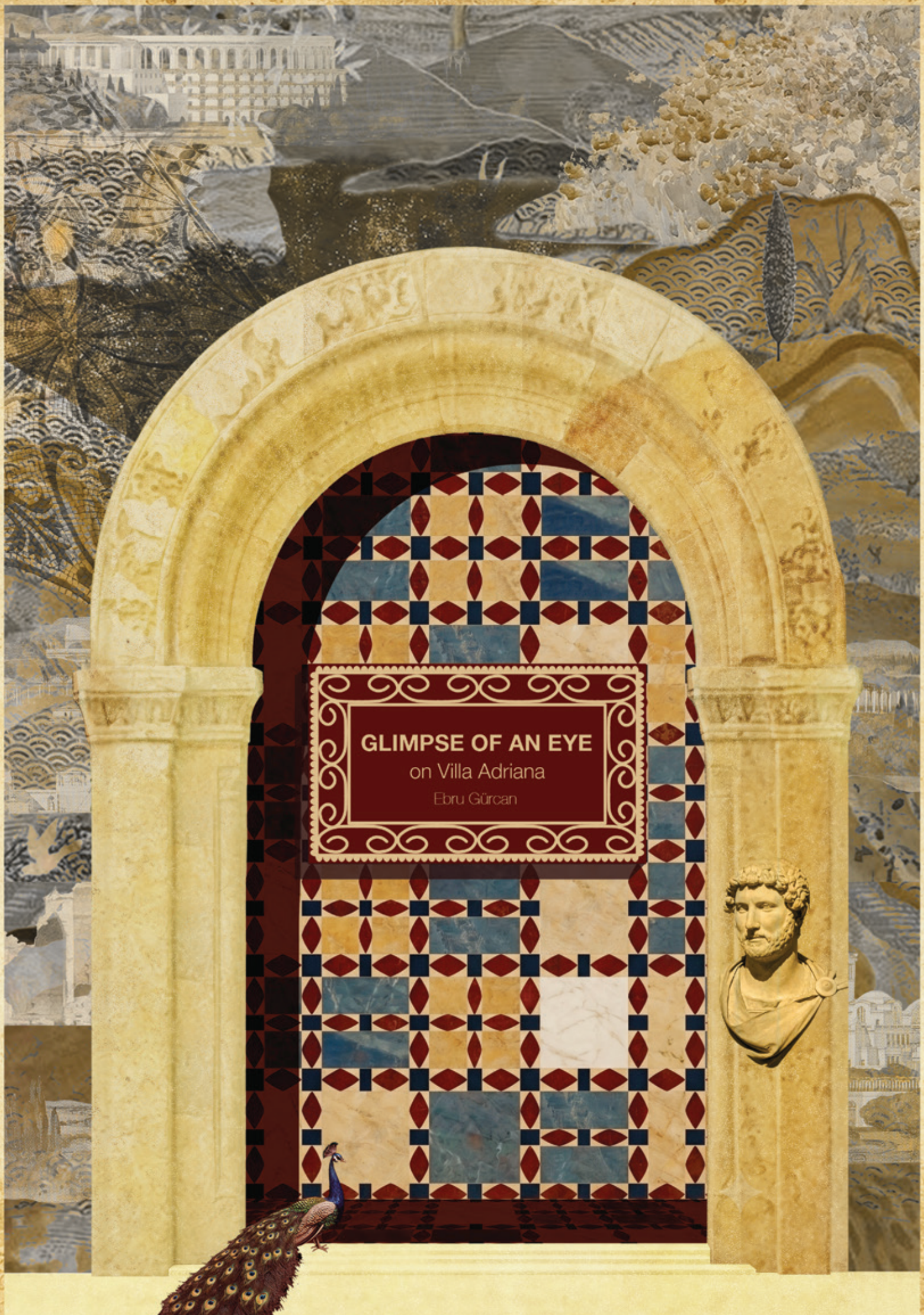

GLIMPSE OF AN EYE
on Villa Adriana
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POLITECNICO DI TORINO
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“Glimpse of an Eye” on Villa Adriana, UNESCO World Heritage Site

VILLA ADRIANA. WATER ARCHITECTURE AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE
THE PROJECT FOR THE MUSEALIZATION, ACCESSIBILITY, VALORIZATION,
AND COMMUNICATION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS

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ABSTRACT

Preserving the authenticity of the archeological heritage sites remains a culturally significant challenge while introducing contemporary design interventions without limiting the capacity to engage audiences. This thesis materialised these challenges through the case of Villa Adriana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Tivoli. The intention of this research is enhancing the relic museographic presentation of Villa Adriana by contemporary scenographic intervention while contributing to its long-term discovery and conservation. The method of the research implements a research-by-design integrating historical, architectural and scenographic analysis with combining design experimentation projected through the international workshop Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII.

The UNESCO listed sites conservation decrees to constrain contemporary intervention, regarding the balance with preservation with design strategies with active public scenography. The conceptualised history as a “Glimpse of an Eye” is developed by a Portal Strategy that stands as a core design method to establish an architectural threshold that creates strategically designed museographic scenarios of the past and the present. The proposal discloses across four significant archeological experiential promenade in Villa Adriana; Teatro Greco, Tempio di Venere, Piazza d’Oro, and Edificio di Tre Esedre, scheme as a pre-show prelude, the thermal pavilion, the fashion show, and the closing event of gala. The identity of the exhibited material and the aesthetic language is based on the color palette of the fashion house Gucci as a collaboration overlay that becomes spatialized in order to articulate Villa's contemporary identity.

Throughout the tracing of antiquity into an active museography, the aim of this thesis is to treat conservation through reactivation as a living experience for the heritage management.

Keywords: Preservation, Contemporary Musealisation, UNESCO World Heritage, Ephemeral, Pavilion, Heritage, Fashion

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CHAPTER 1
Introduction

1.1.
GLIMPSE OF AN EYE: layers of Villa Adriana on the trail of time

Figure 1. Colored Marble Pattern
Source: created by the author, 2026.



The architectural and archeological heritage of Villa Adriana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (in English literature referred as Hadrian's Villa) is not limited to historical chronology, rather, valorized itself in a transcended moment when the past it emerges as a fleeting moment.[1] Where its foundational past collapses into the complicated reality of the present,[1] Walter Benjamin articulates the concept of history fulfilled by the "now" through the notion of Jetztzeit, in this scenario, the origin of Villa Adriana and ancient ruins.[2] This spatial narrative, as proposed in this thesis combines ephemeral and permanent time in architecturally captured through the "Portal Strategy". Villa Adriana, as a base for contemporary scenography for musealisation and valorization, is spatially defined by Pier Federico Caliari as a "polycentric radial hypotactic composition", in which each archeological center, bearing distinct cultural influences such as Greek, Roman, and Egyptian, acts as a piece of a whole, interconnected spatial narrative.[3]

As Raddato's foundational ancient biographical tradition records,

The Villa "served as a testament to Hadrian's intellect and spirit and a remind of his travels."[4]

This thesis projects the concept of the "glimpse" as a cultural scenography on Villa Adriana's historical journey through the tangible spatial sequence infused with contemporary design principles, distinct from the philosophical tradition of the "moment" as theorized by Kierkegaard and later Heidegger.[5] The "Portal Strategy" shaped by the phenomenological "glimpse", has become the contemporary design strategy for the scenographic musealization of heritage sites. Instead of treating heritage as a passive history, this dynamic interface introduces methaphorical portals at four strategic locations within the Villa. At the core of it establishes a cultural scenic restoration that preserved a continuous infusion of "now" into the polycentric historical fabric of Villa Adriana.

A transitional scenography leads visitors through a narrative of transitional Pre-show ritual performed at the Teatro Greco, to the scenario of the sensory thermal pavilion under the Tempio di Venere, followed by the Fashion Show in Piazza D'Oro, and ends with the Gala Event at the Edificio di Tre Esedre. The theory behind the design process is based on the form, space, and order, as articulated by Francis D.K. Ching, structured with 7 principles: axis, symmetry, hierarchy, datum, rhythm, repetition, and transfor-

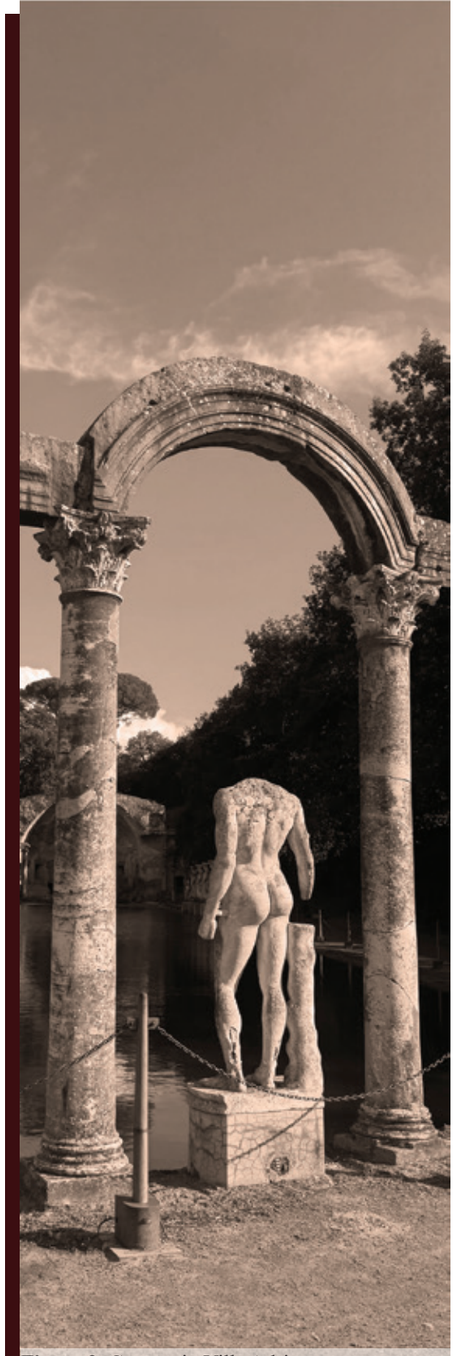


Figure 2. Canopy in Villa Adriana
Source: Photographed by the author during the site visit through the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII." 2025.

1. **UNESCO World Heritage Centre,** *"Villa Adriana (Tivoli)," World Heritage List,* no. 907, accessed August 2026, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/907.

2. Walter Benjamin, *"Theses on the Philosophy of History,"* in Illuminations, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), thesis XIV.

3. Pier Federico Caliari, *"La composizione policentrica di Villa Adriana e il tecnigrafo post alessandrino,"* Ananke 84 (2018): 67–79.

4. Carole Raddato, *"Hadrian's Villa and Its Treasures,"* Antigone, June 2, 2024, https://antigone-journal.com/2024/06/hadrians-villa-and-its-treasures/, citing Historia Augusta, "Life of Hadrian," 26.5.

5. Søren Kierkegaard, *"The Concept of Anxiety,"* trans. Reidar Thomte (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); **Martin Heidegger,** *"Being and Time,"* trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962).

1.1.

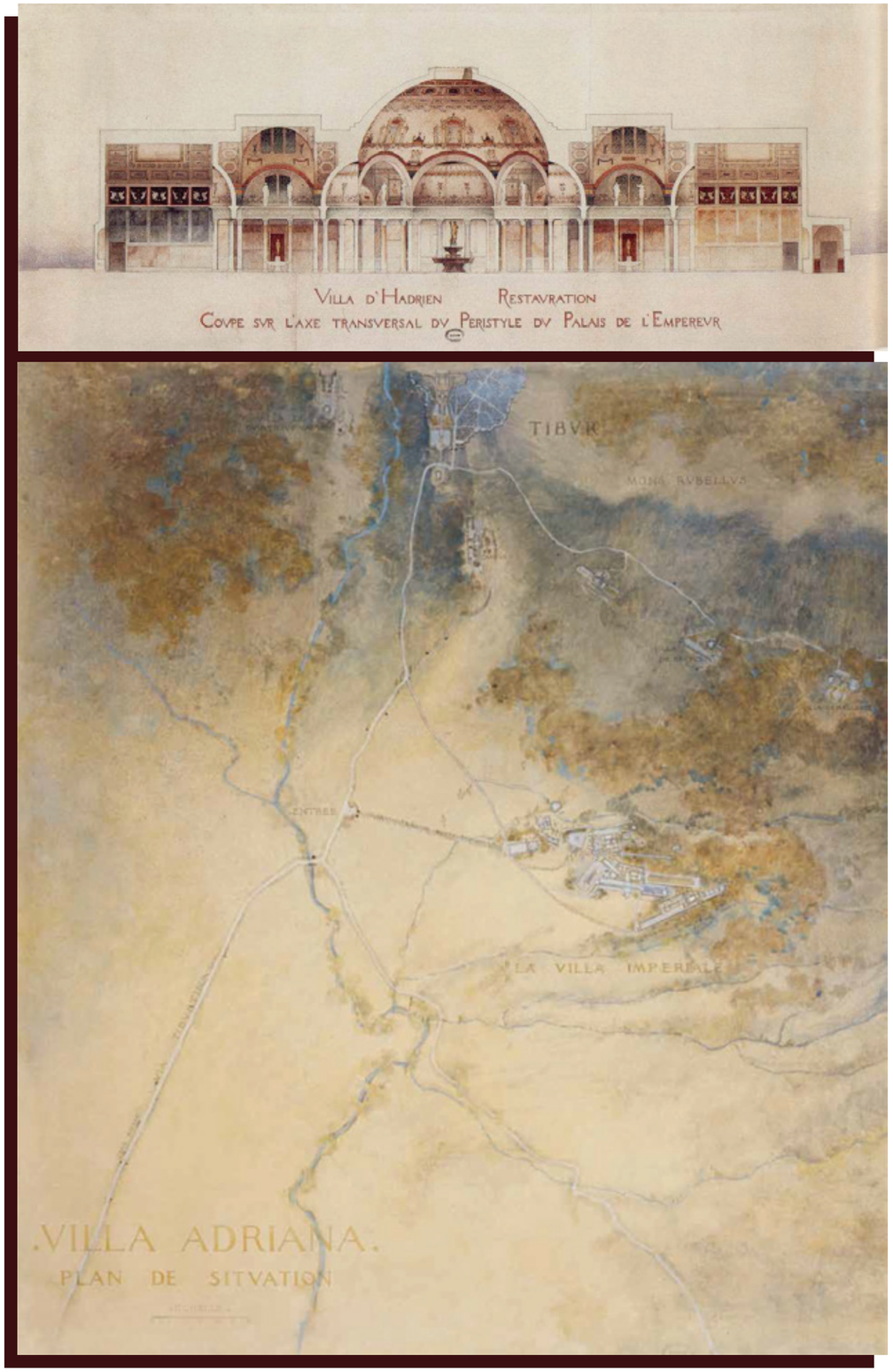


Figure 3. Section of the Piazza d'Oro
Source: Charles Louis Girault, reconstruction drawing, École des Beaux-Arts (late 19th century).

Figure 4. Plan of the Villa Adriana
Source: Charles Louis Girault, reconstruction drawing, École des Beaux-Arts (late 19th century).

mation.[6] In order to materialize the scenarios at the heritage site, each intervention is designed using structural logic that ensures preservation of the ancient ruins. Moreover, these design portals open a new dialogue between the heritage site of Villa Adriana and contemporary needs, interpreting a curational combination of the past and present.

Fashion and heritage place in the opposing ends of the temporal spectrum, contradicting the time spectrum with their narratives. Despite the contradictions, synthesizing their aesthetic narratives, while respecting the boundaries and identities of each, creates an unique contemporary foundation for scenographic musealization at the heritage sites. Within this framework, the aesthetic and material code associated with the house of Gucci, identified particularly through the collection of Cosmogonie 2023. Remarkably, the foundational base does not draw on an arbitrary aesthetic base borrowed from Walter Benjamin's idea of "constellation thinking".[7] The challenge through fashion driven narrative on the ancient fabric, commercial identity does not overpower the design, rather, it underlines the base stage for an active architectural medium.

The reliance of the theoretical design model is based on a foundation of dual-layered methodology of merging a historical database with on-site practice during the Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII edition.[8] The synthesis of historical research defining the chronological evolution while the engagement of the real life data confirms the true dynamics on the site by creating sketches, mapping and a project on the ruins. The Piranesi Workshop served as an intensive laboratory for empirical data collection, master plan proposal with defining the axis and analysing the historic fabric by observation. Demanding of the scenography directly in the ruins by physical engagement of the reality on the heritage site. Understanding how each polycenters acts upon the others necessitates a specific mapping of the phenomena.

6. Francis D. K. Ching, *"Architecture: Form, Space, and Order,"* 4th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2014).

7. Alessandro Michele, *Gucci Cruise 2023 "Cosmogonie" show notes,* Castel del Monte, Andria, Italy, May 16, 2022, as reported in Ana Escalante, "All of the Lights: Alessandro Michele Looks to the Stars for Cosmogonie Gucci," Vogue Singapore, May 2022, https://vogue.sg/cosmogonie-gucci-cruise-2023/.

8. Accademia Adrianea di Architettura e Archeologia, *"Piranesi Prix de Rome, XXIII Edizione". "Piranesi Prix de Rome, XXIII Edizione"* (workshop program, Villa Adriana, Tivoli, August 23–September 5, 2025). See also Luca Basso Peressut and Pier Federico Caliari, eds., *"Piranesi Prix de Rome: Progetti per la Grande Villa Adriana"* (Milan: in edibus – Accademia Adrianea Edizioni, 2019).

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

How can the phenomenological concept of "glimpse of an eye" be developed at Villa Adriana UNESCO World Heritage Site through contemporary design portals bridging the intersection of architecture, fashion, and heritage?

Figure 5. Abstract Marble Pattern
Source: created by the author during the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII."2025.

The multilayered, dynamic history of Villa Adriana's cultural heritage serves as the foundational metaphor as "glimpse of an eye". This research is grounded in Walter Benjamin's redefinition of history "not as a homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now".[9] This theoretical phenomena develops the architectural concept of "glimpse of an eye" and is strategized through four contemporary portals that redefine heritage as a threshold between the past and the present. The research is based on history, architectural interventions, fashion aesthetic, landscape scenario within the antique texture on Villa Adriana, shaping Portal Strategy through its diverse cultural influences. Alessandro Michele's manifestation of the use of fashion is a bridge that connects these fragments into a new, contemporary constellation intersecting with the Villa Adriana and the fashion show and the collection of Gucci Cosmogonie 2023, recoding its timeless aesthetic to materialise four portals which are based on the scenario of early show, thermal pavilion, fashion show and gala that represents an experienced spatial integrity of heritage and fashion.[9]

Finally, the architectural interventions are situated at the strategic points of Villa Adriana: The Teatro Greco, The pre-show ritual encounters the multicultural archeological site; Tempio di Venere, where the thermal pavilion is designed through water architecture of the Villa with sensory touch of the antique fabric; Piazza d'Oro, which is identified as a "golden square"[11] for the fashion show; Edificio tre Esedre, as a last scenario, the Gala Event the social gathering before moving towards the Villa's archeological sites, like Pecile and Canopus for further exploration.

The preservation of the heritage is conducted through a theoretical design model introduced as a dynamic experience. To achieve, the thesis outlines the following specific objectives:



Figure 6. Bust of Hadrian
Source: William L. MacDonald and John A. Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 21.

- To establish a site specific methodology by dual-layered research synthesize the archive and historical research with on-site data, including dimensions and correct scale analysis and an architectural project, following the Piranesi Prix de Rome workshop project as a foundational reference on reality and the theoretical basis on the ruins of the Villa Adriana.[12]

- To spatialize the ruins as a contemporary portal to intersect with the ephemeral and permanent time
Developing a model of scenographic musealization of the heritage site requires a bridge on the historical fabric with the contemporary design needs, rather than treating as a passive heritage, while respecting the boundaries of the preservation.

- To integrate ephemeral fashion as a spatial and material catalogue
Integrating the aesthetic and material palette of the Gucci Cosmogonie 2023 collection as an architectural active reference to contemporary foundation forms a base that underlines the ancient fabric.[10]

9. Walter Benjamin, *"Theses on the Philosophy of History,"* in Illuminations, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), thesis XIV.

10. Alessandro Michele, *Gucci Cruise 2023 "Cosmogonie" show notes,* Castel del Monte, Andria, Italy, May 16, 2022, as reported in Ana Escalante, "All of the Lights: Alessandro Michele Looks to the Stars for Cosmogonie Gucci," Vogue Singapore, May 2022, https://vogue.sg/cosmogonie-gucci-cruise-2023/.

11. Adembri, Benedetta, and Andrea Bruciati, *"Hadrian's Villa Tivoli".* ed. Andrea Bruciati (Milan: Skira, 2024), 44-45.

12. Accademia Adrianea di Architectural e Archeologia, *"Piranesi Prix de Rome, XXIII Edizione"* (workshop program, Villa Adriana, Tivoli, August 23–Sep-

1.3. METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Research-by-Design methodology is structured through the act of architectural interventions on the UNESCO World Heritage Site.[13] The 'Portal Strategy' is a proposed scenographic musealisation model that can be conceived as an adaptable, non-invasive architectural design in the ancient ruins, collecting a cultural curation of historical memory and contemporary needs. The foundational database for this proposed scenario was collected through a dual-method approach, combining phenomenological engagement, and translating the author's intensive site and field research.

This thesis builds on the structure of the "protean nature" characterized by Villa Adriana, blending the Doric order with curvilinear walls and vaults, departure from Roman architectural norms through its responsive integration with the landscape.[14] [15] Within this framework, the 'Portals' bridge each unique cultural nodes in the archeological site, treating not as a static historic relic, but as a revitalizing scenario with spatial fabric through contemporary fashion museography with national heritage protection law.[16] [17]

The principles of the Italian Restoration Charter ensures that all contemporary architectural interventions are in a harmonized reversible environment, visually noticeable from the ancient fabric by the ephemeral nature of the "Portal Strategy".[18]

13. Murray Fraser, ed., Design Research in Architecture: An Overview (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), on Research-by-Design as an established methodology in architectural doctoral research.

14. Joanne Mannell Noel, "Hadrian's Villa," EBSCO Research Starters (2022), https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/anthropology/hadrians-villa.

15. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 2-5.

16. Alessandro Michele, Gucci Cruise 2023 "Cosmogonie" show notes.

17. Ivan Allegranti, "Fashion Shows in Archaeological Heritage Sites: Ruins Under the Lens of International Treaties," Design/Arts/-Culture 1 (2020): 61–62.

18. Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Carta Italiana del Restauro (Rome, 1972).

THE CHALLENGE Contemporary Scenography for Musealization and Valorization at UNESCO World Heritage Site

THE INPUT Contextual Theoretical Grounding
Empirical Data Collection: *Piranesi Prix de Rome*

THE FILTER
Heritage and Dynamics
Spatial Logic
Conservation Ethics
Fashion and Heritage Narrative

Research Question

How can the phenomenological concept of "glimpse of an eye" be developed at Villa Adriana UNESCO World Heritage Site through contemporary design portals bridging the intersection of architecture, fashion, and heritage?

THE OUTPUT



Research-by-Design
The "Portal Strategy"
The synthesis of the four filters into a temporary, scenographic, and architectural intervention model within Fashion-Driven Narrative

1.4.
The SCOPE AND AIM OF THE THESIS: the definition of “Portal Strategy”

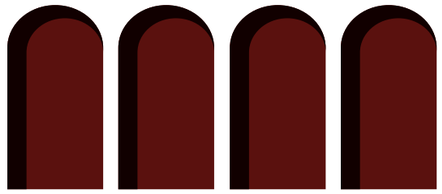


Figure 7. Abstract “Portal Strategy”
Source: created by the author, 2026.

The primary aim of this research is to introduce a contemporary museography methodology, the “Portal Strategy”, shaped with a “glimpse”[19], an interface that captures the fleeting moment of the now and the past within its contradictions. By implementing a scenario of contemporary portals, polycentric composition of Villa Adriana’s archeological centers is revitalized as a contemporary experience as a connection through cultural filters.[20] [21]

Cultural curation with complementary features intervened by a distinct role at each center; Teatro Greco, Tempio di Venere, Piazza d’Oro, Edificio di Tre Esedre. The synthesis of Fashion and Heritage opens a contemporary portal within the selected areas, suggested through a master plan suggestion. Dual research methodology harmonized the brand identity on the heritage site by the decisions regarding the spatial relationships, rhythm, and circulation.

The architectural composition is established by seven principles of form, space, and order by Ching,[21] while the restoration approach is preserved by the principles of restoration theory by Brandi.[22] The realisation of the transition of the nature of the ruins into the ephemeral nature of fashion is harmonized within each metaphorical “Portal” as a distinct element of form,space, and order, considered by ensuring the preservation.

19. Søren Kierkegaard, The Concept of Anxiety; **Martin Heidegger,** Being and Time

20. Pier Federico Caliari, *"La composizione policentrica di Villa Adriana e il tecnigrafo post alessandrino,"* Ananke 84 (2018): 67–79.

21. Francis D. K. Ching, *“Architecture: Form, Space, and Order,”* 4th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2014).

22. Cesare Brandi, *“Teoria del restauro”* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1963); English translation: Theory of Restoration, trans. Cynthia Rockwell (Florence: Nardini Editore, 2005).



Figure 8. Section of the Canopy
Source: Charles Louis Girault, reconstruction drawing, École des Beaux-Arts (late 19th century).

Figure 9. Bird’s Eye view of Villa Adriana by Charles Louis Boussois
Source: Charles Louis Boussois, pensionnaires of Villa Adriana, 1909-1913.

