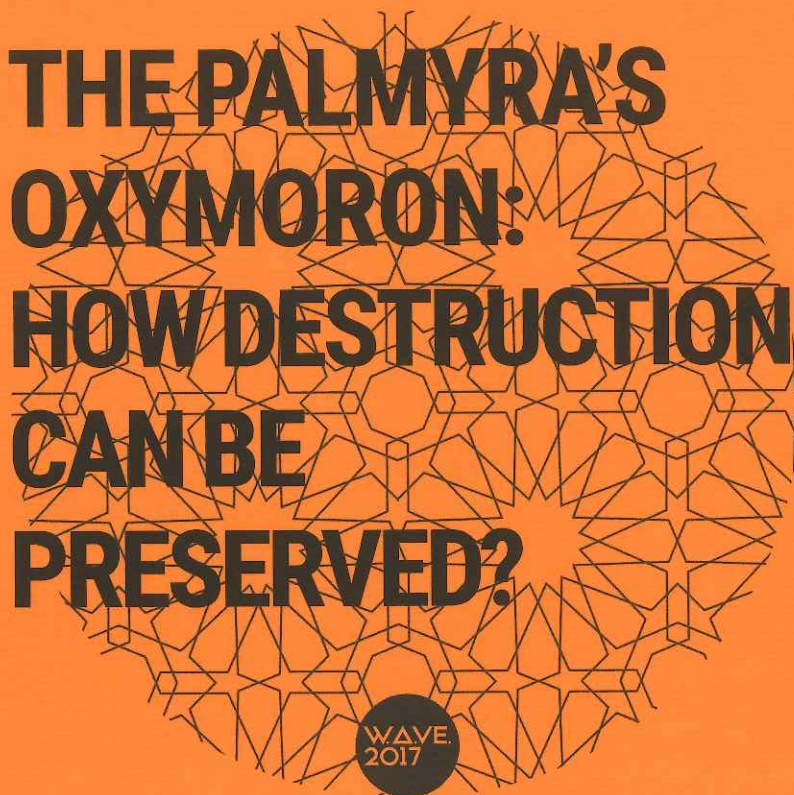


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Università Iuav
di Venezia

Camillo Magni - Operastudio

— PALMYRA / 34°33'02"N 38°16'18"E



THE PALMYRA'S OXYMORON: HOW DESTRUCTION CAN BE PRESERVED?

WAVE
2017

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**SYRIA – THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE
FROM URBICIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY**

W.A.Ve. 2017

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WAVE
2017



W.A.Ve. 2017

Alberto Ferlenga

W.A.Ve. is now at its fifteenth edition but, despite this, its characterising formula still works. Since its beginning, when it did not have its current name yet, being a design workshop and an international architecture exhibition at the same time has made it a unique product. If we consider that each year more than 1,500 students and 30 teachers are involved, we cannot deny that even the numbers are sizable. In these 15 years, about 23,000 students (not counting students from abroad) and 450 architects (not counting assistants) have developed a project experience at Università Iuav di Venezia that takes place in a narrow span of three weeks, during which Iuav venues become training and meeting sites. Its open-air workshop feature has brought many prestigious architects and names of the international scene to the classroom venues of the Cotonificio Veneziano and Magazzini: Pritzker prizes such as Eduardo Souto de Moura or Alejandro Aravena, masters such as Yona Friedman and Pancho Guedes, and renowned professionals such as Sean Godsell or Carme Pinos. Under their guidance, Iuav undergraduates and foreign participants have developed (together and making no age distinction) a project experience that pertains to the city of Venice and many other places as well. The same summer days also see the spaces of the Santa Marta Auditorium and the Tolentini Cloister become the scene of large conferences, making it possible for hundreds of students to follow the latest international projects or reflections on the most pressing issues concerning cities and territories. Above all, however, W.A.Ve. is special for the atmosphere that it creates during its three weeks of work; discussions, projects, and meetings are often expanded and brought outside the classrooms, in bars and Venetian *campi*, and in the exhibitions that follow, transforming the campus of Santa Marta into a major international architecture showcase.

For all these reasons, W.A.Ve. is unique and renowned among architects and students of Architecture around the world, becoming one of the most representative expressions of a school, Iuav, that has built its peculiar quality on international exchange, laboratory experience, and on city studies.

Peace and Architecture

Benno Albrecht

1 – Elio Vittorini in "Il Politecnico", n. 1, September 29, 1945.

2 – Pierre Rosanvallon, "La democrazia dell'emergenza", "La Repubblica", April 16, 2012.

We invited many architects to Venice, to contribute to the discussion on the reconstruction of countries destroyed by the madness of men. Like a round table, Università Iuav di Venezia became the venue for the dialogue and discussion on the possibilities of architecture to preserve and reconstruct Peace. The will and desire for Peace was the guest of honour of our 2017 W.A.Ve. workshop.

A post-WWII Italian intellectual, Elio Vittorini, said that it was necessary to form "not a culture that consoles in times of suffering, but a culture that protects from it, fighting and eliminating it"¹.

We see the University as an institution that serves society and the generations of the future, alertly vigilant and working to stay one step ahead. The relationship between Universities and Administrations can become operational and productive, precisely because the university is the exact place to test hypothetical future models – an "Academy of the Future"², as described by Pierre Rosanvallon – to overcome the fragmentation of knowledge and educate in global civic responsibility.

In Iuav's W.A.Ve. workshop, a future of Peace, the reconstruction of Peace, has become an academic topic, a forecast technique, and an experience in practical planning of the future.

The immanence of the "environmental and human disaster" that we see today in Syria overcomes the

concept of architecture (understood as a need, consequence or manifestation of something else), leading the discipline to inevitably participate, as an integral part, in the resolution of a local/global "political and environmental" issue. In fact, one of the most pressing topics in the field of civil commitment (and in the operational field of architecture) is how to deal with the consequences of urbicides, with the deliberate violence against cities, with their destruction, and with the intentional elimination of collective memory made of stone.

Venice is where reflecting on these things is possible: a city that was described, by Richard Bonington and by Antoine-Claude Valéry, as "a Palmyra of the Sea"³.

However, we side these reflections with the words that John Adams wrote to his wife from Paris: "The science of government is my duty to study, more than all other sciences; the arts of law and administration and negotiation should take the place of, indeed, exclude, in a way, all other arts. I must study politics and war, that our children may have freedom to study mathematics and philosophy. Our sons must study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain"⁴.

3 – Valéry Antoine Claude Pasquin, "Venise et ses environs", Société belge de librairie, Bruxelles, 1842, p.2.

4 – Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, post 12 May 1780, in L.H. Butterfield, Marc Friedlaender, eds., "Adams Family Correspondence", Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1973.

SYRIA - THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE

SYRIA - THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE FROM URBICIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY



W.A.Ve. 2017

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JARAMANA

Ciro Pirondi

KOBANE

Ricardo Carvalho

MA'LÜLÄ

Salma Samar Damluji

THE PALMYRA'S OXYMORON: HOW DESTRUCTION CAN BE PRESERVED?

