

BRIDGING CULTURES

An Ephemeral Architectural
Installation at *Villa Adriana*

EXPLORING
PRE-COLUMBIAN
GOLDSMITHING
THROUGH
CONTEMPORARY
DESIGN



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Bridging Cultures: An Ephemeral Architectural Installation at Villa Adriana

Exploring Pre-Columbian Goldsmithing through Contemporary Design

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**Honoring our Colombian roots, for
shaping our vision, curiosity, and
passion for heritage**

a mi mamá, que tiene fuerza
por las dos cuando hace falta.

a mi papá, que no tiene un
“no se puede” en su vocabulario.

a Juan Sebastián, que es mi hogar.

- Catalina

A Jorge, mi padre, por ser mi pilar
y creer en mí incluso cuando yo
no lo hacía.

A Majo, mi hermana, por ser mi
compañera de vida, cada paso
que doy es por ti.

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y enseñarme a construir las alas
con las que alcanzar mis sueños.

- Gina

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Abstract

This thesis proposes an ephemeral architectural intervention at Villa Adriana, one of the most significant archaeological sites of the Roman world. The project aims to reactivate a place that was conceived as a setting for culture, exchange, and representation. Originally envisioned, by Emperor Hadrian, as a synthesis of the civilizations that shaped his empire, the villa becomes the starting point for a new dialogue between Colombia and Italy inspired by Cano jewelry and its contemporary reinterpretation of pre-Columbian goldsmithing.

Architecture becomes the medium through which this dialogue unfolds. Materials, spatial sequences, landscape, and light reinterpret the symbolic language of pre-Columbian cultures, transforming it into a contemporary experience of contemplation, discovery, and cultural exchange. The proposal culminates in an ephemeral fashion show that temporarily brings new life to the archaeological site, reconnecting it with the cultural and ceremonial character it once possessed while creating a meeting point between architecture, fashion, and craftsmanship.

Grounded in contemporary conservation theory, the intervention avoids reconstructing the past or replicating historical forms. Instead, it develops a recognizable and context-sensitive architectural language capable of coexisting with the archaeological remains while revealing new ways of experiencing them. By bringing together architecture, fashion, craftsmanship, and cultural heritage, the project reactivates Villa Adriana through a temporary yet meaningful experience that encourages visitors to engage with both the memory of the site and the living traditions of another culture.

Keywords: Ephemeral architecture, Villa Adriana, Fashion and design, Traditional craftsmanship, Cultural translation, Experiential space

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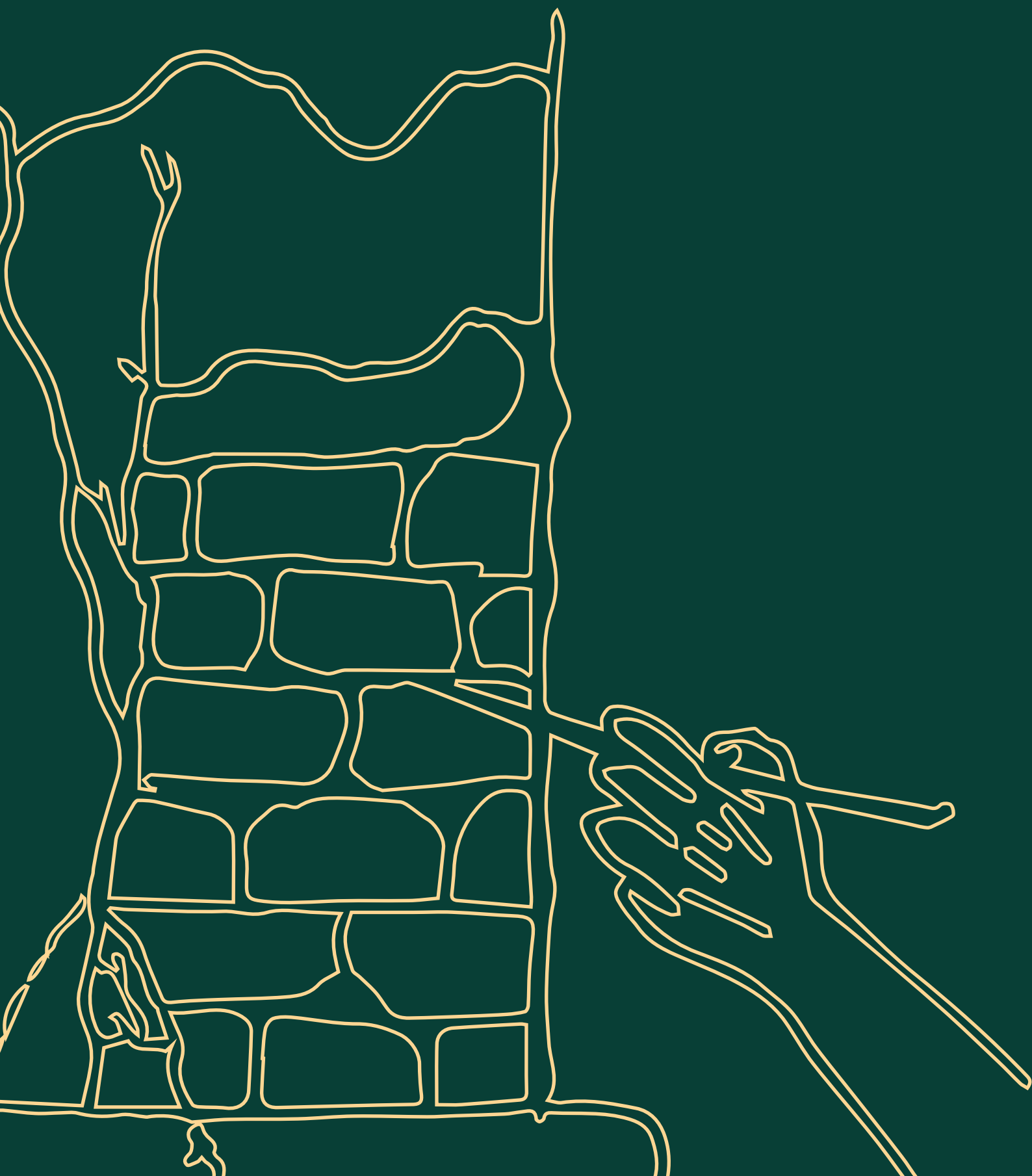
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Chapter I Prologue

Problem Statement

The management of cultural heritage today faces the challenge of engaging with contemporary dynamics that aim to generate meaningful experiences without compromising the historical value of sites. In this context, the question arises of how a space inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List can host innovative cultural events. The issue lies not only in the logistical organization of such events, but also in the ability to establish a respectful dialogue between two seemingly opposing dimensions: the intangibility of historical and cultural value, and the ephemeral and communicative nature of contemporary creative practices.

This dilemma becomes even more complex when the goal is not only to safeguard the heritage site, but also to enhance it as a stage capable of acquiring new meanings in the present. At the same time, the participating cultural actors must preserve their identity, values, and vision, while avoiding a merely instrumental or superficial use of heritage. Therefore, the central problem lies in how to manage, conceptualize, and design an event within a heritage site that can generate mutual benefit: enriching the contemporary interpretation of heritage, while reinforcing the cultural and symbolic value of the participating entities.

Justification of the Topic

This research emerges from the experience of two Colombian architects in training in Italy, which has enabled a direct observation of the contrasts and affinities between the constructive and artistic traditions of both contexts. This personal positioning serves as a starting point for addressing a broader issue: how the dialogue between distinct cultures, historically present in Villa Adriana, where the emperor integrated artistic languages from diverse territories, can be reactivated within the framework of contemporary architecture and heritage valorization.

Through the connection between the pre-Columbian goldsmithing of Casa Cano and the intercultural and contemporary design approaches in Italy, the research seeks to demonstrate that architecture can operate as a space of symbolic mediation between local traditions and global dynamics. In this way, the proposal not only responds to a personal interest but also contributes to the academic debate on the need to open architectural heritage to intercultural and innovative readings, moving beyond purist approaches to conservation.

Hypothesis

It is proposed that it is possible to integrate a contemporary cultural event within a UNESCO World Heritage site like Villa Adriana, provided that it is developed through a curatorial and architectural approach capable of respecting and engaging in dialogue with the site’s historical values. In this logic, the project is conceived as a platform for intercultural re-signification: the Villa, as a container of empires and foreign cultures; and pre-Columbian culture—through Cano jewelry—as a guest that prolongs the tradition of the “foreign” reinterpreted in a Hadrianic key. In this way, both the heritage site and the participating entities do not lose value but rather enhance it through a shared aesthetic, symbolic, and heritage experience.

Main Research Question

In what terms can Villa Adriana, conceived as a symbiosis of cultures, host a contemporary event that articulates a bridge between Italian heritage and the pre-Columbian legacy of Cano jewelry, fostering both heritage preservation and the cultural projection of the Colombian brand?

Specific Research Questions

1. How can the intercultural conception of Villa Adriana as a “container of empires” serve as a theoretical and conceptual framework for integrating new cultures into a contemporary event?
2. What curatorial and architectural strategies allow for balancing the conservation of heritage value with the introduction of ephemeral experiences?
3. How can the presence of Cano jewelry articulate an intercultural dialogue without falling into imposition or folklorism?
4. What impact can this articulation have on public perception and on the valorization of both the heritage site and the participating cultural entities?

General Objective

To design an ephemeral architectural installation at Villa Adriana that functions as a symbolic, sensorial, and intercultural device of encounter between Colombia and Italy, integrating Cano jewelry as a narrative mediator within a space that dialogues with history, identity, and sustainability.

Specific Objectives

1. To investigate the history and cultural transformations of Villa Adriana, highlighting its symbolic dimension as a container and integrator of foreign influences, in order to establish a solid historical-conceptual framework for the intervention.
2. To analyze the archaeological and cultural references of pre-Columbian goldsmithing that inspire Cano jewelry, emphasizing their aesthetic and symbolic values in the contemporary Colombian context.
3. To carry out a curatorial analysis of Cano’s pieces that can engage in aesthetic and conceptual dialogue with architectural and spatial de-

sign, selecting those that most clearly represent the potential for integration between heritage and contemporary interpretation.

4. To develop an architectural proposal that translates this symbolic and intercultural exchange into space, using architectural language to articulate an immersive event that is respectful of the heritage site, where archaeology, craftsmanship, and contemporary design intertwine.

Research and Design
Methodology

Type	Phase	Title	Description and Tasks
Research	01	Historical and Cultural Framework	Documentary and bibliographic review on the history of Hadrian's Villa and Pre-Columbian culture.; Critical analysis of buildings inspired by external cultures (Egypt, Greece, the Orient) as a conceptual framework for interculturality.; Archaeological and cultural study of Pre-Columbian goldsmithing; symbolism, use of gold, relation to ritual and power.
	02	Cano Jewelry	Analysis of the Cano brand as a contemporary mediator of Pre-Columbian heritage.
	03	Curatorial Analysis	Heritage mapping to identify possible scenarios for intervention (spaces with symbolic and performative potential); Identification of key pieces from the Cano collection that dialogue with the values of Hadrian's Villa; Selection of narrative scenes (collection + jewelry + villa space).
Analysis	04	Comparative and Intercultural Studies	Study of international cases of fashion shows in heritage sites (e.g., Dior in Cairo, Fendi at the Trevi Fountain); Critical evaluation of best practices and risks (folklorism, cultural imposition, physical impact); Definition of curatorial and architectural criteria for the project.
Design	05	Spatial Conceptualization	Translation of theoretical findings into an architectural concept: the Villa as a container of empires and the installation as a container of cultures; Definition of spatial narrative: route, sequences, atmospheres; Conceptual palette of materials, colors, and symbolisms.
	06	Architectural Proposal	Design of the ephemeral installation for the event, considering heritage conservation criteria; Curatorial articulation: integration of Cano pieces into the spatiality; Production of graphic and digital representations: plans, renders, conceptual diagrams



Chapter II The Villa

Emperor Hadrian and His Intercultural Vision in the Villa¹

Emperor Hadrian, successor of Trajan, was born in 76 A.D. He ruled the Roman Empire from 117 A.D. until 138 A.D., when he died. During his reign, the empire was the biggest it ever was, going from what is today known as Great Britain to Egypt and from the Iberian Peninsula to Mesopotamia. However, this big territory also implied political and administrative challenges like extensive and expensive borders, conflicts with local populations, and the need to prove authority in new conquered territories, which drove him to travel around most of the provinces of the empire. Apart from standing out for his political and military work, Hadrian was famous for having many construction projects he promoted throughout the Roman Empire, among which the Hadrian's Wall, the Temple of Venus and Rome, and, of course, Hadrian's Villa. This last project reflects his eclectic taste, inspired by the architectural styles he discovered during his travels, which distinguished him from his predecessors

by incorporating elements from different cultures into his imperial projects².

The construction of Hadrian's Villa, located in Tivoli, Rome, began around 118 A.D., and was conceived from the beginning as a retirement residence. However, this was not the emperor's only goal, since Hadrian also wanted a space where he could freely express his cosmopolitan vision, his idea of a villa that would represent in scale the totality of the empire, clearly influenced by his visits to almost all the provinces³.

The villa could be called a "container of empires", where architectural and symbolic elements from diverse cultures are incorporated into the different buildings. For example, Greek elements are found in the Maritime Theatre and the Academy, evoking Hellenic tradition and Athenian philosophy. There are also Egyptian elements, found mainly in the Canopus and the Serapeum, where the setting, sculptures, and a space dedicated to Serapis (a deity associated with healing) highlight this influence. Finally, Eastern elements present in the use of domes, hypostyle spaces, and gardens inspired by Asian models. Of course, the Roman imprint is also evident, symbolizing imperial

1. Unless otherwise stated, citations on this thesis are placed only after the final paragraph of the relevant discussion.

2. Caliri, "Gli architetture di Adriano."

3. Osen, "Hadrian's Villa (Villa Adriana): Tivoli, Italy."



Figure 1: Tre Erede, Villa Adriana
Source: photograph by the authors.



Figure 2: Tempio di Venere, Villa Adriana
Source: photograph by the authors.

4. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Villa Adriana (Tivoli)."

5. Caliri et al., "Tractatus logico-sintattico: la forma trasparente."

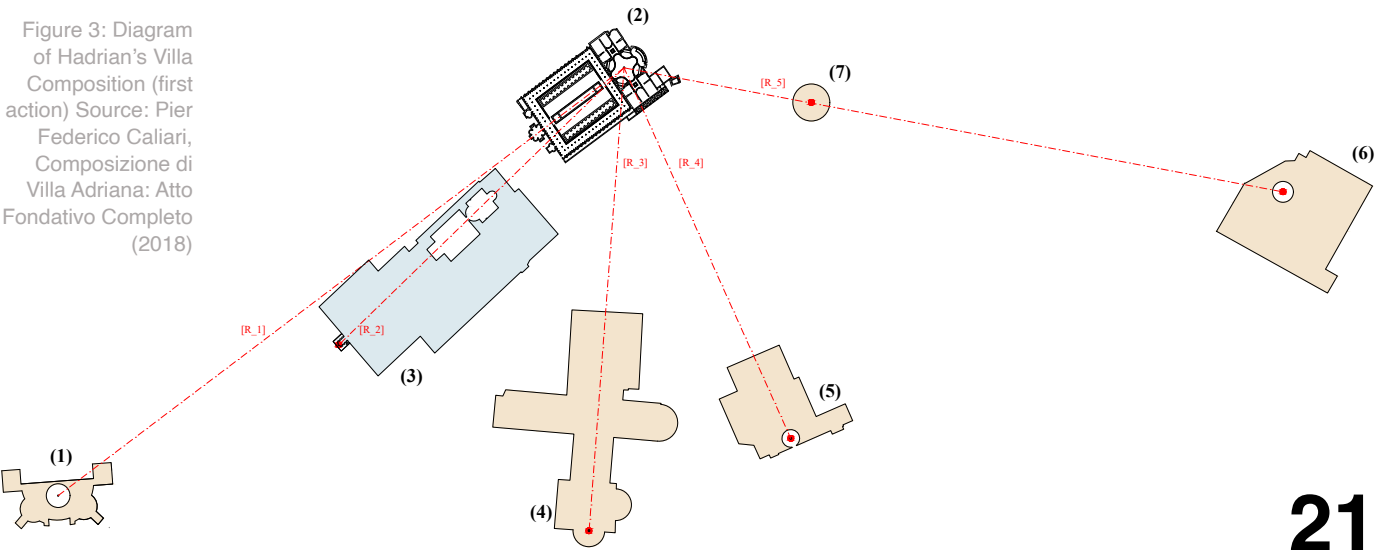
luxury through baths, libraries, crypts, and banquet halls⁴.

The complexity of Hadrian's Villa is not limited to aesthetics but also responds to meticulous spatial planning. As architect Pier Federico Caliri points out in his book "Tractatus logico-syntacticus: The Transparent Form of Hadrian's Villa", the true form of the villa is "invisible to the naked eye." For an inexperienced observer, without the necessary information, the buildings could appear arranged according

to their own logic, without a clear sense of organization. However, a detailed analysis from an overall view reveals the underlying logic: the organization of the complex can be defined as polar, polycentric, radial, and hypotactic⁵.

The composition of Hadrian's Villa is first understood through a polar logic, where certain buildings act as centers of attraction and spatial organization. These poles, such as the Temple of Venus Cnidia (1) or the Nymphaeum of Piazza d'Oro (2), not only possess a symbolic

Figure 3: Diagram of Hadrian's Villa Composition (first action) Source: Pier Federico Caliri, Composizione di Villa Adriana: Atto Fondativo Completo (2018)



or representative value, but also function as geometric foci from which axes and alignments are drawn that orient the arrangement of other architectures.

The organization of Hadrian's Villa evolves towards a polycentric logic, in which multiple buildings acquire the status of order-generating centers. Beyond the initial primacy of poles such as the Temple of Venus Cnidia (1) or the Nymphaeum of Piazza d'Oro (2), progressively other cores appear: the Domus (3), the building with three exedras (4), the Great Bath (5), and the Temple of Apollo (6) integrate into the organizational network and articulate their own axes and relationships. In this way, the villa does not depend on a single governing point.

From the main axes, the first trilaterations are developed, understood as geometric operations in which triangles are drawn between reference centers. The first of these is established between the two main cores, the Nymphaeum of Piazza d'Oro and the Temple of Venus Cnidia, along with the center of the western exedra of the Building with Three Exedras. The articulation of these points generates various geometric configurations, among which the formation of a right angle of 90° stands out. The bisector of the angle located at the vertex corresponding to the Temple of Venus becomes the axis of symmetry of the Maritime Theatre and, in turn, determines the layout of its main entrance.

The area delimited by this first trilateration integrates a significant set of buildings, among which are the Maritime Theatre, the Building with Three Exedras, the Latin Library, the Greek Library, the Caserma dei Vigili, and the eastern sector of the Pecile.

The second trilateration is established taking the Nymphaeum of Piazza d'Oro as the main pole, from which new spatial relationships are articulated. In this process, a hypotactic logic becomes evident, understood as the geometric subordination of other buildings, including the Great Baths, the Small Baths, and the Great Vestibule, whose position and orientation are

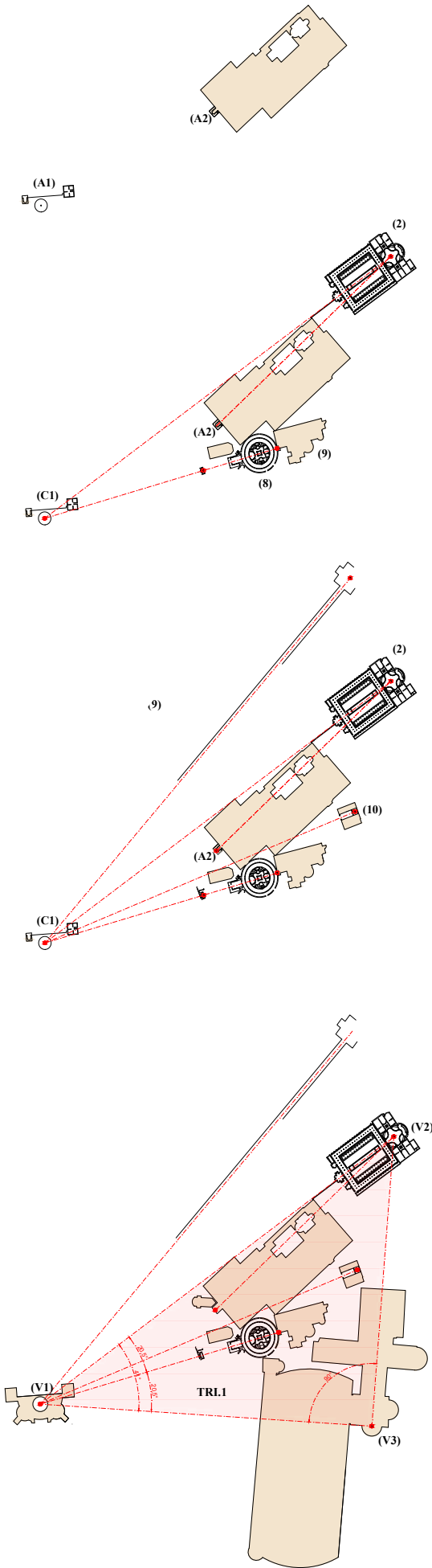


Figure 4: Diagram of the First Action, First Trilateration. Source: Pier Federico Caliarì, *Composizione di Villa Adriana: Atto Fondativo Completo* (2018)

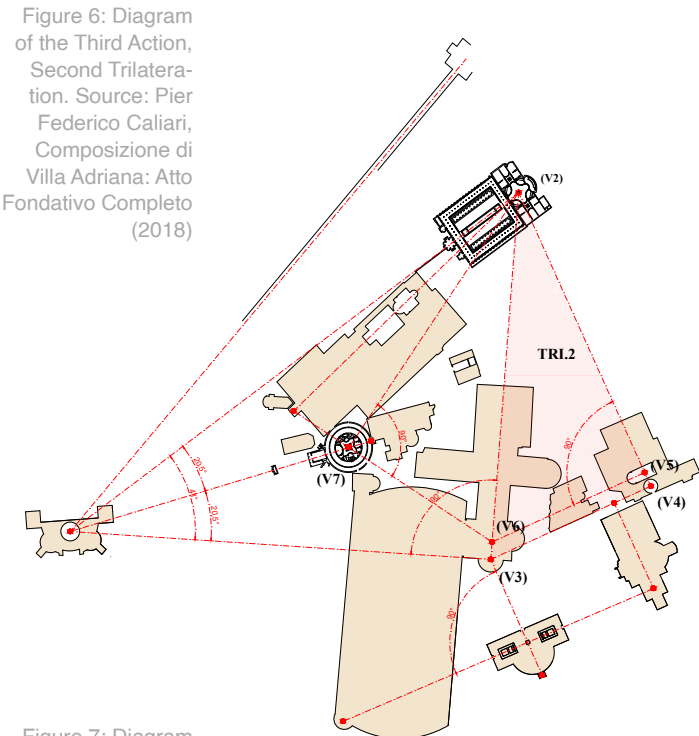


Figure 6: Diagram of the Third Action, Second Trilateration. Source: Pier Federico Caliarì, *Composizione di Villa Adriana: Atto Fondativo Completo* (2018)

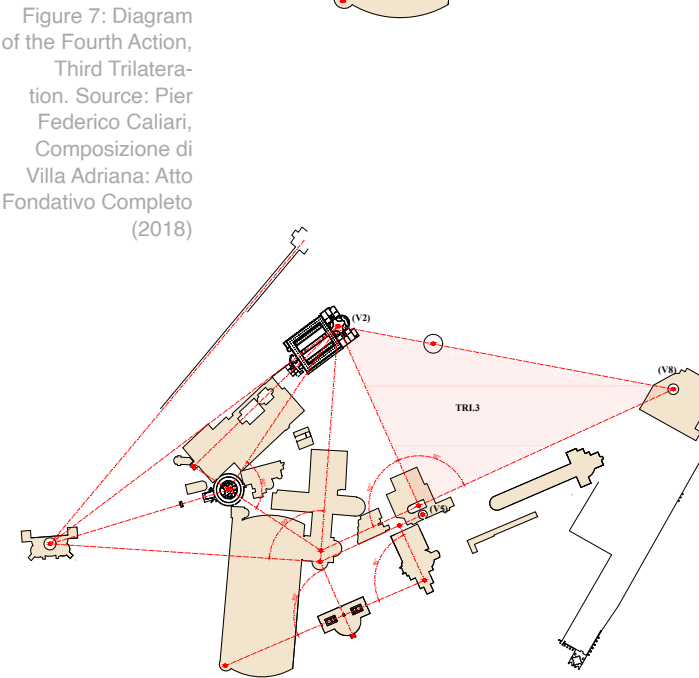


Figure 7: Diagram of the Fourth Action, Third Trilateration. Source: Pier Federico Caliarì, *Composizione di Villa Adriana: Atto Fondativo Completo* (2018)

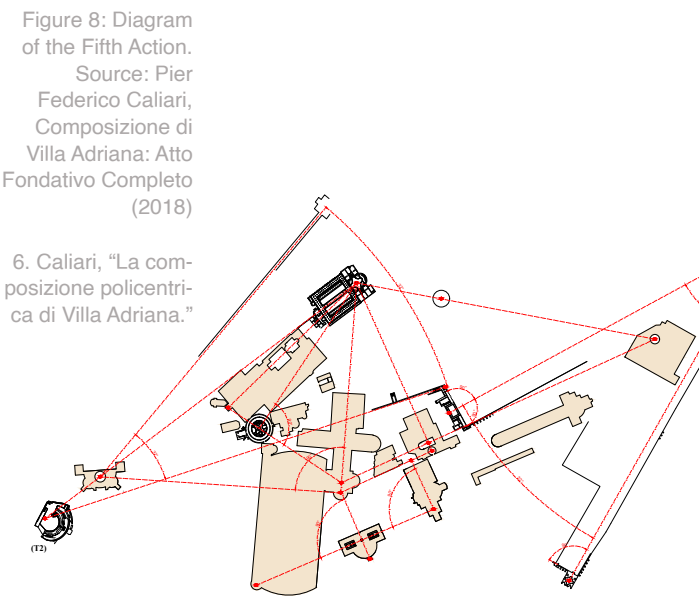


Figure 8: Diagram of the Fifth Action. Source: Pier Federico Caliarì, *Composizione di Villa Adriana: Atto Fondativo Completo* (2018)

6. Caliarì, "La composizione policentrica di Villa Adriana."

defined based on the governing center constituted by the Nymphaeum.

The area resulting from this operation, delimited by the vertices located at the Nymphaeum of Piazza d'Oro, the frigidarium of the Great Baths, and the courtyard of the Building with Three Exedras, once again generates a right angle of 90 degrees, reaffirming the geometric coherence of the complex.

The third trilateration of the complex is configured again from the Nymphaeum of Piazza d'Oro, which reaffirms its hierarchy as a composition-generating center. From this point, a connection is established with the vertex located at the frigidarium of the Great Baths, which thus acquires the status of a secondary pole within a polycentric system, and with the vertex situated at the center of the Temple of Apollo, expanding the geometric network of relationships and consolidating its polycentric structure

The fifth and final action in the compositional logic of Hadrian's Villa is articulated through the introduction of the two theatres, located to the north (T1) and south (T2), which assume the role of generating heads within a large "tweezer"-shaped composition. The Southern Theatre projects its influence towards the west, giving rise to the large elevated terraces and the Roccabruna complex, which act as a monumental boundary in that direction. On the other hand, the Northern Theatre, aligned with the axis of the Temple of Venus Cnidia, closes the composition towards the east, consolidating a geometric and spatial balance between both extremes. In this way, the two theatres not only function as autonomous architectural poles, but also establish a gesture of closure and containment, reinforcing the overall coherence of the complex through a monumental tweezer-shaped structure⁶.



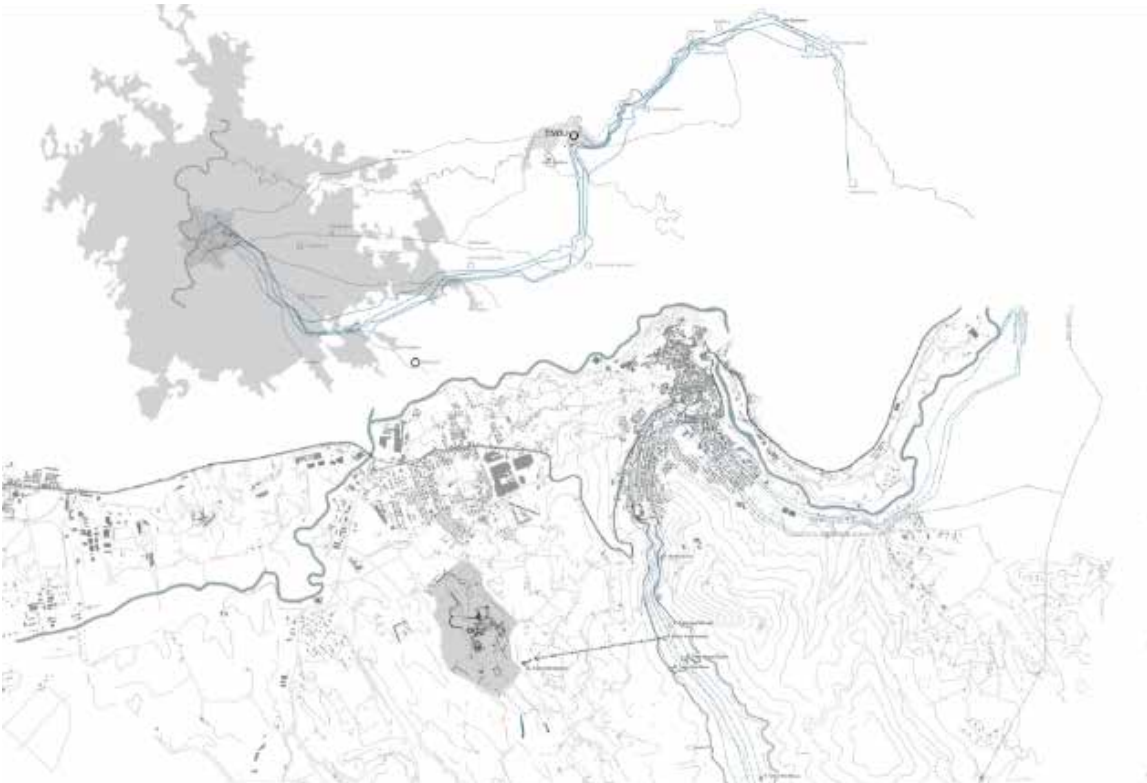
Hadrian's Villa as a Space of Connection with Water

The organization of the villa was not only conceived geometrically, since its location, technical dimension, and symbolic dimension were highly influenced by water. The placement of the villa in the Tiburtine landscape was not a random decision: the territory has an abundance of water sources such as the Aniene River, and is close to important Roman aqueducts, including the Anio Vetus, Anio Novus, Aqua Claudia, and Aqua Marcia, where the infrastructure allowed for a constant and abundant supply. This external hydraulic system ensured the autonomy of the complex and also provided the possibility of deploying sophisticated water management within its interior.

Besides these imposing external infrastructures, it is plausible to assume there probably was a series of internal channels, visible and invisible, that redistributed water within the perimeter of the villa.

These underground and surface conduits probably functioned as a refined extension of the principal aqueducts, directing the supply to the different internal elements and so revealing a sophisticated hydraulic system that combined engineering, landscape, and symbolism. The direction and distribution of water also took advantage of the natural slope of the terrain, which descends from south to north (with north represented on the left in the supply hypothesis map). This gradient made it possible for the lower areas of the villa, particularly the zones of the Greek Theatre and the Gymnasium, to function as collection points and accumulation ponds, thereby closing the hydraulic cycle through a strategic use of topography⁷.

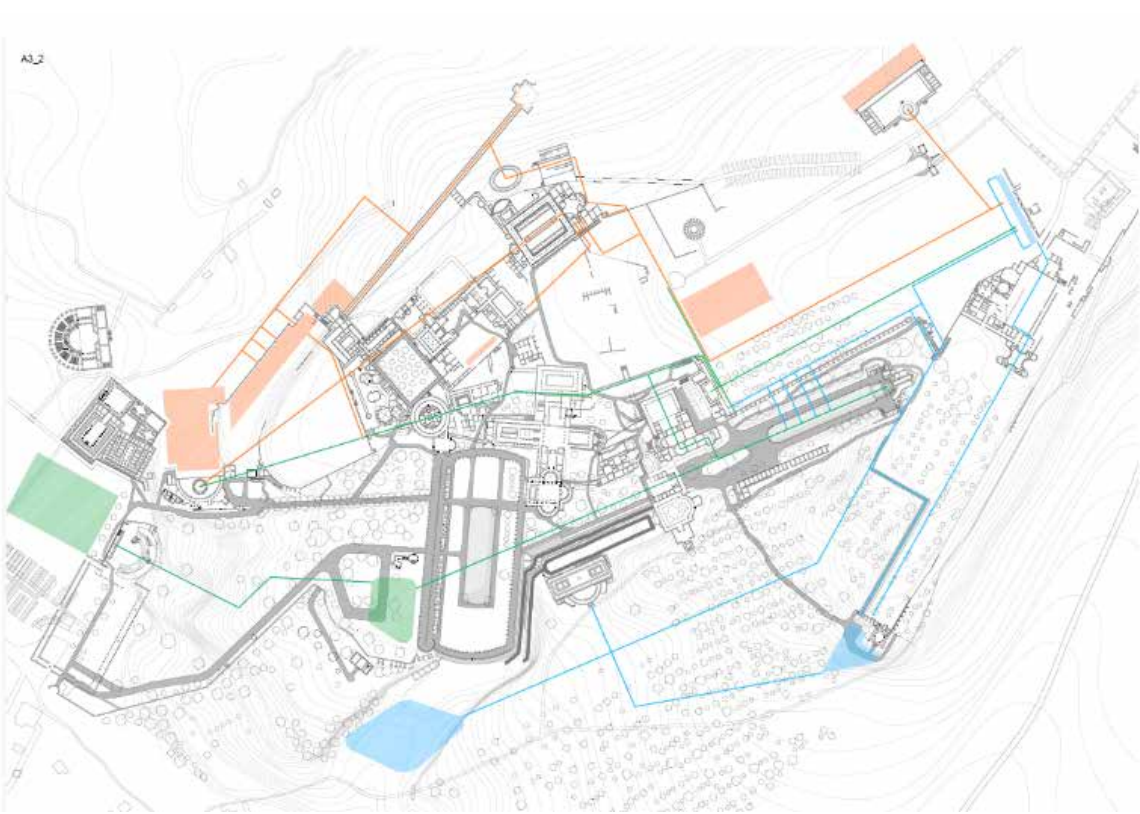
Once inside the villa, water became a primary architectural and landscape resource. The ponds, nympheae, channels, and reflecting pools served utilitarian function, and also actively participated in the construction of the spatial experience. The Canopus, the Maritime Theatre, the Pecile, and the various bath complexes show this integration, where water regulates the microclimate, enriches the architectural scenography, and causes effects of reflection and visual depth. Similarly, in the gardens and



7. Cardinale and Slavich, "Villa Adriana. Architetture d'acqua."

Figure 9: Plan of the aqueducts supplying Hadrian's Villa. Source: Cardinale and Slavich, Villa Adriana – Architetture d'Acqua 1 (2016), p. 75.

Figure 10: Water infrastructure and aqueduct system of Hadrian's Villa. Adapted from DWG file provided by Accademia Adrianea, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



8. Virtual World Heritage Laboratory, "Building with Fishpond." And "Maritime Theater."

9. Cardinale and Slavich, "Villa Adriana. Architetture d'acqua."

10. Caliri, "Valorizzazione dei Beni Culturali."

11. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Villa Adriana (Tivoli)."

landscape pathways, water could articulate the relationship between architecture and nature, transforming the territory into a setting for contemplation and pleasure⁸.

In this way, the villa presents itself as a synthesis between Roman engineering and the poetics of landscape, in which water simultaneously acts as vital infrastructure, aesthetic resource, and symbol of imperial power⁹.

As has been presented throughout this work, Hadrian's Villa constitutes one of the oldest and richest architectural complexes of Roman heritage, whose influence has transcended centuries. Its extraordinary spatial and constructive configuration has inspired prominent architects and theorists: Andrea Palladio mentions it in I quattro libri dell'architettura as a reference model; Giovanni Battista Piranesi conducted fundamental graphic studies in Le Antichità Romane, accompanied by suggestive imaginary reconstructions; and, in modernity, Le Corbusier recognized in the villa a decisive precedent for the free and fluid conception of architectural space, even without documentary evidence of a direct visit¹⁰.

It was to be expected that this complex would catch the attention of the UNESCO, since it represents a testament of the survival of the early Roman Empire, after its rediscovering in 1461 it has served as inspiration for various architects throughout history, particularly during periods such as the Renaissance and the Baroque¹¹.

UNESCO Declaration and Heritage Value

For these reasons, the villa was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1999, during the 23rd session of the World Heritage Committee held in Marrakech, Morocco. The inscription was based on criteria (i), (ii), and (iii), where: (i) means the villa is described as a masterpiece that brings together diverse and extensive expressions of the ancient Mediterranean world. Following, (ii) means the villa has been a source of inspiration for multiple architects in different historical periods since its rediscovery, thanks to the monuments that make up the complex and demonstrate the richness, diversity, and technique of classical Ro-



Figure 11: Canopo,
Villa Adriana
Source: photograph
by the authors.

man architecture. And finally (iii) means the villa constitutes an exceptional testimony of the early Roman Empire. The preservation of a large number of buildings, statues, sculptures, and other structures in the complex illustrates the functions, events, and traditions of everyday life, from both the emperor and those who inhabited this magnificent space¹².

Since its inscription, the villa has been under the administration and supervision of various Italian entities, both state and non-state, among which stand out: the Ministero della Cultura (MiC), the authority responsible for cultural heritage in Italy, which manages the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per l'area metropolitana di Roma, in charge of the direct supervision of the site. Its tasks include the conservation and restoration of monuments, the archaeological protection of the land and structures, the coordination of scientific and archaeological studies, and the supervision of projects within the buffer zone.

Alongside these, there is the organization Villa IAE, which administers several archaeological sites in Italy, including Hadrian's Villa and Villa d'Este¹³.

This is an operational structure that handles the practical management and promotion of the site, and covers: tourism management, maintenance and conservation, cultural promotion and dissemination, and coordination with state authorities. All these institutions work together to ensure that interventions and activities carried out within the villa comply with cultural heritage regulations and with the criteria established by UNESCO¹⁴.

