The Ephemeral Versace: a Temporary Fashion Intervention at Hadrian's Villa



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Politecnico di Torino

Masters Degree in Architecture for Heritage
A.A. 2025/2026
September 2026

The Ephemeral Versace: a Temporary Fashion Intervention at Hadrian's Villa

Fashion and Heritage Establishing Fashion at UNESCO World Heritage Site, Villa Adriana

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1. Abstract

This thesis studies the possibility for the fashion brand to temporarily occupy the archaeological site through design intervention without necessitating the reconstruction of the space, permanent occupation or damaging its physical and historical state. The study was done by analyzing the relation between Hadrian's Villa and the identity of Versace through the analysis of Hadrian and his connection with Antinous.

The analysis showed the existence of a great conceptual and visual connection between the identity of the site and the identity of Versace due to their common cultural references, monumentality, decoration and representation. The precedent research also showed that archaeological sites have been mostly used in the contemporary fashion world in the context of fashion shows. On the other hand, the temporary retail or exhibition program for the site is rarely studied apart from such events.

Based on this observation, a design approach was developed where the archaeological site was not used as a simple background for the fashion brand but as an integral part of the intervention. The architectural language developed in this way seeks to create dialogue between the identity of Versace and the historical, spatial and narrative qualities of Hadrian's Villa.All interventions are planned to be completely ephemeral and distinct additions to the existing environment, enabling the site to be involved in the activity without compromising the clarity and integrity of the archaeological context.

Keywords: Ephemeral, Archeological Site, Cultural Reference, Fashion, Monument, Brand Identity

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1.Heritage

1.1 The Concept of Cultural Heritage & Valorization

The topic of cultural heritage wasn't ever stagnant; many reasons have shaped it. Political changes and social and cultural shifts also affected it over time. The topic has changed step by step, grown, and included more types of spaces and paradigms. Primary approaches were towards preserving the objects, spaces, and isolating them. However, in the late 20th century, the meaning of heritage also widened even more by including historic sites, archaeological sites, heritage routes, cultural landscapes, and even industrial heritage. [1]

In this period, the approach also led to major changes in conservation theory. Cesare Brandi and Giulio Carlo Argan's influences were evident in the 20th century; restoration theory was considered a more interdisciplinary and critical practice. For Brandi, restoration was a tool for recognizing the physical materiality, history, and aesthetics to carry forward to the next generation. Therefore, the idea of conservation was not limited to protecting the physical elements but also the significance that was locked within those elements.[2] This created a big question about how to preserve the past while adding adaptations to the modern day's cultural point

This perspective developed a point of view that conservation purposes should go beyond the physicality of the material. In 1972, world heritage convent (UNESCO) was established; under this organization, conservation, valorization,identification, protection, and transmission to the next generation were the key aims. This organization later included socio-economic and environmental aspects to manage heritage sites.[3]

1. UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, and IUCN, Managing Cultural World Heritage (Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2013), 12–13.

2. Yolanda Madrid Alanís, "An Interpretation on the Ideas of Cesare Brandi in the Theory of Restoration," in Conversaciones con Cesare Brandi y Giulio Carlo Argan, no. 7 (June 2019): 129–30.

3. UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, and IUCN, Managing Cultural World Heritage, 54; UNESCO, Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris: UNESCO, 1972), art. 4.

Thus, heritage management not only decides what needs to be protected but also the reasoning for its importance, the groups that it is meant to protect, and how this heritage will remain relevant and accessible in the modern. Within this context, heritage valorization entails the appreciation and articulation of heritage value while preserving the cultural values that are used to justify its conservation.[4]

Modern museums and the discipline of archaeology emerged directly from the modernity of Western culture. The development of these fields was based on neoclassical ideals, in particular Johann Joachim Winckelmann's theories of "the beautiful, the true, and the just," themselves inspired by classical antiquity.[5] In the nineteenth century, as European countries began forming nation states, they used classical heritage as central cultural policy and even as a mechanism of domination. These countries reconstructed monuments and conducted archaeological excavations to demonstrate the superiority of European culture and to strengthen their individual nationalist cultures.[6]

The diffusion of this ideology led to the emergence of the idea of the "universal museum". The institutions, which the philosopher Michel Foucault called heterotopias, became such absolute institutions of accumulation, separated from real time and aimed at safeguarding items against any kind of damage.[7] Now the British Museum, the Museumsinsel in Berlin, as a theatrum mundi, and the Louvre are seen as typical examples of these institutions. The universalist concept continues to be defended politically now,

4. UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, and IUCN, Managing Cultural World Heritage, 27–28.

5. Luca Basso Peressut e Pier Federico Caliari, "Introduzione", in Architettura per l'archeologia. Museografia e allestimento, ed. Carolina Martinelli (Rome: Prospettive Edizioni, 2014), 11.

6. Luca Basso Peressut, "L'invenzione dell'antico. Architetti, archeologi, musei," in Architettura per l'archeologia. Museografia e allestimento, ed. Carolina Martinelli (Rome: Prospettive Edizioni, 2014), 31–32.

7. Michel Foucault, as quoted in Luca Basso Peressut and Pier Federico Caliari, "Introduzione," in Architettura per l'archeologia. Museografia e allestimento, ed. Carolina Martinelli (Rome: Prospettive Edizioni, 2014), 11.



Fig.1.1.1. Johann Joachim Winckelmann, by Anton Raphael Mengs

mostly to save these collections from claims for their return to their place of origin. For example, in 2002 several famous directors of museums issued a statement declaring that objects entering the collections of museums had become culturally significant due to being collected by them and thus belonged to the cultural heritage of the states, in which these museums operate.[8]

The post-colonial and pluralist schools of thought, however, have strongly criticized this centralizing concept. According to critics, this reasoning negates the idea of repatriation of archeological finds back to the countries from which they originated, and equates the centralist paradigm for archeological sites with mining masterpieces. Modern-day theorists like Brian Graham and Peter Howard reason that the past, heritage, and identity are not singular but plural, meaning that due to the varying interpretations of historical events and monuments by varying populations, there must be heritages, pasts, and identities. Something that is a victory for one people may be a defeat or oppression for another.[9]
As a result, the concept of heritage has shifted, in the contemporary era, away from nationalist aims and toward valorization, the active promotion of social, cultural, and educational value.[10] This shift was also driven by the demands of global cultural tourism and modern scientific research.[11] Whereas the traditional archaeological approach served national ideologies and elite classes, the contemporary approach instead serves the democratization and sharing of knowledge; architectural and museographic design are now treated as tools of communication, aimed at teaching the public about archaeological research and excavation.[12]

8. Basso Peressut and Caliari, "Introduzione," 11–13. The 2002 declaration is quoted in full at this location.

9. Brian Graham and Peter Howard, as quoted in Luca Basso Peressut and Pier Federico Caliari, "Introduzione," in Architettura per l'archeologia. Museografia e allestimento, ed. Carolina Martinelli (Rome: Prospettive Edizioni, 2014), 13.

10. Romolo Martemucci, "Presentazione," in Architettura per l'archeologia. Museografia e allestimento, ed. Carolina Martinelli (Rome: Prospettive Edizioni, 2014), 11.

11. Luca Basso Peressut e Pier Federico Caliari, "Introduzione," in Architettura per l'archeologia. Museografia e allestimento, ed. Carolina Martinelli (Rome: Prospettive Edizioni, 2014), 15.

12. Romolo Martemucci, "Presentazione," in Architettura per l'archeologia. Museografia e allestimento, ed. Carolina Martinelli (Rome: Prospettive Edizioni, 2014), 11.



Fig.1.1.2. Cesare Brandi

However, Italian laws concerning cultural heritage have never perceived valorization as a predetermined notion from the beginning. In particular, the Ronchey Law, adopted at the end of the twentieth century, viewed the notion as purely economic in nature because it aimed at relieving the state budget from the expenses related to conservation through private management of the cultural sites.[13] About fifteen years of debate were needed until the economic interpretation of the notion was abandoned and replaced with another one. For instance, the Code Urbani, approved by Legislative Decree 63 of 26 March 2008, interpreted valorization as an educational tool.[14]

The implementation of this contemporary concept of valorization had to be done using design approaches operating at two levels of scale: those aimed at the asset, and those aimed at the environment surrounding it. The approaches targeted at the asset include physical conservation, structural safety measures, elimination of architectural obstacles, creation of circulatory paths for visitors, and lighting schemes that would facilitate understanding of the ruins.[15] Approaches targeted at the site's environment, on the other hand, involve separating the preserved area from the modern environment surrounding it, development of tourism networks for the region, educational programs, and local lodging facilities, thus fostering tourism and economic activity in addition to preservation of cultural heritage. As part of this comprehensive approach, the concept of "diffused museum" or museo diffuso gained popularity. The idea was to introduce to these historical sites the security, comfort, and clarity associated with traditional museums.[16]

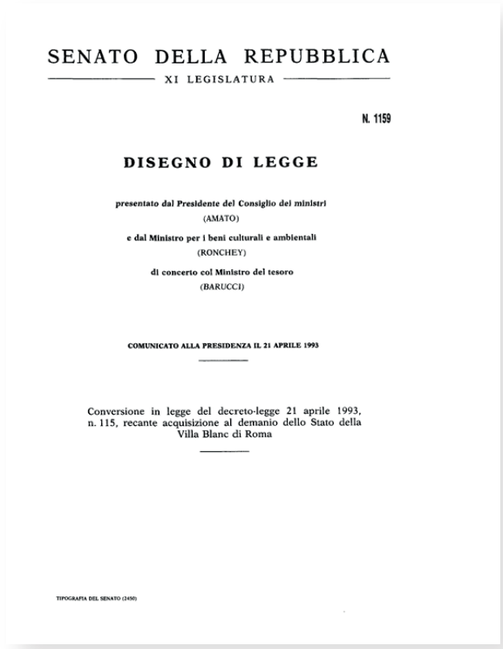
13. Pier Federico Caliari, "Valorizzazione dei Beni Culturali. Appunti su Villa Adriana," in Villa Adriana. Memoria, storia, fortuna, futuro, ed. Monica Centanni and Daniela Sacco (Tivoli: Edizioni Engramma, 2014), 63.

14. Caliari, "Valorizzazione dei Beni Culturali," in Architettura per l'archeologia. Museografia e allestimento, ed. Carolina Martinelli (Rome: Prospettive Edizioni, 2014), 64.

15. Caliari, "Valorizzazione dei Beni Culturali," in Architettura per l'archeologia. Museografia e allestimento, ed. Carolina Martinelli (Rome: Prospettive Edizioni, 2014), 69.

16. Luca Basso Peressut e Pier Federico Caliari, "Introduzione," in Architettura per l'archeologia. Museografia e allestimento, ed. Carolina Martinelli (Rome: Prospettive Edizioni, 2014), 13–15.

The theory enjoyed backing from the ideas put forward by Andrea Emiliani according to whom "the museum must cease to be an enclosure and become museographic parks," considering the entire city and its surroundings as one vast historical complex.[17] In the proposed approach, there is no such thing as "pure conservation." Heritage is not an unchanging entity but rather a palimpsest of various historical layers which continue to change with each new generation.[18]



SENATO DELLA REPUBBLICA

XI LEGISLATURA

N. 1159

DISEGNO DI LEGGE

presentato dal Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri
(AMATO)
e dal Ministro per i beni culturali e ambientali
(RONCHEY)
di concerto col Ministro del tesoro
(BARUCCI)

COMUNICATO ALLA PRESIDENZA IL 21 APRILE 1993

Conversione in legge del decreto-legge 21 aprile 1993, n. 115, recante acquisizione al demanio dello Stato della Villa Blanc di Roma

TIPOGRAFIA DEL SENATO (1450)

17. Andrea Emiliani, as quoted in Luca Basso Peressut and Pier Federico Caliari, "Introduzione," in Architettura per l'archeologia. Museografia e allestimento, ed. Carolina Martinelli (Rome: Prospettive Edizioni, 2014), 13–15.

18. Basso Peressut and Caliari, "Introduzione," 15.

Fig.1.1.3. The Ronchey Law

1.2 The Ephemerality in the Protected Sites

Modern architects who work with archaeological sites do not usually try to reconstruct what time has destroyed. In cases where a monument has not survived or has survived partially, the most popular method is to build a new temporary and removable layer over it. Such an approach has been called museographical restoration of archaeological monuments. There are two basic principles behind it. One of them is the ease of reading of the site. The second one is the visual separation of the old and the new: there can be no question of the addition imitating the original; anyone visiting the site should be able to immediately distinguish which part of the structure belongs to antiquity and which is added by architects in recent times. Behind this requirement stands a specific conception of the ruin itself. An incomplete piece is more informative in its interpretative power than the complete one, as it compels the visitor to reconstruct the missing elements, rather than admire somebody else's vision of the site. Because of this, the designers prefer gaps and losses to completeness and present the visitor as an active creator rather than a passive observer of somebody else's vision of the past. As such structures are physically connected to the archaeological remains, there emerges an additional requirement: no structure should damage the site in any way and be fully removable.[19]

Also, the moral conduct of legible and temporary design is based on the various preservation charters from around the world. The 1964 Venice Charter provides a clear definition of how architects should handle protected areas. To prevent modern additions on-site from compromising the historical authenticity of ancient monuments, the charter states that

19. Luca Basso Peressut, Pier Federico Caliari, and Carolina Martinelli, eds., Architettura per l'archeologia. Museografia e allestimento (Rome: Prospettive Edizioni, 2014), 15.

"All reconstruction work should however be ruled out 'a priori'. Only anastylosis, that is to say, reassembling of existing but dismembered parts, can be permitted."[20] This means that the charter generally prohibits reconstruction, with the exception of anastylosis, the method of reassembling original remains using their original materials. Where additional materials have been added to stabilize or strengthen an existing ruin, there are two criteria which the charter holds to be fundamental. Firstly, that any addition made should always be clearly distinguishable from the existing historic structure; secondly, that only the amount needed for survival should be added.[21]

From a theoretical standpoint, when a historic monument falls into ruin, this is what makes it a "beautiful ruin." In such cases, rather than serving as a cause for grief, the destruction of the building triggers within the viewer an urge to reconstruct it mentally in its pristine glory, rather than construct an imitation of the building that was never actually built. The visible ruin sparks the visitor's curiosity about the building's features, its height, its façade, and its missing parts. Modern theoretical approaches indicate that physical reconstruction may be just one possibility from among many choices; however, some decision-makers still opt for physical reconstruction of the ruins. Examples of the latter include the Arch of Titus and the Roman theater of Sagunto. When the ruined building is viewed as fragmentary, it ensures its existence in people's minds by the process of discovering it.[22]
At Luís Carrilho da Graça's Praça Nova project for the São Jorge Castle in Lisbon, this theoretical approach becomes a built strategy.

20. International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter 1964) (Venice: ICOMOS, 1964), art. 15.

21. ICOMOS, Venice Charter, art. 15.

22. Pier Federico Caliari, The Shape of Beauty, trans. Alessia Rampoldi (Rome: Accademia Adrianea Edizioni, 2021), 28.



Fig.1.2.1. Image of the International Scientific Committee in Venice

The designer enclosed the site within a perimeter and structured the movement of visitors based on steel plates vertically arranged in the earth. These plates sliced through the various layers of soil and construction and thus exposed the Iron Age layer, which was lying below the other layers of soil rather than covering it. Choice of paving is also based on the same principle. Black basalt covers the ground associated with the present day, while sand in varying tones separates areas that were once private household space from those that were shared or public within the Alcáçova. In places where the mosaics cover the floor of the fifteenth century Bishop's Palace, the mosaics are protected by a canopy from above. The bottom of the canopy is made with a black reflective material, which allows people standing on the ground to view their reflection in the pavement.[23]

23. Carrilho da Graça arquitectos, "Palimpsest and Palindrome: The Musealization of the São Jorge Castle's Praça Nova Archeological Site," Archello, accessed August 19, 2026, https://archello.com/project/palimpsest-and-palindrome-the-musealization-of-the-sao-jorge-castles-praca-nova-archeological-site.



Fig. 1.2.2. Praça Nova do Castelo de São Jorge, project by João Luís Carrilho da Graça and Global Arquitectura, Lisbon.



Fig. 1.2.3. Interior view of the pavilion

2. Villa Adriana

2.1 Hadrian and the Construction of the Villa

Hadrian is one of the most mysterious and gifted emperors of Rome's glory days. He had a multifaceted character and was deeply interested in architecture. Born in Rome, Hadrian was nicknamed "Graeculus" (literally, "little Greek") from his very early age due to his love for the Hellenic culture and its education. The style of government and artistry of the emperor, which he adopted during his lifetime, largely depended on his trips around the Roman Empire and the cultures he got acquainted with; this experience was needed for him to embody his ideas into space.[1]

In addition to his excellent abilities in disciplines like geometry, arithmetic, and drawing, Hadrian was one who at some stage appeared to be a qualified architect. There is a saying that Apollodorus of Damascus, the architect of Emperor Trajan, was very harsh to Hadrian when he tried to interfere in design, and he told Hadrian to "be off and draw your gourds you do not understand any of these matters." [2]

Nonetheless, it has been said that Hadrian's method while designing from the perspective of modern architectural theory shows a level of intellect akin to a professional designer, and he consciously refrained from using the traditional rule of "mos maiorum" (custom of ancestors). It is still unclear how far did Hadrian go while sketching.[3]

The two contrasting modes of life Hadrian maintained were also mirrored in the design of the large imperial villa he had built near Tivoli between AD 118 and 134. The villa's functional identity directly reflects the duality in Hadrian's personal way of life.

1. John Pinto, "Giovanni Battista Piranesi's Plan of Hadrian's Villa," The Princeton University Library Chronicle *55*, no. 1 (Autumn 1993): 65–66.

2. Cassius Dio, Roman History, trans. Earnest Cary, in LacusCurtius, ed. Bill Thayer (University of Chicago), accessed August 11, 2026, https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/69*.html.

3. Pier Federico Caliari, "'Tractatus Logico Sintattico: The Transparent Shape of Villa Adriana. Edited by Carola Gentilini. Translated by Silvia Pettinicchio and Hilary Carter. Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2012, "Conclusions. Hadrian and his architect," pp. 63–64.



4. Pinto, "Piranesi's Plan of Hadrian's Villa," 66.

5. Pier Federico Caliari, Tractatus Logico Sintattico: The Transparent Shape of Villa Adriana, ed. Carola Gentilini, trans. Silvia Pettinicchio and Hilary Carter (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2012), 9.

6. Pier Federico Caliari, "La composizione policentrica di Villa Adriana e il tecnigrafo post-alessandrino," in 'ANANKH, speciale 84, Villa Adriana: XIX secoli a Villa Adriana — interferenze e folgorazioni iconiche (118–2018) (August 2018): 70.

Fig.2.1.1 Bust of Hadrian in, Fondazione Torlonia, Rome.

It was important that the building complex would have served the dual purpose of being an administration center for the conducting of the business of imperial governance as well as being a retreat place where one could escape the demands of politics; the two purposes were not in contradiction but complemented each other within the concept of the building complex. In fact, over the passage of time, the villa transformed itself into a power center that was separate from Rome, but where the emperor ruled in reality. In addition to that, it has been suggested that there is a symbolic representation of all those journeys of Emperor Hadrian within the borders of his empire within the spatial design of the interior of the complex.[4] The architectural pattern that was not followed by Hadrian's architects was that of the oorthogonal (right-angled grid) model. Instead, they decided to use the polar model system. This was an innovative move for that era, because this showed that Hadrian's architecture had diverged from classicism. [5]

Such an approach to structuring, manifest in the Piazza d'Oro, the Tempio di Venere Cnidia-Teatro Nord, Teatro Marittimo, Teatro Sud, Tre Esedre, Grande Vestibolo, and Padiglione dell'Accademia complex, with its many centers, departed from the regular system of scaling in favor of a much more dynamic approach to planning; in the process, by means of pavilions endowed with their own individual characteristics, it transformed the spirit of the whole complex from a military-inspired Roman imperial palace to a grand acropolis (a religious community located on raised land).[6]

2.2. The Element of Water in Villa Adriana

A central characteristic of rural dwellings in the Roman period is that water is usually a central element. This is especially true of the villa urbana, the luxurious country villas used for leisure and relaxation. According to Tracy L. Ehrlich, Romans approached water less as a sacred element and more from an artistic point of view. [7] Emperor Hadrian conceived the idea of the villa as a demonstration of his own artistic creativity; in fact, the water systems of Hadrian's Villa represent almost the entire typology of Roman water design. The villa contained small pools, large fish ponds, and narrow channels known as euripi or nili, the latter named after the Nile River that inspired them. Water features ranging from simple, single jet fountains to grand and ostentatious nymphaea (monumental decorative fountains), and even artificial grottoes, were strategically distributed among the site's dining areas, reception spaces, and gardens. [8]

The vast scale of Hadrian's Villa demanded a water supply system of real sophistication to keep it running. Some of the villa's water supposedly came from the large aqueducts nearby, but rainwater played a role too, it was assumed that it gathered in cisterns overnight and channeled into the fountains the next day. [9] The villa's water features can be divided into two broad categories. The first includes long, shallow pools, such as those found in the Stadium Garden and the Water Court. The second includes larger, deeper pools, such as the pools on the eastern and western terraces and the picturesque canal at Canopus. The deep pools were in the middle of open spaces and the shallow pools were close to ground level. [10]

7. Tracy L. Ehrlich, "The Waterworks of Hadrian's Villa," The Journal of Garden History 9, no. 4 (1989): 161, https://doi.org/10.1080/01445170.1989.10410572.

8. Ehrlich, "Waterworks of Hadrian's Villa," 161.

9. Fiona Ann McFarlane, "The Decorative Use of Water at Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli, and Its Ancient Roman Context" (PhD diss., King's College London, 2003), 32–34.

10. McFarlane, "Decorative Use of Water," 99, 105–8.

As sight was important, so was sound in Hadrian's handling of water. The splash of a fountain or a little cascade was prized for its soothing effect and this is probably why moving water was concentrated in places intended for lingering, especially the dining halls. The emperor's residence went further than most Roman houses of the time, which already had a tradition of mixing triclinia with fountains. [11] The most elaborate example of this is the Serapeum at Canopus, where water poured from niches on the curved wall, and ran down the marble cladding at the back of the hall, creating a continuous sheet over the surface, an effect very similar to what the Italian sources call a "curtain" of water (cortina d'acqua) said Rafael Hidalgo Prieto.[12]

The geological structure of the area in which Hadrian's Villa was located was a determining factor that directly influenced its design. The site was built on a deep layer of volcanic tuff. The usual Roman method of construction was to cut and fill the ground to create artificial flat surfaces, and then build on top of them. The Temple of Fortuna Primigenia at Palestrina is a typical example of this. But at Hadrian's Villa, the process seems to work in reverse: the buildings are not merely resting on the ground but seem to be growing out of it, so that the enclosed, subterranean character of the interior spaces reads along with the open, cosmic order of the mountains and sky around it. [13]

Much of the role of water as an organizing element of the site is due to this same geological base. In the vaulted frigidarium of the Great Baths the water was arranged so as to meet the visitor from all four sides of the room, giving to the frigidarium a strong, unified, geometric plan. The water that flows from the octagonal structure of the Piazza d'Oro (the Sala Quadrilobata) is designated as the origin of life, origo vitae, and is understood to have a similar symbolic meaning. [14]

11. Ehrlich, "Waterworks of Hadrian's Villa," 165–68.

12. Rafael Hidalgo Prieto, "L'immagine della Villa: spazi e usi," in Villa Adriana: Passeggiate iconografiche, ed. Giuseppina Enrica Cinque and Nicoletta Marconi (Foligno: Il Formichiere, 2018), 25.

