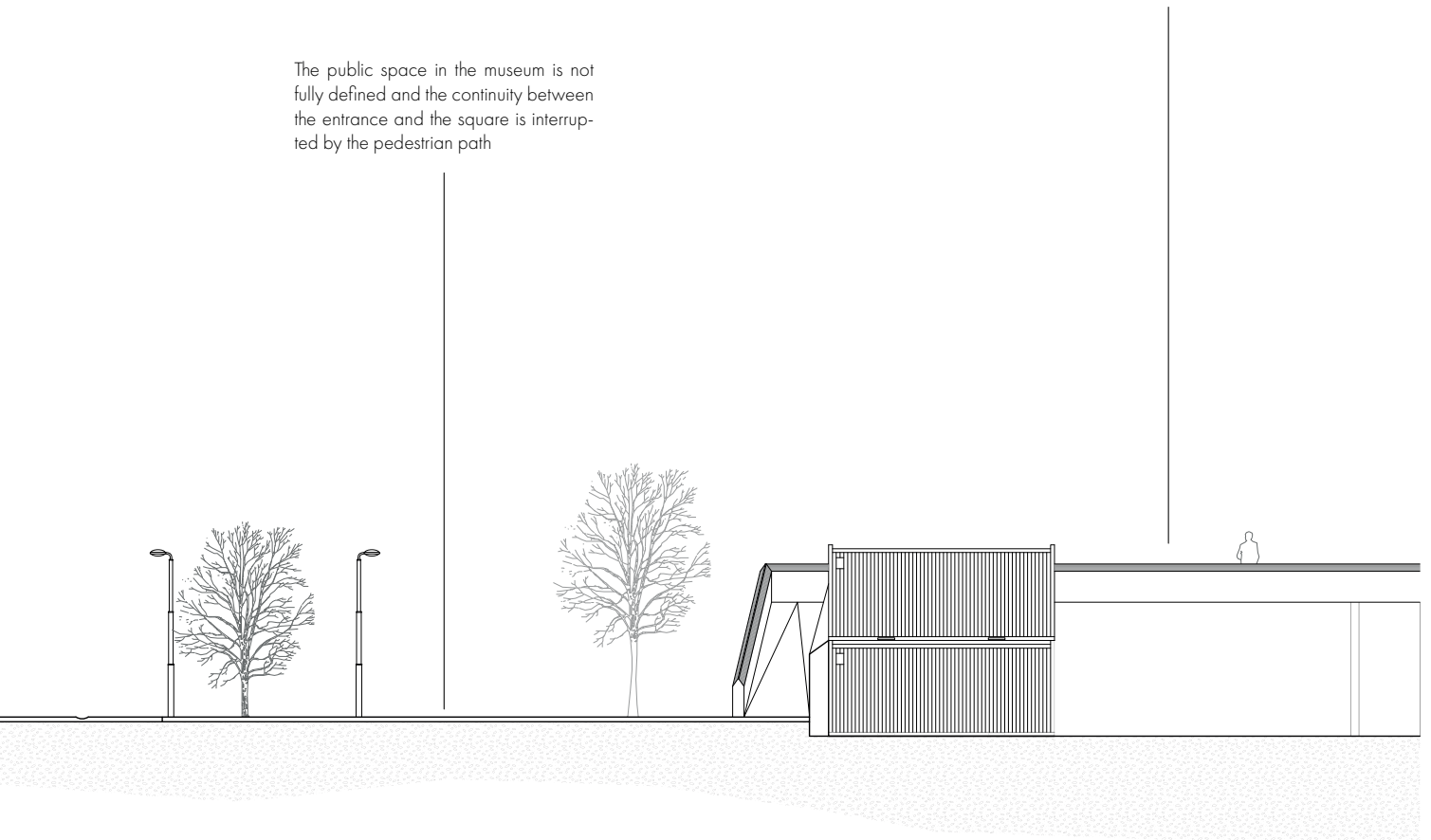
fig 82. personal elaboration: view from the entrance of the museum; section in the entrance of the museum and beginning of the archaeological site

0m   1m   2m   5m
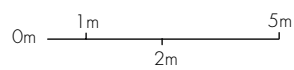
Critical devices
the first reflections on the project
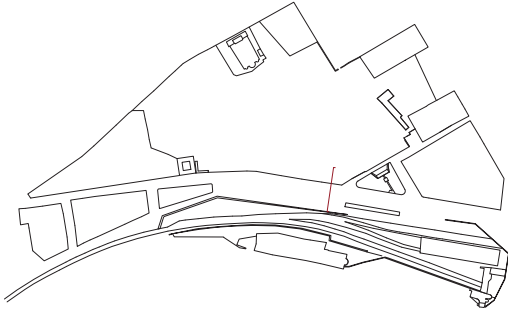
Change the perception from the archae-
ological site, eliminating the feeling of
being inside a void
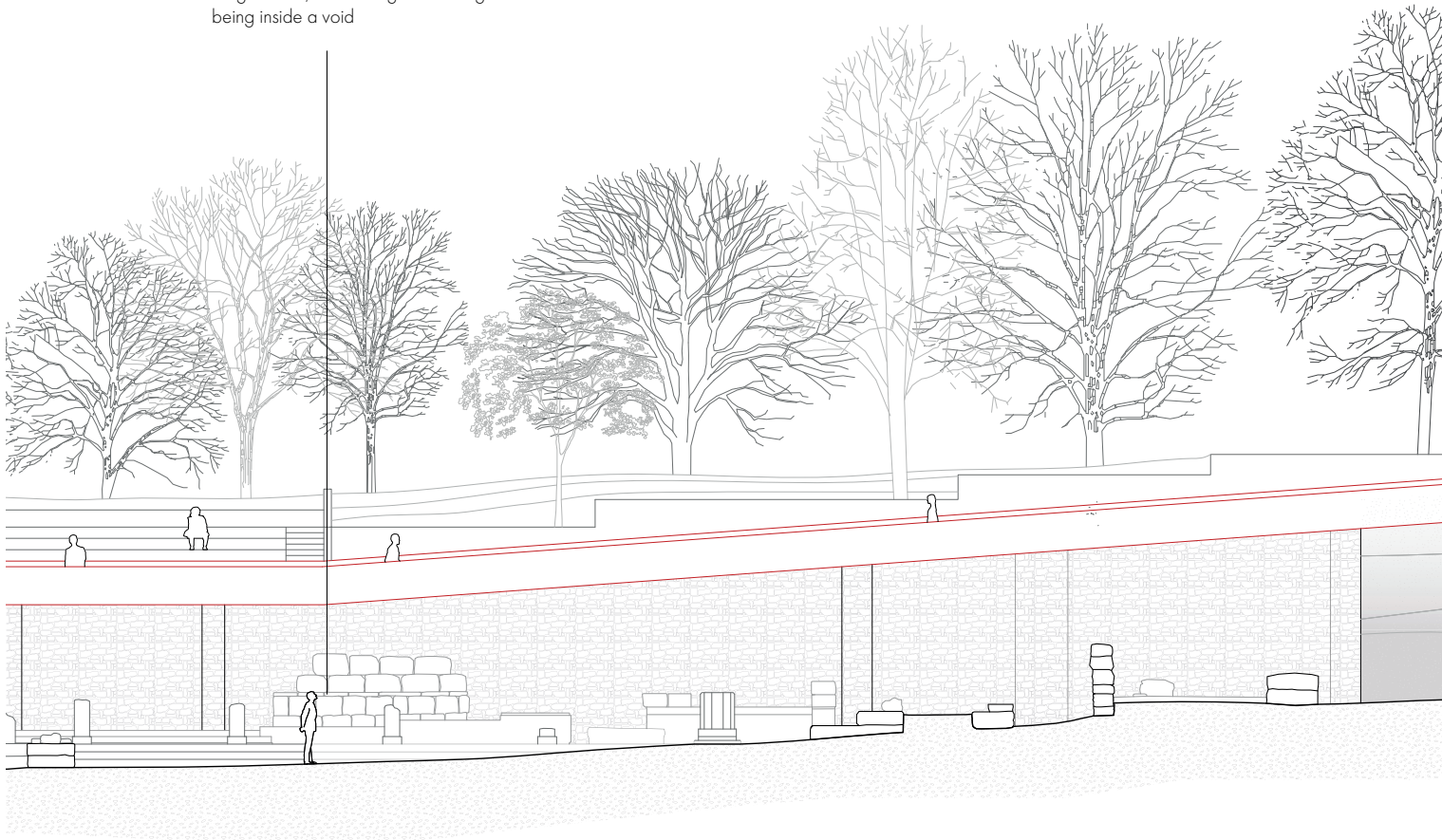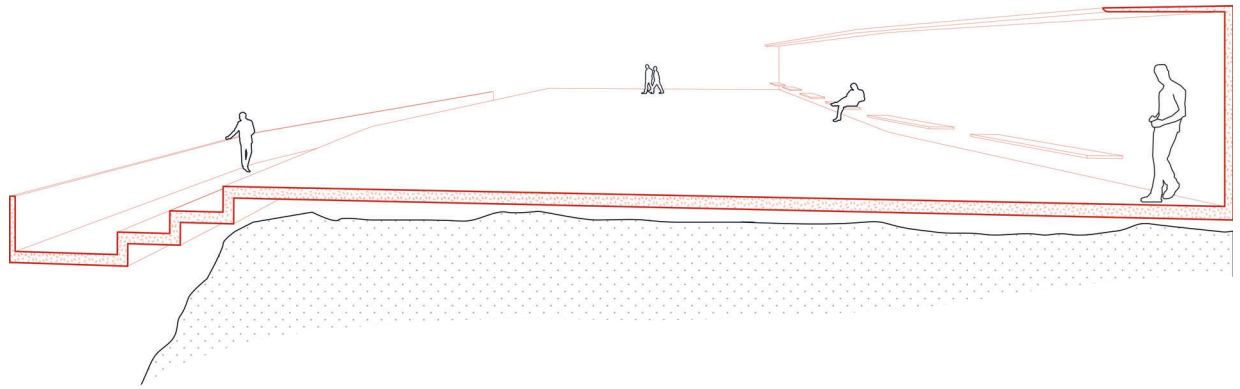
Space dedicated to the stop that allows you to enjoy the view of the landscape and the archaeological site without obstacles

The elements are in continuity and developingin in urban furniture for better defining the space
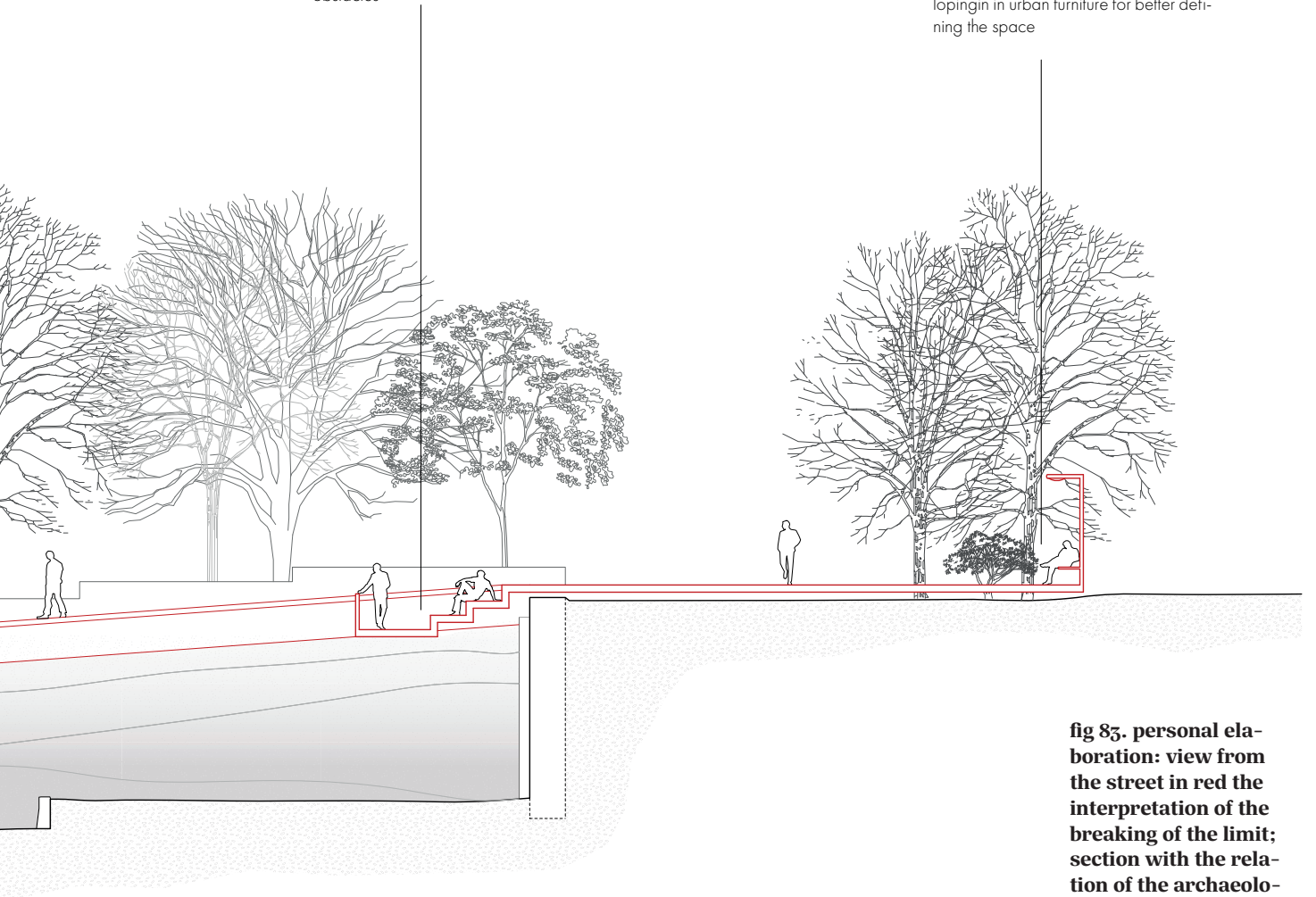
fig 83. personal elaboration: view from the street in red the interpretation of the breaking of the limit; section with the relation of the archaeological site and the new possibilities of road

0m   1m   5m
              2m
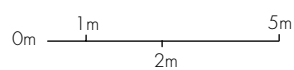
Create a viewpoint for observi
Pompeion
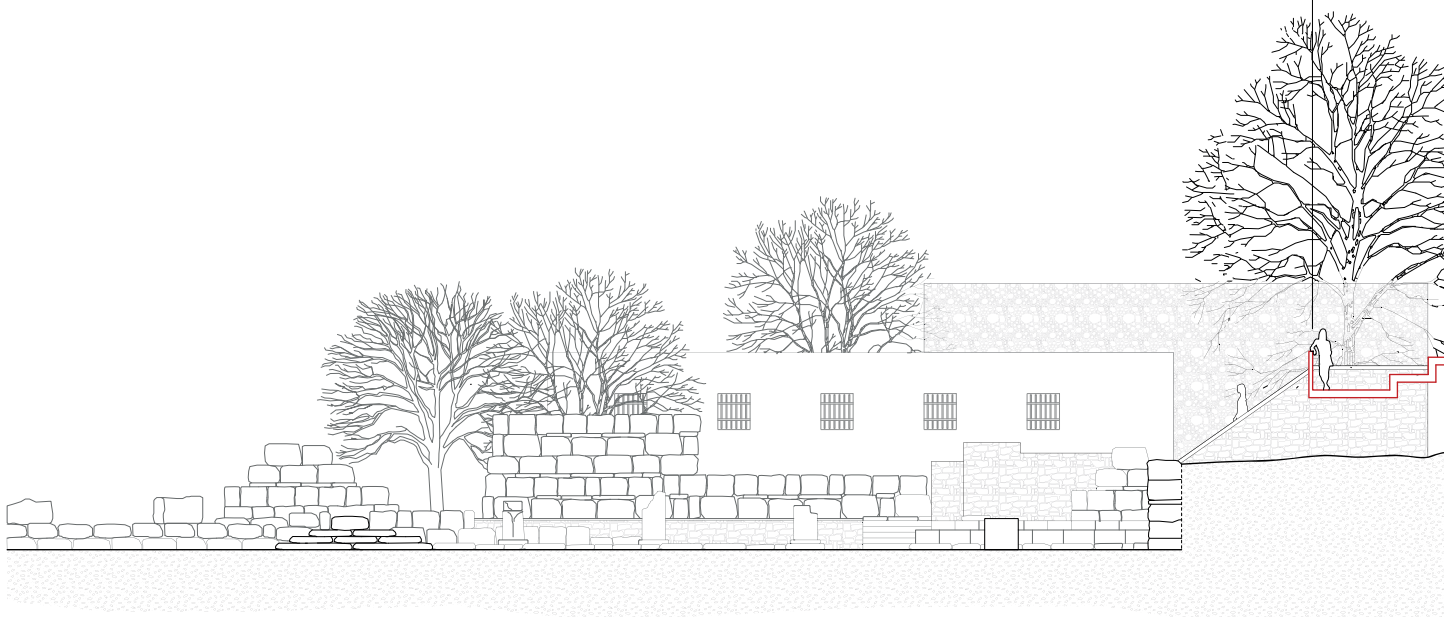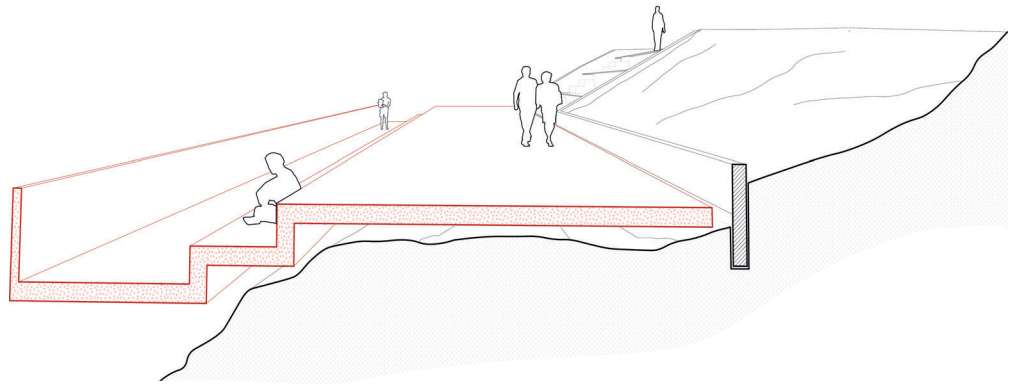
Enjoy the view sitting on the steps of the
Holocaust Memorial

ng the
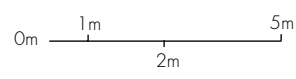
**fig 84. personal
elaboration: view
of the study of the
possible relation of
the project; section
focus on the relation
between the steps of
the Holocaust memo-
rial and the traces of
Pompeio, the project
idea is to create a
more direct con-
nection and change
the sense of closure**