PALMYRA

- 36°01'31" N 36°89'12" E



Population

2004 ●●●●●●
2017 ●●●●●

55,062
51,015

Description

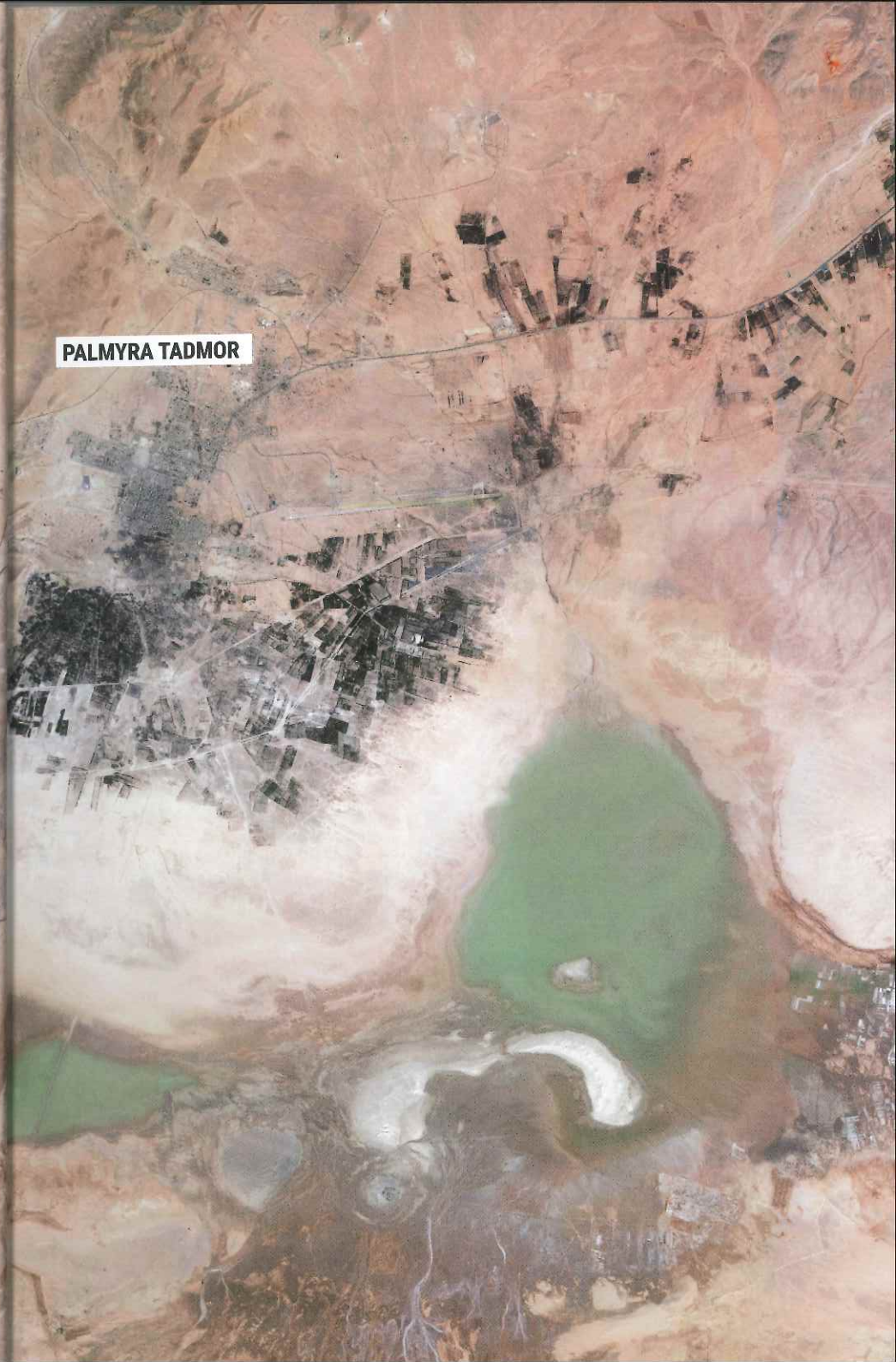
Palmyra is a city in the centre of Syria, administratively part of the Homs Governorate. It is located in an oasis in the middle of the Syrian Desert, northeast of Damascus and southwest of the Euphrates River. Palmyra contains the monumental ruins of a great city that was one of the most important cultural centres of the ancient world. The ruins of ancient Palmyra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, are situated about 500 m southwest of the modern city centre. The modern city is built along a grid pattern.





to Homs

0 5 km



PALMYRA TADMOR

to Homs

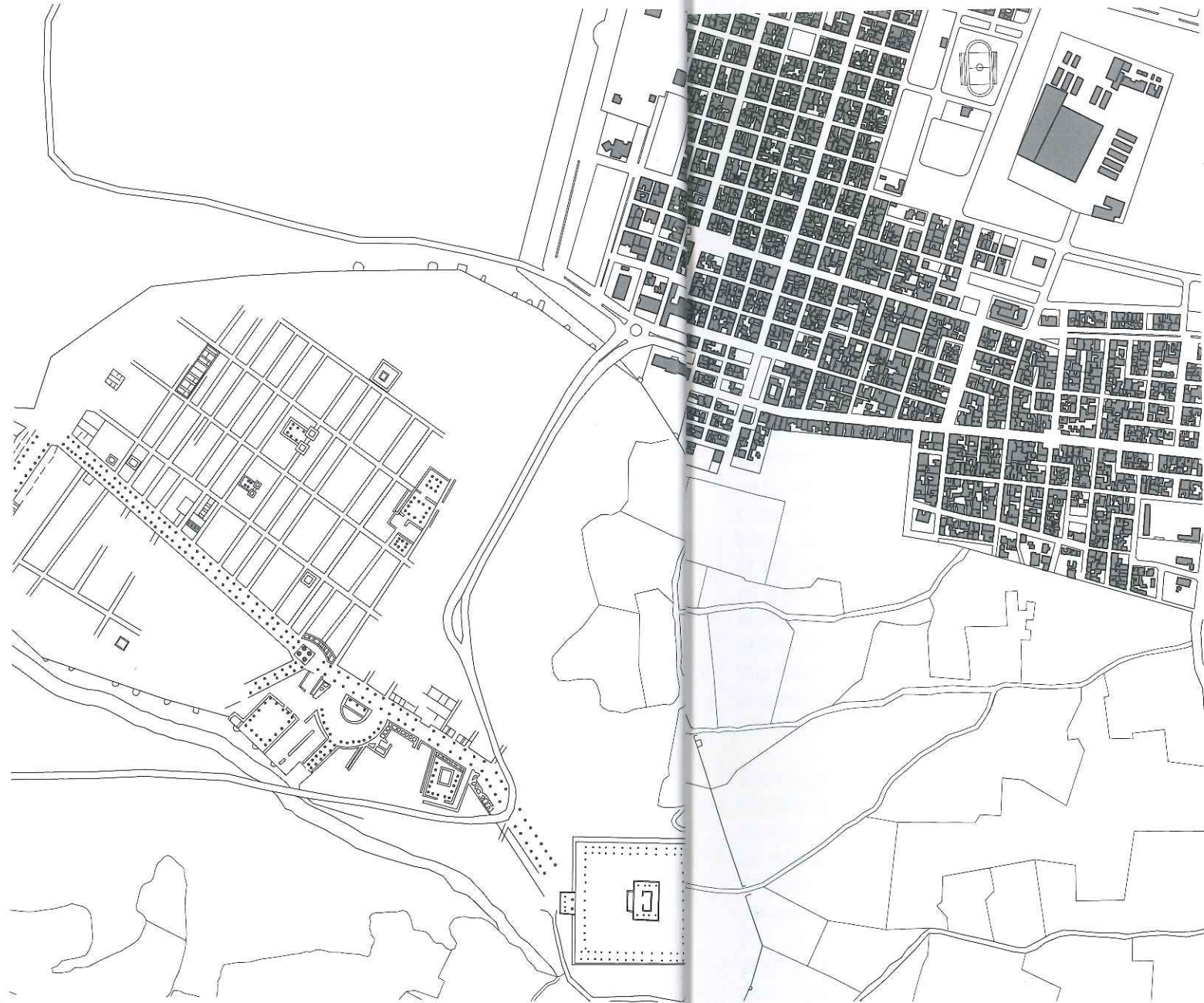
PALMYRA TADMOR

Palmyra airport

archeological site

0 1 km





— After ISIS first seized Palmyra in May 2015, a selection of 42 areas across the site were examined in the satellite imagery. Of these, 3 were totally destroyed, 7 severely damaged, 5 moderately damaged, and at least 10 possibly damaged. Many historical buildings have been destroyed, like the Palmyra museum, the great temple of Ba'al, and the Valley of the Tombs (the large-scale funerary monuments outside the city walls). Syrian government forces regained Palmyra on 27 March 2016 after intense fights against ISIL fighters.

Introduction

Alessia Boldrin, Manuel Minto, Rossella Villani

As scraps of columns and ancient walls are able to evoke an archaeological set, scraps of designs and projects evoke general strategies. With this approach, it was possible to consider which new functions could be overlapped on the archaeological site of Palmyra, to restore vital life to it, strengthen the archaeological area, and not hide or deny its historical destruction. Palmyra is an ancient city, and today has become an archaeological site of great value in modern times as a result of its partial destruction. We must find a new function that valorises its past, considers its present, and looks with renewed interest in its future. The archaeological site is connected to the contemporary city not only in physical and functional terms, but also in deeper social terms. The relaunch of the archaeological site can only happen through an appreciation and reconstruction of the entire city, in order to rebuild the community, the most precious asset that will take care of Palmyra in the future. For this reason, the functions that could take place in the archaeological site must be addressed to the local community, and not to a purely tourist operation.

Each project aims at overlapping a new “graveyard” – containing burial sites, a place of prayer, a mosque, a church, and a system of paths – on the archaeological site of Palmyra. The seven proposals investigate different forms of relationship with the archaeological site. The cemetery welcomes Muslims, Catholics, lay, and people of all creeds. The monumental strength of the archaeological site imposes an ardent dialogue between the new and the past, a pro-

found reflection on monumental architecture and its construction. Each proposal explores different portions of the project. Students were asked not to touch the actual ground because it belongs to the site's archaeological history: not to touch the surface because it narrates the tragic of the present. For this reason, the projects investigate the existing space through the suspension of architectural elements or the movement of new land.

The past belongs to the subsoil, the present on the surface, while the future is a layer gently leaning on top.

The oxymoron of Palmyra

Camillo Magni - Operastudio

I postulate

History teaches us that appeasement is possible only through the memory of events. Remembering, even if agonising, is the only manner to reconcile inhabitants. Conversely, oblivion conceals rancour and hate.

II postulate

Archaeology has the task of proving the testimony of ancient human culture, through the collection, information, and analysis of material traces. In the case of the archaeological site of Palmyra, we take part in the stratification of Greek, Roman, Persian, and Arab cultures.

III postulate

The destruction of Palmyra, committed by both militants of ISIS and governmental forces, cannot be denied or removed. Such act of destruction must be somehow arranged in the history and memory of the city.