13 Angelo Torricelli, "The Lesson of Villa Adriana," in Pier Federico Caliari, Tractatus Logico Sintattico: The Transparent Shape of Villa Adriana, ed. Carola Gentilini, trans. Silvia Pettinicchio and Hilary Carter (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2012), 77–78.

14. Pier Federico Caliari, Tractatus Logico Sintattico: The Transparent Shape of Villa Adriana, ed. Carola Gentilini, trans. Silvia Pettinicchio and Hilary Carter (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2012), 47–48.

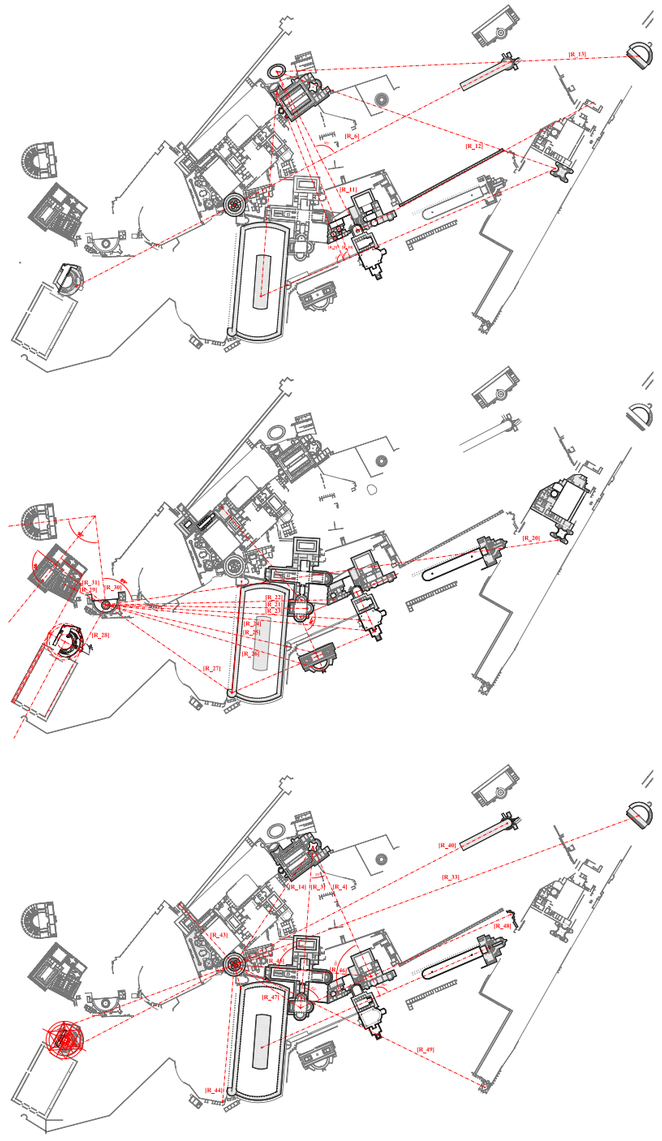


Fig.2.2.1. Table III. II of the Tractatus Logico Syntattico, Pier Federico Caliari

Fig.2.2.2. Table IV. II of the Tractatus Logico Syntattico, Pier Federico Caliari

Fig.2.2.3. Table V. of the Tractatus Logico Syntattico, Pier Federico Caliari

2.3. The Selected Sites

The villa is divided into areas accessible to the public, areas that belong only to the emperor, and intermediary zones connecting the two of them. The three spaces mentioned are viewed as the most developed manifestation of Hadrianic architecture. Located in close proximity to each other, the Pecile, Sala dei Filosofi and Teatro Marittimo constitute some sort of monumental network. One can analyze through these three spaces how the architects managed to combine impressive public spaces with the intimate and private ones. The close location of the three zones acts almost like a threshold leading from the public to the emperor's private spaces.[15]

15. Rafael Hidalgo Prieto, "L'immagine della Villa: spazi e usi," in Villa Adriana: Passeggiate iconografiche, ed. Giuseppina Enrica Cinque e Nicoletta Marconi (Foligno: Il Formichiere, 2018), 26–28.

16. Marina De Franceschini, "Sala dei Filosofi," Villa Adriana Tivoli, accessed August 19, 2026, https://www.villa-adriana.net/edifici-dettaglio.aspx?id=112&idCat=140&d=SALA%20DEI%20FILOSOFI%20-%2030.

17 "La sala dei Filosofi," Tibursuperbum, accessed August 19, 2026, https://www.tibursuperbum.it/ita/monumenti/villaadriana/SalaFilosofi.htm.

18. De Franceschini, "Sala dei Filosofi."

19. De Franceschini, "Sala dei Filosofi."

2.3.1. Sala dei Filosofi

Constructed during the villa's initial period, in 118-125 AD, the Sala dei Filosofi is a rectangular room that has dimensions of 20.55 by 14.35 meters. The positioning of the room is deliberate as it acts as a link between the public garden known as the Pecile and the emperor's very private rooms. The room was connected to the Teatro Marittimo on the eastern side via two doors and was connected to the Pecile through two staircases. The main entry into the room was through an arched door, and it had a wooden panel roof and a semi-domed section in the south that was flanked by two columns.

The early historians believed that the seven niches in the room were a type of library in which the manuscripts were kept; however, this is not true, as the niches are 1.6 meters from the floor level.[16] Orientation of the hall is contradictory to the principles formulated by Vitruvius about what makes an ideal library: according to his principles, libraries situated to the east should receive more light and would be less affected by moisture and paper eating insects.[17] The first excavations of this area in the 16th century were done by Pirro Ligorio, who called this hall "Temple of the Stoics" due to the alabaster and huge stones of red porphyry found there. The existing traces of the marble decoration in the form of holes where there used to be screws and clamps can be seen on the brick walls, but not the layer of the mortar itself and traces of the opus sectile.[18]The current name of the hall was given to it based on seven busts of the Greek philosophers.[19]

The modern-day historians of architecture have likened this type of building to imperial audience halls or halls used for greeting many guests like the throne room of Domus Flavia on the Palatine Hill or the Auditorium of Maecenas on the Esquiline.

Extending this analogy, some have speculated that the emperor might have carried out his business work in this place too. An alternative idea is that the seven niches measuring 70 cm deep contained figures of members of the imperial family, further lending an air of dignity to this hall. However, recent research claims that this hall was actually used for two purposes one of them being that of a formal hall and the other as a reception area. The modern day historians of architecture have likened this type of building to imperial audience halls or halls used for greeting many guests like the throne room of Domus Flavia on the Palatine Hill or the Auditorium of Maecenas on the Esquiline. Extending this analogy, some have speculated that the emperor might have carried out his business work in this place too. An alternative idea is that the seven niches measuring 70 cm deep contained figures of members of the imperial family, further lending an air of dignity to this hall. However, recent research claims that this hall was actually used for two purposes one of them being that of a formal hall and the other as a reception area.[20]

20. Giuseppina Enrica Cinque and Nicoletta Marconi, eds., Villa Adriana: Passeggiate iconografiche (Foligno: Il Formichiere, 2018), 234.

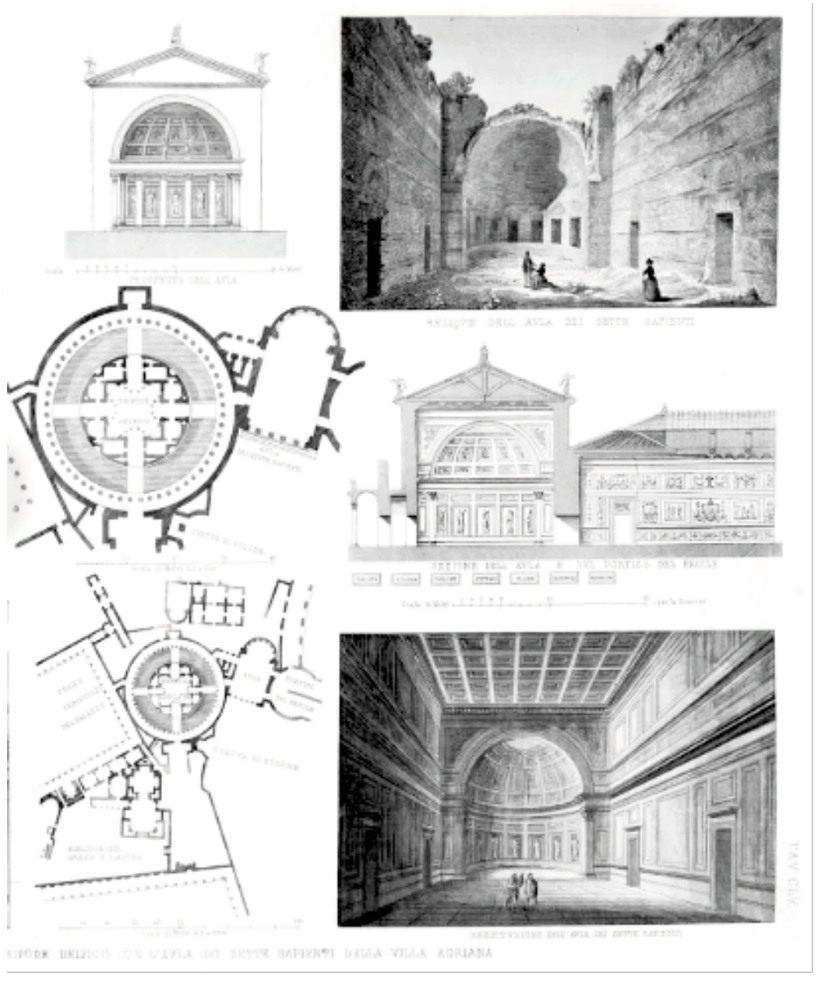


Fig.2.3.1.1. Drawings made by Luigi Canina, plan, section, and elevations of the Sala dei filosofi.



Fig.2.3.1.2. Drawing made by Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 1774.



Fig.2.3.1.3. Image of the Sala dei Filosofi from the northern elevation, Villa Adriana, Tivoli.

Fig.2.3.1.4. Image of the interior of Sala dei Filosofi, Villa Adriana, Tivoli.



2.3.2. Teatro Marittimo

Teatro Marittimo dated to the first stage of construction works which took place from 118 to 125 AD in conjunction with the construction of the Sala dei Filosofi.[21] The distinguishing feature of this particular structure is the presence of a unique design, which makes it quite different from all other buildings of the villa; namely, the ring-like form of the Teatro Marittimo consists of a channel with the depths ranging from 1.40 to 1.64 meters depending on the direction from south to north, which divides an external ring from the island in the center.[22] The ring itself is 44.20 meters in diameter and 4.9 meters high with forty Ionic columns without flutes on the outer side of the ring near the channel.[23] In the center of the ring stands a small house resembling the Roman atrium house.[24] Despite the approximate diameter of 24 meters, the island had many facilities for its area, including a bath suite with a furnace, a reception hall (tablinum), bedrooms (cubicula), dining room (triclinium), and a courtyard with a fountain and garden, collecting rainwater in the same way an ancient impluvium does.[25] Historians usually interpret this island not as an operational theater, which is an incorrect interpretation derived from the name associated with the maritime fresco, which was discovered near the entrance of this island.[26] This island was a place that allowed the Emperor Hadrian to separate himself from all official business and indulge in his own interests, which included architectural drawing and painting.[27]

21. Madain Project, "Hadrian's Villa," accessed August 19, 2026, https://madainproject.com/hadrians_villa.

22. Fiona McFarlane, "The Decorative Use of Water at Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli, and Its Ancient Roman Context" (PhD diss., King's College London, 2003), 326.

23. McFarlane, "Decorative Use of Water," 326.

24. Madain Project, "Hadrian's Villa."

25 Carole Raddato, "Hadrian's Villa," Following Hadrian, accessed August 19, 2026,https://followinghadrian.com/hadrians-villa/.

26. Madain Project, "Hadrian's Villa"

27. Madain Project, "Hadrian's Villa."

To reach the island, the emperor had to enter either one of the two wooden bridges, which were opened from the sides of the channel but easily disassembled whenever the Emperor needed to separate himself from other people.[28] One of the two wooden bridges, however, has been later replaced by the permanent stone bridge.[29]

In contrast to conventional buildings where entablatures have to accommodate decorative friezes only along the straight surfaces of their walls, this structure was different because of its circular form. As a result, the architectural decoration of the entablature involved a sculptural program based mostly on marine themes and characters as well as mythological images like dolphins, sea monsters, erotes riding in the chariots, and processions linked with the sea-thiasos, which were placed on the curved trabeation of the building.[30] [31] There were some sculptural discoveries made at the excavation site, including a faun figure created from red marble, Fauno di Rosso Antico, which served as evidence of the importance of this private part of the villa.[32] There was also another challenge discovered through further analysis: it turned out that during the first attempt of restoration (anastylosis), some parts of the frieze were misplaced. To fix this error, it became necessary to perform a new survey of the remaining fragments using 3D laser scanning.[33]

28. McFarlane, "Decorative Use of Water," 327.

29. McFarlane, "Decorative Use of Water," 327.

30. Benedetta Adembri, Sergio Di Tondo, and Filippo Fantini, "Architecture and Decorative System of the Teatro Marittimo at Villa Adriana: A New Integrated Approach to an Understanding of the Building's Original Aspect," in Fusion of Cultures: Proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference on Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology (CAA), Granada, Spain (Granada: CAA, 2010), 1–2.

31. McFarlane, "Decorative Use of Water," 329.

32. Cinque and Marconi, eds., Villa Adriana: Passeggiate iconografiche, 231.

33. Adembri, Di Tondo, and Fantini, "Architecture and Decorative System of the Teatro Marittimo," 1–2.



Fig.2.3.2.1. Drawing made by Giovanni Battista Piranesi, of Teatro Maritimo



Fig.2.3.2.2. Image taken inside of Teatro Marittimo, Villa Adriana, Tivoli.

Fig.2.3.2.3. Aerial Image of Teatro Marittimo, Villa Adriana, Tivoli.



2.3.3. Pecile

The Pecile is derived from the Stoa Poikile of Athens, the painted colonnade where the Stoic philosophy was born, and lies in the south section of the villa.[34] Constructed in the form of a quadriporticus, an enclosed garden bordered by covered walkways on all sides, the Pecile is 232 meters long and 97 meters wide, containing in its center a pool that is 100 meters long and 25 meters wide.[35] On the northern side, two rows of columns once stood opposite each other, creating a double colonnade, but now there is only the wall separating them, which reaches a height of 9 meters, with roof beam holes as well as column foundations at every 3.5 meter interval.[36] A huge gateway interrupts the wall in the middle and is still present, through which the guests would enter the villa.[37] This was not done by chance since physicians recommended taking a stroll after eating, and the portico was designed so that it would precisely fit that walk, which totaled about 429 meters.[38] This was so because the portico stretched along both sides of the colonnade, meaning that it could be used all year long since the northern colonnade would take the shade and the breeze in the summer and protect one from the chill of the winter sun in the south.[39] Mosaic paving in plain black tuff and white palombino tesserae covered the walkway underfoot.[40] Because the topography declined toward the west, elevating the Pecile's terrace above the rest of the valley entailed significant engineering effort; below the terrace lies the Cento Camerelle, a 15 meter high structure of rooms that is between 125 or 200 rooms.[41] This was where the slaves and servants of the villa were housed, not leisure quarters by any means, but rather the base on which the entire structure was erected. Walled in completely and out of view of the rest of the estate, the Pecile was designed as a private place for solitary walks and thought.[42]

34. "Hadrian's Villa: The Pecile," GJCL Classical Art History (blog), April 7, 2019, https://gjclarthistory.blogspot.com/2019/04/hadrians-villa-pecile.html.

35. "Hadrian's Villa: The Pecile," GJCL Classical Art History.

36. Marina De Franceschini, "Poecile," Villa Adriana Tivoli, accessed August 19, 2026, https://www.villa-adriana.net/edifici-dettaglio.aspx?id=81&idCat=43&d=POECILE&l=EN.

37. De Franceschini, "Poecile."

38. De Franceschini, "Poecile."

39. De Franceschini, "Poecile."

40. Cinque and Marconi, eds., Villa Adriana: Passeggiate iconografiche, 184.

41. "Hadrian's Villa: The Pecile," GJCL Classical Art History.

42. "The Pecile," Tibursuperbum, accessed August 19, 2026, https://www.tibursuperbum.it/eng/monumenti/villaadriana/Pecile.htm.

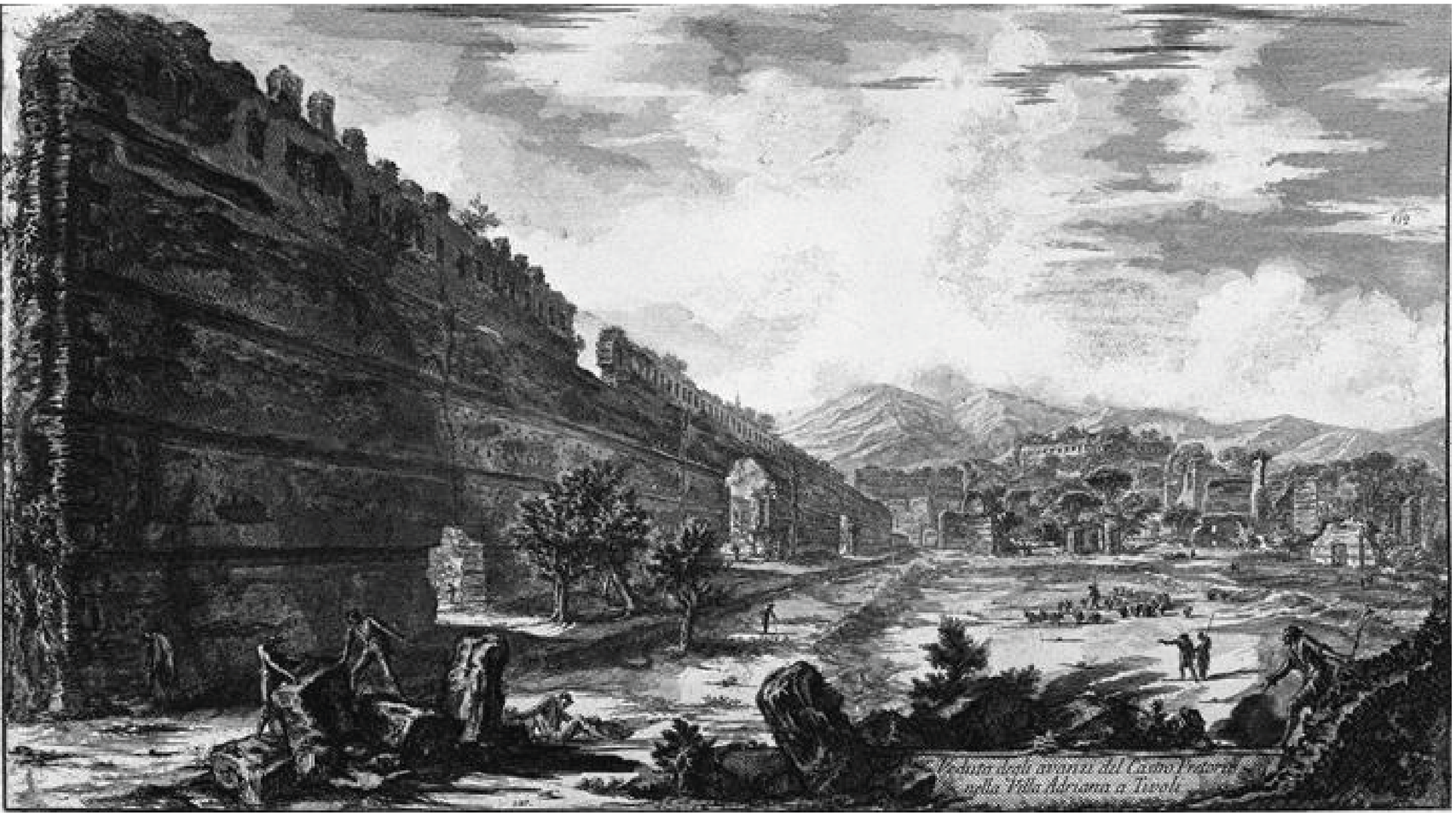


Fig.2.3.3.2. 3D reconstruction of Villa Adriana.

Fig.2.3.3.1. Drawing made by Giovanni Battista Piranesi, of Pecile.

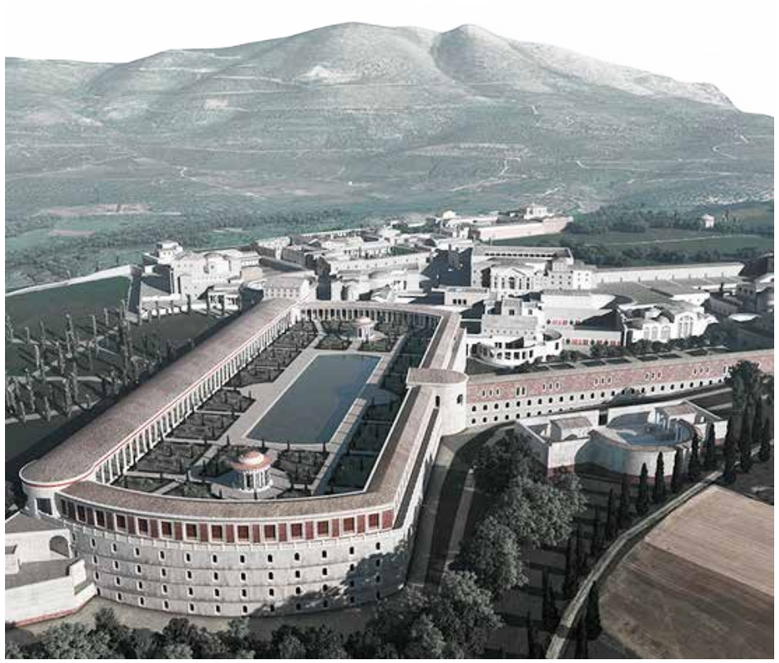




Fig.2.3.3.3. Aerial image of the Pecile, Villa Adriana, Tivoli.