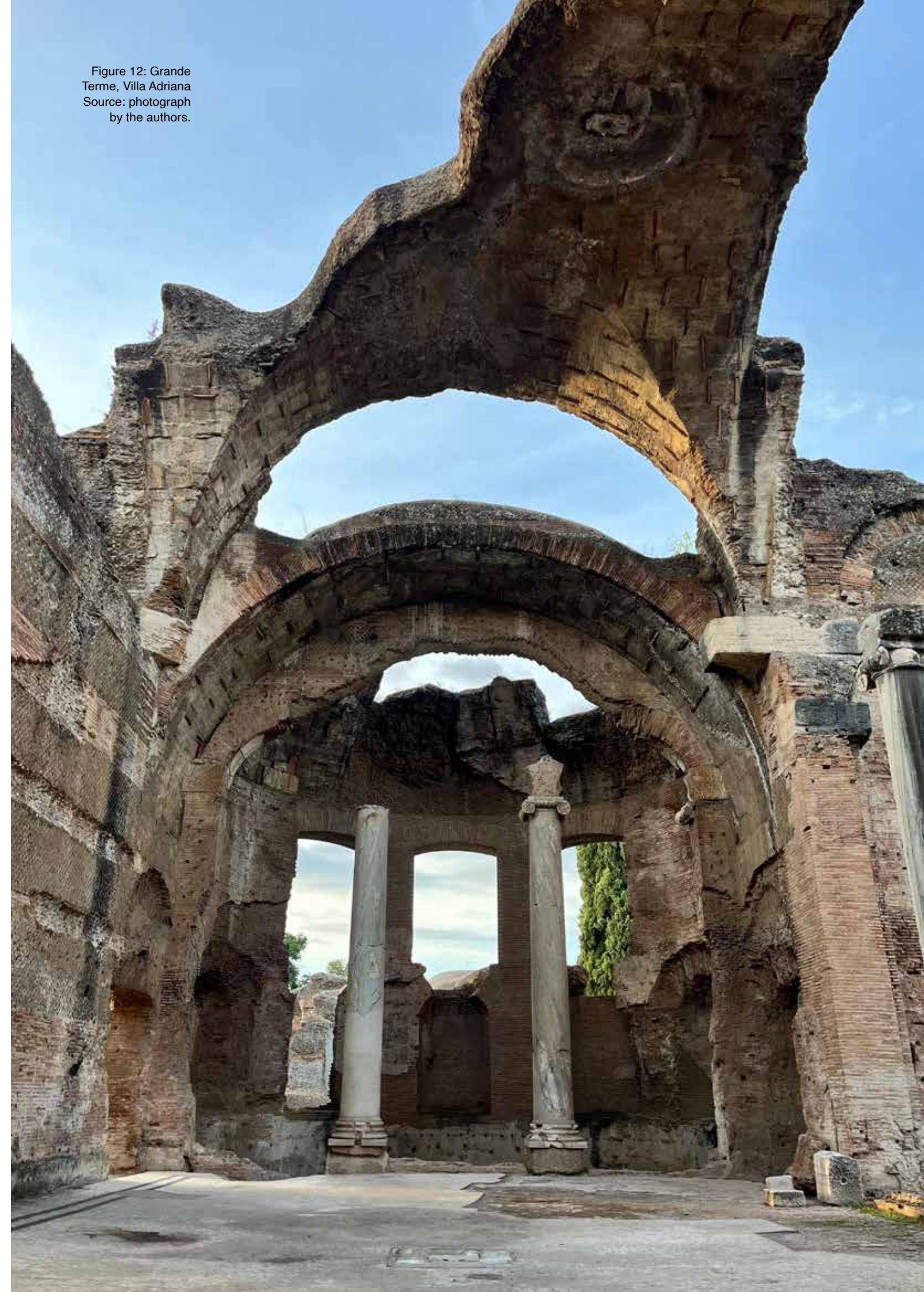
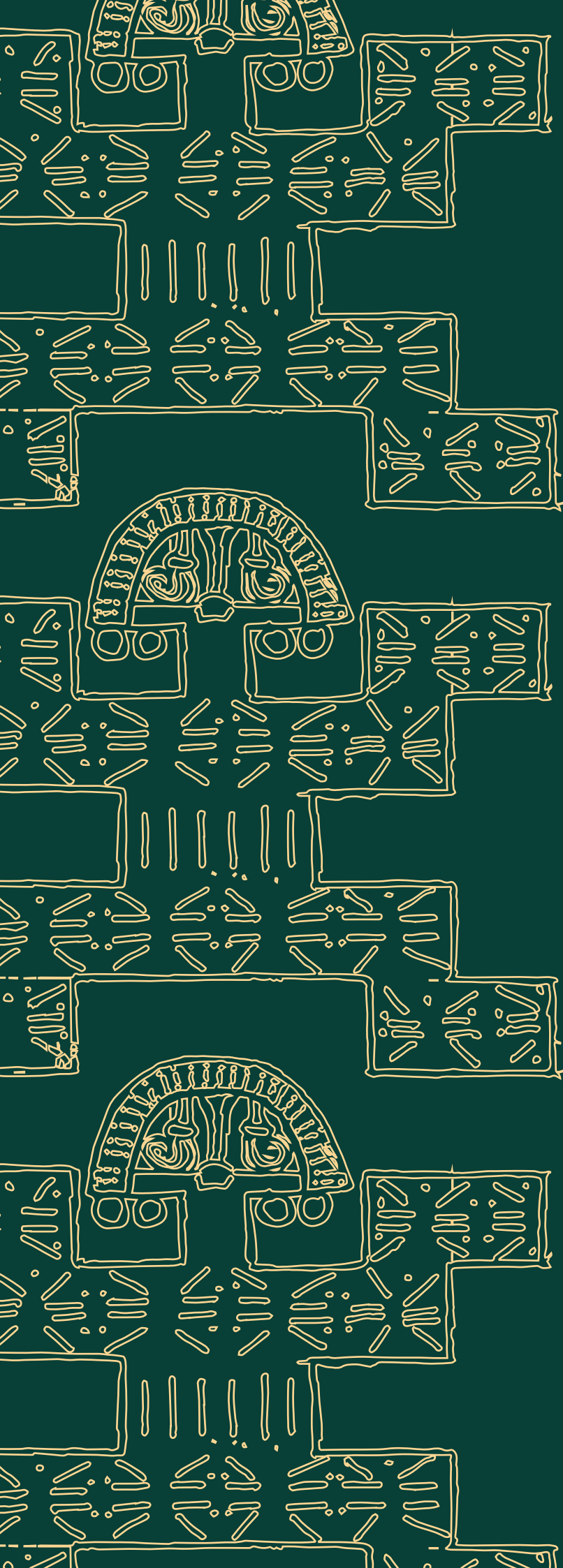


Figure 12: Grande
Terme, Villa Adriana
Source: photograph
by the authors.

12. Commissione Nazionale Italiana per l'UNESCO, "Villa Adriana (Tivoli)."

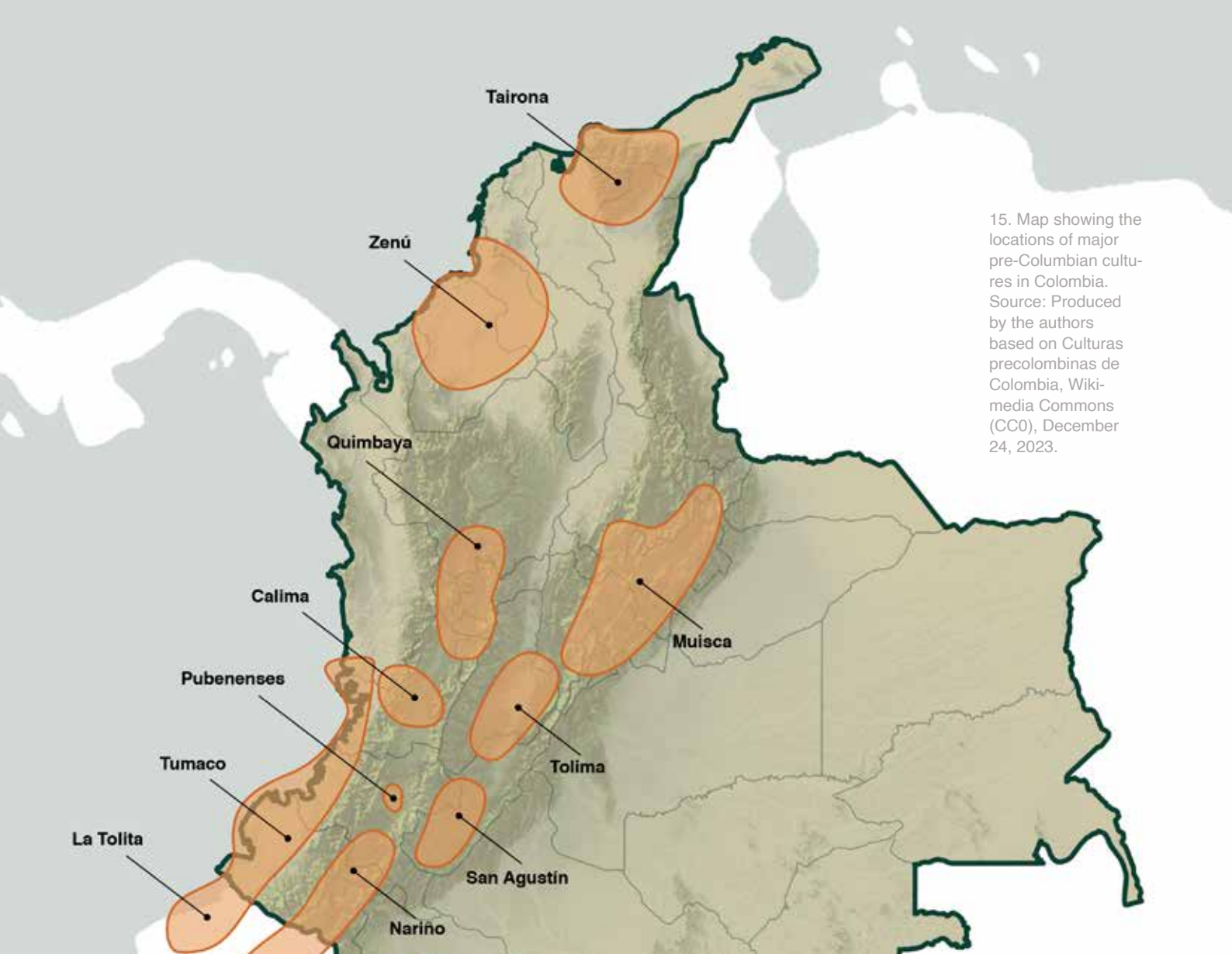
13. Villa Adriana e Villa d'Este (VILLÆ), "Il '2023' nelle VILLÆ di Tivoli."

14. Basso Peressut and Caliri, "La 'maggior protezione' dei siti UNESCO."



Chapter III

The Gold and the Memory



On October, 1492, Christopher Columbus arrived at what are now the territories of Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. Believing he had reached India, he called those he encountered there “Indians.” In reality, the people who inhabited the Americas at that time were complete and complex civilizations, spread across the entire continent. Today, we know all these civilizations by the name “pre-Columbian”. However, since they were dispersed throughout the territory, the different civilizations were very different from one another. Some, such as the Maya, the Aztec, and the Inca, (which are also the most widely recognized worldwide), were sedentary societies, experts in architecture, astronomy, mathematics, and agriculture. Others were nomadic, and there are not many records of their passage on the land¹⁵.

In Colombia, various peoples developed throughout the territory. However, it is not possible to speak of goldsmithing across the entire country. There is no evidence that the peoples settled in the Amazon and Orinoquía regions practiced metalworking, even though these territories cover more than half of the national area. These techniques were apparently found among the peoples of the Pacific coast, the border with Ecuador, and in the valleys and mountains of the Andes¹⁶.

In these regions, the gold, copper, silver, and platinum were more than materials. They became the principal ingredient for one of the most sophisticated expressions of indigenous spirituality and goldsmithing.

16. Colombia.co, “Así fue la época precolombina.”

17. García Botero, “La orfebrería en la Colombia antigua.”

18. Turbay-Ceballos, Croyances et pratiques religieuses des Zenus.

Architecture in Pre-Columbian Colombian Cultures

The House as Cosmos

For many Indigenous cultures of the pre-Columbian Colombia the house was conceived as a reflection of the cosmos where the roof represented the heavens and sunlight entered through precisely aligned openings, and each space served a defined ritual or social function. The central point of the house was considered the center of the universe, where rituals were performed to maintain balance between the human and the divine.

For the Muisca, the chief’s house had a public and religious significance: It functioned as a center for ceremonies, sacrifices, for defense, and community organization. The chief embodied political and spiritual leadership, meaning he was close to the gods. After death, his mummified body was preserved within his house, which was then permanently sealed.

Gold played a vital role in this cosmology, not as a symbol of wealth, but of spiritual power. Gold ornaments such as nose rings and ear spools were given only after long periods of retreat and spiritual preparation, marking the leader’s transformation into a bridge between the earthly and the divine. The Zenú Civilization

In the Colombian Caribbean coast, the Zenú people (1st–9th century CE) developed an hydraulic culture. This highly flood-prone region alternated between dry plains and inundated wetlands throughout the year, challenging human’s settlement, but at the same time providing immense ecological and agricultural richness.

The Zenú mastered the seasonal rhythm of floods and droughts. Using an adaptive process, they diverted river water into

an intricate network of radial canals that distributed the water across their territory. This hydraulic system optimized agriculture adjusting the water flow to each crop’s needs. They also used artificial lagoons created from river diversions for fish farming.

Water was not only a practical resource but also a sacred element embedded in Zenú cosmology. Their myths and rituals revolved around aquatic beings —such as the Hombre Caimán (Alligator Man), stream spirits, and encantos, entities that could take human or animal form and inhabit lagoons, springs, and storms— reflecting an understanding of water as both a life-giving and transformative force¹⁷.

The Tayrona

In the tropical mountains of north Colombia, the Tayrona people developed an ecological adaptation system based on relief, stone, and water. To control and live in steep terrain, they created terraces supported by dry-stone retaining walls. These terraces were connected by a network of paths that also functioned as rainwater drainage channels.

The construction process began by excavating to the rocky base, filling with clay and gravel, and compacting the surface underneath to form a solid platform held by stone embankments. These stone elements —foundations, walls, and decorative features— were often sculpted and integrated into the landscape’s natural rock formations.

Each Tayrona settlement consisted of 50–200 terraces organized in a network. Because of the slope, agriculture required strict zoning: some terraces housed dwellings while others were dedicated to cultivation. The integration of green areas between terraces reflected an early “garden city” logic, preserving forest patches and biodiversity—a concept that would only be formally theorized centuries later during the Industrial Revolution.

Water played a central role in the Tayrona architectural composition. Springs, creeks, and channels were intentionally incorporated into the settlement design. The circulation routes guided water flow, with filters, bridges, and reservoirs made of stone. Some terraces were directly associated with water features such as stone basins for ritual bathing or wooden suspension bridges.

Circular houses were elevated on stone rings that lifted the structure from ground humidity. Based on the size of these rings, archaeologists identify three building types:

1. Small “doll houses” ($\leq 12 \text{ m}^2$) – likely used for initiation or seclusion rituals.
2. Medium dwellings ($12.5\text{--}50 \text{ m}^2$) – residential units, representing about 75% of the total.
3. Large structures ($>50 \text{ m}^2$) – public, political, or ceremonial spaces located at the core of each terrace cluster.

Walls were built using wattle and daub, or wood, or palm bark. The circulation system was hierarchical: a central axis connected the main ceremonial area, while secondary

and peripheral paths linked terraces, settlements, and agricultural zones¹⁸.

The Muisca

According to the Muisca’s tradition, the first house of government was built upon request of the goddess Bachué, who, according to the story, emerged from the sacred waters of Lake Iguaque. For them, architecture was inseparable from cosmology, from the orientation of temples that followed the sun’s path to each ceremonial house aligned with a different astronomical event.

The Temple of the Sun at Sogamoso embodied this cosmic order. It was built with guayacán wood, clay, and woven fibers and it symbolized the union of natural and spiritual forces. As described by modern Muisca descendants, “the guayacán holds the house, the clay unites it, and the weaving transcends clothing and bags, intertwining houses and temples alike”¹⁹.

Water remained a sacred connector between the earthly and the divine. Lakes and rivers were seen as portals to the spiritual world sites of offerings and ceremonies in which gold, representing sunlight, was returned to its elemental source.



19. Banco de la República de Colombia, “La Ofrenda.”

20. Morales, “Cultura muisca.”

Figure 13: Icon of the ancestral Zenú canal system in the Colombian Mompoxina Depression. Source: Cultura10, “Los canales Zenúes en Colombia: un desaparecido en el territorio y un desconocido en el bolsillo” (2018), p. 134.

Figure 14: Reconstruction of the Muisca Sun Temple at its original site in present-day Sogamoso, Boyacá, Colombia (50-foot high). Source: Henry Lewis, “The Muisca and the Search for El Dorado,” MyQuest Blog (October 20, 2019).

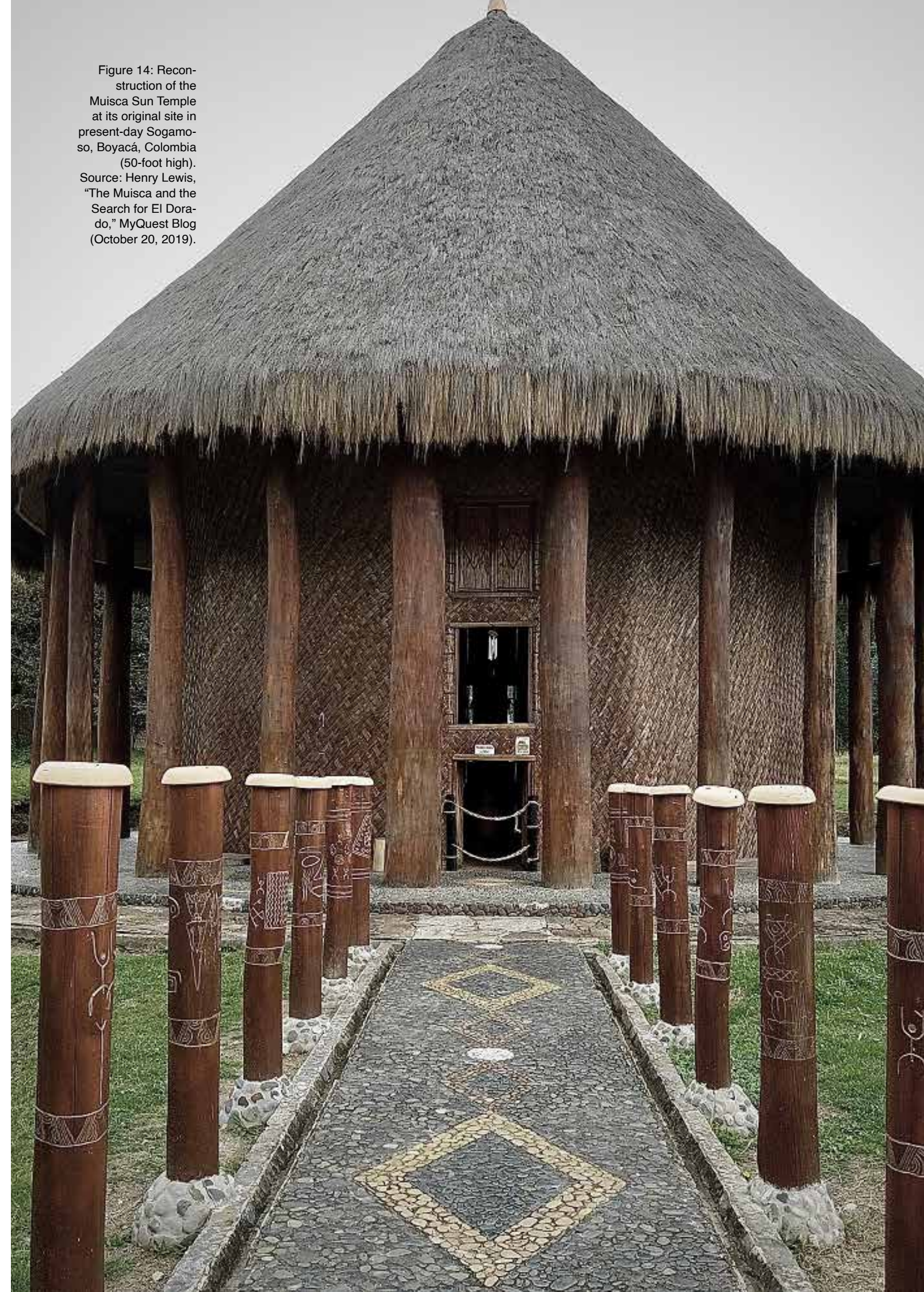




Figure 15: Photograph of pre-Columbian pieces from Oro de Colombia, Chamanismo y Orfebrería. Source: Catálogo "Oro de Colombia, Chamanismo y Orfebrería", Museo del Oro, Bogotá, Colombia.

Gold as a Sacred Material and Symbol of Power²⁰

The Matter: The Sacred Metals

The metals were considered sacred and essential elements in pre-Columbian cultures of Colombia, for their material value and also for their physical properties and symbolic meaning. Thanks to the Banco de la Republica of Colombia there is access to research on metals and their handling in those times. Its museum network, especially the Gold Museum, preserves some of the most emblematic pieces, collected from the pre-Columbian era, and provides detailed bibliography on techniques, handling, history, and relevant terms.

What is a metal

According to the article Pre-Hispanic Metallurgy of the Banco de la República, metals are solid elements, characterized by certain physical properties: they are usually shiny, malleable, ductile, hard, tough, and elastic. In addition, they are

good conductors of heat and electricity, and have a high capacity to reflect light. These characteristics are thanks to their chemical composition, that has a crystalline structure in which atoms bond in a specific way, allowing them to relocate when force is applied. Furthermore, their atomic structure facilitates the conduction of heat and electricity.

The main metals that were used by pre-Columbian artisans were gold, copper, silver, and platinum, both in their native form and in alloys. As the Banco de la República clarifies: "In their native form, gold, silver, and copper generally contain, as impurities, variable quantities of the other two; copper may appear free of gold, while native gold generally contains considerable amounts of copper".

Gold

Gold was the most used metal by the indigenous peoples due to its high ductility and malleability, which allowed the production of very thin sheets. It occurs naturally in the earth's crust, where "nuggets" are formed and rivers transport them from the depths of the earth. Gold

is normally not found pure, but mixed with copper or silver in alloys. Its great advantage is that it does not oxidize, it is incorruptible, and especially, it maintains its shine. This last property associated it symbolically with the sun and spiritual power.

Copper

Copper is believed to be the first metal used to make utensils. Although it is also malleable and ductile like gold, it oxidizes when it comes in contact with humid air, forming a characteristic green patina usually seen in sculptures. In addition, it tends to become brittle under hammering due to its rapid hardening, which makes its handling require greater care.

Silver

Known as the metal of the moon because of its color, silver is scarce and is found in hydrothermal veins of igneous and metamorphic rocks. It is generally not found in its pure state, and instead it is combined with other elements. Its extraction involves processes that remove impurities. It does not oxidize easily like copper, but its surface may darken due

to sulfides. It is the most reflective metal, reflecting up to 95% of light.

Platinum

Although platinum began to be commercialized in Europe in the 18th century, the indigenous people had already used it for millennia. It was originally believed to be a variant of silver, giving it the name of "small silver" or "lesser silver." However it is very rare and is found mainly in the Pacific region of Colombia and Ecuador. Its melting point exceeds 1700 °C, which makes it more difficult to work with, but it is highly resistant to corrosion by air, acids, and ordinary reagents.

Alloy: Tumbaga

The most used alloy by artisans was tumbaga, composed of gold and copper. This combination took advantage of the ductility and shine of gold along with the resistance of copper, allowing the creation of fine and durable pieces that stood out both for their aesthetic value and for their symbolic meaning.

Extraction and use of metals

Mining is the process of selective

21. Banco de la República, "Metalurgia prehispánica."

Figure 16: La Balsa muisca: Votive gold raft of the Muisca culture exhibited at the Museo del Oro, Bogotá, symbolizing offerings in the El Dorado ritual. Source: Banco de la República, "La Balsa muisca, una ofrenda para cuidar el mundo," Banrepcultural (accessed January 5, 2026)





Figure 17: Quimbaya and Tairona gold artifacts. Source: Banco de la República, Musée de l'Or. Colombie (Paris: Éditions Delroisse, n.d.), p. 146-147. Photograph by the authors.

extraction of minerals and other materials. Large quantities are usually extracted to then select only the necessary elements. According to the Banco de la República, today there are four basic mining methods: surface mines, underground mines, drilling wells, and underwater mining. However, in pre-Hispanic times tunnels or shafts were not used; they searched in the mountains where cracks of the earth's crust were visible on the surface. It is believed that the first metal that drew the attention of indigenous groups was copper, due to its particular color.

During the American conquest, Spanish chroniclers documented how indigenous people extracted gold. In Colombia, in the Andes mountain range, miners washed chunks of sand from the rivers that descended from the central and western ranges. They also exploited some mountain veins from which gold emerged.

- The indigenous peoples developed various extraction and collection techniques:
- Wooden or ceramic pans to separate gold nuggets from sediment.
- Nets to catch larger pieces in rivers.
- Diversion of channels to pass through gold veins.
- Burning land where it was not possible to channel the river, to expose deposits.

On some occasions, they dug shafts up to 6 meters deep and heated the stones before cooling them with water to weaken them. To drill, they used coas or macanas, shovels with fire-hardened tips, carved in hard stones. They also used baskets of vegetable fiber to transport soil and auriferous material, and hammers, axes, or crowbars of stone to extract minerals.

Metallurgy (refinement)

Metallurgy is the art of taking the already extracted metals and then refining them for use. The goal is to separate the metal from sulfide compounds, oxides, silicates, or carbonates. For example, to recover gold it was enough to pulverize it and wash it with water. However, these processes did not separate the metals from other alloys. Currently, refinement is carried out in smelters using pyrometallurgy (fire), electrometallurgy (electricity), and hydrometallurgy (chemical solutions). In pre-Hispanic times, a similar effect was achieved through furnaces and fire²¹.

Gold was the easiest metal to refine, while copper required higher temperatures and complex furnace systems. Some furnaces were located on hillsides to take advantage of wind currents; others were buried and required several people blowing air through reed tubes reinforced with ceramics.

Figure 18: Pre-Colombian alluvial gold nuggets ("chicharrones de los ríos"), illustrating native metallurgy. Source: Enciclopedia I La Red Cultural del Banco de la República, Archivo: Metalurgia-prehispánica-chicharrones-de-los-rios (image), accessed January 5, 2026.



During the conquest, portable ceramic furnaces were also observed, in which air was blown through reeds to maintain the fire, reaching more than 1000 °C necessary to melt the metal. By melting gold and copper together, the tumbaga alloy was obtained.

Goldsmithing

Hammering technique: According to the Banco de la República, the goldsmiths of the Eastern Cordillera, the Nariño Highlands, and the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta used hard and lustrous stones as tools. These included anvils, punches, chisels, embossers, and polishers, as well as hammers of different sizes, carved in stones according to the type of metal to be worked. Some tools were made of copper or tumbaga, harder than gold, allowing it to be shaped without deforming. With these tools they applied the hammering technique, shaping the metal until achieving the desired thickness and design.

Lost-wax technique: This technique was mainly used for ornaments of gold and

other metals. The goldsmiths obtained wax from native bees and molded it into sheets, sculpting the exact shape they wanted. They covered the wax piece with clay, leaving a hole for the wax to melt in the furnace. Then they poured the molten metal, and once cooled, they broke the mold to release the final piece, unique and unrepeatable. With years, several variants of the lost-wax technique are known, which show the sophistication of pre-Columbian artisans:

Multiple casting: This variant of the Lost-wax, very known in what is now Valle del Cauca, allowed combining several metals in the same piece: generally gold and copper. First, the piece was made in gold, which melts at a higher temperature. Then details or decorations in wax were added and it was recast with copper. Since wax melts at a lower temperature than gold, the original piece was not damaged, which allowed intricate combinations of metals without visible soldering.

Casting with hollow core: Used mainly in statuettes, poporos, or other containers

23. Banco de la República, "Metalurgia prehispánica."

that required an empty interior. A ceramic mold was first made, which was then coated with wax and again with clay, following the traditional process. When pouring the molten metal, it took the shape of the wax and preserved the hollow core. The holes through which the ceramic was removed were sealed with more metal, achieving completely closed pieces. This technique allowed both material saving and greater control over the weight and balance of the piece.

Matrixing for repetitive pieces: For ornaments composed of many similar units, such as Muisca necklaces, clay or soft stone matrices were used that stamped directly onto clay blocks. Then a sheet of wax was stretched over the matrix, the shape of the stamp was also applied onto the wax, and the usual casting was carried out. Each sheet turned out uniform, but once melted it became a unique piece.

These variants show the technical skill and also the creative thinking and advanced planning of pre-Columbian goldsmiths.

Each piece could involve multiple stages of wax, metal, and clay, with results that combined aesthetics, functionality, and symbolism²².

Rituals, Ceremonies, and Myths around the gold

With what we know today, it is possible to think that the objects produced by these cultures corresponded to jewels that represented wealth and power. However, the political and social system was very different from the current one: ornaments in gold and other metals did not symbolize wealth, but spiritual power. Status was granted by knowledge and the ability to transmit wisdom about the gods and nature.

The metallurgical pieces had multiple functions: they served as offerings to sacred entities and as body ornaments for the living and the dead. For example, the

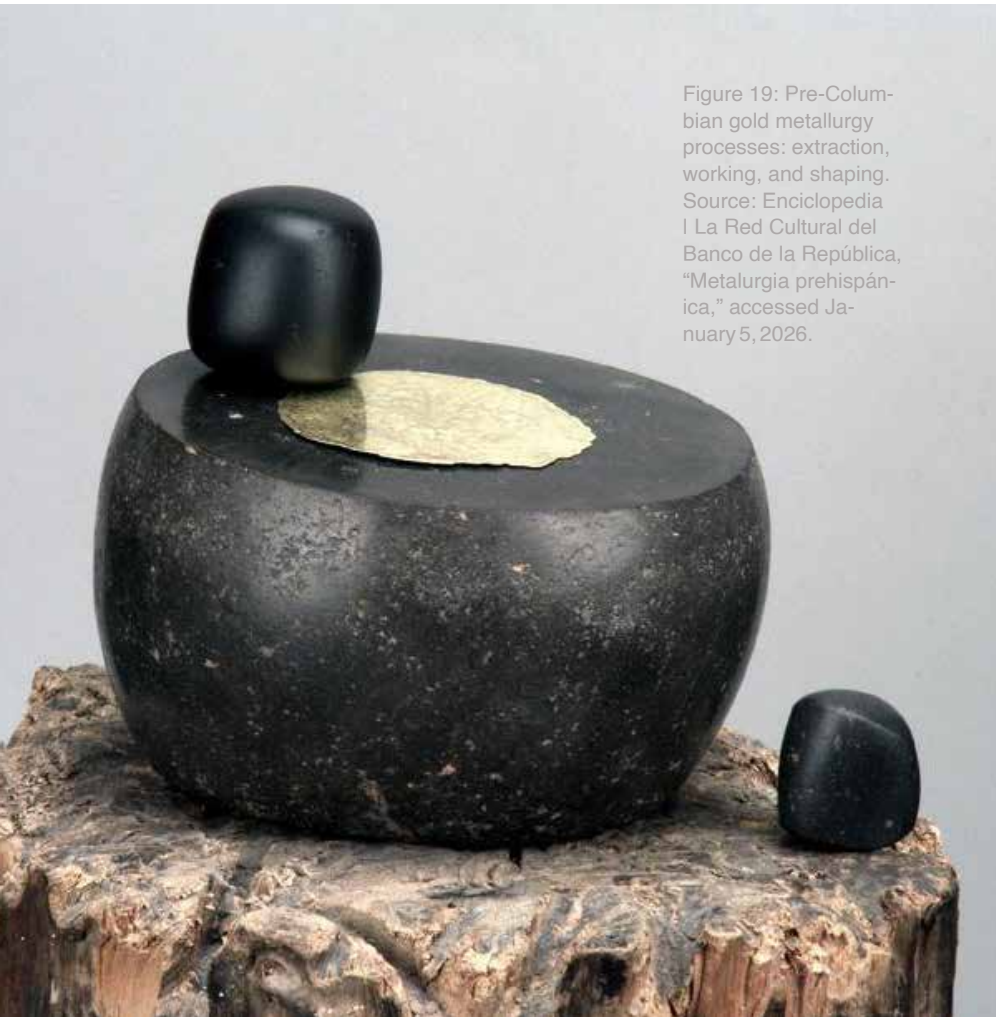


Figure 19: Pre-Columbian gold metallurgy processes: extraction, working, and shaping. Source: Enciclopedia I La Red Cultural del Banco de la República, "Metalurgia prehispánica," accessed January 5, 2026.



Calima people (100 B.C. – 700 A.D.) created diadems, nose ornaments, pectorals, and pendants that could be part of offerings or funerary trousseaus. The Muisca (1000 – 1600 A.D.), in addition to pieces for display, produced objects meant to be buried, often inside ceramic containers along with precious stones, textiles, food, or shells, and deposited in lakes, lagoons, or caves. The art of metal was highly valued, since the shine and color of metals were related to solar and lunar cycles. Those who mastered these techniques had access to the power of controlling and transforming the world²³.

Worldview
The BancodelaRepública defines worldview as the way in which a society relates to its environment, defining itself and the world around it: animals, plants, bodies of water, stars and natural phenomena, as well as spirits, deities, and death. The worldview guides rituals, spirituality, rules of conduct, social organization, symbols, economy, and art²⁴.
Native American cosmologies are considered ecocosmologies, due to their deep knowledge of ecosystems, and ecosophies, because the peoples felt

24. García Botero, "La orfebrería en la Colombia antigua."

25. Teresa Kiss, "Culturas precolombinas."

26. García Botero, "La orfebrería en la Colombia antigua."

27. Banco de la República, "Quimbaya."

28. Banco de la República de Colombia, "Nariño."

Figure 20: Calima gold artifacts.
Source: Banco de la República, Musée de l'Or. Colombie (Paris: Éditions Delroisse, n.d.), p.100-101. Photograph by the authors.

morally responsible for maintaining natural balance. These beliefs were constantly reinterpreted to explain unknown phenomena, for example, the arrival of the conquerors, adapting their vision to new incomprehensible events.

Objects of high material value, such as budares, baskets, stools, and poporos, served as tools of learning, representation of beliefs, and preservation of social order. In goldsmithing, metals —gold, copper, silver, and platinum— were privileged means to create objects with symbolic and spiritual powers²⁵.

Body and clothing

In their worldview, all living beings had a material and an immaterial dimension. Animals and plants were seen as organized communities, with houses and tasks, similar to humans. Hunting was conceived as a marital alliance between hunter and prey²⁶.

The use of ornaments and garments, usually including animal-made ornaments, activated the powers of the beings represented. For example, in Muisca goldsmithing and tradition, birds and jaguars were symbols of political and religious power. Some objects, like nose ornaments or diadems, represented bird-men or elements of the jaguar, reinforcing the relationship between the individual, the nature, and the cosmos.

Duality and balance

For Andean societies the world was complementary structured in pairs, in balance: man-woman, sun-moon, rain-drought, full-empty. Maintaining this balance was the responsibility of the wise and leaders, who used offerings to restore order. These offerings included creations in gold, music with rattles, seashells, and drums²⁷.

Gold, being as shiny and incorruptible, was directly linked to the gods, and was considered capable of manipulating the nature and the cosmos. Therefore, body

ornamentation and offerings were not mere decorations, but instruments to interact with the divine and maintain the harmony of the universe.

Mythical Narratives and Symbolisms of Gold and Water

In pre-Columbian Colombian cultures, water and gold were absolutely linked. Materially and symbolically. Rivers, lakes, and springs structured settlements, agriculture, and daily life, and also served as conduits between humans and the divine. On the other hand, gold, reflective and incorruptible, was not only a material, but a manifestation of spiritual power. It was often deposited in water spaces during rituals. Together, water and gold formed a cosmic dialogue: one sustaining life, the other channeling the sacred, shaping myths, ceremonies, and the very architecture of these civilizations.

Muisca ritual of El Dorado vs. colonial myth of El Dorado

Among the Muisca peoples settled in the high Andean area there existed the ritual of El Dorado, which consisted in bathing the new chief with gold and transporting him on rafts to the center of Lake Guatavita. As part of the offering to the gods, the leader would throw various ornaments and gold symbols into the lake, where a powerful deity was believed to dwell. This ritual was part of the ceremonial life of the Muisca, who ceased to exist before the conquest after being defeated in a war against another people.

The arrival of the Spaniards transformed this tradition into a colonial myth. Upon observing the remains of gold at the shore of the lake, the legend of El Dorado originated: a city completely made of gold submerged under the water, an object of search for adventurers for centuries. In the 16th century, the Spaniards tried to drain the lake to reveal this city, without success; however, they found large quantities of gold products on its shores.



“ *It is not so much that the body is clothing, but rather that clothing is body.* ”

- Viveiros de Castro (1998)³⁰

Explorers and historical writers contributed to the fame of the myth. For example Sir Walter Raleigh, in 1617, undertook his second expedition with his son in search of the famous El Dorado. During the adventure his son was killed by the Spaniards and Sir Walter himself was beheaded for disobeying the orders of the English crown. Another example is Edgar Allan Poe, who in 1849 was inspired by this legend in his poem titled El Dorado²⁸.

Other myths related to gold

Although the myth of El Dorado is the most famous, it does not literally reflect indigenous traditions, but it is based on them as pre-Hispanic people had numerous myths and symbolisms around gold:

The Emberá-Chamí people, in Risaralda, had the myth of Porré, a being similar to a giant serpent, completely golden and with a beard, that explained the origin of gold veins. It was believed that, by blowing the seashell, shamans invoked Porré, who brought darkness and chaos. Two shamans managed to defeat him, and where his body fell, gold veins emerged, showing that this metal was considered a remnant of a nature deity, charged with power and magic, destined for expert hands.

On the other hand the Guambianos, in the Cauca region, believed that in the Lake Ñimpi, a landslide gave rise to a 10-year-old girl dressed in colors, who taught the people to harvest and process gold. She

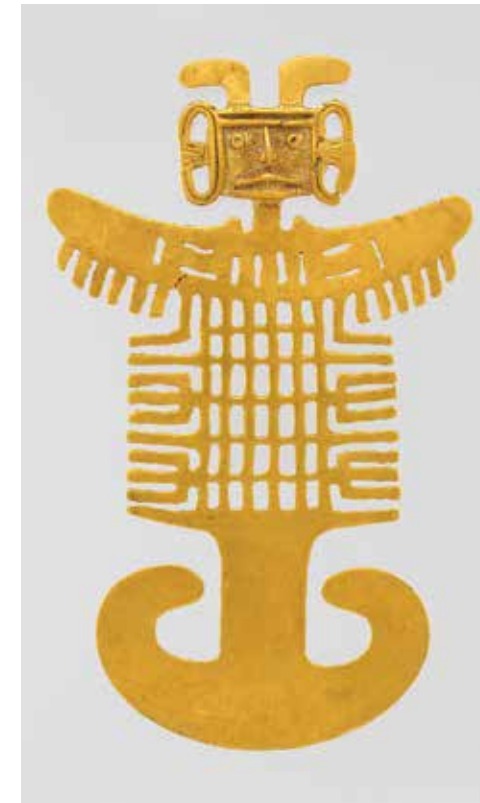


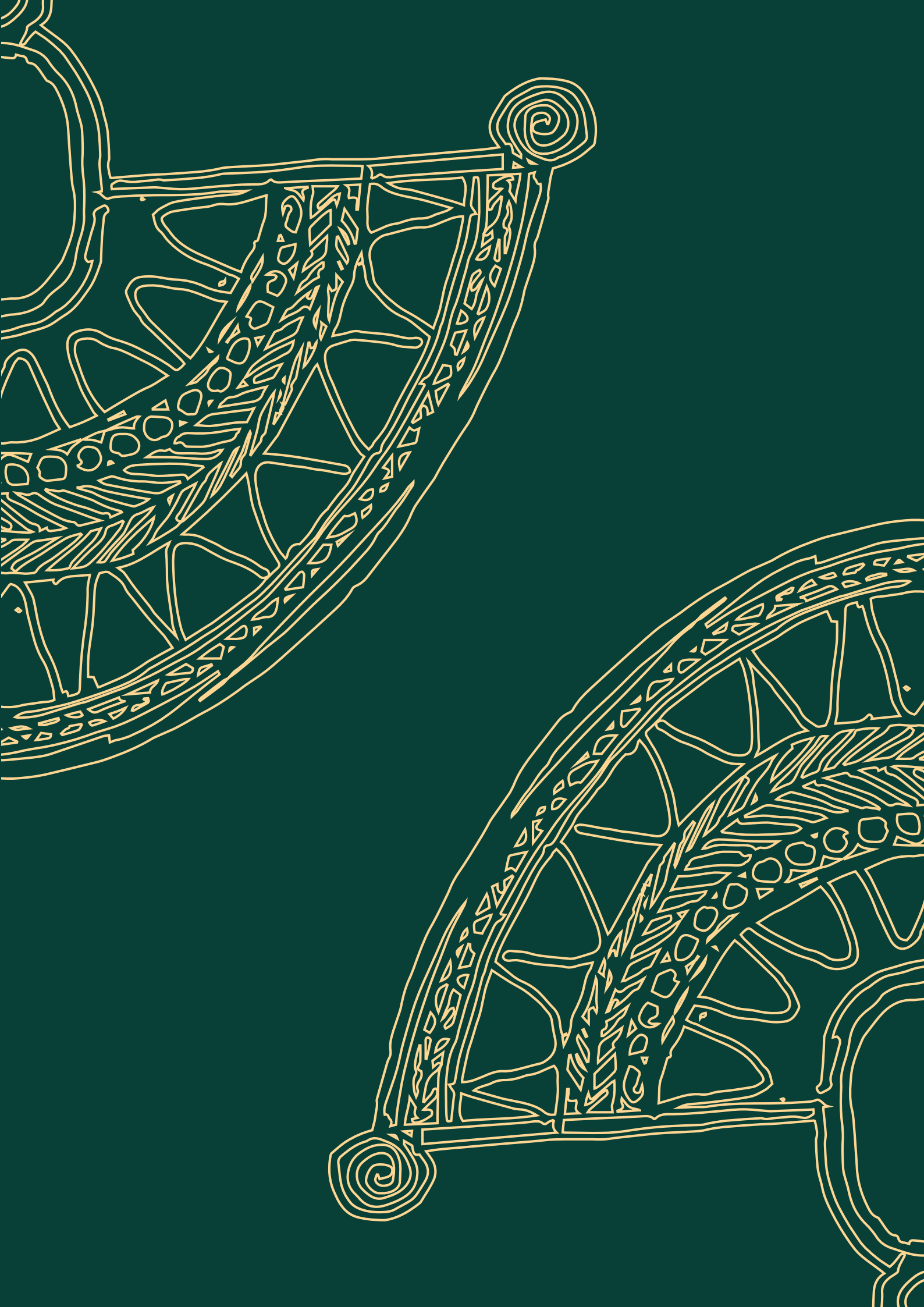
29. Drye, “El Dorado.”