CHAPTER 2
Literature Review

2.1.
HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND MORPHOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OF VILLA ADRIANA

Villa Adriana is located in Tivoli, approximately 30 km east of Rome, was constructed on a nearly 120 hectares archaeological site during the reign of Hadrian (AD 118 and AD 138), though the evidence of archaeological ruins are considered an extended larger territory. Rather than serving solely as an imperial residence, the extensive, rich architectural and archeological site, comprising more than thirty architectural centers, serve as a multifunctional city complex imperial residence through developed residential, administrative, ceremonial, religious, recreational and service functional integrations, combining the architectural identity of Egypt, Greece and Rome in the form of an 'ideal city' in the Roman times.[23]

The architectural dialogue represents the character of the Emperor Hadrian's own biography, the connection has been assumed by scholars, the Villa is a symbolic recreation that embodies names of Hadrian's journeys, "though these are almost never defined" with precision.[24] As documented in the Historia Augusta, "Lyceum, Academia, Prytaneum, Canopus, Poecile and Tempe."[25] The reflection of Emperor Hadrian through architecture characterized by his vision, and his political standing power in the Roman Empire.



Figure 10. Sections of the Reconstruction Proposal and Existing Situation by Charles Louis
Source: Charles Louis Girault, reconstruction drawing, École des Beaux-Arts (late 19th century).

23. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, *"Villa Adriana (Tivoli),"* World Heritage List, no. 907.

24. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 7.

25. Historia Augusta, *"Life of Hadrian,"* 26.5, translated by David Magie, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Historia_Augusta/Hadrian/2*.html.

26. Pier Federico Caliari, *"Tractatus logico sintatticco: La forma trasparente di Villa Adriana,"* ed. Carola Gentilini, trans. Silvia Pettinicchio and Hilary Carter (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2012),

27. MacDonald and Pinto, *"Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy,"* 195, quoted in **Fikret Yeğül,** *"review of Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy,"* by William L. MacDonald and John A. Pinto, The Art Bulletin 79, no.3. (September 1997), 549.

2.1.



Figure 11. Topographical Survey
Source: School of Engineers in Rome and published in 1906, rearranged from ,“Tractatus logico sintattico: La forma trasparente di Villa Adriana,” Pier Federico Caliari 72-73.

When it comes to morphological aspect, there is a transformation of the traditional Roman imperial architecture into a new form, which Prof. Pier Federico Caliari refers to as a “polycentric radial hypotactic composition”, differs from the multi-axial, and paratactic configuration.[26] The master plan acts with both natural topography, and decentralized base, rather than a dignified single, monolithic master plan. As archeological research has identified more than thirty principal architectural complexes, the list of polycentres includes the Imperial Palace, the Maritime Theatre, the Pecile, the Canopus, the Piazza d'Oro, extensive thermal baths, and libraries, forming a sequence of buildings,courtyards, and circulations.[23] The dynamic spatial nodes that structure monumental architectural sites compose an organic spatial scenography in its domestic environment. The formation is connected by intersection of geometries through special nodes, circular pavilions, elliptical courtyards, and exedras, based on the geometry and natural formation.

. The importance of Villa Adriana in terms of heritage is not limited by the monumental imperial architecture, however includes hidden infrastructural ingenuity through a various range of construction techniques, decorations, hydraulic infrastructure, and underground facilities, such as including cryptoporticus, underground passages used for communication and storage.[23] Imperial nature of Villa Adriana reveals in fact that ephemeral activities taking place above ground are sustained by underground network system, which include nymphae, baths, and reflecting pools, whereas beneath the architectural organisation.

As MacDonald and Pinto observe, Villa Adriana functions as a “laboratory” where the Emperor Hadrian built and shaped the building programs.

“... Embellishing Rome, ... meant responding and conforming to local and cultural expectations” [27]

23. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, *"Villa Adriana (Tivoli),"* World Heritage List, no. 907.

24. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 7.

25. Historia Augusta, *"Life of Hadrian,"* 26.5, translated by David Magie, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Historia_Augusta/Hadrian/2*.html.

26. Pier Federico Caliari, *“Tractatus logico sintattico: La forma trasparente di Villa Adriana,”* ed. Carola Gentilini, trans. Silvia Pettinicchio and Hilary Carter (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2012), 35.

27. MacDonald and Pinto, *“Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy,”* 195, quoted in **Fikret Yeğül,** *“review of Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy,”* by William L. MacDonald and John A. Pinto, The Art Bulletin 79, no.3. (September 1997), 549.

2.1.

THE EMPEROR ADRIAN'S VISION

AD 117.
Adrian became Roman Emperor

AD 118.
Construction of Villa Adriana

AD 121-128.
Canopus, Maritime Theatre, and Imperial Palace

AD 128-134.
Expansion of baths, gardens, and libraries

AD 134-138.
Final architectural finishings

AD 138.
Death of Emperor Adrian

Hadrian's Architectural Vision: Emperor Hadrian's accession to the throne and the commencement of the villa's construction.

The Conceptual Synthesis: The synthesis of architectural memories brought back from the Emperor's travels (Greek, Egyptian, Roman) with the topography.

The villa's peak as an imperial micro-city; the completion of water structures, cryptoportici, and palace buildings.

THE PERIOD OF USE and EARLY DECLINE

2nd century.
Continued occupation and maintenance by later emperors

3rd century.
Limited use by Antonine Emperors

5th century.
Progressive abandonment following political changes in the Western Roman Empire

Beginning of structural deterioration, and decline of the Villa Adriana

Post-Hadrianic Usage: The Antonine period and the continued use of the villa as an imperial residence.

Administrative & Ritual Function: The site retained its role as a center for imperial administration and ceremonies.

Gradual Decline: The loss of the villa's function alongside the fragmentation of the empire during Late Antiquity.

THE MATERIAL LOSS and THE ERASURE

Middle Ages.
Reuse of marble, columns, sculptures, bricks, and metals.

Significant loss of original architectural fabric through systematic spoliation.

Late Antiquity.
The Villa Adriana was deprived of regular maintenance and gradually reclaimed by nature, transforming into abandoned site.

Abandonment: The villa being left to nature and becoming an abandoned sight.

Systematic Plundering: The dismantling of marble, columns, and bronze from churches, palaces, and castles during the Middle Ages. You can note this process as "Significant loss of original architectural fabric through systematic spoliation."

RENAISSANCE RE-DISCOVERY

15th century.
Renaissance Archaeological discoveries and artistic documentation.

Villa Adriana becomes a major source of inspiration for Renaissance architecture.

16th century.
Excavations by Cardinal d'Este and Pirro Ligorio

18th century.
Architectural surveys and documentation by scholars such as Piranesi.

Architects (Palladio, Borromini, etc.) discovering the ruins as an "architectural laboratory."

Excavations & Dispersal: excavations carried out during the time of Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este; the removal of sculptures and decorative pieces from their original contexts and their dispersal into European collections.

Piranesi's Documentation: The embedding of the ruins into cultural memory as "romantic ruins" through Piranesi's drawings.

DOCUMENTATION OF HERITAGE SITE

19th century.
Systematic Archeological Studies

1950-1990.
Conservation and restoration projects

1999.
UNESCO World Heritage inscription

21st century.
Digital documentation, laser scanning, GIS, photogrammetry, visitor management, and preventive conservation

Stratigraphic Excavations: Adoption of scientific excavation methods in the 19th and 20th centuries.

UNESCO Inscription (1999): Inclusion of Villa Adriana in the World Heritage List and attainment of international conservation status.

Digital Transformation (21st Century): Conservation and documentation of the villa using terrestrial laser scanning, HBIM, and digital restoration technologies.



Figure 12. Historical Timeline of Villa Adriana,
Source: created by the author on the Charles Louis Girault, reconstruction drawing, École des Beaux-Arts (late 19th century),2026.

2.1.1. UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE



Figure 13. Pecile in Villa Adriana
Source: Photographed by the author during the site visit through the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII."

The architectural heritage of the Villa Adriana is a representative value in cultural curations of Roman, Greek, and Egyptian architectural influences, enlisted in 1999, the legacy of Emperor Hadrian was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in recognition of its outstanding contributions to the history of architecture, and its archaeological significance.[28] Beyond its status as a collection of ruins, Villa Adriana is recognised for its accomplished integration of landscape, and architecture defined by its ancient environment, harmony with nature, advanced infrastructure, and engineering.[28]

The "ideal city" as a residence for the emperor is identified by UNESCO World Heritage, with the synthesis of architectural and artistic traditional methods between multicultures in the Mediterranean World.[28] The composition that includes the dynamic geometry of representative cultures (Greek,Roman,and Egyptian architecture), constitutes a reinterpretation of a unified space heritage values of many aspects. [28]

28. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Villa Adriana (Tivoli)," World Heritage List, no. 907.

29. Cesare Brandi, Teoria del restauro (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1963).

30. Italy, Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio, ai sensi dell'articolo 10 della legge 6 luglio 2002, n. 137, Decreto Legislativo 22 gennaio 2004, n. 42, Gazzetta Ufficiale no. 45 (February 24, 2004), Supplemento Ordinario no. 28.

Regarding the guideline provided by UNESCO, the remains of the Villa are Palace', the Latin and Greek 'Libraries', and the outlined under four categories: ceremonial and religious zone ('Greek Theatre' and 'Temple of Cnidian Aphrodite'), imperial and court structures ('Maritime Theatre', 'Imperial Palace', 'Winter Piazza d'Oro), the thermal complexes ('Small Thermae', 'Large Thermae' and 'The Thermate with Heliocaminus'), and the landscape and infrastructure ('Cryptoportici', 'Lily Pond', 'Roccabruna Tower', the 'Academy', 'Pecile', 'Nymphaea', 'Court of the Libraries', and 'Cento Camerelle').[28]

Following its rediscovery in 1461, after centuries, the Villa Adriana's inspiration has risen significantly in classical architecture, especially Renaissance times.[28] The recognition by the Unesco World Heritage Site dates back to 1999. The architectural values of Villa Adriana were inscribed by World Heritage Criteria (i), (ii), and (iii), referring ancient materiality of Mediterranean, "monument rediscovery", survival from the

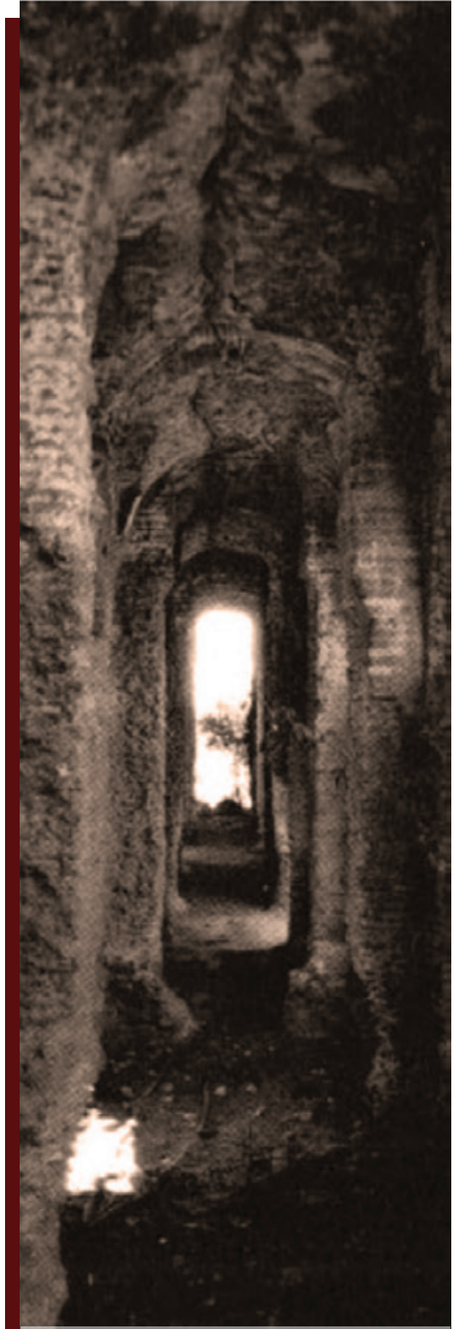


Figure 14. Interior, Stage in Teatro Greco
Source: MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 127.

2.1.1.

Early Roman Empire", respectively, which creates a foundational framework for any contemporary intervention within its context.[28] Rather than acting as a borderline, these criteria frame the Villa Adriana as a dynamic, performative archeological heritage, where it inherits an evolution through modern layers in a centuries-long narrative.

As outlined by UNESCO World Heritage, the preservation of structural integrity and authenticity of Villa Adriana is conducted by the Restoration Charter.[28] [29] The Outstanding Universal Value of Villa Adriana maintains the preserved relationship within the archeological extensive area of green spaces, pools, fountains, and architectural significance, while the legibility of the ruins with original layout remain readable, and ensure the spatial connections in the ancient complex preserve the authenticity.[28]

The preservation and management of Villa Adriana is governed by the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, under the law of Decreto Legislativo 42/2004, the Code of the Cultural and Landscape Heritage, synthesis of conservation and active cultural engagement.[30] The framework of the management encourages the cultural event, exhibitions and collaborations to encourage the dynamic nature of the history as an interpretation and public awareness of the UNESCO Buffer Zone. [28]

By acknowledging the dynamics of preservation between maintaining integrity and authenticity, this cultural framework creates a foundational base for the thesis's proposed as a 'glimpse of an eye' materialised through the portals. Rather than overruling the site's authenticity, the spatial dialogue seeks to enhance the Outstanding Universal Value by re-curating the heritage site by respecting the archeological and architectural preservation.

28. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Villa Adriana (Tivoli)," World Heritage List, no. 907.

29. Cesare Brandi, Teoria del restauro (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1963).

30. Italy, Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio, ai sensi dell'articolo 10 della legge 6 luglio 2002, n. 137, Decreto Legislativo 22 gennaio 2004, n. 42, Gazzetta Ufficiale no. 45 (February 24, 2004), Supplemento Ordinario no. 28.

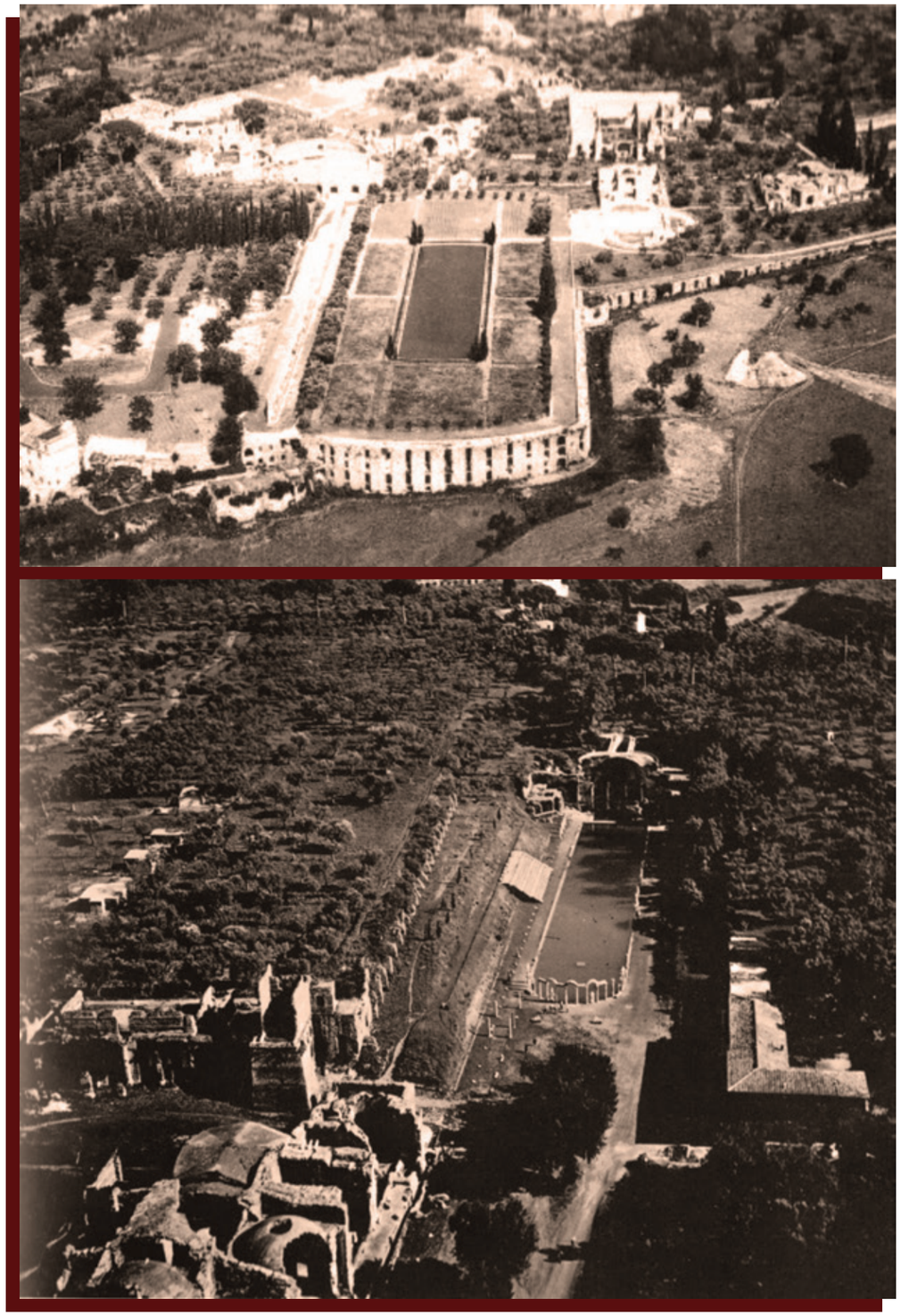


Figure 15. Bird's Eye view of Villa Adriana towards Pecile
Source: MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 12.

Figure 16. Bird's Eye view of Villa Adriana towards Canopy
Source: MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 119.

2.1.2.
PLANIMETRY, TERRITORIAL, ARCHITECTURAL ORGANISATIONS

A deeper analysis on the topographic adaptive planning within the Tiburtine topography underlies a “highly rigorous geometric matrix” on the composition of Villa Adriana, a system observed by Caliari as “a whole range of other centralities,... in particular, triangles and circles”.[31] Within this framework, further elaborations by Caliari projected the concept of “logical syntax” identified through the Villa’s centrally planned domed structures (tholoi) by “node system”.[32] The planimetric studies of Caliari, the definition of central theatres, courtyards, and pavilions are strategically volumed by their “nodal points”, that progress from a whole to particular central axis, and geometries across the site.[33]



Figure 17. Topography Drawing
Source: MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian’s Villa and Its Legacy, 27.

31. Pier Federico Caliari, Tractatus logico sintattico, 8.

32. Caliari, Tractatus logico sintattico, 32–33.

33. Caliari, Tractatus logico sintattico, 44.

2.1.2.

Figure 18. Planimetry by Piranesi, 1781

Source: G. B. Piranesi, Plan of the structures existing at Hadrian's Villa, 1781.

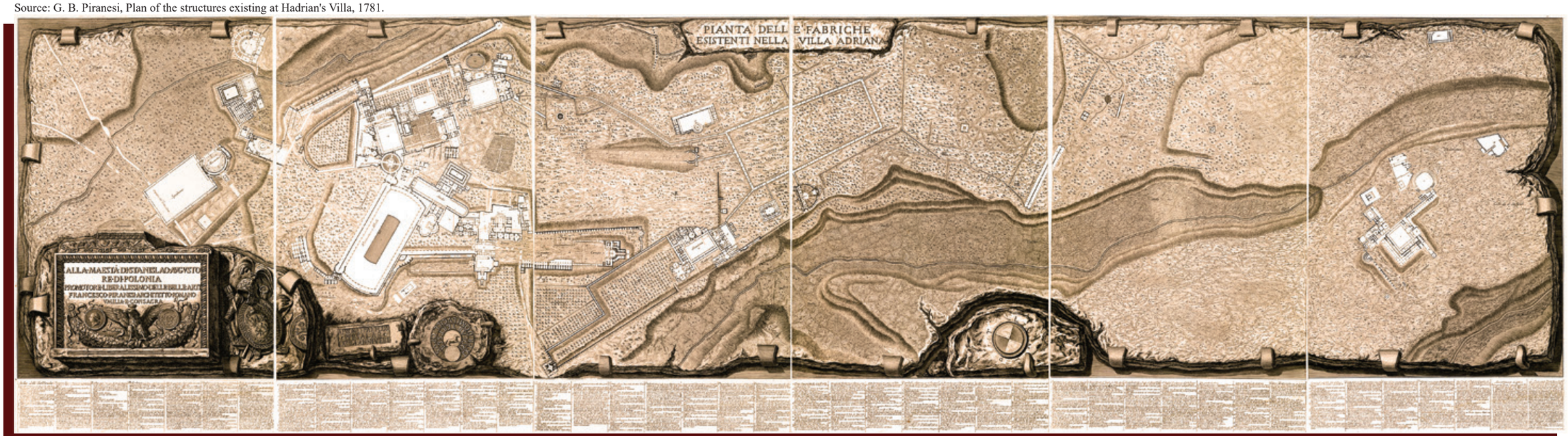


Figure 19. Centralisation of Piazza d'Oro

Source: created by the author, according to the information provided by Luca Basso Peressut and Pier Federico Caliari, "Piranesi Prix de Rome, Progetti per la Grarde Villa Adriana", 95.

Figure 20. Centralisation of Tempio di Venere

Source: created by the author, according to the information provided by Luca Basso Peressut and Pier Federico Caliari, "Piranesi Prix de Rome, Progetti per la Grarde Villa Adriana", 103.

2.1.2.

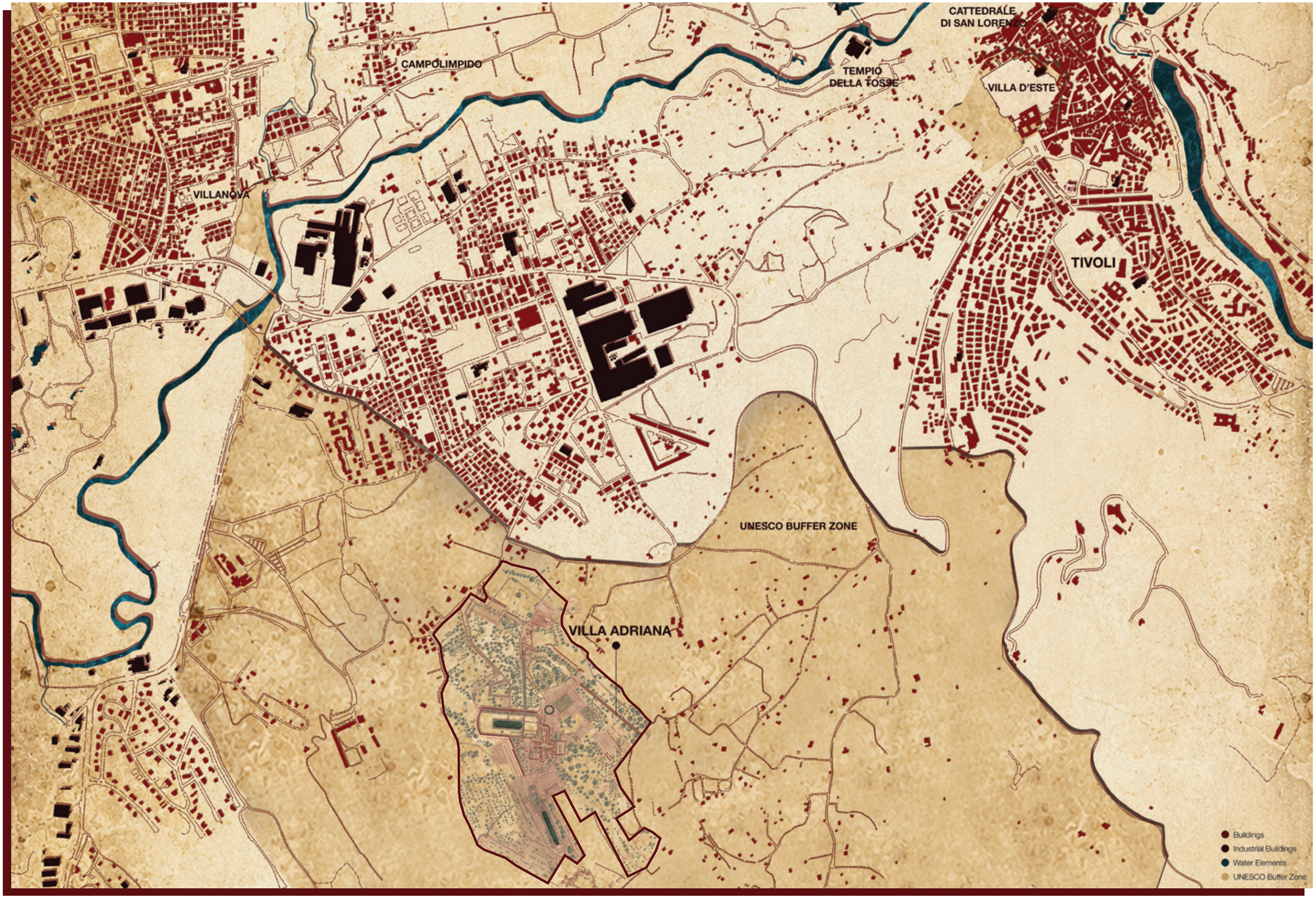
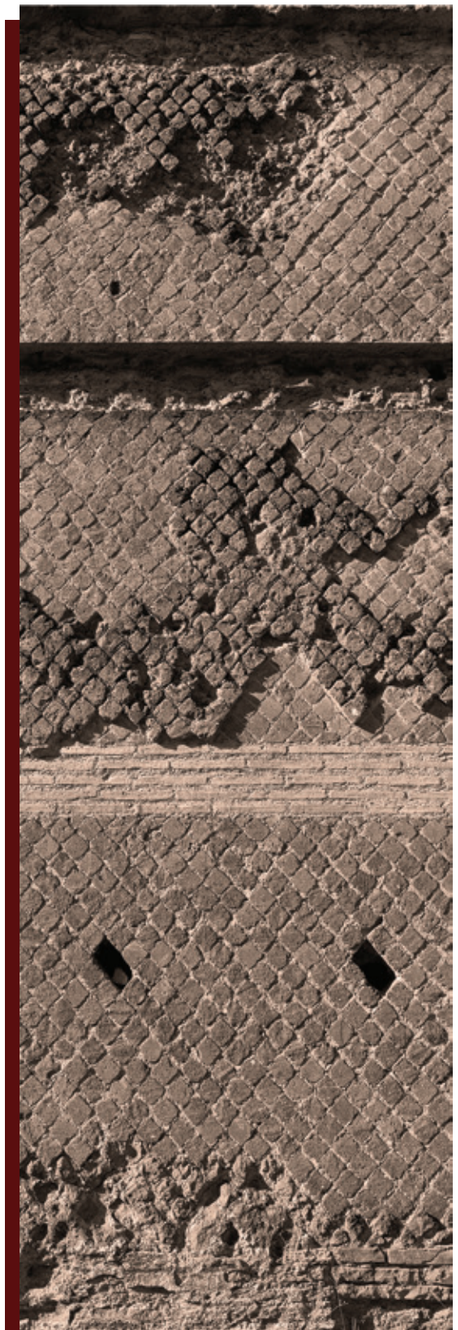


Figure 21. Territorial Analysis of Villa Adriana,
Source: created by the author according to the QGIS Data, 2026.