0m   1m   2m   5m

The hill is not at odds with the design, but this slips gently under the road
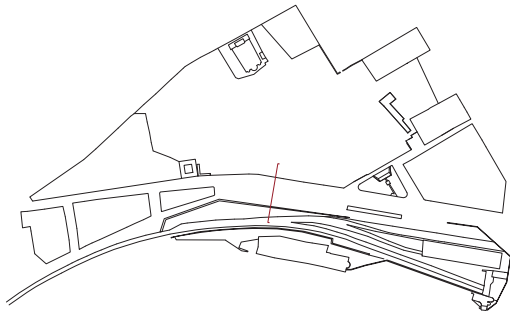
The fluidity of the movement between the edge of the site and the road is the starting point to provide a hybrid space to eliminate the shear imposed by the fence
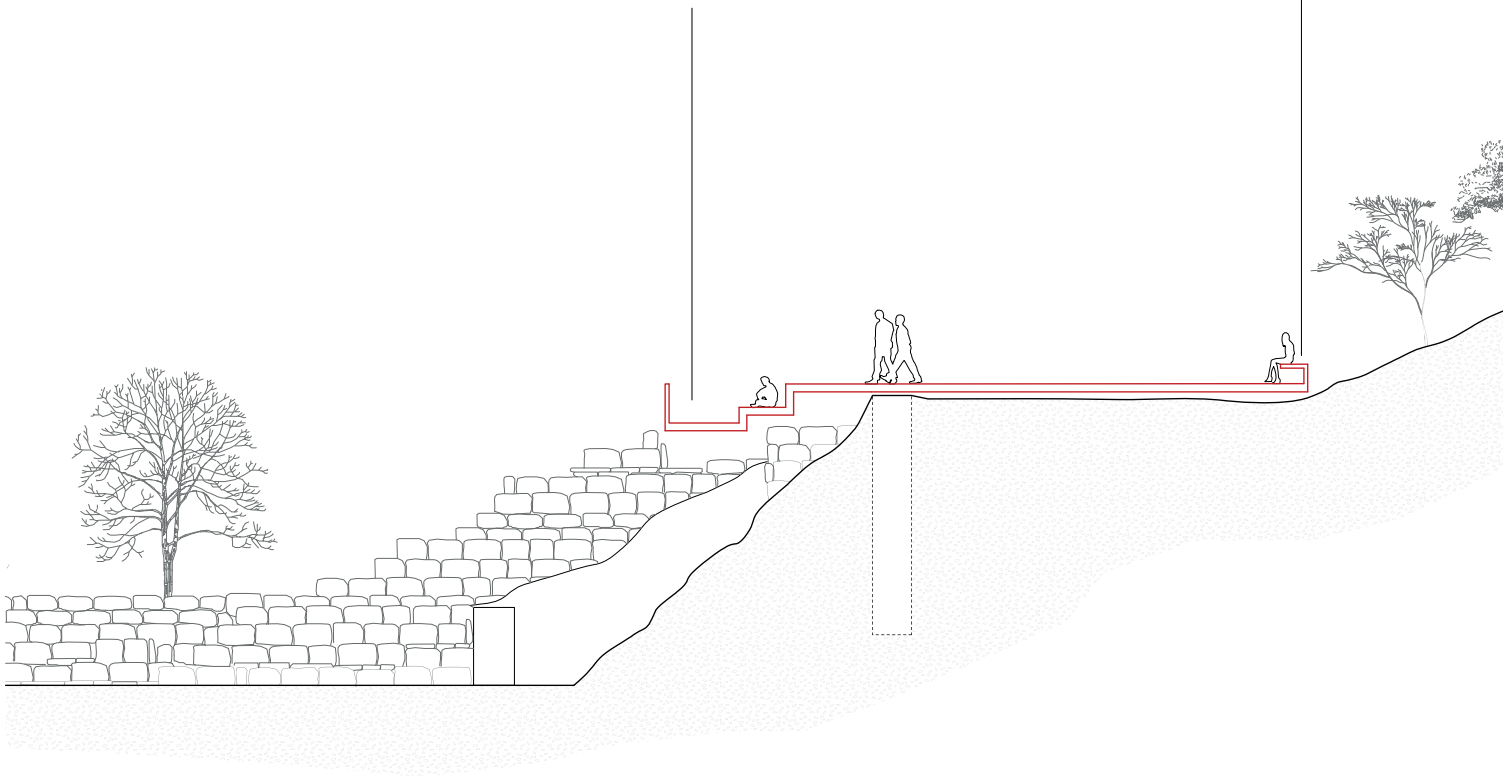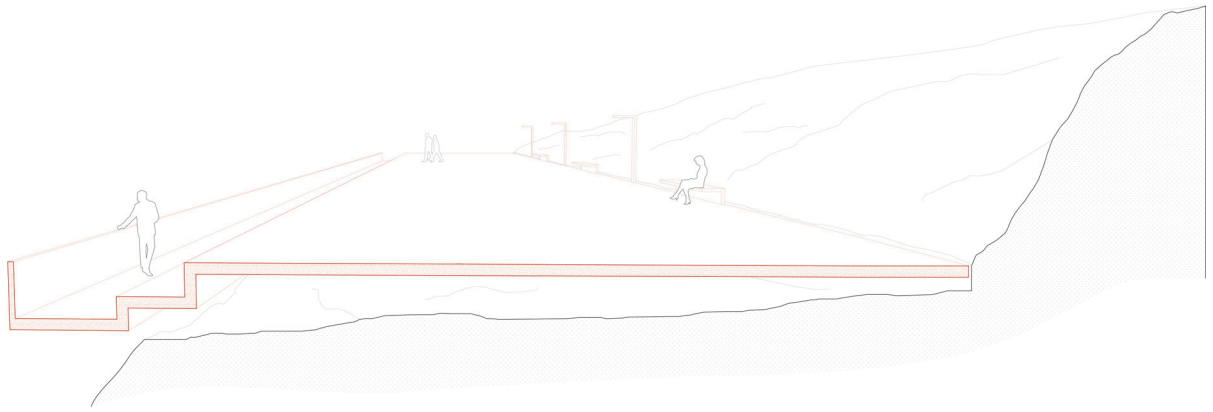
fig 85. personal elaboration: view showing the idea of the hill that is not interrupted by the road; section with the first studies of variation and the possibility of creating new points of view towards the landscape

0m   1m   2m   5m

Free up the space at the entrance, changing the layout of the ticket office
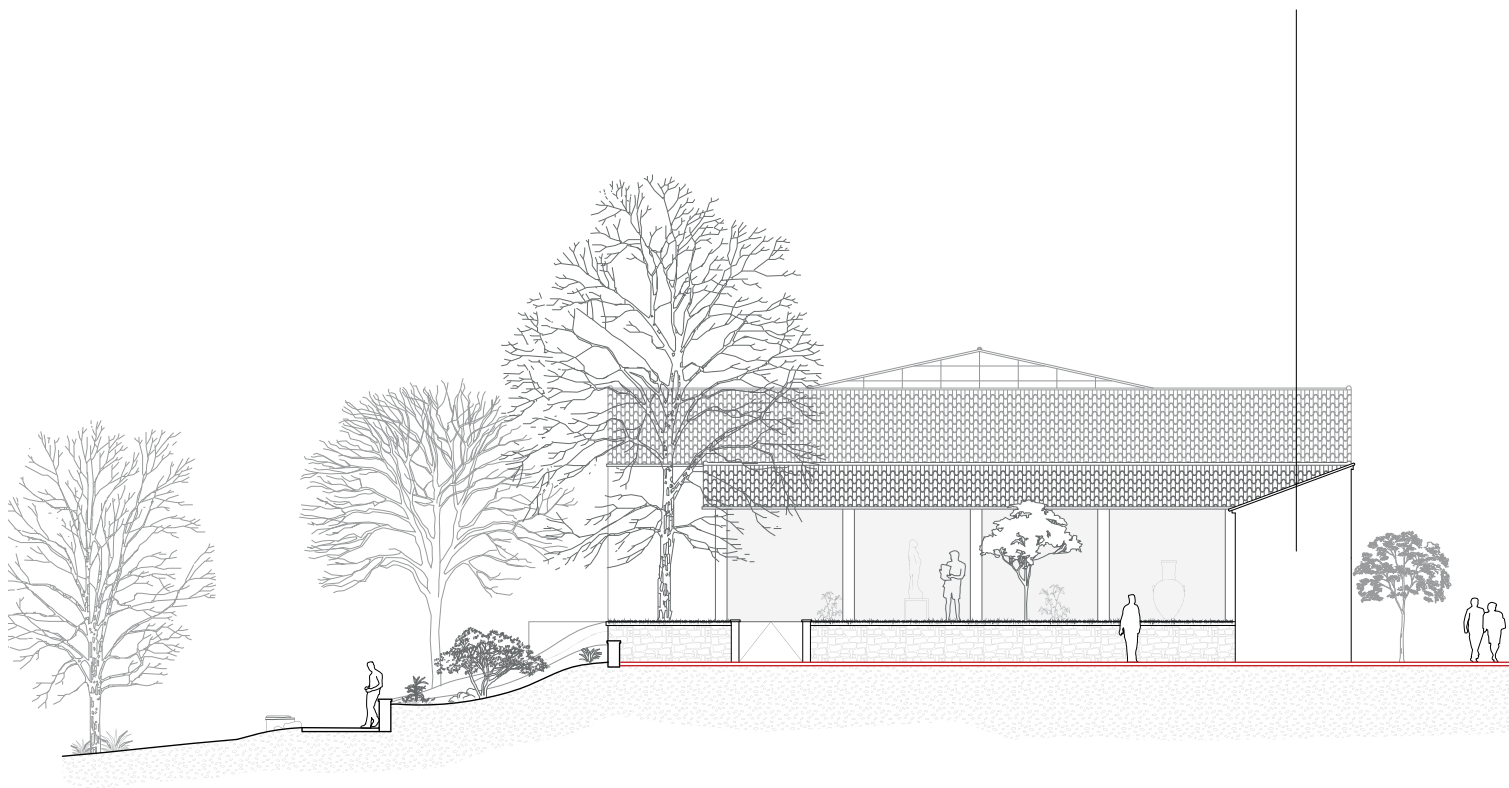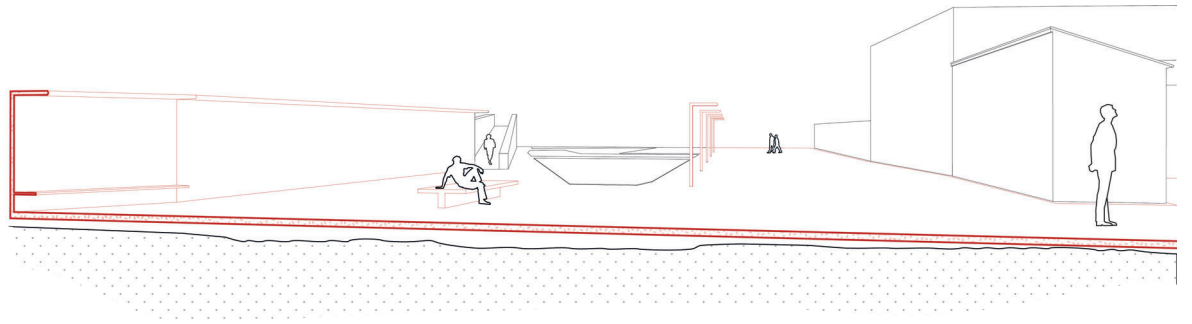
Equipping open areas with urban furniture to create places of rest along the route in relation to the museum
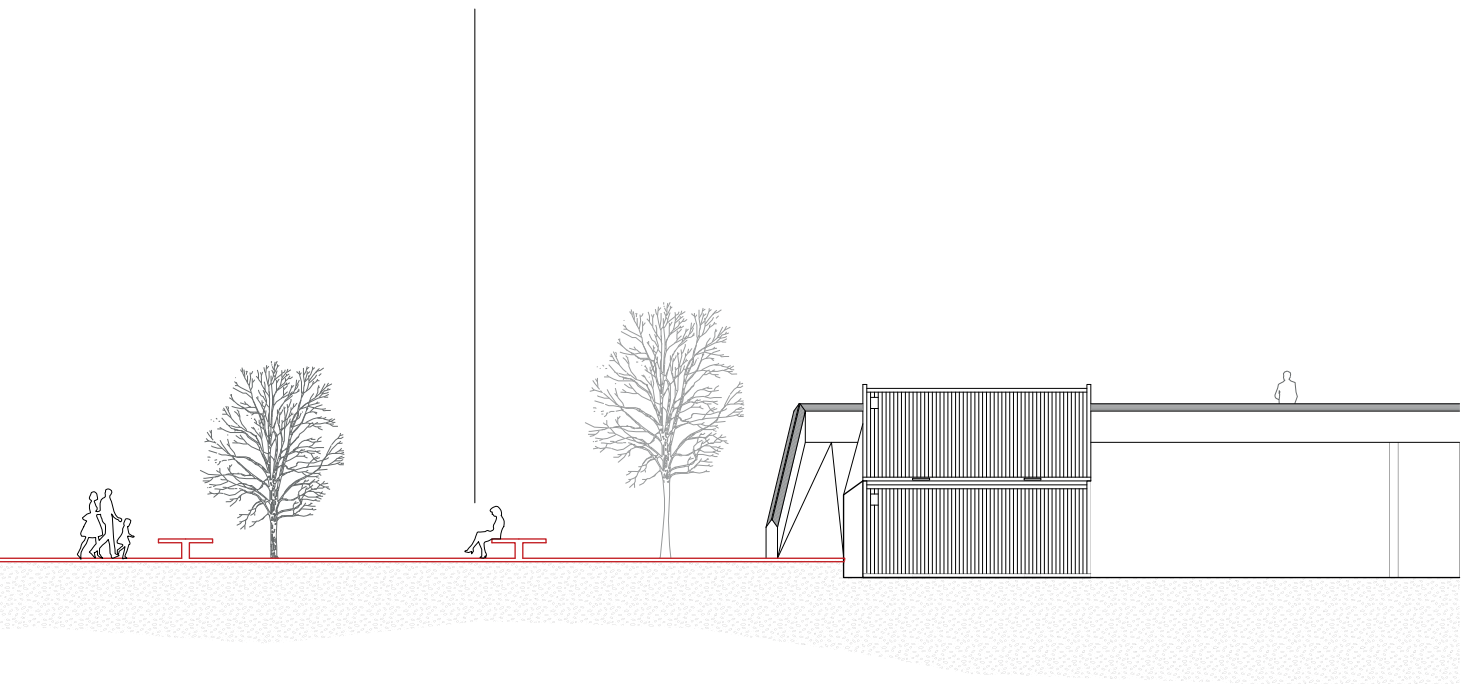
fig 86. personal elaboration: view study of the entrance of the museum; study section for the new entry