3. Hadrian & Antinous

3.1 Same-Sex Relationships in Roman Antiquity, A Brief Note

The attitudes held by Romans regarding same-sex relations were totally different from what is observed in modern times. According to Williams, the social background of the Roman man ensured that they did not have tendency to judge sexual activities according to their nature, which could be either wholly masculine or of a mix between men and women.[1] The important aspect of defining sexual desire among Romans was based on the positions of individuals taking part in the activity, rather than their gender. The modern perspectives of defining sexuality as homosexual or heterosexual were alien to the Roman culture, where the whole system was based on who was penetrating whom. In this context, the masculinity of the active person as well as his social reputation did not get affected.[2]

For a freeman in Roman society, the protection of his honor within the social hierarchy could only be achieved by strictly refraining from participating in any form of sexuality that might put it at risk. This line was drawn by the Roman notion of stuprum, which was a breach of the status of a free individual by engaging in a sexual intercourse outside marriage. According to Cantarella, stuprum did not involve the application of any sort of coercion; it was rather a sexual contact that happened outside marriage regardless of the willingness of the other party, who could be either widow, virgin, or a boy.[3] On the other hand, the Romans were protecting the pudicitia of their free individuals, both male and female, because they recognized that a Roman man just like materfamilias had pudicitia, which he lost if he assumed the role of a passive partner in a sexual contact with another male.[4]

1. Craig A. Williams, Roman Homosexuality, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.

2. Williams, Roman Homosexuality, 18–19.

3. Eva Cantarella, Bisexuality in the Ancient World, trans. Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 104.

4. Cantarella, Bisexuality in the Ancient World, 116.

Contrastingly, having intercourse with slaves and prostitutes did not invite any condemnation but rather received social tolerance because both groups were viewed as members of the low class society. Cantarella explains that homosexuality itself neither constituted a criminal offense nor was it considered socially condemnable in ancient Republican Rome: being engaged in sexual intercourse with a slave (assuming the slave belonged to oneself) or a male prostitute was regarded as normal conduct, and the one act of sodomy that was socially condemnable was making love to a young and freeborn Roman citizen. Roman texts often portray young men and boys, including pueri, adulescentuli, and iuvenes, as standard male subjects of sexual desire, especially when in the phase of adolescence.[5]

Notwithstanding the above, there were certain significant constraints that characterized the practice of same-sex relations, including, above all else, age and bodily development. Romans gradually shifted their focus more and more onto the pueri, namely, adolescent boys who assumed the passive sexual position.[6] These were individuals who had reached the flos aetatis("the flower of youth"), the age of transition between adolescence and young manhood, when their skin was still soft and their chin unshaven. Such an age, at the zenith of male attractiveness, was defined by youthful nudity and ended with the maturing of the body hair and the full beard.[7] The protection of freeborn boys against the unwanted sexual attention was of great importance in Roman law: according to the edict of urban praetor de adtemptata pudicitia, dated shortly before 193 BCE, the penalty applied equally to those who pursued, harassed or dismissed the chaperone (comes) of a praetextatus, that is to say, of a freeborn boy who had not yet attained puberty and was still wearing the purple toga praetexta, as well as to similar actions regarding a materfamilias.[8] Such an edict was added to the older Lex Scatinia, a republican law that had previously defined sexual intercourse with a freeborn boy (stuprum cum puero) as punishable, along with, in addition to that, being the passive partner in relations between adult men.[9] The crime of stuprum cum puero under the Lex Scatinia was punished by a set fine of 10,000 sesterces, according to Cantarella's interpretation. The crime of sexual violence against a freeborn male, however, had become subject to the Lex Iulia de vi publica at the time of Ulpian, where the penalty was death.[10]

5. Williams, Roman Homosexuality, 19–20.

6. Cantarella, Bisexuality in the Ancient World, 115–118.

7. Williams, Roman Homosexuality, 19–20.

8. Cantarella, Bisexuality in the Ancient World, 111–113.

9. Cantarella, Bisexuality in the Ancient World, 141.

10. Cantarella, Bisexuality in the Ancient World, 113–114.



Fig. 3.1.1. Antique plate of two man kissing, erastes and eromenos, Louvre Museum.

Fig. 3.1.2. Antique plate showing man playing the aulos beside a resting man, New York.



Fig. 3.1.3. Antique plate describing Achilles bandaging the wounded Patroclus, Berlin.

3.2 Antinous, Their Connection , and the Tragedy on the Nile River

Antinous was born in the city of Bithynion-Claudiopolis, in the region of Bithynia (modern-day Turkey), and was of Greek descent. It is not clear how Antinous was introduced to Hadrian, but scholars usually associate their first meeting with the journey of the emperor to Bithynia in 123 CE, because this is the only time when Hadrian visited this region while Antinous was alive.[11] By 128 CE, Antinous became a member of the entourage of Hadrian, traveling together with him through the Roman Empire, including his participation in the Eleusinian Mysteries, an ancient Greek religious ceremony near Athens.[12] The connection between Antinous and Hadrian acquired a symbolic importance beyond their private lives, especially in the Greek-speaking eastern parts of the Empire, where the worship of Antinous could represent local Greek identity and ties to Roman rule.[13]

It is not possible to consider this relationship in isolation from Hadrian's wider philhellenism. Indeed, it was Hadrian's love for Greek literature, history, and culture, a passion so intense that it had led to his being nicknamed Graeculus, meaning "little Greek," since childhood, which ensured that he would view the Greek youth Antinous in classicizing terms.[14] Scholarship has suggested that Hadrian viewed their relationship in the terms of the erastes-eromenos tradition of classical Greece, whereby an older lover has a relationship with a younger beloved.[15] The overt nature of Hadrian's grief meant that he could not fail to be compared to the heroic relationships of ancient Greece, such as those between Achilles and Patroclus. It is clear that contemporary critics found the strength of Hadrian's emotions especially offensive, to mention specifically that, according to one hostile tradition, "he wept like a woman."[16]

11. Niayesh Jamshidi, "Building a God: The Cult of Antinous and Identity in the Eastern Roman Empire" (master's thesis, University of Oregon, 2018), 5–7; Anthony R. Birley, Hadrian: The Restless Emperor (London: Routledge, 1997), 162–63.

12. Jamshidi, "Building a God," 6–7.

13. Jamshidi, "Building a God," 36.

14. Tatiana Eileen Fox, "The Cult of Antinous and the Response of the Greek East to Hadrian's Creation of a God" (bachelor's thesis, Ohio University, 2014), 11–12; Birley, Hadrian, 2.

15. Fox, "Cult of Antinous," 11–12.

16. Fox, "Cult of Antinous," 11.

It was in October 130 CE that Antinous met with his fate while accompanying the imperial court on its journey through Egypt. Cassius Dio, in his writings years later about these events, reports two possible versions of what happened to him: either Antinous fell into the Nile accidentally, or he was "sacrificed" ritually.[17] Because Hadrian had an active interest in magic, astrology, and foreign divination, scholars further hypothesized that the death of Antinous could have been a religious sacrifice that guaranteed the future of Hadrian; that he was sacrificed during a process of rejuvenation; or even that he had committed suicide. In his own explanation of events, as recorded in fragments of his lost autobiography, Hadrian explained the death as an accident.[18] However, modern research considers the issue of what really occurred to be insolvable on the basis of extant evidence, while studying how Hadrian reacted to the event within the week of time, a foreign deity was worshiped, Antinous died, another deity was born, and a city was founded.[19]

Hadrian's very demonstrative mourning became the target of criticism by some Romans.[20] While deification had been the prerogative of the Roman Senate, Hadrian broke with custom and declared Antinous to be a god himself, going so far as to actively cultivate the worship of Antinous.[21] In accordance with the mourning rites, he linked Antinous with Osiris, the Egyptian god of death, the underworld, and rebirth, a logical act considering that the date on which Osiris was said to have drowned coincided with that of Antinous, and was already a feast day in Egypt.[22]

17. Cassius Dio, Roman History, trans. Earnest Cary, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), 69.11.2–3.

18. Fox, "Cult of Antinous," 10.

19. Fox, "Cult of Antinous," 11.

20. Fox, "Cult of Antinous," 11.

21. Fox, "Cult of Antinous," 9.

22. Fox, "Cult of Antinous," 8–9.

23. Fox, "Cult of Antinous," 9, 12–13.

In the following October of the same year, as his travels went on, Hadrian founded the Greek city of Antinoöpolis at the site of the young man's death. It was not only an act of cultural colonization, but one which evoked the custom in ancient Greece of founding cities after the tombs of their heroes, and which set the cult of Antinous to spread throughout the Mediterranean region.[23]



Fig. 3.2.1. The statue of Antinous, between 130–138 AD, Vatican Museums, Rome.



Fig. 3.2.2. Statue of Emperor Hadrian, between 117-138 AD, Troy Museum, Çanakkale, Turkey.

3.3 Deification and Antinous' Memory

The deification of Antinous became a sociopolitical event for the eastern, particularly Greek, part of the Empire, allowing its inhabitants to feel that they once again belonged to the Roman Empire. Most historians of the western Roman empire, who enjoyed sociological privilege, viewed the eastern Romans negatively as inferior from both cultural and moral perspectives.[24] The fact that the young Greek Antinous was raised to god status and could be worshipped at the same time as people celebrated certain aspects of their Greek heritage gave an opportunity to preserve local identity alongside being attached to the Roman Empire.[25]

Antinous' popularity among local elites increased with time as games were held in his honor, temples were erected in his name, and his image was put on local currency, allowing cities and elites to connect themselves with the newly created cult and imperial favor.[26] In the conclusion of his thesis, Jamshidi says that the mainly Greek worshippers of Antinous in the eastern part of the Empire saw in his cult the reflection of their cultural identity and way of connecting themselves to Roman identity.[27]Moreover, there is evidence in the numismatics that shows the survival of the Antinous cult even long after the death of Hadrian. Coins with Antinous's likeness continued to be minted during the reigns of Commodus and Caracalla even after the deaths of Antinous and Hadrian.[28] According to Fox, this indicates the fact that the cult of Antinous was important for Bithynion Claudiopolis not only for Hadrian but continued to be relevant long after his reign. In other words, it is possible to say that the significance of Antinous to this city continued long after Hadrian and his personal patronage.[29]

24. Jamshidi, "Building a God," 3–4.

25. Jamshidi, "Building a God," 3–4.

26. Jamshidi, "Building a God," 14–21.

27. Jamshidi, "Building a God," 41–42.

28. Fox, "Cult of Antinous," 52–53.

29. Fox, "Cult of Antinous," 53–54.



Fig. 3.3.1. Historic drawing by Cecile, of the Arch of the Triomphe in Antinoöpolis, Egypt.

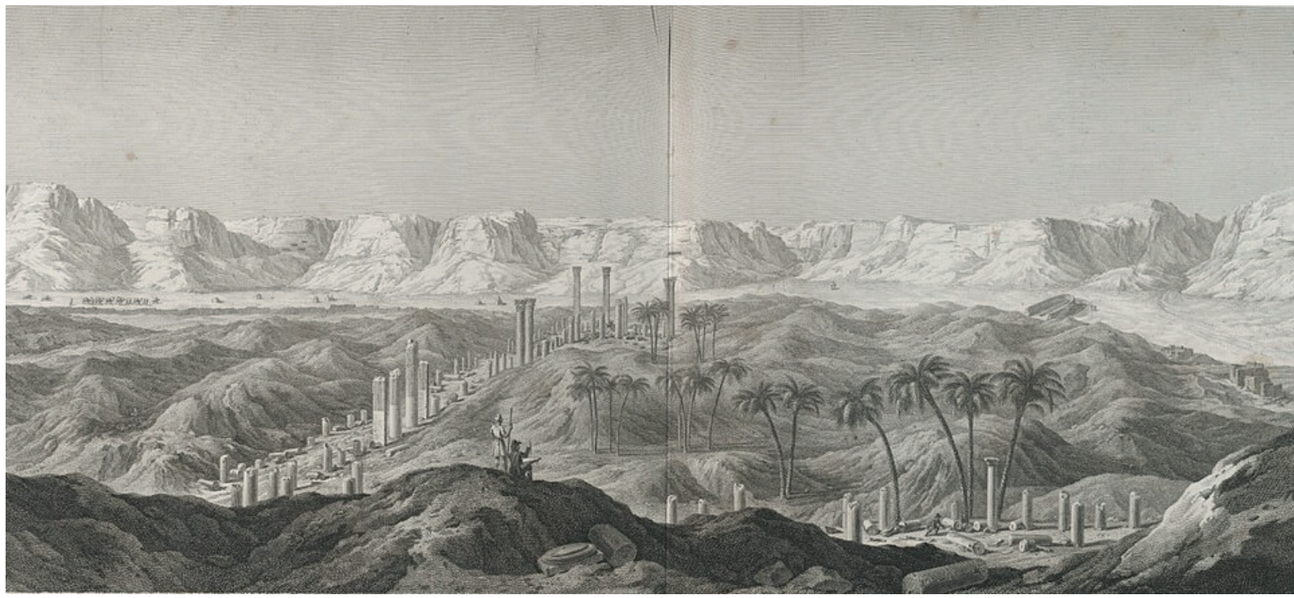


Fig. 3.3.2. Drawing of the ruins of Antinoöpolis in Egypt.

Another way that the continuity and prominence of the Antinous cult could be observed is through the polemics of the early Christian authors. According to Justin Martyr, people were forced into worshipping Antinous out of fear, whereas Tertullian took the fact that Antinous was deified to prove the immorality inherent in pagan Rome's religious practices. Similarly, Origen asserted that the Egyptians were forced by Hadrian to worship Antinous.[30] All of these claims reflect explicitly hostile Christian views and, hence, should not be taken for neutral representations of the Antinous cult. However, Fox herself stresses the Christian bias of these statements. Still, along with the later numismatic evidence, this continuous presence of Antinous in the Christian polemical literature reinforces the overall impression that his cult remained prominent even after Hadrian's death.[31]

30. Fox, "Cult of Antinous," 12–13.

31. Fox, "Cult of Antinous," 13, 53–54.



Fig.3.3.3. Remains of Antinoöpolis

4. Fashion Interventions at Heritage Sites

4.1 Heritage Sites as a Venue for Fashion

Culture, taken in the broad sense of the term, can be defined as the accumulation of knowledge, belief, custom, value, and practice that one acquires from engaging in society. In this context, art creation can also be viewed within the same scope as culture, thus putting fashion and culture in the same cultural space. Introducing fashion in an historical or archaeological environment creates a link between the two cultures.[1]

Since the beginning of the decade of the 2000s, it became more common for fashion labels to choose culturally and historically valuable places as venues for their fashion shows; this trend has prevailed in the subsequent years. An example of one of the early fashion houses that chose such a place for a presentation is Fendi, with its Spring/Summer 2008 collection presented in 2007 on the Great Wall of China.[2] Though such places help the promotion of the fashion label itself, further examples prove that such fashion shows could have a greater meaning. For instance, in 2019 Greek designer Mary Katrantzou held her fashion show in the Temple of Poseidon at Cape Sounion for the purposes of raising money for ELPIDA, the charity for children with cancer.[3]

However, at the same time, the interaction between luxury fashion and heritage began to involve not only the temporary usage of heritage sites as a backdrop for fashion events. On the one hand, some fashion brands and industry players began to finance the restoration of historical monuments. Thus, for instance, the creator of the Diesel brand Renzo Rosso, financed the renovation of the Rialto Bridge in Venice for €5 million. On the other hand, the fashion industry was associated with such initiatives related to

1. Ivan Allegranti, "Fashion Shows in Archaeological Heritage Sites: Ruins under the Lens of International Treaties," Design/Arts/Culture 1 (2021): 1–2.

2. LVMH, "Fendi and the Great Wall of China: Cultural Connection," October 23, 2007.

3.Allegranti, "Fashion Shows in Archaeological Heritage Sites," 6–7.

heritage conservation as the Fendi for Fountains program and the Alda Fendi Foundation program aimed at the renovation and opening of the Arch of Janus in Rome, the restoration of mosaics in the Baths of Caracalla by Valentino, and the restoration of the Grand Palais in Paris by Chanel.[4] In terms of theory, the demonstration of fashion in the heritage environment may be regarded as much more than mere commercial display. The development of fashion exhibitions within museums and heritage spaces has contributed to discussions surrounding fashion museology and to new ways of understanding the relationship between clothing, exhibition, and space. [5] Within such settings, fashion is experienced in relation to the atmosphere and historical significance of the environment in which it is presented. In her view, Joanna Potvin says that the environment plays an important role in determining fashion performance, consumption, display, and appreciation. It therefore means that heritage space is more than a visual setting where the fashion experience takes place. It also means that the cultural and historical residues of the space form part of the interpretation of the items being shown in the environment.[6]

4. nss Staff, "When Fashion Invests in Cultural Heritage," nss magazine, October 13, 2022.

5. Lan Lan and Peng Liu, "Exhibiting Fashion on the Heritage Site: The Interrelation between Body, Heritage Space, and Fashionable Clothing," Humanities and Social Sciences Communications 10 (2023): 2.

6. Lan and Liu, "Exhibiting Fashion on the Heritage Site," 2–3.



Fig. 4.1.1. Renzo Rosso posing next to Rialto Bridge during the restoration, Venice

Fig. 4.1.2.Interior image of the Grand Palais during the restoration process, Paris.



Fig. 4.1.3. Installation of the Eiffel Tower inside Grand Palais, Paris for the Chanel 2017 Haute Couture show.

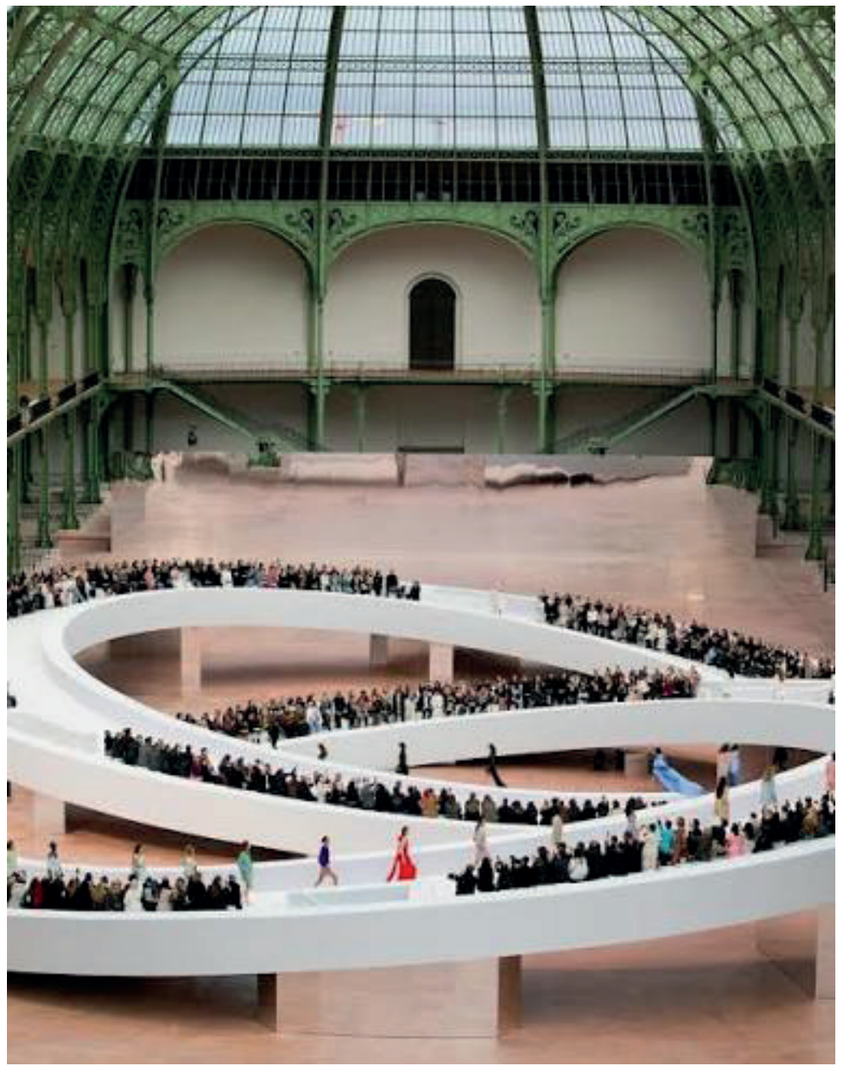


Fig. 4.1.4. Chanel Spring Summer 2025 fashion show runway installation inside the Grand Palais.



Fig. 4.1.5. Chanel r Fall 2017 Ready to Wear fashion show rocket shaped runway installation.

4.2 Fashion Shows in Historical & Cultural Venues











Fig. 4.2.1.1. Gucci Cruise 2019 set in Alyscamps necropolis in Arles

Fig. 4.2.1.2. Looks 86, 69, 44, and 60 (left to right)

4.2.1 Gucci Cruise 2019 in, Arles

Gucci presented its Cruise 2019 collection at the ancient necropolis of Alyscamps in Arles, in the south of France. The Alyscamps forms part of the UNESCO World Heritage property "Arles, Roman and Romanesque Monuments," which was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1981.[7]

Alessandro Michele has frequently expressed an interest in the relationship between history and contemporary culture. Reflecting on his attraction to historic settings, he stated, "To feel the contemporary, I need to know that something was there before. I need to touch it."[8]

This event happened at the Promenade des Alyscamps and included 114 looks. The collection combined historical, religious, and contemporary references, with imagery extending from nineteenth-century widow dress to rock culture.[9] It marked the first time that the Alyscamps had hosted a fashion show of this scale. Vogue also suggested that it may have been the first fashion show of any kind to take place in an ancient cemetery.[10]

7. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Arles, Roman and Romanesque Monuments," UNESCO, accessed October 10, 2021.

8. Nicole Phelps, "Exclusive: Gucci to Present Its Cruise 2019 Collection in Arles, France, on May 30," Vogue, December 11, 2017.

9. Samantha Conti, "Gucci Cruise 2019," WWD, May 31, 2018.

10. Phelps, "Exclusive: Gucci to Present Its Cruise 2019 Collection in Arles."











Fig. 4.2.2.1. Light installation on the Pyramids of Giza for the Dior Pre Fall 2023 men's show.

Fig. 4.2.2.2. Looks 4, 3, 2, and 13, (from left to right)

4.2.2 Dior Men Fall/Winter 2023 Giza

The Dior Men's Pre-Fall 2023 fashion show took place at the Pyramids of Giza, near Cairo, Egypt. The Great Pyramid of Giza is the only survivor of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Giza Pyramids Complex belongs to the UNESCO World Heritage property "Memphis and its Necropolis, the Pyramid Fields from Giza to Dahshur," inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979.[11] Dior's Men's Pre-Fall 2023 collection shows influences from astronomy, science fiction, and retro-futurism. Kim Jones, who serves as the creative director of Dior Men, mentioned his great fascination with Frank Herbert's Dune as well. Space exploration ideas were further strengthened by technical details designed in collaboration with NASA.[12] Dior celebrated its 75th anniversary through the use of 75 models, since Christian Dior founded the company in 1947.[13]

The date of the event corresponds to the 100th anniversary of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb by Howard Carter in 1922.[14] In the preparation process of this event, the CEO of Dior, Pietro Beccari, has interacted with organizations related to Egyptian culture and tourism. Beccari explained that it was during such discussions that he realized the necessity of adopting a new concept in respect of this ancient place, and thus decided to organize this event in Giza.[15]

Rather than competing with architecture, the scenography relied more on the components of the landscape itself and on the pyramids as well. Light design highlighted the outlines and geometrical forms of the pyramids during the night, emphasizing the divine nature of the collection.[16]

11. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Memphis and Its Necropolis – the Pyramid Fields from Giza to Dahshur," UNESCO, accessed September 7, 2021.

12. Sarah Mower, "Dior Men's Pre-Fall 2023," Vogue, December 3, 2022.

13. Mower, "Dior Men's Pre-Fall 2023."

14. Mower, "Dior Men's Pre-Fall 2023."

15. WWD, "Dior Heads to the Pyramids With a Space-Themed Men's Collection," December 4, 2022.

16. WWD, "Dior Heads to the Pyramids."











Fig. 4.2.3.1. Exterior view of the Temple of Venus and Rome.

Fig. 4.2.3.2. Looks 13, 5, 14, and 23, (from left to right), Fendi Fall 2019 Couture show.

4.2.3 Fendi Couture 2019 in Rome

In 2019, the Fendi brand unveiled its Couture collection in the Temple of Venus and Roma located in the center of Rome.[17] It was planned to be a homage to Karl Lagerfeld who had designed for the fashion brand for 54 years until his death. The collection contained 54 outfits designed for each year of Lagerfeld's collaboration with Fendi.[18] As mentioned by the Fendi CEO, Serge Brunschwig, the show was meant to pay tribute not only to the designer but also "to the relationship between Fendi and Rome" because the fashion house originated from there.[19]

The Temple of Venus and Roma was constructed in the time of Hadrian's rule in the second century AD.[20] It is situated in the Historic Centre of Rome, which was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1980. The World Heritage property was expanded in 1990.[21] In the context of the above-mentioned event, Fendi stated its €2.5 million contribution towards the renovation of the Temple of Venus and Roma.[22]

17. CNN, "Fendi Stages Couture Fashion Show Amid Ruins of Ancient Rome," July 5, 2019.

18. CNN, "Fendi Stages Couture Fashion Show."

19. CNN, "Fendi Stages Couture Fashion Show."

20. CNN, "Fendi Stages Couture Fashion Show."

21. 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," UNESCO.