2.1.3.
SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

Figure 22. Wall Material in Villa Adriana
Source: Photographed by the author during the site visit through the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII," 2025.



During the construction phase, the archaeological site in Tivoli adapted through the natural slope of the terrain, corresponding to 120 hectares by adaptive planning approach.[34] The site specifically inherits a plateau, defines two roughly parallel southeast-northwest valleys, provides its natural environment topographical identity and considerable privacy to the architectural volumes into its natural environment.[35] The surrounding quarries provide travertine and lime for construction through topographic integration of the archeological volumes, rather than imposing a rigid grid plan, but as a dynamic spatial planning, as MacDonald and Pinto indicates the "axes are used to organize discrete groupings of structures, not to impose rigid unity on the scheme."[36] Imperial life circulated by ceremonial routes with a diverse set of landscape elements, including courtyards, reflective pools, terraces and gardens while the underground service system is buried to keep the management of daily activities and carrying the water on a concealed system as an out of sight.[37]

34. UNESCO World Heritage Centre. 1999. "Villa Adriana (Tivoli)."

35. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 28.

36. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 276.

37. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 26.

The Roman aesthetic identity of Villa Adriana is enhanced by a material code that synthesizes multi-cultural aesthetic language synthesis, Greek artistic influence on Mediterranean cultures, as MacDonald and Pinto note,The Villa stands as "an elaborate portrait" and "took a leading place within the roman frame.[38] The tie to the Egyptian documentation deepened through Emperor Hadrian's 130 CE journey, reflected on egyptianizing sculptures found at the Villa, and reading the Egyptian features on the Scenic Canal through Roman imperial art.[39] Its vaulted and domed geometries were built by advanced engineering, using opus caementicium (Roman concrete) and opus latericium (brick-faced concrete) providing a structural core by advanced engineering.[40] The materiality of the brick-faced concrete structured by rows of travertine consoles, supporting the balconies, reflected on the extensive sections of the site survive.[41] The monolithic structural base polished with decorative skin creates a spatial atmosphere as a residence of a monumental architectural emperor design, such as the mosaic decorations of the Residence, "Palace", resemble black and white mosaic decorations with circles and squares.[42]



Figure 23. Site Photographs within Villa Adriana
Source: Photographed by the author and Chiara Alinovi during the site visit through the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII", 2025.

38. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 21.

39. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 108-109.

40. Fikret Yeğül and Diane Favro, Roman Architecture: A Visual Guide (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 452–454.

41. Yeğül and Favro, Roman Architecture, 389. Yeğül and Favro, Roman Architecture, 376–377.

2.2.
ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS OF INTERVENTION SITES

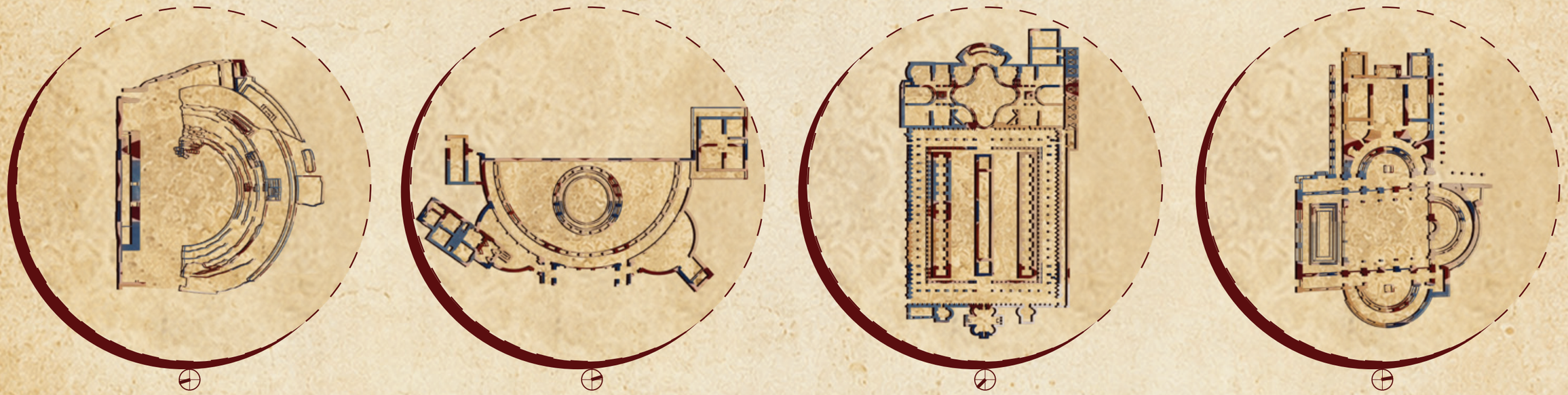


Figure 24. Plan Drawings of Analyzed Sites
Source: created by the author, 2026.

2.2.1.
TEATRO GRECO, Greek Theatre

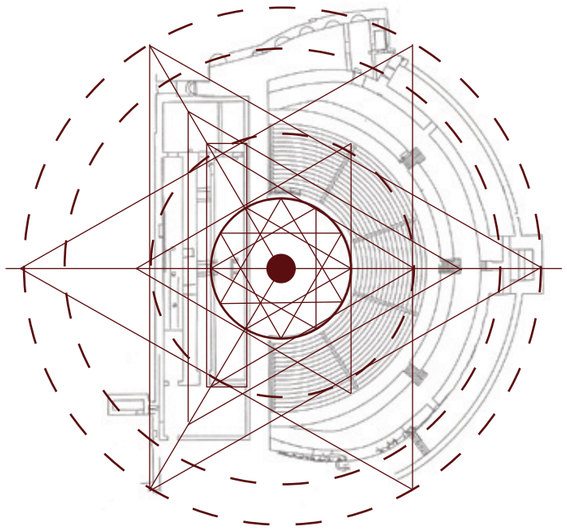


Figure 25. Reconstruction Plan
Source: created by the author according to the information by Caliari, Tractatus logico sintattico, 106-107.

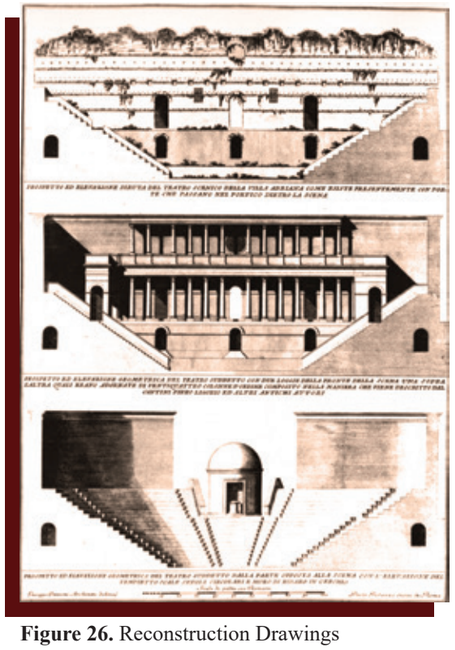


Figure 26. Reconstruction Drawings
Source: MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 126.

Teatro Greco stands as an example of the architectural testament of Emperor Adrian's Greek influence. The form of the unique theatre represents imperial theatrically excavated a semicircular aiming to create a gallery.[42] Despite its name, Teatro Greco's plan structured in Roman traditional half circle plan with "cavea" and underground galleries.[42] [43]

As Yegül describes Teatro Greco,

"it presented a perfect balance between the natural and the man-made, between the city and nature, …"[44]

Nowadays, the ruins of Teatro Greco is covered by greenery on the slope, Villa Adriana (author's observations, 2025.)

42. Adembri and Bruciati, Hadrian's Villa Tivoli, 52-53.

43. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 127.

44. Yeğül and Favro, Roman Architecture, 673.

Figure 27. Reconstruction Drawings by Gatteschi
Source: Provided by the tutors.

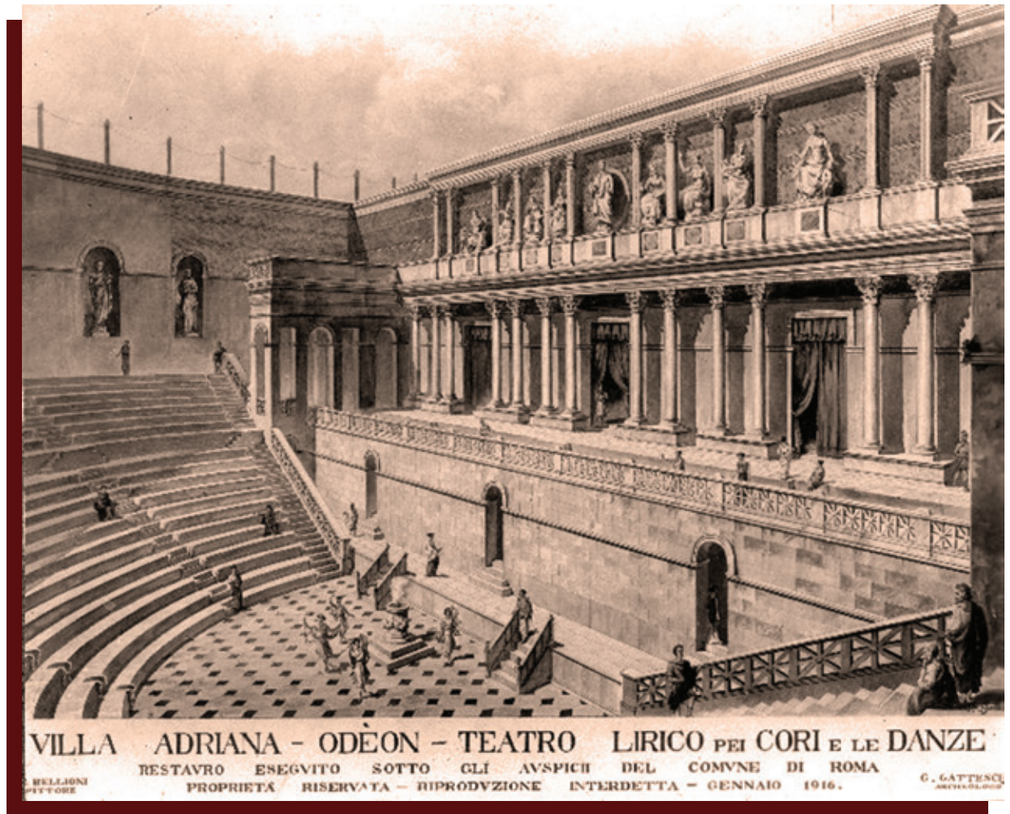




Figure 28. Site Photographs within Villa Adriana
Source: Photographed by Chiara Alinovi during the site visit through the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII."

2.2.2.
TEMPIO DI VENERE, Temple of Venus

Figure 29. Site Photograph within Villa Adriana
Source: Photographed by Chiara Alinovi during the site visit through the workshop “Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII,” 2025.



The temple is located to form a strategical connecting point between the green areas in the lower sections of the archaeological site and the upper part of plateaus. The circular temple (tholos), positioned at the edge with a view of the hill over the valley, is defined by a central exedra, now occupied by the farmhouse that was built in 1704 by Conte Fede.[45] The structure’s elevated position at the edge of the plateau offered an expansive panoramic view overlooking the area known as the "Gymnasium" and the distant hill of Tivoli, combined with the surviving opus sectile flooring, an inlaid pavement made of polychrome marble fragments.[45]

As Caliari demonstrates, the generative center of the extensive network of Tempio di Venere, extending across the Villa radiating from its center alone, connecting the tholos to the Tempio virtually as a generative center.[46] As Yegül and Favro observe, the centrality of the Tempio di Venere was reinforced by the visual choreography with site structures, monumentalising the effect through the deep “cavea” of theater toward its hexastyle facade.[47]

45. Adembri and Bruciati, Hadrian’s Villa Tivoli, 56.

46. Caliari, Tractatus logico sintattico, 41.

47. Yeğül and Favro, Roman Architecture, 96-97.

Architecturally, the structure is a classic tholos in the Doric order, originally featuring sixteen columns and a roof clad in marble tiles.[48] Following the discovery of a copy of Praxiteles' famous Aphrodite statue at the site in the 1950s, early research identified the structure as a direct architectural recreation of the Temple of Aphrodite at Knidos in Asia Minor.[49] Scholars, however, offer a more nuanced perspective on this direct connection. Adembri and Bruciati highlighted that epigraphic evidence identifies the original circular temple at Knidos as belonging to the Corinthian order and dedicated to Athena. Therefore, the Doric tholos at Villa Adriana should be regarded not as an exact and faithful replica of a specific structure, but rather as a conceptual reference to Hellenistic traditions concerning temples dedicated to Aphrodite/Venus.[49] References to famous ancient monuments are conveyed consistently through evocation and atmosphere rather than exact imitation. This connection corresponds directly to the broader architectural philosophy of Villa Adriana. Broadly, MacDonald and Pinto debate the Doric order in the Tempio di Venere and the West Belvedere tholos as would be expected for an imperial settlement of the second century, where Ionic and Corinthian capitals are dominant in roughly equal measure.[50]

49. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian’s Villa and Its Legacy, 58.

50. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian’s Villa and Its Legacy, 51.

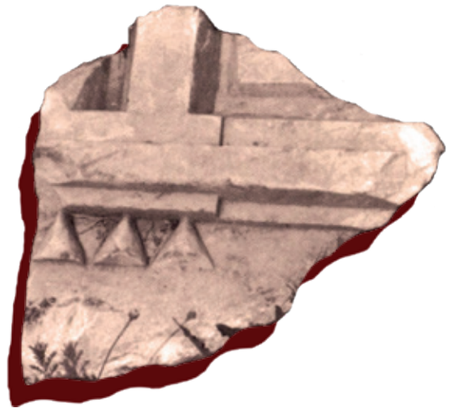


Figure 30. Doric Fragment
Source: MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian’s Villa and Its Legacy, 51.



Figure 31. Tempio di Venere, Current Scan
Source: HBIM model, provided by the tutors, and rearranged by the author.

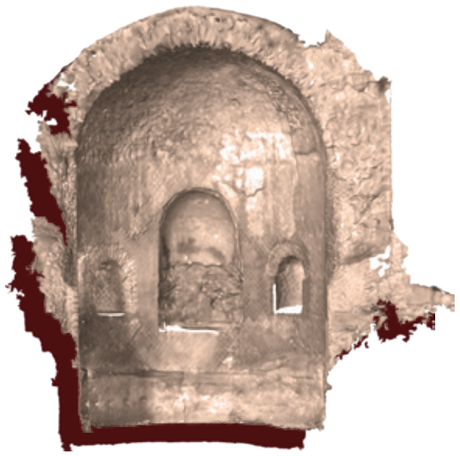
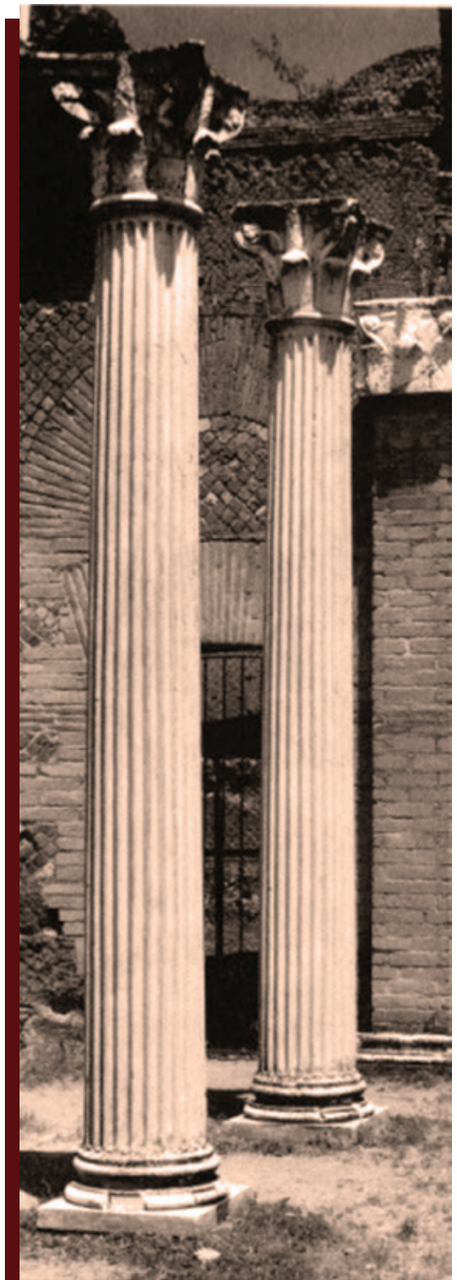


Figure 32. Tempio di Venere, Current Scan
Source: HBIM model, provided by the tutors, and rearranged by the author.

48. Adembri and Bruciati, Hadrian’s Villa Tivoli, 57.

2.2.3.
PIAZZA D'ORO, Golden Square

Figure 33. Columns
Source: MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 99.



The radial axis of the tholos of the Tempio di Venere, shown by Prof. Pier Federico Caliari, intersects at the symmetrical center of the Piazza d'Oro.[51] The high-quality textures introduced for imperial use were intentionally designed for recreational activities "overlooking the inner gardens or banquets, … towards the hills of Tivoli and the arena built in the Temple Valley."[52] Piazza d'Oro is known by its modern name "Golden Square", with its multi colored "opus-sectile" flooring, which symbolises the richness within the historic fabric.[52]

The "Reverse-Curve Pavilion" of the Piazza d'Oro works with smaller vaults independently; the externalised central core consists of governing circles projected through a rational plan with joining half circles.[53] The further plan consists of the "Vestibule" with "Pumpkin Dome" and "Water Court" enriched by the six fountains.[53] [54] In the materiality of the Water Court, enriched by the marble and mosaic flooring surrounded by the windowed corridors (a small amount of the colored mosaics are preserved in the Villa, according to the author's site observation in the workshop Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII).

51. Caliari, Tractatus logico sintattico, 32.

52. Adembri and Bruciati, Hadrian's Villa Tivoli, 44-45.

53. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 94-97.

54. Yeğül and Favro, Roman Architecture, 391.



Figure 34. Site Photograph
Source: Caliari, Tractatus logico sintattico, Index.



Figure 35. Section of the Piazza d'Oro
Source: Charles Louis Girault, reconstruction drawing, École des Beaux-Arts (late 19th century).



Figure 36. Site Photograph
Source: Photographed by Chiara Alinovi during the site visit through the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII," 2025.

2.2.4.
EDIFICIO DI TRE ESEDRE, Building with Three Exedras

The archeological structure consists of three exedrae on a north-south axis, with a semicircular courtyard, and is named for its architectural configuration.[55] The peristyle in the hall is enriched by the multipurpose hall, with its internal columns accommodating Roman society gathering with dinner parties, beyond the Emperor's own presence.[56] The Villa's network of reception and dining spaces was positioned along the Peristyle, Nymphaeum/Stadium, and Small Baths.[56] The imperial hospitality through the rhythm is reinforced by the hydraulic design, which contains a large rectangular fountain by closing semicircular exedra.[56]



Figure 37. Fountain
Source: MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 105.

55. Adembri and Bruciati, Hadrian's Villa Tivoli, 24-25.

56. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 102.



Figure 38. Bird's eye view
Source: MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 104.

2.3.
EMPIRICAL DATA COLLECTION: Piranesi Prix de Rome

The empirical data collection for this research was provided by the XXIII Edition of the Piranesi Prix de Rome, held at Villa Adriana from August 23rd to September 5th, 2025.[57] The workshop focused on designing within the UNESCO Buffer Zone, with specifically emphasizing on water architecture and archeological landscapes. To valorize these historic sites, the program addressed contemporary design solutions framed as an international architectural and museography seminar, addressing the world's archaeological heritage. The core of the didactic program centered on the "musealisation of archeology and the scenographic design for the "valorization of archeological heritage", followed by the knowledge of the Villa Adriana and its territorial analysis.[58] The didactic framework sessions discussed on the musealisation of the ruins, the design of the thermal pavilion, and setting organisation of the cultural events themed "Fashion & Heritage".

The aim of the workshop is to establish an architectural relationship with the water, a brand-led fashion show, landscape design and musealisation of stone display through furniture design. To achieve, the following design steps objectified set by Prof. Pier Federico Caliari founder and organiser of the event,all groups are asked to:[57]

- Design a contemporary thermal pavilion, inspired by Roman Culture, within one of the four areas introduced during site visit, each featured with water source and minimum archeological risk.
- Design the landscape interventions for the Villa, accessible to all the groups of visitors and forming an axis going toward the fashion show, functioning as a part of the museography of a brand chosen by each group.
- Stone display, requested by the committee of Villa Adriana to develop in practice for the management of displaying ancient stones.

The Piranesi workshop contributed in the development of a collaborative group project through site analysis, on-site photography, brainstorming, and a presentation to the committee, the experience of the site itself through a database for the process of this thesis. From the empirical database, the project proposes a concept of "glimpse of an eye", a metaphor directly emerged by the phenomenological experience at the ruins inspired by the author personally, constitutes a transformation of the initial collaborative decision making process through a spatial narrative individually through with four specific interventions developed by the "Portal Strategy".

57. Accademia Adrianea di Architettura e Archeologia, "Piranesi Prix de Rome, XXIII Edizione".

58. Caliari, Tractatus logico sintattico.

2.3.1.
EMPIRICAL MAPPING AND PRELIMINARY EXPERIENCE

During the workshop, the visits through the Villa organised by Prof. Pier Federico Caliari. The guided tours within the Villa were organised by Prof. Pier Federico Caliari during the workshop, took place before the project development within groups. The groups were guided on the origin of the site to gather data, measurements, and photographs supported by the historical information provided by tutors and representatives from the council of the Villa. The process of the intensive workshop then continued with the individual works of groups and discussions with tutors twice a day over two weeks. At the conclusion of the workshop, each group prepared to make a representation to a board composed of international architects, who examined the projects considering it by a selective criteria.

Development of a project to complete successfully on Piranesi Prix de Rome workshop were conducted by the Group 3 was composed of Ebru Gürcan (author), Catalina Ossa Terán, Yasin Muhammed Çalık, Başak Su Durukan, Chiara Alinovi, Sara Balliu, and Gina Paola Bello Alvarez. The first step was conducted before the workshop, involving research and online seminars for academic understanding Villa Adriana. Through the guided tours, each group member gathered individual documentation,photographs and quick sketches, to inform a brainstorming on the recommended design areas. After every visit, the Group 3 gathered and discussed the strategy, drawing on the knowledge of personal experiences of the site's circulation, before concluding a common design proposal.