30. Vasco Uribe, El oro y la plata entre los embera y waunaan.

31. Viveiros de Castro, “Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism,” 135.

Figure 21: Selection of pre-Columbian gold artifacts from different cultures of ancient Colombia. Source: Héctor García Botero, “La orfebrería en la Colombia antigua,” Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, December 5, 2024, accessed January 5, 2026.





Chapter IV The Cano Legacy



Figure 22: Heritage Necklace by Cano Jewelry.
Source: Cano Jewelry, “Best Sellers,” International Cano Jewelry website, accessed July 5, 2026.

Cano: Archaeology and Contemporary Jewelry

The Cano Jewelry is a family legacy business that opened its doors in 1970. However, its story began much earlier, in the late nineteenth century. At that time, Nemesio Cano, an expert in stone carving and handling, discovered an important indigenous funerary site. This finding created in him a big passion for searching and collecting pre-Columbian relics. This passion has now been passed down from one generation to another³¹.

Nemesio had two sons, José and Félix who, along with his grandson Guillermo, continued exploring the country looking for these ancestral pieces. Over time, the Cano family found more than 10,000 pieces that are now exhibited at the Gold Museum of the Banco de la República, with some also having traveled to world-renowned institutions such as the American

Museum of Natural History in New York, National Geographic, and the British Museum³².

It was thanks to Guillermo Cano, born in 1929 in Caldas, that the family tradition took a new direction. He wanted more than collecting, he dreamed of bringing unique pieces of pre-Columbian archaeology into Colombian homes. To achieve this, he began recreating his collection using ancestral techniques such as lost-wax casting and hammering³³.

Together with his wife, Dory de Cano, he opened his first jewelry boutique in Bogotá in 1968, and two years later, in 1970, opened his private collection with more than 4,000 ceramic pieces and more than 50,000 carved stone objects. Their son, Luis Alberto Cano, became the first family member to formally train as a goldsmith at the School of Goldsmithing in Pforzheim, Germany, and in 1987 he opened another boutique of the family business in Medellín. In 2001, Cano jewelry achieved a milestone: it became the only jewelry house authorized to reproduce pieces from the Gold Museum’s collection³⁴.

36. Badás, “La colombiana Joyería Cano aterriza en Madrid.”

37. Cano, Eduardo. Interview by Catalina Ossa and Gina Bel-lo, September 2025

38. Perez, “Eduardo Cano on Preserving a Five-Generation Legacy of Colombian Jewelry”.

Today, the Cano family has reached its fifth generation dedicated to goldsmithing and jewelry. Since 2016, Eduardo Cano, a trained businessman, has carried on the tradition, now with a focus on internationalization and expanding the brand abroad, with boutiques in five Colombian cities. In 2024, Cano opened its first boutique in Madrid, Spain. In addition, the company offers shipping to 170 locations worldwide, across Europe, Asia, North America, Central America, and South America³⁵.

Brand Vision and Mission

In conversation with Eduardo Cano, current CEO of the jewelry house and representative of the fifth generation of the Cano family, he explained that the brand’s mission is to preserve and revitalize Colombian cultural heritage through jewelry pieces that can be appreciated and worn in contemporary life, while seeking to consolidate itself as a Latin American jewelry house of global reference, expanding its presence in Europe and Asia without losing its connection to its roots and to artisanal craftsmanship in Colombia.

Cano operates on three fundamental pillars to ensure the preservation of identity: “historical authenticity, artisanal excellence, and contemporary reinterpretation. The challenge is always to maintain a balance between fidelity to legacy and relevance in the present”³⁶.

At Cano, respect for history, culture, and artisanal processes is fundamental. Their goal is to reinterpret the past, maintaining fidelity to the brand’s DNA. They do not focus on fashion trends that are constantly changing, but rather on the brand’s narrative, on craftsmanship, and on timeless designs. As Cano stated to Hola! Magazine in February 2025: “We don’t just make jewelry, we tell stories through our pieces. Every collection is a tribute to Colombia’s past while reinterpreting it for the present.”³⁷

Gold, beyond being a precious material, holds a profound significance for the brand. Cano understands gold as a medium for connecting with history and culture, and as inspiration in the creation of their pieces. The influence of masters such as Alejandro Obregón and Fernando Botero has shaped their careful use of

32. Moanack, “Los Cano.”

33. Molano Guzmán, “La Galería Cano.”

34. Cano Jewelry, “Nosotros.”

35. Molano Guzmán, “La Galería Cano.”

Figure 23: Selection of Cano Jewelry Taver collection pieces displayed on models.
Source: Cano Jewelry, “Taver,” International Cano Jewelry website, accessed January 5, 2026.



gold, seeking to continue the dialogue between craftsmanship, culture, and fashion. Therefore gold functions not only as a luxurious material but as a vehicle for transmitting history and making it relevant in contemporary life.

Jewelry Production Process

When he was asked about the design process of their pieces, Eduardo Cano explained that for each collection they conduct a study of the pre-Columbian cultures of the country, analyzing their symbols, colors, and cosmogony. As he mentioned in his interview with *Hola! Magazine*, they usually focus on one region, motif, or culture that represents the original pieces, so that each collection has a cohesive narrative and a clear concept. Traditional and artisanal elements are combined with contemporary components to honor the past while appealing to modern clientele³⁸.

For the creation of each piece, the jewelry house employs artisanal techniques that best preserve the traditions of pre-Columbian cultures. From the original pieces, handmade rubber molds are crafted. Hot wax is applied to these molds to obtain models, which are then carefully polished to achieve a representation as close as possible to the original piece. Once the wax models are ready, they are coated with plaster. Metal is then applied and centrifuged, melting the wax and leaving the nearly finished piece in metal. The plaster mold is broken, the metal piece is inspected, cleaned of residues, and polished in a vibration machine to smooth its surface. Finally, the piece undergoes a last polishing; necessary parts are soldered for the final composition, and it is given a 24-karat gold matte finish that replicates the look of the original pieces. When required by the design, pieces are assembled and distributed to bouti-

39. Perez, "Eduardo Cano on Preserving a Five-Generation Legacy of Colombian Jewelry."



Figure 24: Selection of Cano Jewelry Taver collection pieces displayed on model. Source: Cano Jewelry, "Taver," International Cano Jewelry website, accessed January 5, 2026.



ques. The jewelry is made entirely by hand and produced by artisans from different regions of the country. In addition, Cano uses what they call “green gold,” an artisanally extracted gold that minimizes ecological impact³⁹.

Reinterpretation of Pre-Columbian Culture
One of the recurring elements in Cano’s collections is the spiral. According to the article “The Symbolism of Spirals: A Journey through Pre-Columbian Culture and the Interpretation of Casa Joyera Cano”, published on the company’s website, for many pre-Columbian cultures, such as the Muisca, Tayrona, and Quimbaya, spirals represented life, eternity, and the cosmos. These patterns appeared in ceramics, goldwork, and architecture, and were not regarded as mere decorative elements but as amulets that connected with the divine.

From the Cano family’s collection numerous pieces feature spirals symbolizing the flow of energy and the cyclical nature of existence. For this reason, Cano frequently incorporates this motif into its designs to honor pre-Hispanic tradition and cosmogony. In this way each piece maintains a dialogue with history and culture, and brings to the present a symbolism that is not only contemplated like would happen in a museum, but also worn, connecting the wearer with the past⁴⁰.

Beyond Jewelry

As part of its intention to keep the country’s culture and ancestral techniques alive, Cano Jewelry has collaborated with artisans from different regions. “We sell Arhuaca bags from the Sierra Nevada indigenous peoples, traditional sombreros vueltiaos, decorative pieces from Chocó, and silk shawls,” Cano stated in an interview with El Español. They always strive to ensure that all products they make and distribute are entirely artisanal and preserve ancestral techniques. Moreover, they seek to adapt them to contemporary life in order to create bridges between past and future.

Cano’s Expansion Abroad
It is undeniable that Cano Jewelry and its family have played an important role in Colombia’s history, beginning with the more than 100,000 pieces they have contributed to the Gold Museum’s collection and the more than 4,000 molds of original pieces they possess to create their designs. However, they also have significant impact abroad, with collections exhibited in major museums worldwide and jewelry showcased in displays in Mexico, New York, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Germany, among others, over the years. Their pieces have been worn by iconic figures such as Queen Letizia, and have been present at international events such as in 2018, when President Juan Manuel Santos gifted them to Queen Elizabeth⁴¹.

The jewelry house opened its first European store in Madrid in 2024. Eduardo Cano states that this is only the first stage of the brand’s international market expansion, as they plan to bring the tradition of Colombian gold to countries in Europe and Asia in the coming years. Since its arrival in Madrid, Cano has received a good reception from clients, who are drawn both to the innovative designs and to the conversations sparked by their jewelry and history. People have been able to connect with pre-Columbian culture through the interaction with jewelry adapted to contemporary life⁴².

Regarding market positioning, El Español reports that Cano’s new store is already competing directly with more traditional local brands, such as the historic Joyería Suárez. Cano thus seeks to “establish itself as a benchmark of cultural luxury in Madrid,” assures Beatriz Badás in her article “The Colombian Jewelry House Cano Lands in Madrid.” To commemorate its opening, the brand launched its new collection, Siona, which stands out for its spirals and floral designs⁴³.

Cultural Bridges and Living Tradition
In the spring of 2025, Cano Jewelry celebrated its first participation in the Seville Fair since its arrival in Spain in 2024. Following this event,

40. Cano Jewelry, “Proceso de producción.”

41. Cano Jewelry, “El simbolismo de las espirales.”

42. Serra, “La joyería colombiana.”

43. Badás, “La colombiana Joyería Cano aterriza en Madrid.”

44. Serra, “La joyería colombiana.”

45. Cano Jewelry, “Feria de Sevilla: Herencia, arte y celebración.”

46. Cano, Eduardo. Interview by Catalina Ossa and Gina Bello, September 2025.

47. Cano Jewelry, “Feria de Sevilla: Herencia, arte y celebración.”

48. Cano Jewelry, “Feria de Sevilla: Herencia, arte y celebración.”

they published an article on their website titled “Feria de Sevilla: Heritage, Art, and Celebration.” In this article the jewelry house reflects on how the fair celebrates traditions that highlight the past and the culture of a place, preserving their value through rituals in the present⁴⁴.

They emphasize how the Seville Fair resonates with Cano’s philosophy which is “to preserve what is ancestral, reinterpret it, and make it part of the present”⁴⁵.

The article invites readers to “take a piece of Colombia to a deeply Spanish celebration”⁴⁶,

promoting the construction of bridges between traditions and cultures that value craftsmanship, history, and the legacy of objects that have shaped our civilizations. It concludes by stating: “we pay tribute to the encounter between cultures, to the universal language of art, and to the power of traditions that endure”⁴⁷, making clear the brand’s commitment to cultural connection.



Figure 25: Selection of Cano Jewelry Taver collection pieces displayed on model. Source: Cano Jewelry, “Taver,” International Cano Jewelry website, accessed January 5, 2026.

In Conversation with Eduardo Cano⁴⁸

Crafting Culture Through Jewelry

In order to understand the intersection of design, craft, and cultural heritage in contemporary architecture, we sat down with Eduardo Cano, the fifth-generation steward of Cano Jewelry and current CEO of the brand. The conversation immediately revealed the meticulous philosophy behind the brand's evolution and its dialogue with history, its approach to sustainability, its collaboration with artisan communities, and the ways in which its design philosophy engages with historical and symbolic narratives.

Opening the discussion with our curiosity about the brand's recent expansion into Europe, Cano reflected on their new Madrid boutique: "About six or seven months ago, we opened a store in Madrid, focusing on consolidating the brand and exploring new markets, such as Europe, where history, art, and culture are highly valued. Here, we found a clientele very interested in our product." It was evident from the start that this move wasn't just commercial—it was a cultural dialogue, a bridge between Colombian heritage and an international audience eager to engage with it.

We asked Eduardo about the core values that had guided Cano through decades of growth, and he responded with remarkable clarity: "I think one must be very clear about who they are. Brands that endure over time are very clear about their DNA and the values of handmade work: maintaining techniques, preserving processes, respecting original pieces, and those designs with so much history." His words framed the brand not merely as a commercial venture but as a guardian of cultural memory. Later, when reflecting on the challenges of maintaining this identity while evolving, he reinforced this principle: "For us, the most important thing has been to stay true to who we are; everything stems from what these cultures and original pieces created."

The conversation naturally shifted toward the audience that engages with Cano's jewelry. Eduardo described the multi-generational appeal of the pieces with a quiet pride: "They are timeless pieces, and it's nice to see how different generations relate to the same piece." His observation highlighted the emotional resonance of the jewelry: it was not only a commodity but

49. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations and information in this section are based on an unpublished interview with Eduardo Cano conducted by Catalina Ossa and Gina Bello in September 2025.

also a medium of cultural continuity. Expanding on this, he explained the unexpected reach of the brand: "You find people who have no connection to Colombia, but appreciate art, culture, and history, and that attracts them." For Cano, jewelry functions as a form of storytelling, capable of connecting disparate worlds through the aesthetic and symbolic power of gold. "People use brands because, in some way, it transmits something to them, and ours is related to the mystical, the cultural, the historical," he added, showing how the brand carefully positions itself not just as a product but as a cultural experience.

Turning to the realm of presentation and event design, we asked about how Cano approaches showcasing its collections. He recounted the power of iconic sites and digital amplification: "[Content that] Carolina Herrera made in Madrid's Plaza Mayor, going back to the Madrid theme, and the Plaza Mayor alone is super beautiful; so just having a runway or a walkthrough there already generates a big impact." His insight emphasized that location and context could magnify the narrative of the jewelry, much like the villa in our own project, where architecture and culture intersect to frame the experience.

Figure 26: Eduardo Cano, CEO of Cano Jewelry, fifth-generation head of the Colombian jewelry house. Source: Andrea Pérez, "Eduardo Cano on preserving a five-generation legacy of Colombian jewelry," ¡Hola! (February 26, 2025), accessed January 5, 2026



“For us, the most important thing has been to stay true to who we are; everything stems from what these cultures and original pieces created”

“ *They are timeless pieces, and it’s nice to see how different generations can relate to the same piece.* ”

Yet he also reminded us that jewelry requires intimacy: “In a traditional runway, people are seated and the model passes by. With clothes and garments it’s easier to see, but in the world of jewelry you need to be closer to better appreciate what the model is wearing.” This distinction underscored the need to design spaces that invite close observation, fostering a tangible connection between viewer and object.

Artisanal process, perhaps the most defining aspect of Cano’s identity, came up naturally. Eduardo described how, despite the brand’s growth and globalization, the techniques remain faithful to tradition: “The way to do it is the same. What changes is that we might use

a more efficient oven or wax injectors, but the technique remains the same. The teams can evolve and improve, but lost wax is worked the same.” It was clear that maintaining these processes was not a constraint but a deliberate choice to honor history and craftsmanship.

Collaboration with artisan communities emerged as another pillar. Eduardo spoke passionately about the transmission of knowledge: “We work with different communities, returning again to those values of rescuing and preserving that knowledge [...] all these knowledges pass from generation to generation. If that work isn’t continued, it’s lost; it’s like a language.” Here, Cano positioned jewelry as a vessel for cultural



Figure 27: Selection of Cano Jewelry Kawsay collection pieces displayed on model.
Source: Cano Jewelry, “Kawsay,” International Cano Jewelry website, accessed January 5, 2026.



Figure 28: Traditional lost-wax production process used by Cano Jewelry.
Source: Cano Jewelry, “Our Process,” International Cano Jewelry website, accessed July 5, 2026.

preservation, embedding intangible heritage into tangible, wearable forms.

We also explored the educational dimension of Cano’s work, particularly for clients unfamiliar with Colombia’s rich craft traditions. Eduardo explained, “All jewelry comes with a certificate that talks about the origin of that particular piece, and the crafts also have a certificate explaining their origin and what they represent.” These certificates function as authentication and as storytelling devices, bridging the gap between culture, product, and wearer.

Finally, we asked Eduardo about the long-term vision for the brand. His answer resonated with ambition and responsibility: “To continue putting Colombia’s name high and be a reference for heritage brands that work artisanally; to be a leading Latin American brand crossing borders.” Through this conversation, it became clear that Cano is much more than a jewelry house, it is a platform for cultural diplomacy, an enterprise where history, art, and identity converge into designs that are simultaneously timeless, modern, and deeply narrative.

“ *all these knowledges pass from generation to generation. If that work isn’t continued, it’s lost; it’s like a language* ”

Continuities and Translations

One of the most important aspects of Cano is the commitment to cultural heritage and the preservation of ancestral techniques, which in the project was translated through the use of materials and construction processes that evoke craftsmanship and history. We decided to work with shapes inspired by the pre-Columbian patterns, applied to some structural elements and some wall finishes. The intention was to create a visual reference to Colombian heritage and also to use materials capable of expressing permanence, memory, and cultural continuity.

The idea of the “Statement Piece” which is central to Cano’s collections, was also translated into architectural form. Throughout the route, we introduced singular elements that act as landmarks and moments of attention, these included shapes inspired by pre-Columbian spirals, large-scale sculptures, and reflective metal installations. Just as a piece of jewelry attracts the viewer’s eye, these elements were positioned to help guide movement around the site and create a sequence of memorable experiences.

Materials played an important role in connecting the intervention with both the villa and Cano’s identity, as metals were integrated into railings, frames and exhibition elements, while local stone helped establish continuity with the existing context. The small scale of jewelry inspired the design of intimate and human-scaled experiences, such as getting closer to admire a detail. Also, rather than relying on long and neutral circulation corridors, the project introduced experiential paths, secondary routes, viewpoints, and elevated platforms. All these spaces encouraged visitors to approach elements closely and discover them gradually, similar to the careful observation required to appreciate a handcrafted piece of jewelry.

Another aspect of Cano that influenced the project was its ability to bring together cultural references without establishing hierarchies between them. This idea was applied in the combination of Roman and pre-Columbian influences in the intervention through the use of volumes, vegetation, and architectural forms blending classical geometries from Hadrian’s Villa with patterns and motifs inspired by pre-Columbian cultures, creating a dialogue between both traditions but allowing each one to maintain its own identity.

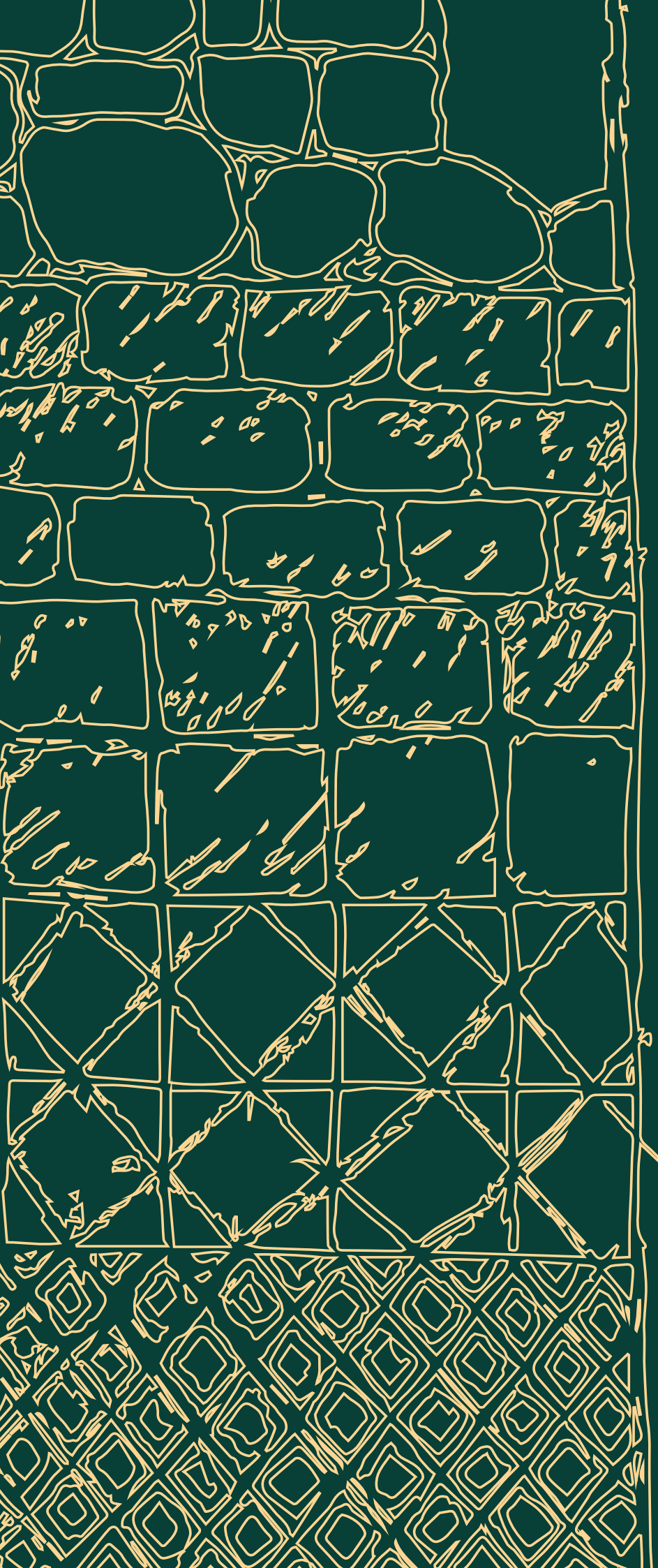
Cano’s emphasis on creating memorable experiences also shaped the use of light and shadow. Filtered light was used to highlight key architectural elements and golden sculptures, generating moments of contrast and visual focus throughout the visit. In this way, the project tries to recreate part of the emotional and visual impact that characterizes Cano’s collections and exhibitions.

Finally, Cano’s international presence and strong visual identity inspired the creation of photogenic spaces and carefully framed views throughout the intervention. These spaces were designed to enrich the physical experience of the site and to encourage documentation and mass sharing. The idea was not prioritizing digital representation over direct experience, but to work on both levels simultaneously, allowing the narrative of the intervention to extend beyond the boundaries of the villa itself.

“ To continue putting Colombia’s name high and be a reference for all these heritage brands that work artisanally; to be a leading Latin American brand crossing borders ”



Figure 29: Selection of Cano Jewelry Taver collection pieces displayed on models. Source: Cano Jewelry, “Taver,” International Cano Jewelry website, accessed January 5, 2026.



Chapter V Intersections

Between Memory and the Present

Before defining the architectural form of our intervention at Villa Adriana, it was necessary to first define the position from which we would intervene. In many ways, the project started from a simple question: How can contemporary architecture inhabit a site of historical significance without either imitating the past or pretending it is not there?

From the beginning, the intention was not to reconstruct the ruins, and not to introduce an autonomous architectural object disconnected from its context. We were looking for something else. An intervention capable of establishing a dialogue with the memory of the Villa, while still remaining clearly contemporary. To support this position, and also to better understand it ourselves, we turned to some of the most influential theories of restoration and conservation.

One of the first positions we encountered was the one of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. His vision of restoration was to return monuments to a state of ideal completeness, even when that state has never historically existed. In that line, restora-

tion becomes more an act of reconstruction. At the opposite extreme, John Ruskin and William Morris defended the ruin itself as a testimony of time. For them, restoration always carried the risk of falsifying history and in some cases, erasing authenticity⁴⁹.

Between these positions lies the work of Camillo Boito and also Cesare Brandi. It was Brandi who became particularly important for the development of our project. In *Teoria del Restauro* (1963), he proposed that any intervention should remain recognizable as a product of its time while still respecting the historical and aesthetic integrity of the existing work. His principle of riconoscibilità became one of the main references for us. (Boito, *Questioni pratiche di belle arti*; Brandi, *Teoria del Restauro*.) We were not interested in making the new appear old. That was never really the objective. Instead, what interested us was the possibility of allowing different temporal layers to coexist without confusion. Different moments in history, but all remaining legible⁵⁰.

To bring this theoretical position closer to contemporary architectural practice, we also turned to Kenneth Frampton's concept of Critical Regionalism. Frampton argues that architecture should resist universal homogenization

50. Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française*; Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*; SPAB, *The SPAB Manifesto*.

51. Boito, *Questioni pratiche di belle arti*; Brandi, *Teoria del Restauro*.

52. Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points."

53. Caliri, "La composizione policentrica di Villa Adriana."; Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points."

54. Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points."

55. Murphy, Carlo Scarpa and the Castelveccchio Revisited.

56. Frascari, "The Tell-the-Tale Detail."

57. Dal Co, Álvaro Siza: Complete Works.

and nostalgic imitation by grounding itself in the specific conditions of place. Meaning that instead of reproducing historical forms, architecture should reinterpret the spatial, material and cultural logic of a site through contemporary means⁵¹.

At Villa Adriana, this means looking carefully at the geometries, rhythms, axis and sequences already present in the ruins. It also means paying attention to the relationships between different parts of the site. Some are very evident, others less so. Together, these observations can become the starting point for a new architectural language. The objective is not to reproduce forms. At least not directly. What matters more is maintaining a continuity of spirit and of spatial logic⁵².

Another position that also helped define our own, although mainly because it was one we deliberately chose not to follow, is that of certain contemporary approaches, often associated with architects such as Rem Koolhaas, Peter Eisenman or Zaha Hadid, known for embracing contrast, rupture and architectural spectacle as design strategies. These projects can be very interesting and they have produced important architectural works, but they also often risk transforming heritage sites into backgrounds for architectural statements that primarily draw attention to themselves⁵³.

At Villa Adriana, where the historical fabric already has an extraordinary spatial and cultural richness, we felt that this approach would be difficult to match with the atmosphere of the place and with its memory.

Project References: Who Paved the Way

The theoretical positions discussed above find practical expression in several contemporary interventions that became important references for this project. Although they were developed in very different contexts, these works share a common concern to introduce a con-

temporary layer into a historic setting without resorting to imitation or spectacle.

For us, these projects were important not because they offered solutions that could simply be copied. They did not. What they offered was a way of thinking about the relationship between old and new.

Carlo Scarpa — Museo di Castelveccchio, Verona (1959–1973)

Scarpa's intervention at Castelveccchio is one of the best examples of dialogue between the old and new. He doesn't conceal the distinction between historical and contemporary elements, he makes it visible through carefully crafted details and material contrasts⁵⁴.

As Marco Frascari notes, Scarpa's joints become places where construction, meaning and memory converge. What we found particularly interesting is that continuity does not emerge from imitation. It emerges from interpretation. Sometimes even from a very small detail. Scarpa demonstrates that architecture can acknowledge different moments in time without attempting to blur the boundaries between them⁵⁵.

Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura — Monastery of Santa Maria do Bouro, Braga (1989–1997)

In the transformation of the monastery into a hotel, the architects accepted the incompleteness of the ruin, and didn't try to reconstruct it. New interventions are clearly contemporary, yet they remain deeply connected to the existing structure⁵⁶.

For us the most valuable lessons of this project is the way the ruin is accepted as it is. The existing condition is not treated as a problem that needs to be corrected. Instead it becomes the starting point for a new architectural layer. This project shows that heritage can be reactivated while preserving the presence and memory of what remains.

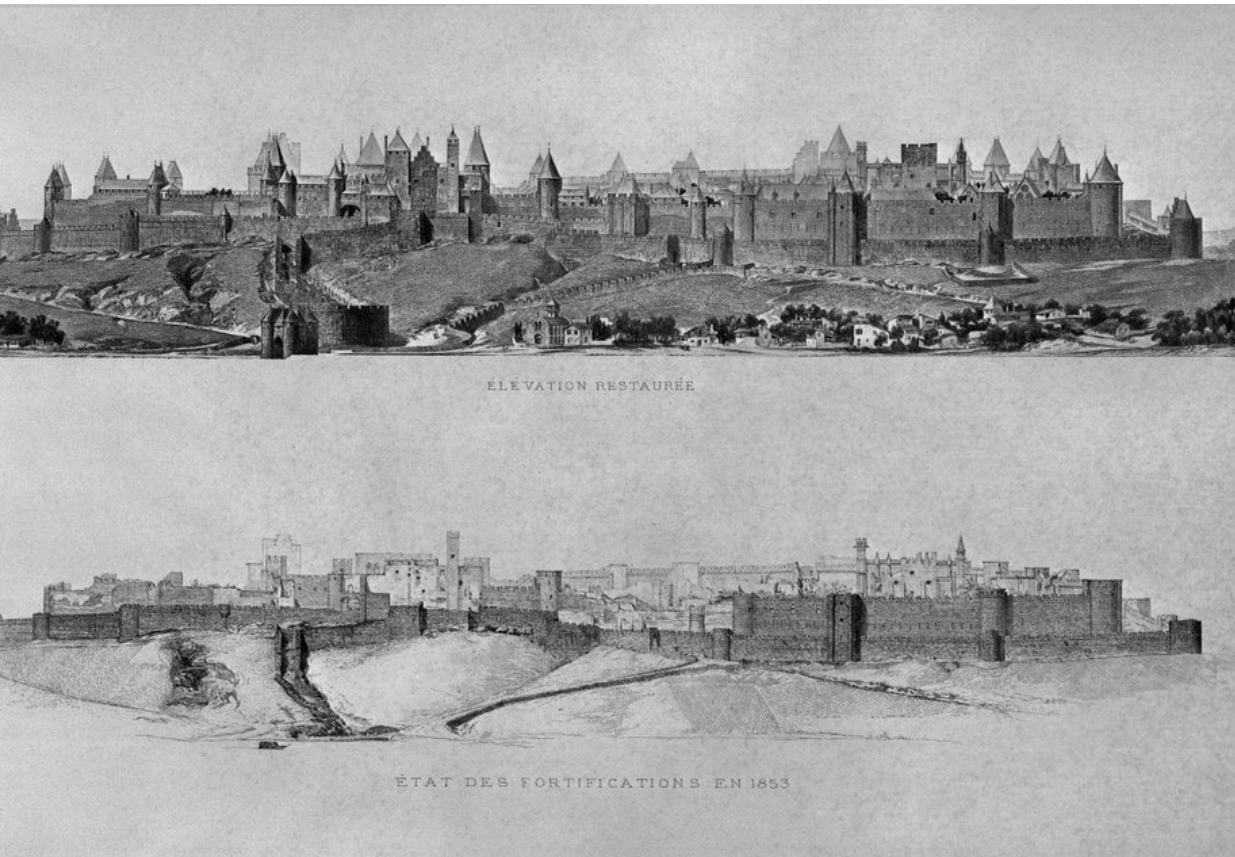


Figure 30: West view of the fortified city of Carcassonne showing the condition of the fortifications in 1853 (before and after restoration interventions). Source: Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, illustration from *Monuments Historiques* (Paris: Laurens et Schmidt éditeurs), 1853, in MeisterDrucke portal, accessed January 5, 2026



Figure 31: Castelvecchio medieval fortress, Verona, Italy, showing its characteristic red brick battlements and fortified structure. Source: image of Castelvecchio, Verona, accessed on Tumblr, January 5, 2026.

David Chipperfield — Neues Museum, Berlin (1997–2009)

Having to intervene in a building marked by war and loss, Chipperfield developed a strategy, based on legibility rather than reconstruction. New additions remain distinguishable, while traces of damage and absence are preserved⁵⁷.

What makes the project particularly relevant for our research is the way it deals with absence. He doesn't hide what has been lost, it allows those traces to remain visible. Continuity with history is achieved through clarity and restraint and not through stylistic imitation. The building does not attempt to erase its wounds, they remain part of the architectural experience.

Peter Zumthor — Kolumba Museum, Cologne (1997–2007)

Built over archaeological remains spanning several centuries, the Kolumba Museum allows different historical layers to coexist within a single architectural experience. Through mate-

rial restraint and carefully controlled light and spatial continuity, Zumthor creates an intervention that feels deeply connected to the memory of the site while remaining clearly contemporary⁵⁸.

There is no attempt to recreate the past or to dominate the space. Different periods coexist. They remain distinct, but they also become part of a larger spatial experience. This balance between continuity and distinction became particularly relevant for our own proposal.

Taken together, these projects suggest that the relationship between old and new does not need to be based on reconstruction or on dramatic contrast. They point toward another possibility. One in which contemporary architecture remains legible while helping visitors better understand memory, place and time. Their lessons became an important foundation for the development of our proposal at Villa Adriana.

60. Brandi, *Teoria del Restauro*; Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points."

61. Brandi, *Teoria del Restauro*.

62. Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points."; Caliri, "La composizione policentrica di Villa Adriana."

63. Caliri, "Valorizzazione dei Beni Culturali."; Basso Peressut and Caliri, "La 'maggiore protezione' dei siti UNESCO."

58. David Chipperfield Architects, *Neues Museum Berlin*.

59. Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture*.

Our Position: A Critical Contextual Intervention

Our intervention at Villa Adriana is conceived as a contemporary layer within a historical palimpsest. Rather than reconstructing what has been lost, or establishing a deliberate contrast with the ruins, the project seeks to engage with the site's existing spatial, material and logic.

For us, the contemporary gains meaning not through opposition. It gains meaning through its relationship with what is already there. This position can perhaps be summarized through a simple principle. Let it be recognized as new, but let it belong.

The intervention remains clearly contemporary while maintaining continuity with the character and memory of the place. It does not seek to imitate the past. Nor does it seek to compete with it. Instead, it participates in an ongoing narrative that extends across different temporal layers and different moments in time⁵⁹.

Legibility of Time

Inspired by Cesare Brandi's principle of riconoscibilità, the intervention is designed to be immediately identifiable as a product of the present. The material choices, construction techniques and spatial language reveal the contemporary nature while preserving the readability of the site's historical evolution⁶⁰.

The visitor should be able to understand immediately what belongs to the present and what belongs to the past. Not because they are separated, but because they remain legible.

Structural, Not Formal, Coherence

We didn't want to reproduce historical forms, so the project draws from the underlying spatial logic of Villa Adriana. Rhythms, proportions, sequences and relationships between solids and voids are reinterpreted through a contemporary architectural language⁶¹.

The objective is not imitation. It is continuity. A continuity based on spatial relationships rather than on formal reproduction.

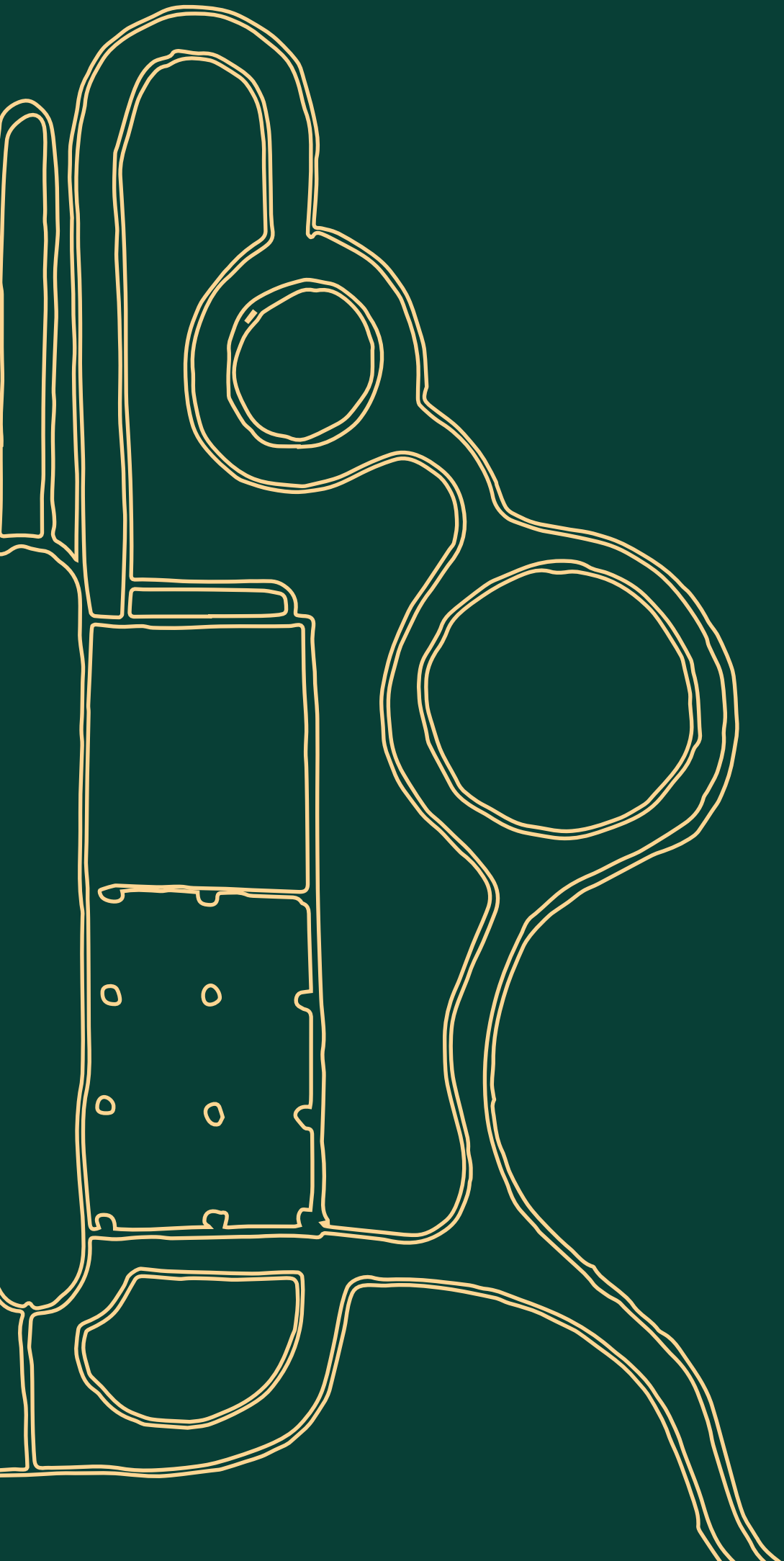
Framing the Existing

The intervention is conceived not as an object to be observed in isolation, but as a device for observing the Villa itself. Throughout the project, architectural elements are positioned to frame some of the views, to direct movement and to draw attention towards significant features of the archaeological landscape.

In many areas the pavilions deliberately show the existing ruins, so they remain the primary focus of the visitor's experience. Rather than competing with the site, the intervention seeks to reveal it. To make certain relationships more visible. To direct attention toward things that are already there, but that may otherwise go unnoticed⁶².

In this sense, architecture becomes a frame. A way of looking at the Villa and not an object that demands attention for itself.

Together, these principles establish the conceptual framework of the intervention. They also provide the criteria through which decisions about form, materiality, circulation and spatial experience were developed throughout the project.



Chapter VI

The Piranesi Experience

Accademia Adrianea and the Piranesi Prize⁶³

The Accademia Adrianea is a non-profit organization, formally founded in 2007, although it had a presence even before that, which seeks research and training in the valorization and rehabilitation of cultural and archaeological heritage. It also has international agreements.

Its two main branches are the SAMA (School of Architecture and Museography for Archaeology), mainly responsible for training and education; and MUS-ATH, dedicated to research through the use of advanced technologies.

The educational branch organizes a main annual event called the Piranesi Prix de Rome, whose name pays homage both to Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778), a prominent Italian architect, engraver, and theorist known for his representations of Roman ruins and his creative reinterpretation of heritage, and to the

Grand Prix de Rome, a competition established by Jean-Baptiste Colbert in 1666 to award the most talented young architects of the French Academy.

From this historic Grand Prix de Rome, the Accademia Adrianea adopts three fundamental pillars for its own event: the comparison of projects on-site with the most important archaeological areas on the planet; the Grand Tour as an educational principle based on the experience of travel; and the quality of graphic representation together with the use of new technologies as a tool of knowledge⁶⁴.