22. CNN, "Fendi Stages Couture Fashion Show."









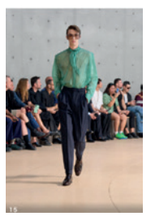


Fig. 4.2.4.1. "Clinamen" installation by Céleste Boursier-Mougenot inside the Bourse de Commerce.

Fig. 4.2.4.2. Looks 3, 26, 38, and 15, (from left to right), Saint Laurent Spring 2026 menswear.

4.2.4 Saint Laurent Spring/Summer 2026 in Bourse de Commerce

The Saint Laurent Spring/Summer 2026 menswear runway show was created by Anthony Vaccarello, who is the creative director of Saint Laurent. The runway show took place in the Bourse de Commerce in Paris.[23] The circular building of the Bourse de Commerce was built from 1763 to 1767 as a grain exchange.[24]

However, the building then underwent a renovation that was carried out by Japanese architect Tadao Ando to convert the building into a contemporary art museum. In this renovation, a cylinder made of concrete nine metres high and thirty metres in diameter was installed under the historic dome. The cylinder forms the exhibition space while creating a dialogue between the historic building and its new museum purpose.[25]

Clinamen, an audio installation by French artist Céleste Boursier-Mougenot, was used to organize the runway for the show. Although Saint Laurent usually organizes its runway shows at night time, Vaccarello opted to use daylight on this particular occasion.[26] Thus, through their combination, the architectural heritage of the Bourse de Commerce building, Ando's contemporary project, light, and Boursier-Mougenot's work played the role of scenographic elements instead of just setting the scene for the runway show. According to Saint Laurent, this created "a suspended moment, somewhere between Paris and Fire Island."[27]

23. designboom, "Tadao Ando's Bourse de Commerce Sets Stage for Saint Laurent Men's Summer 26 Show in Paris," June 25, 2025.

24. Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection, "A Preserved Heritage Brought Back to Life," accessed August 20, 2026.

25. Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection, "Trois années de transformation," accessed August 20, 2026.

26. designboom, "Tadao Ando's Bourse de Commerce Sets Stage."

27. designboom, "Tadao Ando's Bourse de Commerce Sets Stage."

4.3 Fashion Exhibitions in Heritage Sites

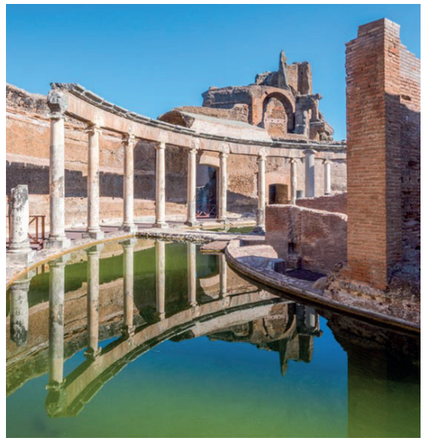










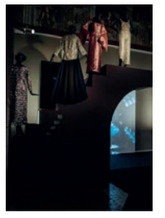
Fig. 4.3.1.1. Interior view of the Teatro Maritimo

Fig. 4.3.1.2. The jewelry collection of Dolce &Gabbana "Alta Gioielleria" Collection









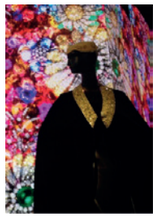


Fig. 4.3.2.1. Exterior view of the Castel Sant'Angelo

Fig. 4.3.2.2. Images From the Bvlgari Exhibition

4.3.1 Dolce & Gabbana, Villa Adriana

The Grand Tour d' Italia (Italian Grand Tour) started in 2012 by Dolce & Gabbana. This is an attempt to establish a dialogue between cultural heritage of Italy and the traditions of fashion design of the house. Locations, where previous exhibitions were placed, include cities as Taormina, Venice, Naples, Como, Syracuse, Alberobello, and Nora.[28]

For 2025, Villa Adriana in Tivoli served as the site where Alta Gioielleria collection of the fashion house was presented in Teatro Marittimo.[29] This collection pays homage to Rome and takes its inspiration from Hadrian the emperor and the Roman art legacy. The collection contains numerous references to antiquity; there are patterns, taken from Hadrianic coins and columns from classical architecture.[30]

The organization of the event was carried out in close collaboration with the administration of the Capitoline, with the participation of Italian Ministry of Culture, including its Department for Cultural Heritage Enhancement and Directorate General for Museums.[31]

28. Roma Capitale, "Dolce&Gabbana Porta l'Alta Moda a Roma," April 30, 2025.

29. Roma Capitale, "Dolce&Gabbana Porta l'Alta Moda a Roma."

30. Dolce & Gabbana, "Alta Gioielleria Roma," accessed August 15, 2026.

31. Roma Capitale, "Dolce&Gabbana Porta l'Alta Moda a Roma."

32. Alberto Calabrese, "Bulgari: una nuova mostra a Roma," Vogue Italia, June 26, 2019.

33. Calabrese, "Bulgari: una nuova mostra a Roma."

34. Direzione Musei Nazionali della Città di Roma, "Museo Nazionale di Castel Sant'Angelo," Ministero della Cultura, accessed August 20, 2026.

35. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Historic Centre of Rome."

4.3.2 Bvlgari, Castel Sant'Angelo

In 2019, Bvlgari held an exhibition called "Bvlgari, la storia, il sogno" in two important heritage buildings in Rome. It took place in Palazzo Venezia and Castel Sant'Angelo. Curated by Chiara Ottaviano, the exhibition was devoted to the history of the Roman fashion house, founded in 1884, and its transformation into a globally renowned luxury brand.[32] The exhibit included the collection of Bvlgari jewelry along with haute couture clothing by such fashion designers as Gianni Versace, Mila Schön, Roberto Capucci, and Valentino.[33]

The Castel Sant'Angelo is the former Mausoleum of Hadrian built by the order of Emperor Hadrian in the second century AD as a mausoleum for himself and his family.[34] The monument is located in the historic center of Rome, which was included in the World Heritage List of UNESCO in 1980. The property was later extended in 1990.[35]











Fig. 4.3.3.1. Exterior view of the Musée Maillol

Fig. 4.3.3.2. Images From the Gianni Versace Retrospective exhibition

4.3.3. Gianni Versace Retrospective, Musée Maillol

The Gianni Versace Retrospective is organized by Saskia Lubnow and Karl von der Ahé at the Musée Maillol in Paris.[36] This takes place from June 5 to October 31, 2026.[37] It features almost 450 items, comprising original works and silhouettes, accessories, sketches, decorative objects, photos, films, and rare interviews. This is the first large-scale French retrospective of Gianni Versace since 1986.[38]

The Musée Maillol was founded in 1995 and offers a historical venue for the retrospective.[39] In this way, this exhibition creates a museum context for Versace's work that is not typical for fashion trade shows or runway collections.

36. Musée Maillol, "Gianni Versace Retrospective," accessed August 20, 2026.

37. Paris je t'aime, "Gianni Versace Retrospective," accessed August 15, 2026.

38. Musée Maillol, "Gianni Versace Retrospective."

39. Musée Maillol, "Toutes les expositions," accessed August 20, 2026.

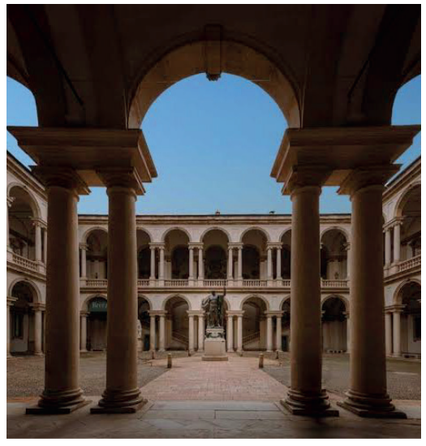










Fig. 4.3.4.1. View from the courtyard of the Pinacoteca di Brera

Fig. 4.3.4.2. Images From the "Giorgio Armani: Milano, per amore" exhibition

4.3.4. Giorgio Armani, Pinacoteca di Brera

As part of celebrations in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of the creative activity of Giorgio Armani, the Pinacoteca di Brera hosted its first exhibition dedicated to the stylistic evolution of the designer. "Giorgio Armani: Milano, per amore" took place from September 24, 2025, to May 3, 2026, and featured over 120 designs by the designer exhibited with pieces from the permanent collection of the museum in an effort to juxtapose painting and fashion history.[40] Since the passing of Giorgio Armani just before the opening of the exhibition, the exhibition has also gained a memorial character for the designer.

The decision to organise the exhibition at the Pinacoteca di Brera was linked to Armani's connection to Milan and to the Brera district, where he chose to spend most of his life and conduct his professional activity. Armani was fond of this part of Milan and its cultural perimeter, elegance, and artistic freedom.[41]

The Pinacoteca di Brera is dated back to 1809 when it was founded during the Napoleonic period. Its foundation was closely related to the creation of the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera that was founded in 1776.[42] This is what made the positioning of Armani's clothes in this old institution a confrontation between a modern fashion archive and the existing archive of Italian art.

40. Pinacoteca di Brera, "Giorgio Armani: Milano, per amore," accessed August 20, 2026.

41. Pinacoteca di Brera, "Giorgio Armani: Milano, per amore."

42. Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, "Comitato Nazionale per il Bicentenario di Brera: Profilo Storico," 2009.

4.4. Fashion Exhibitions in Heritage Sites



Fig. 4.4.1.1. Aerial view of the Temple of Concordia.

4.4.1. Dolce & Gabbana, The Valley of the Temples

The Dolce & Gabbana Alta Moda collection show was held at the Valley of the Temples in Agrigento, with the runway located in front of the Temple of Concordia.[43] The collection was heavily inspired by the classical history of Sicily, featuring garments and accessories as well as images reflecting ancient Greek culture.[43]

The Temple of Concordia is dated to the 5th century BC and constitutes a part of the Archaeological Area of Agrigento, which was included into the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1997.[44] Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana claim that it took them two years to obtain permission to organize the event there.[45]

The Alta Moda event was more than just the runway show. While invited clients could view the garments available for purchasing or trying, the separate presentations of menswear and high jewelry were held.[46] In other words, the fashion show was accompanied by a private shopping experience set in the context of Agrigento.

43. Suzy Menkes, "Suzy Couture: Inspiration from Ancient Greece in Sicily," British Vogue, July 8, 2019.

44. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Archaeological Area of Agrigento," UNESCO, accessed August 20, 2026.

45. Menkes, "Suzy Couture."

46. Menkes, "Suzy Couture."



Fig. 4.4.2.1. Store front view of the Acne Studios Store in Norrmalmstorg Square.



Fig. 4.4.2.2. Interior of the store.

4.4.2. Acne Studios, Stockholm

The flagship store of Acne Studios was reopened in 2020 at Norrmalmstorg Square, Stockholm. The flagship store is located in a building which was initially a banking hall of Sveriges Kreditbank and witnessed the 1973 hostage situation that was linked to the invention of "Stockholm syndrome" phenomenon.[47] According to the creative director of Acne Studios, Jonny Johansson, the flagship store of his company is "a temple" that "belongs to no one but is owned by everyone."[48]

Prior occupants made certain modifications to the building that changed some of the characteristics of the original architecture. As part of renovation, Jonny Johansson decided to restore the architectural characteristics of the banking hall along with its neoclassicism. This included restoring the flooring of the building by installing Ekeberg marble floor.[49]

Thus, the renovation of the building included not only the restoration of the architectural characteristics of the building but also the incorporation of its contemporary characteristics in the form of Acne Studios.

47. Suzanne Lovell Inc., "Acne Studios Boutique Outdoes Itself!," July 10, 2021.

48. Suzanne Lovell Inc., "Acne Studios Boutique Outdoes Itself!"

49. Suzanne Lovell Inc., "Acne Studios Boutique Outdoes Itself!"







Fig. 4.4.3.1. Exterior of the pop upstore.

Fig. 4.4.3.2. Interior of the pop up store.

Fig. 4.4.3.3. View from the courtyard

4.4.3 Jacquemus Pop-up, Milan

A temporary retail installation in Milan was opened by Jacquemus in February 2022 as a part of its Jacquemus 24/24 installation. The temporary installation took place in the courtyard of Palazzo Clerici, an eighteenth century palace in the historic centre of Milan.[50] Palazzo Clerici is listed in the National Register of Cultural Heritage maintained by the Ministry of Culture of Italy.[51]

This retail installation differed from a regular luxury retailing store by using automated selling technique which reminded of a vending machine. Bags were kept separately in lockers and the customers could make the purchase via an electronic process, after which the purchased item would be taken out from the specified locker.[52] As Simon Porte Jacquemus said, the installation was "not just about buying", but an experience that broke down the barriers of luxury retail while remaining open to those people who came to experience it or to take pictures.[53]

50. Elle Decor Italia, "Jacquemus 24/24 a Milano," 2022.

51. Catalogo Generale dei Beni Culturali, "Palazzo Clerici, Milano," Ministero della Cultura, accessed August 15, 2026.

52. Elle Decor Italia, "Jacquemus 24/24 a Milano."

53. nss magazine, "Jacquemus Ha Aperto il Suo Pop-up a Milano," February 25, 2022.

5. Versace

5.1 History of the Brand Versace

Even before the Versace company was created, there was the Versace family business. Gianni Versace learned about fashion when he was growing up in Reggio Calabria in the 1950s from his mother, who owned a dress workshop; it was there that is where he gained the basics of making clothes. which he later used in all aspects of his professional work so much did he value these practical skills that even at the peak of his fame he called himself a tailor rather than a designer. Both of his siblings entered the workshop for other purposes: his brother Santo took care of the management aspect of the business in the future, and his sister Donatella, who was his closest collaborator in life, joined the workshop as well. [1]

Versace's move to northern italy in 1972 marked a turning point in his career. In 1973 he began working as a designer for the Genny and Callaghan label, and in 1974 he helped launch the Complice label. On 28 March 1978, however, he put his years of experience to use and unveiled his own brand. The debut was staged at the Palazzo della Permanente, an art museum in Milan, where he presented his signature womenswear collection. He subsequently opened a boutique on Via della Spiga, where he showcased his menswear collections.[2]

From its logo to its textile patterns, the brand drew on a wide range of historical references and mythology, and in doing so built a powerful visual language.[3] Between 1980 and 1990 in particular, the house made moves bold enough to unsettle more traditional fashion houses, turning its aesthetic sensibility toward popular culture, music, and modern art. One such move was Gianni's 1982 invention of *oroton*, an innovative fabric made of interlocking metal elements.[4]

1. Andrea Vigneri, "La storia della moda italiana: Versace," Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana, August 24, 2012, https://www.cameramoda.it/it/associazione/news/917/.

2. "Versace," Made-In-Italy.com, published November 30, 2017, https://www.made-in-italy.com/italian-fashion/designers-and-brands/versace/.

3. Vigneri, "La storia della moda italiana: Versace."

4. Vigneri, "La storia della moda italiana: Versace."

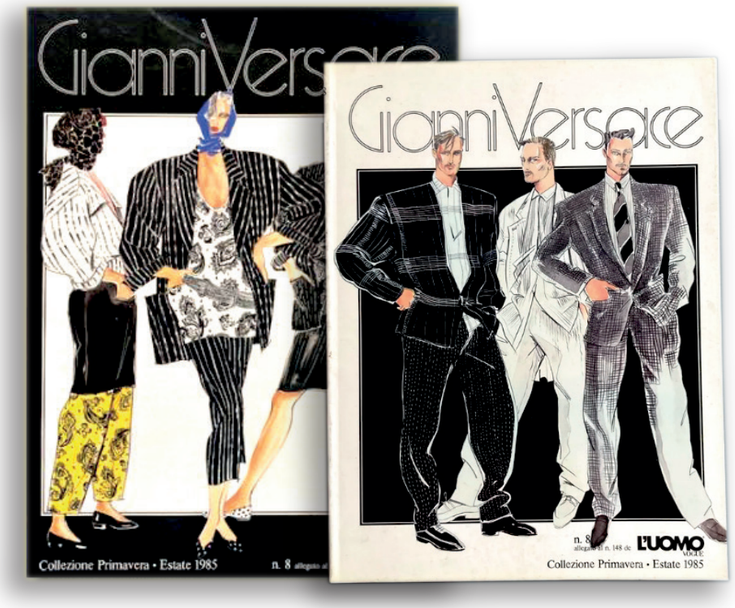


Fig. 5.1.1 Gianni Versace Spring/Summer Collection Catalogue from 1985 for womenswear

Fig. 5.1.2. Gianni Versace Spring/Summer Collection Catalogue from 1985 for Menswear



Fig. 5.1.3 Gianni Versace in Milan 1980.



Fig. 5.1.4 Gianni Versace in Milan 1980.

The runway shows and advertisements of Versace also helped to bring about the supermodels. Models who included Stephanie Seymour, Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford, Claudia Schiffer, and Elle MacPherson were closely linked to Versace and appeared in the company's runway shows and advertisements shot by photographers like Richard Avedon and Mario Testino. [5]

Gianni's assassination in Miami Beach on 15 July 1997 pushed the brand into a profound transformation. Donatella Versace took over as the house's creative director in Gianni's place, while their brother Santo became chief executive officer (CEO). The house was renamed simply Versace. Under Donatella's leadership, the house continued to bring Gianni's bold aesthetic to global markets.[6]

Prada Group finished the purchase of Versace from Capri Holdings in December 2025, after the deal was finalized in the same year at an enterprise value of €1.25 billion.[7] The purchase was consummated in December 2025. [8] Donatella Versace resigned from her position in March 2025 as the brand's Creative Director. Dario Vitale, who was Design Director at Miu Miu until that time, replaced her position in april 2025 but resigned from his position just eight months later.[9] Pieter Mulier was also later appointed as the Chief Creative Officer at Versace on July 1, 2026.[10] He will present his first collection for Versace early next year in 2027.[11]

5. Vigneri, "La storia della moda italiana: Versace."

6. Redazione, "Versace, la storia di un logo mitologico," Pixartprinting Blog, April 3, 2020, https://www.pixartprinting.it/blog/brand-versace-evoluzione/.

7. Prada Group, "Prada Group's Agreement for the Acquisition of Versace," press release, April 10, 2025, https://www.pradagroup.com/en/news-media/press-releases-documents/2025/25-04-10-prada-group-versace.html.

8. Prada Group, "Announcement of Completion of Acquisition of the Versace Group," December 2, 2025.

9. Agence France-Presse, "Pieter Mulier Named New Versace Creative Head," Philstar.com, February 8, 2026.

10. Prada Group, FY 2025 Analyst Presentation, 2026.

11. Reuters, "Prada Plans to Cut Outlets, Lower Prices at Versace," March 5, 2026.

Fig. 5.1.5 Gianni Versace with Naomi Campbell and Carla Bruni in London for The Rainforest Foundation, 1992.

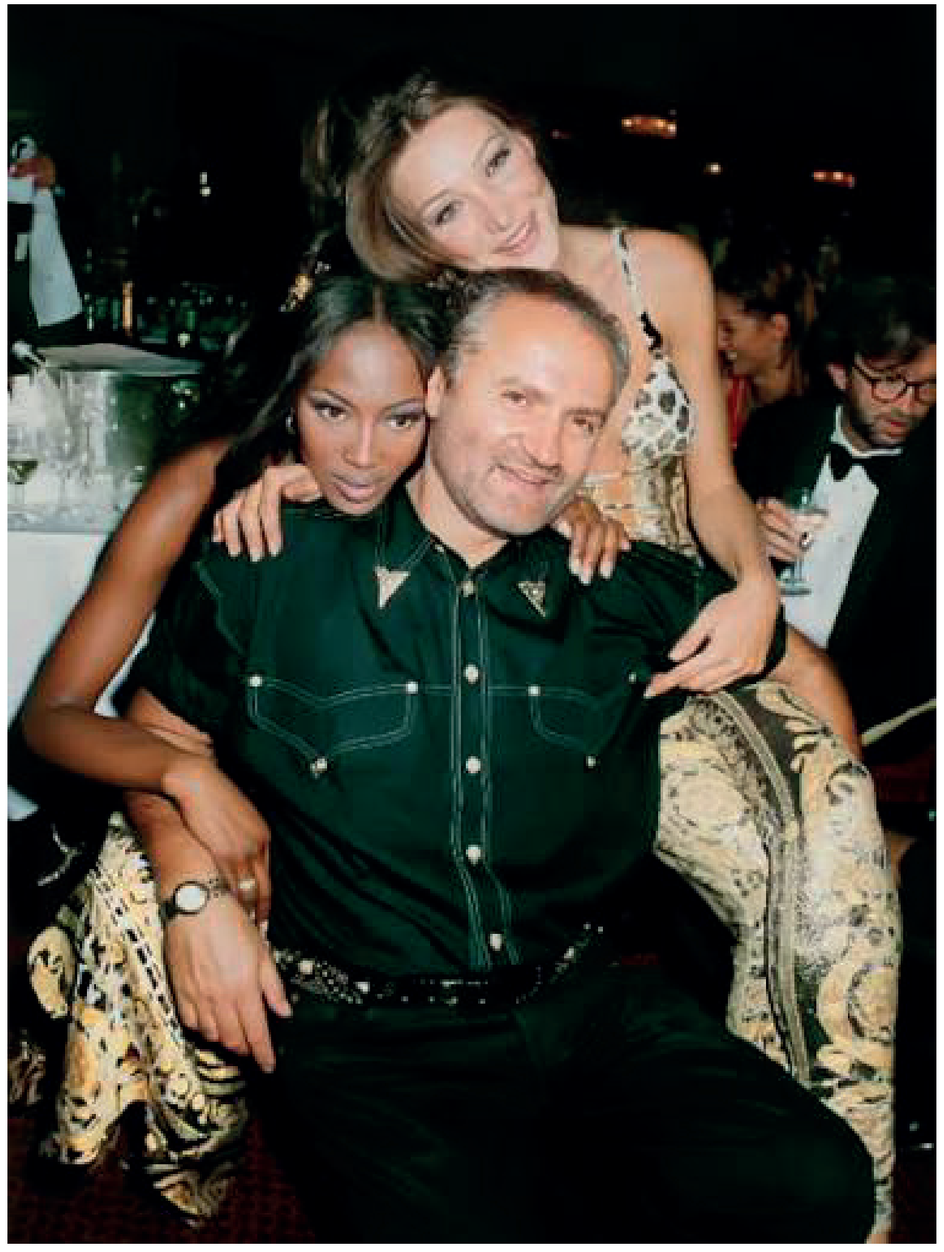




Fig. 5.1.6 Gianni Versace with the supermodels 1990's.