0m ⊢——— 1m ———— 5m
⊢ 2m ⊣
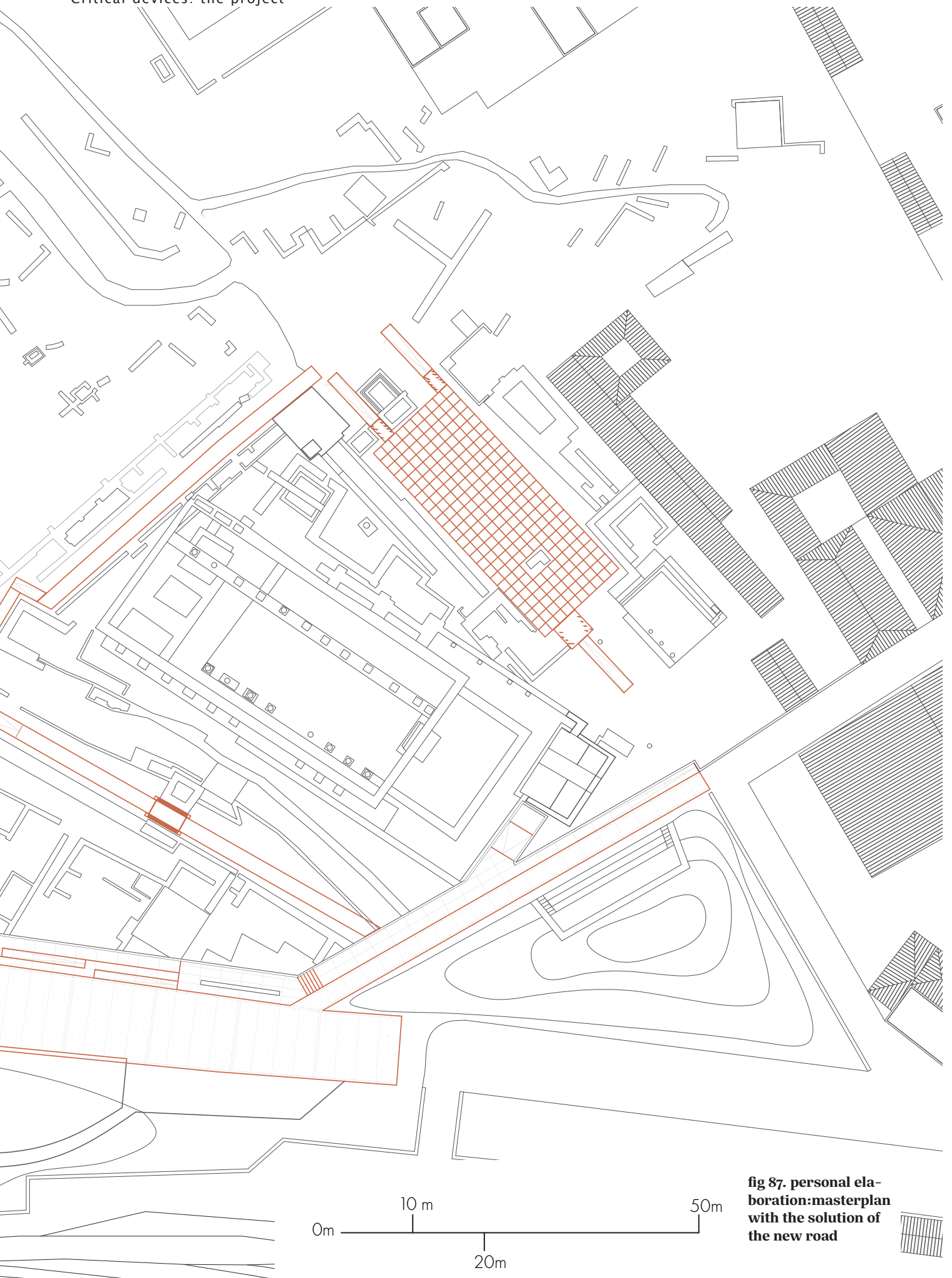
**fig 87. personal ela-
boration:masterplan
with the solution of
the new road**

0m   10 m   20m   50m

A detached floor

The square is suspended in the vicinity of the Holocaust Memorial in Athens, but at a lower level than the street: to create a perceptive as well as physical detachment. Although it may appear almost an overhang as an end in itself, in reality it is geometrically placed at the entrance to the ancient Pompeion monument, a fundamental building for the preparation of the sacred festivities of the polis.

This device was intended to be accompanied by the action of **observing**, since following the descent the visitor encounters the limit of the parapet, which remains only a physical impediment. Through this intervention it is possible to admire not only the aforementioned building and

the entrance column that remains, but also the rest of the archaeological park, especially the area corresponding to the Dipylon.

Thus, curiosity is also activated by the intervention inside the site at the ancient entrance gate from a distance through a very simple action, that of observing.
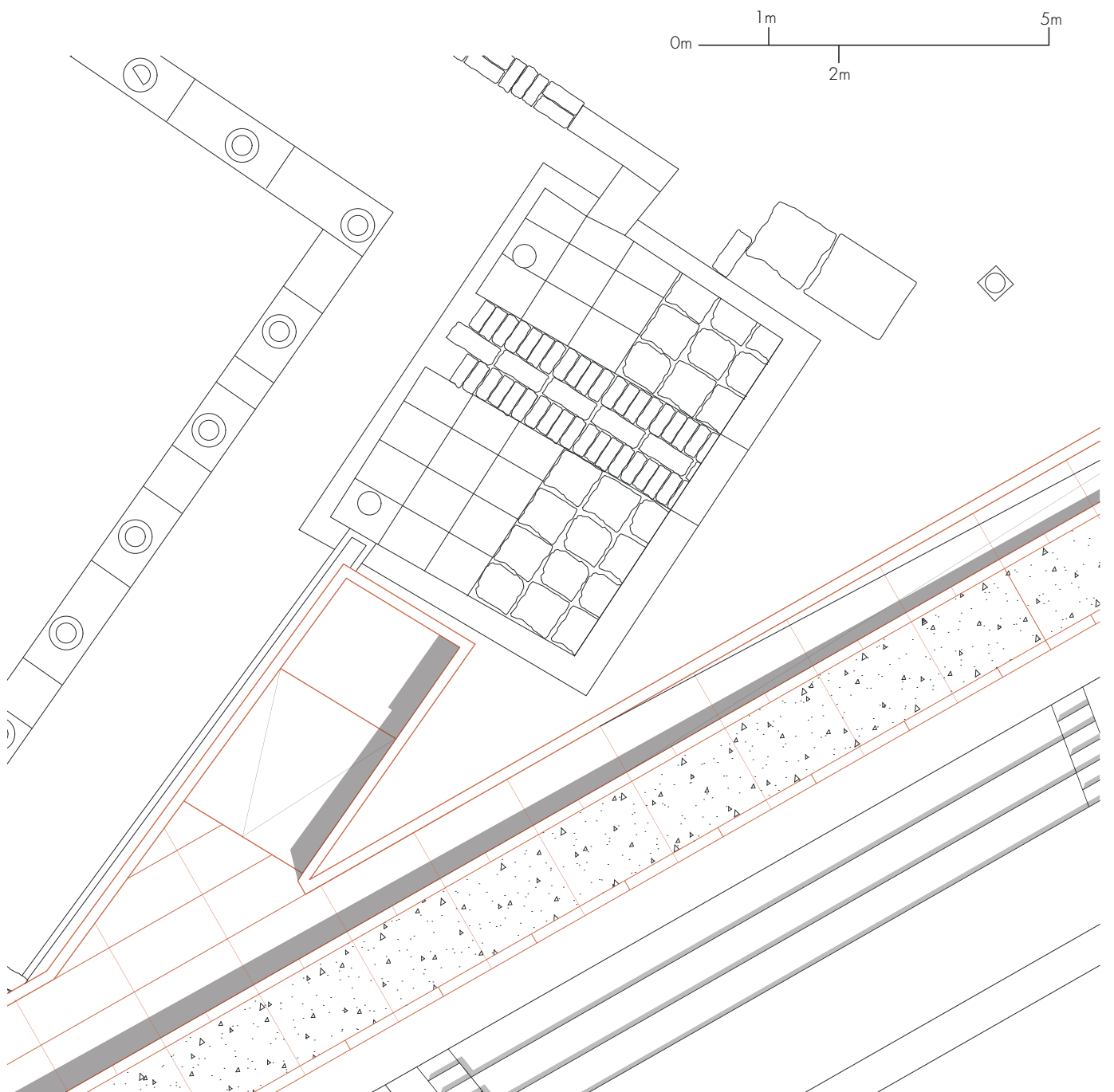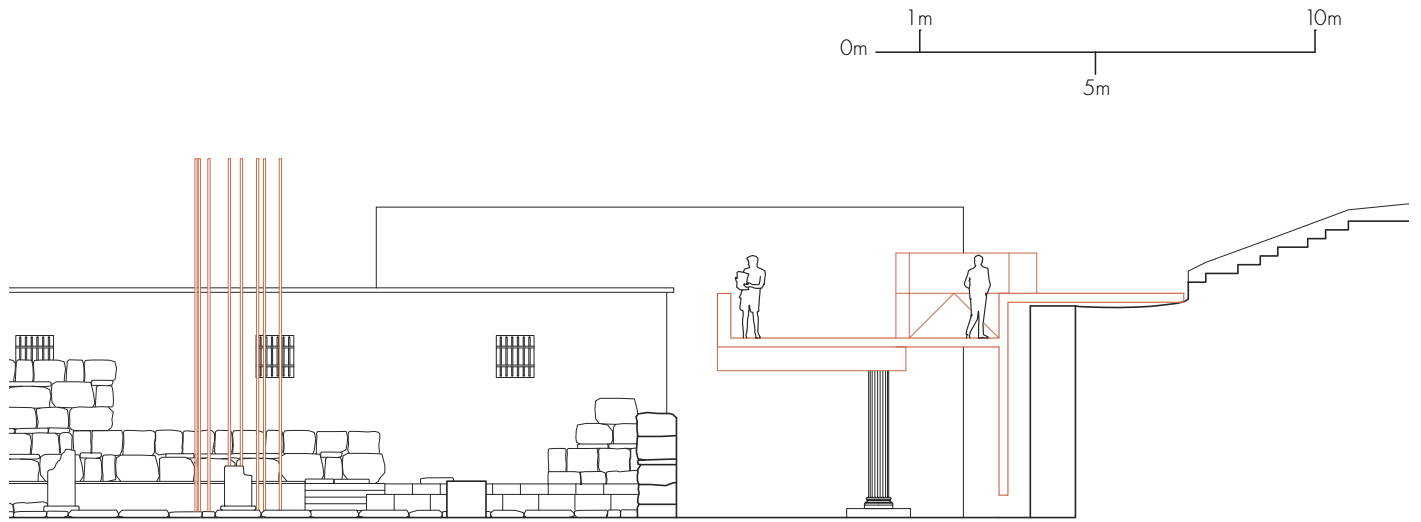
Om ⊢————⊢————————————⊢ 10m
         1m   5m

Om ⊢————⊢————————————⊢ 5m
         1m   2m

A turning point

Near the access to the footbridge, before the junction, one encounters a kind of square with a bench that almost seems to contrast with the typical element of passage and movement that is the street.

In this sense the central square appears almost as a balcony over the entire archaeological park, but is preferably associated with the action of **sitting**.
Sitting to admire and to immerse oneself in the context is resolved through one of the apparently simplest elements, namely a seat.

This is twice as large as usual, so that it can become freely usable and can also be interpreted by visitors according to their own wishes. The seating in this sense no longer contrasts with the movement of the pedestrian street, but provides a necessary pause to begin to understand the site and ask questions.
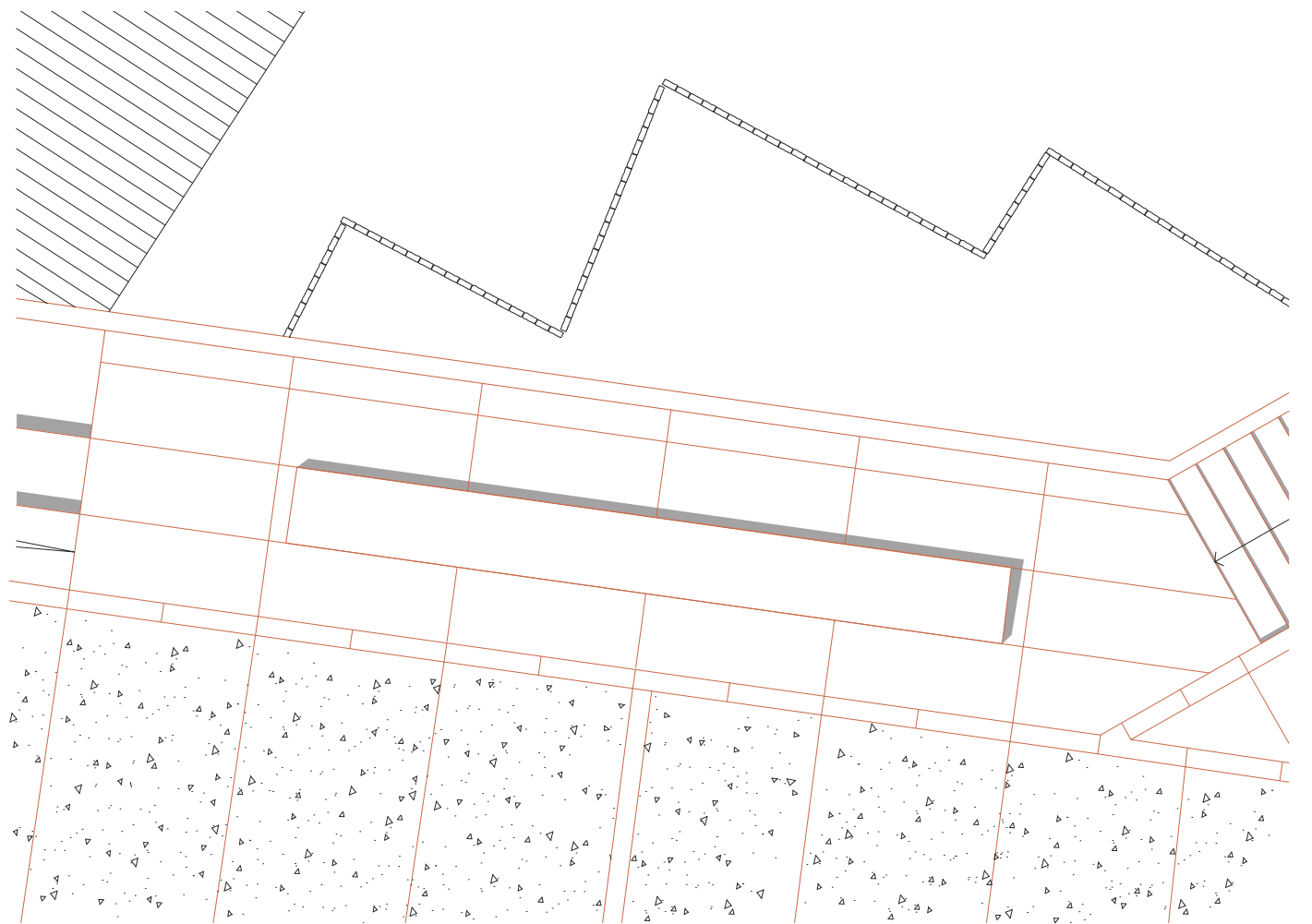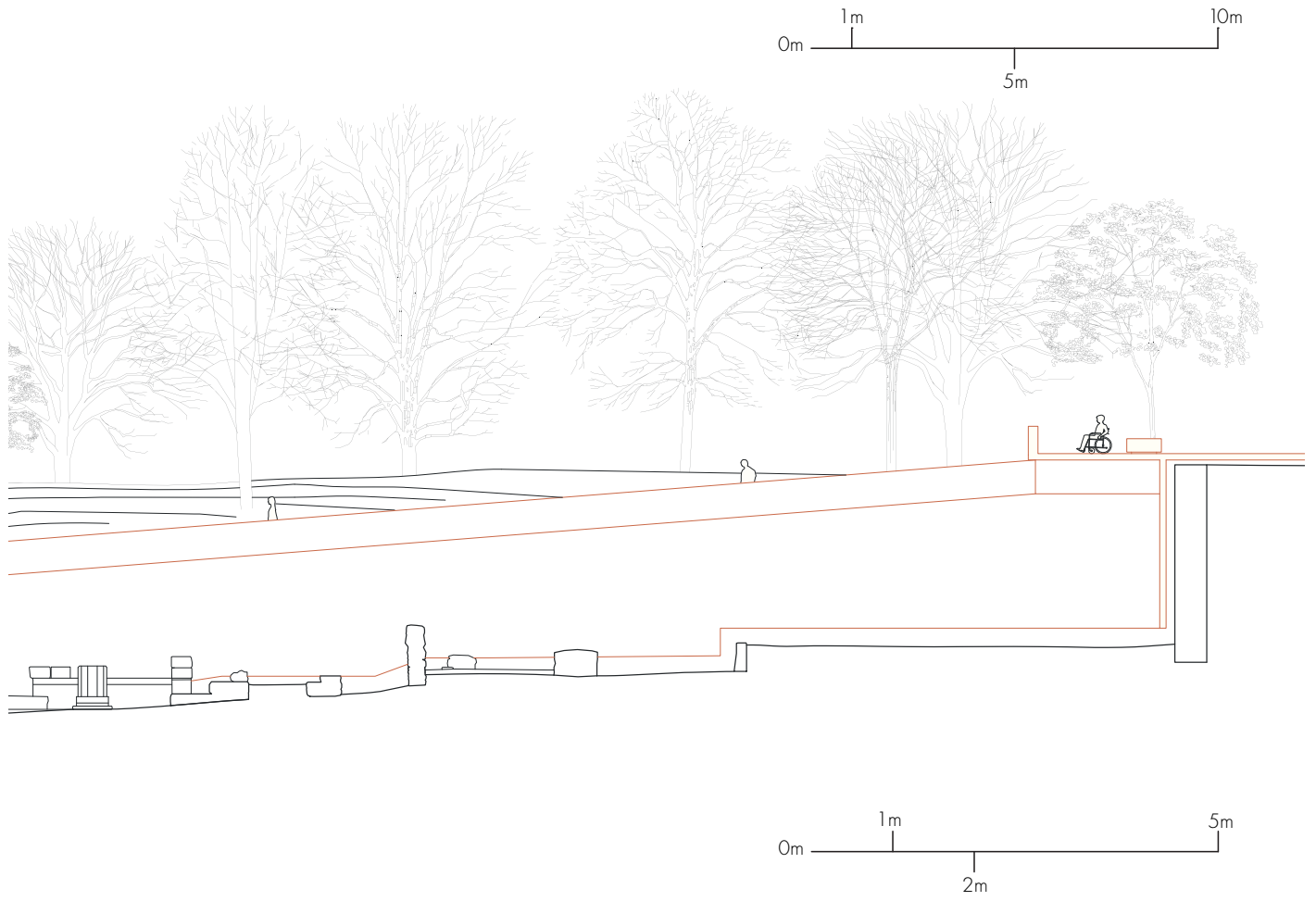
A contactless telescope

fig 90. personal elaboration: view from the terrace, with the "unstable road" and "floating door" interventions in the background; technical drawings of the developed solution

To gain access to the second projecting balcony along the route at street level, it is necessary to descend.