Inaugurated in 2003, the Accademia Adrianea's Prix de Rome welcomes students and architects from all over the world for a workshop on archaeology and architecture. Participants have the opportunity to immerse themselves in Tivoli, in Hadrian's Villa, exploring the archaeological area as great architects have done throughout history. Subsequently, in groups of 6 to 8 people, they develop an immersive project in the Villa that seeks a balance between archaeology, technique, and architectural creativity.

64. Unless otherwise stated, all drawings, renderings, diagrams, project descriptions, design decisions, and architectural analyses presented in this chapter were developed by Group 3 during the Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025. Group 3 was composed of Chiara Alinovi, Sara Balliu, Gina Paola Bello Álvarez, Yasin Muhammed Çalık, Başaksu Durukan, Ebru Gürcan, and Catalina Ossa Terán.

65. Accademia Adrianea di Architettura e Archeologia Onlus, "Chi siamo."



Figure 32: Greek Theatre at Villa Adriana during the Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025, view toward the participants. Source: Accademia Adrianea, unpublished photograph shared internally among participants, 2025.



Figure 33: Site documentation photograph taken during the Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025 for the development of the group project at Villa Adriana. Photograph by Chiara Alinovi, 2025.

Development of the Proposal in the XXIII Edition

The Challenge

The Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025 focused on the relationship of architecture with water, and Prof. Pier Federico Caliarì, founder and organizer of the event, proposed the following challenges to the students:

1. Create a pavilion inspired by Roman thermal baths as an additional area in the Villa, choosing a location close to a water access source and with low archaeological risk.
2. Develop a landscaping proposal that connected different points of the Villa and concluded in a fashion show runway, of a brand chosen by the group, exploring in depth the fashion exhibition proposal.
3. Design exhibition furniture for archival pieces of the Villa (mainly stones and architectural fragments) that could be used modularly at different points. This last challenge was not

only academic but also responded to a request from the Villa management, seeking furniture implementable in practice.

During the two weeks of the workshop, students participated in several guided tours of the Villa, where each recommended area for their installations was shown in detail. They also developed their proposals with constant guidance from tutors assigned by the Academy, who supervised the progress of the architectural design. Groups also had unlimited access to the Villa to carry out more detailed surveys or to take photographs to strengthen the communication of their projects.

At the end of the two weeks, on September 2, 2025, each group submitted their proposals to the organizers. The following day, the presentation took place before a committee composed of national and international architects, who listened to and discussed each proposal. The workshop concluded with awards given to the groups most outstanding for their architectural design.

Proposal Developed

In the first phase, we conducted a detailed study of the site, touring Hadrian's Villa and documenting each potential area for our interventions. This work included surveys, photographs, and quick sketches to record topography, water access points, circulation, as well as existing elements that could be integrated into the design. Each decision regarding location and form was based on direct observation of the space. We took as a basis some of Kenneth Frampton's points in his text *Towards a*

Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance, where he proposes that a project should dialogue with the environment and history while using contemporary techniques and materials⁶⁵.

We conducted a formal analysis, using the Tempietto of Venus and the axes that are formed in the Villa from this point as a starting point. We mainly used the axis formed towards Piazza d'Oro, the building with the peschiera, and the Greek Theatre as guides for our rou-

66. Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points."

tes. Additionally, by analyzing the angles of the axes coming from the Tempietto, we created three new axes that would help consolidate the position and shape of our pavilion.

Thus, we arrived at our concept of "Modern Twist to the Past," seeking to reinterpret historical elements of the Villa through a completely contemporary approach. We focused on forms, axes, and specific details of the existing heritage, while employing modern materials such as steel, glass, polycarbonate with lighting, and

travertine and marble as references to the originals, always in an abstract way.

In terms of the route, we wanted the experience to be a single immersive narrative, with several stages progressively revealed. Each element is part of an integral experience, where the relationship between water, nature, and geometry guides the visitor through the history and modern reinterpretation of the Villa.

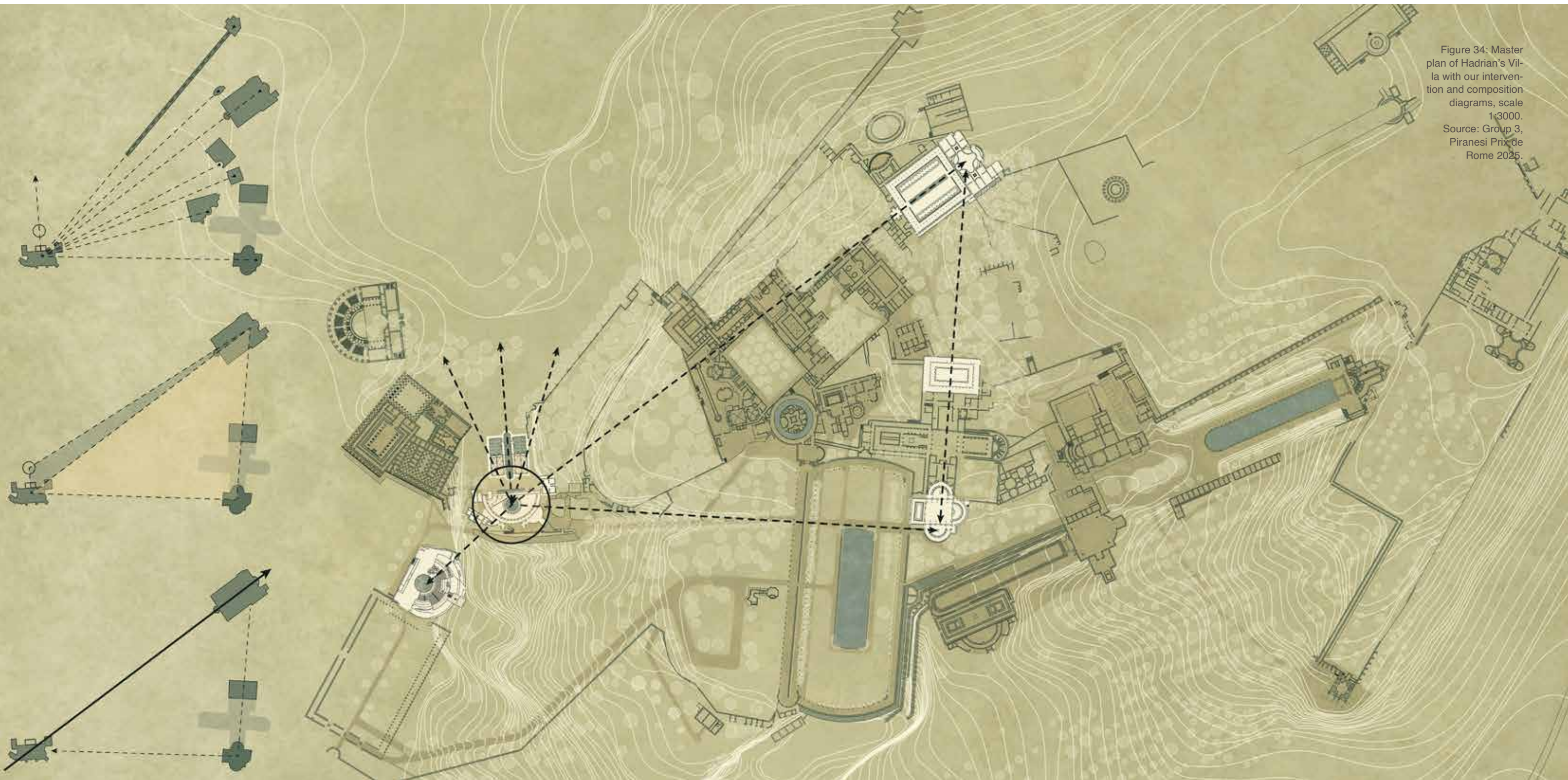


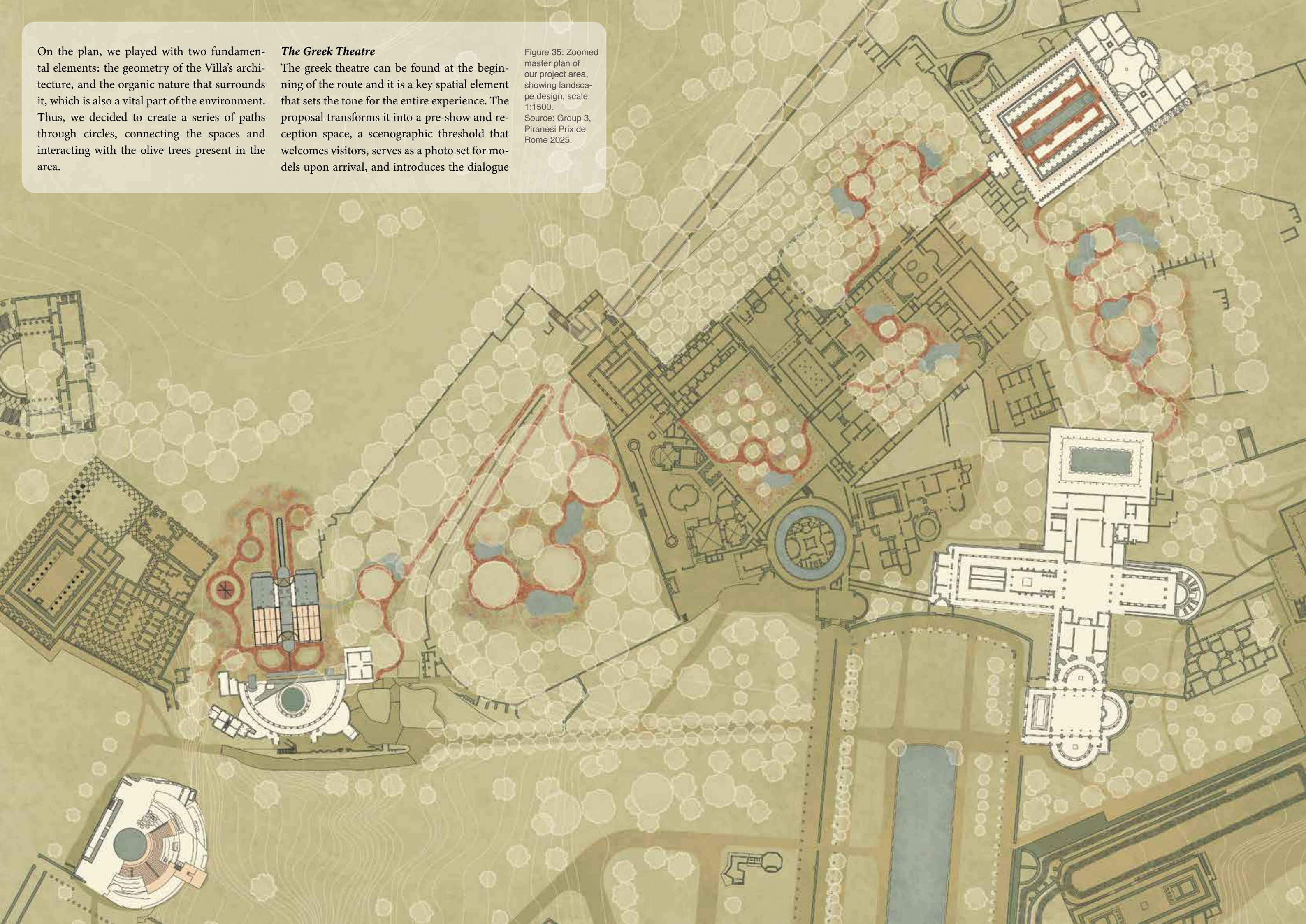
Figure 34: Master plan of Hadrian's Villa with our intervention and composition diagrams, scale 1:3000. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.

On the plan, we played with two fundamental elements: the geometry of the Villa's architecture, and the organic nature that surrounds it, which is also a vital part of the environment. Thus, we decided to create a series of paths through circles, connecting the spaces and interacting with the olive trees present in the area.

The Greek Theatre

The greek theatre can be found at the beginning of the route and it is a key spatial element that sets the tone for the entire experience. The proposal transforms it into a pre-show and reception space, a scenographic threshold that welcomes visitors, serves as a photo set for models upon arrival, and introduces the dialogue

Figure 35: Zoomed master plan of our project area, showing landscape design, scale 1:1500.
Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



between past and present that defines the intervention.

The existing condition of the theatre is essentially that of a green ruin, its architectural form largely lost, but its spatial essence still legible. Rather than attempting a literal reconstruction, our proposal aims to reveal what once existed through a language of abstraction and lightness. We used steel structures and luminescent polycarbonate panels to outline portions of the original geometry, remembering the ori-

ginal looks of the ancient theatre without falsifying its authenticity. These new insertions, with their transparent and reflective qualities, create a visual contrast between the archaeological remains and the contemporary intervention. This allows visitors to distinguish clearly between what belongs to history and what belongs to the present.

To preserve the integrity of the ruins, all our structures are designed to be reversible and non-invasive, touching the site delicately and

offering a new way of perceiving it. The asymmetrical composition of these reconstructed fragments introduce movement and dynamism to the composition.

Finally, acknowledging the presence of water in Villa Adriana, the project takes advantage of the shallow groundwater level in this area, to introduce a reflective pool where the ancient stage used to be.

The Pavilion

The Pavilion emerges along the axis defined by the Tempietto di Venere, following its proportions and spatial logic while reinterpreting certain aspects of the architectural language associated with Hadrian's era. It was conceived as a contemporary reinterpretation of a Roman bath, creating a connection between memory and invention. The intention was to preserve the historic relationship between architecture, water and landscape, while expressing it through a lighter and more contemporary ar-



Figure 36: Render of the intervention in the Greek Theatre.
Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



chitectural vocabulary based on transparency, abstraction and lightness.

The design process began with a detailed analysis of the architectural and material elements found throughout Villa Adriana. The ceramic fragments became the primary source for the project's chromatic and decorative identity, but they were not the only reference. We also examined recurring architectural elements such as vaulted systems, wall textures and spatial compositions, trying to find a certain coherence that eventually began to emerge. The rhythm of the brick vaults, the tactile qualities of the masonry and the careful use of light and proportion appeared repeatedly across different parts of the Villa.

Rather than reproducing these elements directly, we treated them as conceptual references. They became a series of layers that informed the design of the pavilion and allowed it to draw from the site without attempting to replicate it. The palette of colors and patterns was developed from the study of ceramic fragments while reducing ornamentation to a minimum. As a whole, the construction system reflects one of the central ideas of the project. To establish a relationship with the past without reproducing it literally.

Water remains one of the defining elements of the pavilion. Two lateral pools and a central basin organize the space and guide visitors through a sequence of reflections, transparencies and changing perspectives, while the central pool extends toward the exterior and gradually merges with the surrounding garden. Because of this, the boundary between architecture and landscape becomes less clear.

As visitors move through the pavilion their perception shifts constantly from point to point. At certain moments it becomes difficult to distinguish where the building ends and the landscape begins. Interior and exterior begin to overlap. The same happens with time. The experience is rooted in the present, but remains in constant dialogue with traces of the past.

Figure 37: Site photographs of roman floors taken by Chiara Alinovi during project development. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.

Figure 38: Floor plan of the pavilion, scale 1:250. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.

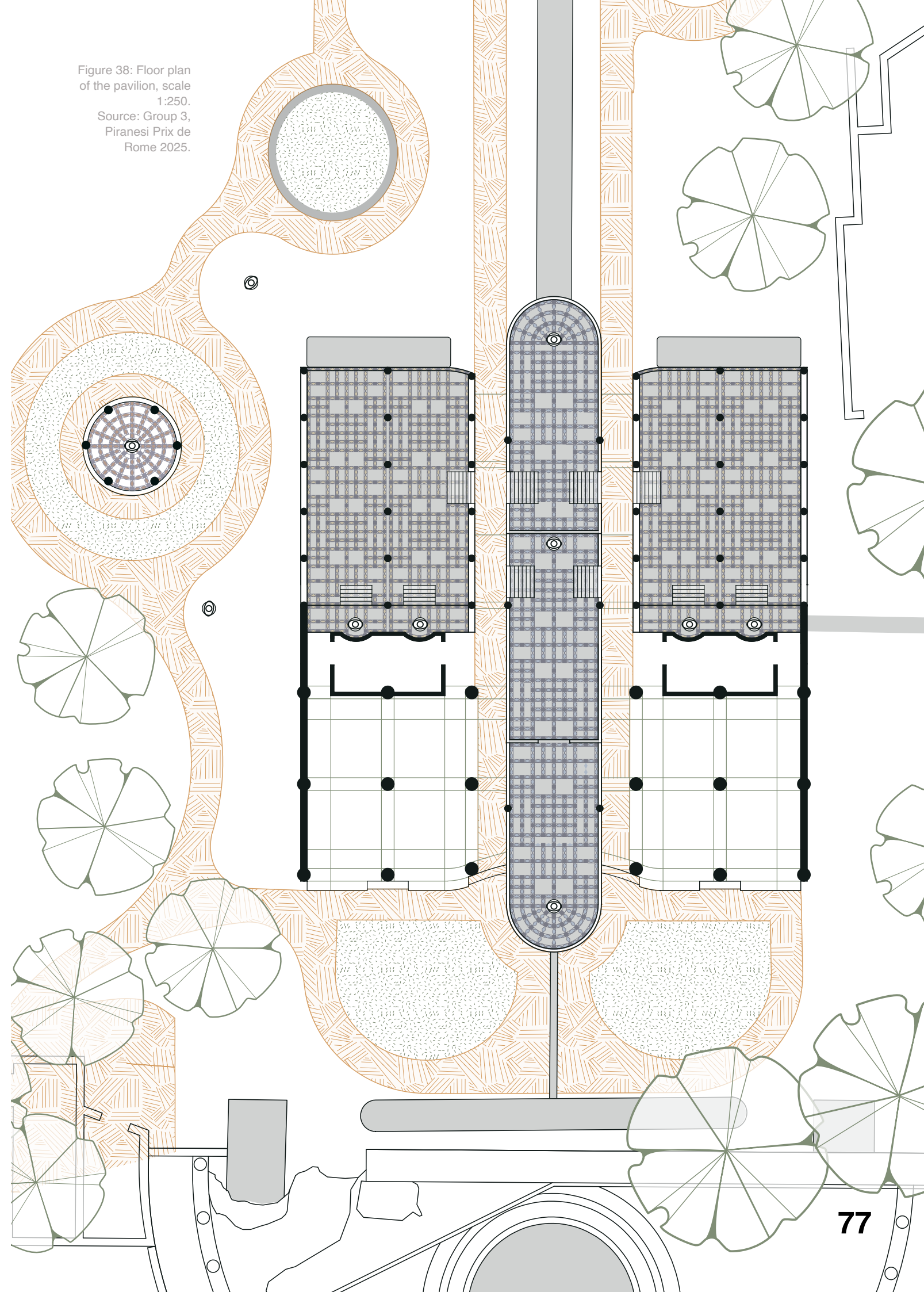


Figure 39: Long section of the pavilion, scale 1:250.
Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



Figure 41: Transversal section of the pavilion, scale 1:250.
Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.

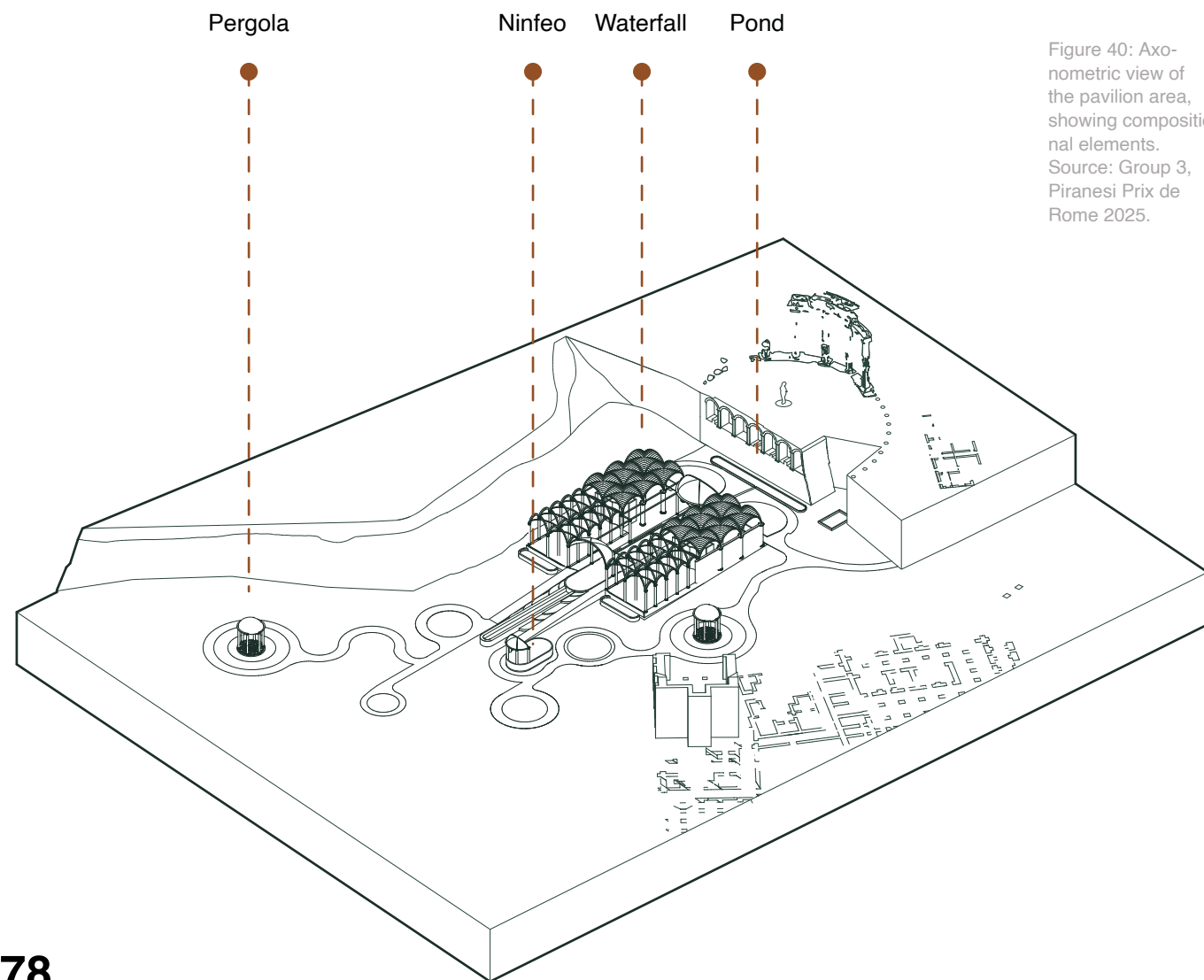
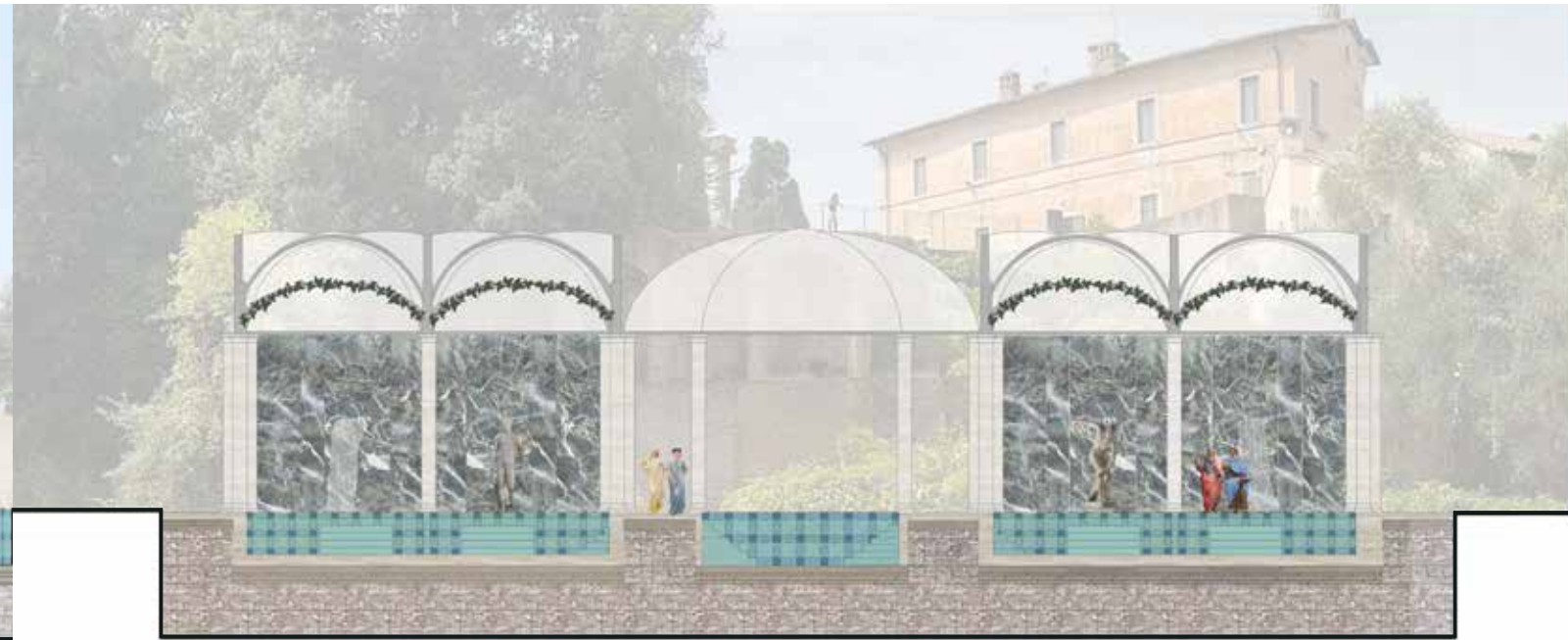
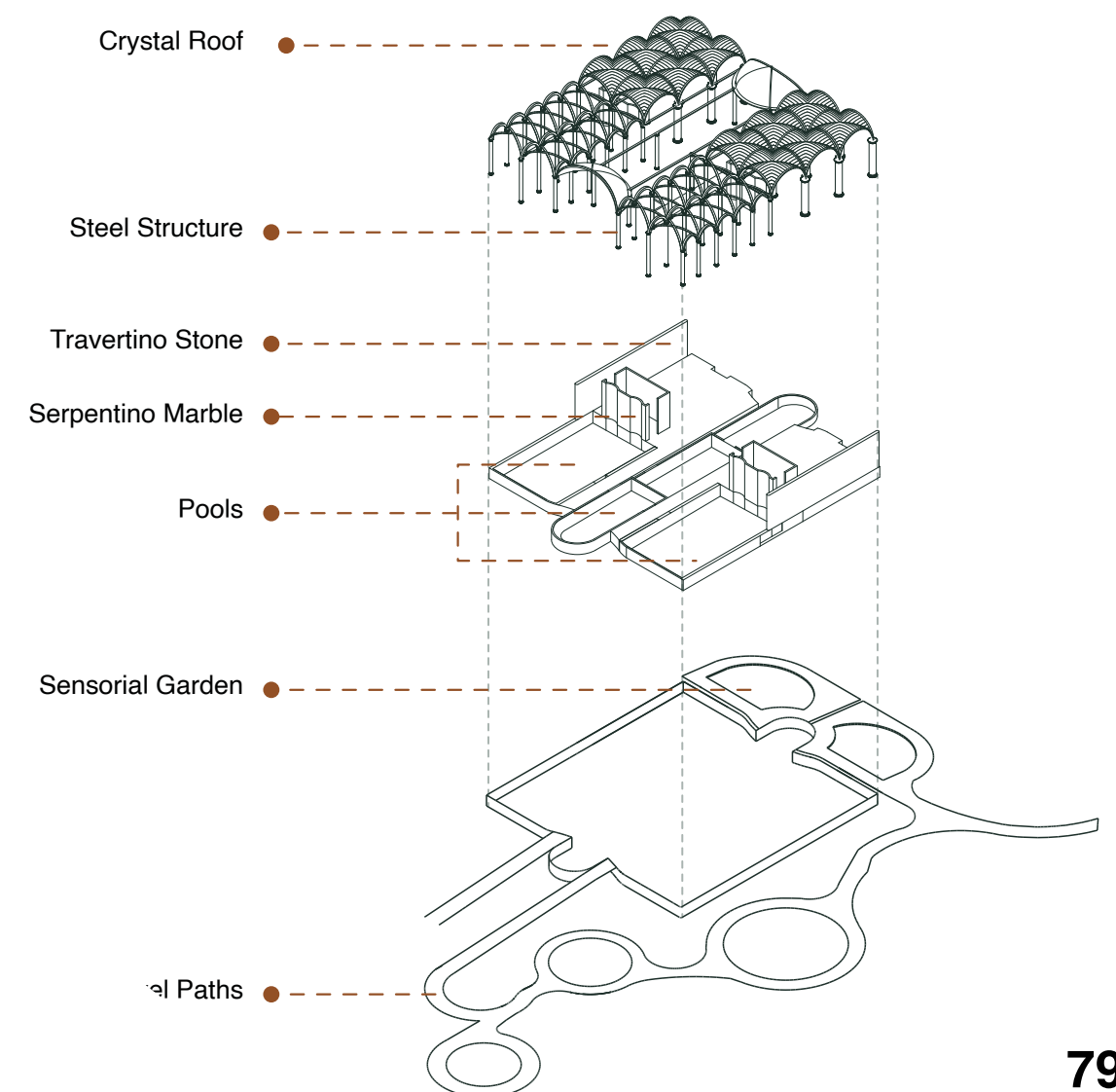


Figure 40: Axonometric view of the pavilion area, showing compositional elements.
Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.

Figure 42: Exploded axonometry of pavilion construction elements.
Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



The landscape surrounding the pavilion was designed with the same intention. Drawing inspiration from Roman gardens, it becomes more structured and cultivated than other areas of the intervention, signaling the pavilion's role as the experiential climax of the route. With axial paths, controlled vegetation and water features that recall the order and sensory richness associated with imperial gardens. At the same time they provide places for rest, contemplation and social interaction.

Several additional elements were introduced to reinforce this relationship with the ancient world. Near the remains of the Tempietto di Venere, the project reactivates existing nymphaea and introduces new ones throughout the landscape. These water features recall the historic

relationship between nature and architecture that once characterized many areas of the Villa. Ultimately, the pavilion exists somewhere between permanence and transformation. It borrows from the geometries, materials and atmospheres of Hadrian's Villa while speaking through a contemporary architectural language. Transparency, modularity and sensory experience become the primary tools..

The Landscape

The landscape intervention was designed as the element that connects the different parts of the project. Its role is not only to link one architectural space to another, but also to organize the visitor's movement through the site. For this reason, the landscape was considered from the beginning as an important part of the pro-



Figure 43: Interior render of the pavilion, pool area.
Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



Figure 44: Interior render of the pavilion, exhibition area.
Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.

posal and not simply as the space surrounding the architecture.

The system is composed of a series of paths that connect the Greek Theatre, the pavilion and the other intervention areas. As visitors

move through the site, they encounter different situations and different types of spaces. Some are more open, others more enclosed. Some are closely related to vegetation, while others are organized around water features.

Figure 45: Exterior render of the pavilion, view toward green area and landscape development.
Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



The geometry of the paths is based mainly on circular and curved forms. This decision was made intentionally. Straight paths often reveal their destination immediately, while curved routes allow the visitor to discover spaces progressively. In many cases it is not possible to see the next destination from the point where the path begins so instead, the route gradually reveals different views and areas of the project. This geometry also adapts well to the existing conditions of Villa Adriana. Rather than imposing a rigid system onto the landscape, the pa-

ths follow the topography and adjust to the presence of vegetation already found on the site. Because of this the intervention feels integrated into the landscape while still maintaining a clear design strategy.

The paths are made of compacted earth. This material was selected because of its permeability, its relatively low visual impact and its compatibility with the character of the site. It also provides an accessible surface for visitors with reduced mobility, allowing movement throu-

ghout the intervention without introducing materials that would feel visually disconnected from the surrounding environment.

Water is again an important component of the project. Historically water played a central role at Villa Adriana, and the proposal seeks to reintroduce this presence with a series of pools, channels and fountains distributed along the route.

These elements serve all different purposes. In some areas they act as visual focal points. In others they help define spaces or mark transitions between different sections of the project. Reflections of the sky, vegetation and surrounding architecture also contribute to the perception of the landscape. Water is therefore present throughout the route rather than concentrated in a single location.

Particular attention was also given to the olive trees present on the site. These trees form part

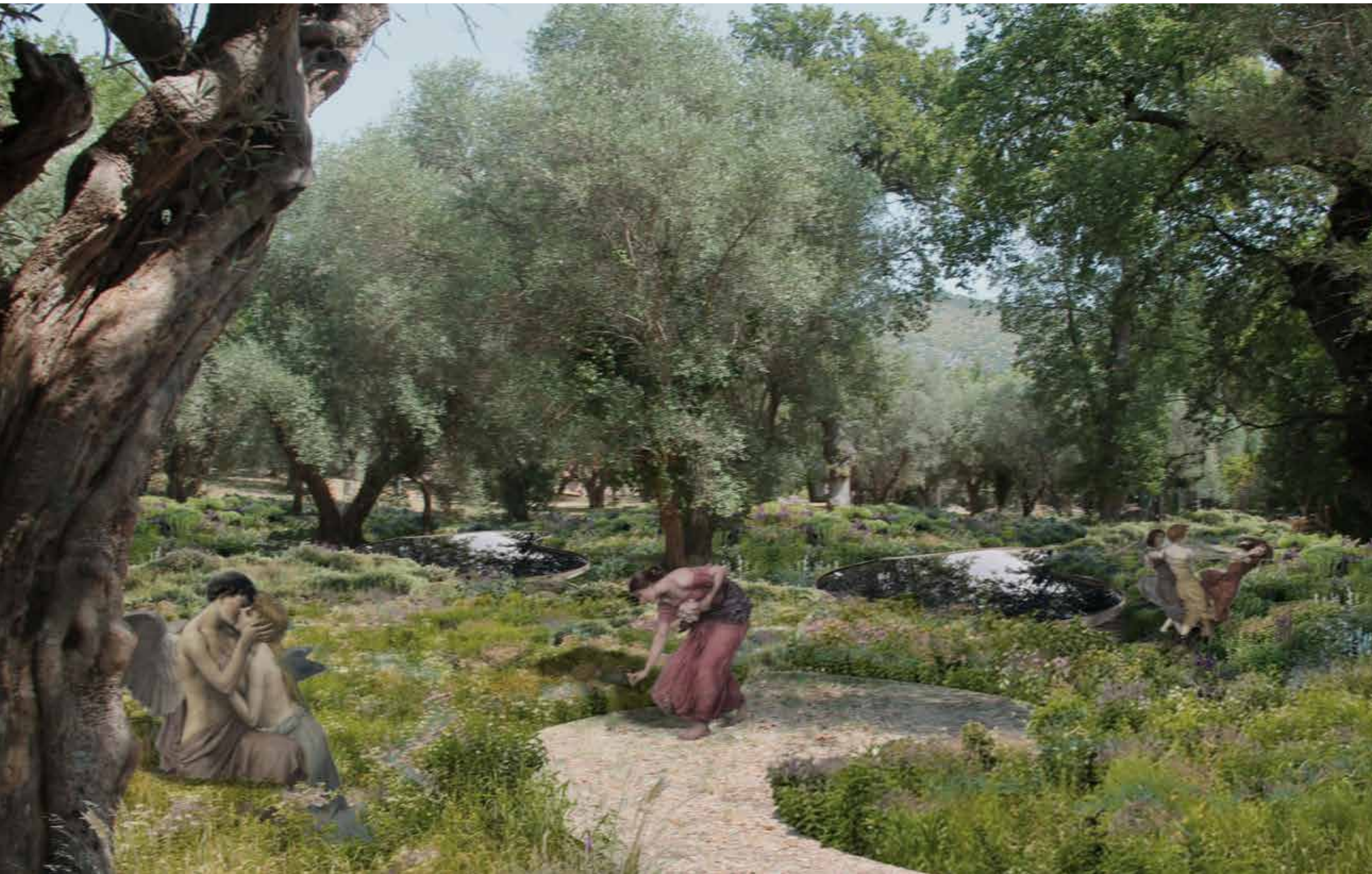
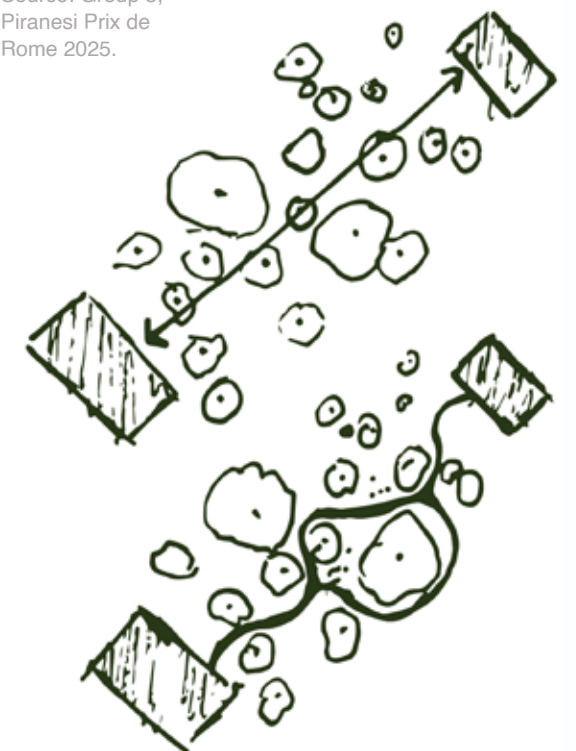


Figure 46: Landscape area render with diagrams showing spatial composition. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



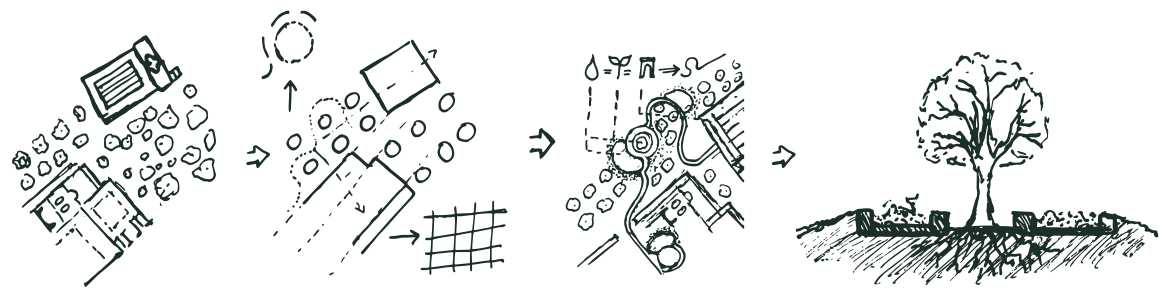


Figure 47: Hand drawings illustrating composition decisions for the landscape design. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.

of the cultural landscape of Tivoli and were considered an important existing resource, so rather than modifying their arrangement, the project was developed around them.

The circular geometry of the paths made it possible to adapt the routes to the existing vegetation. In many cases the paths curve around the trees, allowing them to remain central elements within the composition.

To protect them, a buffer zone was established around each trunk. This circular band defines an area where no excavation or intervention takes place. It also functions as a raised planter where new vegetation can be introduced without affecting the root systems of the olive trees.

The planting strategy for the landscape combines ornamental species, aromatic herbs and



Figure 48: Render of the landscape design. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



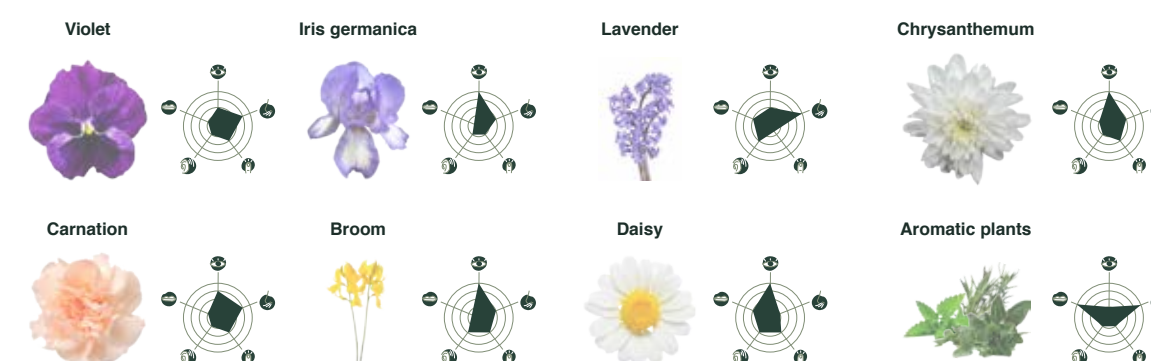
Figure 49: Render of the landscape design. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.

edible plants. Low and medium-height vegetation was selected in order to maintain visibility throughout the site while still creating variation in color, texture and fragrance during the path. Different areas of the project contain different combinations of species like lavender, rosemary, ornamental grasses, poppies and flowering shrubs that are used repeatedly throughout the landscape. These species were selected for their visual qualities and also for their adapta-

bility to local climatic conditions and their relationship to the Mediterranean landscape.