Palmyra: oxymoron

The application of the third postulate negates the second one, but denying it would negate the first. War conferred a new significance to the archaeological ruins of Palmyra. These ruins cannot be reconstructed as if nothing ever happened. But the history of the archaeological site cannot fade away, and the hope for a new rebuilding persists at the same time. We are immersed in a contradiction. An

oxymoron. In this uncertainty, architectural design could find enhancement.

Palmyra: stratification

An extraordinary example is the *Cretto di Ghibellina*, realised by Alberto Burri, that shows how a design is able to preserve both the memory of disastrous events, and the traces of the past before them at the same time. The process of layering can help to overtake the planning impasse. Giving a new function to the archaeological site of Palmyra, means to start a new chapter of the city's history. It means to highlight the war as an occasion for a new birth.

Why a cemetery in Palmyra?

A cemetery could be a remarkable plan in this archaeological site. This new function could improve the connection among citizens, archaeological areas, and the modern city, avoiding principles of musealisation. In our opinion, the cemetery and the archaeological ruins can coexist. The cemetery is, *par excellence*, the ultimate place for reconciliation. Each project overlaps on top of the archaeological site of Palmyra, with a new cemetery – containing burial sites, a place of prayer, a mosque, a church, and a system of paths. The seven proposals investigate different forms of relationship with the archaeological site. The cemetery welcomes Muslims, Catholics, and people of all faiths.

New *domus* to accommodate the cemetery

The project uses the rhythm of the *Decumano* as a "mould" for the setting. In the southern part of

the archaeological park, there will be burial sites shaped on the geometry of the ancient Roman *domus* placed in that area. A series of rectangular fences marks the different sites of the *domus*, and replaces its volumes. In the meantime, these define the entrances to the *Decumano*. Each fence hosts a specific function of the cemetery park: the Islamic burial place and the Christian one, the Mosque and the church, the Orthodox church and the Memorial palm garden. The earth-filling on the existing level allows to host tombs, without having to excavate the ground and the archaeological remains. A new main path for the archaeological park are set upon the *Decumano*, reviving the ancient street and incentivising contaminations between visitors and Palmyra's population.

Dichotomy between light and heavy

The projects offer a reinterpretation of the *Cardo-Decumano* system by combining burial sites and archaeological paths in the same modular figures, orthogonal to the *Decumano*. Light and thin boardwalks – sticking out from the archaeological level, safeguarding the ruins and helping to guide the visit of the area at the same time – containing burial sites, a place of prayer, a mosque, a church, and a system of paths – define the paths.

The northern part of the *Decumano* hosts the Islamic cemetery, while the southern area the Christian one. Following the same approach, an informal Mosque and Catholic church seem to rise upon the Baal Temple ruins. Both worship places are built with light structures, on wooden platforms detached from the soil and the ruins. Light curtains hang over the oversized structure, covering it and

flowing in the desert wind. With this image, lightness is directly connected to the heaviness of the ancient columns of the Baal Temple.

The topographic strength of a place

The project aims to set up a new landscape from the earth that is uncovered and dug out from the archaeological site. Topographic work is set in order to define a buffer zone on the edge between the ancient part of Palmyra and the modern one. That sloping space will be the burial place: on the top, on a stair-system, there will be the Islamic tombs, as a hypogeum corridor to the Christian ones. The difference between the archaeological level and the "new" ground is the site where religious functions and archaeological paths match. The project deeply investigates the possibility to design an underground space as accessible areas to live in.

A new monumentality

The project uses the *Cardo* traces as a place to set the project. Starting from the existing *Decumano* site, still visible and recognisable, a new building reconfiguring the ancient *Cardo* is imagined. This building assumes a monumental size through a trilithic system, repeated on a 600 metre-long structure: the dialogue with the existing colonnade of Palmyra is evident. The structural system is defined, firstly, in its geometric morphology, and then in the different and variable pitches between the two sides of the structure. This subtle work on the variability of a scheme creates a feeling of disorientation. The ground floor of that grand covered path hosts the burial sites that disappear on the

stone paving as the archaeological paths begin to match the religious ones. The structure comes to define a new border inside the archaeological park: the ruins on one side, and a limitless palm grove on the other.

Geometric repetition of the Temple of Bel

The project holds the geometry of the Temple of Bel as the established principle of the cemetery area. For this reason, an eight-meter wall delimits two new 200x200 m square areas. These areas are dedicated to burial and prayer. One square is devoted to Islamic faith while the second to the Christian one. For the organisation of the burial grounds, the morphology of the ancient Temple of Bel was lost before the French demolished the secondary structures at the beginning of the last century; it was a complex system of buildings that today has been transformed into a tangle of tombs. In addition, a design study on the mosque created a large 42-metre sphere as a perfect form of dialogue with the square geometry of the outer perimeter.

Dialogue with the city evoking the ancient necropolis

The project aims to redefine the access to the archaeological area by building a new entry system. For this reason, buildings dedicated to religious cults are located symmetrically on the outside, building a new relationship with the city. A new large square is set as a public space that penetrates the existing architectural fabric, while a new pedestrian path crosses the archaeological site, reinforced by the presence of burial grounds that welcome Catholics and Muslim faithful, is set on the other side. This

path overlaps a system of small museum areas dedicated to archaeological excavations, entering in the soil and studying the ruins in their ancient location. This architectural form is an explicit evocation of the ancient necropolis present in Palmyra, just like the ground cover evokes the geometry of the burials.

Strengthen the limits to build identity

The object of this design proposal is the outer wall of the archaeological site. The identity of the site is strengthened with the definition of its perimeter. The more you define the largest enclosure, the stronger will be its content. According to these principles, a system of high paths overlap the archaeological ruins of the external wall. In some cases, the wideness of these paths increases in order to accommodate an exhibition area linked to the site's tourist operation. In the east, a large landscaping project coming from the excavations involves the construction of large palm islands where burials are located. The cemetery becomes a large palm grove, a garden of Eden, redefining the relationship between nature and man (the reference to the Stockholm cemetery of Asplund and Lewerentz is not figurative but evocative).

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Seven stratifications for seven projects.



THE PALMYRA'S OXYMORON: HOW DESTRUCTION CAN BE PRESERVED?

SYRIA - THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE FROM URBICIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY



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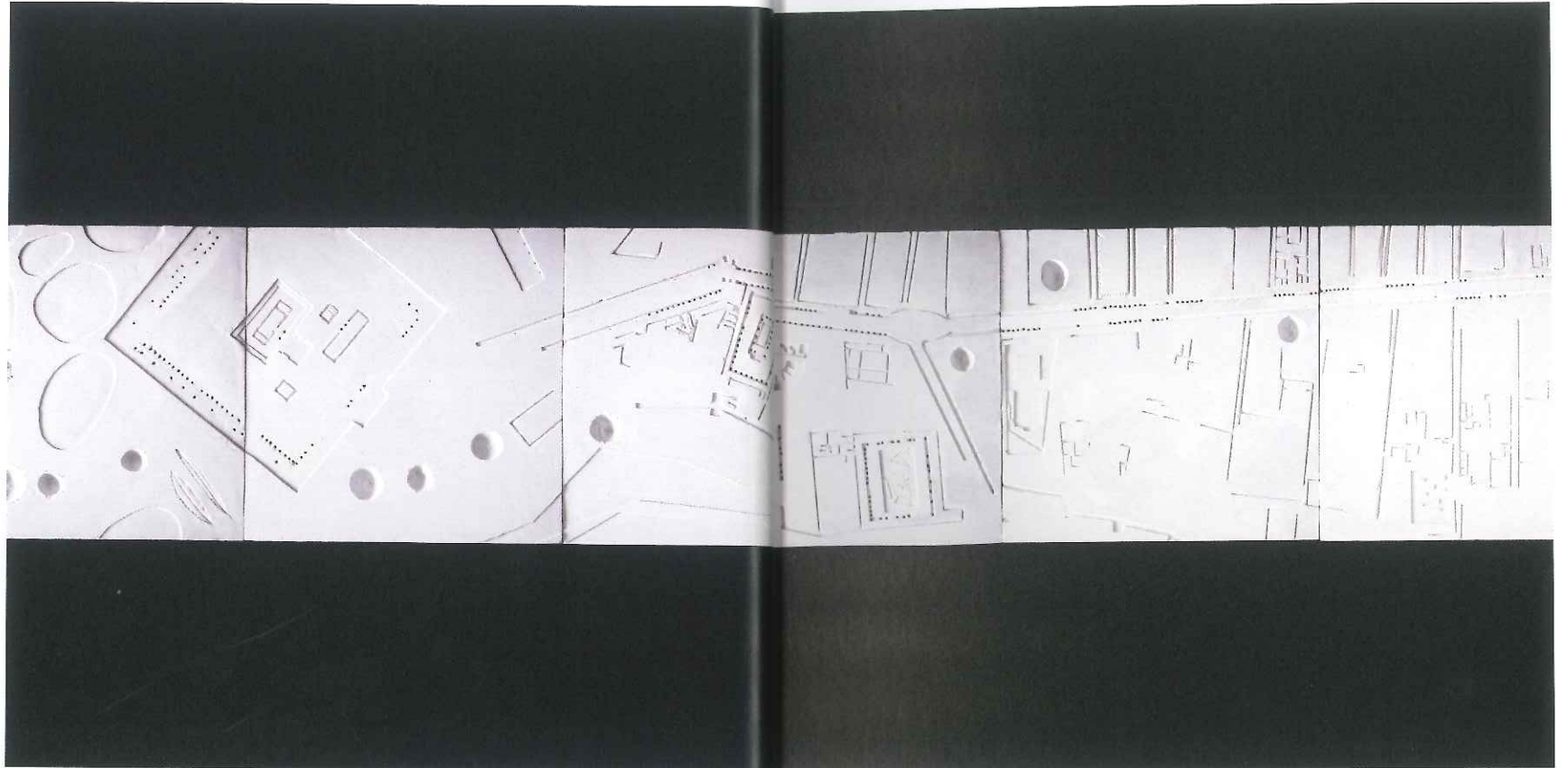