This immersion is such that the remains of a portion of the ancient city wall almost become the parapet of the projecting element, left detached by a sharp caesura to respect the nature of the archaeological remains, but also to emphasise the temporal gap between past and present.

The action of **descending** to immerse oneself is therefore performed as a personal choice for an initial mile of contact with the ancient remains.

Also at this point of the project, the view of the archaeological park is certainly very wide and complete, allowing once again the view of the other interventions below and giving rise to desire and questions.
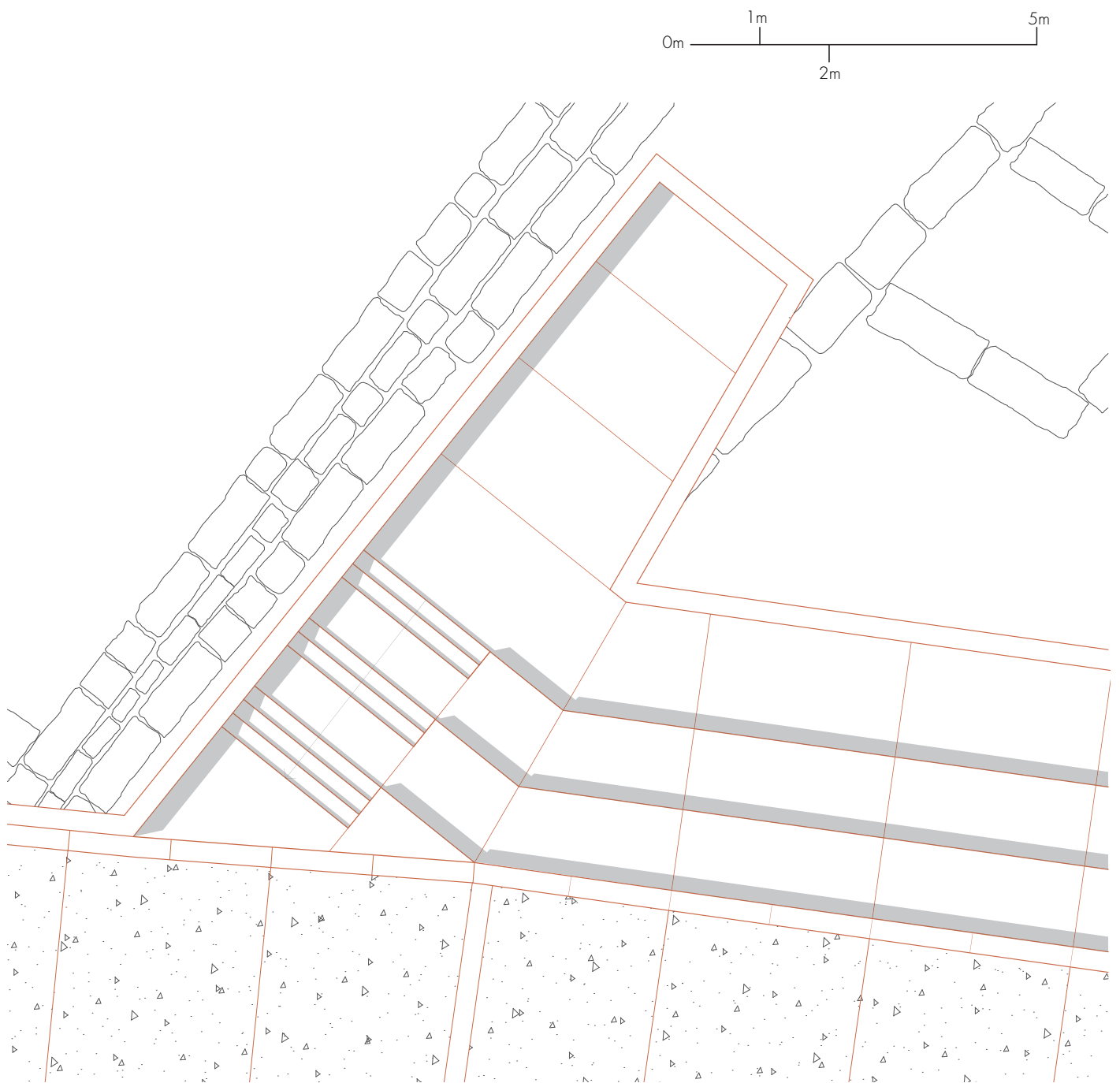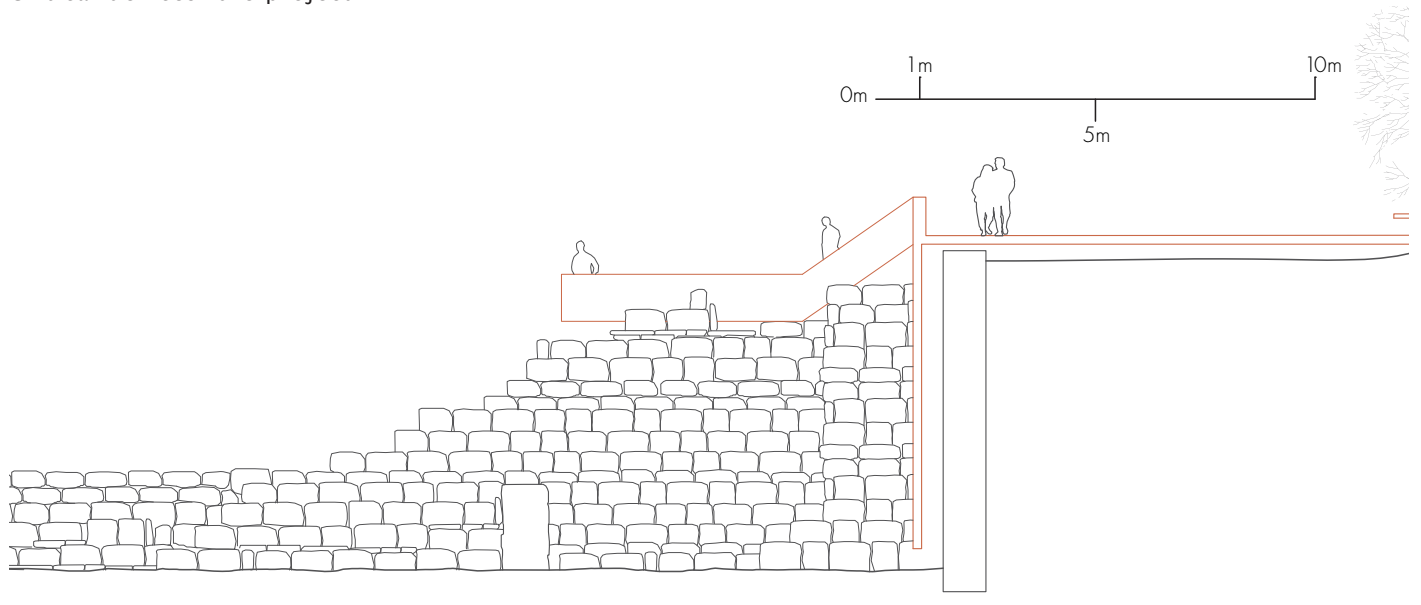
A w a l l e d d o o r

fig 91. personal elaboration: new entrance for the museum and the archaeological site; technical drawings of the developed solution

The new entrance to the Museum of the Kerameikos Archaeological Park is conceived as an element of interruption of the route, through the insertion of a wall septum. The pedestrian road narrows in its axis and makes the visitor question the nature of the intervention at this point.

Beyond the septum, however, the actual action of **entering** the archaeological area begins, which is blind, as the traces of the past remain hidden by the wall. At the end of the entrance there's a final small square, from which a whole series of existing paths to the museum building proper and the archaeological area with the remains also open up.

This action of **entering** becomes more of an expectation and creates an even greater sense and will in reaching the remains.
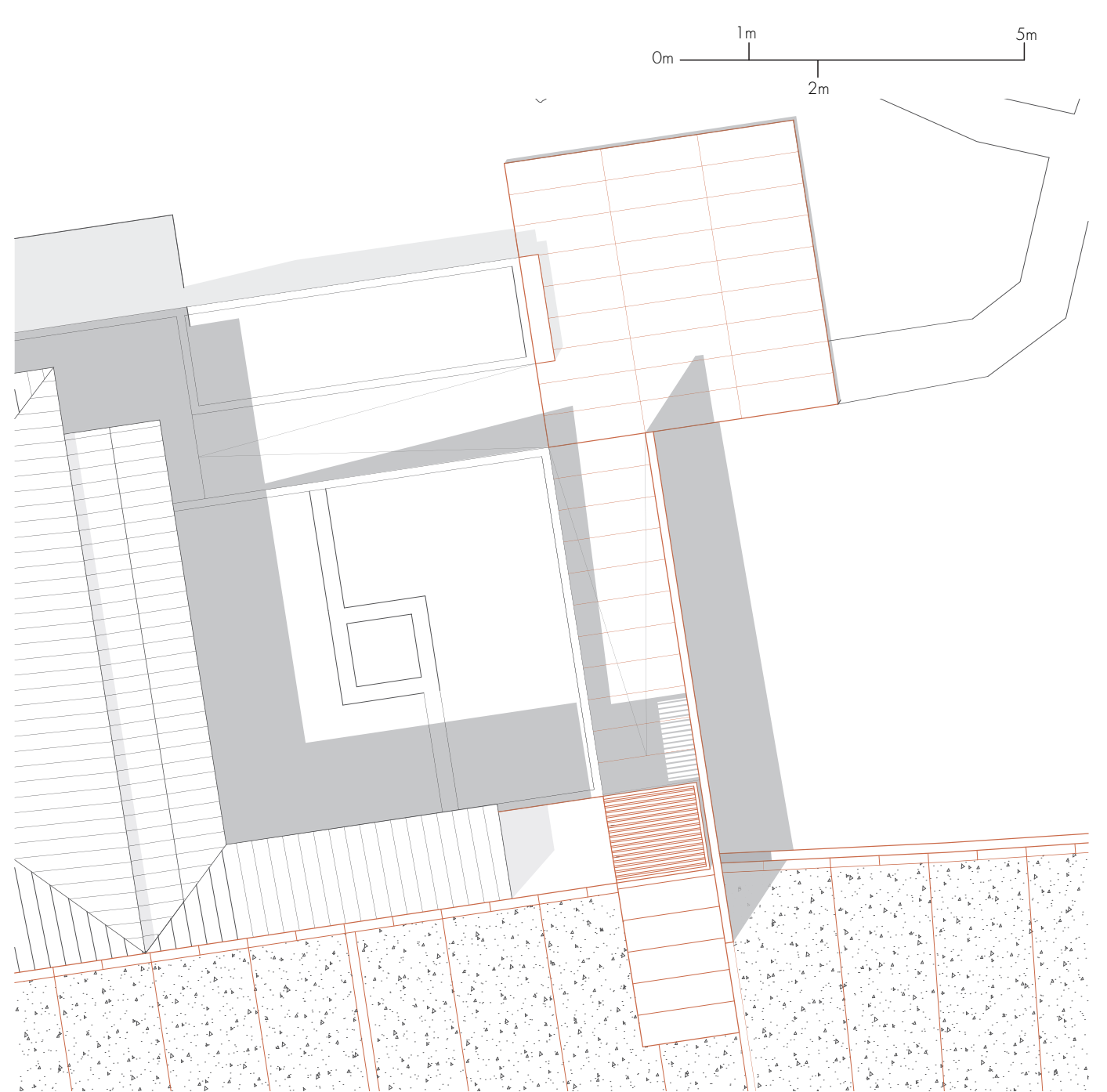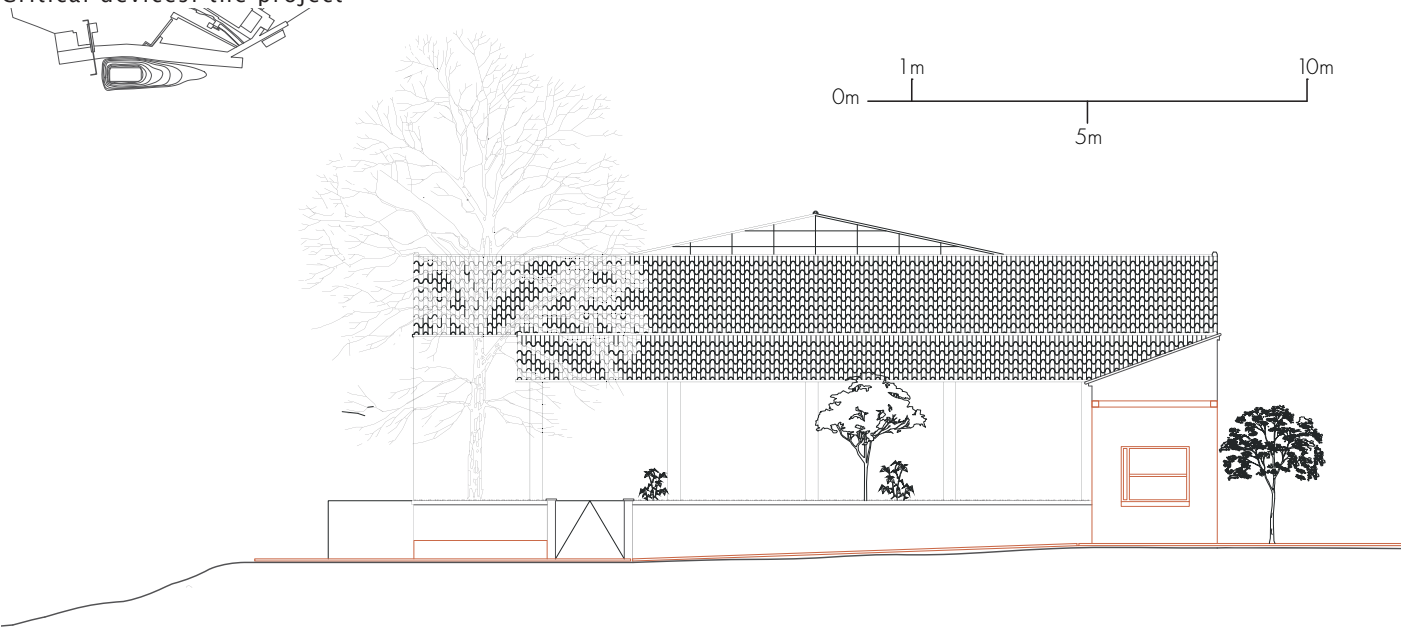
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SITE