5.2. Cultural & Aesthetic Roots of the House

Gianni Versace is from Reggio Calabria, which is located in southern Italy. This region was considered part of Magna Graecia. The result of being brought up in this setting is that he was able to be influenced by the heritage of Magna Graecia. In fact, he stated that he read the Aeneid, the Odyssey, and the Iliad. Versace wasn't a brand that used classicism in a literal way by replicating it but rather through reinterpreting and transforming it. [12]

In Versace's Atelier, the fabric treatment was not only by the classical motifs its was inspired by greco, roman art more commonly in hellenistic style.[13] For example, one of the key elementst of hellenistic sculptures is the realistic draping on the dresses where it almost melt into the sculpture highlighting human body. [14] Versace, who was deeply iinfluencedby this, took this element and applied it in his designs, using the wet draping technique to develop a sculptured design.[15]

These influences led the brandto be eclectic. (mixing different styles from different historical eras)[16] Through its collection versace used different time elements and different locations in order to create the ultimate confident and provocative woman.[17] Infact As anna wintour, editor-in-chief of U.S. Vogue, stated: "Armani dresses the wife and Versace dresses the mistress."[18] This eclecticism also extended to material innovation: when Gianni invented the oroton fabric in 1982, the result was not only technically innovative but visually representing a way of a gladiator armor.[19] As such, these elements combined gave Versace the ability to build a visual language where classical allusions, pop culture, material innovation, and the body would be constantly reinterpreted rather than merely replicated. [20]

12. Giulia Corrente, "Wearing Magna Graecia, Wearing Versace" (paper presented at Wearing Antiquity: Modern Fashion and the Past, 2000 BCE–1000 CE, IX International Conference Imagines, Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, March 19–21, 2025).

13. Museo del Traje, Madrid, "15 Years without Gianni Versace," Google Arts & Culture, accessed August 17, 2026, https://artsandculture.google.com/story/15-years-without-gianni-versace-museo-del-traje-madrid/3AWRLWqxOH5qIg?hl=en.

14. Museo del Traje, Madrid, "15 Years without Gianni Versace."

15. Museo del Traje, Madrid, "15 Years without Gianni Versace."

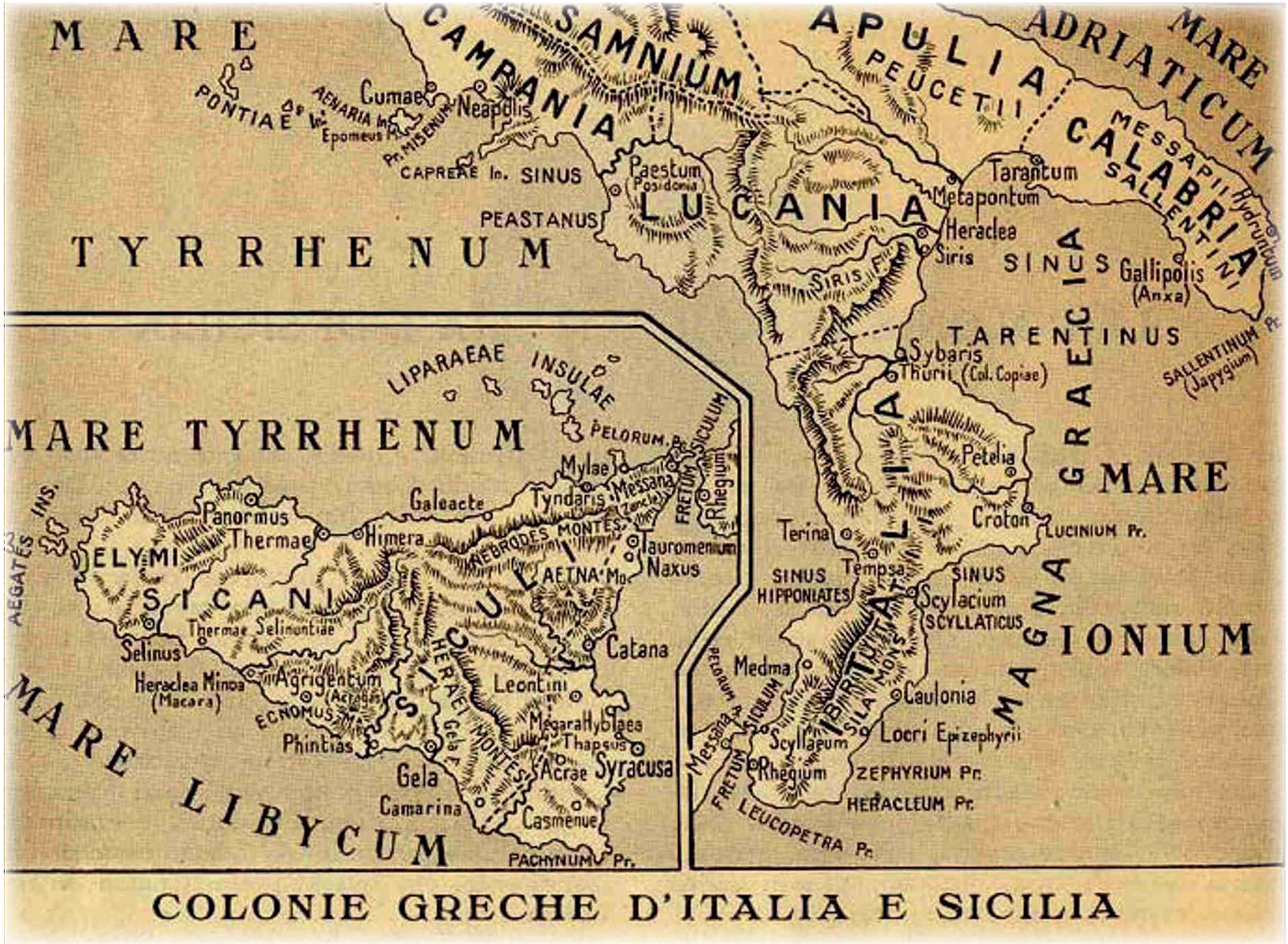
16. Vigneri, "La storia della moda italiana: Versace."

17. Vigneri, "La storia della moda italiana: Versace."

18. Anna Wintour, quoted in Roxy Lola, "Happy Birthday Donatella: Her Most Iconic Quotes," 10 Magazine, May 2, 2018, https://10magazine.com/happy-birthday-donatella-her-most-iconic-quotes/.

19. Vigneri, "La storia della moda italiana: Versace."

20. Vigneri, "La storia della moda italiana: Versace."



COLONIE GRECHE D'ITALIA E SICILIA

Fig. 5.2.1. Map of Magna Grecia, focused on the colonies in Italy.



Fig. 5.2.2. Terra cotta fragmnts of meander motif, (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria)



Fig. 5.2.3. Head of Basilea, dating 460-450 BC, (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria)



Fig. 5.2.4. Bronze statue of "Older Warrior" dating 435 BC (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria)

5.3 Symbology and Classical Iconography

5.3.1 Medusa

In 1993, Gianni Versace designed the Medusa and came up with the logo himself. This was a very powerful move in terms of classical dialogue.As a child, Gianni often played on the floor of ancient ruins in Reggio Calabria, where a Medusa head was found; this experience is said to have inspired his later choice of logo. Being the inspiration, Gianni also chose the logo for its meaning. In mythology, Medusa had a deep charm, and, in the softer reading Versace himself is said to have preferred, whoever fell for her could never go back; in the classical myth itself, anyone who looked into her eyes was turned to stone.He wanted his clothing and his brand to attract clients at first glance. This also changed the basic perception of Medusa, separating her from her fearsome image and turning her into a symbol of luxury, glamour, and seduction; Medusa appeared everywhere, from clothing to home accessories.[21]

21. Emily Harper, "Versace Logo and Its Golden History: Everything You Need to Know," Logo.com, May 3, 2023.



Fig. 5.3.1. Ancient mosaic of Medusa from 117-138. AD, at Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Boston (USA)



Fig. 5.3.2. Ancient Roman mosaic of Medusa from Tarraco at museum of tarragona (Spain) from 3rd century AD



Fig. 5.3.3. Ancient mosaic of Medusa from 115-150. AD, at The J. Paul Getty Museum (USA)



Fig. 5.3.4. Medusa mosaic Opus Sectile sytle, 1st century AD from ancient city of Kibyra, Burdur (Turkey)

Fig. 5.3.5. Mosaic floor of an house with a medusa figure from 2nd century AD National Archaeological Museum (Greece)



Fig. 5.3.6. Medusa mosaic from 3rd centurt AD from ancient city of perge, Antalya (Turkey)

5.3.2 The Greek key pattern

The Greek key pattern, also known as the meander (a linear, continuous geometric pattern), is the classic design pattern choice in the house of Versace. Gianni Versace integrated this motif into the brand in the Fall/Winter 1988 collection. As an impactful design element between history and the luxury of modernity, this pattern became a permanent part of the brand's core DNA, from home decorations to metal hardware.[22]

Gianni Versace was a collector of Antique South Italian Greek vases, and this fascination made him analyze the design, pattern, and painting of these vases. As an archaeologist specialized in the classical period, Vinnie Nørskov notes that one such vase carried "the meander that carries a motif with four rectangles with a dot which became popular on South Italian vases from around 360 BC."[23]

5.3.3 Medusa and the Greek key Combined

Versace often combined the Greek key pattern with the Medusa head, framing Medusa in a circular way. It is thus both a reference to classical antiquity as well as a visual representation of allure and seduction, traits that are intrinsically tied to Versace's Medusa myth.[24]



Fig. 5.3.3.1. Versace Logo between 1993-1997



Fig. 5.3.3.2. Versace Logo Between 2008-onwards

22. Giulia Corrente, "Wearing Magna Graecia, Wearing Versace" (paper presented at Wearing Antiquity: Modern Fashion and the Past, 2000 BCE–1000 CE, IX International Conference Imagines, Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, March 19–21, 2025).

23. Vinnie Nørskov, "Gianni Versace — South Italian Vases in Fashion," in Ceramics in Context: Proceedings of the Internordic Colloquium on Ancient Pottery Held at Stockholm, 13–15 June 1997, ed. Charlotte Scheffer, Stockholm Studies in Classical Archaeology 12 (Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2001), 166.

24. Emily Harper, "Versace Logo and Its Golden History: Everything You Need to Know," Logo.com, May 3, 2023.



Fig. 5.3.3.3. Meander Motif carved into stone, in ephesus achaelogical site (Turkey)



Fig. 5.3.3.4. Meander motif in mosaic, from 4th century AD.(England).

5.4. Creative Direction Era's: Gianni, Donatella, Dario Vitale

5.4.1.Gianni Versace, The Birth of the Signature

Gianni Versace wasn't just the brand's founder, he was also the foundation of the brand. His approach to fashion was artistic, street style, and also provocative, but it always had a reason. Through his designs, Gianni wanted to challenge conventions and established boundaries; in fact, he stated: "You have to break a barrier every day. Fashion, to me, is born and dies every day."[25]

His way of breaking the rules was showcased on 11 May 1994, at the London premiere for the movie Four Weddings and a Funeral. That night he dressed actress Elizabeth Hurley in a bold, safety-pinned gown that was revealing from the sides, highlighting the actress's body. After that night, the dress was the topic talked about throughout the world. It became a global sensation. The term "safety pin dress" became iconic for the fashion brand and for fashion history.[26]

When Gianni Versace organized his Autumn/Winter 1991–1992 show, he had Naomi Campbell, Christy Turlington, Linda Evangelista, and Cindy Crawford hold hands and walk down the runway together, lip-syncing "Freedom '90" by George Michael. This moment redefined fashion history. Not only did he highlight the models, but he also incorporated a hit song into the runway. Gianni Versace wasn't only a designer; he also played a central role in creating the supermodel phenomenon and transforming the runway into a pop-culture spectacle.[27]

Fig. 5.4.1.1. Gianni Versace



25. George Pistachio, "'I Don't Believe in Good Taste': Gianni Versace's Top Quotes," AnOther, July 15, 2022.

26. Laird Borrelli-Persson, "Versace Spring 1994 Ready-to-Wear," Vogue, October 11, 1993.

27. Alex Kessler and Eni Subair, "How Many of These Iconic '90s Supermodel Catwalk Moments Do You Remember?," British Vogue, May 1, 2020.

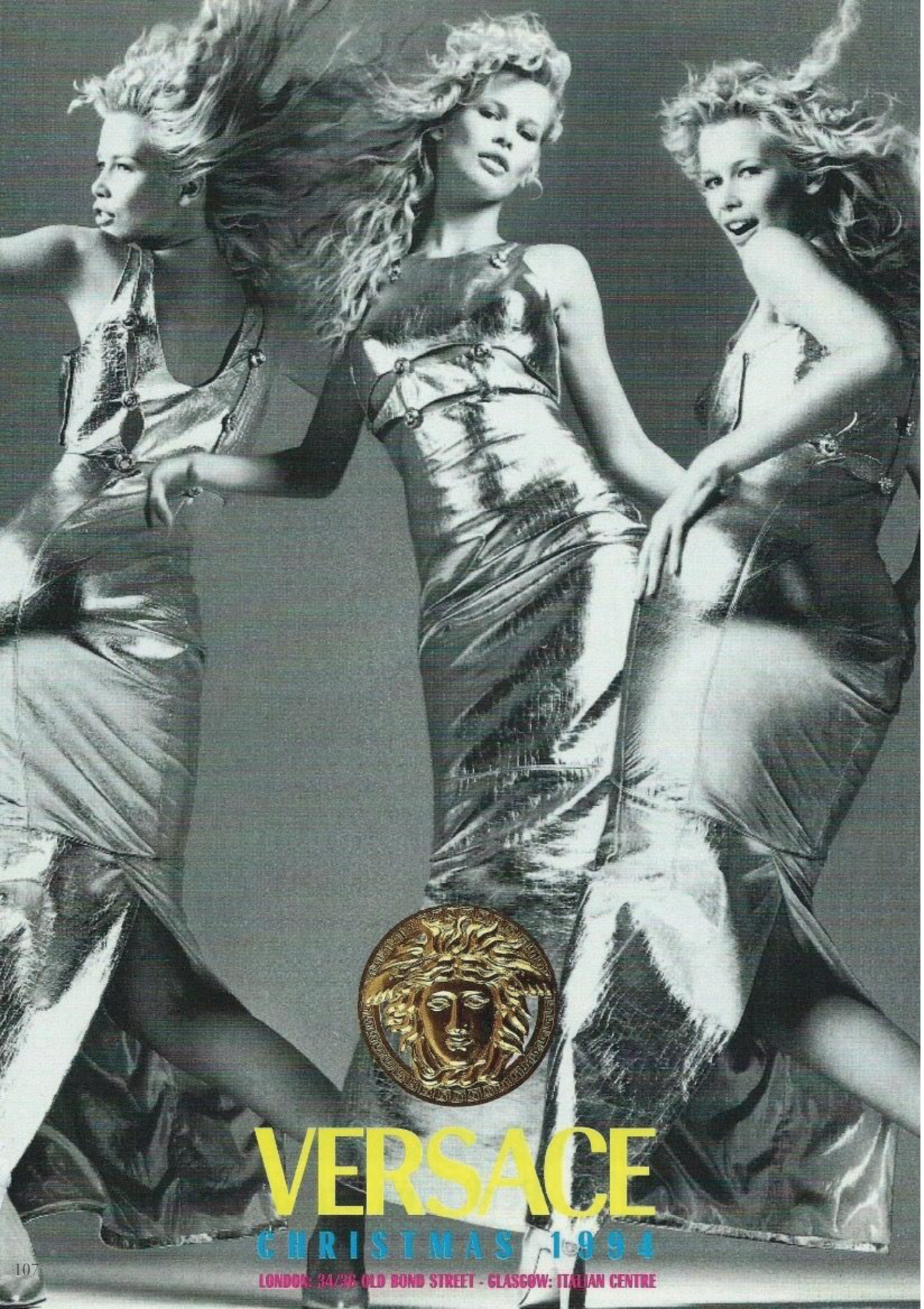


Fig. 5.4.1.2. Claudia schiffer for Versace, 1994 shot by Richard Avedon

Fig. 5.4.1.3. Linda Evangelista for Gianni Versace, 1991, by Irving Penn

Fig. 5.4.1.4 Linda Evangelista for Gianni Versace, Early 1990's







Fig. 5.4.1.5. Nadja Auermann, Christy Turlington, Claudia Schiffer, Cindy Crawford, Stephanie Seymour posing for Gianni Versace, 1994 by Richard Avedon

5.4.2. Donatella Versace, Continuing the Legacy

Following the tragic assassination of Gianni on 15 July 1997, Donatella Versace inherited the fashion house. However, even prior to this tragedy, from 1993 onwards, Donatella Versace was in charge as the creative director of the Versace diffusion brand, Versus. Versus, which had been founded back in 1989, featured a style that contrasted with the style of Gianni Versace; Donatella did not mimic her brother, but developed her unique style through the Versus brand.[28] After Donatella became the creative director of the brand, she marked another historical moment for Versace and fashion history. On 24 February 2000, she dressed Jennifer Lopez for the Grammy Awards. The dress, called the jungle dress, was sexy, fluid, and modern. This dress caused an overwhelming global sensation, so much so that it became the most searched dress on Google at the time, leading Google to develop "Google Images" for people to search for it.[29]

Nearly twenty years later, in Milan, Jennifer Lopez walked down the Versace Spring 2020 runway in a new interpretation of the famous jungle dress that had inspired Google Images.[30]During the Donatella era, the brand expanded into all categories, including fragrances, home decor, and even hospitality. In 2000, Versace opened its hotel, so called Palazzo Versace, on the Australian coast, and then in 2015 Versace opened another luxury hotel in Dubai. Both hotels had a striking interior design with baroque interiors and custom furniture.[31] Donatella famously stated: "In Italian there is an expression: we don't sleep on the fame,"[32] meaning that the brand never relied on past achievements or stood still, but instead always moved forward and pushed the boundaries of innovation.

Fig. 5.4.2.1. Donatella Versace



28. Marie Périer, "Le style de Donatella Versace dans les années 90," Vogue France, March 13, 2025; "Versace, Donatella," Treccani, accessed August 21, 2026.

29. Vincenzo Riili, "18 Years after Google Images, the Versace Jungle Print Dress Is Back," Google, September 21, 2019.

30. Rachel Tashjian, "How Jennifer Lopez's Versace Dress Created Google Images," GQ, September 20, 2019.

31. Templeman, "Palazzo Versace," Let's Travel Magazine, 2014.

32. Templeman, "Palazzo Versace."

Marnay, Carolyn

n Meisel.

hen for Versace,

Versace, 2013,
Mert Alas and Marcus Piggott.



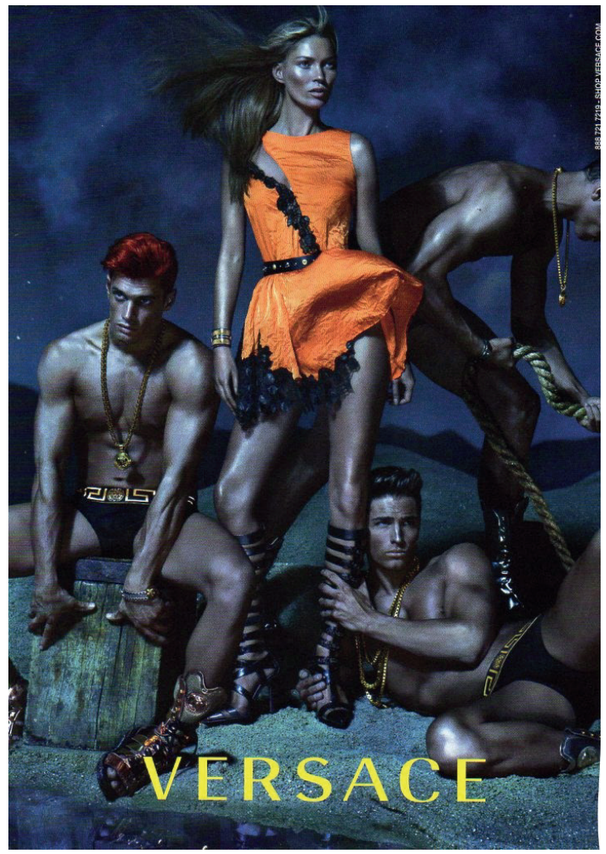




Fig. 5.4.2.5. Jennifer Lopez closign Versace Spring Summer 2020 runway show.



Fig. 5.4.2.6. Carla Bruni, Claudia Schiffer, Naomi Campbell,Cindy Crawford,Helena Christensen walking together along with Donatella Versace for Versace Spring Summer 2018 runway show.



Fig. 5.4.2.7. Lady Gaga for Versace, 2014, shot by Mert Alaş and Marcus Piggott.

This era of the brand really showed the differences between the two designers: Gianni's baroque and classical influences versus Donatella's rock and contemporary approach.[33] She continued producing successful work by collaborating with H&M in 2011, which created massive attention that led the collection to sell out within minutes.[34] However, her tribute collection (a special runway dedicated to a designer's legacy) to Gianni Versace was one of the most important moments of her career at the brand. In this show she reinterpreted Gianni's most iconic collections, from Trésor de la Mer to the Warhol prints; the collection had it all.[35] At the end of the show, "the supermodels" (Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford, Claudia Schiffer, Helena Christensen, and Carla Bruni) walked down the runway together.[36] However, on 13 March 2025, Donatella Versace announced that she was stepping down from her creative director position, nearly three decades after her brother's passing, saying: "It has been the greatest honour of my life to carry on my brother Gianni's legacy."[37]

33. Nicola Aprile, "Versace dopo Versace: Storia di una rivoluzione," The Walkman, November 8, 2020.

34. Max Sortino, "Versace e H&M," Vogue Italia, June 21, 2011.

35. Sally Singer, "Versace Spring 2018 Ready-to-Wear," Vogue, September 22, 2017.

36. "Milan Fashion Week: Versace Brings Back the Supermodels," Reuters, September 2017, republished by Gulf News.

37. Associated Press, "Donatella Versace Out as Creative Director of the Milan Fashion House, in a Shakeup by US Owner," March 13, 2025.

38. Sarah Kent, "Dario Vitale to Succeed Donatella Versace as Chief Creative Officer of Versace," The Business of Fashion, March 13, 2025.

39. Kirsty McGregor, "'Fun and Audacious': First Reactions to Dario Vitale's Versace Debut," Vogue, September 27, 2025.

40. McGregor, "'Fun and Audacious.'"

41. Associated Press, "Creative Director Dario Vitale Exits Versace Two Days after Prada's Acquisition," December 4, 2025.

42. Associated Press, "Creative Director Dario Vitale Exits Versace."

Fig. 54.3.1. Dario Vitale

54.3.Dario Vitale, a Transitional Era

Dario Vitale was appointed creative director of Versace in early 2025. His work at Miu Miu, where he was formerly the design and image director, was highly appreciated and had contributed to the brand's popularity and retail growth.[38] His first and only collection was the Spring/Summer 2026 show, which took place at the famous Pinacoteca Ambrosiana museum. In this show, Vitale showcased the essence of Versace: Gianni Versace-inspired prints and vintage Versus Versace cuts.[39] The collection generated considerable interest and was well received by several important fashion publications, although the reviews were not uniformly positive.[40] However, after Prada Group's acquisition, it was announced that Dario Vitale had exited the house of Versace. Timing was important in relation to the attention paid to his sole collection. As per Versace, the move from Dario was based on mutual agreement.[41] The following statement was made by the house: "It is our sincere pleasure to thank Dario for his excellent contribution towards the development of creative strategy of our brand and wish him all the success in future."[42]





Fig. 54.3.2. Versace Spring Summer 2026 Cmapaign shot by Steven Meisel

Fig. 54.3.3. Versace Spring Summer 2026 by Dario Vitale Look 50, Model Alex Consani



Fig. 54.3.4. Versace Spring Summer 2026 by Dario Vitale, Look 31.



Fig. 54.3.5. Versace Spring Summer 2026 by Dario Vitale, Look 12.