Taken together, the paths, vegetation, water elements and existing olive trees create a landscape that supports the architectural intervention while maintaining a strong connection with the character of Villa Adriana, reminding us that the proposal does not seek to compete with the archaeological remains. Instead, it provides a

Figure 50: Diagram showing plant selection and sensory stimulation in the gardens. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



framework through which visitors can move between different parts of the project while remaining constantly aware of the surrounding landscape and its historical context.

The fashion show

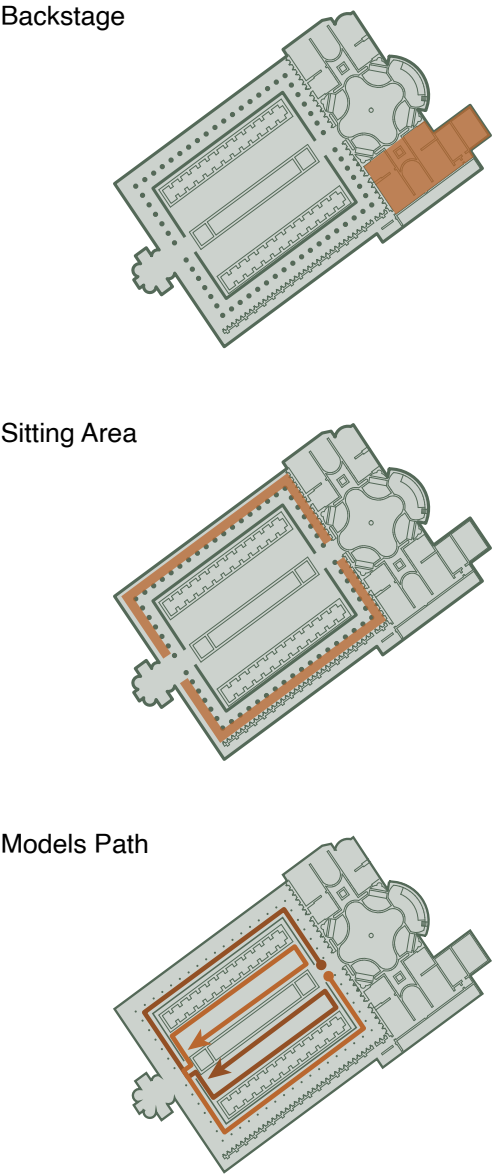
The fashion show, developed in collaboration with Gucci, takes place within the Piazza d’Oro. The intervention uses the archaeological setting as the framework for the event, bringing together fashion, architecture and the historical context of Villa Adriana.

The decision to work with Gucci is related to the palette of colors and geometric patterns developed during the analysis of the ceramic fragments found throughout the Villa. Several of the tones and motifs identified during this research were considered compatible with the visual language often present in Gucci’s collections. This relationship allowed the fashion show to become part of the broader architectural narrative of the project rather than functioning as an independent event.

The runway follows a rectangular circuit instead of the more conventional linear configuration. It moves around the Piazza d’Oro and allows the audience to experience the site from multiple viewpoints. As the models move through the space, visitors are presented with changing views of the ruins, reconstructed elements and landscape interventions. This creates a constantly shifting relationship between the fashion show and the archaeological setting.

Following the same strategy introduced in the Greek Theatre, several architectural fragments within the Piazza are selectively reinterpreted using fluorescent polycarbonate with integrated lighting. These interventions include a group of columns and a portion of the original dome.

The objective is not to reconstruct the missing elements exactly as they once appeared. Instead, they are presented as contemporary interpretations of historical forms. Their materiality



makes this distinction clear. The illuminated polycarbonate is very different from the original construction materials, allowing visitors to recognize them immediately as contemporary additions, while still understanding the scale, rhythm and geometry of the structures that were once on the site.

The ceramic pattern developed for the project is also incorporated into the runway design. Adapted into a contemporary graphic language, it becomes a visual element that connects the fashion show with the broader architectural proposal. At the same time, it establishes a relationship with Gucci’s interest in pattern, materiality and textile design.

Figure 51: Zoning diagram of the Piazza d’Oro. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.

Figure 52: Floor plan of the intervention in the Piazza d’Oro, scale 1:350. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.

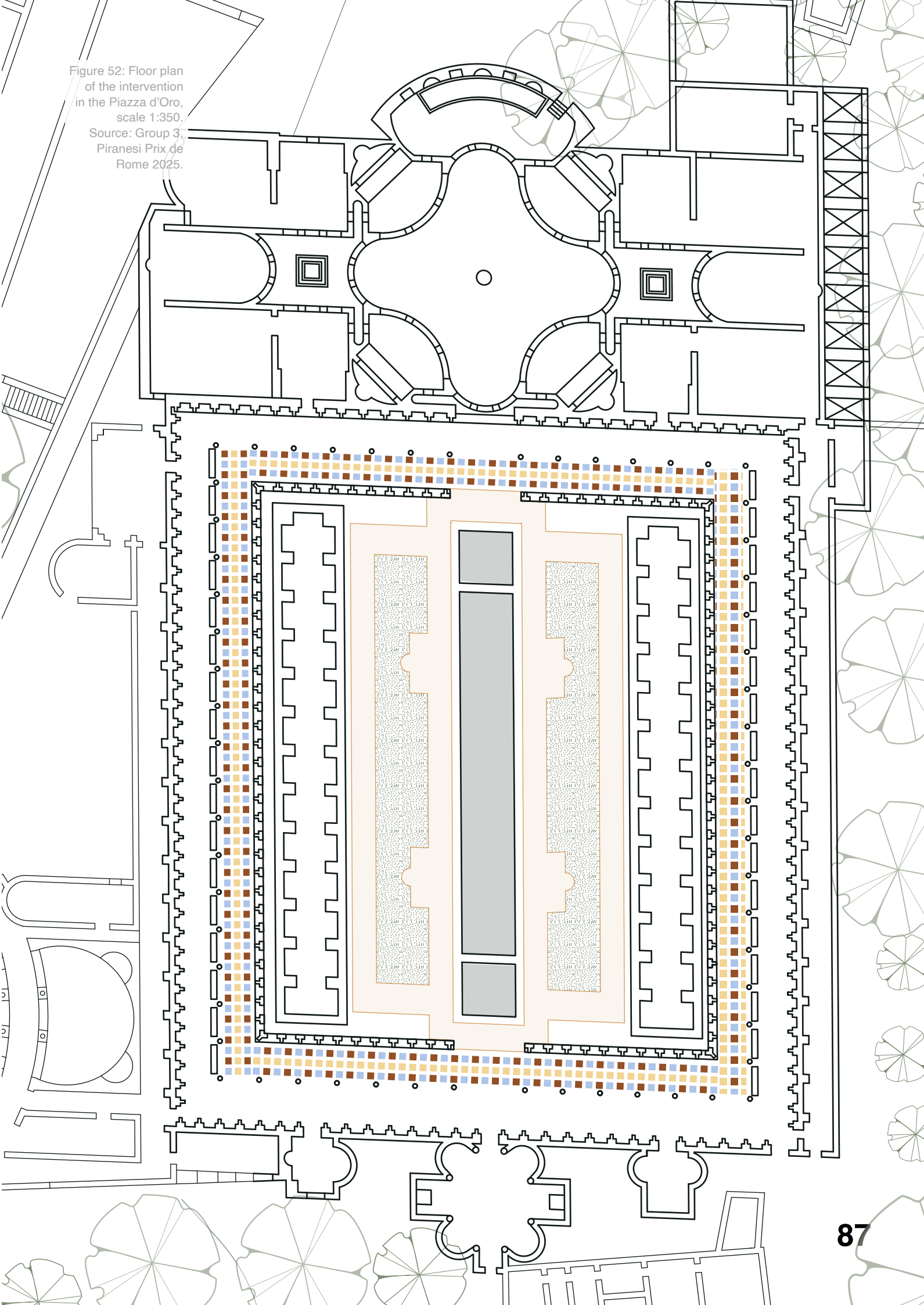


Figure 53: Longitudinal section of the Piazza d'Oro, scale 1:250.
Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



Figure 54: Render of the intervention in the Piazza d'Oro, view from the walkway.
Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



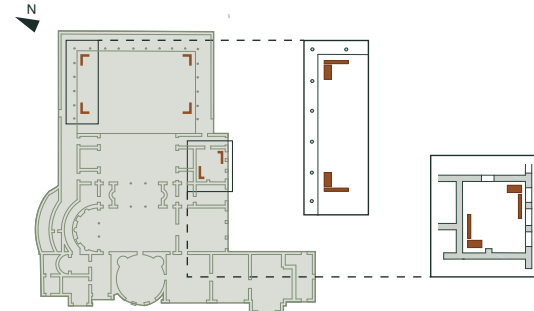
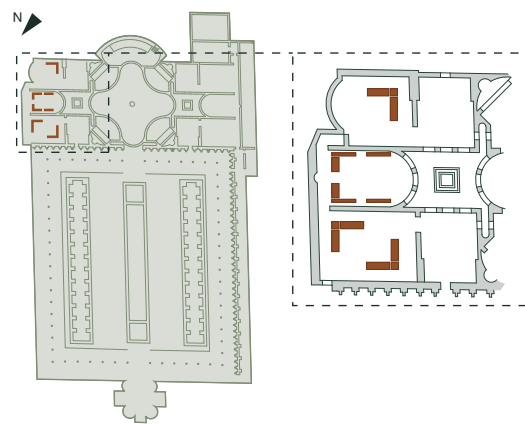


Figure 55: Diagram showing the location of the Stone Display intervention. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.

Figure 56: Diagram showing the location of the Stone Display intervention. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.

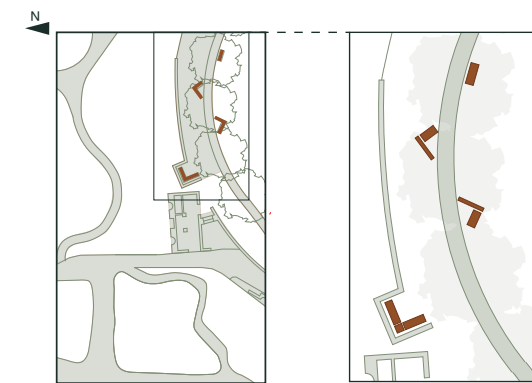


Figure 57: Render showing the Stone Display intervention within the landscape. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.

Water, which appears throughout the project as a recurring element, is also reintroduced into the Piazza d'Oro. One of the historical basins is partially refilled creating a reflective surface at the center of the intervention. During the event, this water surface reflects the movement of the models, the lighting system and the reconstructed architectural fragments.

New planted areas are introduced around the basin. These soften the presence of the stone surfaces and help establish continuity between

the architectural intervention and the surrounding landscape.

The resulting setting allows contemporary fashion and archaeological heritage to coexist within the same space. The fashion show takes place within the historical fabric of Villa Adriana while remaining clearly contemporary. Models move through an environment where original ruins, reconstructed fragments and new interventions are all visible at the same time. Rather than treating the archaeological site as a

simple backdrop, the proposal seeks to establish a dialogue between the event and its context. Through the use of light, materials, water and movement, the Piazza d'Oro can be reactivated, creating a new layer of interpretation and parallel while preserving the legibility of the existing remains. discovered in different areas of the Villa, particularly in the Piazza d'Oro. The Terracotta tones, soft whites and muted blues, are some of the colors found in ancient mosaics. Our patterns however, do not attempt to imitate historical decoration. Instead they

reinterpret its visual rhythm through geometric abstraction. These motifs appear selectively across floors and water surfaces, marking transitions and reinforcing the atmosphere of the pavilion.

In terms of form, the pavilion draws inspiration from Roman thermal architecture. Its axial organization, the presence of vaulted spaces and the integration of water all originate from this reference. At the same time, every historical element is modified through a contemporary



Figure 58: Render of the Stone Display within the ruins of Hadrian's Villa. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



Figure 59: Render of the Stone Display within the ruins of Hadrian's Villa. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.

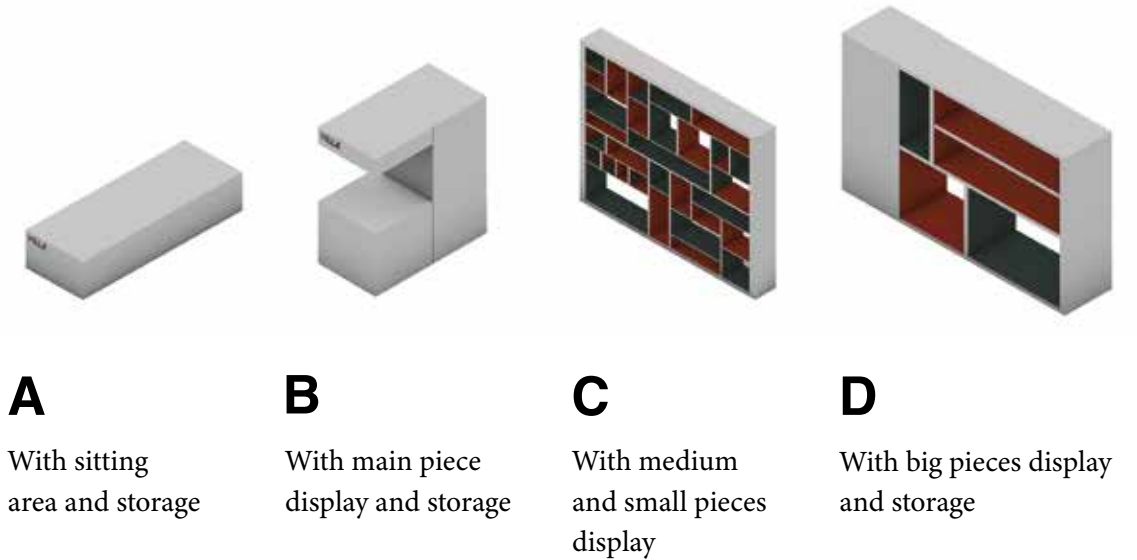
lens, the vaults are reinterpreted through steel and glass structures that maintain a sense of visual lightness, the columns constructed in Treviso stone with serpentine marble accents, borrowing certain proportions and rhythms from classical architectu

The Stone Display

Finally, the Stone Display was conceived as a set of modular furniture pieces designed to exhibit and archive the stone fragments preserved at the Villa—elements such as sections of columns, sculptural remnants, and other archaeological traces that hold contextual and historical meaning for the site. These pieces are

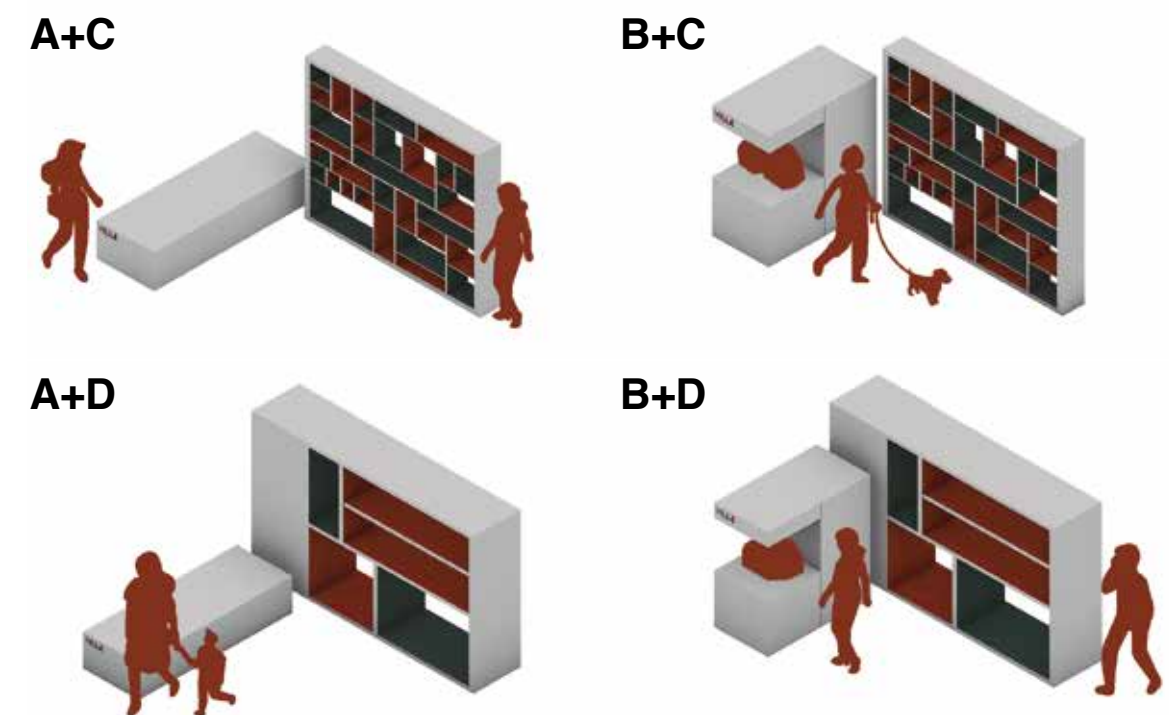
Modular Components

Figure 60: Modular components of the Stone Display. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



Possible Combinations

Figure 61: Possible combinations of the Stone Display modules. Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



generally heavy and numerous, so the furniture needed to function simultaneously as display and storage, without requiring protective glazing, since the intention is to maintain a more tactile, open, and rustic mode of exhibition.

To remain aligned with our broader conceptual approach, we drew directly from the architectural language of Villa Adriana. In particular, we reinterpreted the opus reticulatum pattern, that is present in several of the Villa's original structures, by integrating its geometric pattern into a steel component that anchors each module conceptually. This subtle reference reinforces the project's guiding idea of being a contemporary reinterpretation of classical

elements. Steel was selected for its durability, its capacity to withstand exterior conditions, and its structural performance under significant loads.

We have developed four different modules:

Type A: the smallest unit, designed as a seating bench with integrated drawers for storing select fragments. It prioritizes storage while also offering a practical resting point for visitors.

Type B: primarily a storage unit, taller and conceived to highlight a single, larger, more scenographic piece in its main display niche.

Type C: a display-oriented module designed to hold multiple small and medium-sized artifacts, giving visibility to a broader set of frag-

ments.

Type D: a module for exhibiting larger pieces, complemented by lateral storage to accommodate additional items.

Conceptually, the Stone Display is intended to work as a system: at least two modules of different types combine, often in an L-shape, to create a more complete spatial and curatorial experience. While the modules can be arranged in numerous configurations, we recommend pairing either of the high-capacity display units (Types C or D) with the seating module or the single-piece module to maintain the visual balance and avoid oversaturation while ensuring that the featured artifacts remain legible and central within the composition.

The final result was an integrated proposal that connected architecture, landscaping, and furniture. Each element aimed to generate different experiences along the route, emphasizing the relationship between water and space, contemplation and transit, permanence and movement. The presentation to the committee included renders, plans, and circulation diagrams, which were discussed by national and international architects.

Ultimately, our group's proposal reflects a balance between creativity, respect for heritage, and architectural experimentation, laying the foundations for the reflections and decisions we will revisit later in this thesis.

Projectual Elements Taken from the Piranesi Prize Proposal

The experience developed during the Piranesi Prix de Rome was not only an academic exercise, but also an important starting point for many of the ideas that later shaped our project. Several elements emerged from that collective exploration and were carried forward into this proposal, as they proved capable of establishing a meaningful dialogue between heritage, contemporary design and the visitor's experience.

From the three challenges proposed by the Accademia Adrianea, we identified the pavilion as the element with the greatest potential for further development during the project phase. In the thesis project it evolves from a space inspired by Roman baths into a fashion and exhibition area where the dialogue between the Cano brand, pre-Columbian cultures and the identity of Villa Adriana can take place. The pavilion therefore becomes an architectural statement and the culmination of the visitor's journey. A place for admiration and discovery.

The Greek Theatre is another element that we decided to preserve. Not in its previous material form, but in the role it played within the experience. It continues to function as a threshold, a place for gathering, anticipation and introduction to the narrative of the event. In many ways, it remains the "pre-show" space, marking the beginning of the visitor's route.

Although the landscape design developed during the competition will not be maintained, the idea of connecting different moments along the route remains fundamental. In the thesis project, this principle is reinterpreted through a new landscape intervention that links the Greek Theatre, the palestra and the pavilion, while giving each of them a distinct spatial and symbolic character.

The axes derived from the Temple of Venus, which structured the geometry of the original proposal, also remain present. They continue to serve as a compositional and conceptual reference, ensuring continuity with the initial site analysis and reinforcing the dialogue between the new intervention and the archaeological fabric of the Villa.

In this sense, the elements carried forward from the Piranesi Prix de Rome are not simply repeated. Instead, they are reinterpreted, reorganized and synthesized into a new proposal. Adapted to a more compact area of the Villa and to a context that is administratively more manageable, they provide the foundation upon which the architectural project is developed.

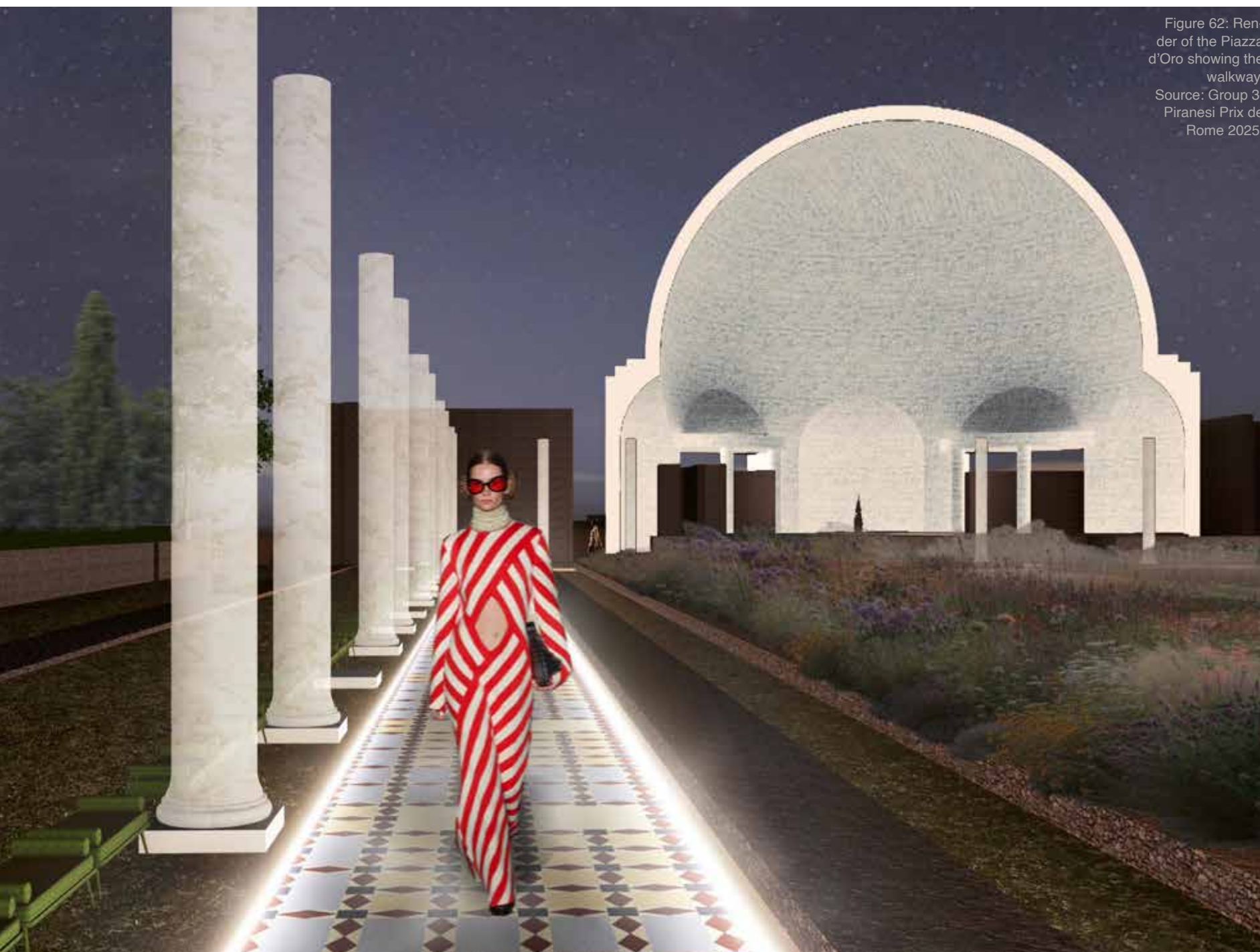
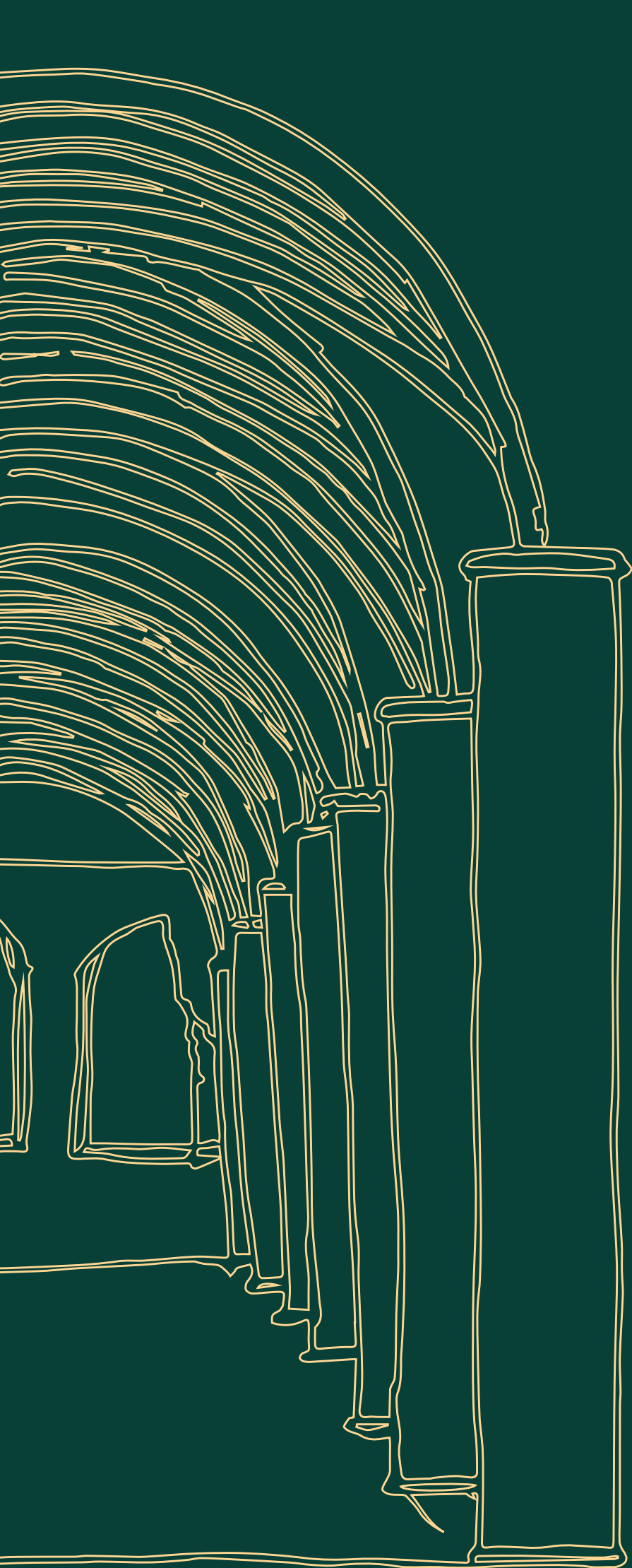


Figure 62: Render of the Piazza d'Oro showing the walkway.
Source: Group 3, Piranesi Prix de Rome 2025.



Chapter VII

The Project

This architectural proposal comes out of three layers of research that have been running in parallel throughout this thesis: reading Villa Adriana as a complex palimpsest of spatial and hydraulic logics, the theoretical framework around heritage intervention and critical continuity, and the design experimentation carried out during the Piranesi Prix de Rome workshop. These three dimensions don't really work as separate inputs. Instead, they end up feeding into each other, and together they shape a single architectural strategy: building a curated sequence of spatial and temporal experiences within the archaeological landscape⁶⁶.

From the start, the project rules out both reconstruction and autonomous insertion as valid paths. Instead, it adopts a position of critical legibility, where every intervention remains identifiable as contemporary while still participating in the continuity of the site. This approach is drawn, primarily, from Cesare Brandi's idea of riconoscibilità and the idea of critical regionalism of Kenneth Frampton. Together, they give a framework in which architecture is not imitating the past neither deliberately contrasts with it, but it operates through alignment, interruption, and resonance. The intention is not to recreate Villa Adriana as it was and not to impose a new object upon it, but to establish a dialogue that allows both the historical and the contemporary to co-exist.

This position has direct consequences on the way the project is conceived. Rather than designing a single architectural object, we understood the intervention as a sequence of experiences distributed across the landscape. Villa Adriana itself is not perceived through one space but through movement, through the gradual discovery of fragments, views, and relationships. For this reason, the proposal is organized as a system of interconnected episodes rather than a singular pavilion. The intervention unfolds through four principal moments: the Greek Theatre, a transitional landscape condition conceived as a vegetal labyrinth, the Palaestra, and finally the main pavilion located in front of the Temple of Venus. Each element

performs a different role, yet none of them is intended to stand alone. Their meaning emerges through the journey that links them together.

Once this logic of sequence was established, the question became where that journey should begin. The decision of putting the intervention near to the entrance of the villa was both practical and conceptual choice. On the practical view, the near location to the entrance made the

67. Unless otherwise stated, all concepts, architectural proposals, design decisions, drawings, diagrams, renderings, plans, and descriptions presented in this chapter were developed by Catalina Ossa Terán and Gina Paola Bello Álvarez specifically for this master's thesis.

project exist in one of the most accessible and manageable areas of the villa, making it possible not only having a greater control over more fragile areas but to accommodate the needs of a bigger number of visitors. At the same time, it creates a clear threshold between everyday reality and the narrative world of the project. The intervention does not appear unexpectedly in the middle of the Villa. Instead, it's the first impression of the visitor through the villa and the

new lecture that has been implanted, creating an experience since the beginning.

From there, the project develops as a progression path structured around the idea of three moments: pre-show, show, and after-show. This idea originates in the design methodology explored during the Piranesi workshop, although here it evolves beyond its initial scenographic character. Rather than referring li-



Figure 63: Master-plan of the Project

terally to a fashion event, these three moments become a way of organizing different degrees of intensity, perception, and engagement. The visitor moves from spaces of anticipation and discovery to spaces of concentration and spectacle, and then to spaces of reflection and permanence. The result is not a static exhibition but a sequence of atmospheres, where architecture, landscape, water, and movement work together to transform the experience of the Villa itself.

Axial Structure and Geometric Operations

The geometry of the project emerged from a long process of reading and interpreting the spatial structure of Villa Adriana. Rather than imposing a new order onto the archaeological landscape, we sought to understand the latent relationships already present within it and use them as a foundation for the intervention. Throughout the design process, a series of existing axes, alignments, and geometric correspondences gradually revealed themselves, becoming the framework through which the project could grow while remaining connected to the logic of the Villa (*See Figure 64*).

At the center of this system stands the Temple of Venus. More than simply another ruin within the complex, it became the primary geometric and symbolic reference from which the entire composition developed. A first axis was projected from the temple, extending perpendicularly from its existing geometry. This operation established one of the principal directions of the intervention and ultimately determined the location of the main pavilion, positioned directly along this line. The relationship was not intended as a visual imitation of the temple, but rather as a continuation of its spatial influence across the site.

As the study progressed, two neighbouring structures located beside the Palaestra revealed another important condition. Each building possesses a slightly different orientation, and when their central axes are extended, they eventually intersect. What made this intersection particularly significant was the di-

sccovery that it coincided precisely with the previously projected axis from the Temple of Venus. This generated a nodal point within the landscape, which became the origin point of the main pavilion. The geometry of the pavilion itself is inscribed within a circumference that replicates the proportions of the Temple of Venus, establishing a relationship between the two elements but without reproducing the temple's form.

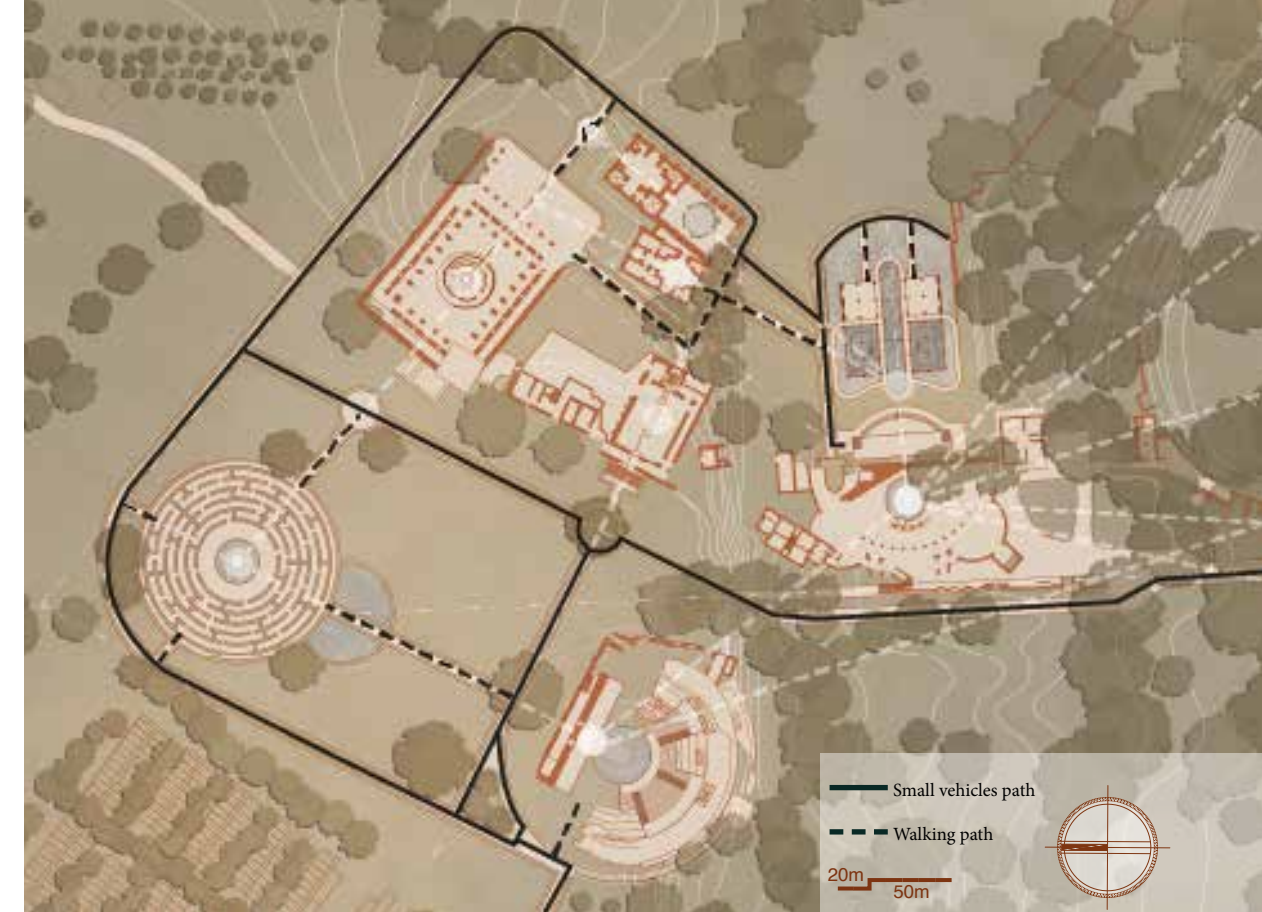
The Greek Theatre and the Palaestra provided a second family of geometries. Both structures possess strong internal axes that organise their original spatial composition. Rather than treating them as isolated monuments, these lines were extended beyond the limits of the ruins themselves and allowed to interact with one another.

The point where the axis of the theatre intersects the axis of the Palaestra became the location of the labyrinth, conceived as an intermediate landscape condition between the two architectural interventions. Once again, the labyrinth was inscribed within a circular geometry derived from the proportions of the Temple of Venus, reinforcing a recurring relationship that quietly ties the different interventions together.

Another important line emerged from the Pecile area. An existing path framed by pine trees already suggested a strong directional movement through the landscape, and by extending this axis until it met the projected axis of the Greek Theatre, a new point of interest appeared. At this intersection, a reflective water basin was introduced. Although smaller in scale, it functions as a moment of pause within the sequence, strengthening the relationship between water, geometry and movement that runs through the project.

A similar operation occurs within the Palaestra itself. Its central axis is extended beyond the limits of the archaeological structure until it intersects with the axis generated by the upper neighbouring. This crossing point is mar-

Figure 64: Accessibility diagram



ked with a sculptural element accompanied by a small water basin, creating another moment of appreciation in the landscape. Like the other water features distributed through the intervention, it serves as a spatial marker and as a device that helps connect the different parts of the project into a coherent whole.

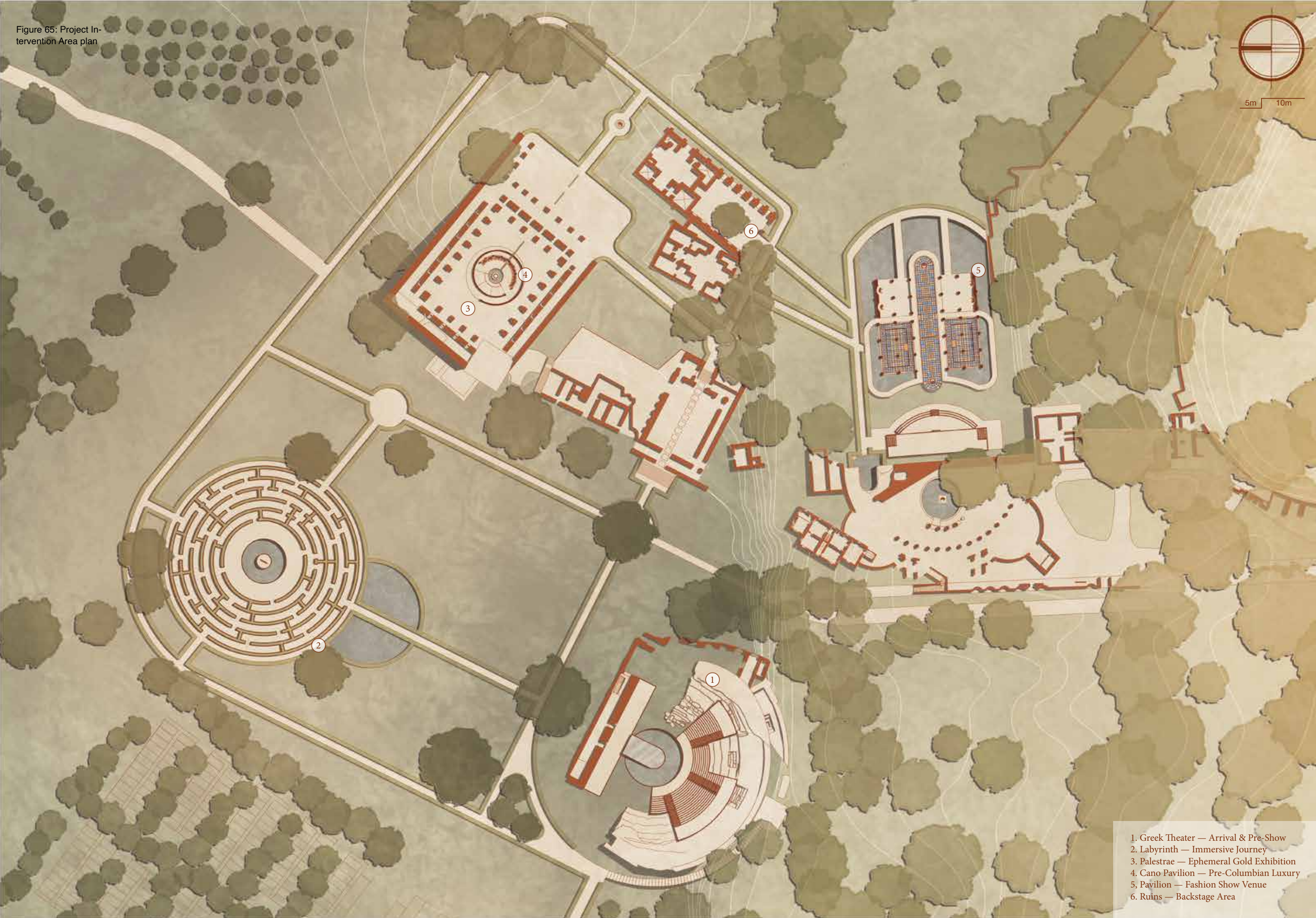
Taken individually, these geometric operations may appear simple. Together, they generate an interconnected network that structures the entire proposal. The project does not rely on a single dominant gesture but on a series of relationships discovered within the Villa itself. Existing paths are not erased or replaced. Instead they are reinterpreted through these axial readings, allowing new routes to emerge while maintaining continuity with the historical organisation of the site. In some cases, the paths follow the original geometry almost exactly while in others they are gently adjusted to improve accessibility and strengthen connections between the different interventions. The result is a system that feels simultaneously familiar and new, rooted in the spatial logic of Villa Adriana while responding to organized patterns of movement and use.