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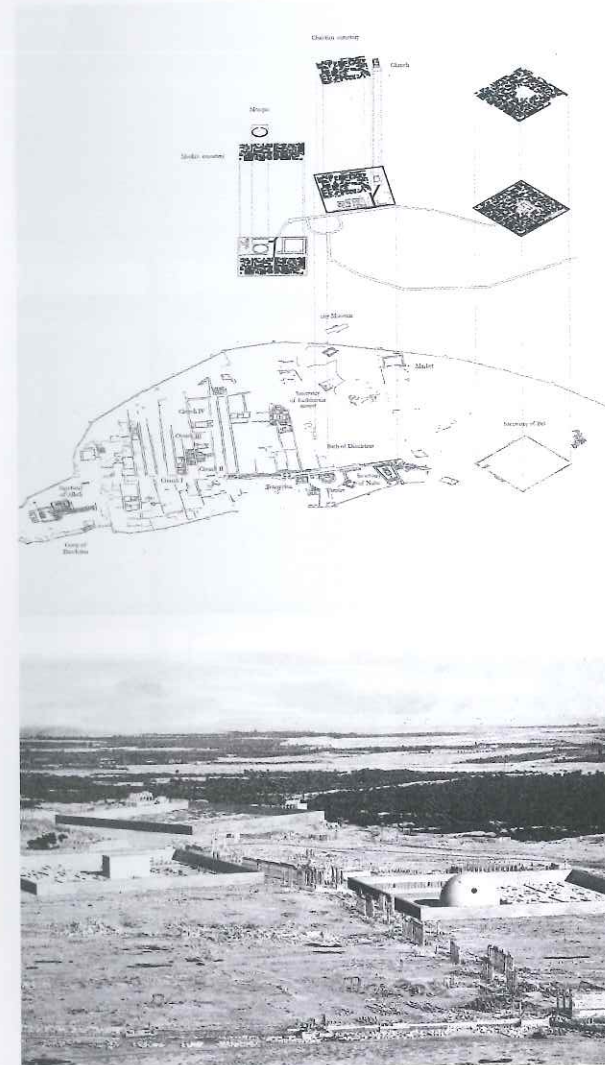
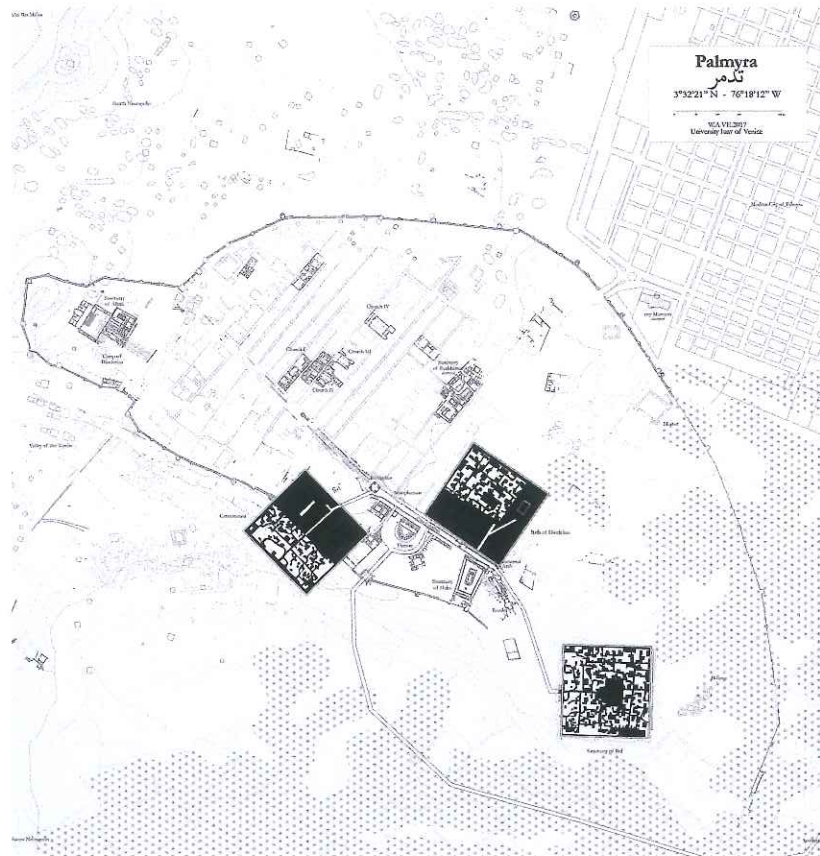
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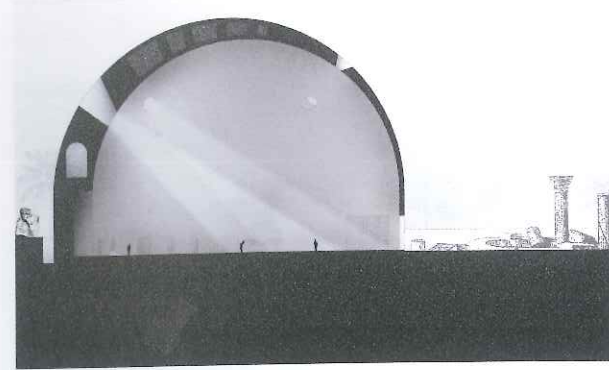
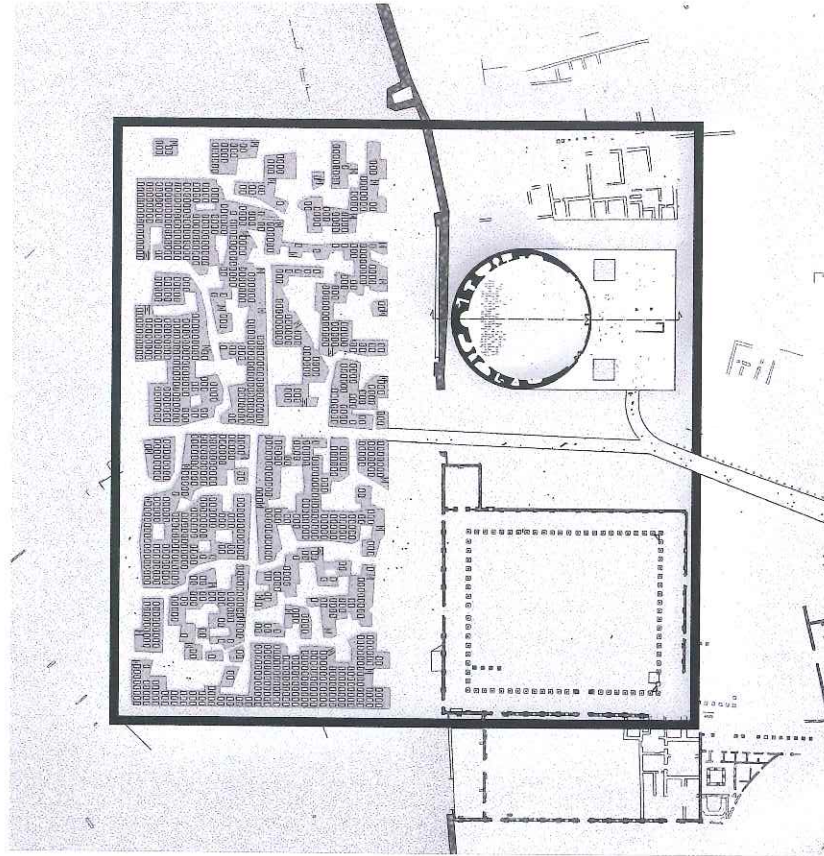


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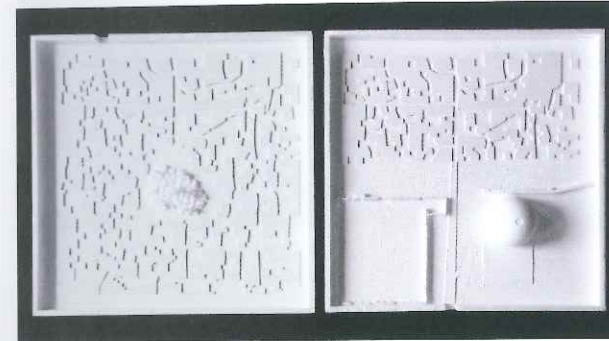
- Stratification. Gypsum model.