Fig. 54.3.6. Image from "Versace Embodied" project. Photographed by Camille Vivier.

5.5. Versace Home

The Versace Home collection was launched in 1992 by Gianni Versace, expanding the identity of the fashion label from just clothing to include the whole notion of lifestyle. Versace Home allowed the Maison to create an interior world built around luxury, tradition, and personal expression. [43]

"Is it really possible to live in a world entirely of one's own making, in a concrete manifesto of one's most authentic, deeply felt desires?"[44]Luxury Living Group, 2025

After Gianni's death in 1997, Donatella Versace took over the brand's creative direction position; she integrated the well-known Medusa head and classical motifs into the home collection. The collection utilizes the historical tradition of neoclassicism by rethinking the classical influences within the context of modern furniture. The company has been able to promote sustainability by the use of traceable materials, ethically acquired sources, low energy consumption, and concepts of the circular economy.[45]

The brand values the sculptural quality and construction of its furniture, paying homage to the brand's identity and archives. The Harem chair (2010, reinterpreted in 2025),[46] the Medusa Carezza bar cabinet,[47] and the Pop Medusa armchair[48] are some of the brand's interesting design pieces.

Today, the flagship Versace Home store in Milan is located at Via Durini 11, where the interior is designed like a residential home. Within the store, the Versace lifestyle is very evident: there is furniture, home accessories, outdoor furniture, and even tableware. With this store, Versace Home continues to showcase luxury and the "Versace state of mind" to the world.[49]

43. "Versace Home," Interni, accessed August 18, 2026; Luxury Living Group, "The Versace Art of Living," Luxury Living Group (blog), 2025.

44. Luxury Living Group, "The Versace Art of Living."

45. "Versace Home," Interni; Luxury Living Group, "The Versace Art of Living."

46. Luxury Living Group, "The Versace Art of Living."

47. "Versace Home Medusa Carezza Bar Cabinet," Used Design, accessed August 18, 2026.

48. "Versace Home Pop Medusa Chair," Luxury Living Group, accessed August 18, 2026.

49. "Versace Home," Interni; Luxury Living Group, "The Versace Art of Living."

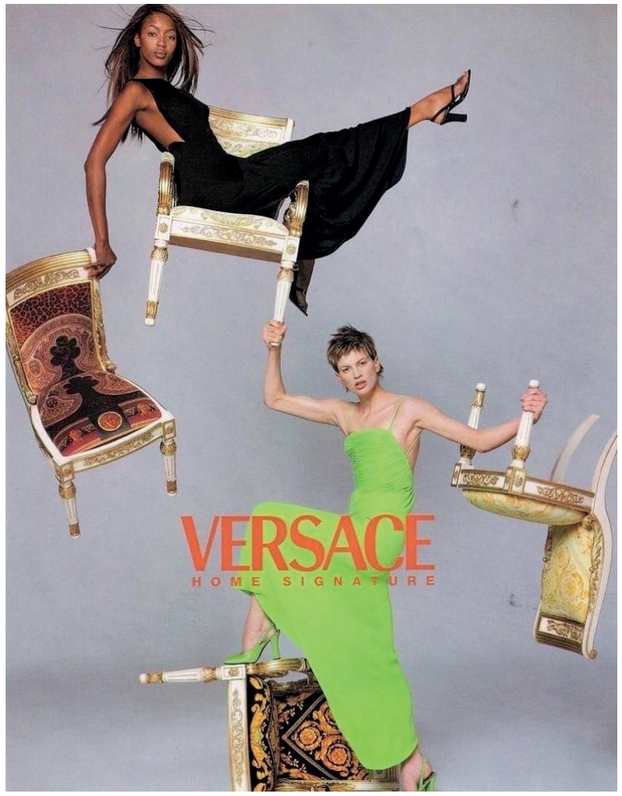


Fig. 5.5.1. Naomi Campbell, Kristen McMenamy posing for Versace Home Signature Spring /Summer 1996, shot by Steven Meisel.

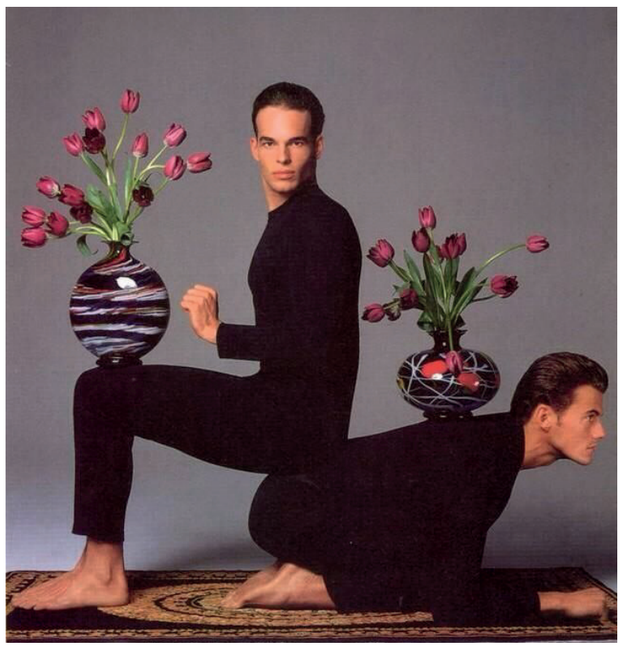




Fig. 5.5.2. Alex Lundqvist for Versace Home Signature (Lo Stile Casa), 1997, Campaign shot by Richard Avedon

Fig. 5.5.3. Joel West and Alex Lundqvist for Versace Home Signature (Lo Stile Casa), 1997, Campaign shot by Richard Avedon



Fig. 5.5.4. Christian Anderson for Versace Home Signature 1997, shot by Richard Avedon

Fig. 5.5.5. Versace Home, La Medusa Deco tall cabinet 2026 collection.

Fig. 5.5.6. Versace Home 'harem' chair 2010 collection.



Fig. 5.5.7. Versace Home pillows, 2026 collection

Fig. 5.5.8. Versace Rosenthal Barocco Mosaic set.

Fig. 5.5.9. Versace Home Table.

5.6 Versace Today: Critical Analysis of the Flagship Stores Worldwide

Source note: The factual information such as opening dates and architect is provided from the cited news articles and footnoted wherever there is an actual source. However, the description of materials and the analysis in the "Comment" sections are based on the author's personal observations from published images and store visits, unless any individual point of discussion has a direct reference from a source.



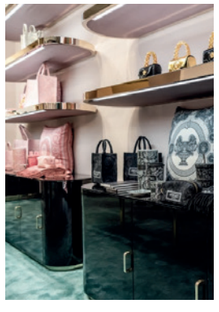




Fig. 5.6.1.1. Exterior view of Milano Versace Flagship Store

Fig. 5.6.1.2. Image from interior

Fig. 5.6.1.3. Image from dressing room

5.6.1. Milan Flagship Store

Location: Milan, Italy
Materials observed: Moquette (wall-to-wall carpet), chrome, plaster

Comments

The store has a contemporary and minimalist character. The use of light pink walls and dusty blue moquette flooring, together with contemporary LED and spotlight lighting, gives the interior a fresh atmosphere. On the dressing room the color choices leans more towards warmer. The walls are covered with gold suede textile with the same blue moquette that has been used in the rest of the store.

Fig. 5.6.2.1. Exterior view of the Paris flagship store

Fig. 5.6.2.2. Image From the interior

Fig. 5.6.2.3. Image From the interior

Fig. 5.6.2.4 Image From the interior

Fig. 5.6.2.5 Image From the interior











5.6.2. Paris Flagship Store

Location: Paris, France
Architect: Gwenaël Nicolas[50]
Opening: December 2020[50]
Materials observed: Marble, chrome, glass

Comments

The store has three levels of flooring, thus creating a luxurious feeling for the customer. There is a deconstructed Greek key motif used on the floor, thus providing a clear connection to the brand. The neutral walls do not create any unnecessary fuss, thereby letting the materials take the center stage. The chrome shelving is either champagne colored or silver depending on the warmness of the light. One of the most noticeable elements in the design is the lighting; here, the designer has taken the Baroque designs from the Versace's Baroque motifs and created a glass chandelier that comprises the forms being repeated all over the ceiling.[51] On the upper level, there is a shoe-changing area that includes two blue chairs with velvet, dusty blue carpet, and blue marble on the wall. Above this area, there is a Medusa head placed on the ceiling, looking down at the floor.

50. Francesca Gugliotta, "Gwenael Nicolas: 'How I Design the Versace Stores,'" IFDM, May 18, 2021; "Versace Paris," Curiosity, February 12, 2021.

51. Gugliotta, "Gwenael Nicolas." The designer describes the chandelier as being formed from repeated Baroque motifs from the Versace collection, shaped in glass and extended across the ceiling.











Fig. 5.6.3.1. Exterior view of Versace London Flagship Store

Fig. 5.6.3.2. Image From the interior

Fig. 5.6.3.3. Image From the interior

Fig. 5.6.3.4. Image From the interior

Fig. 5.6.3.5. Image From the interior

5.6.3. London Flagship Store

Location: London, United Kingdom
Architect: Gwenaël Nicolas[52]
Opening: December 2020[52]
Materials observed: Marble, chrome, wood

Comments
This store is located on historic New Bond Street, inside an older building. Since the building has historical character, there was relatively little intervention to its external appearance. However, the interior has almost no visible historical features; the design approach and color choices are quite neutral. The window displays are made of white Venus marble, while custom eucalyptus wood flooring continues through the interior.[52] The ceiling has a black graphic pattern with spotlights. There are two types of clothing rack designs: one has a pipe-like structure attached to the wall and floor, while the other is attached only to the ceiling, both with gold-colored hardware. The furniture and carpet have a rich color reminiscent of both gold and olive green.

52. Andreas, "London: Versace Flagship Store Opening," Superfuture, December 10, 2020.



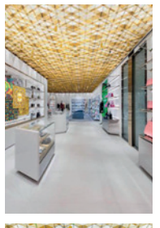








Fig. 5.6.4.1. Exterior view of Beijing Versace Flagship Store

Fig. 5.6.4.2. Image From the interior

Fig. 5.6.4.3. Image From the interior

Fig. 5.6.4.4. Image From the interior

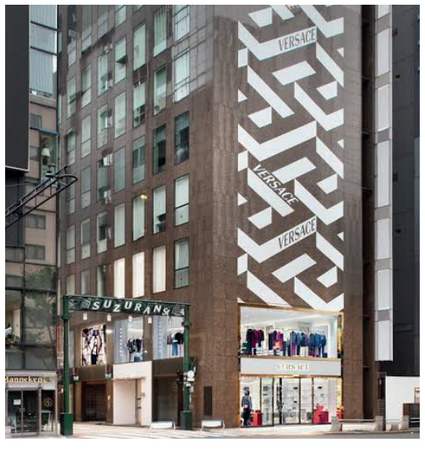
Fig. 5.6.4.5. Image From the interior

5.6.4. Beijing Flagship Store

Location: Beijing, China
Architect: Gwenaël Nicolas[53]
Opening: 2019[53]
Materials observed: Glass, marble, chrome, plaster, carpet, wood

Comments
This two-story store is located inside the China World shopping mall.[53] The store has a striking ombré effect on its geometric exterior, made of black triangles on a marble surface. The interior of the store has similar display designs, but in gold chrome; the hangers are designed like small bars extending to the ceiling, creating the impression that they are part of the ceiling. Some of the walls are plain white, while others are covered in marble. The furniture incorporates two different colors of velvet. In some areas, the fabric and carpet choices are dusty blue and gold, creating monochromatic compositions. The wood flooring is simple but geometric; however, the ceiling design is a geometric coffered form composed of a triangulated, gold-toned grid structure, creating a repeated triangular pattern.

53. "Versace Debuts New Beijing Flagship," WWD, June 28, 2019.





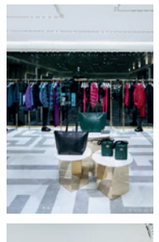


Fig. 5.6.5.1 Tokyo view of Tokyo Versace Flagship Store

Fig. 5.6.5.2 Image from the Interior

Fig. 5.6.5.3 Image from the Interior

Fig. 5.6.5.4. Image from the store front

Fig. 5.6.5.5. Image from the Interior





5.6.5. Tokyo Flagship Store

Location: Tokyo, Japan
Opening: September 2022[54]
Materials observed: Marble, chrome, plaster, mirror

Comments

The store is located in Ginza and opened as a new flagship in September 2022.[54] The Greek key motif is particularly prominent in this case. The exterior of the store is covered by the iconic Greek key motif, creating a continuous pattern across the façade. The interior has white fluted walls with chrome hardware on the displays, along with mirrored elements. The floor design is quite similar to that of the Paris flagship store. One of the most distinctive details of this store is the lighting design: similar to the floor design, the lighting clearly adapts the Greek key motif to the LED ceiling paneling. The placement of spotlights within the motif creates a subtle hidden light effect.

Fig. 5.6.6.1 Exterior view of Beverly Hills Versace Flagship Store

Fig. 5.6.6.2 Image from the Interior

Fig. 5.6.6.3 Image from the Interior

Fig. 5.6.6.4 Image from the Interior

Fig. 5.6.6.5. Image from the Interior











5.6.6. Los Angeles (Beverly Hills) Flagship Store

Location: Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, United States
Architect: Valerio Architects[55]
Opening: November 2022[56]
Materials observed: Marble, chrome, ceramics

Comments

The exterior of the store is quite simple: white marble cladding with gold framing around the doors and windows. The interior is quite similar to the Tokyo and Paris flagship stores, featuring fluted walls, a deconstructed Greek key motif on the floor, and chrome accents with gold finishes. The ceiling uses a similar design approach to the Tokyo flagship store; however, in this store, a large Medusa head is installed on the ceiling, creating a strong focal point within the interior, similar to the choice made in the Paris flagship store. The shoe display wall is covered with blue marble, with a matching armchair and carpet creating a monochromatic area. The dressing room combines Baroque gold wallpaper with silver moquette, showcasing the brand's characteristic opulence.

54. Makiko Awata, "ヴェルサーチェ、銀座・晴海通りにフラッグシップストアをオープン。," Vogue Japan, September 20, 2022.

55. "Versace Retail Store, Beverly Hills, CA," Ashok Kanagasundram Architect, accessed August 18, 2026.

56. "Versace Boutique in Los Angeles," Les Façons, November 29, 2022.

6. Concept & Design

6.1 Design Strategy: Versace × Villa Adriana

The main topic here was how a fashion brand could stage an event within an archaeological site without a full reconstruction, without permanently occupying or damaging the site, and while using Villa Adriana's historical importance, along with Hadrian's character and personal relationships, scenographically and only for the duration of the event. After researching Hadrian's life, his relationship with Antinous, and the site analysis carried out at Villa Adriana, the fit between Versace's identity and this remarkable site was undeniable. Also, the analysis revealed that pop-up events and fashion exhibitions had never before taken place without the presence of a fashion show at an archaeological site, which also showed that archaeological sites in the fashion context are used predominantly for runway shows. This led me to consider a design solution that would pay homage to the site but not violate its sanctity, even as it introduced the presence of the brand identity. The key guidelines upon which I based my design were the idea that all structures created for the site should be read within the context of the site and that there would be a dialogical relationship between the two, being completely ephemeral

In Villa Adriana I had certain places I wanted to see: the Teatro Marittimo, the Sala dei Filosofi and the Pecile. The three spaces are close together in the scale of Villa Adriana, which facilitated circulation for visitors and also allowed a continuous experience without breaking the flow of the design. The geometry of the Teatro Marittimo, its relationship with water, and its history led me to choose it as the space where I could display Versace's different eras and its most iconic garments. The Sala dei Filosofi was the perfect site for the pop-up store because of its direct connection to the Teatro Marittimo, its high walls, and its seven remarkable niches, all of which allowed the surrounding architectural character to be worked into the design. The geometry and scale of the Pecile, along with its historical use as a zen garden to calm visitors, led me toward a romantic landscape design there, featuring a pavilion alongside memorial gardens dedicated to Hadrian and Antinous.


0 25 50 100 m


0 25 50 100 m


Teatro Marittimo
Fashion Exhibition
Sala Dei Filosofi
Pop-up Store
Pecile
Garden of Hadrian
Pavillion
Garden of Antinous
0 25 50 100 m

6.2.Teatro Marittimo

The round geometry of the Teatro Marittimo, with the island at its centre that served as the emperor's private retreat, made this site more meaningful to me. This is a quiet site, surrounded only by circular shaped walls in opus reticulatum brickwork with two openings; today, only one of them, leading to the Sala dei Filosofi, is in use.

The idea for this area was to create a chronological exhibition of Versace, showcasing the brand's iconic looks from different eras. From the Jungle Dress to the Safety Pin Dress, this exhibition will host the brand's most remarkable moments. The philosophy behind this design came from merging Hadrian's classical world with Gianni Versace's neoclassical approach. The opulence of the gold and the mosaic effect of the floor, with its Greek key motif, somehow protects Hadrian's retreat while at the same time bringing light to the site, creating a visual dialogue between Emperor Hadrian and Gianni Versace. The typology of the design for this area came from Tadao Ando's Bourse de Commerce, where he created almost a second, contemporary skin within the historical context.

This approach led me to create a platform supported by adjustable deck pedestals. This system not only creates an even surface but also allows the desired materials to be laid on top. The material chosen for the flooring was brushed gold PVD stainless steel, with a Greek key motif that lights up in the evening. The wall is supported by tubular metal pipes inserted through CNC cut, high density rigid foam spacer blocks, finished with removable metal cladding panels, the same brushed gold PVD stainless steel used for the flooring.

6.3. Sala dei Filosofi

Sala dei Filosofi is an interesting site. According to the analysis, the archaeologists weren't fully certain about the function of this structure. However, the missing elements of the structure, along with its capacity and potential, made me confident about this placement for the pop-up store.
The pop-up is a direct dialogue between classical imperial architecture and Versace's cyberpunk aesthetic under the Donatella Versace era. Opus reticulatum style stainless steel metal cladding creates a material juxtaposition between the old and the new, while the large, portal like chrome arch shows a modern interpretation of the structure's historical features. Inside the pop-up store, the same strategy used for the deconstructed Greek key motif in Versace flagship stores has been applied to the pavement, using different marbles. The Orotron fabric arch shaped curtain, inspired by the National Museum of Roman Art by Rafael Moneo, not only creates division inside the space but also gradually narrows as visitors arrive at the seven niches. This design element reinterprets the monumentality of Roman architecture through the brand's iconic innovation. Although the majority of the walls of the Sala are preserved, semi-walls were added to create a second skin, using the same strategy adopted in the Teatro Marittimo, continuing the material juxtaposition. Relevant furniture pieces were added, such as the displays for the mannequins and busts, which are located in the small sections within the curtains.

The collection chosen for presentation was Donatella Versace's last collection with the brand. This collection was an immaculate choice for the design intervention, honouring both the significance of the Sala dei Filosofi and Donatella Versace herself.

Sala dei Filosofi

Versace Fall/Winter
2025,
by Donatella Versace


Fig. 6.3.1. Look nr. 2


Fig. 6.3.2. Look nr. 6


Fig. 6.3.3. Look nr. 16


Fig. 6.3.4. Look nr. 18


Fig. 6.3.5. Look nr. 21


Fig. 6.3.6. Look nr. 49


Fig. 6.3.7. Look nr. 57


Fig. 6.3.8. Look nr. 59


Fig. 6.3.9. Look nr. 60


Fig. 6.3.10. Look nr. 62


Fig. 6.3.11. Look nr. 69


Fig. 6.3.12. Look nr. 65


Fig. 6.3.13. Look nr. 68


Fig. 6.3.14. Look nr. 63

Teatro Marittimo

Versace Spring 1991
"Pop Art"
by Gianni Versace


Fig. 6.3.21. Look nr. 4


Fig. 6.3.22. Look nr. 91


Fig. 6.3.23. Look nr. 92

Versace Fall 1992
Ready to Wear
"Miss S&M"
by Gianni Versace


Fig. 6.3.24. Look nr. 18


Fig. 6.3.25. Look nr. 48


Fig. 6.3.26. Look nr. 62

Atelier Versace
Fall/Winter 1997
Couture
by Gianni Versace


Fig. 6.3.27. Look nr. 11


Fig. 6.3.28. Look nr. 33

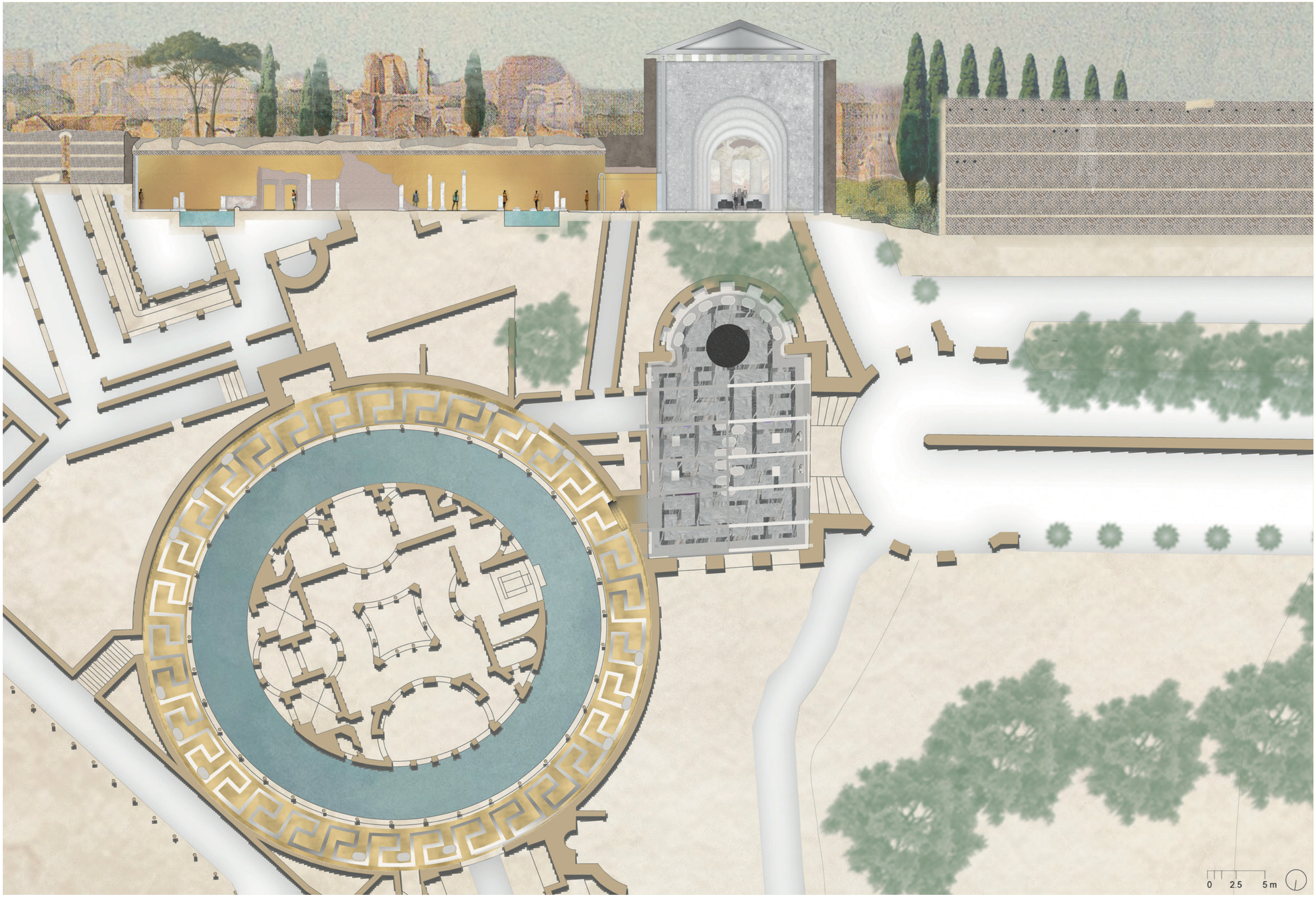

Fig. 6.3.29. Look nr. Unknown

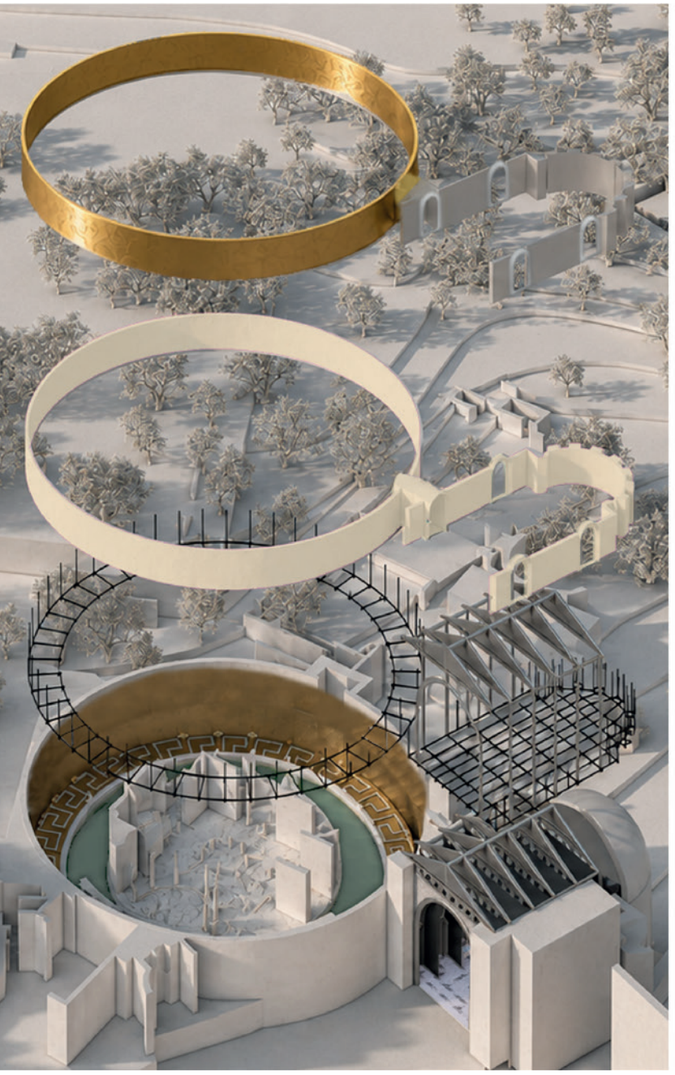
Versace Spring 2000
by Donatella Versace