**fig 92. photo towards
the remains of the
sacred gate and the
outer city walls**

**fig 93. photo wooden
bridge on the eridano
and beginning of the
ring road**

**fig 94. photo of the
ring road**

fig 95. photo entrance of the door of the Dypilon
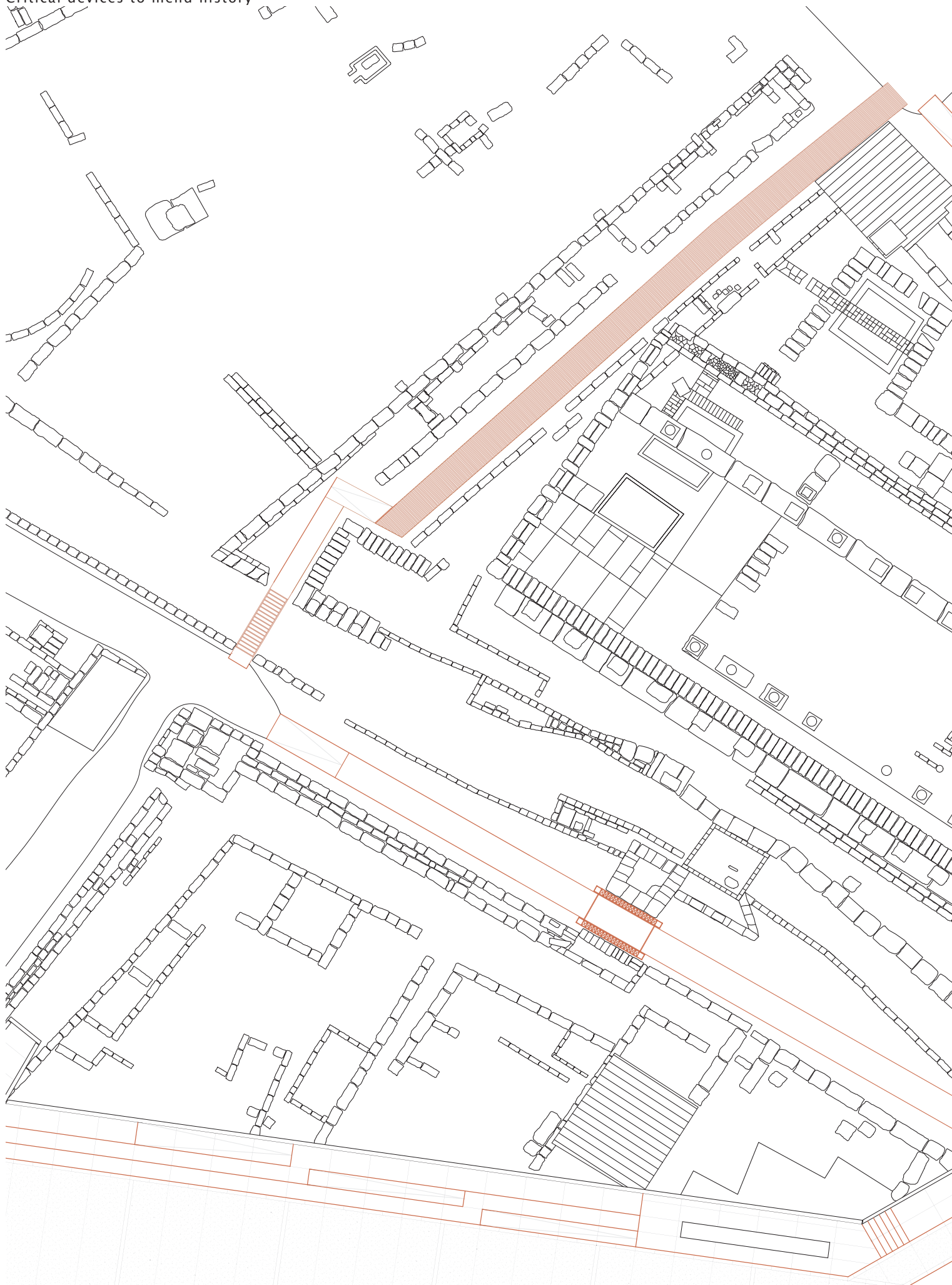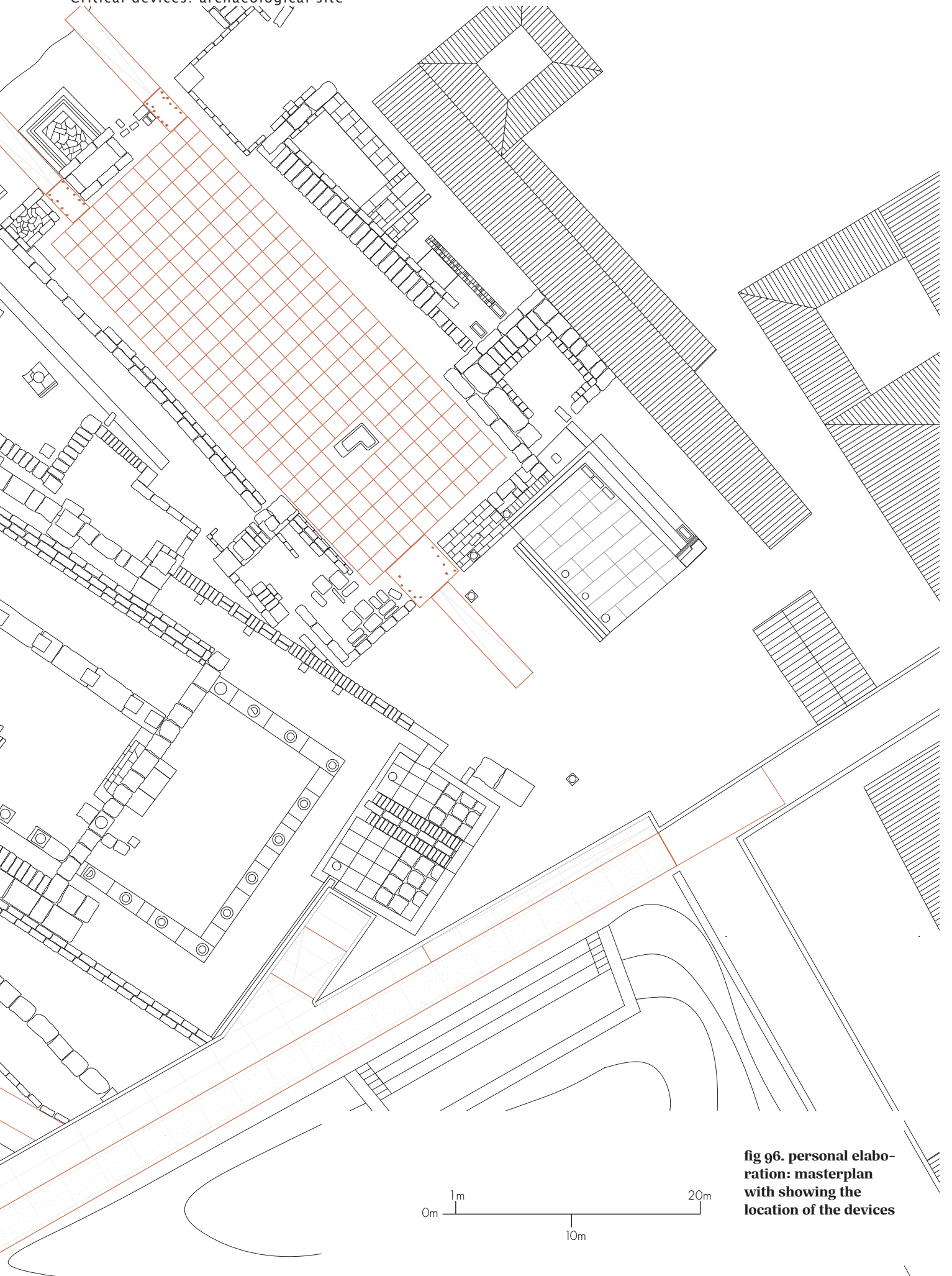
fig 96. personal elabo-
ration: masterplan
with showing the
location of the devices

1m   20m
0m
        10m

A c r o w d e d d o o r

**fig 97.personal elabo-
ration:photomontage
showing the instal-
lation of the device
for the sacred door;
illustration of the in-
terior of the door with
detail on the theme of
reflection**

Arriving in the proximity of the remains
of the Hiera Pyle, or Sacred Door, one can
detect an intervention that proposes the
presence of two reticular structures sup-
porting as many mirrors, in the middle of
which the walkway continues.

Through this obligatory passage, the vi-
sitor undergoes an infinite **reflection**
of his own figure until he emerges
from these parallel elements. Althou-
gh the presence of a doorway is not
stated, nor is its hypothetical ancient
form reconstructed, the intention is to
recreate the feeling of the multiplici-
ty of people who passed through this
passageway during sacred festivals.

A flooded bridge

fig 98.personal elaboration: collage of the new crossing on the eridano; section of the bridge

Through the construction of a bridge over the ancient course of the Eridano, the intention is to give value to the existing element of the crossing.

By means of this device, the action becomes a critical element as the visitor is forced to pass over flexible wooden steps that, although resistant, make him partially submerge, reminding him of the water element of the river itself.

The ancient watercourse is not openly denounced, but it is a method to raise new questions in the visitor with respect to the concept and action of **crossing**.

An unstable road

fig 99.personal elaboration: photomontage of the intervention on the ring road, in the background the system of the new project road; section showing the new relationship between man and ruin

The intervention planned with respect to the ancient ring road connecting the city gates is today completely unrecognisable, also because it is not signposted at all within the archaeological park.

Through the intervention it is therefore planned to reactivate this element that has been lost, to allow visitors **to walk** in the knowledge that they are treading on an element from the past.

The identity of the ancient road is not defined, but by means of a grid set into the rammed earth, an interpretation of the negative of a paving stone.

The descent from the level of the remains of the ancient walls and the grid become interventions with respect to voids that are not filled, but emphasised and amplified.

A f l o o w i n g   d o o r
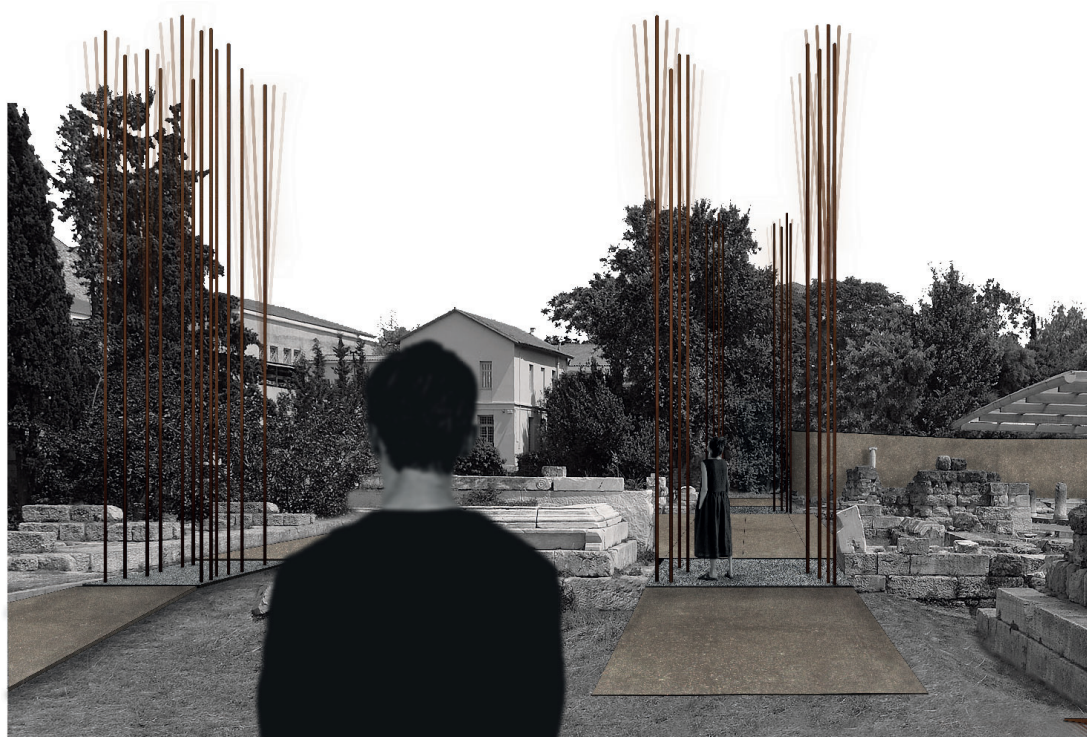
The communication of passing through the high walls and entering a courtyard before seeing the ancient city of the acropolis is poetically evoked through the intervention near the gate of Dipylon.

In this specific case, in addition to conveying the grandeur and height of the walls and the main entrance passage to the city, the elements of the poles and courtyard were also highlighted.

In this perspective, two typical elements are proposed: the insertion of **swinging** and very high poles, and that of a series of walkways of a different nature that can emphasise the succession of stages in the walk and the approach to the gate.

The theme of the threshold is also emphasised in this door through the insertion of a gravel walkway, to make the step uncertain and also sonorously translate the change and the particular nature of this thin line of passage.

Inside the court an uniform platform has a void that houses the fragment of an ancient altar.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

19. I. Calvino, Le città Invisibili,
Mondadori, Milano, 2016, pg 20

(...)

*– Anche le città credono di essere opera della mente
o del caso, ma nè l'una nè l'altro bastano a tener su
le loro mura. D'una città non godi le sette o le settan-
tasette meraviglie, ma la risposta che dà a una tua
domanda.*

*– O la domanda che ti pone obbligandoti a rispondere,
come Tebe per bocca della Sfinge.*[19]

If architecture were once again to become a means for the expression of life through experiences and for the growth of man in his most innocent side, then perhaps we could return to the origin. It would be like living for life in all its facets of beauty and learning to accept even the experiences that seem impossible to overcome.

Returning to the origin in a world that is now constantly projected only on the future and no longer works to improve today, but only tomorrow is perhaps an unjustifiable oxymoron. Yet architecture can become a means to do so.

If the long-awaited human change comes from man's inner capacity to admit his own limitations and errors, the change in the conception of Architecture then passes through the designers. Sensitive souls must succeed in making a great effort not to allow themselves to be corrupted by a utilitarian or standardised world, which by now exalts great individuals by magnifying them to the star, neglecting and forgetting the human perception and experience of space understood both as building and as surroundings. In historical-archaeological contexts, then, it is possible to admit that the thoughts formulated above take on an even more particular slant and declination.

If an architect must enjoy his own inclination to perceptive sensitivity, then a designer who goes to work and propose interventions in archaeological environments has an imprescribable and unavoidable

duty to cultivate this side of his essence, without ever wanting to make himself the protagonist of his intervention, without leaving his own signature. His task will be to make people reflect, experiment, and activate inner circuits that, unfortunately, our world now tends more and more to perish. No longer volumes or enclosures, what is proposed in this thesis turns out to be a poetic and theoretical project in which the actual material-design declination is only meant to be an example and a demonstration of how, that which has been expressed in words and attempted to be conveyed in a poetic-sensorial key can take on a body and become a critical tool for rediscovering the past and for discussion.

Certainly this experimentation is an attempt to apply a much deeper and more structured theory that could only take shape following extensive historical and archaeological research in order to effectively understand the fundamental and founding characteristics and traces of the site where the intervention was planned.

These turn out to be the two fundamental keys to the theory that has guided the project from its very beginnings: to know history in order to know oneself and to try to revive through questions that curiosity and sensitivity to the question and the 'unresolved'. There was no desire to relate directly to the traces of the past, respecting their nature and remaining well aware that although there are direct sources from the site's archaeologists and

various records of them, the traces of the past need to be clearly separated from the lines of the present, a respect that is due. Secondly, no form of anastylosis or reconstruction of any kind was intended, not because it is considered to be a totally outdated or erroneous process, but because the underlying thesis is based on a desire to reactivate the site not in a formal sense, but rather on the level of a new and constant stimulus for a contemporary user. In fact, it can be seen that all the critical devices turn out to be individual elements that cannot be reduced to architectural objects, let alone art installations: they are in fact on an intermediate level. From architecture they take on the spatial and design valence, becoming part of a complex plot that can guide one to tell a story, from the world of art the temporary and fleeting valence of the definition of a simple concept: to cross, to reflect, to descend, etc.

Defining the critical devices then becomes the unwritten task of this work, trying to give body and words to an idea and a method of approach that can change the way of seeing and thinking about the interventions of architecture for archaeology, trying to make the visitors active characters and real protagonists of the cognitive paths that, to date, appear only as ends in themselves. Hence, in the end, it can be said that the final form, material or rendering is not the final element, but only the material means that goes to define the ephemeral, giving substance to an emotion in favour of the emergence of questions and sensations. Going to design through critical devices reveals that, in nuce, there is the demonstration of a theory, not the architectural-artistic object itself. If architecture for archaeology became merely servility, then the past would continue to remain mute rock and dead remains. But if the project becomes the material transposition of an idea, then the physical and interior activation of visitors would make it possible to make the sites of the past propositional for their knowledge, speaking elements aimed not at defining themselves and their ancient form, but at giving rise to inner questions and personal reflections that in their 'unanswerability' leave doors open in man for his own growth.

APPENDIX:
PROJECT POSTERS

KERAMEIKOS OF ATHENS
HISTORY OF THE SITE

Following an urban analysis of the location of archaeological sites in the city of Athens and the analysis of their most inherent problems, the Kerameikos district was identified as a possible site for further consideration. Although the element of the archaeological park is characterising in itself for the urban fabric of the Greek capital, it is clear that some areas are better known and enhanced than others, also because they are considered more important by mass tourism.

The site we have chosen turns out to be north-west of the Agora and the Acropolis and, consequently, relatively close to the central and best known

area, but despite this it is also perhaps the most unrecognised. According to the analyses carried out, it is in fact not at all valued, nor known, also due to the lack of indications in the area and of a route that makes the history of the site known.