Accessibility and Spatial Continuity

Accessibility was considered from the very beginning of the proposal development and it became one of the criteria that shaped important decisions along the way. It was not looked at as a technical requirement to be fixed after the project was developed, but as a starting point of the design process. Therefore, accessibility considerations helped with decisions about circulation, levels, connections, and the relationship between the different intervention points.

This was particularly important given the nature of Villa Adriana as an archaeological site, which are often experienced through fragmented routes, uneven terrain, stairs and physical barriers that limit access for a portion of the visitors. These conditions, however, should not be considered unavoidable or unfixable, which is why the project sought to establish a continuous system capable of connecting the Greek Theatre, the labyrinth, the Palaestra, and the final pavilion through an accessible route that remains uninterrupted throughout the entire experience (*See Figure 65*).

Figure 65: Project Intervention Area plan



In some cases, this required introducing alternative solutions alongside existing circulation patterns already present within the Villa. The most evident example is the connection between the labyrinth and the Palaestra, where visitors may choose either a direct staircase that is already existing, or a new sloped path that was created. Although both routes coexist, the project is intentionally designed so that the ramp functions as the primary path that naturally guides all visitors to follow this narrative sequence regardless of physical ability.

As a result, movement through the intervention becomes a shared experience rather than a series of separated routes. All visitors can encounter the same spaces, the same views, and the same moments of discovery, proving that accessibility is understood as a way of ensuring that the architectural and cultural experience of the Villa can be equally participated in by the widest possible public.

Material Logic and Environmental Continuity

The intervention maintains a consistent material language throughout the different architectural episodes. The steel, stone, wood, vegetation, and water appear repeatedly across the project and create a sense of continuity even as each intervention responds to different spatial conditions and functions.

Steel is used because of its lightness and precision that allows new elements to be introduced within the archaeological context while remaining clearly distinguishable from the existing ruins and without damaging them. Wood appears in several moments of the project, and brings a texture and a more tactile dimension to the experience.

Stone becomes more prominent in the main pavilion where travertine establishes a direct dialogue with the character of Villa Adriana. It is not used to reproduce Roman architecture, it is used in a contemporary way, maintaining a connection with the site while remaining recognisably new.

Vegetation and water complete the material palette. On one hand, vegetation acts as a spatial element, particularly within the labyrinth and landscape interventions. On the other, water appears throughout the entire sequence, linking the different parts of the intervention together. More than a decorative feature, these two elements become recurring tools that support the architecture, guide movement, and even recall the hydraulic and natural identity that have always represented the Villa Adriana.

Together, these materials create a common language that allows the four interventions to be read as parts of a single architectural system. Temporal Permanence and Reversibility

A core dimension of the project is the way each intervention engages with time. Rather than assigning the same degree of permanence to every architectural element, the proposal operates through different temporal conditions, responding to the intended use, intensity, and adaptability of each intervention.

The installations within the Palaestra represent the shortest-term interventions. Conceived primarily as exhibition structures, they support the presentation of content related to the brand and to pre-Columbian heritage. Their configuration is closely tied to the event itself and therefore remains intentionally temporary.

The Greek Theatre occupies an intermediate position. While activated during the event, it is conceived as a reusable piece of infrastructure capable of supporting future cultural activities. Its value lies not only in the event it hosts, but in its potential for continued use over time.

The labyrinth introduces a different condition. As a landscape intervention, it is conceived as a flexible structure whose appearance can evolve through seasonal change and future reconfiguration. Its permanence is therefore less fixed and more adaptive.

The final pavilion, located near the Temple of Venus, is the most permanent intervention

within the proposal. Although it accommodates temporary event-specific elements, it is conceived as a long-term architectural addition capable of supporting future programmes and activities. Its adaptable roof system further reinforces this capacity for transformation over time.

Across the different interventions, reversibility remains a common principle. Even when the elements have different durations, they are designed to be removed without damaging the archaeological ground beneath them. The project therefore does not treat contemporary use and preservation as opposite demands. It works from the idea that both can coexist, as long as the new structures remain light, readable, and carefully placed.

From this point of view, the proposal is not understood as one single architectural object. It is built through relationships between spaces, routes, materials, and moments of pause. The connections are built through the route itself: the way visitors move, pause, and encounter each intervention in relation to the ruins.

The project does not try to turn Villa Adriana into something different. It works with the conditions that are already present on the site: the ruins, the paths, the views, and the spaces that can still receive people. The new elements do not hide the archaeological remains. They help visitors approach them in another way, through movement, pauses, and moments of use. In this sense, the intervention does not overwrite the site. It offers another way of moving through it, reading it, and inhabiting it.

Figure 66: Project Intervention Area view



Greek Theatre: Reactivation of an Ancient Theatre

The Greek Theatre is the first point where visitors enter the project. It works as a kind of prelude: a place to arrive, gather, and understand that the route through the intervention has begun. It also establishes the first contact between Hadrian's Villa and the contemporary layer introduced by the proposal.

Today, the Greek Theatre is no longer perceived as a complete theatre. What remains are fragments of structure, and areas where vegetation has occupied parts of the original seating. The place still suggests its former use, but its spatial order is no longer clear enough to be experienced directly. The intervention begins from this condition: a ruin that still holds the memory of its function, but needs a new structure to make that function readable again.

For this reason, the project takes as an important reference the work of Miguel Ángel de la Iglesia at the Roman Theatre of Clunia. In that case, partial reconstruction is not used to imitate the monument as it once was. Instead, it helps make the spatial order of the ruin legible again. This approach was relevant for us because it is close to the position developed throughout the thesis. A contemporary intervention can help reveal the past, but it should not pretend to belong to it.

The proposal for the Greek Theatre follows that idea. It does not try to rebuild the theatre, and it does not leave it as a distant archaeological object either. Instead, it looks for a way to bring back one of its essential conditions: the possibility of gathering around a shared event. In simple terms, the intention is to let the theatre work as a theatre again.

To do this, a lightweight steel structure is inserted over the existing topography. The new structure does not erase the ruin or complete

the parts that have been lost. Instead, it follows the slope of the ground and uses the remaining traces to recover the curve of the cavea. Timber pieces are added over the steel frame, giving the intervention a surface that can be used for sitting and gathering. The difference between the materials is kept visible. Steel makes the contemporary intervention clear, timber gives the structure a warmer and more usable surface, and the original stone remains as the historical ground that supports the whole operation.

At the center of the theatre, in the position where the performance area would be located, the project introduces a circular reflecting pool. This decision keeps the middle of the space open instead of turning it immediately into a conventional stage. The water reflects the sky, the surrounding ruins, and the movement of visitors, so the center of the theatre changes slightly with the light and the use of the space. Before becoming a performance area, it first appears as a quiet surface within the ruin.

Above the pool, a light steel-and-glass platform defines the main stage. Because the surface is transparent, the water remains visible below, and the performance is read together with the reflections produced by the basin. A second timber platform is placed behind it, perpendicular to the first one, forming a T-shaped layout. This arrangement gives the theatre more than one possible use. It can host a small performance, a talk, live music, a choreography, an installation, or a temporary presentation without needing to change the structure each time.

The circulation around the intervention also follows the logic of the theatre. Existing paths are reinforced through a circular route that links the seating area with the broader landscape sequence. A new external stair gives access to the upper levels of the ruin, allowing visitors to see the intervention from above and to look back toward the landscape of Villa Adriana. This route introduces a quieter way of experiencing the theatre, less connected to performance and more related to observation.

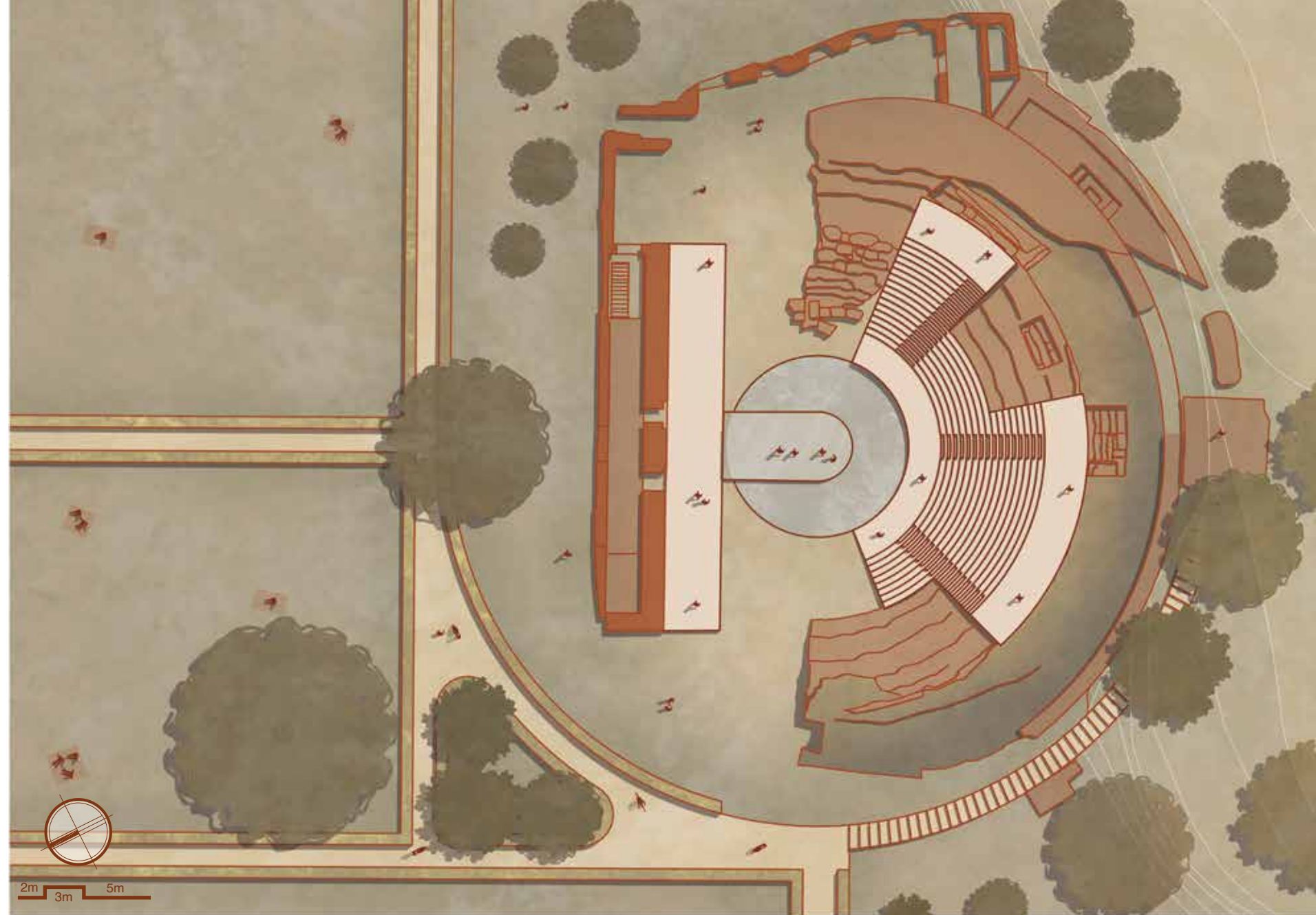


Figure 67: Greek Theatre: Reactivation of an Ancient Theatre

During the Cano event, the Greek Theatre becomes the main arrival space. As the first space along the route, it receives visitors before they move into the rest of the project. It gives them a place to stop, gather, and understand how the sequence begins. The area can also host small performances, sound pieces, brief announcements, or other temporary actions linked to the exhibition. At the same time, the space naturally becomes a point for photography and observation, offering a first framed view of the relationship between the Villa and the intervention.

The intervention is also meant to remain useful after the Cano event. The theatre could later host performances, public talks, educational

activities, or smaller cultural programs, depending on how the site is used over time. In that sense, the structure is not tied to a single exhibition. It gives the Greek Theatre a practical support for future forms of gathering, without turning the ruin into a fixed or fully reconstructed space.

Ultimately, the project does not reconstruct the Greek Theatre as it once was. It works with what remains and makes its original role understandable again. Through a reversible and clearly contemporary intervention, the theatre becomes a place for gathering, watching, and occupying the ruin in a new way. It is not a reconstruction of history, but a way of making history present through use.

Figure 68: Greek
Theatre Site Section

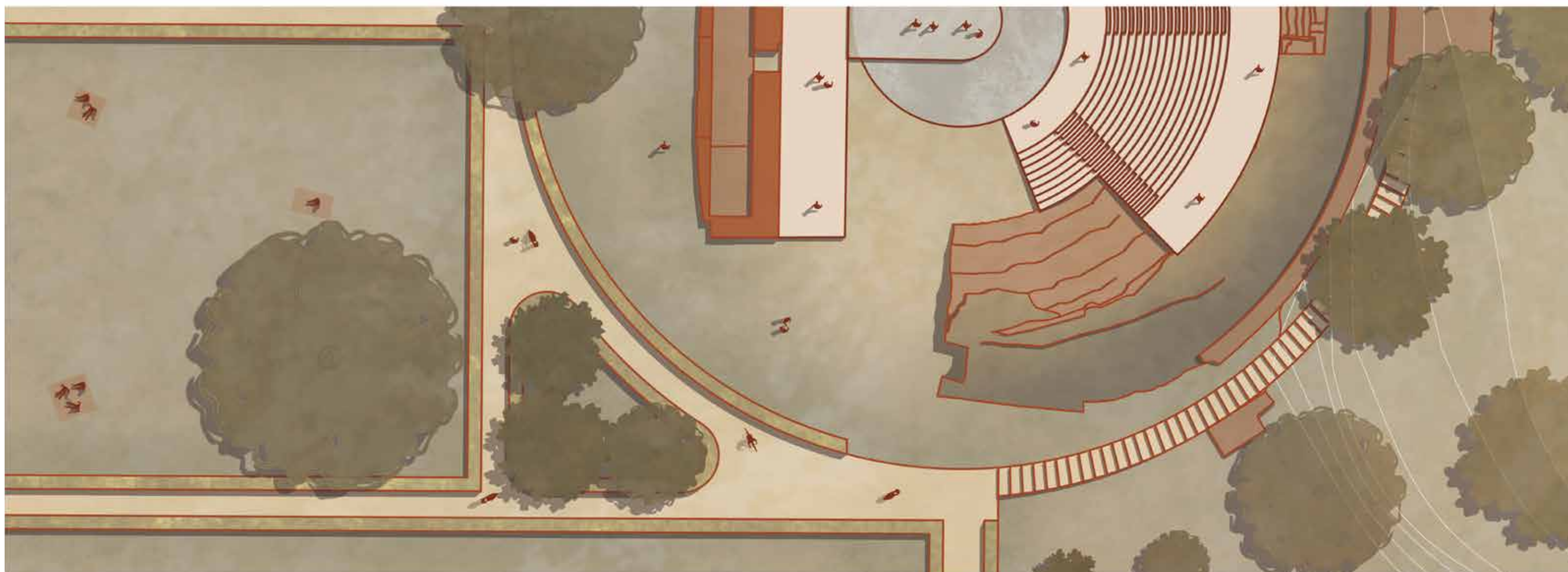
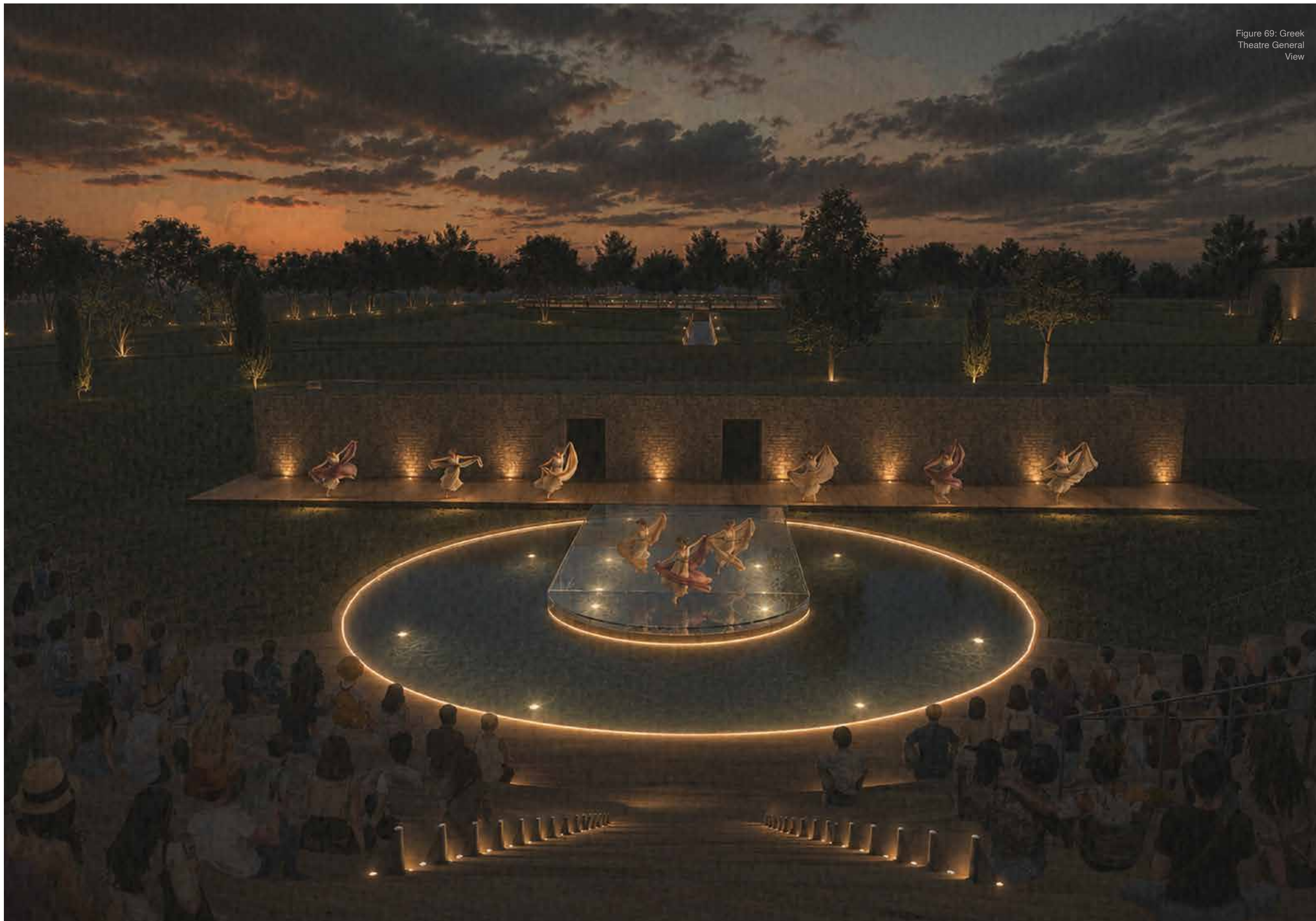


Figure 69: Greek
Theatre General
View



Landscape Connector and Labyrinth

The landscape proposal was not conceived simply as a network of paths linking one pavilion to another. From the beginning, movement through the site was understood as part of the project itself. Reaching each architectural moment remains important, but the time spent between them carries the same weight. The visitor is not only moving toward a destination. They are gradually entering another way of experiencing the site.

This idea comes directly from the work developed during the Piranesi Prix de Rome workshop, where sensory gardens were explored as transitional spaces between architectural moments. In that context, the path was never

treated as a neutral connector. It could slow the body down, redirect attention, create expectation, or prepare the visitor for what would come next. In this project, that same logic is reinterpreted through a landscape sequence that connects the different parts of the proposal while giving each transition its own character.

The circulation follows the main axis extending from the Greek Theatre. Along this direction, visitors first encounter two reflective water basins placed symmetrically on either side of the route. Their position derives from the geometric order previously described, but their role is not only compositional. They mark a threshold between the theatre and the landscape beyond it. Together with the vegetation, the basins introduce a quieter atmosphere and slow the pace of movement before the visitor reaches the labyrinth.

Along this part of the route, the paths are enclosed by dense shrubs, loosely based on Roman garden references. The vegetation is not treated as a simple filler between one intervention and the next. It gives thickness to the route, closes the view at certain points, and then allows the site to appear again gradually as the visitor moves forward. This makes the passage from the archaeological remains to the new structures feel less abrupt. It also gives the visitor a clearer sense of direction through the landscape, without turning the path into a rigid corridor.

At the center of this landscape sequence is the labyrinth. It has a circular plan and is built from a series of lightweight steel frames, each approximately 2.60 meters high and 80 centimeters wide. The structure is deliberately simple, which allows it to remain adaptable. In its main configuration, the frames support dense vegetation that blocks direct visual connections and creates a stronger sense of immersion. Once inside, visitors lose sight of the larger site for a moment. Their attention shifts to the path, the vegetation, and the act of finding their way through.

One of the main references for this part of the project was the Labyrinth Garden designed by Raffaello Galiotto and Nardi at the Cortile del Settecento of the Università degli Studi di Milano. What was relevant was not only the image of the labyrinth, but also the way a light and temporary structure could introduce curiosity, discovery, and different forms of occupation within a historical setting.

The framework was also designed with future flexibility in mind. The same steel structure could support exhibition panels, protective elements, informational displays, or other temporary installations. For this reason, the labyrinth works at several levels at once. It is landscape, architecture, and exhibition infrastructure. Its use can change over time without requiring a major physical transformation.

The labyrinth is not presented as an obligatory passage. When visitors reach it, they can decide whether to enter or to stay on the outer path

and continue toward the following intervention. This choice is part of the design. Entering the labyrinth means accepting a slower and less direct route, with moments of uncertainty before reaching the center. Remaining outside keeps the movement more open and continuous. Both possibilities belong to the same sequence, but they produce different ways of reading the site. In this sense, the project does not force a single experience. It allows visitors to decide how deeply they want to engage with this part of the landscape.

After moving through the labyrinth, visitors reach its center. There, the path opens onto a circular reflecting pool, producing a brief pause after the enclosed and more disorienting sequence of the vegetation. At the center of the basin, a small planted island introduces a more intimate scale. During the Cano exhibition, this island becomes the place for a temporary sculpture based on one of the brand's jewelry pieces. It is the first moment in which the exhibition appears directly within the route, not as an object placed in isolation, but as something discovered after walking through the landscape. Once the exhibition is removed, the sculpture can disappear as well, while the planted island and the water remain as part of the garden.

The labyrinth connects back to the rest of the project through four separate exits. This prevents the route from becoming too rigid and allows movement to remain fluid and non-linear. Each exit returns visitors to the larger landscape sequence and eventually guides them toward the next architectural moment.

Ultimately, the landscape proposal transforms circulation into an active part of the project. Water, vegetation, geometry, and movement work together to create a sequence based on exploration rather than simple direction. Within Villa Adriana, the landscape is no longer treated as a background condition. It becomes one of the main instruments through which visitors discover, interpret, and remember the site.

Figure 70: Landscape Connector and Labyrinth

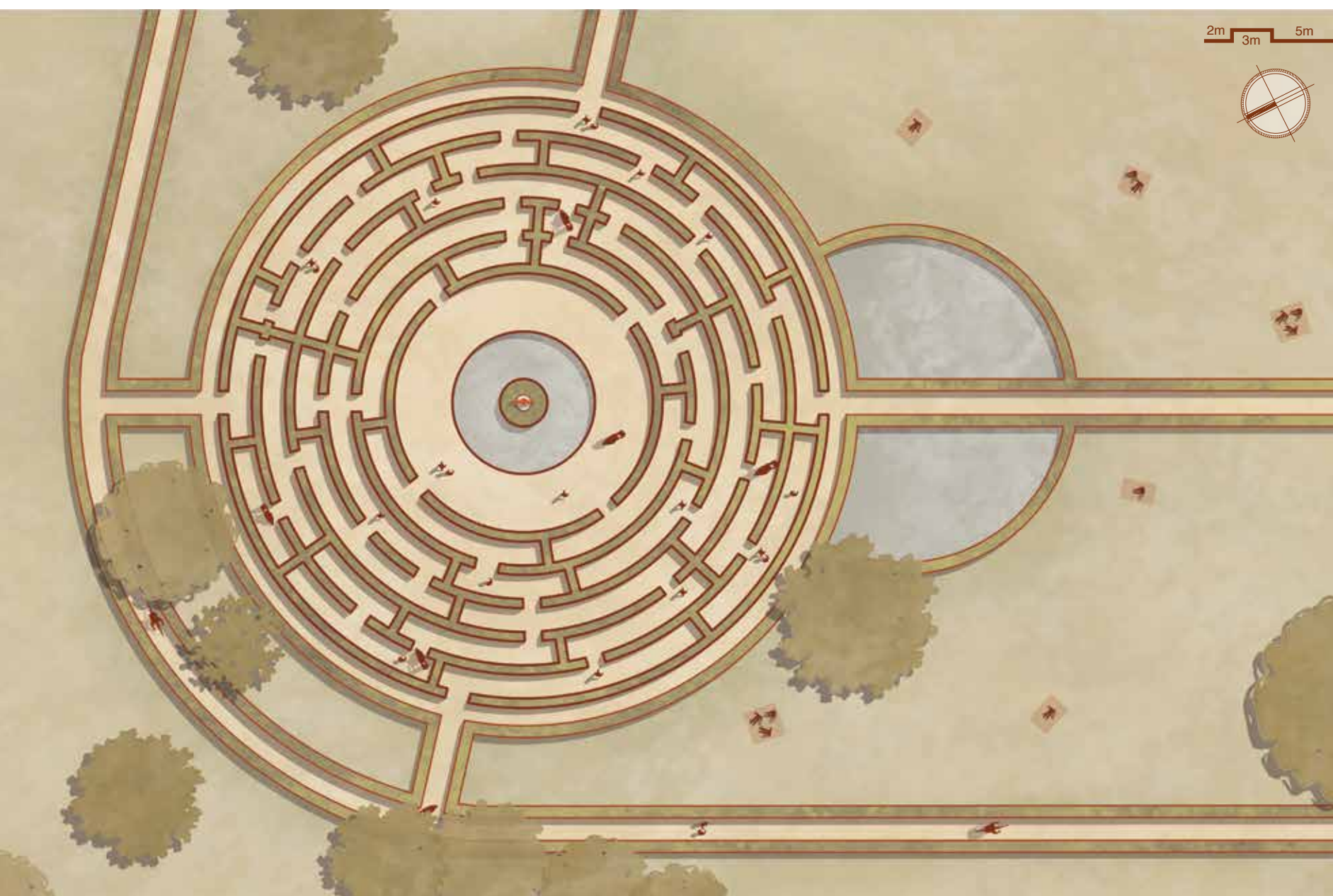




Figure 71: Labyrinth
Site Section

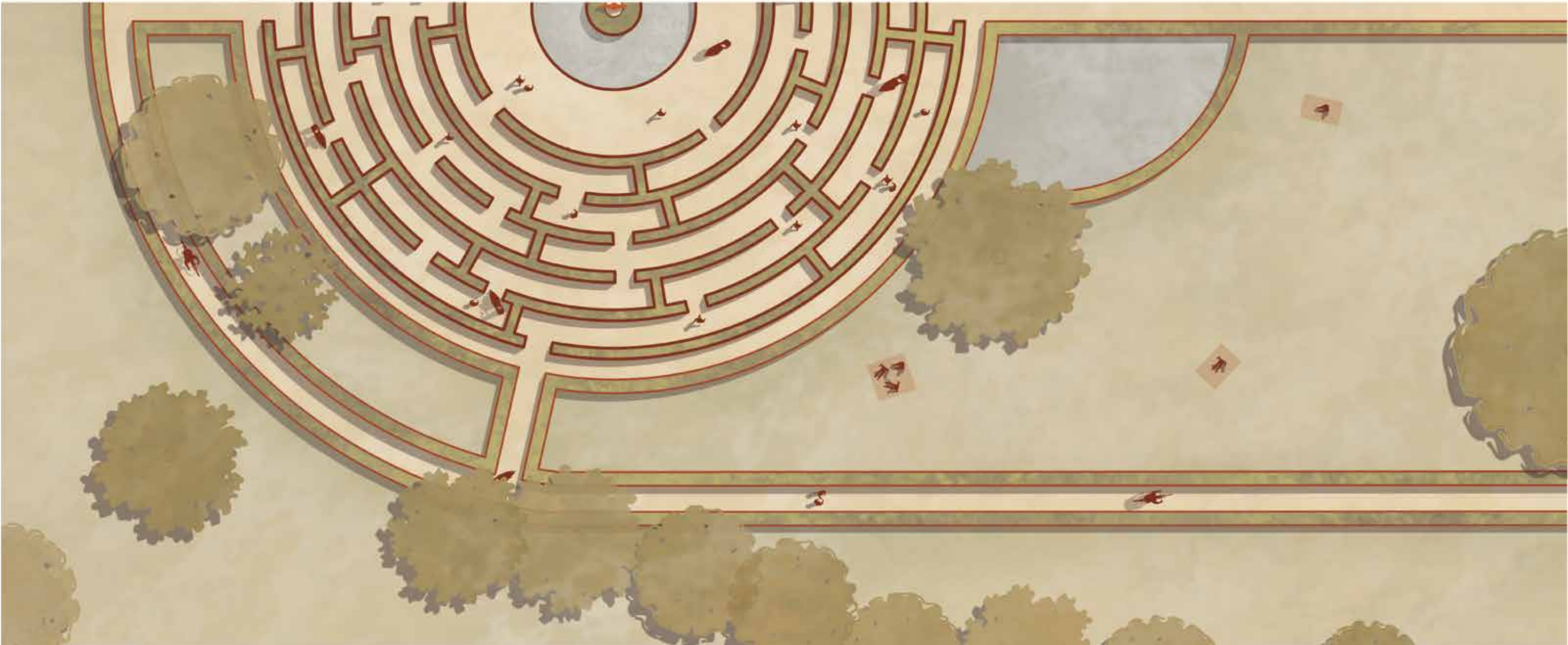
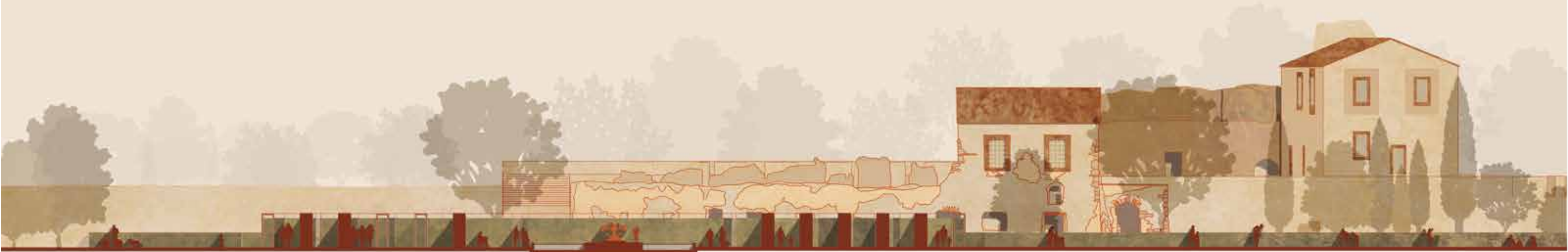


Figure 72: Labyrinth
General View



Palaestrae: Ephemeral Exhibition of Goldwork and Jewelry

In the Palaestrae, the intervention reaches its most temporary form. The route no longer works only as a passage through the site. It becomes an exhibition space, where pre-Columbian goldwork and Cano's contemporary jewelry are placed within the archaeological remains of Villa Adriana. The intention is not simply to display a collection of objects. The space is built as a temporary encounter between different traditions of craftsmanship, brought together through material, symbolism, and the act of making.

The exhibition strategy takes the Museo del Oro in Bogotá as a reference, especially in the way it uses movement to create discovery. Visitors are not meant to understand everything from the first view. The pieces appear gradually along the route, allowing time for observation, reading, and reflection.

Upon entering the Palaestrae, visitors encounter the remains of what was once a large rectangular space. Fragments of walls, structural traces, and partial alignments still define its geometry, even though much of the original architecture has disappeared. The project does not try to reconstruct these missing parts. Instead, it introduces a series of lightweight steel frameworks around some of the surviving fragments. These frames suggest the height and rhythm of the original space without rebuilding it. Their logic is related to the structures used in the labyrinth, although here the grid becomes denser and more closely tied to the exhibition. The same frames also hold panels, hanging displays, protected artifacts, and explanatory texts, allowing the history of pre-Columbian goldsmithing to be presented inside the Palaestrae, in direct relation with the archaeological remains (See Figure 75).

At the center of the Palaestrae stands the Cano Pavilion, the main exhibition space dedicated

to the brand. It is not conceived as a conventional enclosed volume. Its plan follows a spiral, so the center cannot be understood immediately from the outside. Visitors discover it through movement, step by step, which creates a slower and more deliberate experience.

The choice of a spiral for the shape of the pavilion is far from casual. During the research, it became evident that this was also a highly symbolic and recurrent shape in pre-Columbian cultures. Its meaning extended beyond decoration. It also communicated and represented concepts related to time, water, cycles, and vital energy.

It was also a recurrent symbol in pre-Columbian goldsmithing, since gold figures were used to transmit knowledge about rituals and cosmology.

In architecture, the spiral was usually used in sacred spaces, symbolizing the transition from the mundane to the divine, as well as the importance of the path as part of the experience, which was fundamental to the project.

The outer skin is made of perforated brick units inspired by the opus reticulatum found throughout Villa Adriana. The project does not reproduce the Roman technique directly. It reinterprets it through a contemporary language, creating a permeable envelope where light and air can pass through, while the pavilion still keeps a strong architectural presence.

Inside, the tone of the exhibition shifts. The areas around the pavilion are more informative, while the spiral leads visitors into a quieter space. At its center, a circular reflecting pool holds the focus. A sculptural piece inspired by Cano's jewelry rises from the water, linking the brand to the pre-Columbian references explored in the project (See Figure 77).

Around the pool, eight steel arches follow the shape of the pavilion. Their surfaces include abstract motifs taken from pre-Columbian cultures, worked into the metal rather than added as decoration. Under each arch, a female sculptural figure wears Cano jewelry. This changes

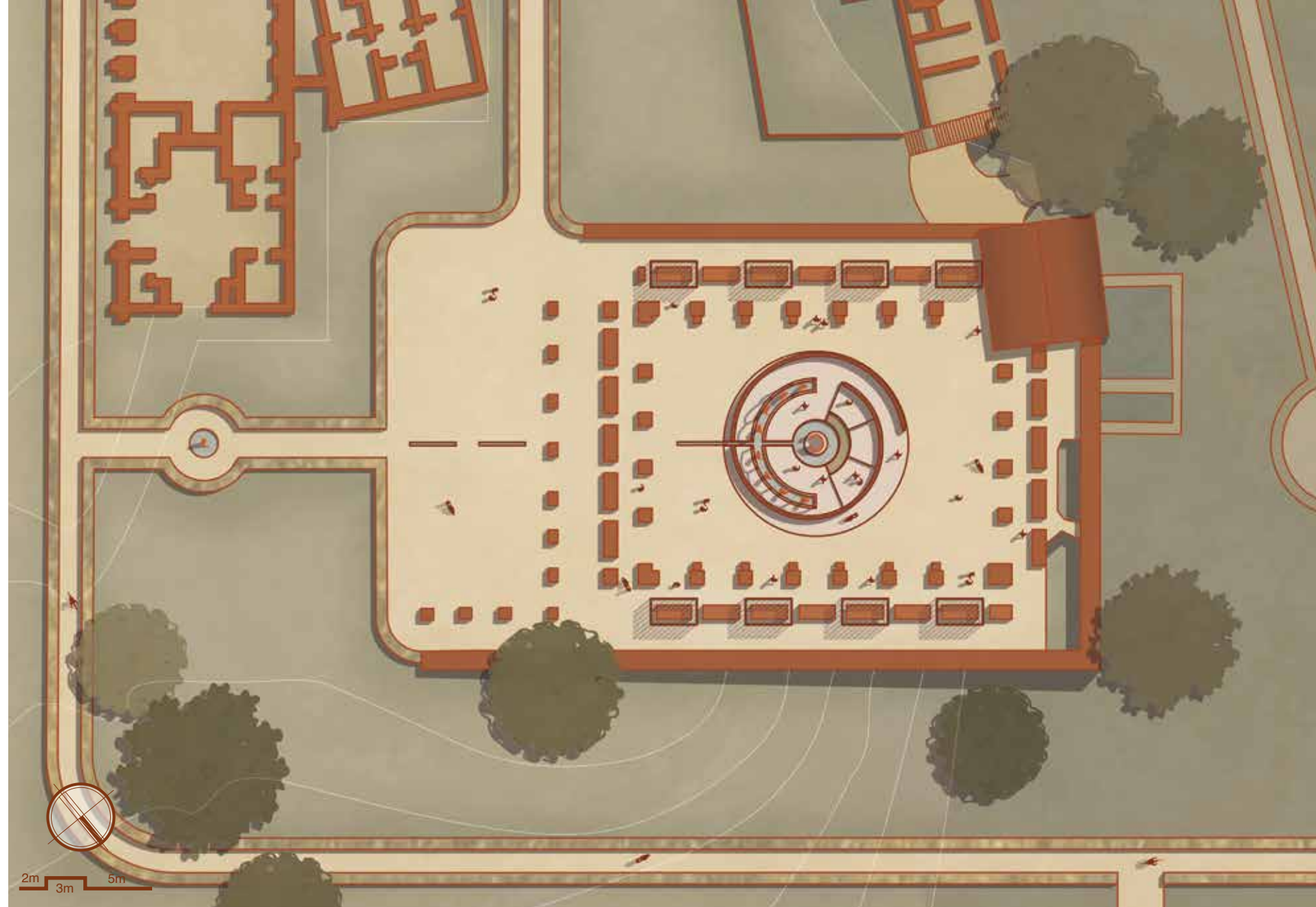


Figure 73: Palaestrae: Ephemeral Exhibition of Goldwork and Jewelry

the way the pieces are seen: not as objects separated in a display case, but as jewelry placed on a body, inside a space, and along the visitor's path.

This is where the link to pre-Columbian culture becomes most explicit. Since the intervention is temporary, it can carry a stronger symbolic expression than the more permanent architectural elements in other parts of the proposal. From the pavilion, a narrow water channel extends along the main axis of the Palaestrae. It follows the geometry of the ruins and guides the visitor toward a secondary point, marked by a small reflecting basin and a sculptural element placed at the intersection with the axis of the surrounding building. Water appears again

as a connective element, linking different moments of the project into a continuous spatial narrative.

The temporary nature of the intervention is central to its identity. Every element introduced in the Palaestrae can be removed once the exhibition ends, leaving the archaeological remains untouched. The Palaestrae is not treated as a reconstruction of history. It becomes a temporary lens through which history can be observed, interpreted, and connected to the present.

Figure 74: Palae-
strae Pre-Columbian
Goldsmithing Exhi-
tion View





1.5m 3m

Figure 75: Palae-
strae Site Section



Figure 76: Palae-
strae Cano Jewelry
Brand Exhibition
View



Pavilion — Contemporary Infrastructure for Cultural Exchange

The visitor's route ends in front of the Temple of Venus, where the pavilion becomes the final point of the proposal. Here, the different layers developed throughout the project meet in the same space: archaeology and contemporary design, permanence and ephemerality, Italian and Colombian cultural references.