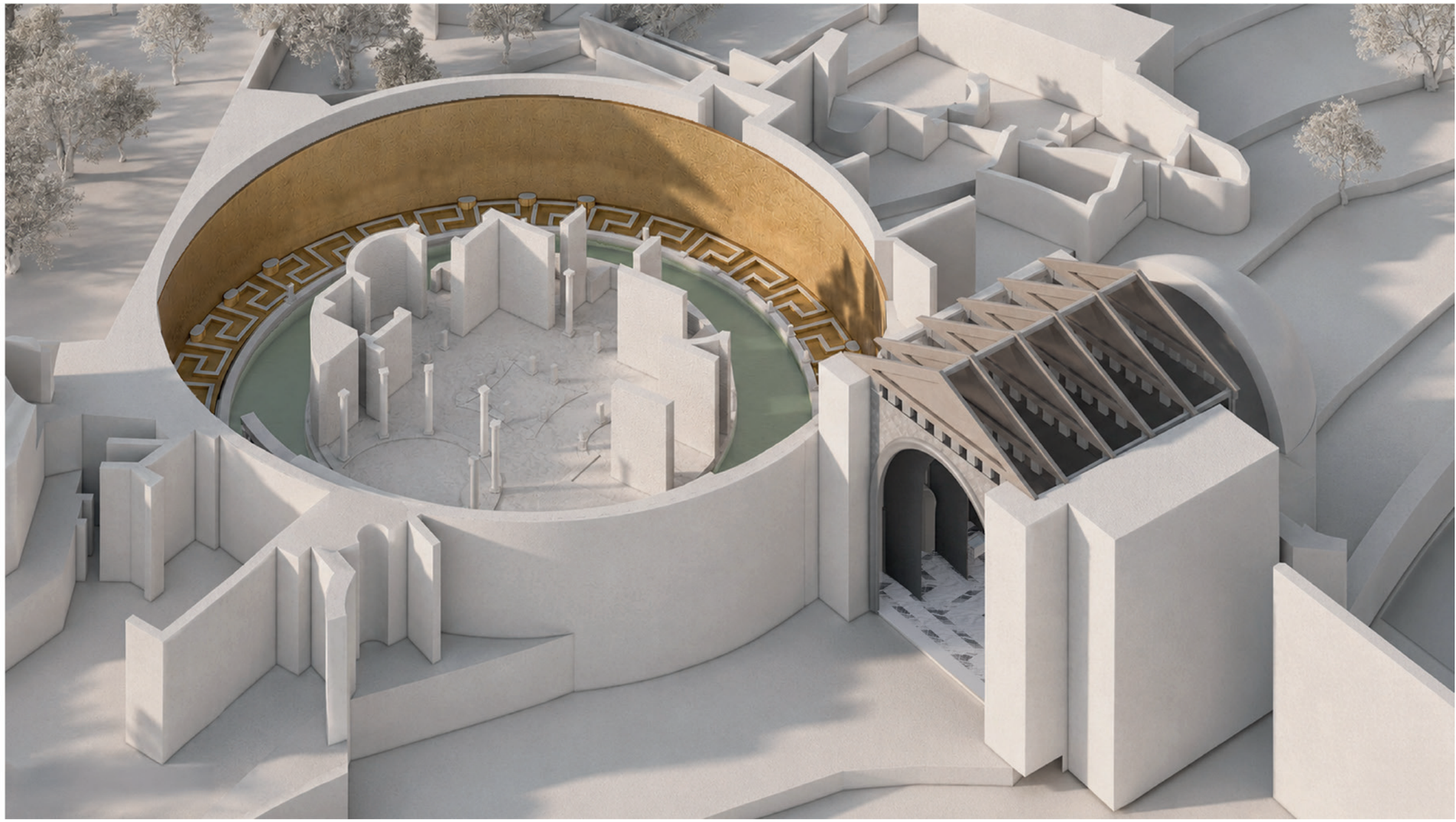

Fig. 6.3.30. Look nr. 39


Fig. 6.3.31. Look nr. 73


Fig. 6.3.32. Look nr. 74


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ATELIER VERSACE. HAUTE COUTURE 1997
Gianni Versace's 1997 Haute Couture collection drew upon the opulence of Byzantine art, translating its gilded surfaces, intricate ornamentation, and mosaic-like richness into couture. Through gold, elaborate embellishment, and sculptural silhouettes, historical references were transformed into the sensual and theatrical language of Versace.


VERSACE SPRING/SUMMER 2000















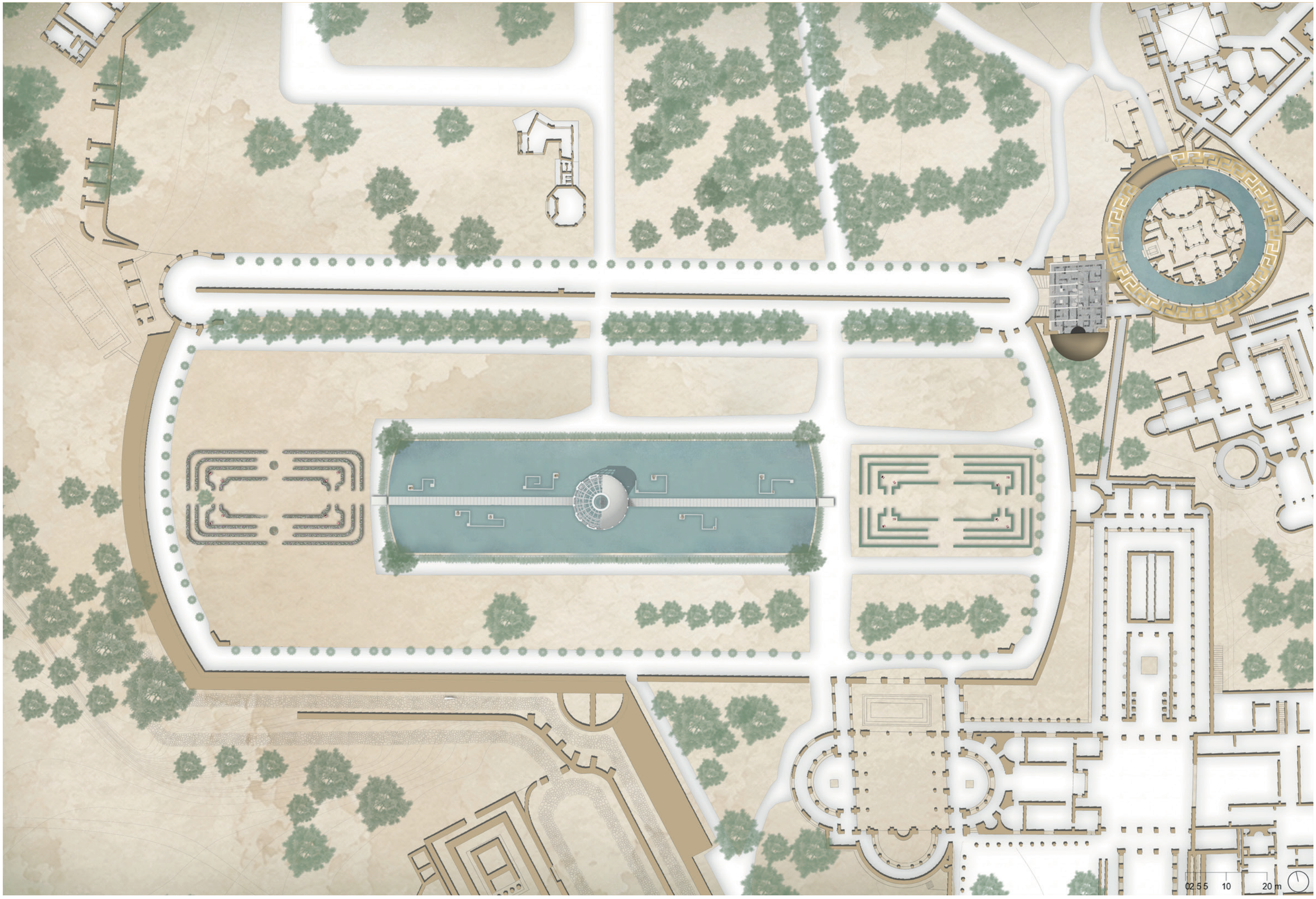


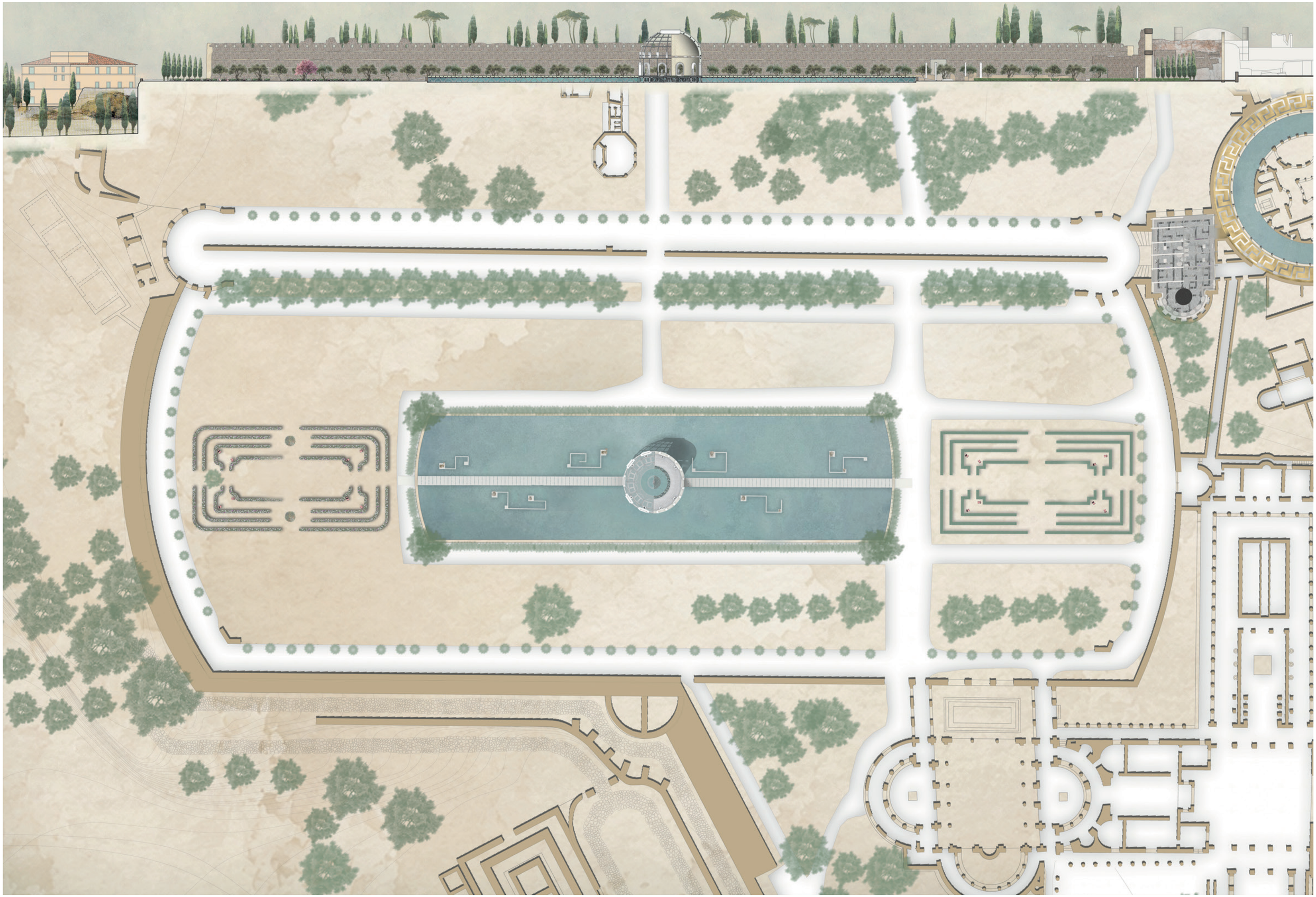
6.4. The Pecile Intervention: Pavilion & Memorial Gardens

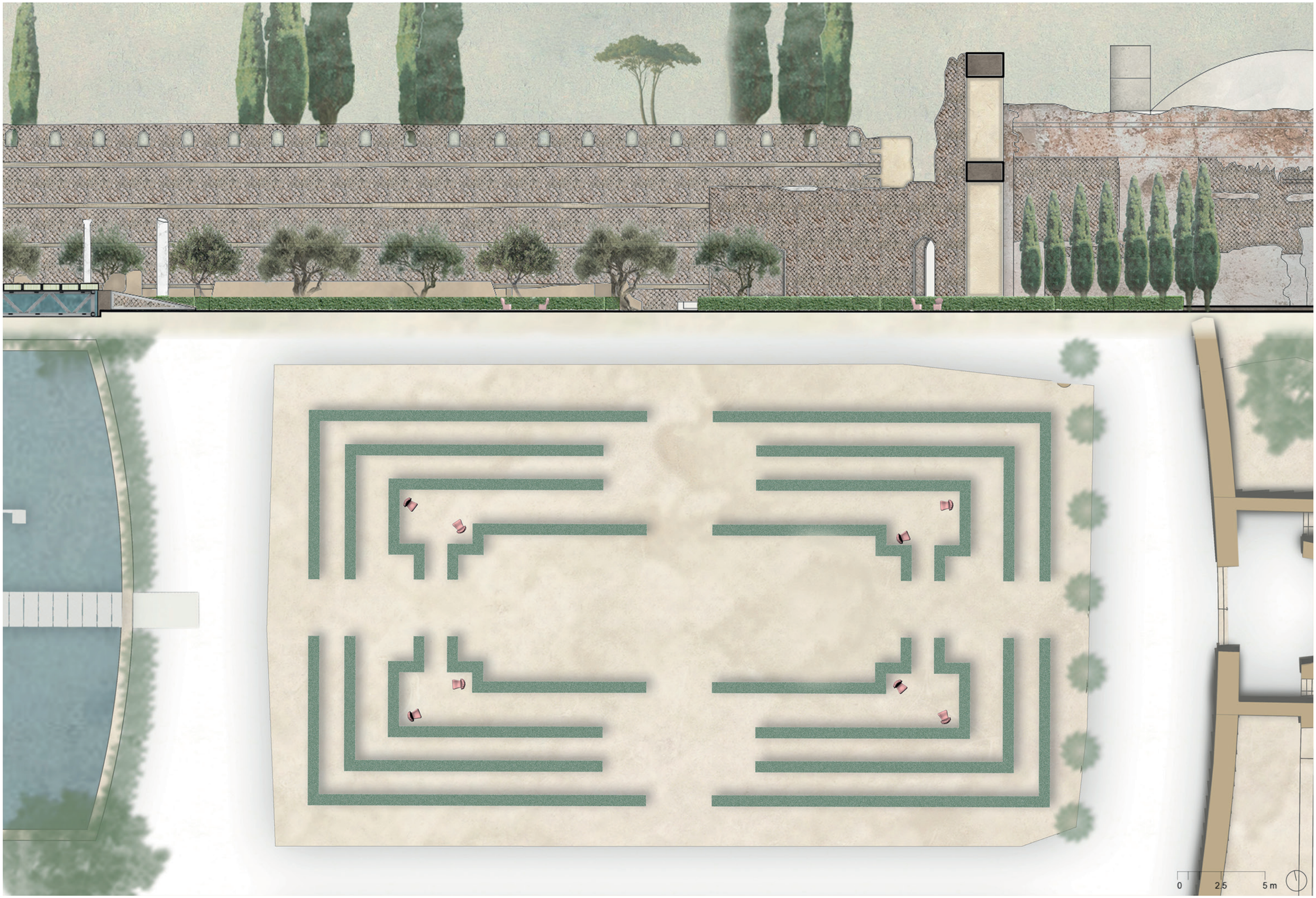
The Pecile intervention is shaped more around the unfinished union of Hadrian and Antinous through geometry, landscaping, and materiality. The two sides of the Pecile host the memorial gardens of Emperor Hadrian and Antinous. The two memorials are designed as Gardens. Though they are separate, they still represent a strong union. Hadrian's garden is more rigid, imperial, and serious, with rigid and sharp edges through vegetation, while Antinous's Garden is soft, romantic, and covered with flowers, with curvy vegetation representing his features.

In the middle of the two memorial gardens, on top of the water, sits the pavilion inspired by the Versace ring. This ring is a direct reference to Antinous's death in the Nile, evoking separation and memory. This is achieved through the duality of the pavilion, with one side covered by the same baroque fabric and the other left as the exposed skeleton of the structure Within, the floor displays marbles that differ with each other, in the Greek Key style, and the openings are mirrors with arches, as in the fashion show and pop-up shop.

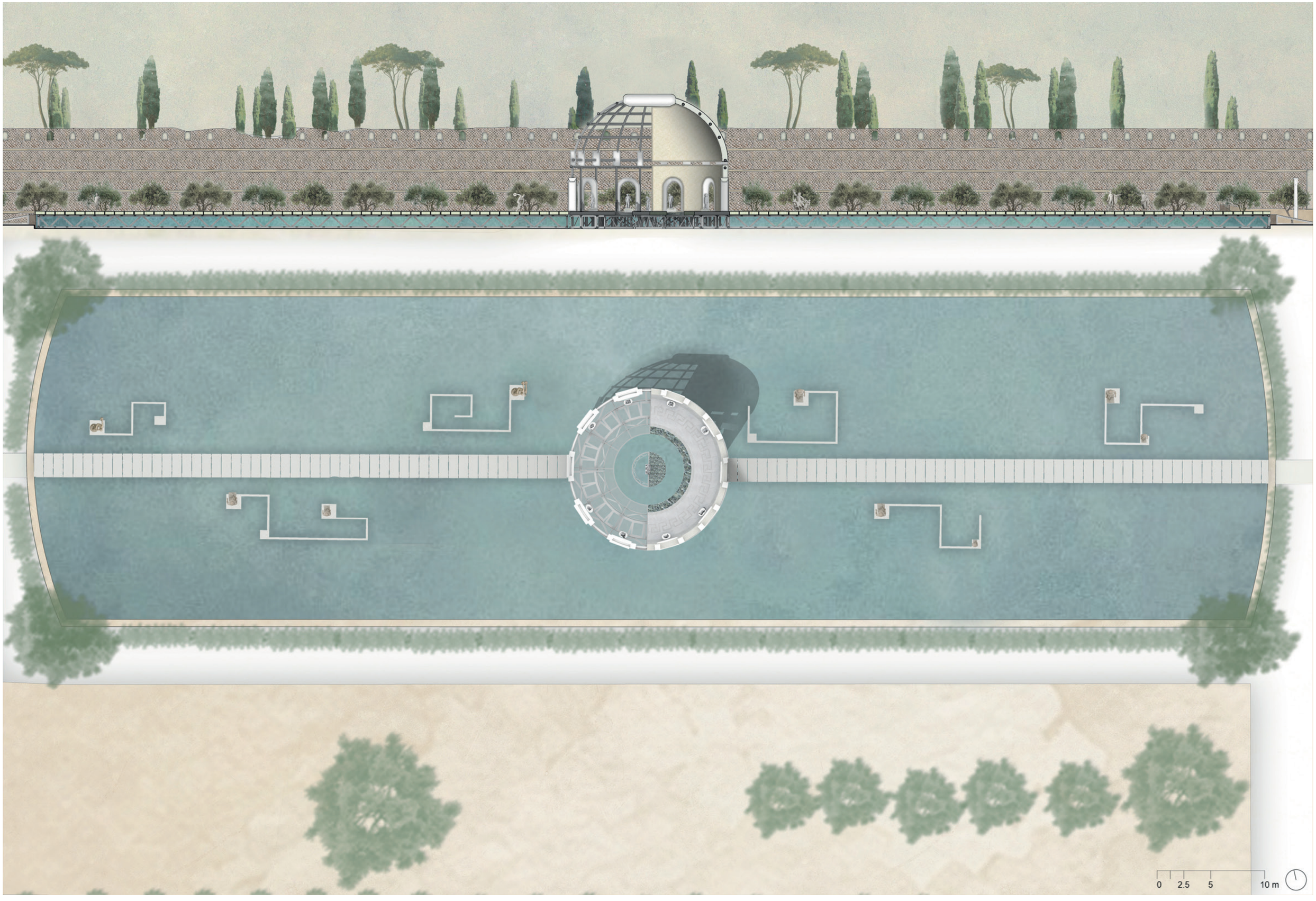
At the center of this circular pavilion is a sculpture depicting Orestes and Pylades, representing eternal friendship. From above, on the dome, the oculus made of chrome dispenses water all over this splendid sculpture, making it a scenographic one in which the halves meet and bring together Hadrian, Antinous, and Versace. On top of the dome, a chromed oculus pours water around this marvellous sculpture, creating an emotional scenography in which the incomplete halves symbolically meet, combining Hadrian, Antinous and Versace.