With respect to this, it was decided to investigate the history of the site and, as a result, it was discovered that it was the main access area to the ancient city. It presents a series of monuments that are not legible today, but which were recognised at the time as some of the main ones in the entire city.

PLAN 1:5000

- Hiera Hodos became the main street
- Kerameikos was incorporated in the city by tyrants
- Dromos became important after the reform of Panathenaic festival

ARCHAIC AGE_VII-VI b.C.

- astro-urban necropolis in the area that would later be occupied by Pompeion
- importance of the road axis from the whole region

PERSIAN WARS_V b.C.

- construction of the protecihema
- construction of tombs for illustrious figures of the city
- abandonment of the area by artisans

- construction of the Themistoclean walls
- division of the Kerameikos into external and internal
- construction of the Hiera Pyle and the Dipylon
- Eridanos was rectified
- fixed asset of the Dromos, the Hiera Hodos and the tombs street

V b.C.

IV-III b.C.

ROMAN AGE_I b.C.-V a.C.

- Hiera Pyle and Pompeion totally destroyed
- reconstruction of the Pompeion by Herod Atticus
- from 267 a.C. to V a.C. series of abandonment and destructions of the Kerameikos

- 1800s: excavations by Greeks
- 1914-2023: handover of excavation sponsorship to Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS_XIX-XXI a.C.
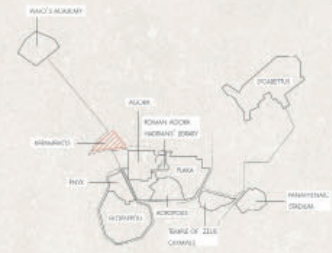
Diagram of the archaeological areas of the city of Athens. It can be seen that the areas are spread throughout, with some rather detailed points, while the main conglomerate appears to be the central one at the Agora and the Acropolis. On the other hand, the Kerameikos district, despite being in a fairly central area and close to the other main archaeological sites, is hardly known and valued at all.

_redesign of the scheme proposed by A. Piekados
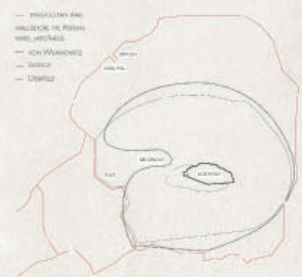
Explanatory diagram of the evolution of the city walls. Note how the growth in importance of the Kerameikos quarter corresponds with the construction of the Themistoclean walls, even though this site was already previously used as a necropolis and a centre for craft production.

_redesign of the scheme proposed by Dörpfeld
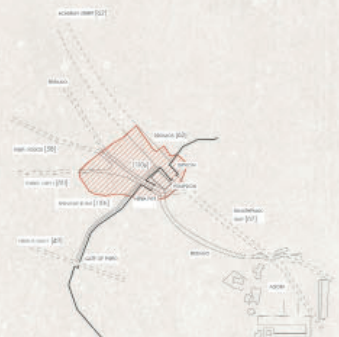
Diagram of the main streets of Athens passing through the Kerameikos district. The Via Sacra and the Dromos were also the main axes for the festivities of the polis. In the following representation, it's possible to see the clout of the above-mentioned streets with respect to the city.

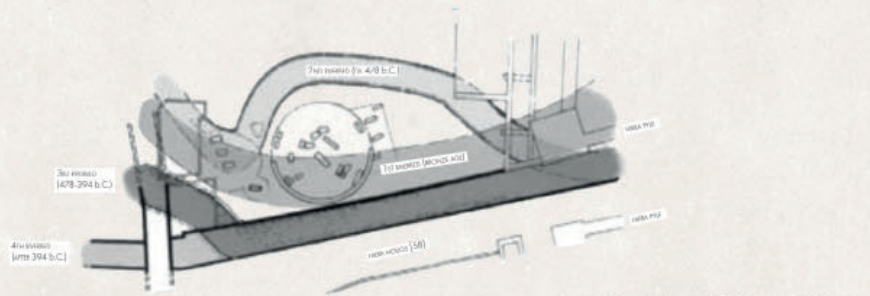_redesign of the scheme proposed by L. Ficacella

ERIDANO

Eridano river was one of the two fundamental water reservoirs for the city, together with the Illisus, 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 Illisus. 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 S. 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 Eridanus.

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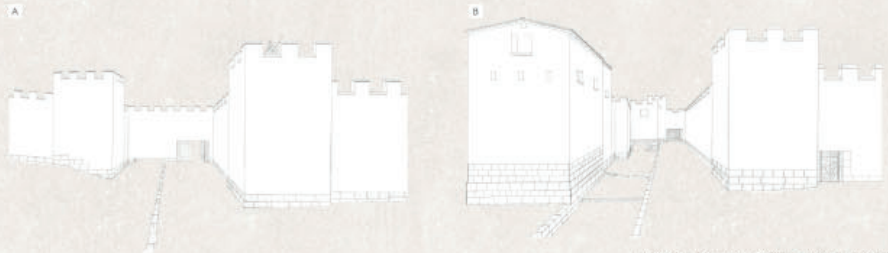
Hypothetical elevation reconstruction of the Hiera Pyle door, first (A) and fifth (B) phases. original drawing D. Kahn

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 Cononian period[?] 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 Herakeios, Hermes and Akamas.
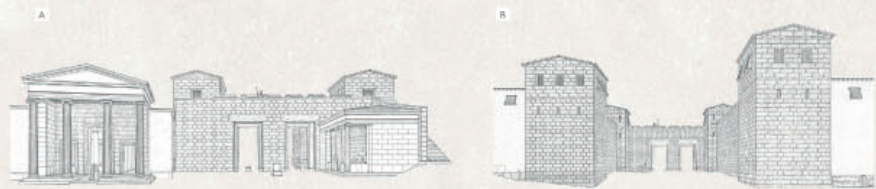
Reconstruction, general perspective view of Dipylon from the city (A) and from outside the walls (B), Hellenistic period. original drawing K. Müller
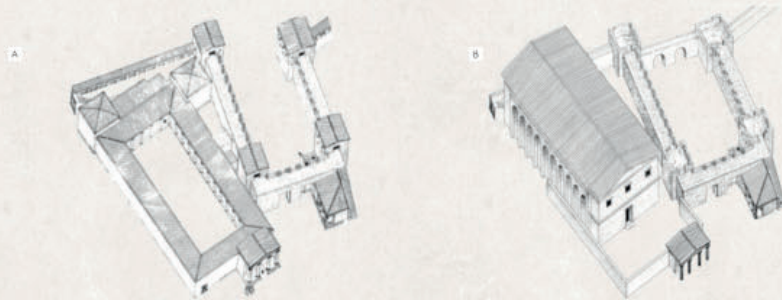
POMPEION

The Pompeion was built following the erection of the Themistoclean walls, immediately inside the defensive circuit, between the two gates is 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 later 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.
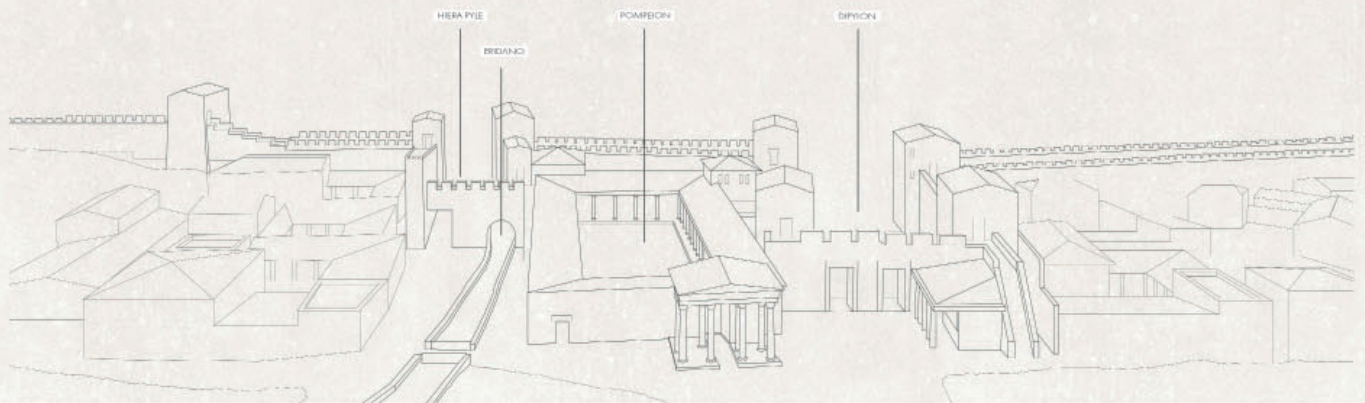
The construction was begun during the IV century b.C., as an additional stratification of the anciently necropolis in the sub-Mycenaean period.

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 stoai 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

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Students: Mattia Tarabarelli_994755
Caterina Volanté_994679

tav. 03

A TURNING POINT
CRITICAL DEVICE FOR THE STARTING POINT

An IMPEDIMENT THAT STARTS

Reaching the new footbridge, one immediately notices a peculiar element. Although every barrier between the road and the archaeological park appears to have disappeared, a single wall with a large bench in front of it comes into view. And it almost seems to be a contradictory point. An imposed limit. Approaching it, one can immediately allow oneself to experience that seat as one sees fit. Wide enough to even lie there for a while or to accommodate as many people as possible. The beginning of reflection and questions, or the end of the path.

Everything else seems endless, as if one could run as far as the past, except for one point.

The parapet prohibits and denies continuation and contact. It creates distances. How can a normatively imposed element have any value?

It is just a little wall.

One stops, a long sitting point invites reflection.

Where to go? How to go on? And why do we still have to stay so far from the past?

SECTION 1:100

PLAN 1:50

COMPARISON DE FACTO – PROJECT STATUS
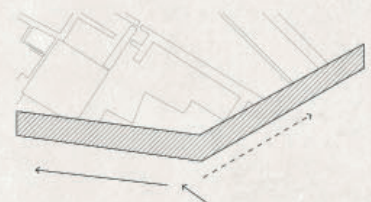
lack of contact with the rest and poor visual appreciation. The road to the north-east appears secondary and little used.
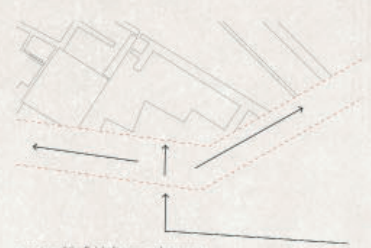
opening of the field of vision and moment of choice. The proposed routes allow different experiences for a greater appreciation and understanding of the remains.

A DETACHED FLOOR
CRITICAL DEVICE FOR THE POMPEION

To stop is to stand between two worlds.

Walking down the ramp that runs alongside the Athens Holocaust Memorial Park, one comes to a fork in the road. Go up to street level or enter an even deeper space. Descending further, after a few steps, one is forced to stop. The road ends, but one's gaze opens here to a specific point in the archaeological park; the entrance to the Pompeion and the Ionic column. Little remains of the ancient building, and it is complex to understand its actual ancient importance and grandeur. One can only imagine and speculate. It is the possibilities that make history.

A continuous and deep descent, one stands below the plane of the living.

Yet if you look up you can still see it, the original world. Then suddenly the pause, almost obligatory, and the end of motion.

It is the moment of reflection and looking beyond. It is the ritual before the entrance into the world of the past, which lies tipped underfoot.

Close, yet so detached. To admire and wonder, stopping always implies this too.
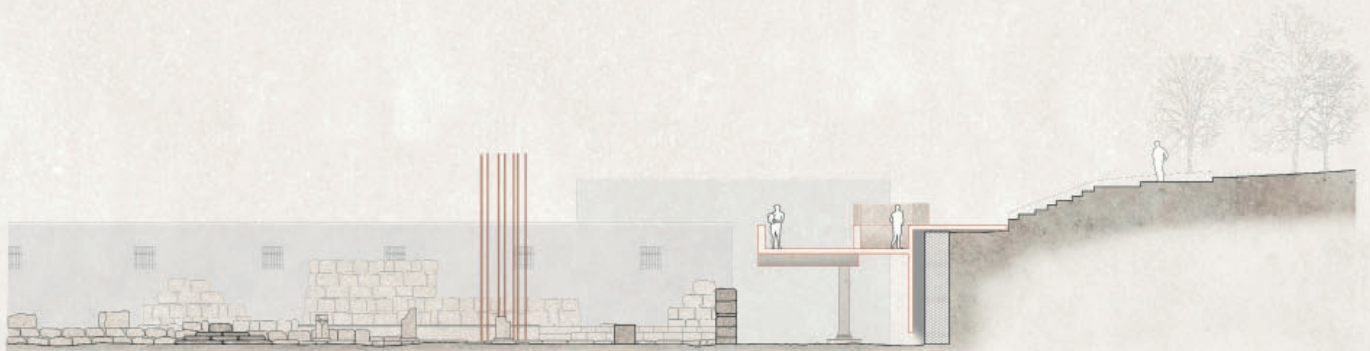
SECTION 1:100

PLAN 1:50

DEVICE PERCEPTION FROM THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

the observation element at the entrance to the Pompeion, allows an extended appreciation of the entire archaeological area and also of the interventions in the excavation area.

the detachment from the rest of the walkway allows for an intimate and singular perception, but at the same time it also creates a great sense of anticipation and a desire to reach the signs of the past.
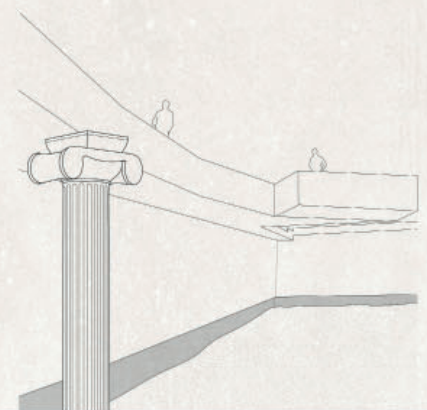
A DETACHED WALL
CRITICAL DEVICE COVERING THE RETAINING WALLS

WHEN DARKNESS BECOMES A FLOW

Looking towards the street, one can see all the grandeur of the wall that divides past and present.

If you get closer, however, you notice that it inexplicably does not touch the ground, it is as if suspended.
And the walkway continues under it, as if to indicate that the archaeological park and the remains do not end with a wall.

That shadowy space imposes questions and allows the continuous flow of history.

A wall that becomes a handrail.

Darkness is the absence of everything.
Presence and movement cannot be distinguished.
Darkness is uncertainty of everything.

The road, however, cannot be stopped. It is against its nature.

The flow will always try to overcome every impediment.
But what if the impediment is the present itself? How can it still lead there towards its only destination?
There is a wall that is pierced by an invisible force.

Before the eyes there is only darkness and a path that remains imagination.
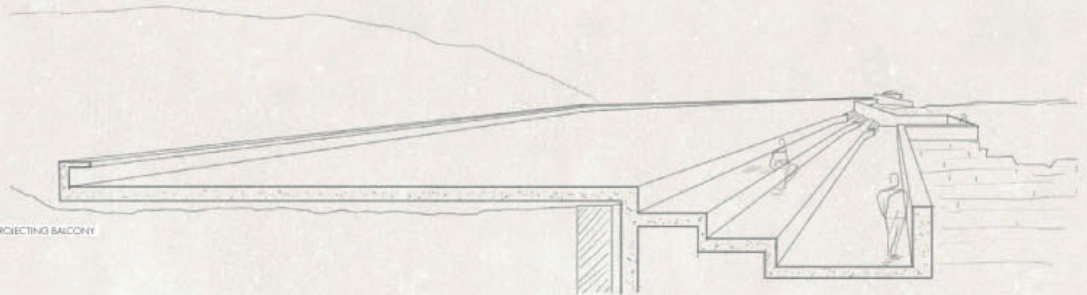
STUDY DRAWING OF THE STEPPED ELEMENT AND THE PROJECTING BALCONY

PROJECT CHRONOLOGY DIAGRAMS

PHASE 0
_presence of high walls and archaeological remains in ancient times

PHASE 1
_retaining walls reaching from the first phase of excavations in the 19th century. These walls appear as historical stone forgeries that, although visibly modern, were built with similar material to the remains

PHASE 2
_the project remains respectful of both the remains and the 19th century intervention, while declaring its solemnity and letting the laziness of the past flow within it

SECTION 1:100

A CONTACTLESS TELESCOPE
CRITICAL DEVICE NEAR THE ANCIENT CITY WALL

THE DISTANT PRESENCE TELLS ITS STORY.

Descending a few steps opens up a view of the whole world of the past, now formed only by remains.
Arriving on the last step, the plan continues, leaning over the edge of the road, almost as if wanting to reach out and touch those traces that for now can only be seen from afar.

The desire increases.

Next to the parapet some stones of a particularly high wall seem to protect this place of standing, just as they defended the ancient city of Athens.

A wall that becomes a handrail.

It accompanies one into history. Into his story. How can it do this?
Archaeology is mute, yet the openness towards which it guides allows one to admire.

Admire and wonder.