The previous interventions work mainly through temporary insertions or through the reinterpretation of ruins already present on the site.

The pavilion works differently. It is conceived as a long-term addition to the site. The fashion show activates it, but the space is not limited to that event. It is imagined as a flexible structure that could host exhibitions, cultural activities, social events, and potentially a permanent restaurant within Villa Adriana.

Its geometry comes from the axial system described earlier. The pavilion is contained within a circumference derived from the Temple of Venus, which creates a proportional relationship with one of the Villa's most important geometric references. The project does not reproduce the circle in a literal way. Instead, it translates that reference into a symmetrical and strongly axial composition organized around a central reflecting pool.

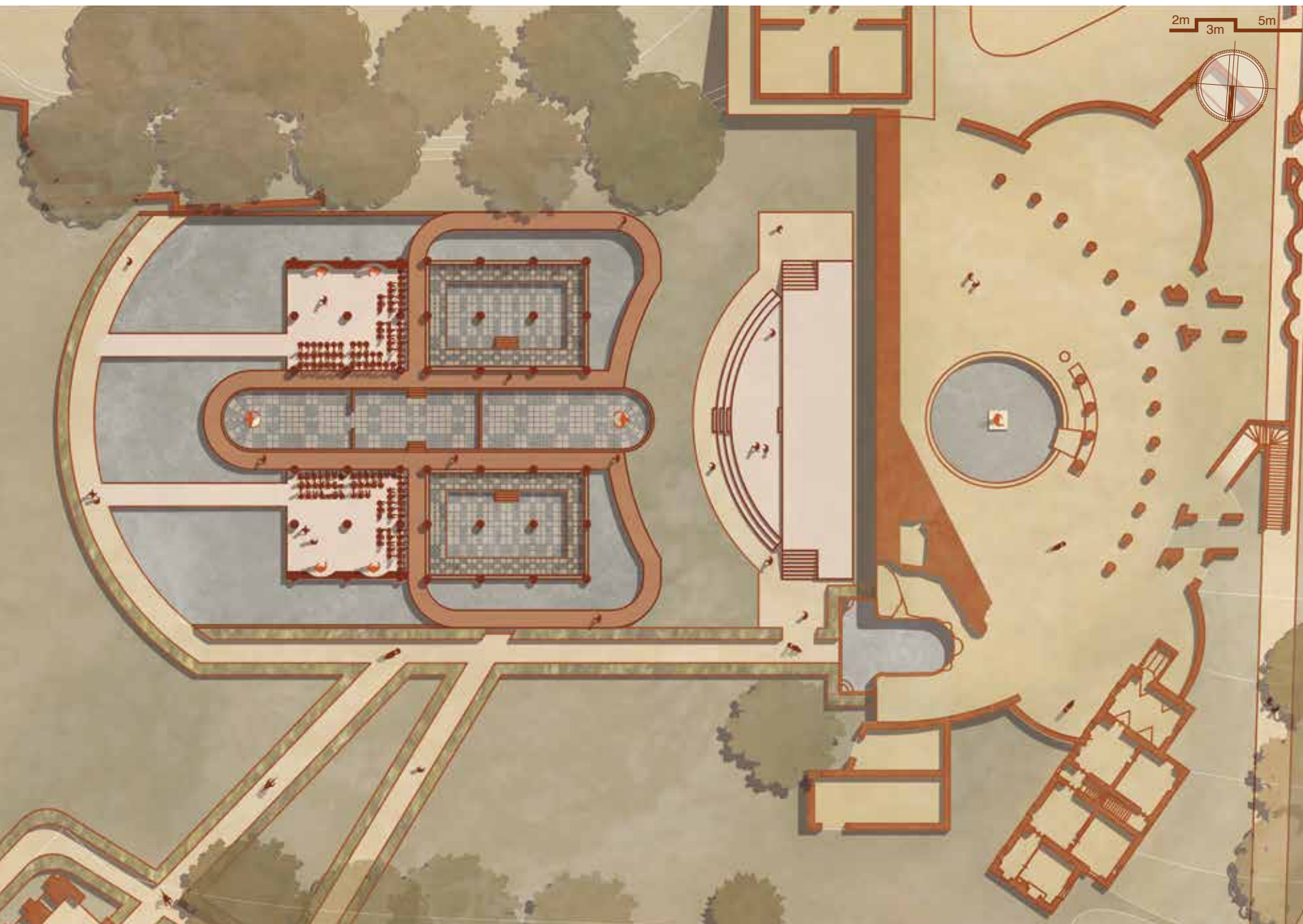


Figure 77: Pavilion
— Contemporary
Infrastructure for
Cultural Exchange

This pool organizes the space. It runs along the main axis of the pavilion, creates a direct visual connection with the Temple of Venus, and guides the visitor's experience. Keeping this axis open was essential to the design. No roof or architectural element crosses above it, so the pavilion frames the view toward the temple and its statue. The architecture therefore works less as an isolated object and more as a way of directing attention (See Figure 79).

The main areas for visitors are placed on both sides of the central pool. During the fashion show, these areas hold the audience. Afterward, they can be used in other ways. At the far end of the pavilion, two additional reflecting pools close the composition. Their presence extends the role of water through the intervention and reinforces the relationship between architecture, landscape, and archaeology.

This part of the proposal has the strongest architectural presence. The structure is conceived in concrete and covered with travertine, so its material character remains close to that of Villa Adriana. Most of the enclosure is defined by slender columns, while only two lateral walls are completely closed. These walls contain niches with sculptural figures, continuing a theme already introduced in the labyrinth and the Palaestrae. During the Cano exhibition, the sculptures are dressed with jewelry pieces, placing Roman representations of the body in relation to contemporary Colombian craftsmanship.

The strongest Colombian references appear in the temporary elements connected to the fashion show. A lightweight bamboo structure is installed above the columns, creating a canopy that introduces a material closely linked to Colombian architectural traditions. At the same time, a wooden runway is inserted into the pavilion. Its contrast with the travertine surfaces helps make the temporary condition of the event visible.

The decision to introduce bamboo, timber, and other lightweight elements only during the

fashion show is intentional. Rather than becoming a permanent architectural language, these additions act as temporary statement pieces that create a deliberate visual contrast with the archaeological setting. Their purpose is to produce a memorable moment that belongs exclusively to the event, allowing the intervention to momentarily transform the atmosphere of the site without permanently altering its character. Once the event ends, these elements disappear, and the pavilion returns to a material expression that is much closer to the architectural language of Villa Adriana.

Next to the Temple of Venus, a secondary wooden platform supports service functions during the fashion show, including catering, technical equipment, and performances. A small stepped seating area faces the pavilion, allowing this space to continue working independently after the event for smaller cultural activities.

For the fashion show, the adjacent building of the Palaestrae becomes the backstage area. From there, the models leave the existing structure and move through the landscape route before reaching the pavilion. The arrival is not immediate. It becomes a slow passage from preparation to performance.

Water continues beyond the pools used by the runway. A larger reflecting basin surrounds the pavilion and follows the same geometric logic that organizes the rest of the project. This gives the intervention a different relationship with the ground. The pavilion does not simply stand beside the water. It appears to come out of it, like an island floating in the middle of a lake.

Access is handled with the same care as in the rest of the proposal. Bridges link the pavilion to the surrounding paths, keeping the route continuous and level so that all visitors can move through the space in the same way.

The pavilion is meant to change over time depending on how it is being used and the climatic conditions of the moment. In its original, more permanent and raw condition, what re-

Figure 78: Pavilion
— Day and Night
Atmospheres View

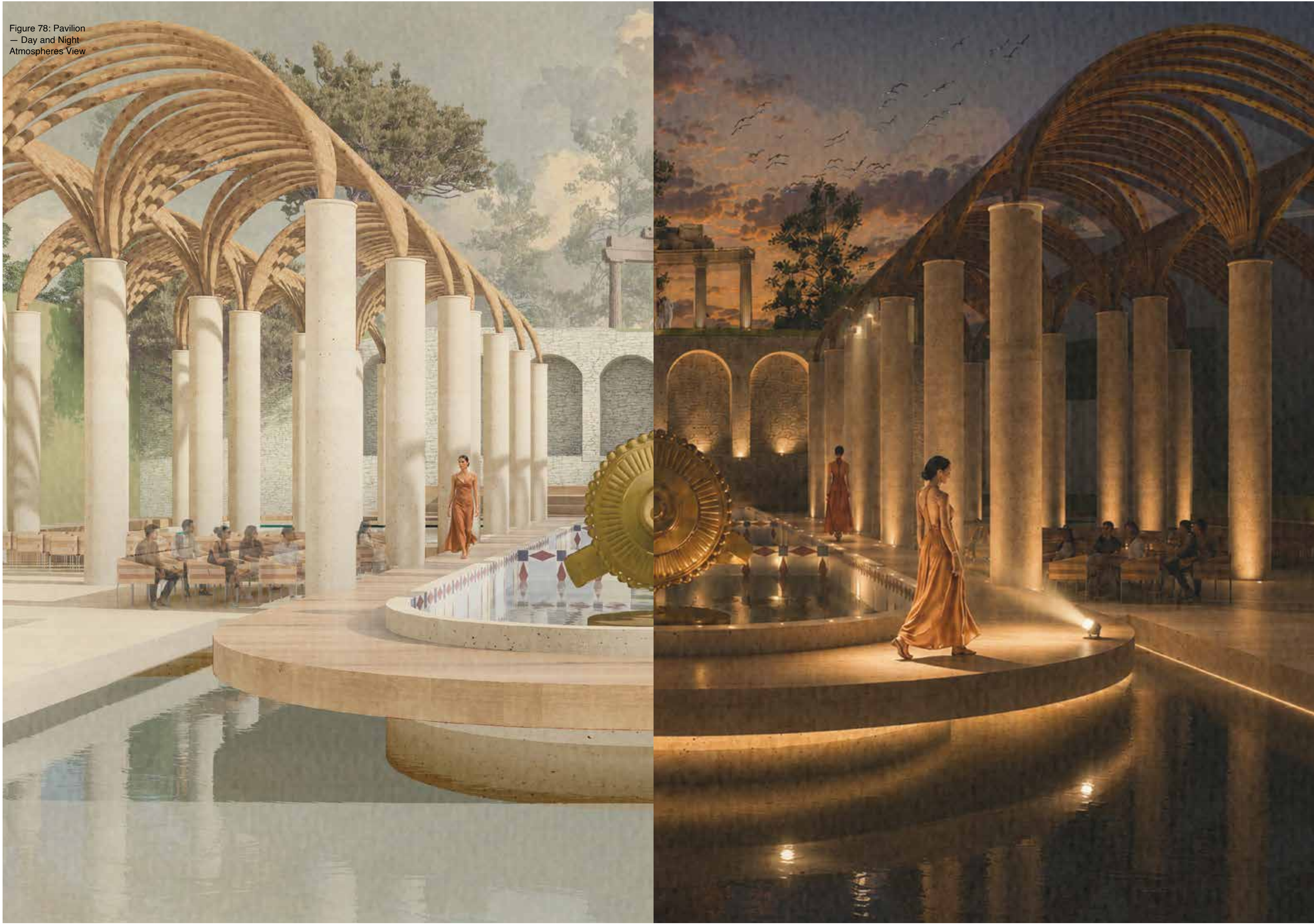
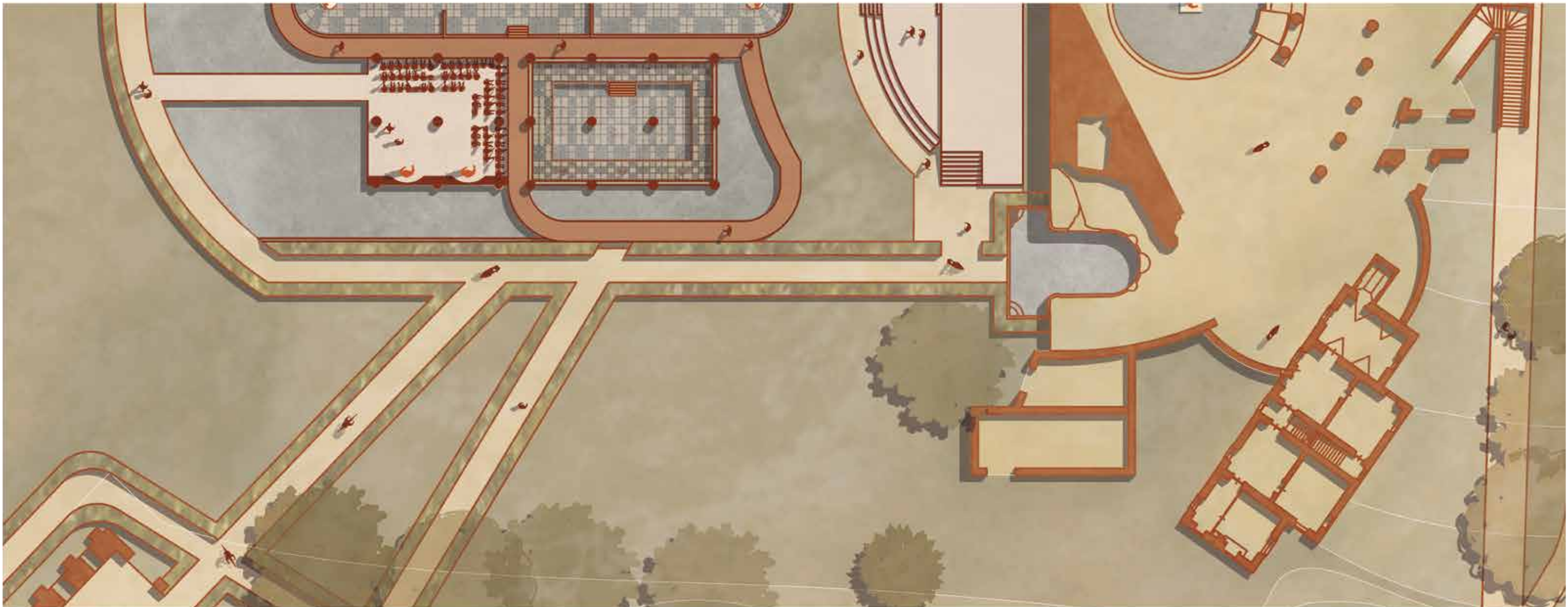




Figure 79: Pavilion
Site Section



mains is the travertine structure, the columns, the walls, and the water elements. The pools are finished with ceramic tiles inspired by the colors and patterns found around the Villa that were studied during the Piranesi Prix de Rome workshop, linking that research phase with the final proposal.

For the fashion show specifically, the stable base is altered by temporary additions. The bamboo canopy is added, the runway reorganizes circulation, and sculptural pieces inspired by Cano jewelry appear throughout the space (See Figure 81).

The runway is laid out around the central and lateral pools, so the movement of the models is not completely frontal or linear. Water becomes part of the path. In the central basin, the circulation of the runway makes the models step down into the pool, cross it, and come out again on the other side. This passage refers to El Dorado myth and to the connection between water and gold in pre-Columbian symbolism. The myth is not illustrated directly. It is suggested through the action of crossing the water inside the pavilion.

The route then reaches the lateral pools. Here, the models stand in the shallow water between the columns. From the viewers perspective, there is a continuation of sculptures and models, creating a composition in which architecture, sculpture, and the human body are seen together. This relationship is already present in different parts of the Villa, and the pavilion brings it back through the event (See Figure 82).

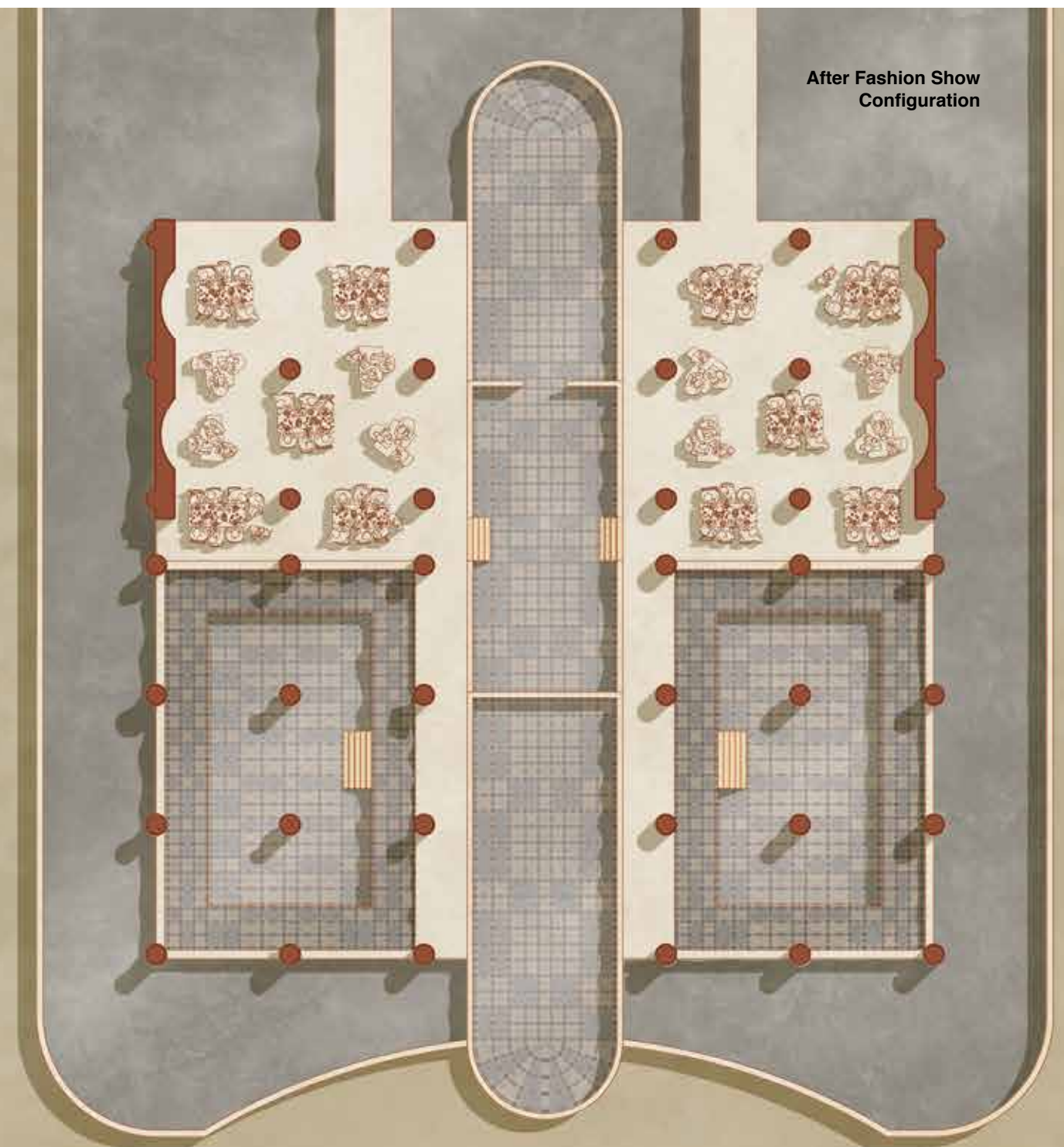
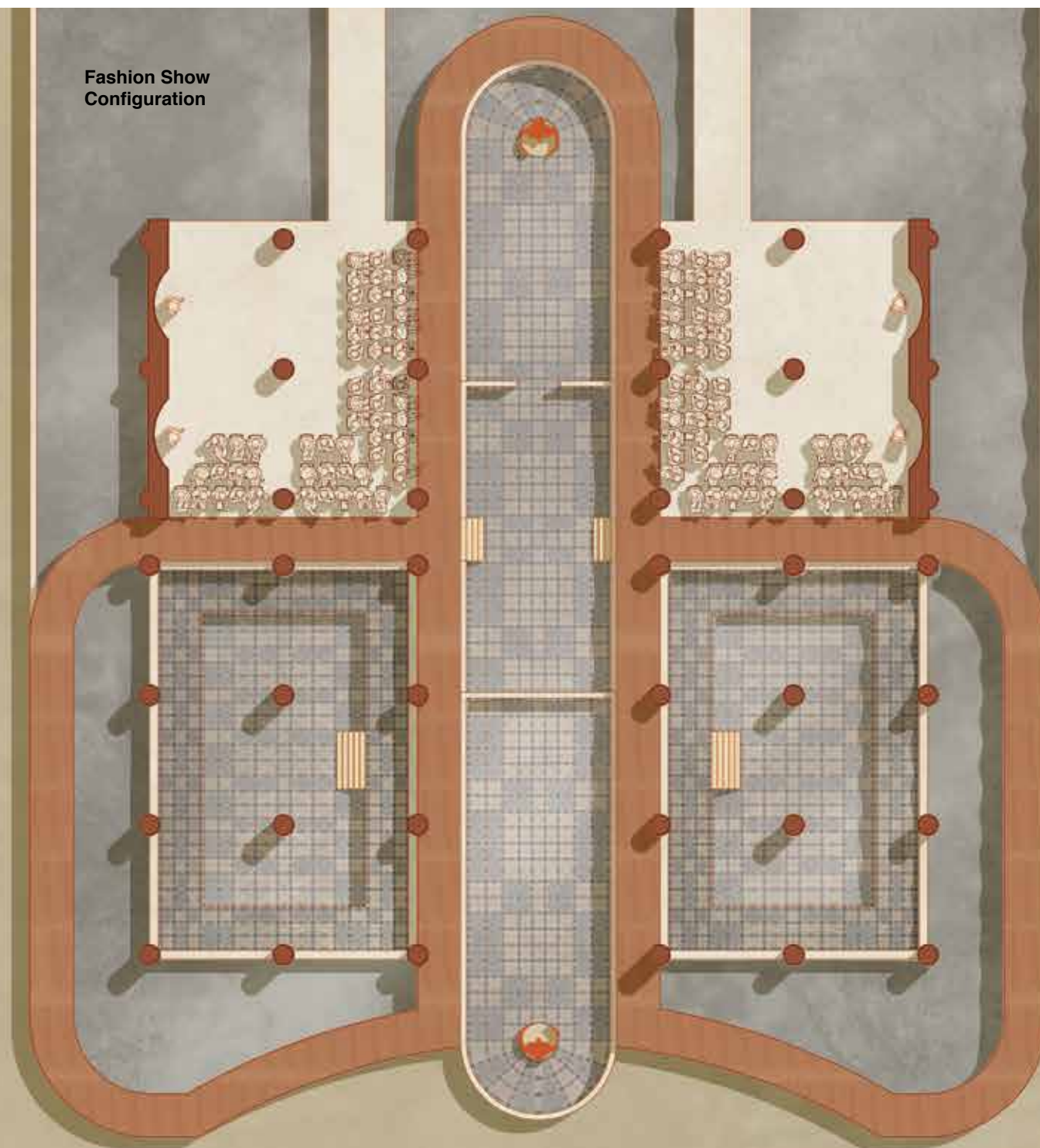
clothing, jewelry requires physical proximity in order to be fully appreciated, and that smaller, more immersive events often communicate craftsmanship and cultural values more effectively than large conventional fashion shows.

For this reason, the audience remains visually and physically close to the models throughout the experience, allowing the jewelry to become part of the architectural composition rather than a distant object on a runway.

Once the show ends, the pavilion can take on another configuration. During the warmer

Figure 80: Pavilion Before and After Fashion Show Configuration Plan

The intimate scale of the pavilion also responds to Cano's reflections on presenting jewelry. During the interview, he explained that unlike



months, Arches and textile coverings can be added to provide shade and make the space usable for longer periods. With these additions, it can host a restaurant, new exhibitions, or informal gatherings. When they are removed, the intervention returns to its fixed elements: travertine, columns, walls, and water. The program can change, but the architectural character remains (See Figure 83).

In this sense, the pavilion behaves almost like a chameleon. Its architecture is not defined by a single fixed image but by its ability to adapt to different moments, climates, and uses while maintaining its identity. Each transformation responds to practical needs, improving comfort and functionality for visitors, yet always preserving a close relationship with the archaeological context.

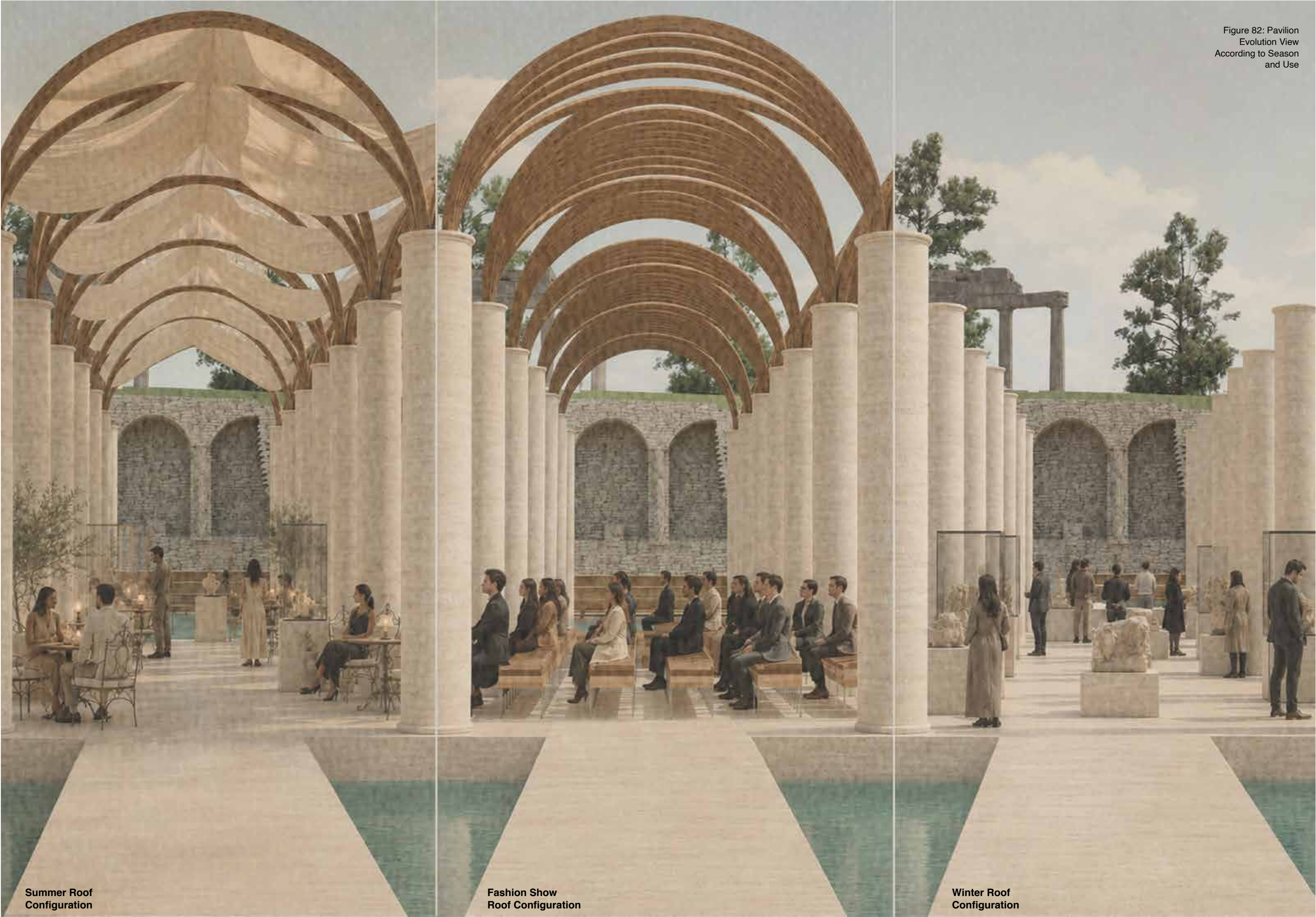
This balance between permanence and transformation also echoes Cano's philosophy as a brand. During the interview, he repeatedly described the importance of remaining faithful to a clear identity while allowing continuous evolution over time. The pavilion follows the same principle: its architectural identity remains constant, while temporary interventions introduce new cultural narratives without replacing the existing ones. Rather than seeking to merge traditions into a single language, the project allows different identities to coexist, each remaining recognizable while enriching the other.

The pavilion becomes the final synthesis of the thesis. Its permanent structure takes its material and spatial references from Villa Adriana, while its temporary transformations introduce elements linked to Cano and pre-Columbian culture. These references are not merged into one single architectural language. They remain distinct, but they are placed in relation to one another. The result is not a reconstruction of the past. It is a new layer added to the site: contemporary, adaptable, and connected to the possibility of producing new cultural meanings within heritage.



Figure 81: Pavilion
Interior View with
Models Runway
Flow

Figure 82: Pavilion
Evolution View
According to Season
and Use



Summer Roof
Configuration

Fashion Show
Roof Configuration

Winter Roof
Configuration

Figure 83: Overall
View of the Pavilion
from the Venus'
Temple at Night





Chapter VIII Epilogue

Reflections

This thesis set out to ask whether a UNESCO World Heritage Site such as Hadrian's Villa could host a contemporary cultural event capable of generating a genuine intercultural dialogue without compromising its historical and archaeological value. Through the analysis of the Villa itself, the study of pre-Columbian goldsmithing traditions, the examination of Cano as a contemporary cultural mediator, and the development of an architectural proposal, it became possible to demonstrate that this kind of integration is not only feasible, but can actually become a powerful strategy for heritage valorization.

The historical research revealed that Hadrian's Villa was never conceived as an isolated or culturally homogeneous place. Quite the opposite. It emerged as a synthesis of influences arriving from different parts of the Roman world, becoming a physical expression of exchange, curiosity, and cultural encounter. Understanding the Villa as a "container of cultures" provided the conceptual foundation for the entire project. It allowed the proposal to develop not as an external imposition, but as a continuation of a logic that was already embedded within the site's own identity.

From this reading of the Villa, the analysis of pre-Columbian goldsmithing and Cano's work opened the discussion toward the Colombian context. It showed how contemporary design can function as a means of cultural transmission, not only as a commercial product. Cano is understood here as an interpreter of archaeological heritage, translating ancient symbolic systems into objects that can still exist and be understood in the present.

This created an unexpected, but productive, parallel with Hadrian's own interest in collecting, reinterpreting, and bringing together different cultural influences. In both cases, cultural exchange is not treated as something external to the project, but as its main point of connection. This shared attitude is what made

the brand a suitable mediator for the dialogue proposed between Colombia and Italy.

The architectural proposal was the point where this dialogue became spatial. The project did not place the event in Hadrian's Villa as if the site were simply a beautiful background. The route became the main tool for building that relationship. Along it, exhibition spaces, landscape areas, performances, and quieter moments were not treated as separate episodes, but as parts of the same experience. The interventions were placed with the archaeological context in mind, allowing visitors to move through the project while still feeling the presence and weight of the Villa around them. Reversible systems, accessible paths, and the combination of temporary and more stable elements helped keep this balance. In this way, the project showed that contemporary activities can be introduced into a heritage site without weakening its value. They can also make it easier to see, understand, and experience in the present.

One of the clearest results of the project appears in the way it deals with permanence and ephemerality. The proposal does not give the same role to every intervention. Instead, each element takes on a different level of expression depending on how long it is meant to remain on the site. The most temporary installations carry the strongest Colombian references and the main narrative content. The more permanent elements, on the other hand, stay closer to the material presence and spatial character of Hadrian's Villa. This separation made it possible for the Colombian references and the character of the Villa to remain visible at the same time, each one occupying a different role within the proposal. The temporary elements introduced a more experimental layer, where symbols, narratives, and cultural references could appear with greater freedom. In that sense, ephemerality became less a constraint than a design strategy, especially in a place where any permanent gesture must be treated with care.

The project also suggests that heritage conservation cannot be understood only as the protection of physical remains. Material integrity remains essential, especially in an archaeological site such as Hadrian's Villa, but it is not the whole problem. A place like this also depends on its ability to be read again by contemporary society, to receive new meanings without losing the value of what is already there. For that reason, the proposal works with a model of heritage management in which conservation and activation are held together. The archaeological site is not treated as a closed object, but as a place where new cultural narratives can be introduced with care, while its authenticity remains protected.

For Hadrian's Villa, the intervention suggests a different way of approaching the site. The Villa is therefore approached as more than a place to be observed. The project gives it an active role, turning the visit into a situation where people can move, gather, participate, and come into contact with other cultural references. This does not mean changing the archaeological identity of the site. The intention is the opposite: to make that identity more present by creating new ways of engaging with it, capable of attracting different audiences and encouraging visitors to return.

This is where architecture takes on a mediating role. It does not resolve the differences between the Italian and Colombian references by blending them into one unified image. Instead, it gives each of them a place within the same experience. The archaeological setting, the pre-Columbian references, the exhibition elements, and the visitor's movement through the site all become part of the dialogue. The connection between both cultures is therefore built through spatial experience, not through a forced narrative. This is where architecture becomes valuable, not only as a physical intervention, but as a way of connecting past and present, permanence and transformation, local heritage and wider cultural exchange.

The final conclusion returns to Hadrian's Villa itself. To conserve the Villa does not only mean to preserve its ruins. It also means preserving the attitude behind the Villa: its curiosity toward other cultures, its openness to exchange, and its ability to bring different references together in one place. If Hadrian's Villa was originally shaped by the coexistence of distant worlds, then allowing it to receive new cultural dialogues today does not contradict its identity. It continues one of the ideas that has belonged to the site from the beginning. It may be one of the most coherent ways of preserving it.

Figure 84: Villa Adriana, Tivoli
Source: photograph by the authors.



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Annex 01. Email Exchange with Eduardo Cano: Spanish version (Original)

Nuevo Mensaje

Para

C*****a@outlook.com

Asunto

Entrevista para proyecto academico internacional

Estimada Catalina y Gina,

Gracias por su mensaje y por el interés en Joyería Cano. Me honra que hayan escogido nuestro trabajo como referente en su tesis y celebro la manera en que buscan vincular el legado precolombino con el diseño contemporáneo y la moda italiana.

Con mucho gusto participaré en la entrevista que proponen. Mientras coordinamos la fecha, aprovecho para compartirles algunas ideas iniciales sobre los temas que mencionan:

Historia y evolución de la marca: Joyería Cano nace en 1970 con la misión de preservar y difundir el legado de la orfebrería precolombina. Hemos trabajado en alianza con el Museo del Oro y con comunidades de artesanos, reinterpretando piezas a través de técnicas ancestrales como la cera perdida. Hoy somos la quinta generación de la familia Cano dedicada a este oficio, y la marca ha evolucionado hacia un diálogo entre tradición y modernidad, con presencia tanto en Colombia como en mercados internacionales.

Misión, visión y proyección a futuro: Nuestra misión es mantener vivo este patrimonio cultural, transformándolo en piezas de joyería que puedan usarse y apreciarse en la vida contemporánea. A futuro buscamos consolidarnos como una casa joyera latinoamericana de referencia global, expandiendo nuestra presencia en Europa y Asia, y al mismo tiempo fortaleciendo la conexión con nuestras raíces y el trabajo artesanal en Colombia.

Proceso creativo y elementos identitarios: Cada colección parte de un estudio profundo de las culturas precolombinas, de sus símbolos, colores y cosmogonía. La identidad de Cano se sostiene sobre tres pilares: autenticidad histórica, excelencia artesanal y reinterpretación contemporánea. El reto es siempre mantener un balance entre fidelidad al legado y relevancia en el presente.

Les propongo conversar el martes 23 a las 5pm hora Paris

Nuevamente, gracias por el interés y la oportunidad de dialogar.

Con aprecio,
Eduardo Cano

Enviar

Guardar

Cancelar

Annex 02. Email Exchange with Eduardo Cano: English version

New Message

To

C*****a@outlook.com

Subject

Interview for an International Academic Project

Dear Catalina and Gina,

Thank you for your message and for your interest in Joyería Cano. I am honored that you have chosen our work as a reference for your thesis, and I truly appreciate the way you seek to connect the pre-Columbian legacy with contemporary design and Italian fashion.

I would be very pleased to participate in the interview you are proposing. While we coordinate the date, I would like to share some initial thoughts on the topics you mentioned:

History and evolution of the brand: Joyería Cano was founded in 1970 with the mission of preserving and promoting the legacy of pre-Columbian goldsmithing. We have worked in partnership with the Gold Museum and with artisan communities, reinterpreting pieces through ancestral techniques such as lost-wax casting. Today, we are the fifth generation of the Cano family dedicated to this craft, and the brand has evolved into a dialogue between tradition and modernity, with a presence both in Colombia and in international markets.

Mission, vision, and future projection: Our mission is to keep this cultural heritage alive by transforming it into jewelry pieces that can be worn and appreciated in contemporary life. Looking ahead, we aim to establish ourselves as a leading Latin American jewelry house with global recognition, expanding our presence in Europe and Asia while simultaneously strengthening our connection to our roots and to artisanal work in Colombia.

Creative process and identity elements: Each collection begins with an in-depth study of pre-Columbian cultures, their symbols, colors, and cosmology. Cano's identity is built upon three pillars: historical authenticity, artisanal excellence, and contemporary reinterpretation. The challenge is always to maintain a balance between fidelity to the legacy and relevance in the present.

I would like to propose Tuesday the 23rd at 5:00 PM Paris time for our conversation.

Once again, thank you for your interest and for the opportunity to engage in this dialogue.

With appreciation,
Eduardo Cano

Send

Save

Cancel

Annex 03. Original Spanish Transcript of the Interview with Eduardo Cano on the Cano Brand

Conducted on September 23, 2025, by Catalina Ossa and Gina Bello, edited by the same authors

Bello: Hola, buenas tardes
Ossa: Hola, estamos justo cuadrando porque no nos estaba dejando empezar a grabar la reunión, pero ya.
Cano: ¿Cómo han estado?
Bello: Muy bien, muchas gracias.
Cano: ¿Están en Turín las dos?
Ossa: Sí [...] vivimos en Turín las dos.
Cano: Bueno, qué bien. Estuve hace unos meses en Turín y me parece espectacular.
Ossa: ¿Sí? Sí, es muy bonito.
Bello: Sí, nosotros estamos viviendo acá desde hace ya dos años que empezamos a hacer la maestría.
Cano: ¿Cómo les ha ido?
Ossa: Muy bien, la verdad.
Cano: Qué bien [...] Bueno, pues gracias por escribirnos.
Ossa: No, gracias a ti por aceptar esta entrevista.
Cano: Estoy acá a sus órdenes. [...] En lo que pueda ayudar, encantado.
Ossa: Gracias.

Bello: Ok, pues te contamos un poco en qué estamos trabajando. Ambas estamos estudiando una maestría en arquitectura para el patrimonio. Para nuestra tesis, estamos en un programa que busca unir moda y arquitectura efímera, explorando nuevos enfoques para integrar fashion shows en espacios patrimoniales. Actualmente trabajamos en Villa Adriana, un sitio reconocido por la UNESCO, con un rico contexto histórico. Algo que nos permitió conectar este proyecto con Colombia, y que nos emocionaba como colombianas, es que la villa funciona como un contenedor de culturas: arquitectónicamente representa distintos

lugares que pertenecieron al Imperio Romano, así como influencias de Egipto, Turquía y otros espacios del mundo. Esto nos brindó la oportunidad de...

Cano: Se llama Villa Adriana, ¿no?

Ossa: Villa Adriana, exacto.

Bello: Sí, queda en Tívoli, un comune cercano a Roma. Es una villa que fue redescubierta en 1400, y desde entonces ha sido muy importante como fuente de inspiración para muchos arquitectos alrededor del mundo y a lo largo del tiempo. Vimos en esto una oportunidad para traer nuestra cultura al proyecto de tesis. Al investigar, encontramos su marca, y nos dimos cuenta de que, además de estar totalmente ligada a lo precolombino, artesanal y arqueológico, tiene una visión muy clara de preservar ese legado cultural. También nos llamó mucho la atención su convenio con el Banco de la República para realizar réplicas de artesanías precolombinas. Después de estudiar la marca, pensamos que era exactamente lo que necesitábamos para integrar nuestro ámbito cultural en el proyecto.

Cano: Entonces, es un poco unir ese universo de cultura, moda, que es tan importante y a través de la historia se ve que van de la mano.

Ossa: Exactamente.

Bello: Entonces, si La Villa ya muestra y evidencia muchas culturas en distintos espacios, ¿por qué no traer una cultura nueva e integrarla, algo fuera de Europa, algo nuestro, más cercano a nosotros? Teniendo eso en cuenta, lo primero que queríamos hacer era pedirte que nos contaras un poco la historia de la joyería: cuáles fueron sus inicios, cómo ha transcurrido su historia a lo largo de los años y cuáles han sido esos momentos clave que han marcado hitos dentro de la marca en todos los sentidos.