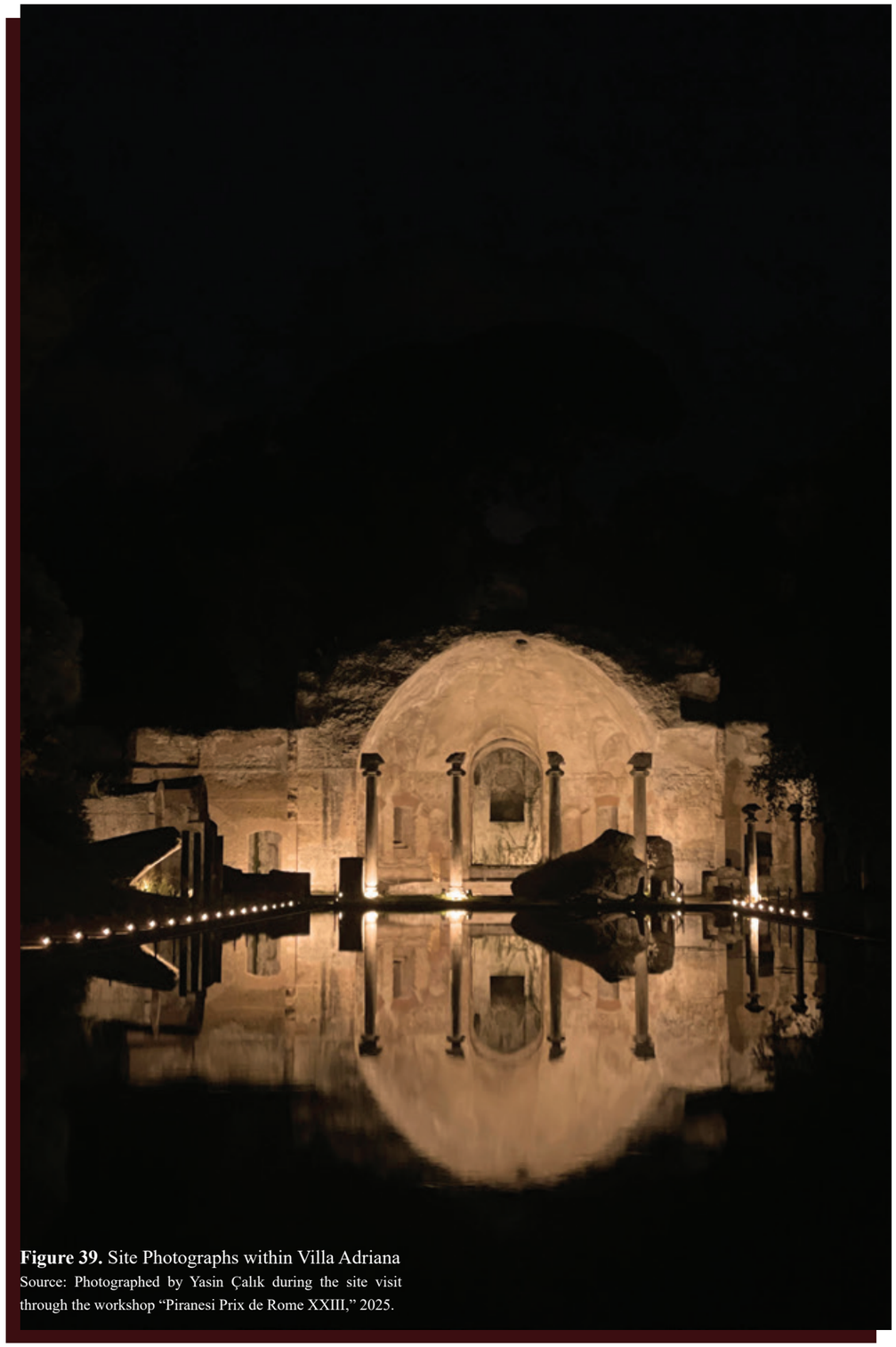


Figure 39. Site Photographs within Villa Adriana
Source: Photographed by Yasin Çalık during the site visit through the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII," 2025.

2.3.1.

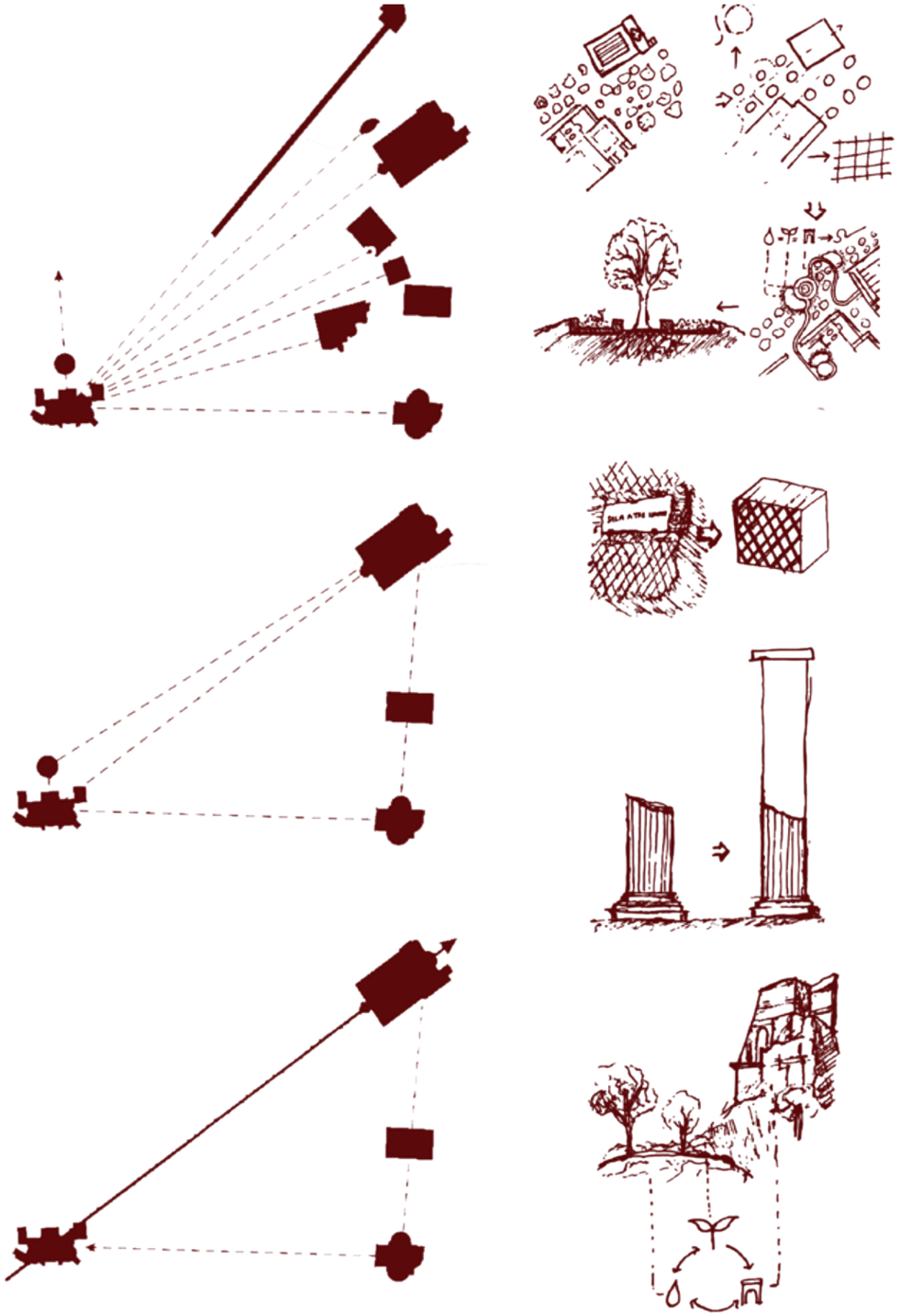


Figure 40. Site Diagrams and Sketches
Source: created by Catalina Ossa Teran and Gina Paola Bello Alvarez during the site visit through the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII," 2025.

Without imposing any intervention, we approached the site through a "flowing memory", living in a specific node within a different axis defined through time and instinct by people. We use this flowing memory as a concept that intersects through water as a thread connecting past and future, leading to the return of the origin of Villa Adriana, experiencing through all five senses of human. The return of the origin on the axis of Tempio di Venere stood as a main axis on the museographic scenario developed for the Villa. As a start point, the Teatro Greco opens onto a route towarding the experience, while on the other side Piazza d'Oro. The formal analysis of the angles informed the design with the concept of a "modern twist to the past." This contemporary approach on the archeological site was projected with modern materials like travertine, glass, steel, lighting elements and marble. A new axis was also introduced towards the pavilion area, one of the low archaeological risk areas introduced by the tutors. The selection of the area affected by the place of the Tempio di Venere, located within the green area with a topographical height difference. The water flow gathers at the points of sensory, qualifying landscape intervention through the character and the type of the flowers. Architecturally, the new pavilion, amphitheatre design, paths and furnitures enhance the Villa Adriana without overpowering the origin, instead supporting the twist through the time period the site faced over decades.

2.3.2.
PHENOMENOLOGICAL SITE DOCUMENTATION

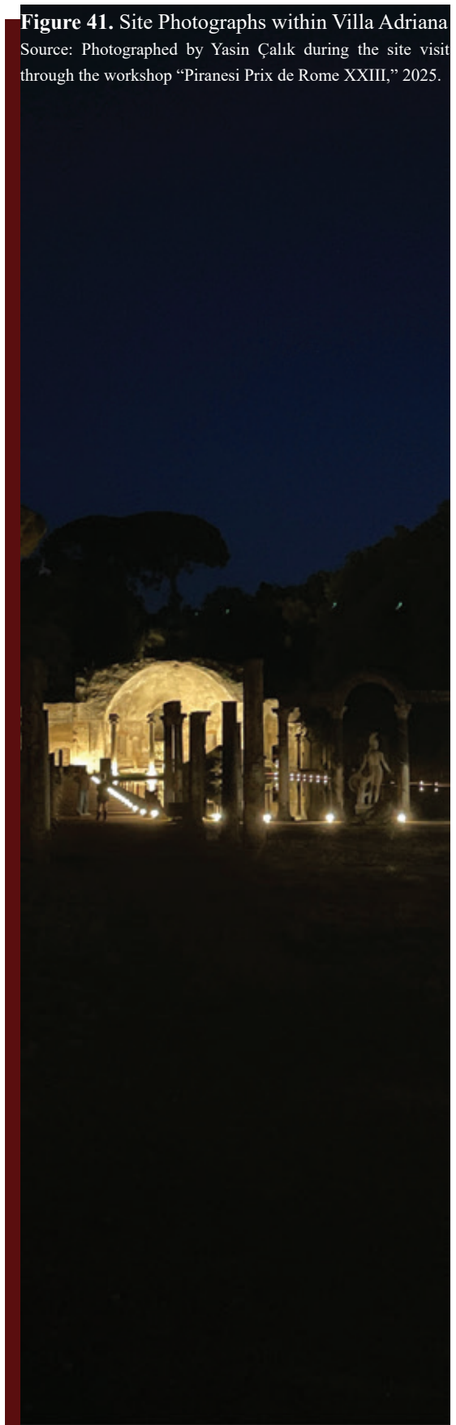


Figure 41. Site Photographs within Villa Adriana
Source: Photographed by Yasin Çalık during the site visit through the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII," 2025.

The empirical visual survey was conducted on-site throughout the Piranesi Prix de Rome workshop. The narrative of the photographic documentation provides a narrative based on the captured moments of the ruins across shifting temporalities, creating a database of the transient "glimpses". The transition during the day plays an important role to the process of scenographic musealisation, with the light changes on texture of raw materials. By documenting these moments, the photographic narrative facilitates an essential database for incorporating the gap between ancient fabric and contemporary architectural intervention.

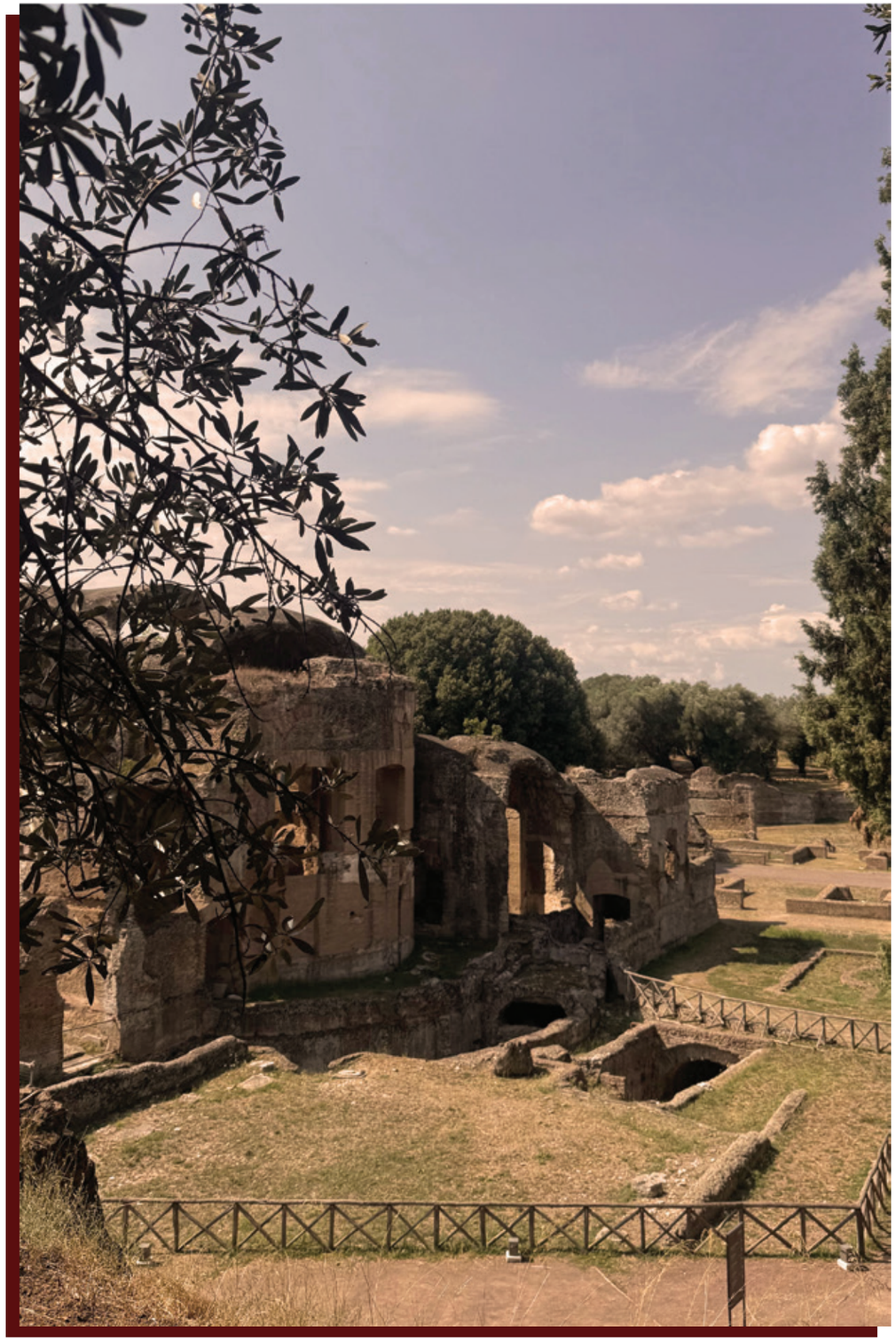


Figure 42. Small Thermae in Villa Adriana
Source: Photographed by the author during the site visit through the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII," 2025.

2.3.2.



Figure 43. Site Photographs within Villa Adriana
Source: Photographed by the Chiara Alinovi during the site visit through the workshop “Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII,” 2025.



Figure 44. Site Photographs within Villa Adriana
Source: Photographed by the author, and Chiara Alinovi during the site visit through the workshop “Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII,” 2025.

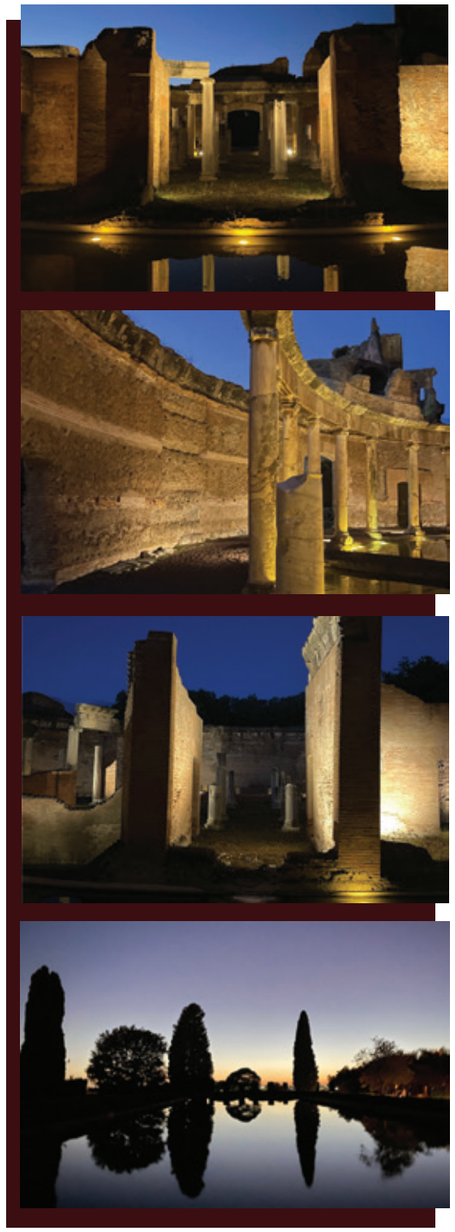


Figure 45. Site Photographs within Villa Adriana
Source: Photographed by the Yasin Çalık during the site visit through the workshop “Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII,” 2025.



Figure 46. Site Photographs within Villa Adriana
Source: Photographed by the author during the site visit through the workshop “Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII,” 2025.

2.3.3. THE PROJECT DATA

Pre-show

The journey begins at the Teatro Greco with a pre-show performance area within the amphitheatre original design, based on restoration drawing by Gatteschi, shaped by the influence of the Greek and Roman theatrical architecture.[59] The opening route begins with a multicultural introduction to the Villa, preparing the audience for an experience. The partially reconstructed theatre is reinterpreted from the original plan with modern materials, adapted into a dialogue between past and the future and is introduced in the existing ruin within a harmony with nature. The abstract representation of the theatre, considering the ruins of today, used as a language of intervention achieved by proportions of its original plan by contemporary interpretation of the ancient theatre. The distinction between history and the present was the key aim to reversible touch on the ancient fabric. The dynamic composition reconstructed by the asymmetrical configuration, the central water emphasizes the show on the central area, through its reflectiveness and representation of the flow.



Figure 47. Pre-show in Teatro Greco
Source: rearranged from the presentation boards made by Group 3 in the workshop “Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII,” 2025.

59. Giuseppe Gatteschi, "Villa Adriana, Teatro Greco di Dionisos: Progetto di Restauro," drawing March 1908.

2.3.3.

Pavilion

The contemporary scenography is located at an intersection of the existing axis and a new defined axis extending down the greenery from the Tempio di Venere. The historical relationship with the ruins becomes an interface within the scenario. The memory and intervention shape an environment between landscape and the water, with a contemporary thermal pavilion that adheres to the original proportions and spatial logic of the Villa.

Beneath the green area of the Tempio di Venere, the topography creates its own hierarchy, shaped by the overwatching of the “Cnidian Aphrodite” sculpture. The key aim to design the pavilion is projected through a contemporary architecture based on transparency, abstraction, and lightness. The detailed analysis of Villa Adriana’s architectural and material palette informed the narrative of ceramic fragments found in on-site research, reinterpreted as chromatic variations expressing the decorative integrity through the water elements by temperature and depth parameters.The rhythm of the Villa’s brick vaults is reinterpreted through a light glass roof element strengthened by steel, set upon tactile masonry walls, allowing light to enter through the roof. Rather than replicating historical elements, the design treats those references as conceptual references, characterized by the ornamented use of the materials.

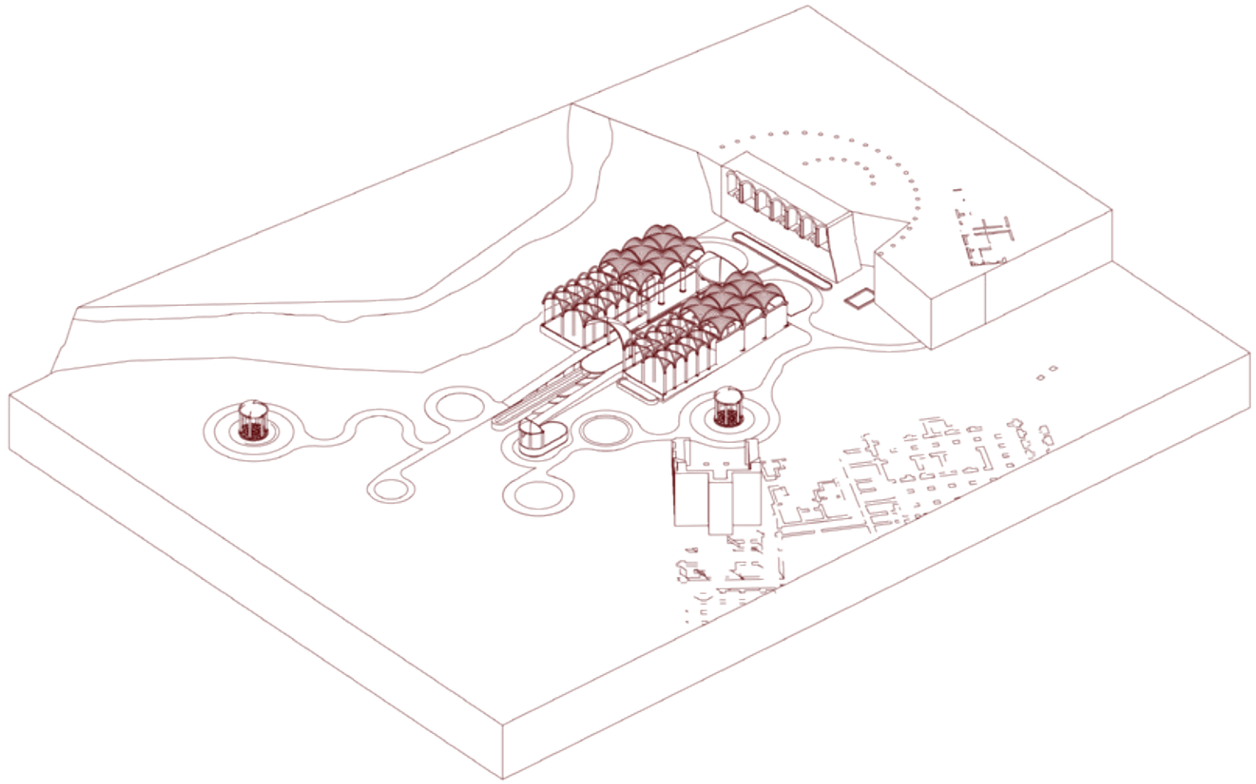


Figure 48. Pavilion Diagram

Source: rearranged from the presentation boards made by Group 3 in the workshop Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII, 2025.

2.3.3.

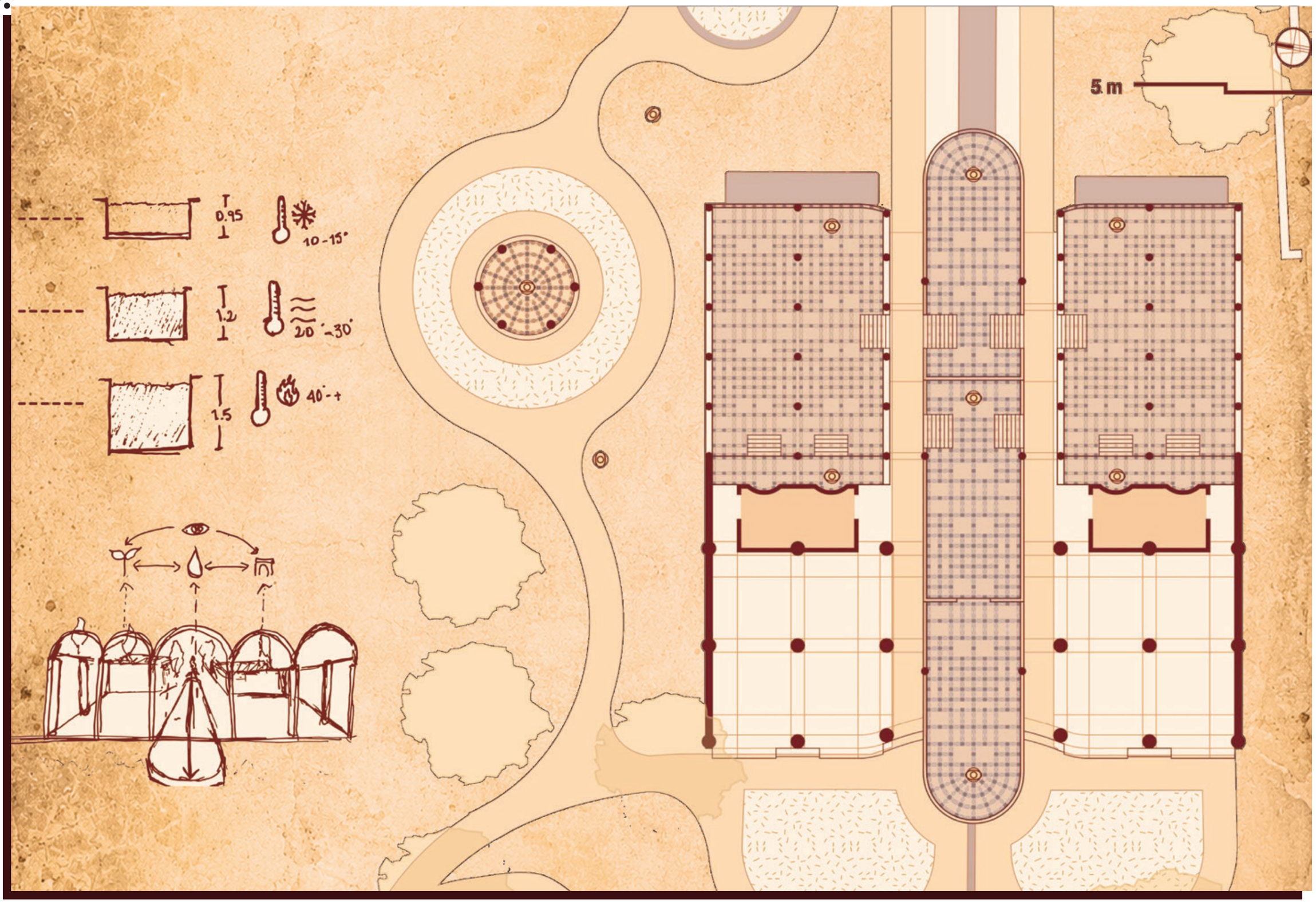


Figure 49. Pavilion Sketches and its Plan

Source: rearranged from the presentation boards made by Group 3 in the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII," 2025.