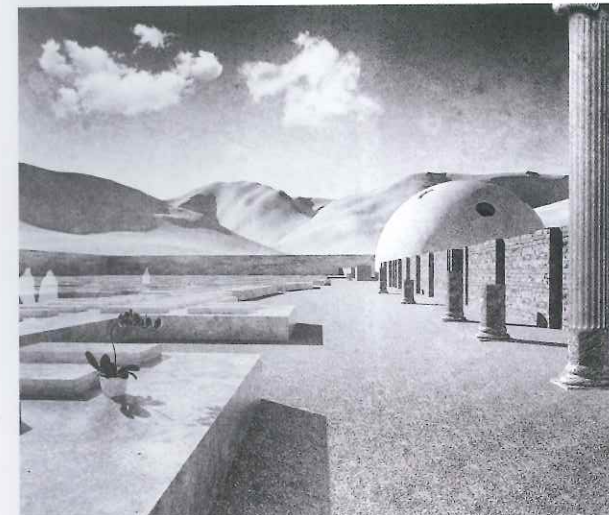
- Geometric repetition of the temple of Bel - strategy.
- Mosque (right) and church (left). View and axonometric projection.

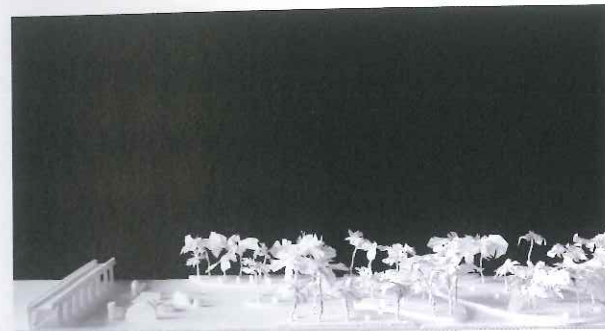
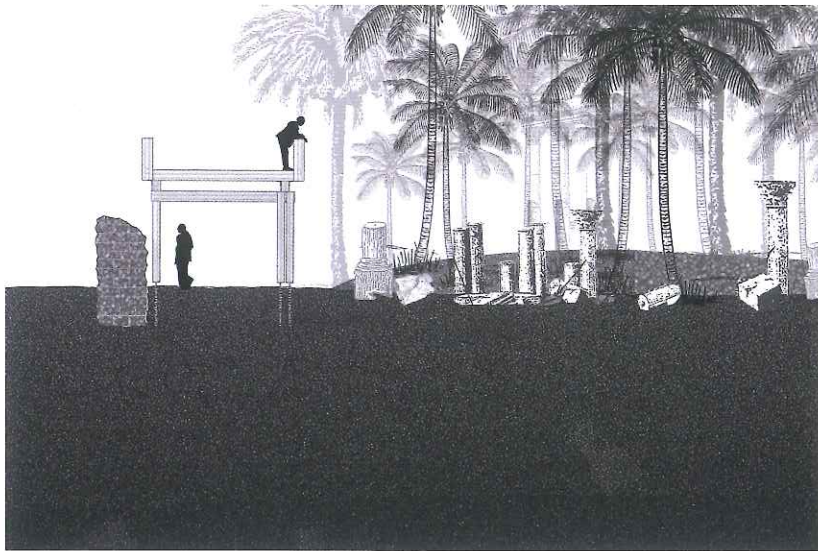


- Mosque and cemetery. Plan.



- Mosque and cemetery. Section, model and view.

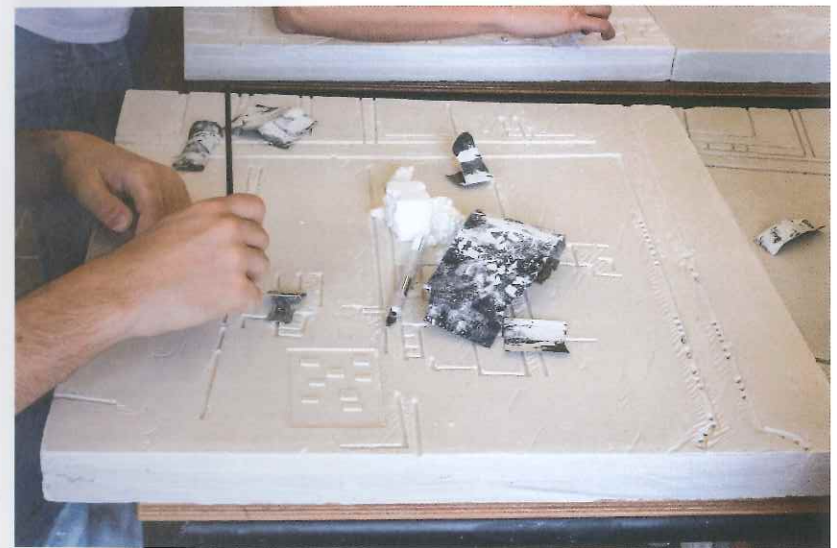




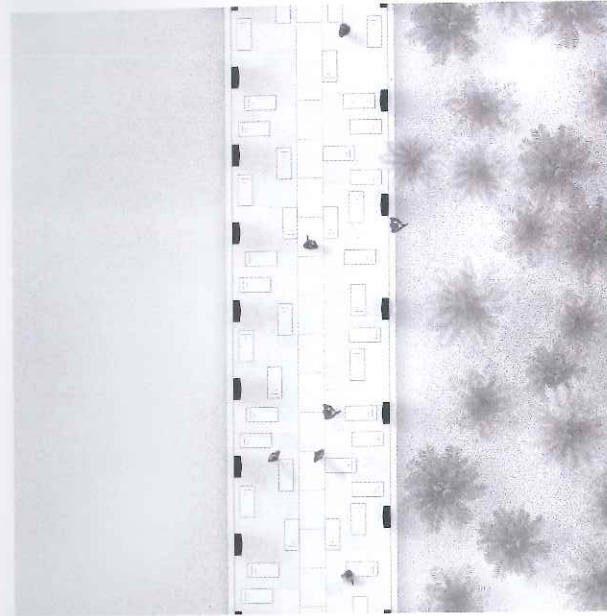
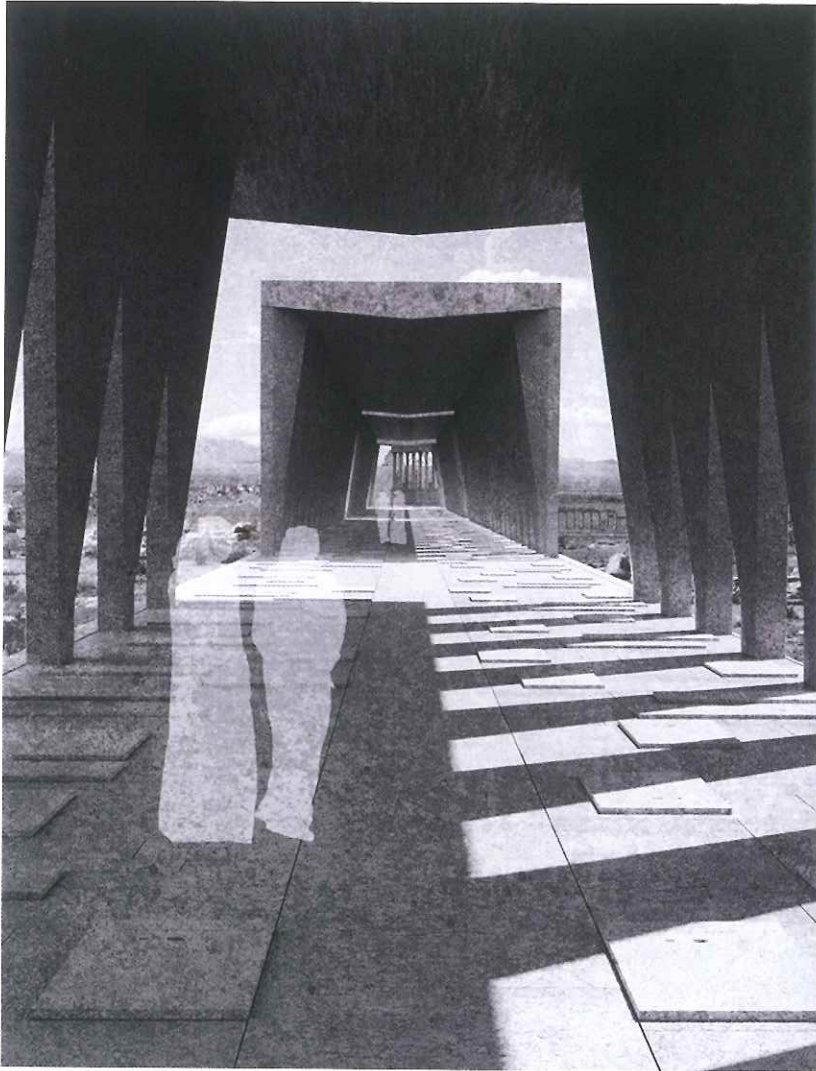
- New wall, section.
- From portico. View.
- Muslim cemetery in the palm grove. Model.

Why a cemetery in Palmyra?