Questions arise at every step, at every step. Elements can be seen in the distance and the desire to reach them leads one to want to bridge the distance.
Yet, for now, one can only stand to admire and open one's gaze to grasp as much as possible, letting the high walls accompany one.
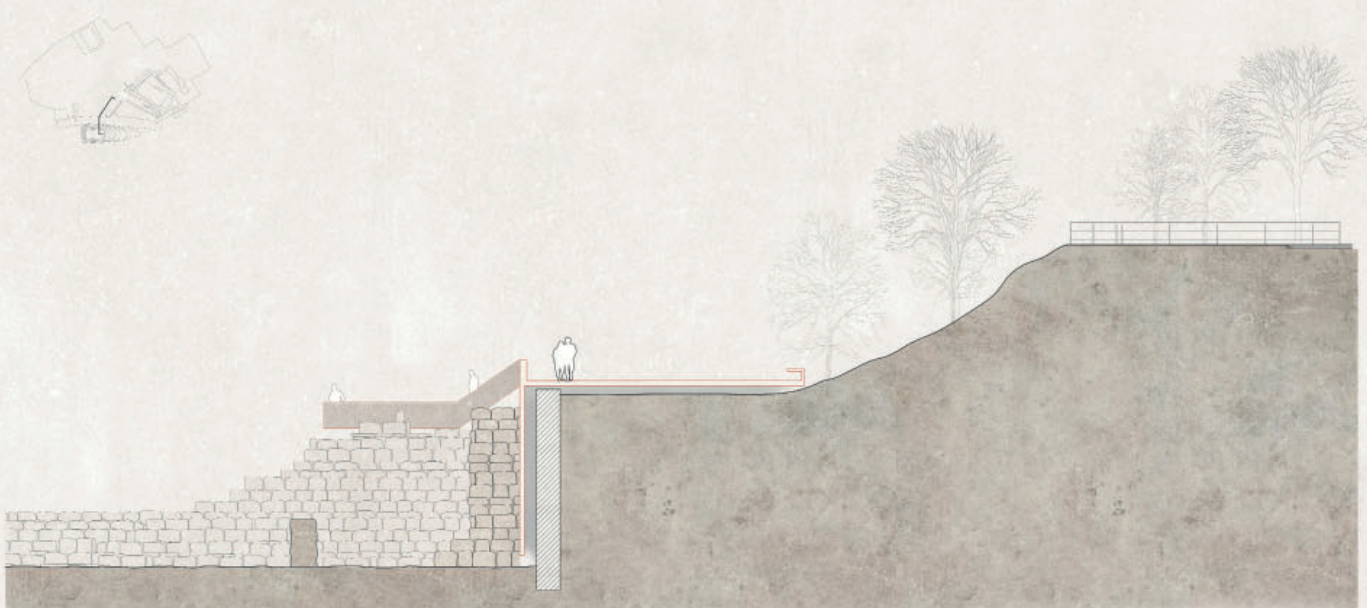
SECTION 1:100

PLAN 1:50
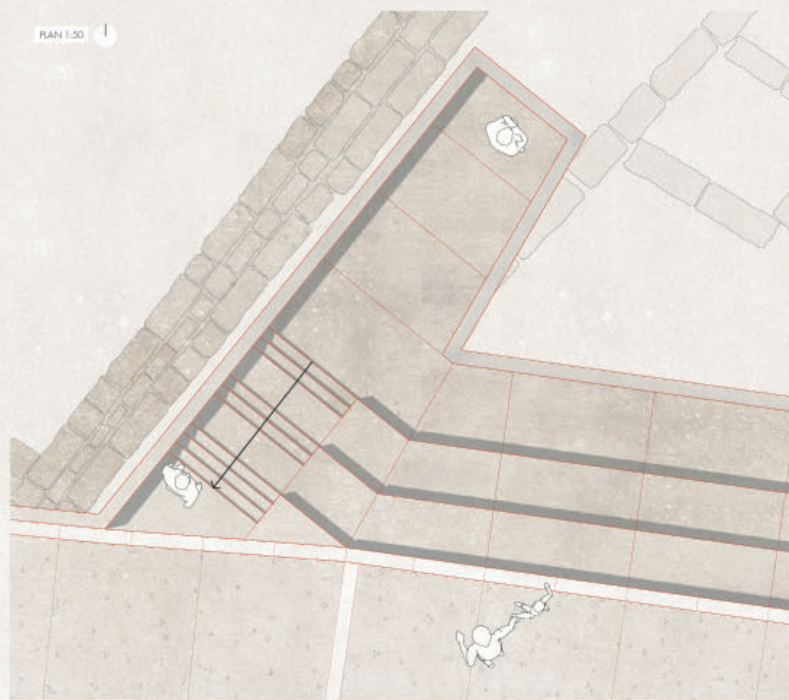
DIAGRAMMATIC SCHEME OF THE DEVICE

the original situation of the pedestrian road with its fence, is problematic and prevents a direct view of the remains, becoming an obstacle to their perception

thanks to the inclusion of the questioning telescope, the approach to the remains is immersive, especially in the portion of the SW wall which presents a complete stratification of all historical phases

A WALLED DOOR
CRITICAL DEVICE FOR THE MUSEUM

A WALL THAT OPENS TO THE BEYOND

Walking along the new pedestrian thoroughfare, one encounters a wall septum protruding from the linear parapet. It is very high and bears an inscription on it.
Intrigued and wanting to answer the questions this element raises, one feels invited to discover what this wall conceals.
It is the entrance to the archaeological park, which, descending slowly, takes us from the ticket office to the museum entrance, until we reach a square square from which all possible routes start.
The choice sanctions the departure.

The wall and prohibition to go on. It is a symbol of the end.
What if the wall is the real opening?
When they are erected they always divide two worlds that initially appear to be hidden from each other, but at some point they touch.
Coming face to face with the reality of the wall placed in the middle of the path and with no apparent logical sense makes one realise something beyond.
What does the wall conceal? And the walk begins again, driven by a new force: the search for meaning. Having overcome the obstacle of laziness, one realises that even walls can guide one into new realities.
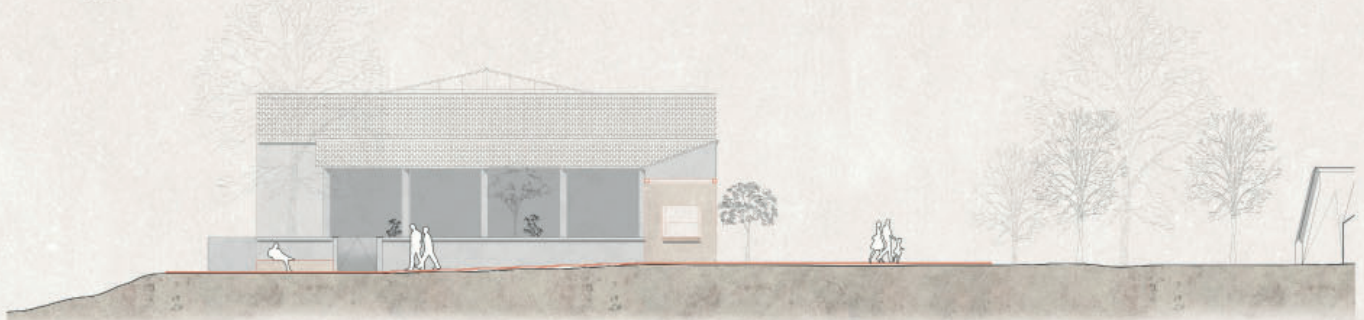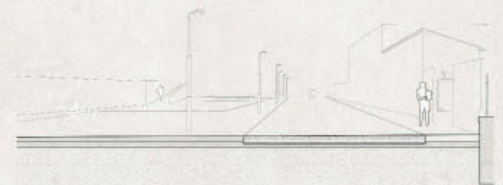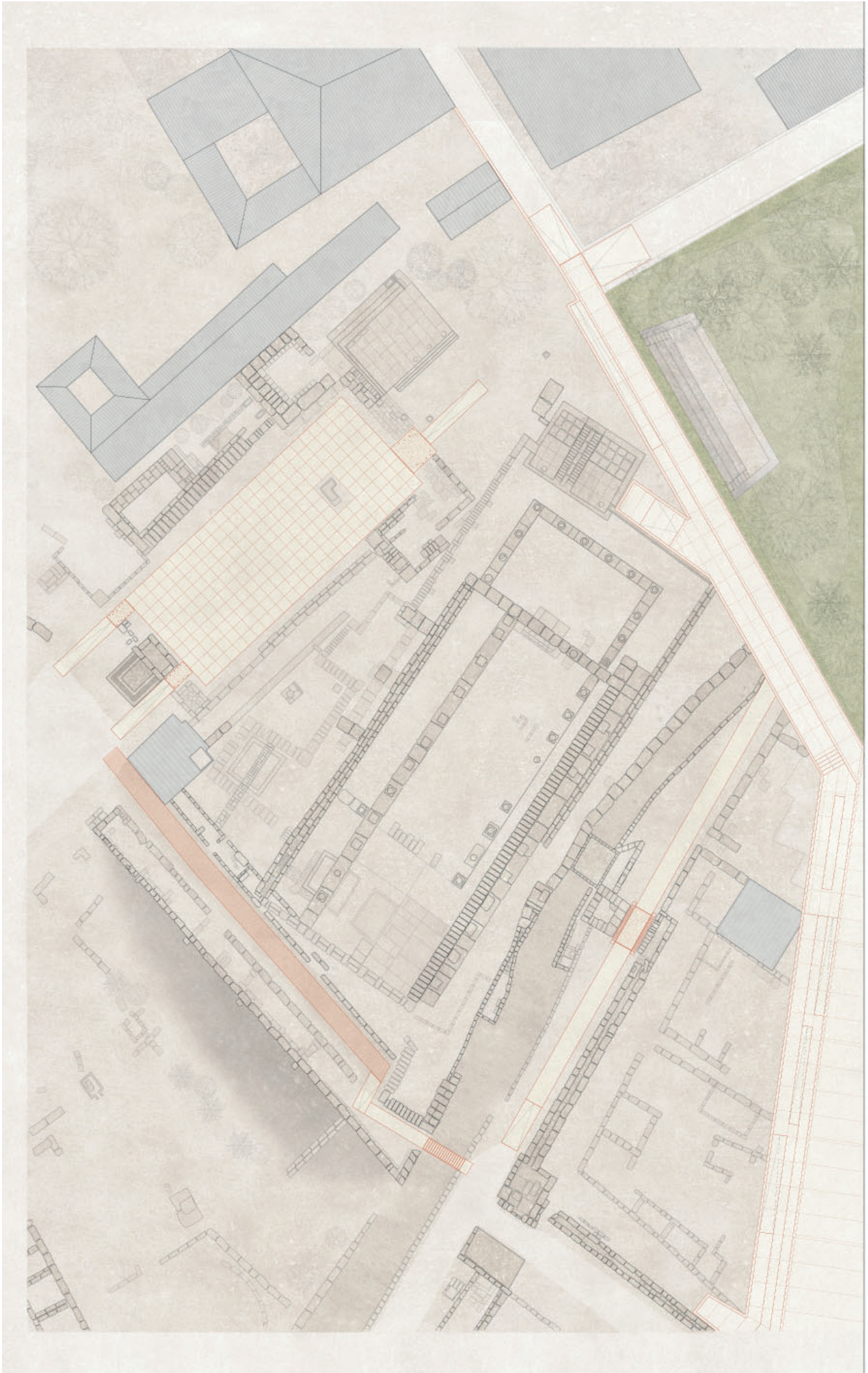

SECTION 1:100
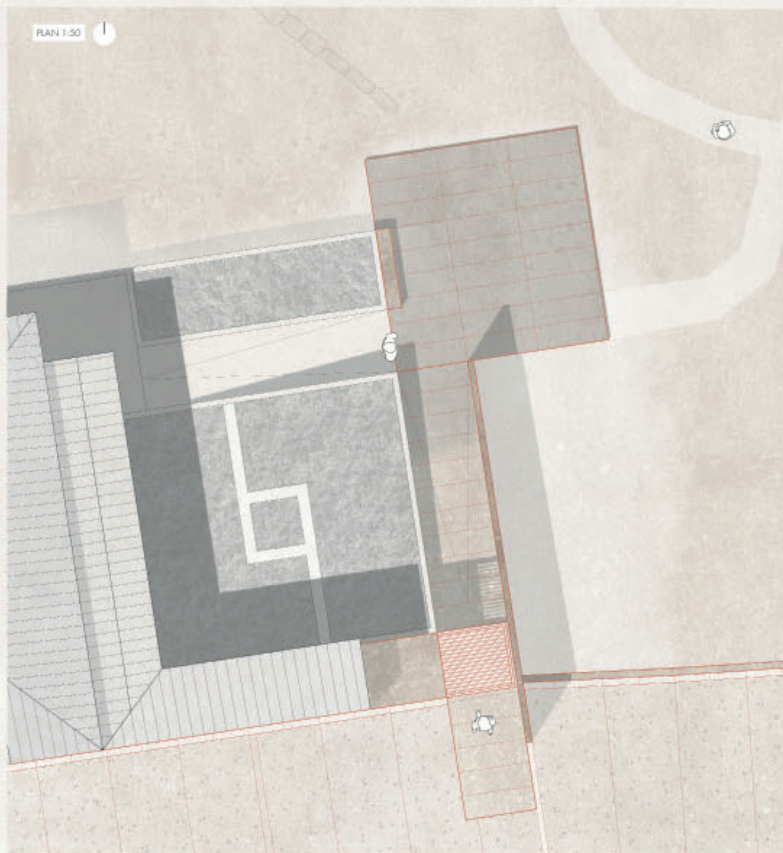
PLAN 1:50

COMPARISON DE FACTO – PROJECT STATUS

the museum entrance is not at all traceable or with a recognisable identity of its own. There is also a lack of homogeneity in the layout of the pedestrian street, which presents different textures.

the device proposes the insertion of a wall septum that may create a partial visual obstruction, but at the same time leaves the visitor with a choice. The ramp that breaks up the layout of the new plate before disappearing behind the wall allows curiosity and questions to arise.

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A CROWDED DOOR
CRITICAL DEVICE FOR THE HIERA PYLE

THE SINGULARITY THAT BECOMES MULTIPLE

Having reached the foot of the footbridge, one has to take a fundamental step in order to ascend it and to start asking oneself questions.
Continuing along the new path, one comes to a crevice and, deciding to cross it, lands on a creaking gravel surface.

Two tall structures supporting mirrors continuously reflect the image of those who decide to enter the threshold. It is a reminder of a door that no longer exists.

An echo of the past that returns to the sensible world through continuous repetition.

Breaking the tangible reality opens up the oneiric dimension, the source of uncertainties.

The procession reappears.

Who has crossed that threshold? How many feet have respectfully crossed that sacred passage?

Questions that bounce back again and again until they shake us as, oblivious to the past, we cross the Sacred Door.

reticular support structure

mirror

SECTION 1:20

PLAN 1:50
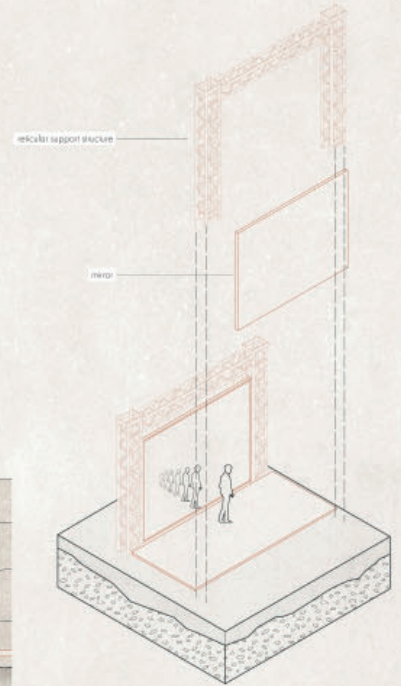
AXONOMETRY OF THE SYSTEM

PROJECT CHORNOLOGY DIAGRAMS

time 0
_presence of the high city walls and the pedestrian gate, as well as the archway of the river

time 1
_loss of perception of the walls and the sacred gate
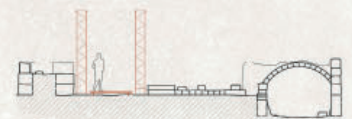
time 2
_inclusion of the project as a critical cue for reading history

A FLOODED BRIDGE
CRITICAL DEVICE FOR THE ERIDANO RIDER

DIVING TO RE-DISCOVER ONESELF

Arriving in the vicinity of the ancient river course, one realizes its absence, but there is still a bridge to cross.
The ground, although dry, maintains the depth of the absent passage.

When one takes the first step to cross this obstacle, however, one's feet still get wet.

The planks of the bridge seem to give way, it is their bending that lets you perceive the instability of the present and allows you to continue on the path to rediscover the past.

It is impossible to walk on a liquid, unable to support any weight on its surface.

Yet, one is not even falling. There is no water in the course, yet it overflows with every step. It deforms the structure that should guarantee passage and submerges everyone.

Obligatorily.