2.3.3.

Figure 50. Pavilion Render
Source: rearranged from the presentation boards made by Group 3 in the workshop “Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII,” 2025.

2.3.3.

The architectural language extends into the water elements, gradually increasing in depth through the fluid boundaries with the flow of the water. The central water organised the spaces by splitting into reflections of the surroundings and different experiences through the temperatures and the depth. Water choreographs the pavilion, guiding visitors through the architecture and nature. The surrounding landscape allows visitors to move through the outside pools where their perspectives and experiences constantly shift. The integration of the interior, semi-interior, and exterior manifests through the temporal experience of the present while creating a dialogue with the past.

The landscape intervention relates to the contemporary revision of the Roman bath typology, with the thermal pavilion designed as a continuation of the narrative integrity. The interpretation of the spatial logic of Roman baths and Roman gardens: the pavilion's landscape design forms part of the experience that aimed at the newly created routes through the Villa, which will be explained in depth in the next chapter. The adaptation of the thermal pavilion and its axis are controlled by planting, water features, pergolas, and greenery. The contemporary sense of richness and the imperial gardens evoke the ancient world, with an existing nymphaea near the ruins of the Tempio di Venere.



Figure 51. Pavilion Render
Source: rearranged from the presentation boards made by Group 3 in the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII," 2025.



Figure 52. Pavilion Render
Source: rearranged from the presentation boards made by Group 3 in the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII," 2025.

2.3.3.

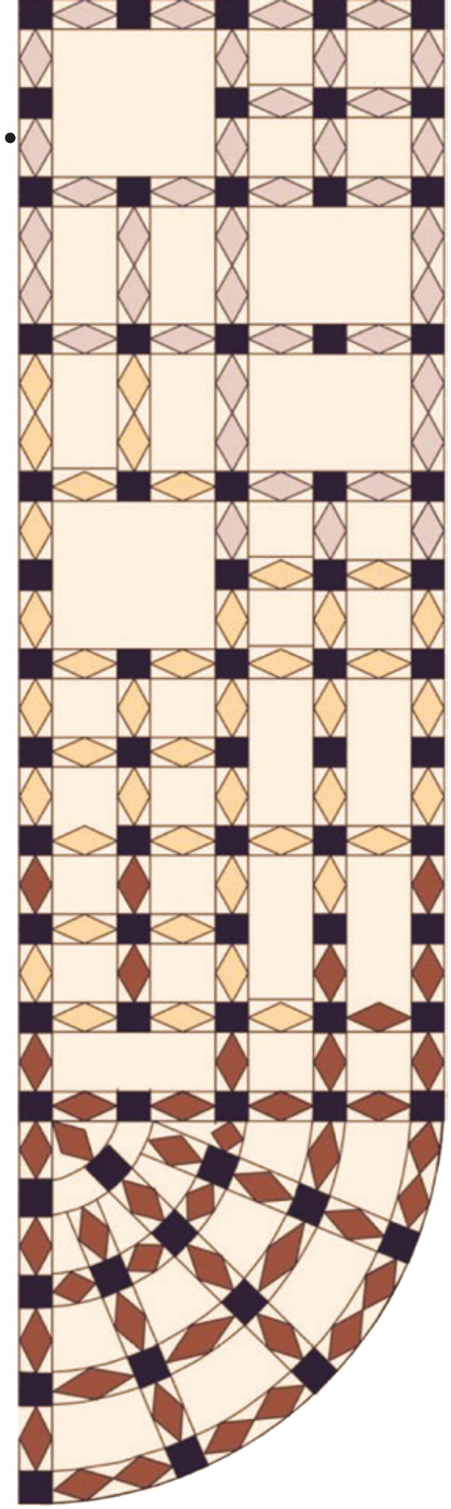


Figure 53. Abstract Marble Pattern
Source: created by the author during the workshop “Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII,” 2025.

Fashion show

In collaboration with Gucci, a fashion show was held in Piazza d’Oro, drawing on Villa's Mediterranean influences. Respect for the origin of Piazza d’Oro was applied throughout the design of the catwalk. The historical knowledge of the square allows us to create a contemporary approach with a timeless aesthetic. The fashion becomes an encounter between the heritage, architecture, and archeology within Villa Adriana.

The choice of the fashion house of Gucci as a collaborating brand was affected by Group 3's site experience, particularly under the columns' material at Piazza d’Oro. The use of the coloured marble pattern affects the design, informing the key decisions tracing the flow of time. The brand’s material identity became a part of the project's narrative of the project as part of an architectural narrative. Gucci's colour palette and the geometric patterns were reinterpreted through a shared visual aesthetic with Villa Adriana.

The reconstructed route creates a defined space for models’ movement along the catwalk. The show begins under the reinterpreted dome of the Piazza d’Oro, where the technical details are distributed for the preparation of the show. The catwalk and the seating area are distributed around the perimeter of the Piazza d’Oro, framed by a changing environmental background in each unique space. The show concludes in the middle area, which is interpreted as the origin of the historical time, with water elements, columns, and the dome as a culminating point of the sequence.



Figure 54. Fashion Show Renders
Source: rearranged from the presentation boards made by Group 3 in the workshop Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII,” 2025.

2.3.3.

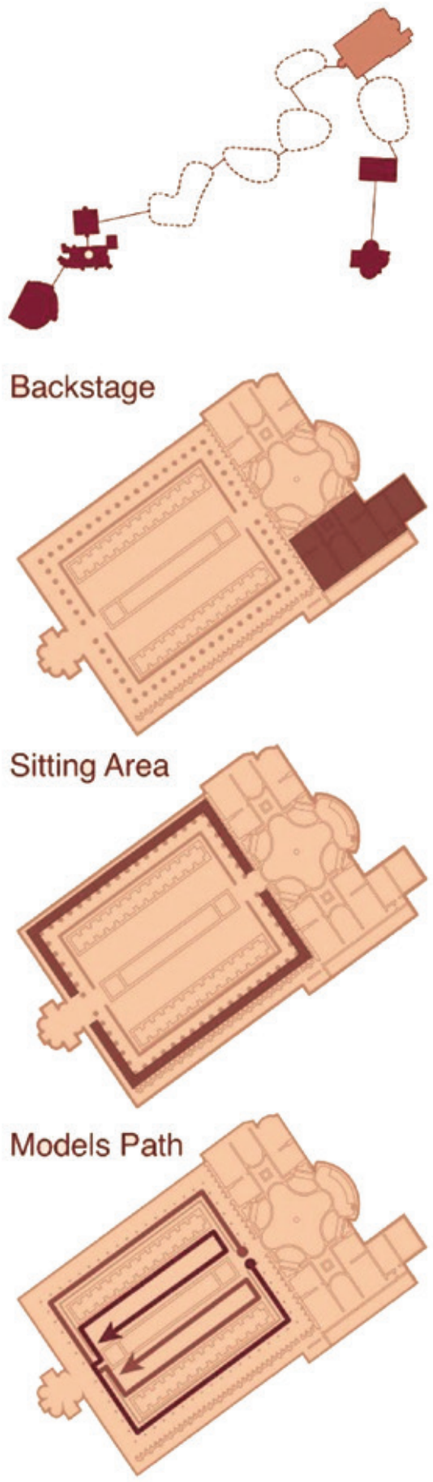


Figure 55. Fashion Show Section and its Render

Source: rearranged from the presentation boards made by Group 3 in the workshop “Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII” 2025.

2.3.3.





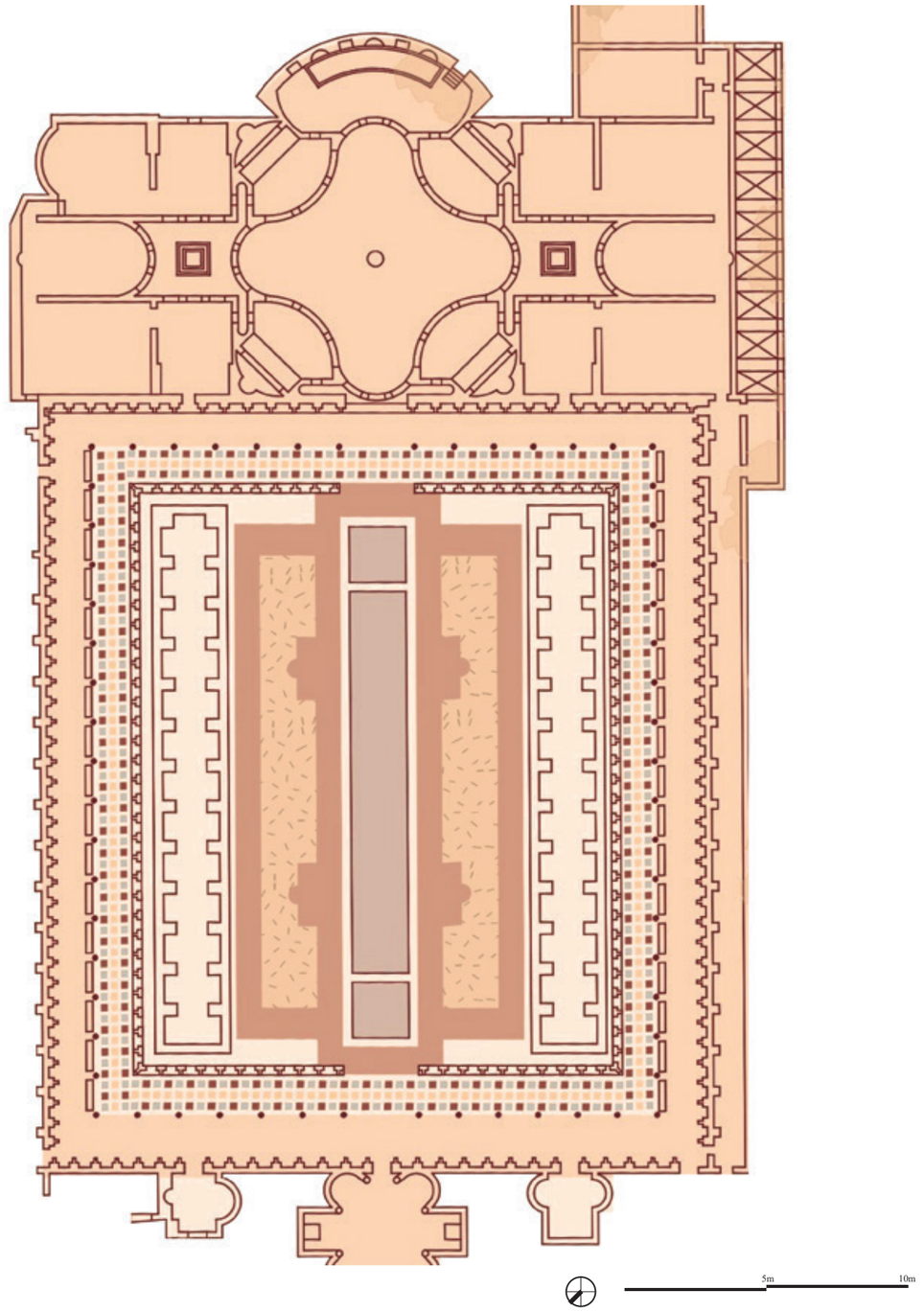


Figure 56. Fashion Show Plan
Source: rearranged from the presentation boards made by Group 3 in the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII," 2025.

2.3.3.

Landscape

The landscape is designed as an additional set of paths to the chosen intervention areas, creating a smooth and accessible passage that leads to an experience that enhances the Villa experience. An additional axis runs from Teatro Greco to Tempio di Venere, leading to the thermal pavilion beneath the Tempio di Venere. From there, the route continues to the next scenario, connecting to the fashion show in Piazza d'Oro, and finally its destination after the fashion show, concluding the sequence with the gala event. The route itself is a part of the experience, engaging with the nature of the Villa and passing through not only the four chosen areas, but also the character of the Villa as a whole, experiencing the ruins, vegetation, and water elements.

The curved, organic paths generate the sensation of parameters, shifting based on their character as the surrounding environment responds to the design parameters. The discovery of the space plays a crucial role in this experience for viewers through the leading topography. The material character of the paths projects the permeability of the Villa itself, compacted earth alongside flowers and water elements. Pools, channels, and fountains serve as the key water elements that connect the whole experience.



Figure 57. Flower Configuration through five senses.
Source: rearranged from the presentation boards made by Group 3 in the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII," 2025.

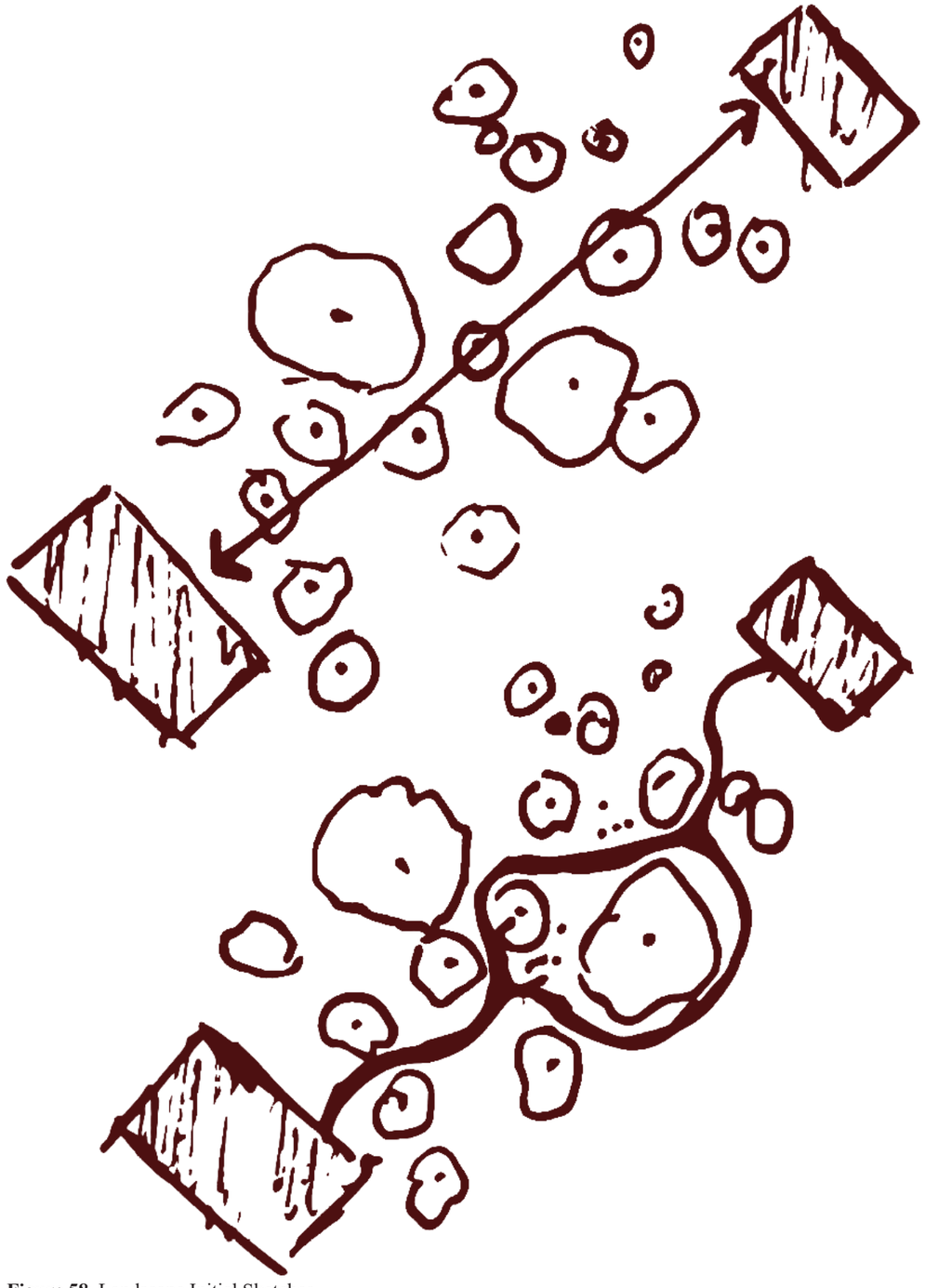


Figure 58. Landscape Initial Sketches
Source: rearranged from the presentation boards made by Group 3 in the workshop "Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII," 2025.



Figure 59. Site Render
Source: rearranged from the presentation boards made by Group 3 in the workshop “Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII,” 2025.

2.3.3.

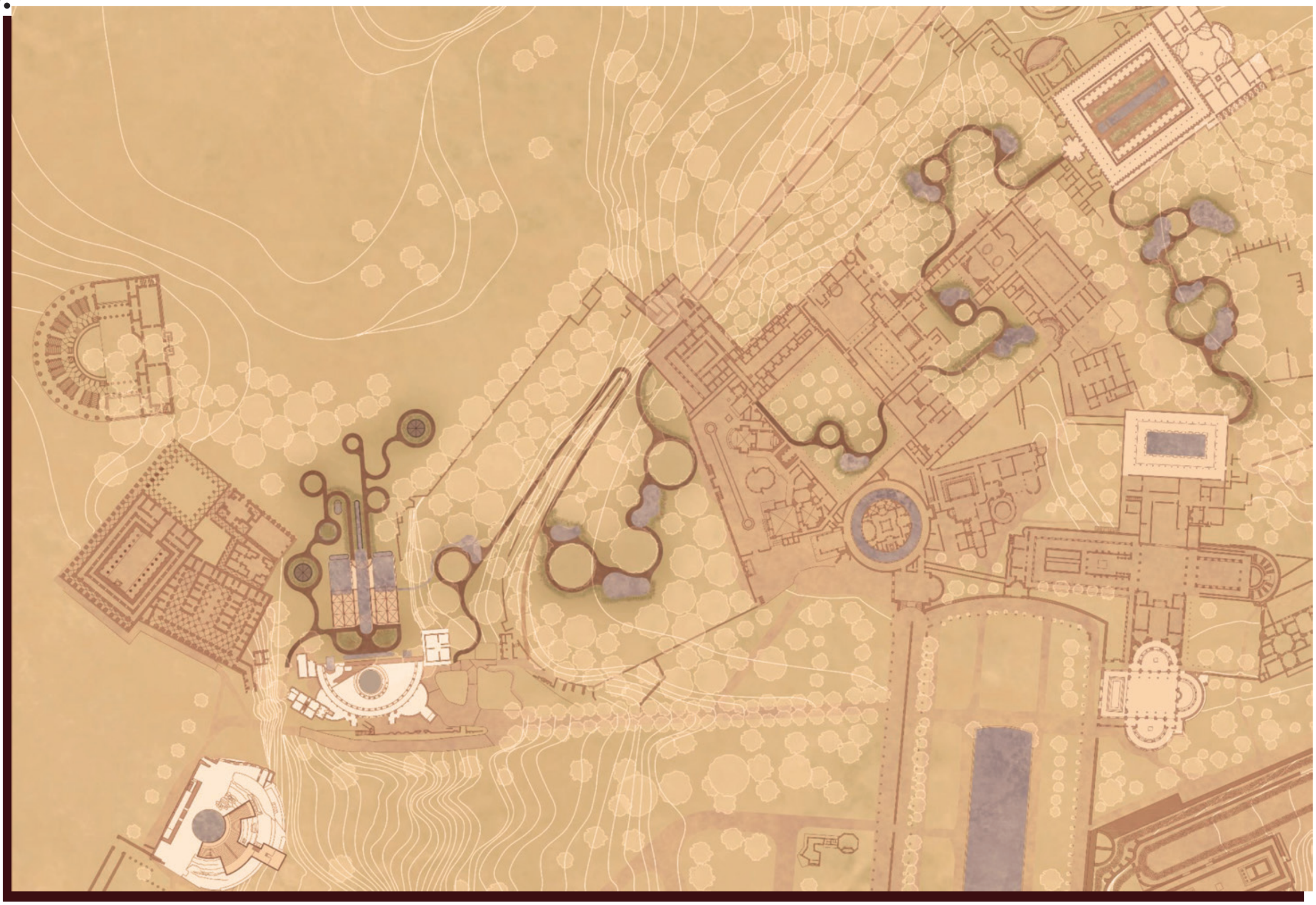


Figure 60. Master Plan Proposal
Source: rearranged from the presentation boards made by Group 3 in the workshop “Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII,” 2025.

2.3.3.

Stone Display

The design for sustaining the musealization of the Villa Adriana relies on a set of modular combinations of furniture, developed to display the ancient stones according to a categorisation of function and size of the stones.

The design comprises four modules.

Type A: with sitting area and storage.

Type B: with main piece display and storage.

Type C: with small and medium pieces display.

Type D: with big pieces display and storage.

The combinations of types, A+C, A+D, B+C, and B+D, are to be placed strategically through the proposed master plan to the specific needs of the site. Each element emphasizes the specific experiences of the relationship with the display, the water and the landscape.

The design concept was projected from the abstract reinterpretation of the opus reticulatum pattern, while steel material strengthens, ensuring to be stable and providing a structural capacity to support the types of stone displays.

As our group was invited by the VILLAE committee to participate in a competition for the further development of the Stone Display, with chosen groups to present the final version of furniture. The winning proposal is expected to proceed and be chosen for physical implementation.

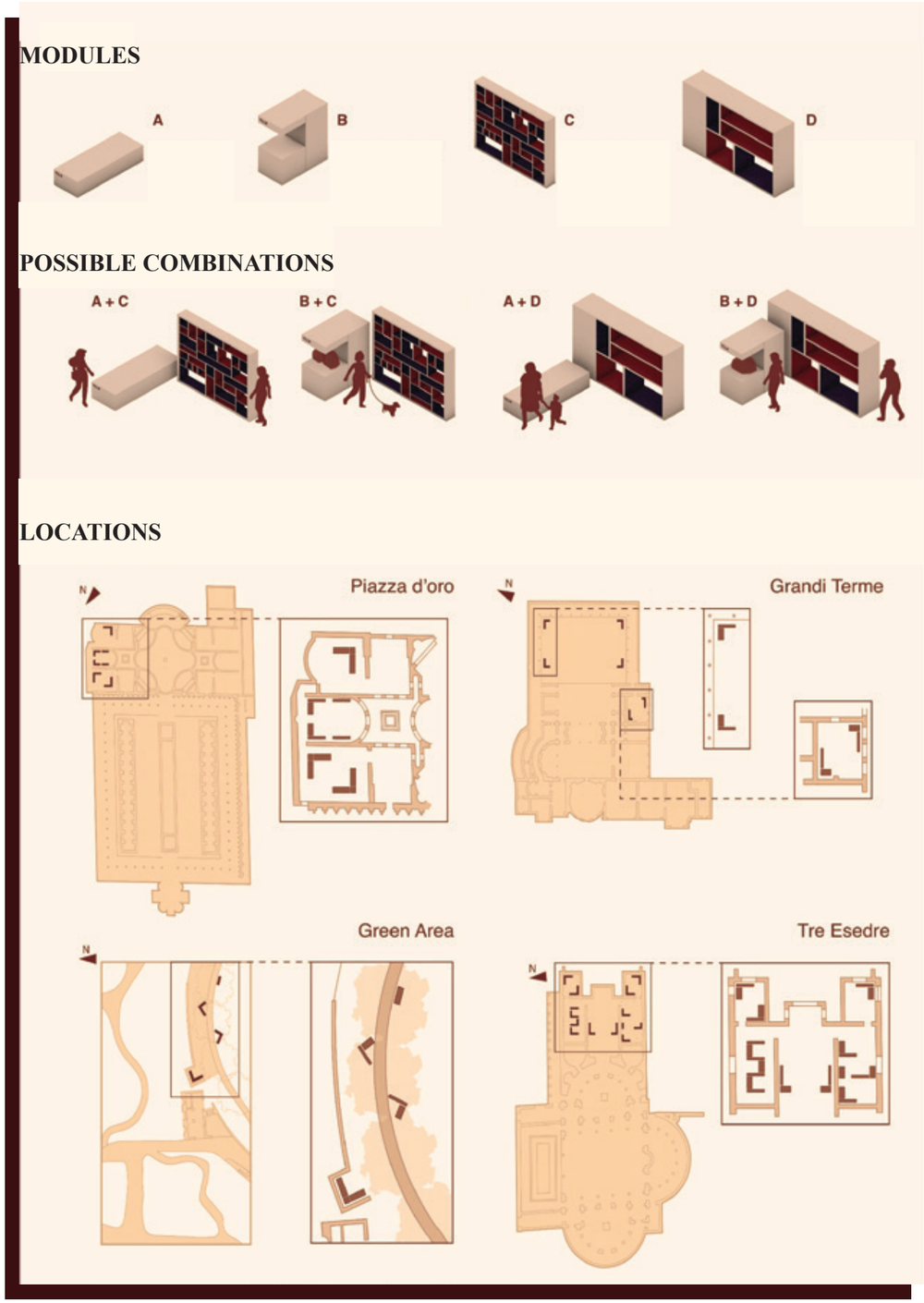


Figure 61. Stone Display

Source: rearranged from the presentation boards made by Group 3 in the workshop Piranesi Prix de Rome XXIII.