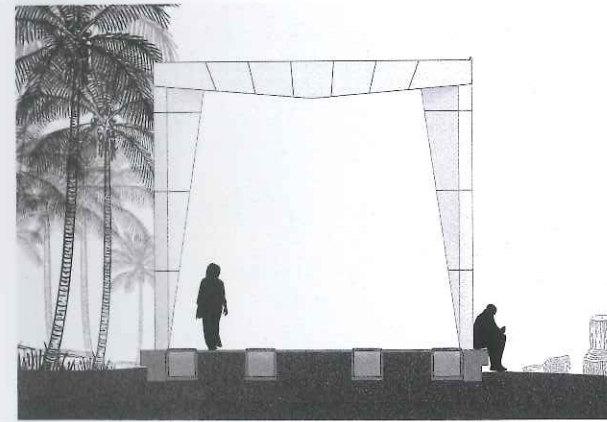
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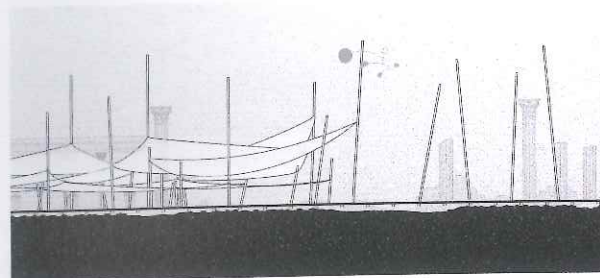
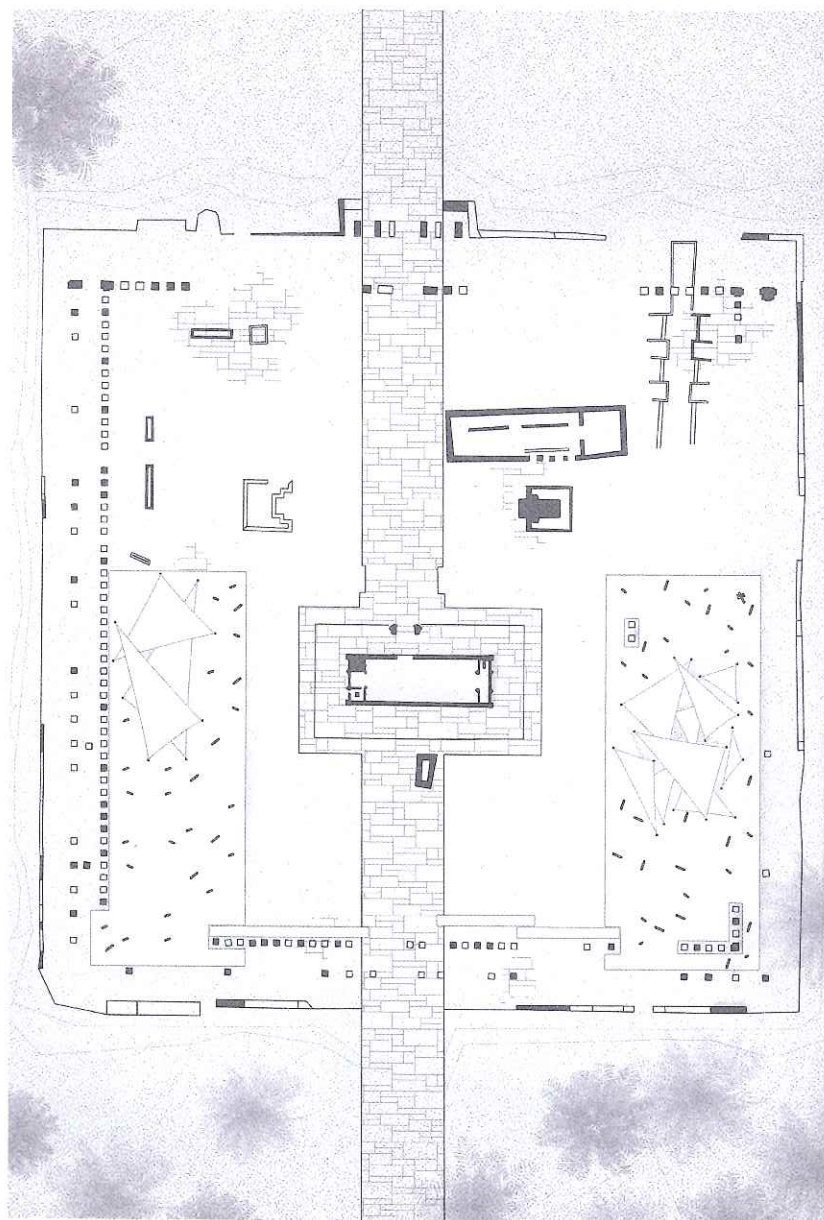


THE PALMYRA'S OXYMORON: HOW DESTRUCTION CAN BE PRESERVED?



- Muslim and Catholic cemeteries. View.
- Cemetery. Plan and section.

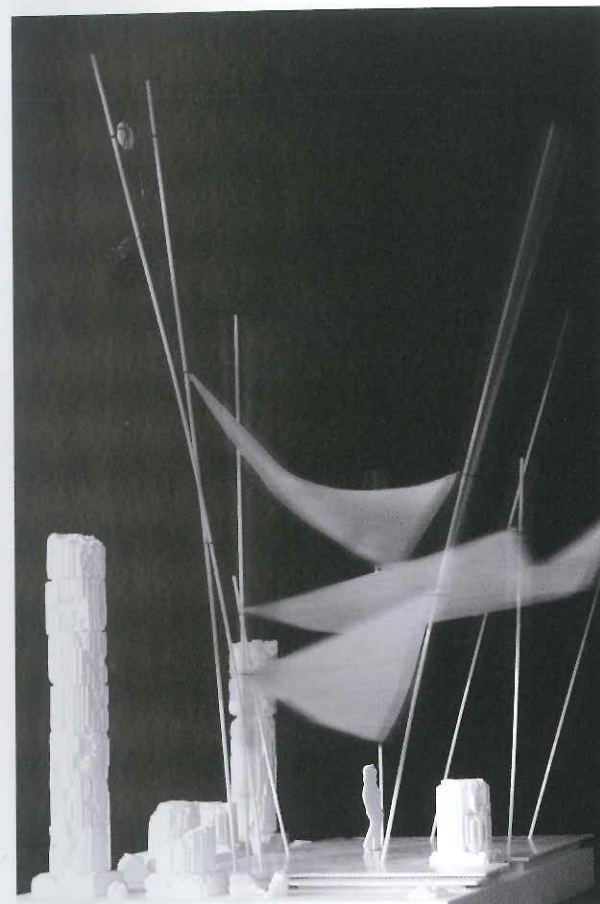


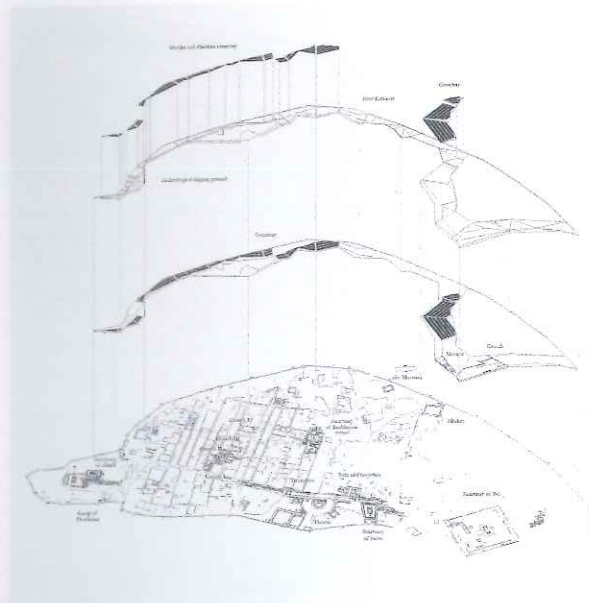
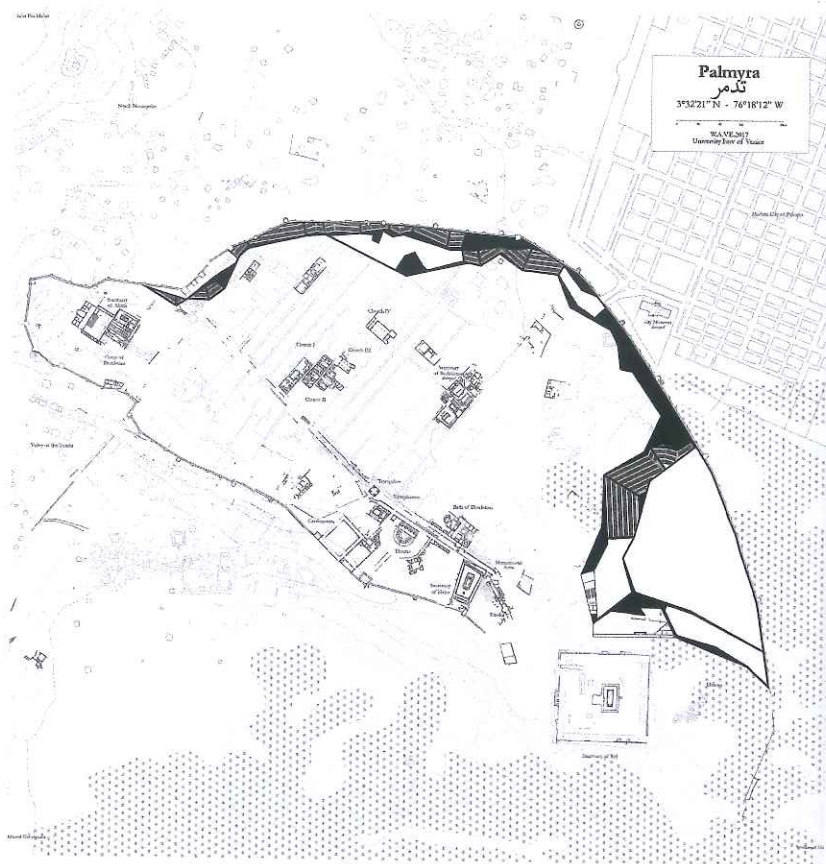


- Mosque and church plan on the Temple of Bel.