And from this sinking one can only re-emerge with inner questions that rumble and grow larger each time. Like the circles in the water after you threw a stone at it as a child.
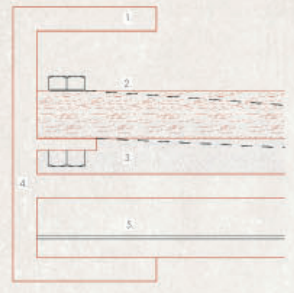So one keeps repeating oneself: "why?".

SECTION AA' 1:20
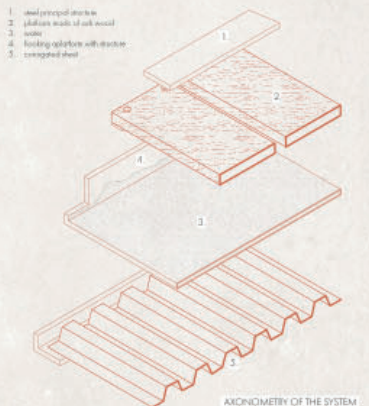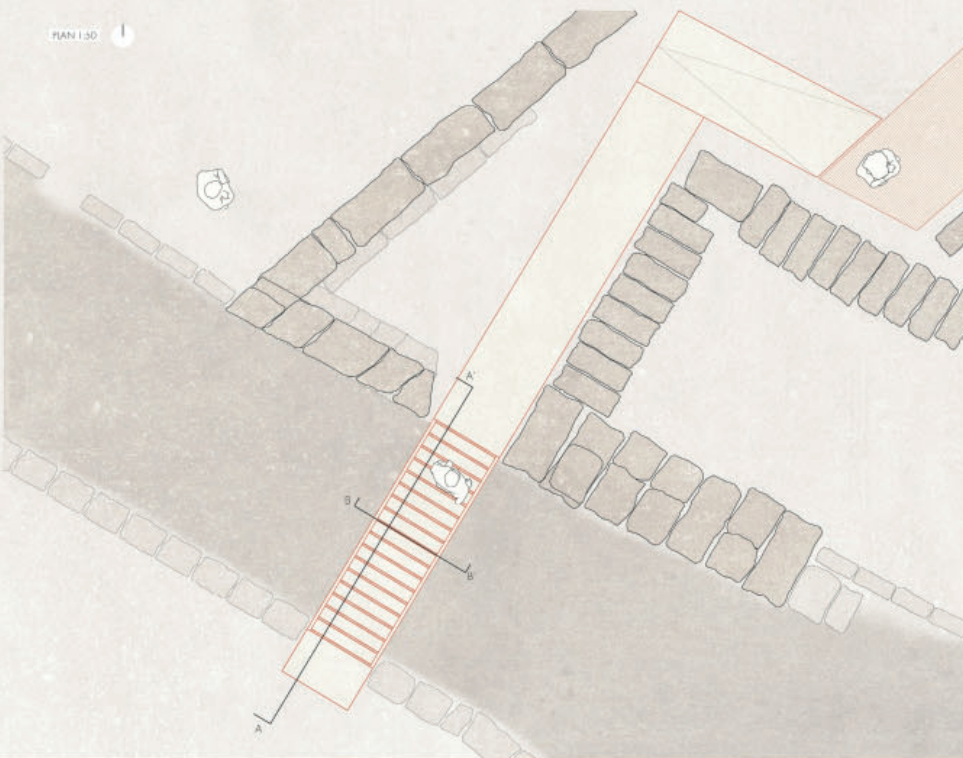
SECTION BB' 1:20

1. steel principal structure
2. platform made of oak wood
3. water
4. floating splatform with structure
5. corrugated sheet

PLAN 1:50

AXONOMETRY OF THE SYSTEM

DETAIL OF THE GROUND CONNECTION 1:5

AN UNSTABLE ROAD
CRITICAL DEVICE FOR THE ANCIENT STREET 110b

EACH STEP BECOMES UNCERTAIN

Once past the small bridge, one finds oneself in front of a section of walled partition. It is the old ground containment near the moat. The ground in front of me suddenly subsides. To continue, you must have to descend.
Iron elements embedded in the ground hint at an absence. The ancient ring road running alongside the high, ancient city walls cannot be retraced.

The absence is not resolved by an addition, but an even deeper void remains to revive ancient sensations and perceptions.

Voids are filled, all of them.

Human nature can only conceive of a void if it can be filled. It cannot imagine infinity and, often, does not even want to try.

Absence frightens because it makes one deeply restless and unstable.

It is in the restlessness of absence that we dig here to find a point of inner crisis and to make not presence, but critical absence arise and resurrect.
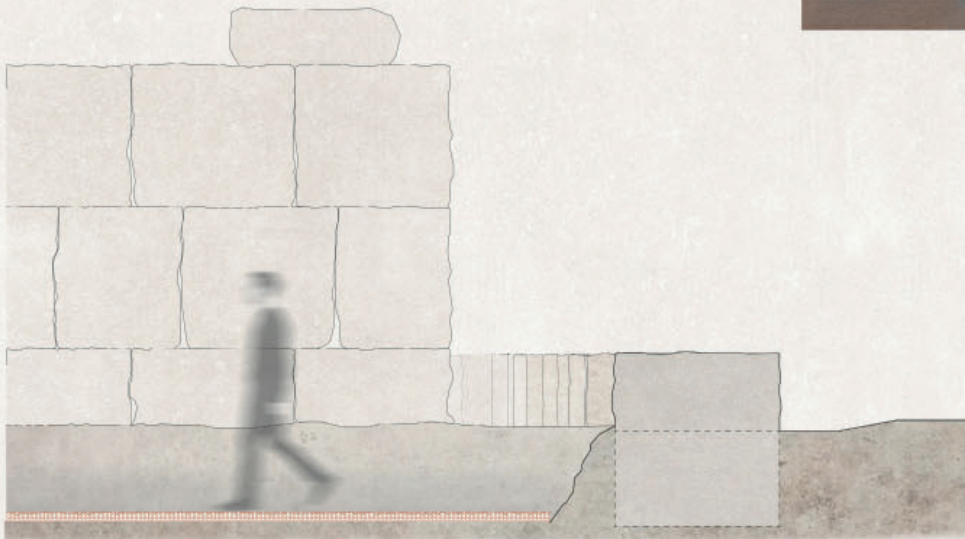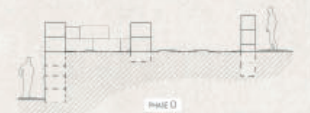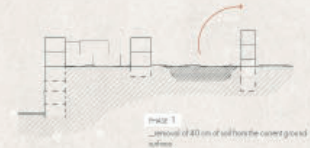

SECTION 1:20
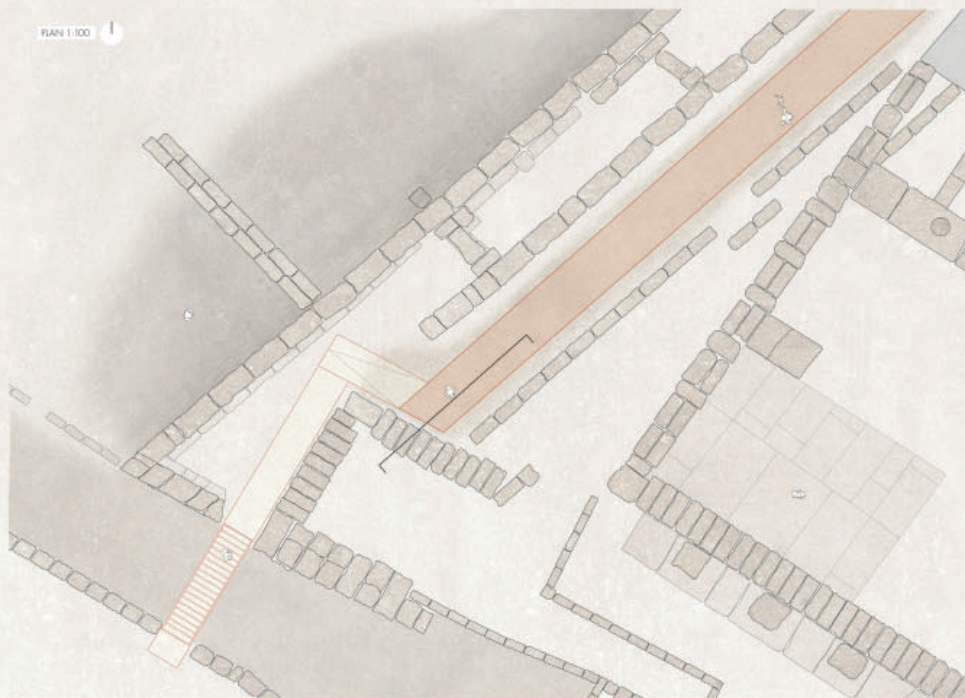
PLAN 1:100

AXONOMETRY OF THE SYSTEM

PROJECT CHRONOLOGY DIAGRAMS

PHASE 0
_current situation with the loss of the notion of the road around the high walls.

PHASE 1
_removal of 40 cm of soil from the current ground surface.

PHASE 2
_filling of the soil and theating of the superficial layer.

PHASE 3
_insertion of the plate and new perception of the remains from a lower level.

A FLOOWING DOOR
CRITICAL DEVICE FOR THE DIPYLON

ACCESS THAT BECOMES RITUAL.

Once in the clearing, one is forced to make a choice. Two walkways and the absence of a door.

History always implies a choice.
Climb up one of the two paths and cross the fractures that vary its nature, until you cross the ancient threshold. Emotionally recognisable, but not reconstructed.

Slender vertical elements swing naturally as you make the transition. Passing through, one enters a dilated space: the courtyard of doors.

One door for those who enter and the other for those who leave, but what is a door if not a man's compulsion to pass through it? What is the encounter between the ways of the world if not a courtyard between two doors?

This space of intersection of invisible straight lines that have been trampled on for thousands of years remains only a diaphragmatic dilation capable of giving man a breath of his own humanity.

It no longer matters which streets or how many people, it is allowing oneself to be changed by the intimate questions that arise here that trigger the experience of questioning.
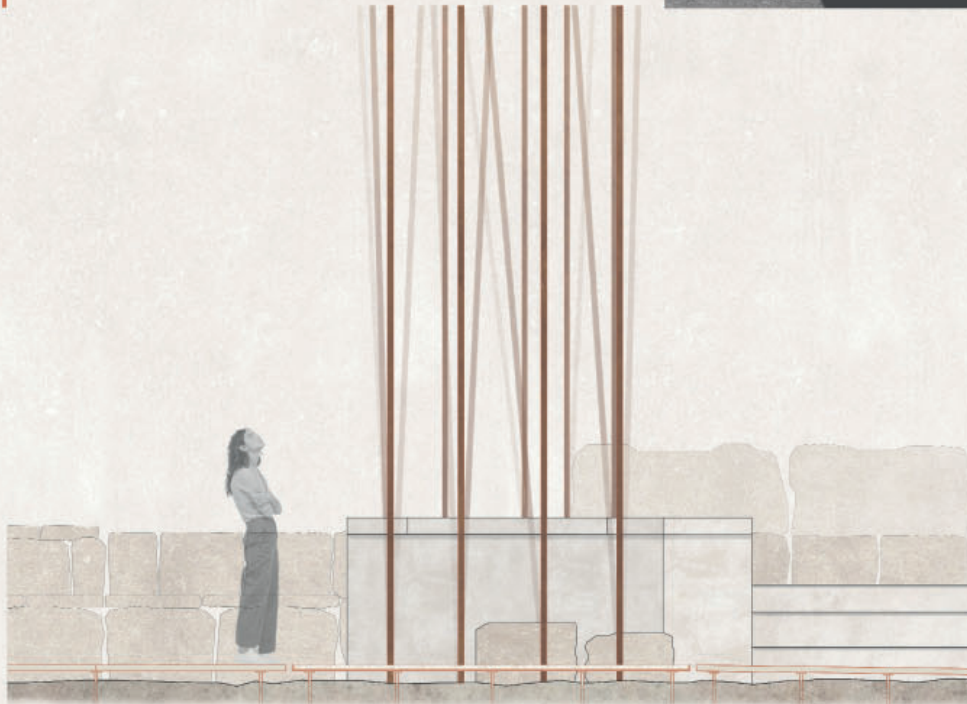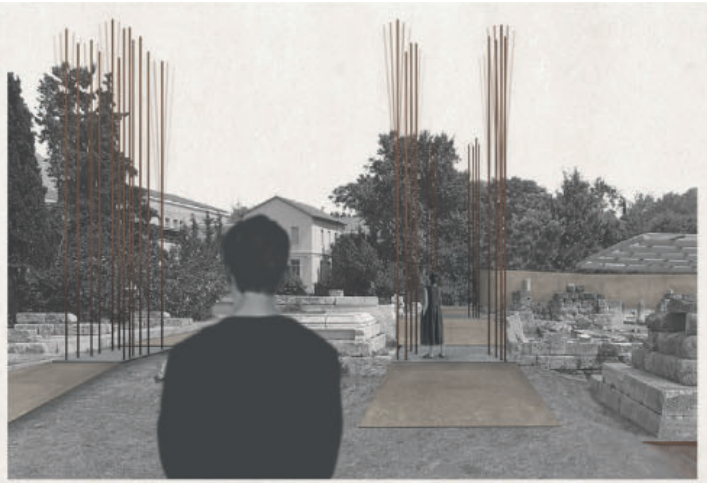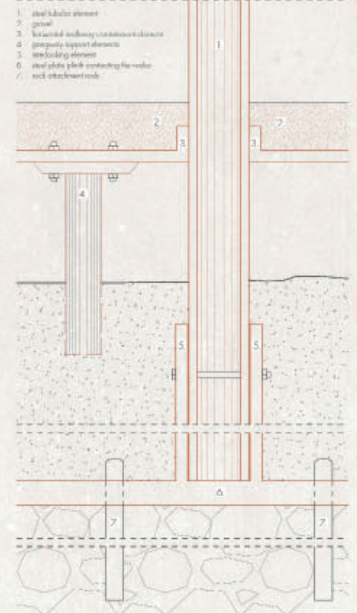

AXONOMETRY OF THE SYSTEM

DETAIL OF THE GROUND CONNECTION 1:5

SECTION 1:20
PLAN 1:200
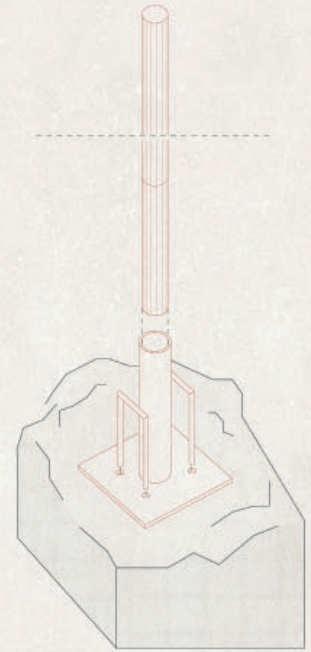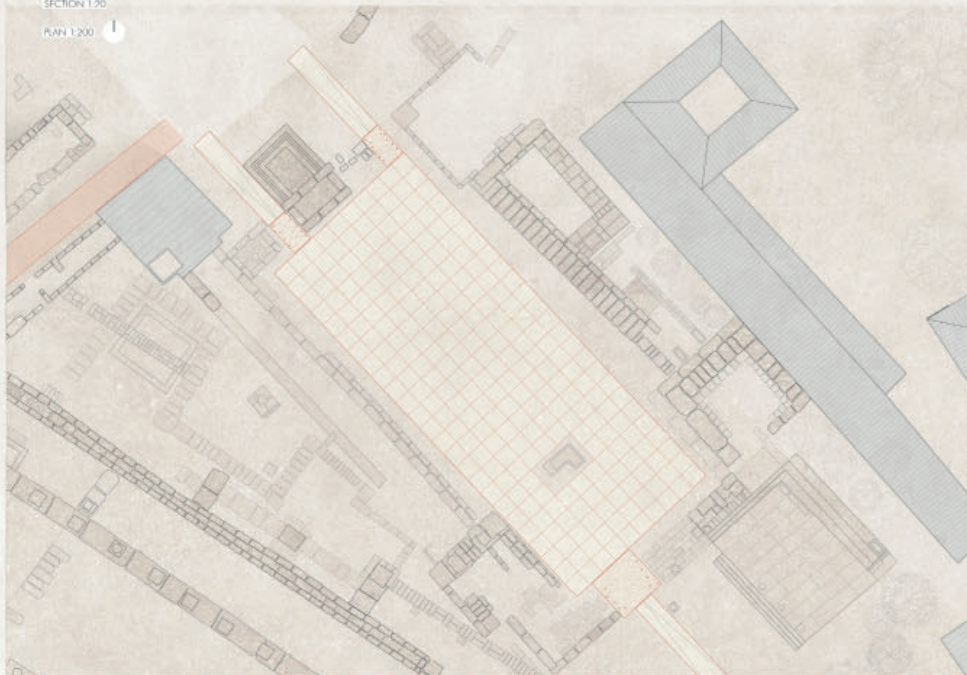
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