2.4.
DESIGN THEORIES OF FASHION, HERITAGE AND ARCHITECTURAL INTERVERNTION

Villa Adriana stands as an architectural laboratory rather than a static relic, allowing an unprecedented testing ground.[60] Yet the architectural integrity of the sensitive historical fabric is revitalized through an additional layer of spatial meaning with the runway as a venue, without compromising its authenticity. The cultural valorization achieved by transforming the ruins into an active, performative interface serves as a powerful iconography within the archaeological sites.[61]

Tracing the evolution of fashion representation, the history of high fashion during the mid-20th century was enclosed in private spaces and salons; using architectural elements creates a neutral environment to focus on the garment.[62] As the fashion industry expanded through the global cultural force, however, the runway elevated into a scenography in its own narrative, enhancing spectacle and memory as a visual experience.[63] In the following decades, the use of architectural space amplified the fashion house's conceptual vision into a temporary "spatial turn", "the instagrammability of the runway" within ephemeral worlds, realisation of transformation of design via digital and social media.[63]

This phenomenological evolution has intersected with the cultural heritage site in recent years by providing a complementary base to its monumental and archaeological sites, with a symbiotic relationship between heritage and contemporary design. The term "monumental scenography" intervenes on a principle: historical sites being temporarily re-energized and broadcast to global audiences, while the modern fashion narrative absorbs the temporal depth, gravitas, and aura of the ruins.[61]

60. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy, 2–5.

61. Allegranti, "Fashion Shows in Archaeological Heritage Sites.

62. Caroline Evans, Fashion at the Edge: Spectacle, Modernity and Deathliness (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 275.

63. Silvano Mendes, "The Instagrammability of the Runway: Architecture, Scenography, and the Spatial Turn in Fashion Communications," Fashion Theory 25, no. 3 (2021): 311–338



Figure 62. 1984-85 Fashion Show
Source: Paul Van Riel, "Photo of Thierry Mugler Autumn/Winter 1984-85 Fashion Show," European Fashion Heritage Association.



Figure 63. 1984-85 Fashion Show
Source: Paul Van Riel, "Photo of Thierry Mugler Autumn/Winter 1984-85 Fashion Show," European Fashion Heritage Association.

2.4.1.
FENDI FALL/WINTER 2016 HAUTE COUTURE: The Trevi Fountain, Rome



Figure 64. Collection
Source: "Fendi Fall 2016 Couture Collection," Vogue.

The Fendi's Fall/Winter 2016 Haute Couture collection,"Legends and Fairy Tales," was held at the Trevi Fountain in Rome to celebrate the fashion house's 90th anniversary with harmonious temporary architectural intervention, stands as an iconic example.[64] The heritage preservation consideration financed by the Fendi, the fountain's restoration celebrated by the show at a cost of €2.2 million.[65] The Trevi Fountain, UNESCO World Heritage Site was listed in 1980, an 18th century Baroque monument by Nicola Salvi.[66]

The installation on the historical site was achieved by a clear, heavy plexiglass based by transparency and lightness, the runway of the Trevi Fountain's water basin.[67] The illusion on the ephemeral structure allowed models to walk on the water without overrunning the historic stone and hydraulic systems. The contemporary runway stands by the principles of reversibility, utilizing the transparency with temporary architectural intervention which amplified its dramatic effect as a tectonic tool without obscuring the monument.[68]

64. ***"Legends and Fairytales: Fendi Celebrates Its Birthday with Couture,"*** i-D, July 8, 2016.

65. ***"Couture's Chic Finale: Fendi at the Trevi Fountain,"*** Daily Front Row, July 8, 2016.

66. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, *"Historic Centre of Rome, the Properties of the Holy See in that City Enjoying Extraterritorial Rights and San Paolo Fuori le Mura,"* World Heritage List, no. 91, accessed August 2026.

67. ***"Rome's Trevi Fountain Plays Host to Fendi's 90th Anniversary Celebrations,"*** Wallpaper, July 8, 2016.

68. Cesare Brandi, Teoria del restauro.

2.4.1.



Figure 65. Fendi Fall/Winter 2016
Source: Condé Nast Traveler. Photograph. Getty Images.

2.4.2.
GUCCI CRUISE 2019: Promenade des Alyscamps, Arles

The Gucci Cruise show was leaded under the creative director of Alessandro Michele in 2019, contrast to the Fendi's focus on water and transparency, capitalized on the roman necropolis of Alyscamps in Arles, UNESCO World Heritage site, with the theme of memory, antiquity and the afterlife.[69] As Michele's stated, The natural runway platform is controlled by a dirt promenade adjoined by ancient stone of the cemetery of Alyscamps.[70] The runway followed this promenade by a sarcophagi to the intervention site of the archaeological area to create immaterial and atmospheric scenography.[71]

The theatrical theme controlled by the fire and smoke, church bells and choral music, Claudio Monteverdi's Vespers for the Blessed Virgin, running down the center of the runway, illuminated in the ancient ruins with kinetic light to aim to change the graveyard into a cinematic landscape.[69] [72] The architectural intervention altered how ephemeral design to reshape the archeological site temporarily with "the idea of death as a fascination" framed by Michele.[2] The architectural intervention on the ephemeral design elements employed sensory elements with light, sound and thermal atmosphere engaging the physical remains a fully sensorial effect.[73]

69. WWD, "Gucci Cruise 2019," WWD, May 31, 2018.

70. Alessandro Michele, quoted in Alyssa Vingan Klein, "Gucci's Cruise 2019 Collection Was All About Death," Refinery29, May 31, 2018

71. "Gucci Cruise 2019 Review: The Show Was on Fire (Literally)," Repeller, May 31, 2018.

72. "Gucci Cruise 2019 Fashion Show," The Impression, May 31, 2018.

73. Allegranti, "Fashion Shows in Archaeological Heritage Sites,"



Figure 66. Gucci Cruise 2019
Source: "A Rave Party in the Necropolis of Arles," Gucci.

Figure 67. Gucci Cruise 2019
Source: "Death and Glitter: Gucci Hosts France Show in Roman Ruins," Seattle Times, 2018.

2.4.2.



Figure 68. Gucci Cruise 2019
Source: “A Rave Party in the Necropolis of Arles,” Gucci.

2.4.3.
DOLCE& GABBANA ALTA MODA 2019: Temple of Concordia, Agrigento



Figure 69. Dolce& Gabbana Alta Moda
Source: "Dolce&Gabbana nella Valle dei Templi, l'Alta Moda ispirata alle divinità dell'Antica Grecia," Il Sole 24 Ore, July 7, 2019.



Figure 70. Dolce& Gabbana Alta Moda
Source: Dolce & Gabbana Stage "an Epic Alta Moda Show in Sicily's Valley of the Temples," Vogue.

Sicily's Valley of the Temples provided a base for Dolce&Gabbana Alta moda in 2019 show which is staged in front of the Temple of Concordia, one of the preserved Doric temples of the ancient Greek world, built around 430 BCE.[74] The topographical adaptation and its monumental scale challenged an irregular runway route with rocky archaeological plateau without touching to its millennia-old site, securing permission by UNESCO World Heritage Site.[75] The preservation of the Temple's survival is attributed to its plateau, composing a layer of clay under the foundation to protect the structural from seismic activity.[74]

The design of the show was achieved by a temporary wooden platform for the models walk at ground level, leading toward the monumental Doric colonnade.The time of the show blended with sand-colored with golden stone of the temple at the sunset hours, intersecting the monumental scale with the model scale on the theatrical pedestal.[75] Mytologically, "the idea of Olympus and its goddesses," referenced by Domenico Dolce as a premise of the collection.[76] The temporal nature of the fashion has revitalized the historic context as a contemporary stage with a sophisticated performance, enriched by layers of history.

74. "Dolce & Gabbana's Alta Moda at Sicilian's Agrigento," We the Italians, accessed August 2026, "In the Lap of the Gods: Dolce & Gabbana's Latest Alta Moda Collections Are Divine," The National, July 5, 2021.

75. "FLASHBACK: Dolce & Gabbana Brought Ancient Greece Alive in Sicily," Greek City Times, February 2, 2023.

76. "Dolce & Gabbana Alta Moda Fall 2019 Haute Couture Collection," Les Façons, accessed August 2026, "Dolce & Gabbana in Sicily's Valley of the Temples," Celebre Magazine, accessed August 2026.

2.4.3.



Figure 71. Dolce& Gabbana Alta Moda
Source: “Thanks to Dolce & Gabbana, tourists can enter this ancient temple for the rest of the summer”, House&Garden.

CHAPTER 3
Fashion and Heritage

3.1. THE PHILOSOPY OF GUCCI : memory and time

The renowned fashion house Gucci was founded by Guccio Gucci in 1921 with a small boutique for leather goods on Via della Vigna Nuova in Florence. Guccio established the foundation of the brand's identity based on his prior experience in quality luggage craftsmanship and leatherwork.[77] He incorporated iconography inspired by equestrianism into his designs, such as the red stripe between two green stripes.[78] However, the brand's philosophy extends beyond its heritage of craftsmanship; it lies in the relationship it has established with its own archive which shaped first the material culture of European aristocracy and subsequently the brand's design strategy.[79] Rather than serving as a static repository of nostalgia, the archive functions as a living dynamic of material memories, which are continually analyzed and reinterpreted to engage with the present.[80] Through this lens, Gucci benefits from its heritage as a generative foundation of historical codes rather than a creative limitation.

During the early stages of its development, the Italian brand was challenged to switch to materials such as woven canapa, hemp, and bamboo due to the League of Nations embargo imposed on Italy in the 1930s.[81] Material constraints led to the emergence of the fashion house's first commercial bags, characterized by a "dark brown diamond pattern on a light brown background."[82] The Bamboo Bag of 1947 which became one of Gucci's most enduring design signatures, emerged from this same logic; the approach of transforming a constraint into innovation.[83] During World War II, additional restrictions on the use of cotton canvas materials led to the introduction of new materials featuring the now iconic "Double-G" monogram and the green-red-green stripe inspired by horse saddle girths.[84] Gucci's design language was shaped by this challenging period of material scarcity; however difficult it was, it didn't stop them from creating impressive designs, perhaps it even spurred their creativity and led to their development.

While Gucci's relationship with its own archives was being reshaped by Tom Ford's appointment as a designer in 1990 and as creative director in 1994, internal family disputes within the fashion house led to a severe bankruptcy crisis.[85] Tom Ford chose to reinterpret the "horsebit" detail by drawing upon the brand's heritage of materials. The minimalism popularized by him in the 1990s was interpreted as being "both minimalist and maximalist" and evolved into an aesthetic that was more sensual and retro infused.[86]

77. Britannica, "Gucci | History, Fashion, Logo, & Facts," accessed August 18, 2026.

78. Gucci, n.d.; Hamish Bowles et al., 2011, 24–26.

79. Glam Observer, "The History and Evolution of Gucci," accessed August 18, 2026.

80. Maria Luisa Frisa, "The New Gucci: A Philosophical Shift," Fashion Theory, 2015.

81. Glam Observer, "The History and Evolution of Gucci."

82. Prestige Portfolios, "The History of Gucci: From Family Feuds to Global Luxury Powerhouse," accessed August 18.

83. "Fashion: Tom Ford," Texas Monthly, accessed August 19, 2026.

84. "Understanding Tom Ford's Design: Minimalist yet Maximalist, but Always Sexy," Domus, accessed August 19, 2026.



Figure 72. Gucci Advertisement, 1922
Source: "History of Gucci," Gucci

3.1.

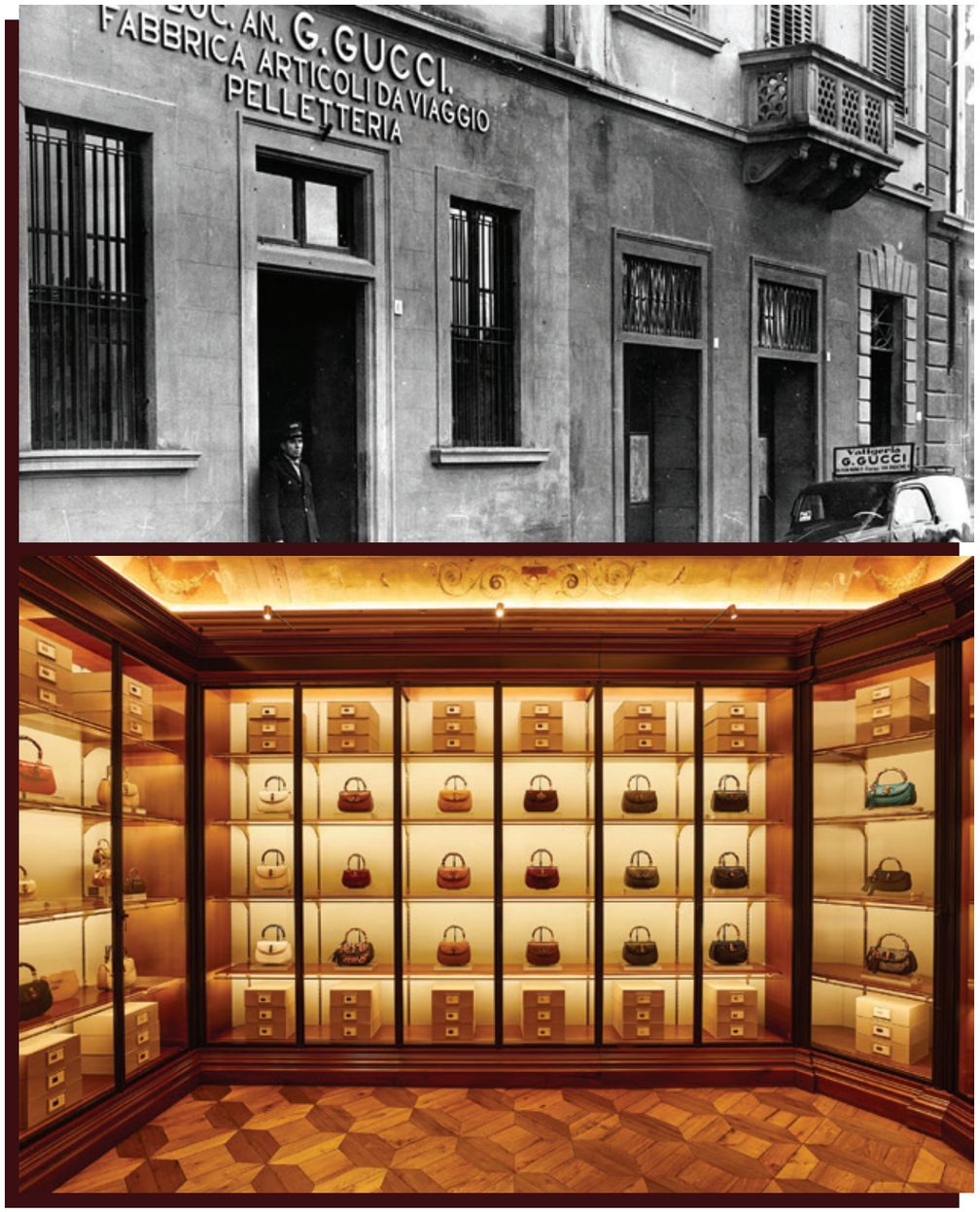


Figure 73. Gucci Workshop, Florence, 1940s
Source: "History of Gucci," Gucci

Figure 74. Gucci, Florence
Source: "History of Gucci," Gucci

The brand's identity was continuously negotiated by a succession of its creative directions, whose underlying the relationship of the Gucci's archive and its contemporary touches.[85] However, the turning point was introduced by the creative director of Alessandro Michele in 2015, identified in contemporary fashion history.[86] Michele's tenure introduced not only a new stylistic sensibility, but also radically reshaped Gucci's relationship with its own archive, and from a broader perspective, with the very concept of historical time.

Where the traditional and linear chronology of the fashion industry articulates Gucci's philosophy of time affected during the transformative director of Alessandro Michele between 2015 and 2022, dictated a strict progression from past to present to future.[87] The anachronistic vision of Michele was situated within the framework of Giorgio Agamben's essay "What is the Contemporary?", Agamben reveals that time needs a certain disconnections from its belongings through contemporary time who does not fit with their era, however, built a relationship distantly allowing to perceive the light alongside its epoch with its obscurity.[88] Additionally, under the understanding of time perceiving, the direction of Michele adopted a design methodology in Renaissance brocades, 1970s pop culture aesthetics, and Victorian silhouettes lensed through Gucci's philosophy. The universe of Gucci, time is an element of past, present and future flattened environment on the same space existing simultaneously.

85. Ecostylia, "Gucci Brand History: Founder, Family, and Creative Eras," accessed August 18, 2026.

86. John Armitage and Joanne Roberts, "The Globalisation of Luxury Fashion: The Case of Gucci," Fashion, Style & Popular Culture, 2021.

87. Caroline Evans, Alessandra Vaccari, Time in Fashion: Industrial, Antilinear and Uchronic Temporalities, London: Bloomsbury, 2020.

88. Giorgio Agamben, "What Is the Contemporary?," in What Is an Apparatus?,.

3.2.
ALESSANDRO MICHELE VISION AND TIME



Figure 75. Alessandro Michele
Source: photographed by Jamie Hawkesworth, Vogue, July 2015, reached from the official website of Vogue.

Alessandro Michele was born in Rome on 25 November 1972 and was raised in an environment early on with visual and cinematic culture by his parents.[89] The journey of becoming a set designer started with his studies of costume design at Rome's Accademia di Costume e di Moda.[90] His fashion career began at Les Copains in 1994, then he joined Fendi under Silvia Venturini Fendi and Karl Lagerfeld.[91] In 2002, he was invited to continue his career at Gucci; over a decade, he positioned at senior roles and became Gucci's creative director from 2015 to 2022.[92] Since 2024, Michele has worked as a creative director at Valentino.[93]

His career at Gucci lasted until his departure in 2022. During his time, he revitalized the house's commercial and cultural standing through his narrative in design language, described as eclectic and maximalist, projected onto historical and cultural references; Renaissance imagery from the 1970s shaped the gender-fluid visual identity in contemporary luxury fashion.[94]

Alessandro Michele:

"I'm not interested in the future, it doesn't exist yet, but I'm really interested in the past and the contemporary."[95]

The approach of Michele's anachronism treats time not as an inaccuracy or lapse in time, recombining references to a fixed marker of a particular era, allowing silhouettes, textures, and motifs within a contemporary narrative. The sensitivity reactivates the past under Michele's direction through Gucci's collections, gathering "the artifacts of other centuries" to operate on a particular moment within the site, an approach articulated in the Cosmogonie collection.[95] The initial radical paradigm shifted the Gucci's creative methodology as in a deconstruction of linear time, moving from antiquity to modernity.

89. "37 Things You Didn't Know About Gucci's Creative Director Alessandro Michele," i-D, accessed August 2026

90. "Alessandro Michele," MAM-e, accessed August 2026.

91. "Alessandro Michele; Bio, Facts, Family Life, Achievements," The Famous People, accessed August

92. "Alessandro Michele | BoF 500," Business of Fashion, accessed August 2026.

93. "Seven Things to Know About Alessandro Michele Ahead of His First Valentino Fashion Show," WWD, September 2024.

94. "Designer Profiles: Alessandro Michele," VCG, accessed August 2026.

95. Hamish Bowles, "Inside the House of Gucci: Meet the New Creative Director," photography by Jamie

3.3. COLLECTION: GUCCI Cosmogonie, 2023

Alessandro Michele's Gucci Cruise 2023 collection took place at Castel del Monte, a UNESCO World Heritage Site featured as an octagonal fortress of the thirteenth century.[96] The house of Gucci supported the cultural heritage site's preservation and enhancement.[97] The runway venue was searched by a narrative explained by Michele with a statement: "a place which gave grace to the mythological, …, It's a site where measurements and proportions cross each other as if by magic,". which allows the interventions on a coexisting with fashion show on a spatial plane.[98]

The collection's conceptual foundation represents anachronistic, non-linear temporality drawn from the eclectic network of references by Walter Benjamin.[99] The "Cosmogonie of Constellation" concept represents the sense of connecting points, separating into a single, coherent design, referencing Benjamin's description as a "pearl diver" connecting from the depth of the past.[100]

The process was described by Alessandro Michele:

"operates through the need of putting together constellations of signs and symbols."[98]

The historical references: portrait collar, plissé gorgets, crusaders' capes, and medieval crinolines, staged at night under the full moon within the Castel del Monte, Cosmological narrative illuminated by the projections of stars and galaxies through setting and atmosphere.[99] The reactivation on the historic fabric illuminates the configuration as an active inherited fortress, history as an open source.

96. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Castel del Monte," World Heritage List, no. 398, accessed August 2026.

97. "Gucci Cosmogonie: An Invitation to Traverse the Cosmos," Archilovers, May 17, 2022.

98. Alessandro Michele, quoted in Tiziana Cardini, "Gucci Resort 2023," Vogue, May 16, 2022.

99. Cardini, "Gucci Resort 2023," discussing Hannah Arendt's introduction to Walter Benjamin, Illuminations, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).

100. "Alessandro Michele's Sidereal Fantasies with Gucci Cosmogonie," NSS Magazine, May 17, 2022.



Figure 76. The campaign of Gucci Cosmogonie
Source: "The Epiphany of a Constellation", Gucci.



Figure 77. Collection
Source: created by the author, model photographs reached from Gucci Resort 2023 Collection, Vogue.

3.3.



Figure 78. Fashion Show Gucci Cosmogonie
Source: Team MOJEH, "The Stars Aligned for Alessandro Michele's Gucci Cruise 2023 Show," MOJEH, May 17, 2022.

3.4. AESTHETIC LANGUAGE AND MATERIAL CODE



Figure 79. Fashion Show of Gucci Cosmogonie
Source: "Exclusively from Backstage", Gucci.

The aesthetic manifestation of Alessandro Michele's Gucci Cosmogonie 2023 is defined through the historical costume elements with shining, luminous, and celestial textures dominating the house through its fabrics of velvet, plissé, and sequined fabrics. The evidence as in Michele's maximalist understanding, achieving voluminous silhouettes referenced by sheer tailoring combined with wide collars, ruffled neckpieces, ecclesiastical capes, and medieval-style crinolines.[101] The logic of evoking the Cosmogonie narrative was referenced by Michele as "Marilyn Monroe's famous last dress studded with crystals; she looked like the beautiful tail of an impalpable comet.", by the material catching light against the night spectacle.[102] The use of reflective, light catching material were fragments into a historic references, and Michele's understanding of the collecting the design logic of the Renaissance, medieval, and Victorian.[103]

Translating this philosophy into a spatial strategy, the proposed temporary pavilions function as architectural "portals", employing fashion set design not to overshadow the ancient masonry, but to temporarily reshape the landscape. Establishing a multi-layered dialogue between the site's rich material memory and contemporary design strictly adhering to principles of reversibility.[104]

101. Tiziana Cardini, "Gucci Resort 2023," Vogue, May 16, 2022.

102. Michele, quoted in Cardini, "Gucci Resort 2023."

103. Cardini, "Gucci Resort 2023."

104. Cesare Brandi, Teoria del restauro.



Figure 80. Collection
Source: created by the author, model photographs were taken from Gucci Resort 2023 Collection, Vogue.

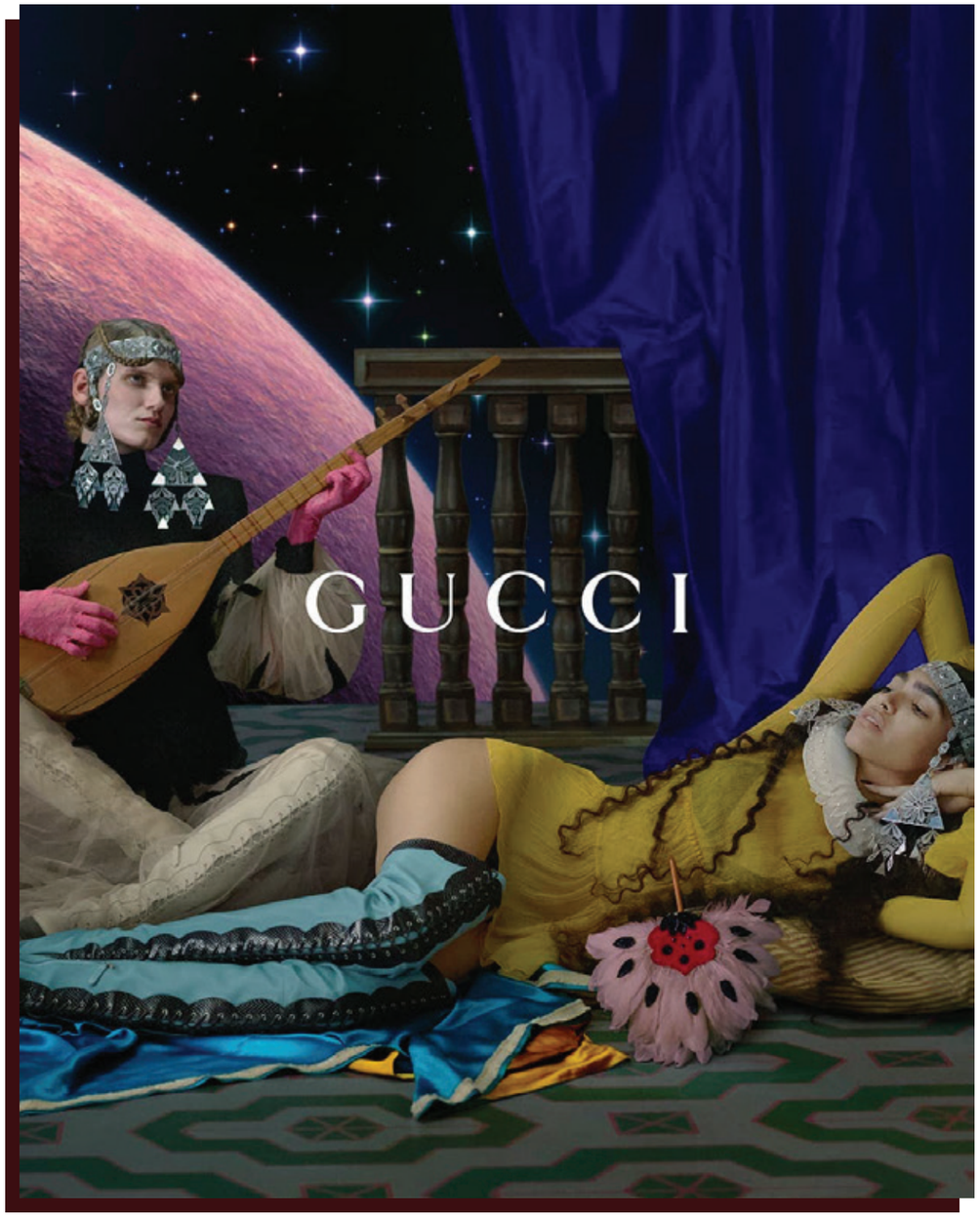


Figure 81. The campaign of Gucci Cosmogonie
Source: photographed by Mert Alas and Marcus Piggot, reproduced in Anne Enke, 2023 Gucci Cruise 'Cosmogonie' Campaign Ode to Philosophy Bridging Space & Time, Anne of Carversville, December 4, 2022.