- Mosque. Section.

- Light covering and minaret. Model.





- Topographic strength of a place - strategy.
- Cemetery. Axonometric projection and view.



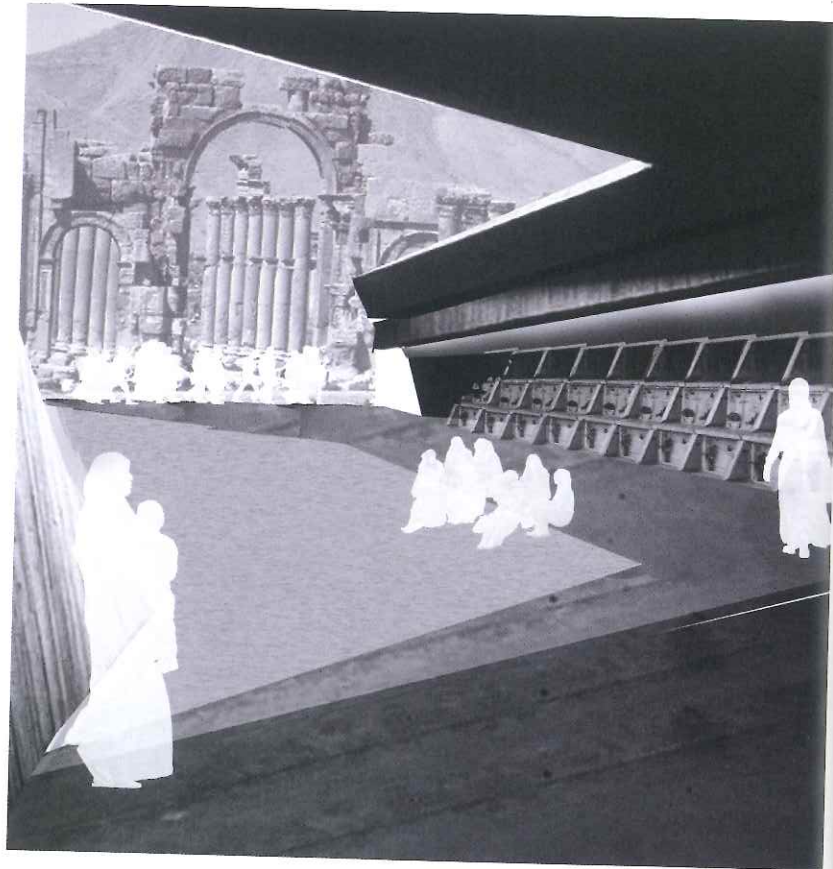
Scraps of seven projects.

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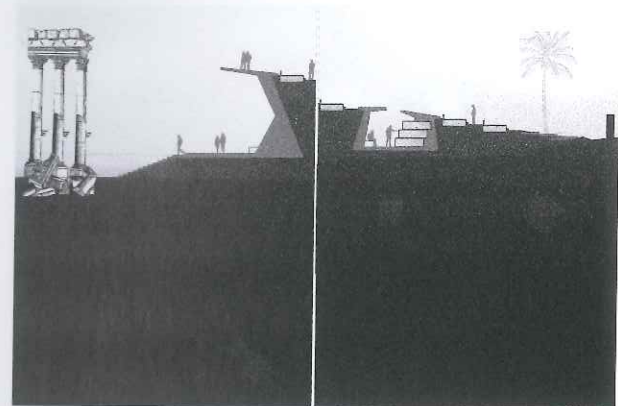


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SYRIA - THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE FROM URBICIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY



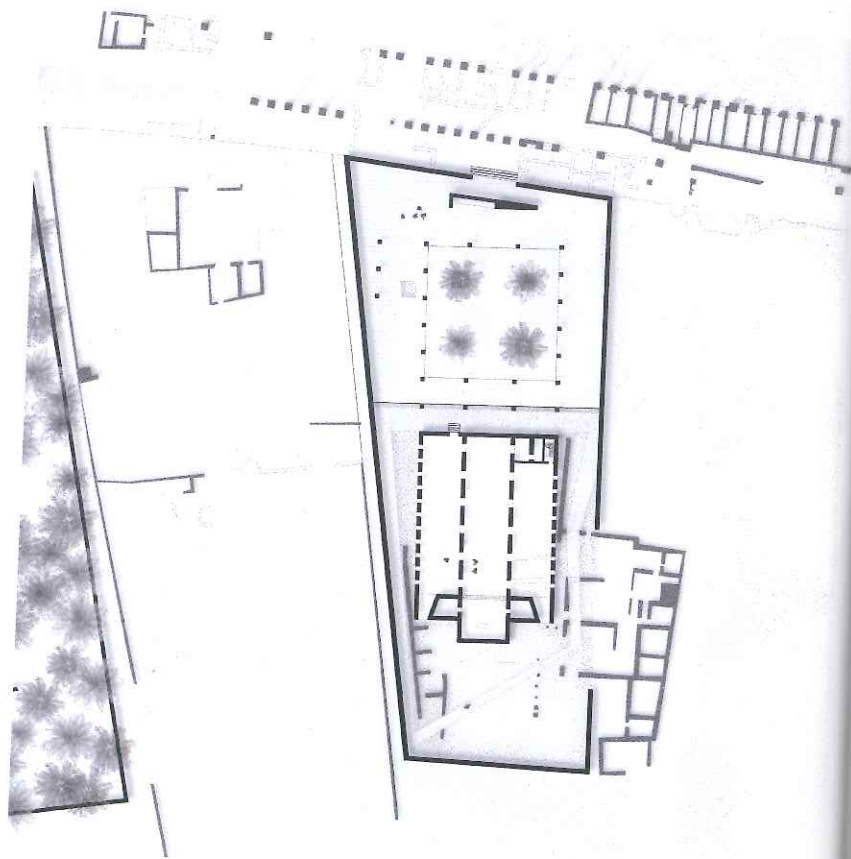
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- Catholic cemetery. View.
- Cemetery, external wall up to the great colonnade. Sections.
- Mosque. Section.