Cano: Perfecto. Antes de empezar a contar, voy a aprovechar para contestarles el correo y compartirles un artículo. Es un artículo que escribió el MET, el Metropolitano de Nueva York,

hace un par de años, pero lamentablemente no se ha publicado. Es una entrevista que nos hicieron y que habla mucho de lo que vamos a tratar y de toda nuestra historia.

Para contarles un poco, yo soy quinta generación [de la familia Cano], y el trabajo se divide entre lo estrictamente precolombino y lo que somos hoy, que es joyería y reproducciones.

El inicio de todo esto fue un encuentro con un entierro indígena donde se encontraron piezas muy importantes. Nemesio Cano, mi tatarabuelo, descubrió este entierro y a raíz de eso nació su pasión por estos tesoros. Dedicó gran parte de su vida a este trabajo y llevó a su hijo y a mi abuelo a recorrer distintas partes del país buscando estos objetos, que suman más de 10.000 piezas. A través de tres generaciones, estas piezas llegaron primero al Banco de la República, que las compraba debido a la riqueza cultural de Colombia y porque muchas de estas piezas eran de colecciones privadas.

Muchas piezas importantes terminaron en manos del Banco de la República. En algún momento, el banco comenzó con exhibiciones pequeñas y después fundó lo que hoy es el Museo del Oro. La familia vendió más de 10.000 piezas y hoy el banco tiene más de 30.000, pero un porcentaje importante provino de nuestro trabajo. Mi abuelo, en los años setenta, fue un autodidacta curioso y aventurero, recorrió el país y entendió desde el inicio la importancia cultural de estas piezas, evitando que muchas se fundieran o se vendieran al dentista del pueblo u otras manos equivocadas.

[Mi abuelo] decidió irse a Alemania para adquirir maquinaria y aprender sobre joyería y reproducciones. En los setenta abrió la primera tienda en Bogotá, con el objetivo de preservar y replicar las piezas originales, usando las mismas piedras, formas y colores, todo lo más exacto posible. Con el tiempo, las piezas han evolucionado: muchas de las que hacemos hoy son inspiraciones que combinan elementos de varias piezas originales, respetando siempre el proceso artesanal de la cera perdida y el acabar

do en oro mate, como las piezas de museo. A lo largo del tiempo, hemos estado presentes no solo en Colombia, sino llevando y divulgando este arte precolombino al mundo. Las piezas se consideran atemporales, y aunque hoy lanzamos cuatro colecciones al año como parte del calendario de la moda, nuestra intención siempre ha sido mantener un puente entre el pasado y el presente. Hemos tenido tiendas en Nueva York, Alemania y vendimos en Japón; nuestras piezas han recorrido el mundo y son muy autóctonas, diferentes a lo que se encuentra hoy en día.

Además de joyería, en nuestras tiendas vendemos artesanías colombianas y trabajamos con comunidades, preservando técnicas ancestrales como cestería y tejido. Hace unos seis o siete meses abrimos una tienda en Madrid, con el enfoque de consolidar la marca y explorar nuevos mercados, como Europa, donde la historia, el arte y la cultura son altamente valorados. Aquí encontramos una clientela muy interesada en nuestro producto.

Ossa: Súper interesante. Nosotras justo encontramos la marca con un artículo que hablaba de la apertura de la tienda en Madrid. Nos pareció muy interesante porque dijimos: claro, es una marca que tiene sus orígenes en la cultura precolombina, muy colombiana, pero que al mismo tiempo está buscando expandirse a nuevos mercados europeos. Eso nos sirve mucho porque aquí estamos desarrollando nuestro proyecto. Y de eso te queríamos preguntar: a través de tantos años, tantas décadas, y ahora con la expansión a Europa, ¿cuáles son esos valores fundamentales de la marca y cómo los han logrado mantener o modificar a lo largo de todos estos cambios?

Cano: Creo que uno tiene que tener muy claro quién es. Las marcas que logran perdurar en el tiempo tienen muy claro cuál es ese ADN y esos valores de lo hecho a mano: mantener las técnicas, preservar los procesos, respetar las piezas originales y esos diseños que tienen tanta historia y tantos años. Creo que nos hemos mantenido entre esos pilares de preservar

y mantener esa herencia cultural tan importante, respetando las piezas originales, pero entendiendo que las marcas también tienen que evolucionar de cierta forma. Si uno construye un ADN, tiene que estar claro que no se puede ser para todo el mundo, porque a veces la gente se pierde buscando lo que hoy está de moda y ahí uno se puede desorientar. Para nosotros, lo más importante ha sido mantenernos fieles a lo que somos, que todo nace de lo que hacían estas culturas y estas piezas originales. No sé si eso te contesta.

Bello: Y teniendo en cuenta esta búsqueda de mantener la fidelidad de la marca, de sus raíces, ahora que probablemente se está extendiendo y busca nuevos mercados, ¿cómo describirías cuál es el público ideal al que se proyecta llegar? ¿Y qué estrategias han usado para diferenciarse y crecer en estos mercados internacionales, que son altamente competitivos, a la hora de atraer a ese mismo cliente?

Cano: Creo que son varias cosas, pero de por sí el producto es bastante distinto a lo que hay en los mercados, desde el color del oro hasta el estilo de las piezas. Nuestras piezas tienden a ser bastante impactantes. Llamémoslas “Statement Pieces”: son piezas de conversación, grandes, que llaman la atención y dan de qué hablar. Son llamativas.

Hablando un poco del tipo de clientes, es curioso porque en la tienda pueden coincidir tres generaciones: la abuela, la hija y la nieta. Las tres, de alguna forma, tienen piezas Cano. Hoy justamente estaba hablando con una persona que hace relaciones públicas en Nueva York, que llegó a nosotros porque veía que su mamá coleccionaba piezas nuestras, y después ella empezó a coleccionar también. Son piezas atemporales, y es lindo ver cómo diferentes generaciones se pueden relacionar con la misma pieza.

Encuentras personas que no tienen ninguna conexión con Colombia, pero aprecian el arte, la cultura y la historia, y eso les atrae. También puedes encontrar alguien que tampoco tiene

nada que ver con Colombia ni conocimiento previo de estas culturas precolombinas, pero simplemente le llama la atención el diseño, el color del oro, lo distinto que es, más un tema estético. Así, la clientela es bastante diversa. Hay marcas que tienen un perfil de cliente muy definido, pero en nuestro caso puedes encontrar desde colombianos que se sienten orgullosos, viajan y quieren llevar regalos, hasta clientes que han desarrollado afinidad con la marca y disfrutan del producto en su día a día y han tenido relación con la marca por años, ya sea a través de sus madres, como mencionaba, o incluso clientes que visitaron el Museo del Oro, visitaron Colombia y compraron una pieza. Muchos clientes, por ejemplo señoras neoyorquinas, ni han estado en Colombia y de pronto ni saben dónde queda, y solo les gusta estéticamente la pieza.

Hablabas un poco de la estrategia del mercado y todo este proceso. Hoy en día, las redes son súper importantes y todo este mundo de los creadores de contenido e influenciadores sigue evolucionando. La prensa tradicional o el mercado tradicional también tienen un peso, pero hay tantas cosas que se pueden hacer donde no todo es a través de la prensa tradicional.

Por eso, uno de los enfoques más orgánicos son las estrategias de gifting: identificar perfiles donde queremos posicionar nuestro producto. Por ejemplo, si quiero que mi producto lo relacionen con alguien, buscamos que esa persona se ponga lo nuestro. Así, en España buscamos ese tipo de perfiles, en Estados Unidos y en los diferentes mercados. Esto forma parte de generar awareness de la marca, con quién queremos relacionarnos dentro de esa matriz de marcas.

Hoy las marcas hablan mucho de generar conexión con el cliente: cómo le genera la marca cuando una persona la usa o se identifica con ella, cómo influye en la percepción de estilo de vida. La gente usa marcas porque, de alguna forma, les transmite algo, y lo nuestro se relaciona con lo místico, lo cultural, la historia. Es una pieza que muchas clientas pueden vestir junto con marcas de lujo; son las mismas

marcas y productos que pueden tener sus amigas, pero nuestras piezas le agregan un toque distinto.

Hoy en día el posicionamiento en cualquier mercado es llegar a ese tipo de creadores de contenido e influenciadores, y dentro de eso hay todo un espectro, de micro a macro y todo lo que está en el intermedio. Además, activaciones en tiendas, eventos pequeños con influenciadores o creadores de tendencias y de opinión. Hay muchas estrategias así, un poco más grassroots u orgánicas, que se pueden hacer.

Ossa: Sí, hay una influencer que me gusta mucho de España, que justo también los mostró, y yo dije: ¡ay! Estoy haciendo mi tesis de esa marca y justo la estaba mostrando.

Cano: ¿Quién era? ¿Te acuerdas?

Ossa: Emma Geikie, creo que se pronuncia así. ¿Sabes cuál es?

Cano: Sí, sacó un video.

Ossa: Ajá. No sé si fue algo que ustedes le mandaron o si ella los compró y los mostró, no recuerdo. Pero sí, los mostró.

Ossa: Pero bueno, tú hablas mucho del posicionamiento, de esta forma orgánica de dar a conocer la marca, que creo que hoy en día funciona un montón con el avance de la tecnología. Pero también queríamos preguntarte, considerando que nosotras estamos haciendo un evento más presencial, ¿han realizado algún tipo de evento para mostrar las colecciones, algo más grande, más presencial?

Cano: Sí, hemos hecho eventos. Estamos retomando un poco esa práctica, pero normalmente presentábamos la colección en Nueva York y en París. Por lo general, se toma un espacio durante tres o cuatro días y se hacen las presentaciones con una combinación de prensa, compradores y asociados.

Bello: En estos eventos, ¿en algunos se ha utili-

zado la idea de desfile o showcase para presentar las joyas? ¿O cómo es esa idea que ustedes han visto que mejor funciona cuando se da a conocer la nueva colección?

Cano: Desfiles hicimos hace mucho tiempo en Colombia y en México también, pero creo que más recientemente no hemos hecho desfiles. Uno de los grandes desfiles ahora ocurre con el inicio de la Semana de la Moda en París; cada vez son más creativos en cómo se realizan las pasarelas y eso tiene mucho impacto. Hoy lo que uno quiere generar es que la gente saque su celular y comparta; eso se multiplica. Si uno logra hacer algo de tal forma que genere eso, es súper importante para las marcas.

Bello: Sí, básicamente esa es la idea de este proyecto: generar un espacio “statement” que no solo se quede en un evento presencial, sino que también cree una imagen que pueda trascender, tanto de la villa como de la marca. Entonces, en cuanto a ese evento ideal, si tuvieras todos los recursos a tu disposición, ¿cuál dirías que podría ser ese evento perfecto para presentar la colección y la marca? Me refiero a espacios, materiales, escalas...

Cano: He visto muchos ejemplos de este tipo de eventos y pasarelas, y creo que el entorno es clave: cuando hay naturaleza alrededor, cuando sacas un poco de contexto el producto y lo pones en el escenario, donde hay contradicciones y se juega con lo que se está presentando, genera mucho impacto. Sin duda, algo como lo que ustedes tienen planteado con esta villa podría ser espectacular, porque el sitio por sí solo ya aporta mucho; no necesita mucha producción. El sitio, por sí mismo, ya basta.

Hay muchos lugares donde se podría hacer algo así. Ahorita, por ejemplo, salió una cantidad de videos y contenido que acaba de hacer Carolina Herrera en la Plaza Mayor de Madrid, retomando el tema de Madrid, y la sola Plaza Mayor es super bonita; entonces, solo hacer una pasarela o un recorrido allí ya genera mucho impacto. Así que, definitivamente, hay muchos sitios especiales donde, tanto en la natu-

raleza como en la ciudad, estas ruinas antiguas pueden funcionar, aunque no sabría decir un sitio en particular.

Ossa: De pronto, más que un sitio, ¿qué tipo de evento te imaginas que podría ser? Porque ahora mismo podría ser un desfile tradicional, como un desfile de modas, pero mostrando las joyas. También se usan mucho experiencias inmersivas, donde las modelos pasan entre la gente. Podría ser un evento para 300 personas, o algo más íntimo al que solo asistan un par de fotógrafos, pensado para mostrarse en redes. A eso nos referimos: cómo sería ese evento ideal en cuanto a tamaño, forma, alcance y la experiencia de la gente presente.

Bello: Hemos visto muchos ejemplos de pasarelas larguísimas y gigantes, donde la persona que está presencialmente no logra percibir todo el espacio. Esto pasa porque está pensado más para generar un espacio statement, algo que se vea en redes, y no tanto para enfocarse en quienes están allí en ese momento.

Ossa: Exacto, eso queremos entender, porque de eso depende el tipo de evento que vamos a diseñar

Cano: Hay diferentes formatos que funcionan para cumplir objetivos distintos. Si la experiencia busca esa cercanía con la marca, puede ser algo que genere una sensación más íntima. Lo que tú dices: en una pasarela tradicional, las personas están sentadas y pasa la modelo. Con ropa y prendas es más fácil verla, pero en el mundo de las joyas necesitas estar más cerca para apreciar mejor lo que lleva puesta la modelo.

Creo que cuando se hacen pasarelas en sitios muy emblemáticos con diseños increíbles, muchas veces están pensadas para generar impacto digital en redes, y eso funciona. Pero si es para una audiencia más específica, como prensa o un editor de revista, ahí buscas dar una sensación más íntima, más cercana a la marca, y exponer los valores de lo hecho a mano, de la historia, jugando con luces y modelos para

que se sientan dentro del mismo espacio, y no desde un plano distante al otro lado de la pasarela. Es otro formato. Hoy se hacen muchas mesas con chefs y experiencias culinarias, mucho más íntimas, con un comité reducido de 10, 15, 20 personas, no cientos.

Ossa: Lo que mencionas es cierto: con ropa puedes verla de lejos, pero las joyas requieren estar más cerca para apreciarlas completamente. Eso es muy importante para considerar a la hora de decidir la escala del evento que estamos proponiendo. También queríamos preguntarte, hoy en día que tienen más libertad para jugar con las piezas y los diseños, ¿cómo es ese proceso creativo a la hora de crear una colección? ¿Cómo deciden qué culturas tomar y cómo combinarlas para sacar una colección, por ejemplo?

Cano: No hay un proceso muy marcado ni estándar. Creo que se combinan varias cosas: se revisan las ventas de ciertas piezas para ver qué diseños y elementos funcionaron en colecciones anteriores, y siempre hay una base de referencia o inspiración en alguna pieza del museo o en una pieza original. A partir de ahí se empieza a construir una familia de productos. Típicamente, una colección tiene entre 30 y 40 piezas, haciendo más énfasis en los aretes, que son los que más se venden. También se revisa el precio de entrada de las diferentes categorías para balancear la colección.

Es un proceso creativo que nace de un concepto, una idea o una pieza. Se empieza con una o dos piezas y de ahí se va extendiendo de manera orgánica. Varias personas intervienen y aportan, siguiendo diferentes pasos hasta completar la colección. Es un proceso con input de distintas áreas y perspectivas.

Ossa: ¿Y los conceptos de los que nacen? Por ejemplo, vimos una colección basada en espirales y otra en flores. Son conceptos que se repiten a lo largo de las culturas, de manera transversal, ¿no?

Cano: Sí, y también se piensa para qué tem-

porada es esa colección, para que haga sentido con esa época del año. Los colores de las piedras también tienen influencia.

Bello: Siempre se mantiene el oro mate como material y color principal, pero ¿también se consideran otros materiales? Por ejemplo, ¿cómo se decide si darle más importancia al color de alguna piedra u a otro elemento?

Cano: El oro siempre está presente. Hacemos algunas variaciones y a veces sacamos piezas en plata; todas las piezas de la colección del Museo del Oro son en plata con baño de oro. La selección de piedras es un tema mucho más creativo: se decide según colores y formas, más que por otra consideración.

Ossa: Bueno, y claro, tú hablas también del proceso. Hemos leído que tratan de hacerlo lo más parecido posible a como se hacía antiguamente, con cera perdida, y que además trabajan mucho con comunidades artesanales, vendiendo en las tiendas productos de artesanos colombianos. Una pregunta que nos surgió es: ¿cómo planean mantener este proceso tan artesanal mientras crecen a escala global?

Cano: La forma de hacerlo es la misma. Lo que cambia es que de pronto usamos un horno más eficiente o inyectoras de cera, pero la técnica sigue siendo igual. Los equipos pueden evolucionar y mejorar, pero la cera perdida se trabaja igual: primero tienes el molde de la pieza, lo inyectas en cera, luego trabajas la cera a mano, fundes la pieza, la pules y le pones el sistema. Todo es un proceso muy manual. Dentro de la joyería hay muchas técnicas, pero es muy artesanal.

Ossa: Claro, y sobre esos otros productos que venden, hemos visto en las tiendas piezas tejidas por artesanos. No hay mucha información sobre eso, pero quisiéramos saber un poco más: ¿con qué artesanos trabajan y qué tipo de piezas ofrecen en las tiendas?

Cano: Trabajamos con diferentes comunidades, volviendo otra vez a esos valores de re-

scatar y preservar ese conocimiento. Hoy en día estas son comunidades donde hay quienes tejen, quienes hacen el sombrero de Sandoná; todos estos saberes pasan de generación en generación. Si ese trabajo no se sigue haciendo, se pierde; es como un lenguaje.

Nosotros tratamos de trabajar con los mejores: el mejor del sombrero, la mejor comunidad Guayu que hace las mochilas, entre otros. Tenemos alrededor de 10 o 15 comunidades con las que colaboramos y compramos la mejor artesanía de cada categoría. Por ejemplo, en las mochilas Guayu hay calidad de la A a la Z. Hay gente que no lo distingue, pero existe. Tú puedes conseguir en la calle de Cartagena una mochila y luego entrar a una tienda y ver otra con un tejido diferente; es otra calidad. Hoy incluso algunas se están haciendo a máquina y se traen, pero trabajar con estas comunidades es fundamental porque viven de eso; es su sustento.

Bello: Y teniendo en cuenta que todo esto se está empezando a llevar a otros mercados fuera de Colombia, ya sea en redes sociales o dentro de las mismas tiendas, ¿tienen alguna estrategia o se ha pensado en cómo educar a estas personas que posiblemente no tengan idea de dónde vienen, de los orígenes de las artesanías, de las joyas, de esta cultura precolombina y de la base cultural que ustedes manejan?

Cano: Sí, todas las joyas van con un certificado que habla del origen de esa pieza en particular, y las artesanías también tienen su certificado, que explica su origen y lo que representan. Por ejemplo, de lo que es el sombrero vueltiao o las mochilas arhuacas... se explica quiénes son los arhuacos. Además, se cuenta sobre Colombia como país artesano y sobre estas artesanías insignia; cada una tiene su certificado y se explica su historia.

Ossa: Sí, claro. Sobre todo en Estados Unidos... bueno, no sé si has visto en redes sociales, hay algo así como: si te pones algo de otra cultura, entonces te estás apropiando de esa cultura.

Cano: La apropiación cultural

Ossa: Sí, sí, hay toda esa cuestión de apropiación cultural. No sé si ustedes se han encontrado con situaciones en las que alguien diga: “No, no lo puedes usar porque no eres colombiano” o algo así.

Cano: Sí, revisa el video de esta influencer española, Emma Geikie.

Ossa: Sí, justo ella hablaba de eso: alguien le comentó, “¿pero por qué compras eso?”

Cano: Siempre hay comentarios como ese, pero lo que se trata de hacer es preservar y respetar ese trabajo, llevarlo al mundo. Que la gente pueda sacar algo de Sandoná a París y que ese sombrero sea valorado por el trabajo del artesano que lo hace. Pero siempre hay gente con distintos puntos de vista, y ahí no hay mucho que hacer, salvo comunicar y mostrar lo que uno hace.

Ossa: Ok, bueno, ya casi estamos cerrando. Una cosa que se me olvidó preguntar sobre la planeación del evento: cuando juegan con la moda, con las modelos, con la ropa, ¿qué esperan? ¿Que las joyas sean las protagonistas y se vistan con cosas muy sencillas para que se resalten mucho, o que haya un juego también de colores y patrones? ¿Cómo lo manejan normalmente en la marca para sus colecciones?

Cano: Yo creo que lo interesante es que la persona que lo está viendo pueda relacionarse e imaginarse en ese look que estás mostrando, ¿no? Entonces, lo importante es que haya un balance entre lo que se ve y la posibilidad de identificarse con ello. Hay veces en desfiles de joyería donde las modelos están vestidas con algo muy simple, solo para que se vean las piezas; un poco más artístico. Pero yo creo que con nuestros clientes el objetivo es que vean las piezas y puedan imaginarse con lo que están viendo. Creo que eso tiene un mayor impacto.

Bello: Y teniendo en cuenta estas metas que hemos estado comentando y que nos has compartido a lo largo de la entrevista, ¿cuál crees que es la meta de Cano a largo plazo, sobre todo

pensando en la expansión a otros países y continentes, y cuál es el legado que quieren dejar en este compartir de culturas?

Cano: Creo que es seguir dejando el nombre de Colombia en alto y ser un referente para todas estas marcas de herencia que trabajan lo artesanal; ser una marca líder latinoamericana cruzando fronteras.

Ossa: Bueno, muchísimas gracias de verdad por su tiempo. Nos has ayudado un montón con toda esta información para el desarrollo de la tesis. Te estaremos actualizando sobre nuestra investigación para que veas el resultado final, que debería estar listo el próximo año, en febrero, más o menos, si todo sale bien.

Cano: A ustedes, mil gracias, y cualquier cosa, a la orden.

Ossa: Y lo último, para que quede el registro en video: ¿nos autorizas a usar toda la información que nos diste durante esta entrevista con fines académicos para nuestra tesis?

Cano: Claro que sí.

Ossa: Muchísimas gracias, y gracias por tu tiempo.

Cano: Espero oír de ustedes y que me vayan contando cómo van.

Ossa: Claro que sí. Ya me llegó el correo con el artículo del MET, muchísimas gracias también. Lo vamos a revisar porque nos sirve un montón.

Cano: ¡Buenísimo!

Ossa: Gracias.

Cano: Bueno, un gusto. Que estén muy bien.

Ossa: Que estés bien. Chao.

Bello: Que tengas buena tarde.

Annex 04. English Translation of the Interview with Eduardo Cano on the Cano Brand

Conducted on September 23, 2025, by Catalina Ossa and Gina Bello, edited by the same authors

Bello: Hello, good afternoon.

Ossa: Hello, we were just trying to get everything ready because it wouldn't let us start recording the meeting, but now we're good.

Cano: How have you been?

Bello: Very well, thank you.

Cano: Are both of you in Turin?

Ossa: Yes [...] we both live in Turin.

Cano: Well, that's great. I was in Turin a few months ago and I think it's spectacular.

Ossa: Really? Yes, it's very beautiful.

Bello: Yes, we've been living here for two years now since we started our master's.

Cano: How has it been for you?

Ossa: Very good, really.

Cano: That's great [...] Well, thank you for writing to us.

Ossa: No, thank you for agreeing to this interview.

Cano: I'm at your disposal [...] Happy to help in any way I can.

Ossa: Thank you.

Bello: Okay, so we'll tell you a little about what we're working on. We are both studying a master's in architecture for heritage. For our thesis, we are in a program that aims to combine fashion and ephemeral architecture, exploring new ways to integrate fashion shows into heritage spaces. We are currently working in Villa Adriana, a UNESCO-recognized site with a rich historical context. Something that allowed us to connect this project to Colombia, and that excited us as Colombians, is that the villa acts as a container of cultures: architecturally it represents different places that were part of the Roman Empire, as well as influences from Egypt, Turkey, and other parts of the world.

This gave us the opportunity to...

Cano: It's called Villa Adriana, right?

Ossa: Villa Adriana, exactly.

Bello: Yes, it's in Tivoli, a comune near Rome. It's a villa that was rediscovered in the 1400s, and since then has been very important as a source of inspiration for many architects around the world over time. We saw this as an opportunity to bring our culture into the thesis project. In our research, we found your brand and realized that, besides being closely linked to pre-Columbian, artisanal, and archaeological heritage, it has a very clear vision of preserving that cultural legacy. We were also very impressed by your agreement with the Banco de la República to create replicas of pre-Columbian crafts. After studying the brand, we thought it was exactly what we needed to integrate our cultural field into the project.

Cano: So, it's a bit of combining that universe of culture and fashion, which is so important, and through history, you can see that they go hand in hand.

Ossa: Exactly.

Bello: So, if the villa already showcases and evidences many cultures in different spaces, why not bring a new culture and integrate it, something outside Europe, something ours, closer to us? With that in mind, the first thing we wanted to do was ask you to tell us a bit about the history of the jewelry: its beginnings, how its history has unfolded over the years, and the key moments that have marked milestones for the brand in every sense.

Cano: Perfect. Before I start telling you, I'll take the opportunity to reply to your email and share an article. It's an article written by the MET, the Metropolitan Museum of New York, a couple of years ago, but unfortunately, it hasn't been published. It's an interview they did with us that talks a lot about what we're going to discuss and our whole history.

To give you a bit of context, I'm the fifth generation [of the Cano family], and the work is divided between strictly pre-Columbian pieces and what we are today, which is jewelry and reproductions.

The beginning of all this was an encounter with an indigenous burial where very important pieces were found. Nemesio Cano, my great-great-grandfather, discovered this burial, and from that, his passion for these treasures was born. He dedicated a large part of his life to this work and took his son and my grandfather across the country looking for these objects, which number over 10,000 pieces. Through three generations, these pieces first reached the Banco de la República, which purchased them because of Colombia's cultural richness and because many of these pieces came from private collections.

Many important pieces ended up in the hands of the Banco de la República. At some point, the bank began with small exhibitions and later founded what is now the Gold Museum. The family sold more than 10,000 pieces, and today the bank has more than 30,000, but a significant percentage came from our work. My grandfather, in the 1970s, was a curious and adventurous self-taught person; he traveled the country and understood from the start the cultural importance of these pieces, preventing many from being melted down or sold to the local dentist or other wrong hands.

[My grandfather] decided to go to Germany to acquire machinery and learn about jewelry and reproductions. In the 1970s, he opened the first store in Bogotá, with the goal of preserving and replicating the original pieces, using the same stones, shapes, and colors, as accurately as possible. Over time, the pieces have evolved: many of what we make today are inspirations that combine elements from various original pieces, always respecting the artisanal lost-wax process and the matte gold finish, like the museum pieces.

Over time, we have been present not only in

Colombia but also spreading this pre-Columbian art worldwide. The pieces are considered timeless, and although today we launch four collections a year as part of the fashion calendar, our intention has always been to maintain a bridge between the past and present. We have had stores in New York, Germany, and have sold in Japan; our pieces have traveled the world and are very authentic, different from what is found nowadays.

In addition to jewelry, in our stores, we sell Colombian crafts and work with communities, preserving ancestral techniques like basketry and weaving. About six or seven months ago, we opened a store in Madrid, focusing on consolidating the brand and exploring new markets, such as Europe, where history, art, and culture are highly valued. Here, we found a clientele very interested in our product.

Ossa: Super interesting. We actually found the brand through an article about the Madrid store opening. It caught our attention because we said: of course, it's a brand with pre-Columbian, very Colombian origins, but at the same time, it's looking to expand into new European markets. That helps us a lot because we're developing our project here. And we wanted to ask: over so many years, so many decades, and now with expansion into Europe, what are the fundamental values of the brand, and how have you maintained or modified them through all these changes?

Cano: I think one must be very clear about who they are. Brands that endure over time are very clear about their DNA and the values of handmade work: maintaining techniques, preserving processes, respecting original pieces, and those designs with so much history. I think we've stayed within those pillars of preserving and maintaining this very important cultural heritage, respecting the original pieces, but understanding that brands must evolve in some way. If you build a DNA, you have to be clear that you can't be for everyone, because sometimes people get lost chasing what's trendy today, and then you can become disoriented.

For us, the most important thing has been to stay true to who we are; everything stems from what these cultures and original pieces created. I don't know if that answers your question.

Bello: And considering this aim to maintain brand fidelity to its roots, now that it's probably expanding and seeking new markets, how would you describe the ideal audience you aim to reach? And what strategies have you used to differentiate and grow in these highly competitive international markets when attracting that same client?

Cano: I think it's several things, but the product itself is quite different from what's on the markets, from the color of the gold to the style of the pieces. Our pieces tend to be quite striking. Let's call them "Statement Pieces": they are conversation pieces, big, attention-grabbing, and give people something to talk about. They are eye-catching.

Speaking a bit about the type of clients, it's curious because in the store you can find three generations coinciding: the grandmother, the daughter, and the granddaughter. All three, in some way, have Cano pieces. Today I was just talking with someone who works in public relations in New York, who came to us because she saw her mother collecting our pieces, and then she started collecting as well. They are timeless pieces, and it's nice to see how different generations can relate to the same piece.

You find people who have no connection to Colombia, but appreciate art, culture, and history, and that attracts them. You can also find someone who has nothing to do with Colombia nor prior knowledge of these pre-Columbian cultures, but is simply drawn to the design, the color of the gold, how different it is, plus an aesthetic matter. So, the clientele is quite diverse.

There are brands that have a very defined client profile, but in our case you can find Colombians who feel proud, travel, and want to bring gifts, as well as clients who have developed an affinity with the brand and enjoy the product

in their daily life and have had a relationship with the brand for years, either through their mothers, as I mentioned, or even clients who visited the Gold Museum, visited Colombia, and bought a piece. Many clients, for example New York ladies, haven't even been to Colombia and maybe don't even know where it is, and they just aesthetically like the piece.

You spoke a bit about the market strategy and this whole process. Today, social media is super important, and this whole world of content creators and influencers keeps evolving. Traditional press or the traditional market also carry weight, but there are so many things you can do where not everything goes through traditional press.

That's why one of the most organic approaches is gifting strategies: identifying profiles where we want to position our product. For example, if I want my product to be associated with someone, we make sure that person wears ours. So, in Spain we look for that type of profile, in the United States, and in different markets. This is part of generating brand awareness, with whom we want to relate within that brand matrix.

Today brands talk a lot about creating a connection with the client: how the brand affects someone when they use it or identify with it, how it influences lifestyle perception. People use brands because, in some way, it transmits something to them, and ours is related to the mystical, the cultural, the historical. It's a piece that many clients can wear along with luxury brands; they are the same brands and products their friends might have, but our pieces add a different touch.

Nowadays, positioning in any market is reaching those types of content creators and influencers, and within that there's a whole spectrum, from micro to macro and everything in between. Additionally, activations in stores, small events with influencers or trend and opinion creators. There are many such strategies, a bit more grassroots or organic, that can be

done.

Ossa: Yes, there’s an influencer I really like from Spain, who just showed them too, and I said: oh! I’m doing my thesis on that brand and she was just showing it.

Cano: Who was it? Do you remember?

Ossa: Emma Geikie, I think that’s how it’s pronounced. Do you know who it is?

Cano: Yes, she made a video.

Ossa: Uh-huh. I don’t know if it was something you sent her or if she bought them and showed them, I don’t remember. But yes, she showed them. But well, you talk a lot about positioning, about this organic way of getting the brand known, which I think nowadays works a lot with technological advances. But we also wanted to ask, considering that we are doing a more in-person event, have you held any kind of event to showcase the collections, something bigger, more in-person?

Cano: Yes, we’ve done events. We’re picking up that practice a bit again, but normally we presented the collection in New York and Paris. Usually, a space is taken for three or four days and presentations are made with a combination of press, buyers, and associates.

Bello: At these events, have some of them used the idea of a runway or showcase to present the jewelry? Or what is the idea that you’ve seen works best when introducing a new collection?

Cano: We did runways a long time ago in Colombia and Mexico too, but more recently we haven’t done them. One of the big runways now happens with the start of Paris Fashion Week; they’re increasingly creative in how they stage the catwalks, and that has a big impact. Today, what you want is for people to take out their phones and share; that multiplies. If you manage to do something in such a way that generates that, it’s super important for brands.

Bello: Yes, basically that’s the idea of this project: to generate a “statement” space that doesn’t just stay in an in-person event, but also creates an image that can transcend, both for the villa and the brand. So, regarding that ideal event, if you had all resources at your disposal, what would you say could be the perfect event to present the collection and the brand? I mean spaces, materials, scales...

Cano: I’ve seen many examples of these types of events and runways, and I think the setting is key: when there’s nature around, when you take the product out of context a bit and put it on stage, where there are contradictions and you play with what is being presented, it generates a big impact. Without a doubt, something like what you have planned with this villa could be spectacular, because the site itself already contributes a lot; it doesn’t need much production. The site, by itself, is enough.

There are many places where something like this could be done. Right now, for example, a bunch of videos and content just came out that Carolina Herrera made in Madrid’s Plaza Mayor, going back to the Madrid theme, and the Plaza Mayor alone is super beautiful; so just having a runway or a walkthrough there already generates a big impact. So definitely, there are many special sites where, both in nature and in the city, these ancient ruins can work, though I couldn’t tell you a particular site.

Ossa: Maybe, more than a site, what type of event do you imagine it could be? Because right now it could be a traditional runway, like a fashion show, but showing the jewelry. Immersive experiences are also used a lot, where models move among the people. It could be an event for 300 people, or something more intimate where only a few photographers attend, designed to be shown on social media. That’s what we mean: how would that ideal event be in terms of size, form, reach, and the experience of those present.

Bello: We’ve seen many examples of super long and huge runways, where the person present

doesn’t manage to perceive the whole space. This happens because it’s designed more to generate a “statement” space, something that can be seen on social media, and not so much focused on those actually there at the moment.

Ossa: Exactly, that’s what we want to understand, because the type of event we’re going to design depends on that.

Cano: There are different formats that work to meet different objectives. If the experience seeks that closeness with the brand, it can be something that generates a more intimate feeling. What you said: in a traditional runway, people are seated and the model passes by. With clothes and garments it’s easier to see, but in the world of jewelry you need to be closer to better appreciate what the model is wearing.

I think when runways are done in very emblematic sites with incredible designs, many times they’re intended to generate digital impact on social media, and that works. But if it’s for a more specific audience, like press or a magazine editor, then you want to give a more intimate feeling, closer to the brand, and expose the values of handmade work, of history, playing with lights and models so they feel within the same space, and not from a distant plane across the runway. It’s another format. Today many tables are set with chefs and culinary experiences, much more intimate, with a reduced committee of 10, 15, 20 people, not hundreds.

Ossa: What you mention is true: with clothes you can see it from afar, but jewelry requires being closer to fully appreciate it. That’s very important to consider when deciding the scale of the event we are proposing. We also wanted to ask, now that you have more freedom to play with the pieces and designs, what is that creative process like when creating a collection? How do you decide which cultures to take and how to combine them to make a collection, for example?

Cano: There isn’t a very marked or standard process. I think several things combine: sales

of certain pieces are reviewed to see which designs and elements worked in previous collections, and there’s always a reference or inspiration base in some museum piece or original piece. From there a product family starts to be built. Typically, a collection has between 30 and 40 pieces, putting more emphasis on earrings, which sell the most. The entry price of different categories is also reviewed to balance the collection.

It’s a creative process that comes from a concept, an idea, or a piece. It starts with one or two pieces and from there it extends organically. Several people intervene and contribute, following different steps until completing the collection. It’s a process with input from different areas and perspectives.

Ossa: And the concepts they come from? For example, we saw a collection based on spirals and another on flowers. These are concepts that repeat across cultures, transversally, right?

Cano: Yes, and it’s also thought for which season that collection is for, so it makes sense with that time of year. The colors of the stones also have influence.

Bello: Gold matte is always maintained as the main material and color, but are other materials also considered? For example, how do you decide whether to give more importance to the color of a stone or another element?

Cano: Gold is always present. We make some variations and sometimes release pieces in silver; all pieces in the Gold Museum collection are in silver with gold plating. Stone selection is a much more creative topic: it’s decided according to colors and shapes, more than by any other consideration.

Ossa: Well, and of course, you also talk about the process. We’ve read that you try to do it as similarly as possible to how it was done historically, with lost wax, and that you also work a lot with artisan communities, selling Colombian artisan products in stores. One question

we had is: how do you plan to maintain this artisanal process while growing globally?

Cano: The way to do it is the same. What changes is that we might use a more efficient oven or wax injectors, but the technique remains the same. The teams can evolve and improve, but lost wax is worked the same: first you have the mold of the piece, you inject it in wax, then work the wax by hand, cast the piece, polish it, and add the mechanism. Everything is a very manual process. Within jewelry there are many techniques, but it's very artisanal.

Ossa: Of course, and regarding those other products you sell, we've seen in stores pieces woven by artisans. There's not much information about that, but we'd like to know a bit more: which artisans do you work with and what type of pieces do they offer in stores?

Cano: We work with different communities, returning again to those values of rescuing and preserving that knowledge. Nowadays these are communities where there are people who weave, who make the Sandoná hat; all these knowledges pass from generation to generation. If that work isn't continued, it's lost; it's like a language.

We try to work with the best: the best in hat-making, the best Guayu community making bags, among others. We have around 10 or 15 communities we collaborate with and buy the best craftsmanship in each category. For example, in Guayu bags there's quality from A to Z. Some people don't distinguish it, but it exists. You can get a bag in the streets of Cartagena and then go into a store and see another with a different weave; it's another quality. Nowadays some are even made by machine and imported, but working with these communities is fundamental because they live from that; it's their livelihood.

Bello: And considering that all this is starting to be carried to other markets outside Colombia, either on social media or in the stores themselves, do you have any strategy or have you thought about how to educate people who

might have no idea where the crafts, jewelry, pre-Columbian culture, and cultural basis come from?

Cano: Yes, all jewelry comes with a certificate that talks about the origin of that particular piece, and the crafts also have a certificate explaining their origin and what they represent. For example, for the Vueltaio hat or Arhuaca bags... it explains who the Arhuacos are. Additionally, it talks about Colombia as a country of artisans and about these flagship crafts; each has its certificate and its story is explained.

Ossa: Yes, of course. Especially in the United States... well, I don't know if you've seen on social media, there's something like: if you wear something from another culture, you're appropriating that culture.

Cano: Cultural appropriation.

Ossa: Yes, yes, there's that whole issue of cultural appropriation. I don't know if you've encountered situations where someone says: "No, you can't wear that because you're not Colombian" or something like that.

Cano: Yes, check the video of that Spanish influencer, Emma Geikie.

Ossa: Yes, she was talking about that: someone commented, "but why are you buying that?"

Cano: There are always comments like that, but what we try to do is preserve and respect that work, bring it to the world. That people can take something from Sandoná to Paris and that hat is valued for the artisan's work. But there are always people with different points of view, and there's not much to do except communicate and show what you do.

Ossa: Okay, well, we're almost done. One thing I forgot to ask about event planning: when you play with fashion, models, clothes, what do you expect? That the jewelry is the protagonist and they wear very simple things to highlight it, or that there's also a play with colors and patterns?

How do you normally handle it in the brand for your collections?

Cano: I think the interesting thing is that the person watching can relate and imagine themselves in that look you're showing, right? So it's important to have a balance between what's seen and the possibility to identify with it. Sometimes in jewelry runways models wear something very simple, just to show the pieces; a bit more artistic. But I think with our clients the goal is that they see the pieces and can imagine themselves with what they're seeing. I think that has a bigger impact.

Bello: And considering these goals we've been discussing and that you've shared throughout the interview, what do you think is Cano's long-term goal, especially thinking about expansion to other countries and continents, and what legacy do you want to leave in this sharing of cultures?

Cano: I think it's to continue putting Colombia's name high and be a reference for all these heritage brands that work artisanally; to be a leading Latin American brand crossing borders.

Ossa: Well, thank you so much for your time. You've helped us a lot with all this information for developing the thesis. We'll keep you updated on our research so you can see the final result, which should be ready next year, in February, more or less, if all goes well.

Cano: To you, thank you very much, and anything, at your service.

Ossa: And lastly, for video record purposes: do you authorize us to use all the information you gave during this interview for academic purposes for our thesis?

Cano: Of course.

Ossa: Thank you very much, and thank you for your time.

Cano: I hope to hear from you and that you keep me updated on how it goes.

Ossa: Of course. I already got the email with the MET article, thank you very much as well. We'll review it because it helps us a lot.

Cano: Great!

Ossa: Thanks.

Cano: Well, a pleasure. Take care.

Ossa: You too. Bye.

Bello: Have a good afternoon.

Annex 05. Digital Archive of Thesis Boards (A2)

Scan the QR code to access the complete digital archive of the thesis boards in A2 format.