3.4.



Figure 82. The campaign of Gucci Cosmogonie
Source: photographed by Mert Alas and Marcus Piggot, reproduced in Anne Enke, 2023 Gucci Cruise 'Cosmogonie' Campaign Ode to Philosophy Bridging Space & Time, Anne of Carversville, December 4, 2022.

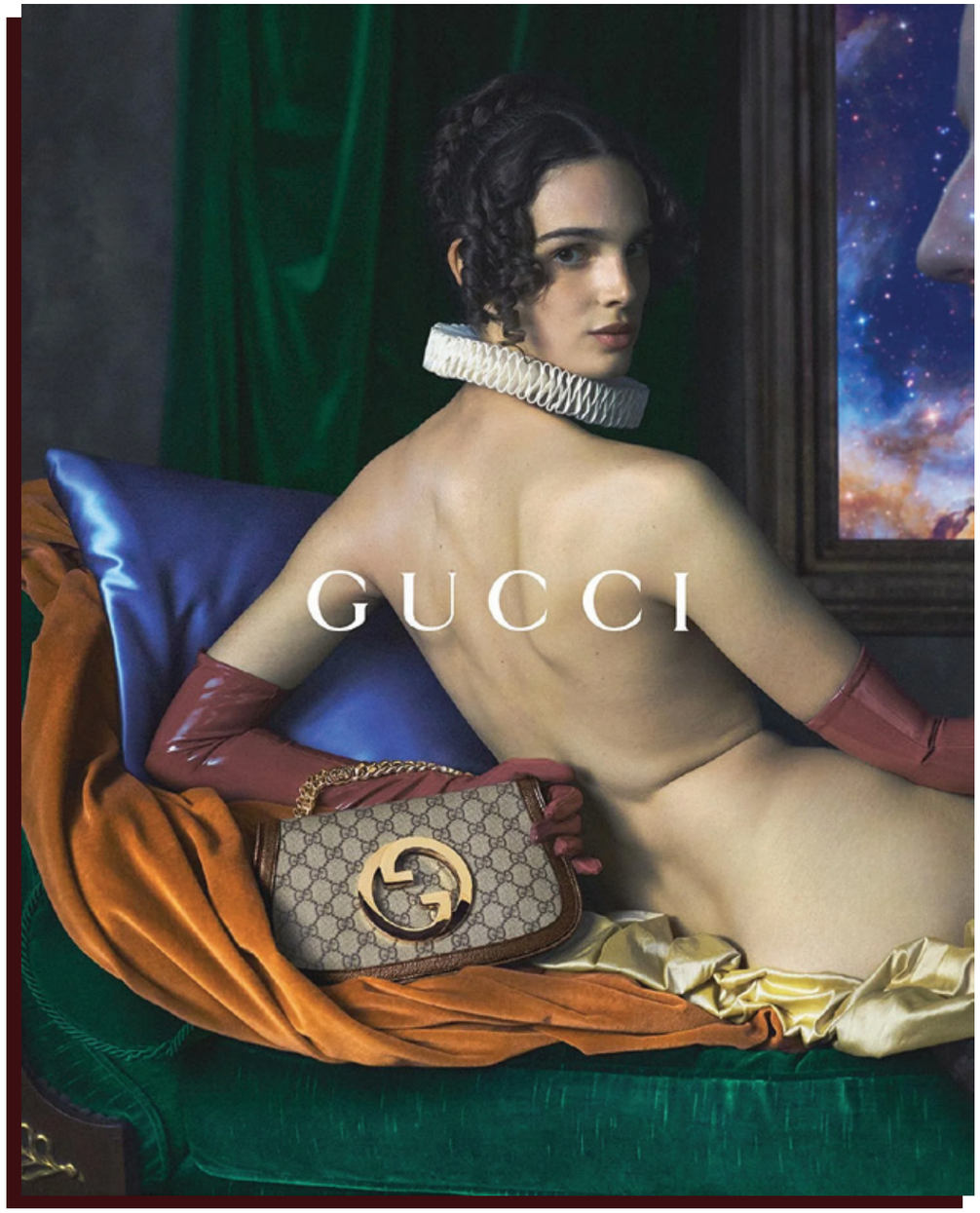


Figure 83. The campaign of Gucci Cosmogonie
Source: photographed by Mert Alas and Marcus Piggot, reproduced in Anne Enke, 2023 Gucci Cruise 'Cosmogonie' Campaign Ode to Philosophy Bridging Space & Time, Anne of Carversville, December 4, 2022.



Figure 84. The Fashion Board
Source: created by the author, 2026.

CHAPTER 4
Glimpse of an Eye

4.1.
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE DESIGN
Master Plan Strategy, Preserving the Heritage of Villa Adriana

The introduction of the concept of a “Glimpse of an Eye” in the context of the archaeological site Villa Adriana is a spatial museography, capturing the narrative of the heritage in the understanding of perception as an adaptive, fragmented, and associative intervention in site-specific and scenographic requirements. The collection of Villa Adriana as a conceptual framework integrates into the historic landscape through the phenomenology of “Glimpse”, capturing the revival times of the ruins into a perception synchronised with contemporary narrative. The design of the spatial configuration is compressed into a single moment, fleeting time portals as a referencing on the glimpses of memories as anachronistic thresholds. The aim is to revitalize historic fabric, not as a standing passive overlooking the heritage.

The museographic scenography is adjusted through four metaphorical design portals, layered with mythologies, sculptures, silhouettes, and fashion narratives. The design tool characterized each heritage fabric related to its past eras, captured by a “Glimpse of an Eye” through intensive research, projected onto a contemporary synthesis of each design need. The “Portals” open through a Pre-Show at Teatro Greco, Thermal Pavilion beneath the Tempio di Venere, a fashion show at Piazza d’Oro, and a Gala Event at Edificio di Tre Esedre, analysed in the next chapters, respectively. The materialisation of the curated design decisions has collected the textures and the fabrics into a harmonized palette, reinterpreted ceramic patterns, travertine marble texture, cherry marble texture, turquoise water, lighting installation, and shiny textures referencing the Gucci Collection of Cosmogonie.

The original landscape plan was shaped by the plateau under the archeological area, which plays a vital role in the master plan proposal. The set of connection paths for the places that is shaped by the original location of the trees.

Knowledge-guided historical analysis and the project of the workshop Piranesi Prix de Rome led to the intervention sites being chosen strategically. The original use of the places, such as the initial show in the Teatro Greco, the mythological existence of the Temple of Venus, the representation of imperial life as in the richness of “Golden Square” in Piazza d’Oro, and a social gathering in Roman’s society at Edificio di Tre Esedre, were considered as a reference to choose an intervention areas. Each polycenter plays a part in the whole of Villa Adriana, as in this scenario. The authenticity is enhanced by contemporary needs. The relationship within the site and the radial axis worked in the master plan strategy. The additional connection points through Villa itself work as an experience.

4.1.



Figure 85. Glimpse of an Eye
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.1.



Figure 86. “Portal Strategy”
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.1.



Figure 87. Aesthetic Language
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.1.



Figure 88. Current Master Plan
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.1.

Figure 89. Polycentric Relationships
Source: created by the author , 2026.



Tempio di Venere



Teatro Greco



Piazza d'Oro



Edificio di Tre Esedre



4.1.



Figure 90. Proposed Master Plan
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.2.
PORTAL I: PRE-SHOW IN TEATRO GRECO
Entrance Ritual, Expectation and Facing History

The strengthening musicalisation of Villa Adriana starts at the Teatro Greco, a representation of the multicultural narrative of the site through its synthesis of Greek and Roman identities, analysed in chapter 2.2.1. Nowadays, the theatre is placed among the greenery; however, the topographical on-site observations reveal that evidence of the theatre can be found throughout the site. The design idea of a pre-show is shaped by preparing the visitor for the experience where the original stage exists, in contemporary interventions by the water flow of the area with small-bulb light installations, intertwining with the reconstructed, asymmetrical interpretation of the theatre within its semicircular geometry. The intervention is applied through the natural slope of the Teatro Greco with a defined material palette of the design. The Pre-Show introduces the narrative of revitalising the archaeological relic into its geometries, creating an environment of reflection and anticipation through the principle of “rhythm” and “transformation”.[105]

The theatrical representation is introduced with an open-air set of transitions into a natural landscape of the Theatre. The lighting installation directed at the sculpture of the Laocoonte was found in the Esquiline Hills in Rome, representing a Greek priest and struggling two sons with their struggle in Troy.[106]

The valorization and musealisation is choreographed by an event as a start through experience within the scenario and Villa Adriana. The challenge with the time passes on the origin of the theatre, reinterpreted on the slope with a contemporary amphitheatre, which opens a portal through the past.

105. Ching, Architecture: Form, Space, and Order.

106. Vatican Museums, "Laocoön," Pio Clementino Museum, accessed August 2026,

4.2.



Figure 91. Pre-Show Plan and Section
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.2.



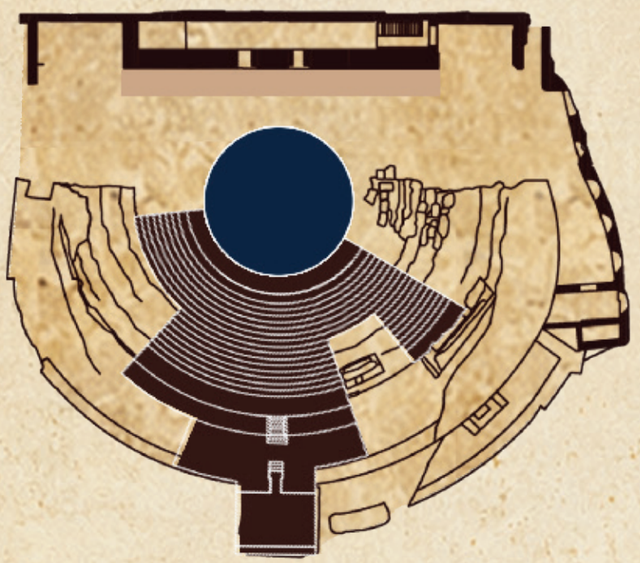
Figure 92. Pre-Show Render
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.2.

INTERVENTION AREA



WATER AND STAGE CONFIGURATION



CIRCULATION

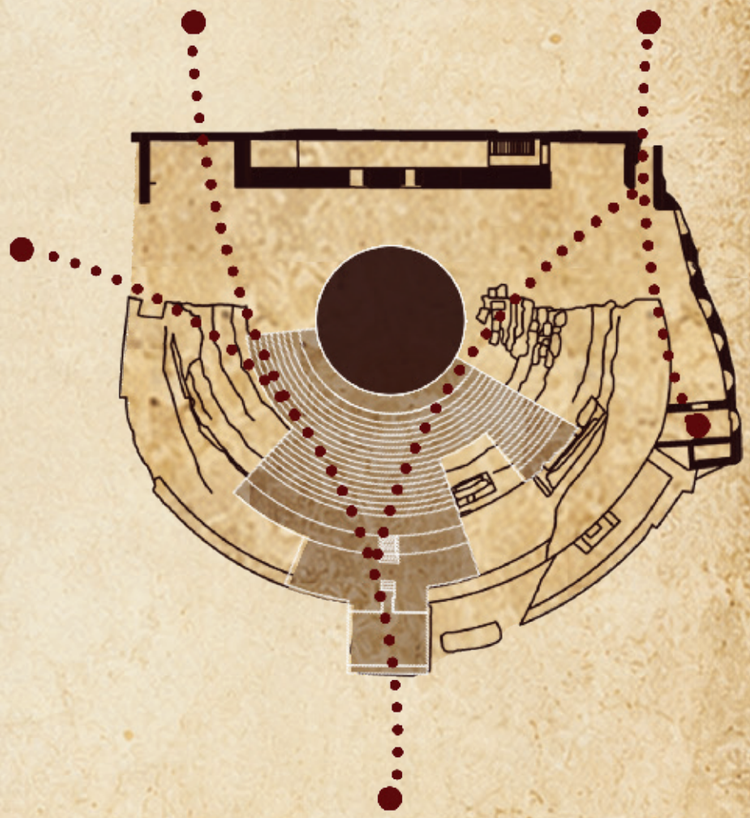


Figure 93. Pre-Show Diagrams
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.3.

PORTAL II: Thermal Pavilion in Tempio di Venere
Water Architecture and Sensory Flow

The strategic location within Villa Adriana, where the logic of the radial axis through the connection point of the Tempio di Venere has been chosen according to its location, with topographical differences creating hierarchy, where a circular geometric plan overwatches the pavilion structure by the sculpture of Aphrodite at Knidos, mentioned in chapter 2.2.2.

The scenography is controlled by the classical architectural principles of order by Ching: an “axis” defined the space, a “symmetrical” monumental entrance, “hierarchy” by the ruins, movement of repetition of a pattern resulting from the creation of “rhythm”, “transformation” of identity without losing the authenticity.[107]

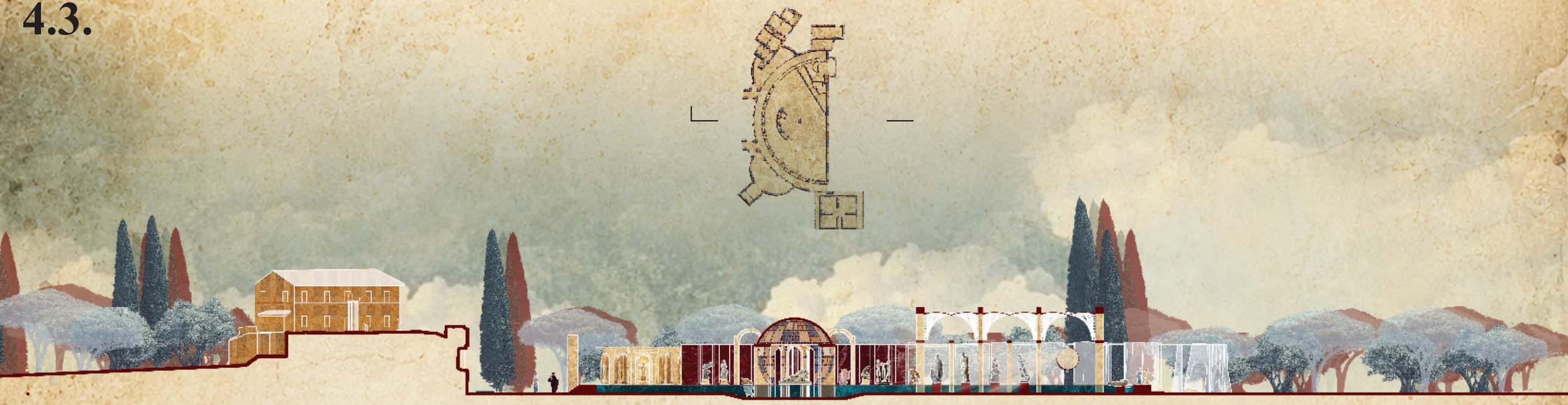
The thermal pavilion was designed with a contemporary interpretation of the monumental entrance, symmetrically aligned with two sculptures toward the Tempio the Venere and the ruins. The audience is directed into the water, with the service pavilion introduced as an experience starting from the preparation of the area with the sculpture series of the movement. The decision to enter through the leading water or by walking was given to the audience. The sculptures, while passing through the water pavilion in the middle, are materialised by the reference of ceramic design based on the remains that were found in Piazza d’Oro. The central pavilion is defined by the circular waterfalls enriched with cherry marble textures, alongside the sculptural and monumental entrances to the water overlooking the colonnade of the Doric order by Tempio di Venere.

The social areas and sunbathing area are introduced overlooking the ruins of the surrounding archeological fabric alongside the mythological collection of the Venus sculptures. The open, semi-open, and closed designs are integrated into the greenery with a harmonious flow by the water, leading the visitor in a choice of walking or swimming.

The museography is choreographed with an understanding of transparency, different perspectives, and the flow alongside the sculptures. This scenario valorized the green area with an architectural experience with an active experience through walking or inside the water.

107. Ching, Architecture: Form, Space, and Order.

4.3.



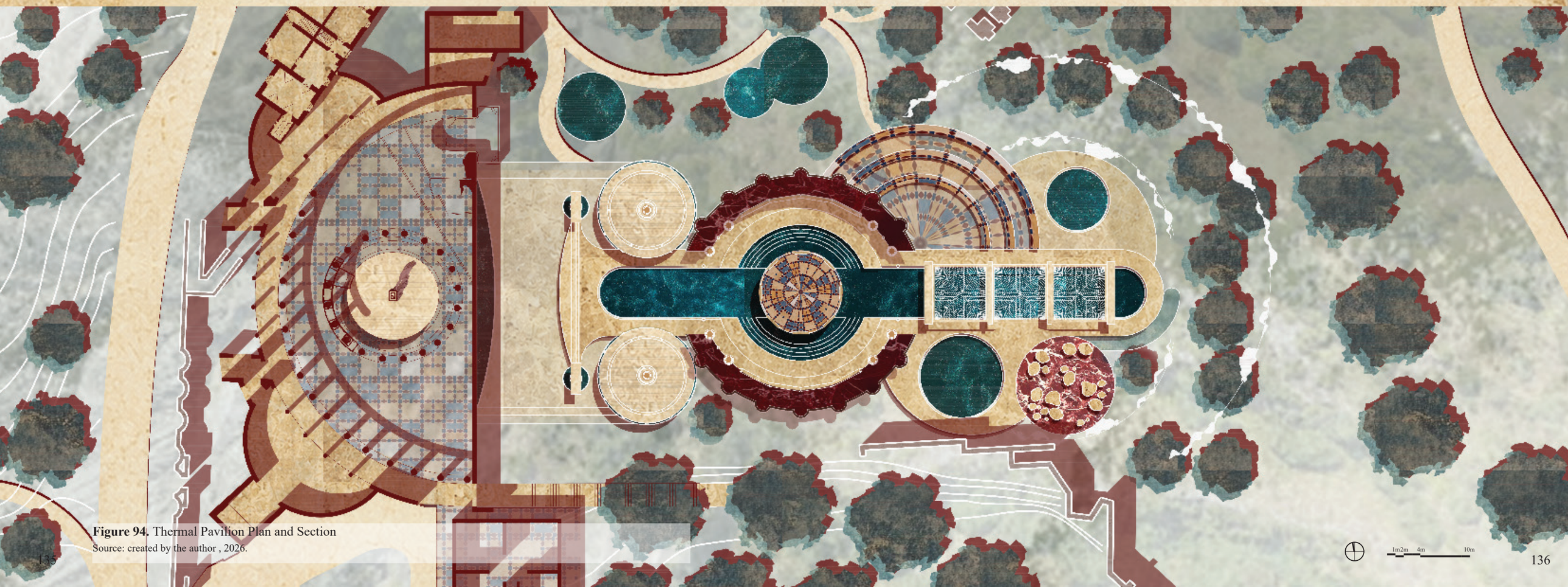


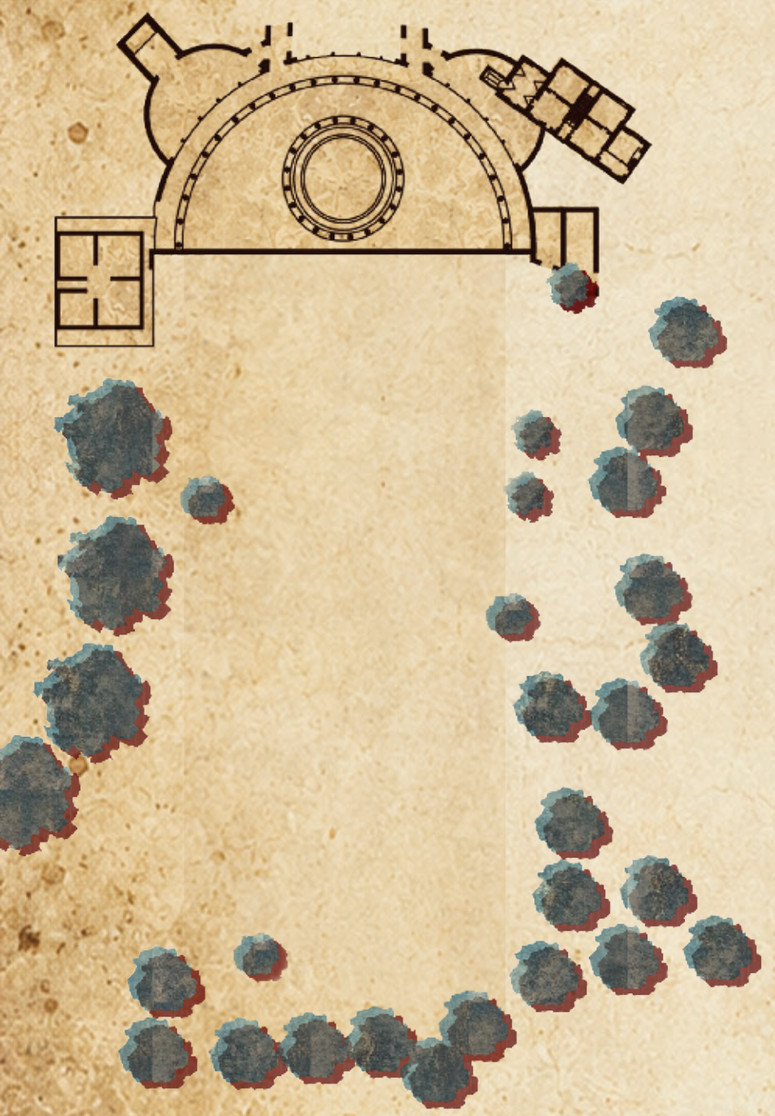
Figure 94. Thermal Pavilion Plan and Section
Source: created by the author , 2026.



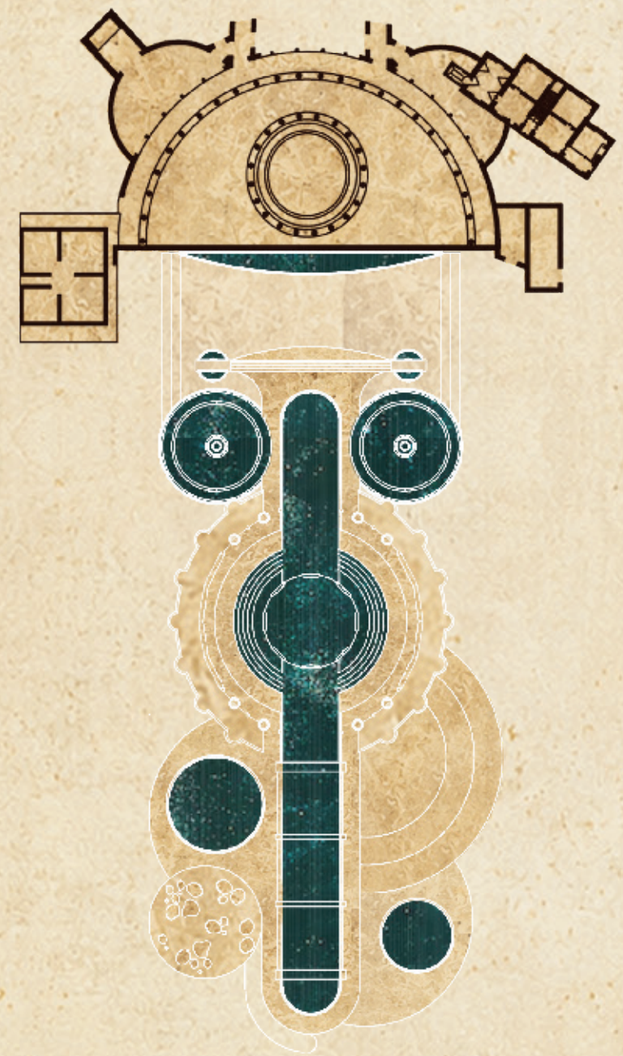
Figure 95. Thermal Pavilion Render
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.3.