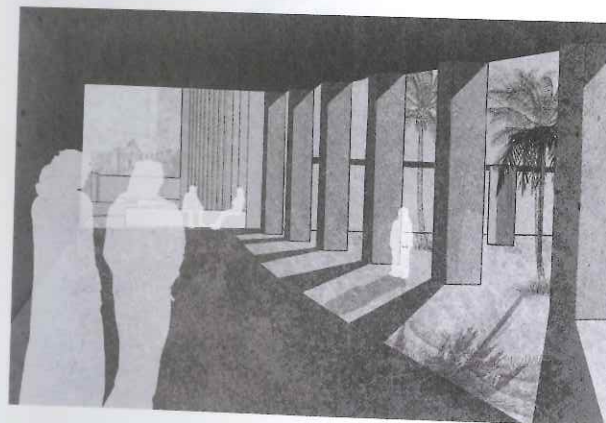
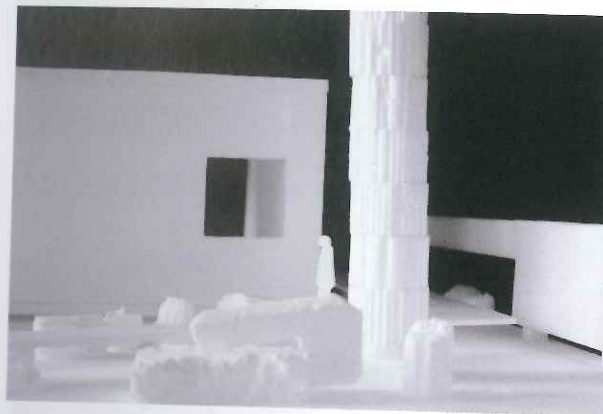
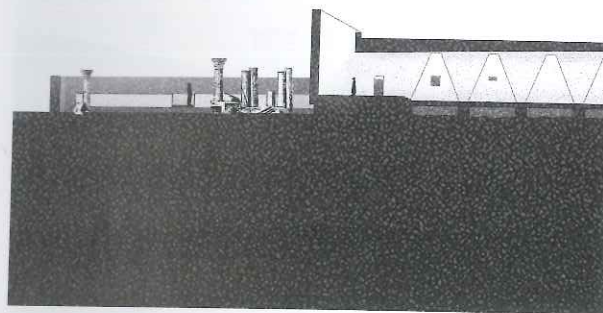
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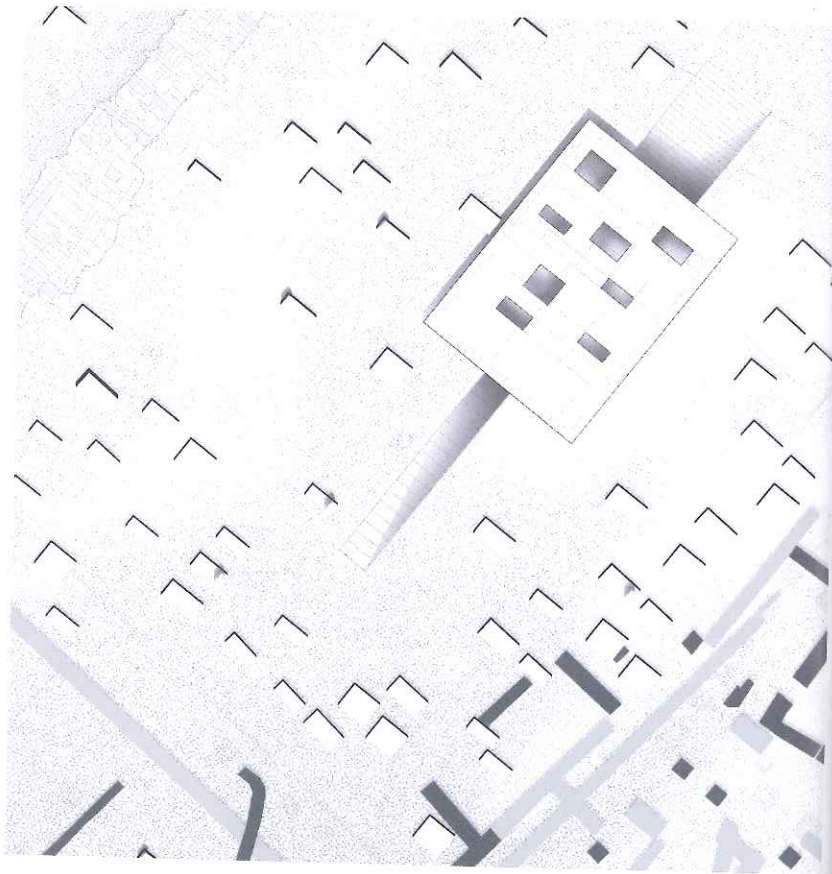
- Orthodox church, from the colonnade. Plan.

- Church and archaeological paths. Section and model.

- Orthodox church, from the colonnade. View.



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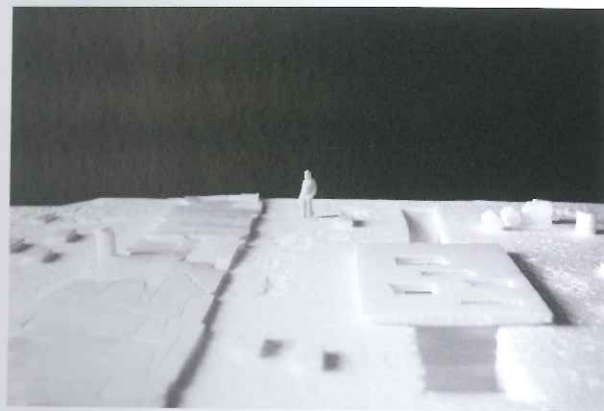


- Cemetery and hypogean museum. Plan.

- Cemetery and museum area. Section.

- Cemetery and hypogean museum. Model.

- New hypogean archaeological area. View.



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Camillo Magni - Operastudio

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Camillo Magni - Operastudio

- Milan, Italy

He studied architecture at the Politecnico di Milano and at ESTA, Madrid, in 1973. In 2006, he obtained his PhD in architectural design at the Politecnico di Milano, where he has been acting as assistant professor in several architectural design courses since 2001 (Leonardo and Bovisa). In 2006, he was appointed adjunct professor of architectural design.

In 2004, he participated in the international research project Casapartes to build low cost housing in Latin America. He is the president of "Architectes Sans Frontiers - Italy", and his working experience took him to Argentina, Paraguay, Guatemala, Ghana, Egypt, and Cambodia. In 2007, he founded OperaStudio, an Architectural Design firm in Milan with Lucia Paci. Now, he is the Western European Coordinator of Union Internationale des Architectes - UIA.

Tutors and Guests

Rossella Villani

Graduate *cum laude* in 2016 from Università Iuav di Venezia, with a master thesis on the reconstruction for Aleppo (prof. Benno Albrecht as thesis advisor). She has worked at Studio Prototype and is currently working at LEVS architecten in Amsterdam.

Manuel Minto

Graduate *cum laude* in 2016 from Università Iuav di Venezia, with a master thesis on an interfaith building as a haven for the city of Milan. He participated to various architectural competitions and is currently working between Italy and Portugal.

Alessia Boldrin

Graduate in Architecture and Innovation in 2017 from Università Iuav di Venezia, with a master thesis on a modular ecovillage for refugees in Hamburg. She is currently an intern at Guillermo Vazquez Consuegra Arquitecto in Seville, Spain.

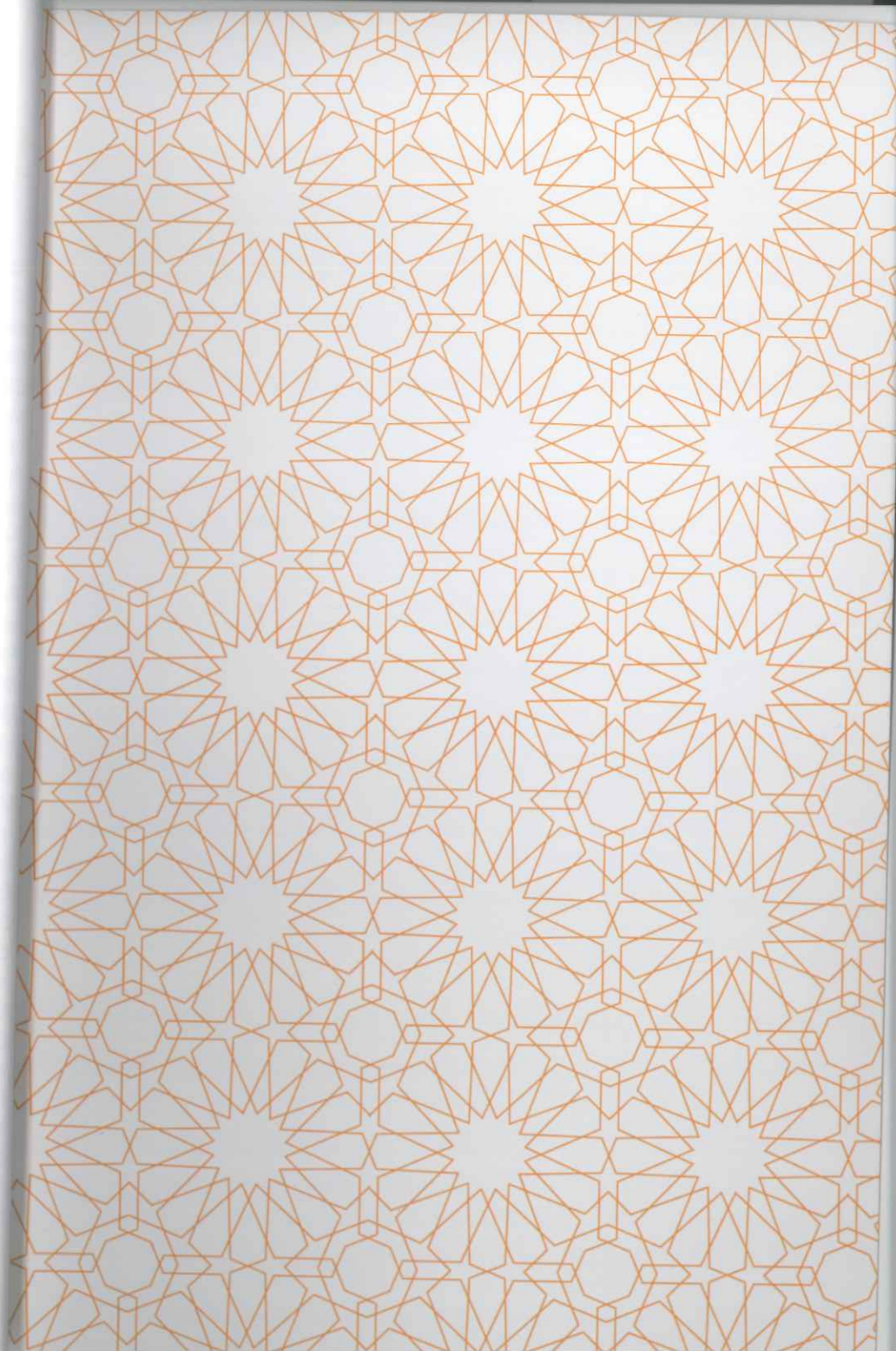
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