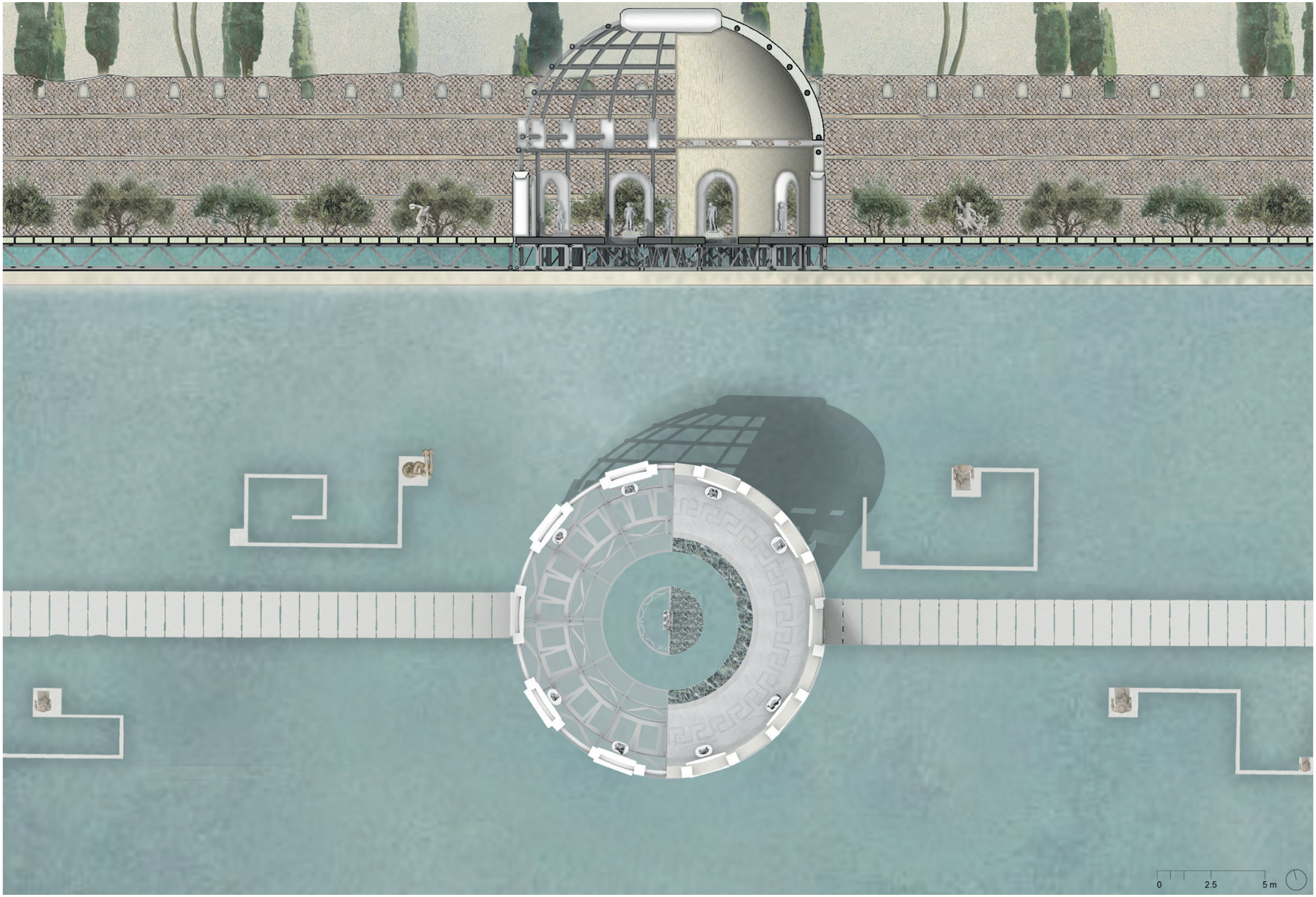

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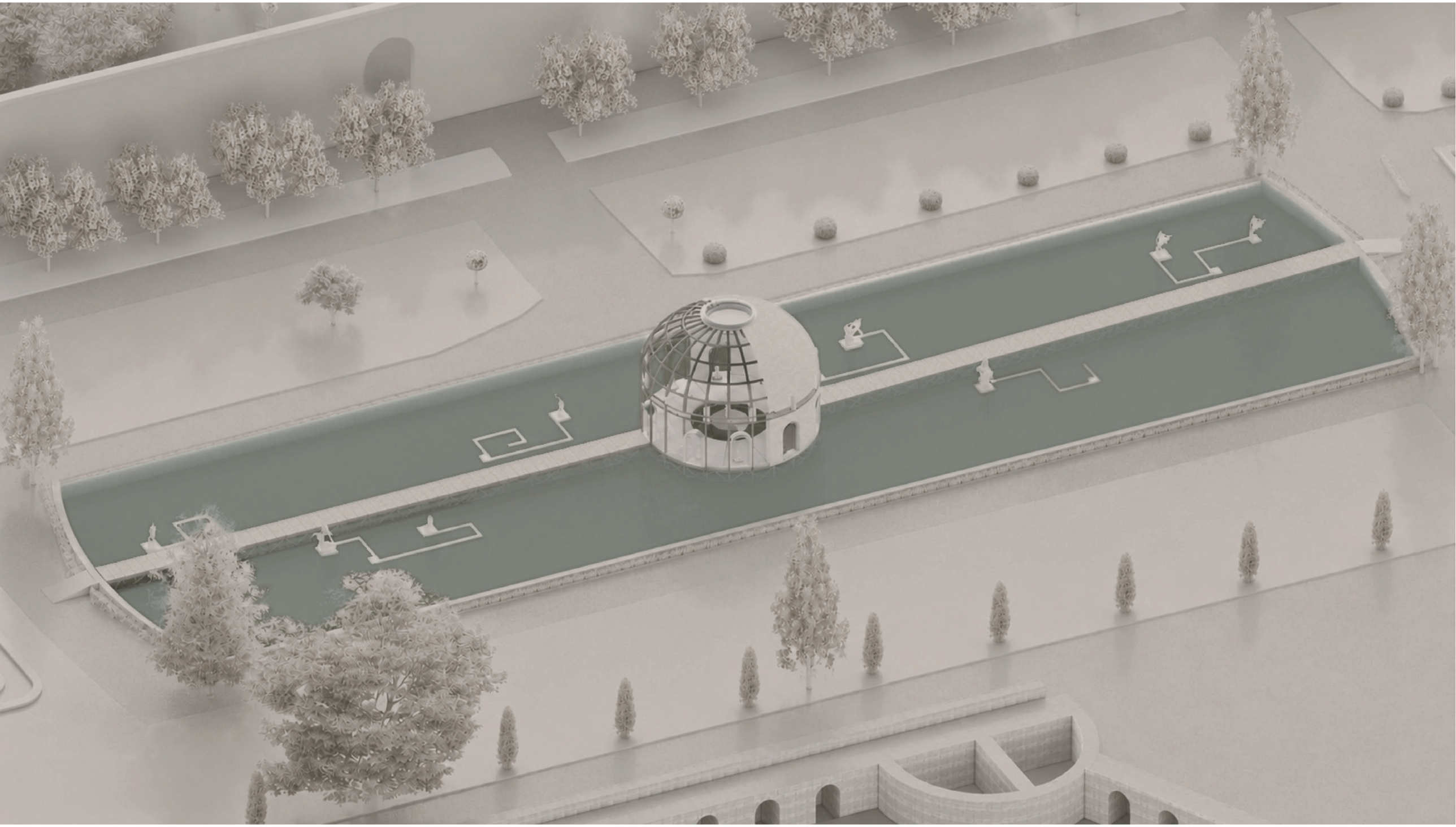


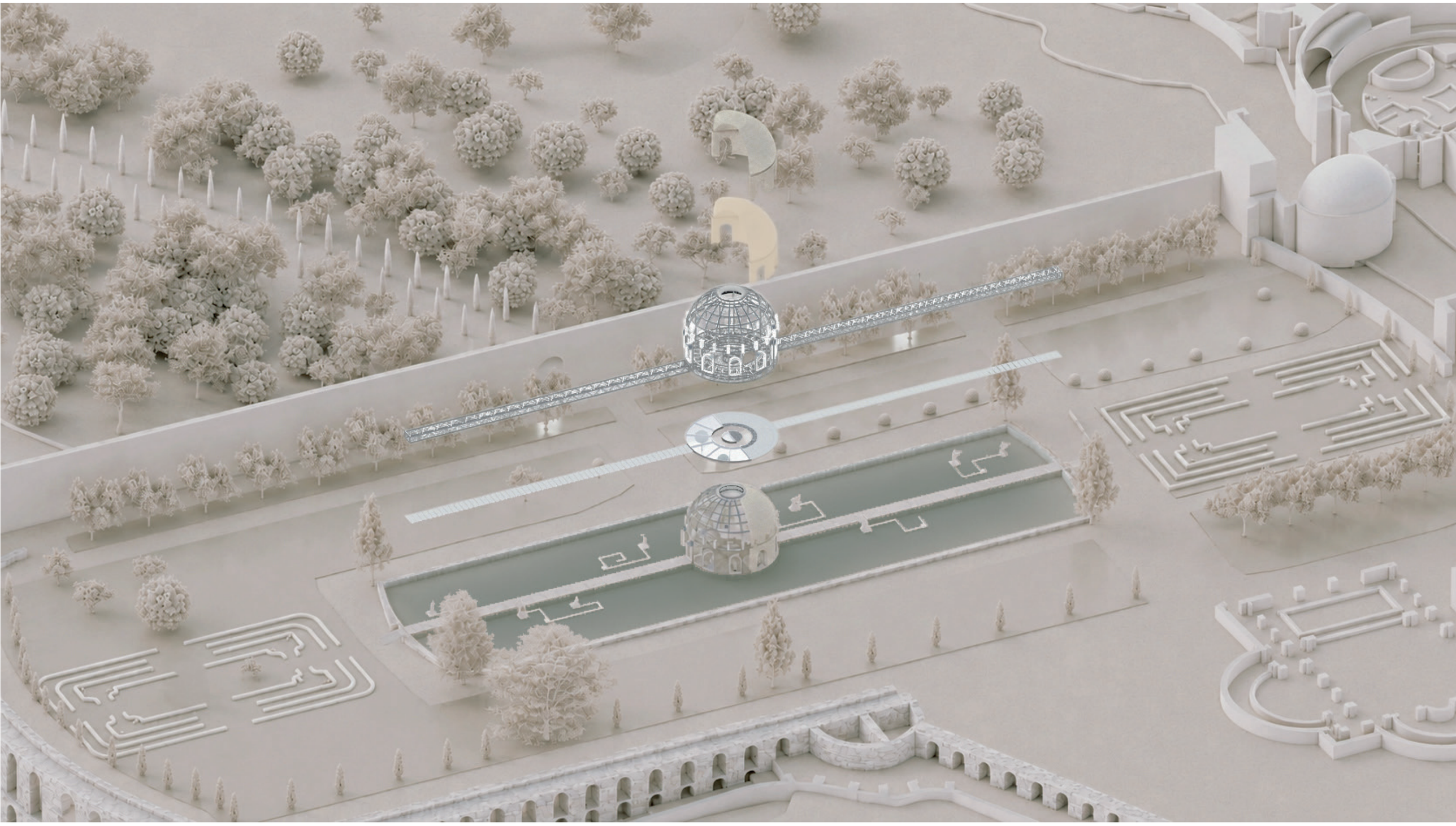

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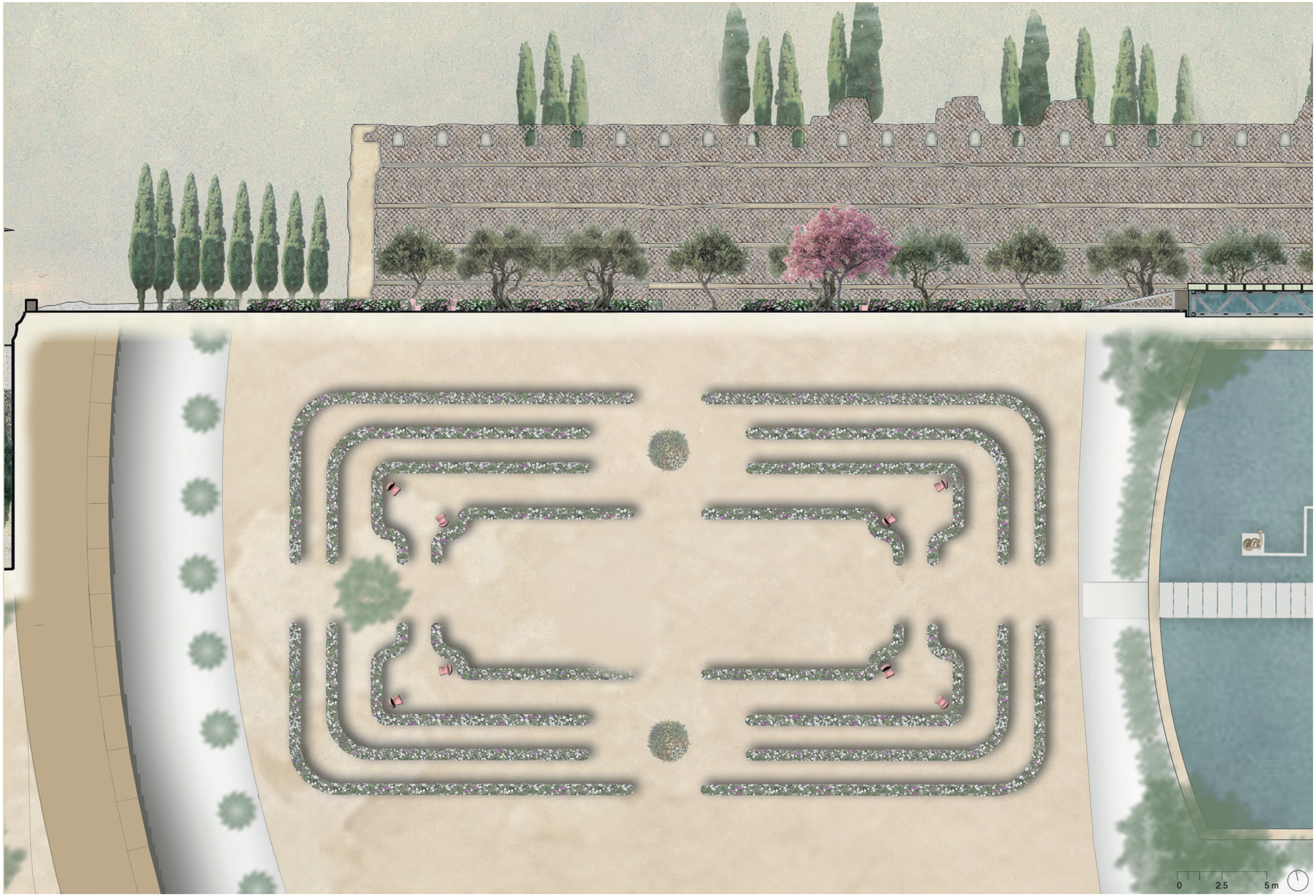











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7. Conclusion

7. Conclusion

This thesis began with the question of the relationship between modern intervention and archaeological heritage: how is it possible to have a fashion event at an archaeologically protected site without reconstruction, permanent occupation, or dissolving into a backdrop of scenography? Through the investigation of cultural heritage and its perception, temporary structures, the relationship between fashion and historical sites, Versace's vision, and the architecture of Hadrian's Villa, the research attempted to find a way for a coexistence of modern intervention and heritage preservation in an architectural solution.

The theoretical research was initially focused on the idea that the improvement of valorization is not necessarily dependent on physical changes that would be irreversible. Modern interventions can improve the awareness and perception of heritage by means of temporary interventions as long as the historical elements remain visible and the new ones do not attempt to replace something which has been lost. In this way, the concept of ephemeral became much more than just a technical requirement for the project.

Fashion projects within heritage environments have informed this position as well. The projects investigated within the course of this research proved how persistent the interest of fashion is in areas that have historical and cultural value. Palaces, museums, monuments, and archaeological sites have served over and over again as stages for the stories of fashion brands' collections and identity to be told on. As for archaeological sites, the examples found have been predominantly connected with runway shows. Here lies an opportunity to investigate another kind of relationship, namely a relationship between temporary retail, exhibition, display, and event

architecture and an archaeological site that does not involve a runway show format. Hadrian's Villa appeared as an especially complicated environment to investigate this potential. Its fractured condition, impressive scale, distribution of historic public and private spaces, and its strong association with the figure of Hadrian allowed this project to move on from viewing the archaeological site as an objective environment. The analysis of Hadrian and Antinous provided an extra level of interpretation that allowed the architectural interventions not only to interact with the material presence of the Villa but also with the stories behind them.

At the same time, the study of Versace revealed a fashion identity that has been continuously reinterpreting classical culture through contemporary means of expression, materiality, ornamentation, imagery, and representation. The link created between Versace and Hadrian's Villa was intended as an opportunity for dialogue between the archaeological representation of classical culture and its reinterpretation through contemporary fashion design.
The resulting design takes the findings and creates three site-specific interventions in the Sala dei Filosofi, Teatro Marittimo, and Pecile. The interventions are site-specific to the characteristics of each particular location, its importance, and narrative.

In the Sala dei Filosofi, the temporary pop-up store investigates the possibility of incorporating commercial activity in the archaeological site. The design acts as a temporary and independent layer, which adapts to the contemporary architectural setting in its geometry, materials, and construction. As a result, retail becomes a transient architectural event rather than a permanent presence in the ruin. As with the varied purposes that have been assigned to the Sala dei Filosofi in the past, the project has also been envisioned as a space that could host different temporary activities. After the pop-up activity, the same space will host a concert under candlelight for fundraising purposes.

The fashion exhibition at the Teatro Marittimo produces an interesting combination of the modern presentation and archaeological setting of the event. In this case, the current architectural setup becomes an integral part of the exhibition, thus allowing the viewers to connect with the story of Versace while moving through the monument. Consequently, the archaeology does not become obscured by the exhibition; rather, it becomes an active part of the spatial composition.

Narrative element of the project is most explicit in the intervention of Pecile. The pavilion and the memorial gardens devoted to Hadrian and Antinous transform the historical research into an architectural experience through geometry, materials, water, sculptures, transparency, and different spatial qualities. The two memorial gardens transform the connection between Hadrian and Antinous into spatial metaphor. The separation of the elements, along with the presence of the water, becomes a representation of such intangible concepts as absence, memory, connection, and loss, without trying to recreate an architectural form that has never existed.

Even though each of the three interventions fulfills a completely different function, there are some underlying themes which tie them together, namely those of temporariness, reversibility, recognizability, minimal physical effect, and engagement with the context surrounding the intervention. For that matter, the project illustrates the potential of temporary architecture in expressing the intangible stories of a heritage site in contemporary form. This way, the project presents the idea of ephemerality as something more than an absence of architecture but rather a specific way of approaching architecture.

Finally, this research neither introduces a broad conceptualization framework for integrating fashion into archaeological sites nor suggests that any commercial actions represent a form of heritage valorization. Instead, this aims to prove that through a carefully designed experiment these actions may become architecturally meaningful if the contemporary intervention is based on a critical approach towards the heritage site, taking into account the restrictions imposed by the historical significance of the site. Thus, preservation and use of a heritage site should not be perceived as a dichotomy; by means of using reversible and temporary architecture, a contemporary intervention may become a part of the ongoing heritage interpretation process.
In this way, the lack of an architectural intervention does not mean that the intervention itself has no significance. Once the event ends and the architecture disappears, Hadrian's Villa will remain the same, while the temporary intervention will have provided a new perspective on it. The main innovation of the research lies in the ability to provide a new experience without creating an architectural layer.

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1. Heritage

Fig.1.1.1
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Fig.1.1.2
https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cesare_Brandi

Fig.1.1.3
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Fig. 1.2.1
https://landscapes.icomos.org/the-venice-charter-1964/

Fig.1.2.2
https://divisare.com/projects/143424-joao-luis-carrilho-da-graca-global-arquitectura-paisagista-duarte-belo-fernando-guerra-fg-sg-praca-nova-do-castelo-de-sao-jorge

Fig.1.2.3
https://divisare.com/projects/143424-joao-luis-carrilho-da-graca-global-arquitectura-paisagista-duarte-belo-fernando-guerra-fg-sg-praca-nova-do-castelo-de-sao-jorge

2. Villa Adriana

Fig. 2.1.1
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Fig. 2.2.1
Pier Federico Caliari, Centralità di Piazza d’Oro, Tav. III.II, in Tractatus logico sintattico: La forma trasparente di Villa Adriana, ed. Carola Gentilini (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2012).

Fig. 2.2.2
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Fig. 2.2.3
Pier Federico Caliari, Centralità: Teatro Marittimo, Tav. V, in Tractatus logico sintattico: La forma trasparente di Villa Adriana, ed. Carola Gentilini (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2012).

Fig. 2.3.1.1
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Fig. 2.3.1.2
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Acknowledgements

Reading this out loud means that I have successfully completed the final stage of my academic journey. It has been a long and stressful path, however it has equipped me with crucial skills, knowledge, and personal qualities. I will always cherish everything this journey has taught me, both professionally and personally.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Professor Caliari, for his mentorship, guidance, and support throughout this process. I am especially grateful to him for introducing me to Villa Adriana and its incredible history, as well as to the Accademia Adrianea di Architettura e Archeologia Onlus. I sincerely hope that our professional relationship will continue to grow in the upcoming years.

I would also like to thank my parents, who have always supported my academic journey and never lost faith in me. who wants my accademic journey to never end.

Sincere thanks go to my sisters, who have always believed in me and understood me better than anyone else. Each of them welcomed me into their home during this period and calmly managed all my stress. I can't thank them enough for their unconditional support.

I would like to thank Başak, who has been on my team since the very beginning. We spent countless hours working together, day and night, finishing the entire Spotify playlists and sharing tears throughout our years at Politecnico.

I would like to thank Ebru for her wisdom, generosity, and kindness. She patiently answered all my questions, no matter how nonsensical they may have seemed, and always managed to find a solution.

I would also like to thank Hazal for being a true all rounder, mvp and for her dedication to helping everyone around her. I am sure that she will complete her thesis very soon. keep going on.

My deepest thanks go to Amedeo for being part of my life and academic journey for the past five years and for patiently standing beside me through all my stress and frustration. I hope you know how grateful I am for your presence and support.

I would like to thank Cansın and Alara for always believing in me, recognizing my potential, and simply being part of my life. Their last minute help and infinite love means so much to me that I can't express. I know that I will never forget their support to my journey, and I look forward to listening to their own wonderful thesis presentations very soon.

I would also like to thank Yağmur for her love and support, even from Milano, and for occasionally coming to check that we were doing well.

I would like to thank Gizem, Oğuz, Mihriban, Mete, Oya, Gülşah, Rüya, Necati, Aybüke, Eda, Catalina, and Gina, each of whom has been part of my life. I will remember even the smallest “you’ve got this” that helped me keep going. I will never forget your presence and support throughout this journey, and I love every single one of you. If I hurt any of your heart during this process I sincerely apologize.

Finally I would like to thank, Torino, Denizli and Koblenz for shaping me making me who I am today, a Proud Architect.

-Yasin