INTERVENTION AREA



WATER CONFIGURATION



CIRCULATION

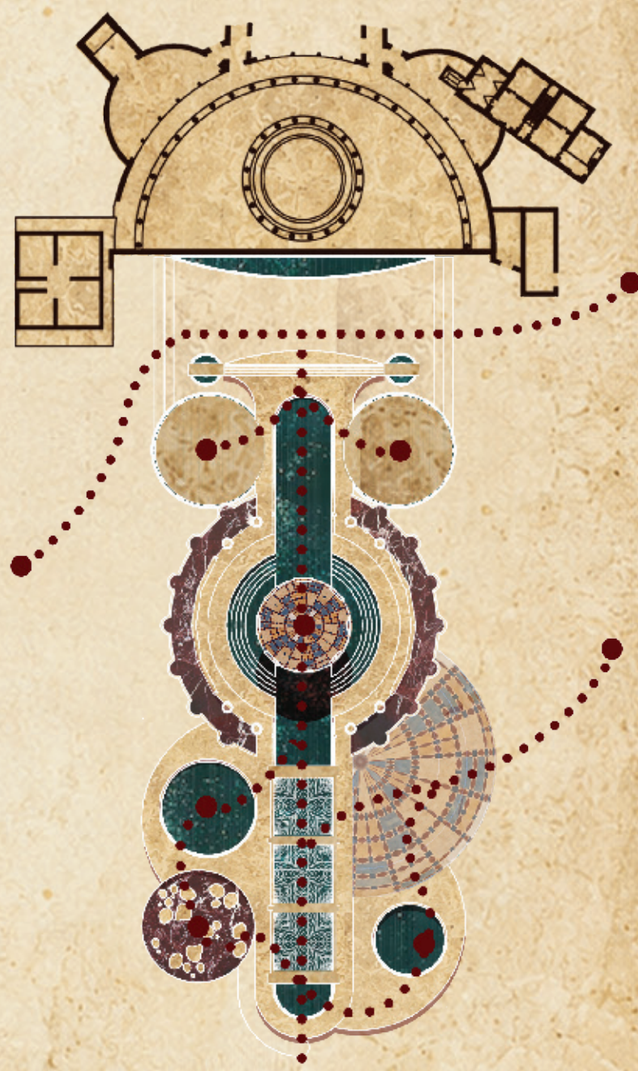


Figure 96. Thermal Pavilion Diagrams
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.3.

Figure 97. Thermal Pavilion Plan and Section
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.3.



Figure 98. Thermal Pavilion Render
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.4.
PORTAL III: FASHION SHOW IN PIAZZA D'ORO
Reinterpretation of Gucci Cosmogonie 2023 Aesthetic



Figure 99. Original Marble Pattern and Recreated Marble Pattern
Source: created by the author , 2026.

The representative of the richness in Villa Adriana, Piazza d'Oro, known as the " Golden Square" chosen as an intervention site for the fashion show scenario.[108] Within "Triclinium-Nymphaeum", a contemporary central pavilion is introduced as a preparation place and starting point of the Runway. The models' catwalk passes through the archways to the walkway in front of the sitting area between the abstracted reconstruction of the columns and the planters. To conclude the show, a glass raised platform is constructed on the Canals above the respected original plan filled with water. Since the glass platform is located above the ruins, it is introduced with small light bulb installations on the left and right sides of the rectangular platform, strengthened by steel tension ropes and beams, without touching the boundaries of the canals.The materiality is based on the non-invasive material through glass acting with transparency and reflectivity, and reflective.[109]

The origin of the designing the ceramic patterned marble is referenced by the original remaining of the piazza d'Oro within the columned windowed area. The reinterpretation of the mosaic with the color matching the collection of the Gucci Cosmogonie 2023, interconnects the architectural elements with fashion influence. [110]

Inside the "Pumpkin Dome" of Vestibule, the lighting installatıon with a sphere of the runway placed to increase the focus on the middle area where the runway concludes.[111] From the far away, the sense of the sphere looks like floating in the air representing the moon and the sky; the structure is strengthened by the steel ropes to the ground. The focal point of the runway changes within its ancient environment by the parameters of the light plays.

The abstract, contemporary design serves the runway in anachronistic philosophy by Alessandro Michele through light, water, and architecture.[112]

108. Adembri and Bruciati, Hadrian's Villa Tivoli, 56.

109. Ching, Architecture: Form, Space, and Order.

110. Alessandro Michele, Gucci Cruise 2023.

111. Yeğül and Favro, Roman Architecture, 391.

112. Cardini, Gucci Resort 2023,

4.4.

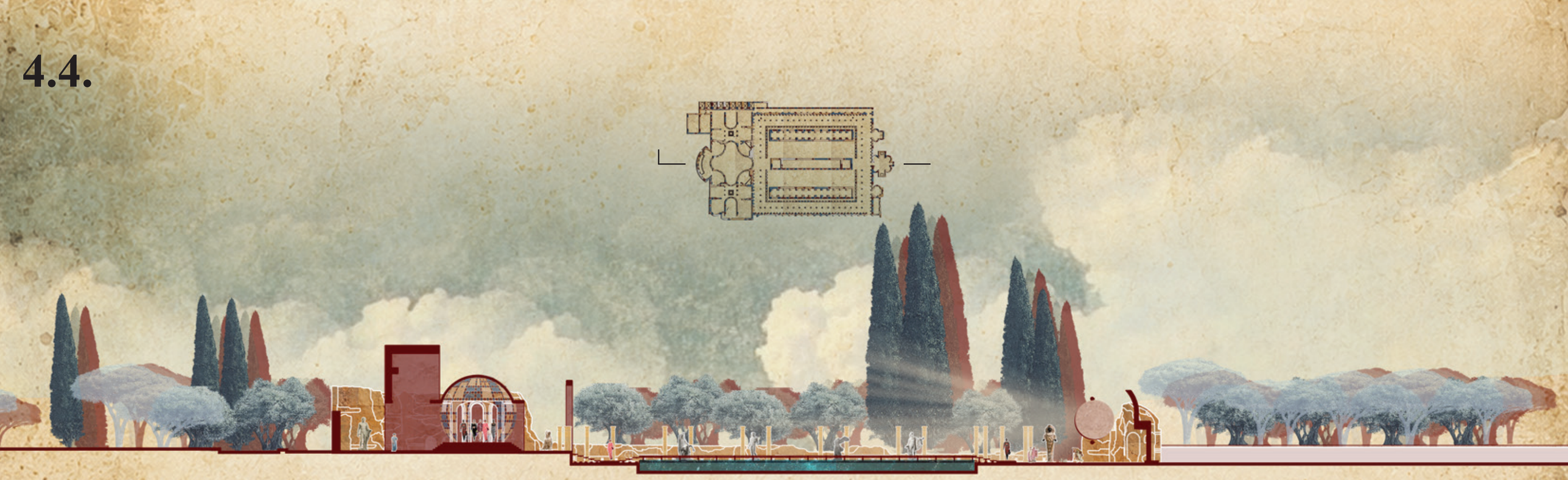


Figure 100. Fashion Show Plan and Section
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.4.

Figure 101. Fashion Show Render
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.4.

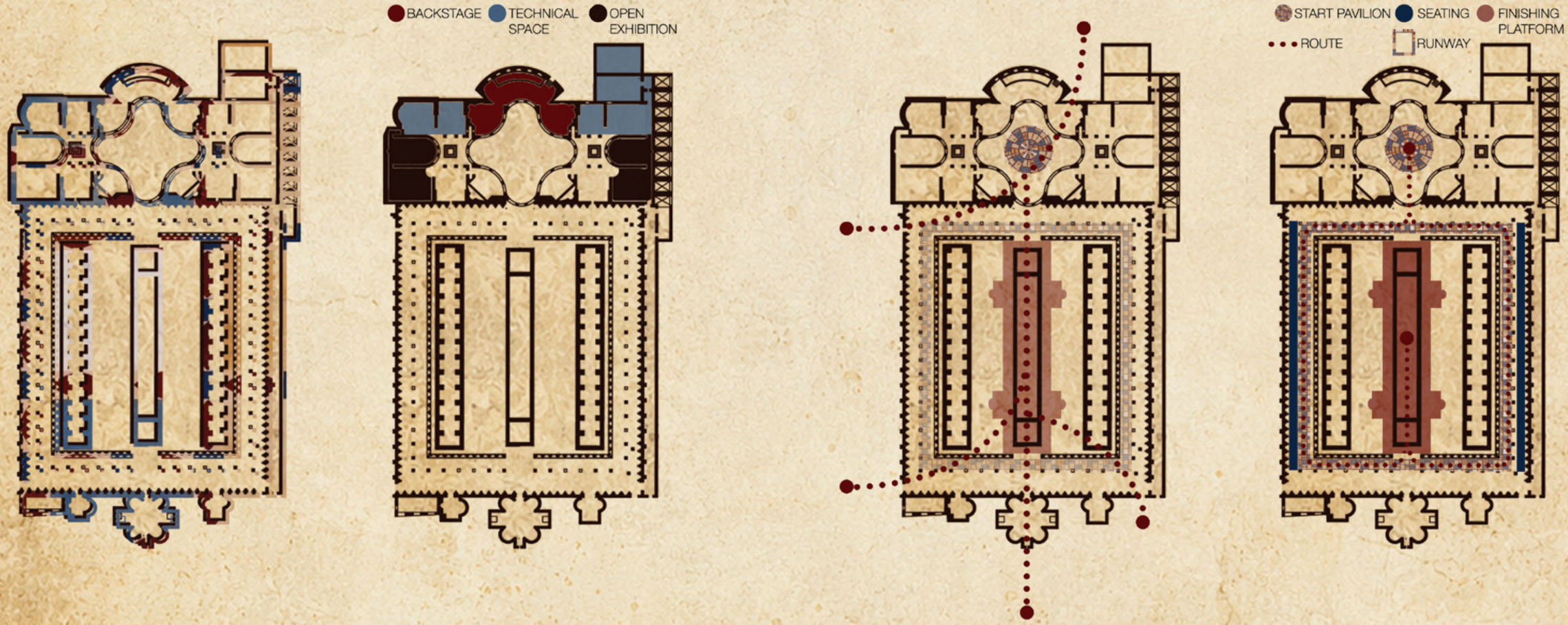


Figure 102. Fashion Show Diagrams
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.4.

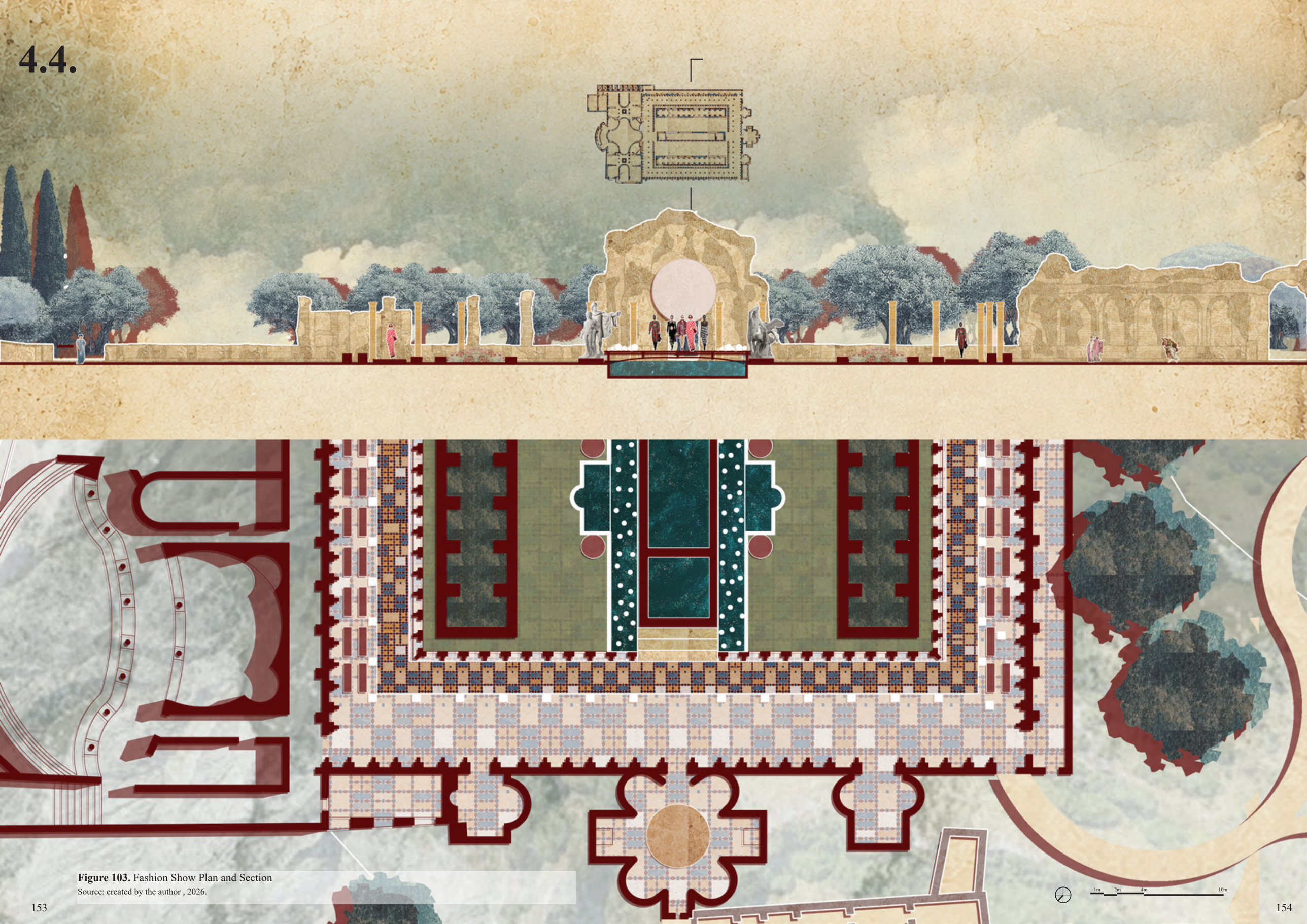


Figure 103. Fashion Show Plan and Section
Source: created by the author , 2026.



Figure 104. Fashion Show Render
Source: created by the author , 2026.

Figure 105. Fashion Show Render
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.5.
PORTAL IV: GALA EVENT IN EDIFICIO DI TRE ESEDRE
Social Gathering in a historical layer

As the evidence of the original use of the archeological site was mentioned in Chapter 2.2.4, Edifico di Tre Esedre played its part in history, providing its curvilinear geometry and spatial configuration as a dinner event in the imperial life of the Roman people. This historical data is projected onto the design; the scenographical museology intervention chose the site to return to its original role throughout history, evolving into a closing Gala Event after the fashion show to meet its visitors.

The rectangular fountain area, surrounded by the sculpture series overlooking the rectangular geometry of the open area within the ruins, introduces the design needs of the Gala event, with lighting installations, furniture, and a defined cocktail space introduced within the contemporary narrative. The Gala Event curated sculptures are “Amore e Psiche”, “Ercole e Lica”, and “Fauna Barberini”.

The final scenario to valorize the Villa Adriana, Gala Event is located between the Pecile and Canopy, to further experience throughout the Villa continues with its ancient ruins and green environment.

4.5.

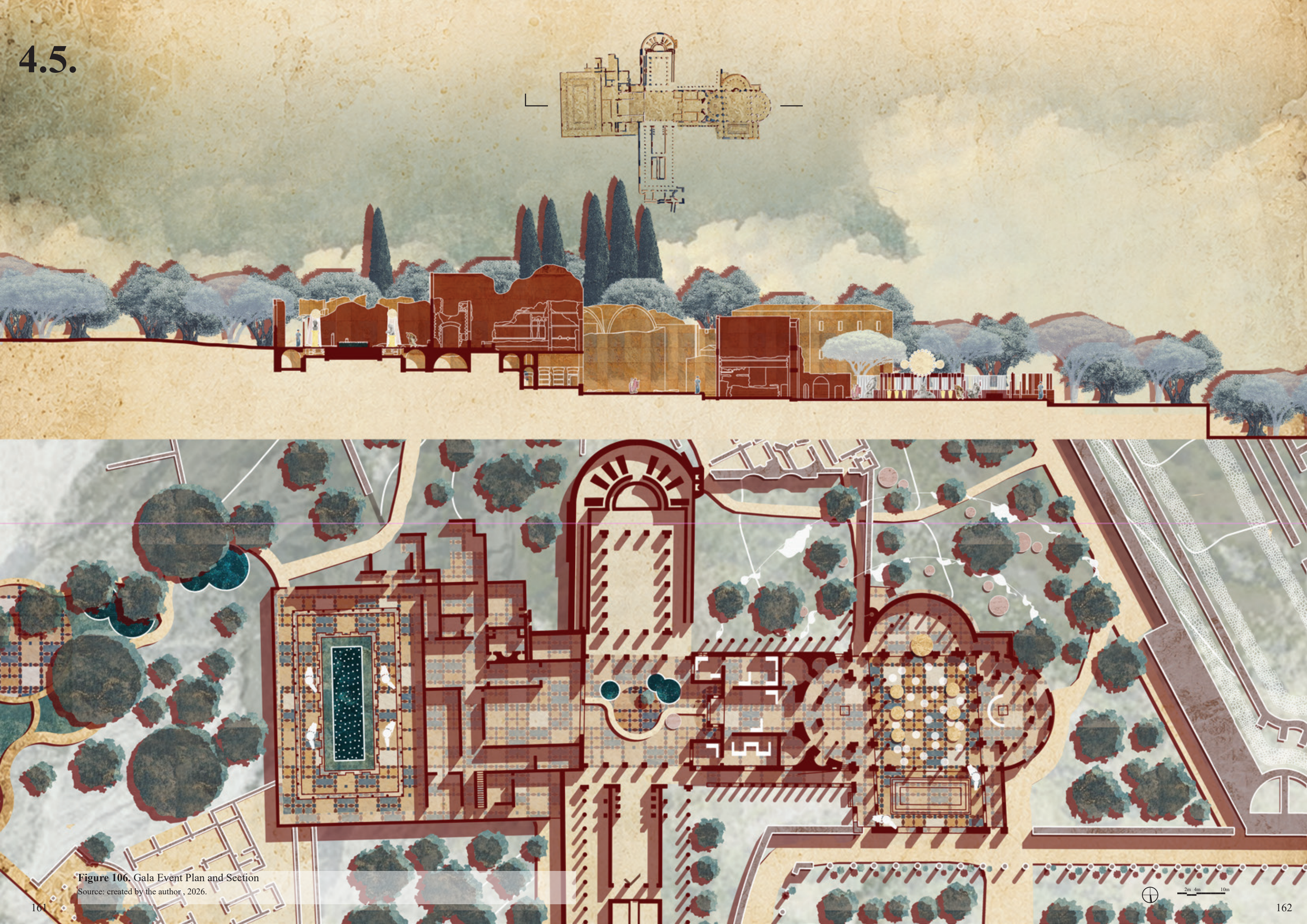


Figure 106. Gala Event Plan and Section
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.5.



Figure 107. Gala Event Render
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.5.

INTERVENTION AREA

WATER CONFIGURATION

GALA SPACE TRANSITION COCTAIL STAGE

CIRCULATION

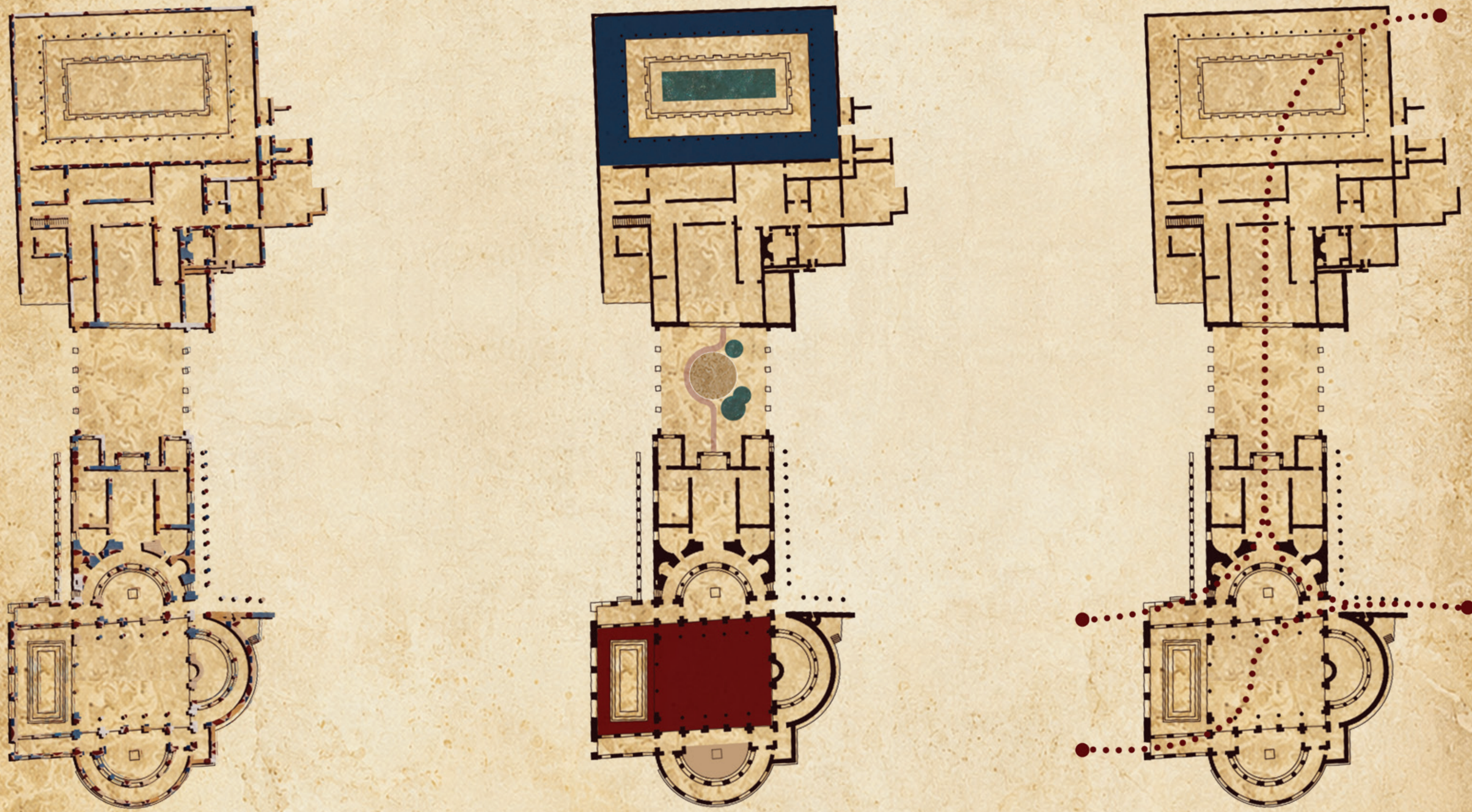


Figure 108. Gala Event Diagrams
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.6.
TECTONIC AND MUSEALIZATION OF STONE DISPLAY

The materialisation of the curated design decisions has shaped the stone display, as the furniture design was shaped through the workshop project of Piranesi Prix de Rome. While the concept of the intervention evolves through a “glimpse,” so does the furniture design behave accordingly; however, the same logic in a set of modular configurations is preserved, harmonizing its aesthetic and geometric forms through the four modules in terms of functions:

- **Type A:** with sitting area and storage.
- **Type B:** with main piece display and storage.
- **Type C:** with small and medium pieces display.
- **Type D:** with big pieces display and storage.

The geometry was shaped using curvilinear and rectangular forms to adapt to the narrative of the project. The materiality changed to a travertine texture for the calm, rich environment in the landscape design, where it needed to be placed through the five senses of the human, building a relationship with the museographic needs enhanced by the water elements leading the path through “Portals”.

The set of paths in the transitional part of the scenography does not act only as a pathway but as a part of the musealisation. The journey in the Villa is interconnected by an additional experiential axis with the sense of the original displays of the ancient stone alongside the sculptures.

4.6.

TYPE A

TYPE B

TYPE C

TYPE D

A+C

B+C

A+D

B+D

Figure 109. Stone Display Configurations
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.6.



Figure 110. Stone Display Render
Source: created by the author , 2026.

4.6.



Figure 111. Stone Display Render
Source: created by the author , 2026.

CONCLUSION

Materialising the phenomenon of the “Glimpse of an Eye” through architectural intervention on the heritage site, a space once lived, now is a heritage site preserved with its katkı sağlamakkazmemories, revitalised through the metaphorical “Portal Strategy”. The katkı sağlamakkahistorical evidence of the Hadrianic era is projected on the ruins with a scenography of the four intervention points, reactivating the original through contemporaneity. Despite the understanding of the musealization of heritage sites, this strategic model is a suggestion of musealization, a space opening to a proposed presence of the now, representing the memory of history. It proposes an alternative way of filling heritage architecture with life, not just being a museum. This thesis seeks a dynamic way of revitalizing cultural heritage sites.

The basis of the architectural logic was developed through theoretical and on-site experience, resulting in a narrative. The territory of Villa Adriana’s planimetry was shaped by the network of polycentric composition, contributing to a unified dialogue within the site, according to Prof. Pier Federico Caliari.[113]

Emperor Hadrian’s intellectual influence from his journeys and cultural acquisitions was synthesized within Villa Adriana.[114] This thesis intervened by synthesizing the dialogue of heritage and fashion into a scenographical museography. Each scenography connects within the proposed master plan with a unified experience. The proposal focused on the archeological site of Teatro Greco, Tempio di Venere, Piazza d’Oro, and Edificio di Tre Esedre, revitalizing the inheritance of the concept of constellation with a time-filled understanding of Walter Benjamin,[115] an inspiration for the collection of Gucci Cosmogonie under its creative director, Alessandro Michele.[116]

The contribution of the authenticity of the Villa Adriana within the heritage and fashion narrative, despite the fashion show's use as a stage within the historic fabric as an ephemeral and one moment in time, this intervention proposes a comprehensive proposal in ephemeral and permanent scenarios, aiming to focus on the ruins with an event to emphasize its museography without being overruled by the brand identity.

113. Caliari, Tractatus logico sintattico.

114. MacDonald and Pinto, Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy.

115. Benjamin, Theses on the Philosophy of History.”

116. Michele, Gucci Cruise 2023 "Cosmogonie" show notes.

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