

IDEAS FOR A RECONSTRUCTION

In other forms, otherwise, present
memories of Amatrice

Research Booklet

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IDEAS FOR A RECONSTRUCTION

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IN OTHER FORMS, OTHERWISE

Post-disaster reconstruction approaches in Italy have come to favor outputs over processes; something that increasingly causes social precarity and a sense of collective oblivion throughout the prolonged recovery efforts.

Located in post-earthquake Amatrice, “In other forms, otherwise” is a project exploring possible practices and processes of reappropriating public grounds, encouraging open-ended narratives in spatial planning and architectural design within three locations along the town’s main road.

By retracing the long-standing tradition of transhumance and procession that is characteristic of rural areas, this project advocates for more adaptive practices of renewal that focus on the movement of materials, spaces, and people, pivoting away from the static and linear understanding of historical processes and cultural forms.

This project is ultimately an infrastructural acupuncture. It provides accessible grounds to an uprooted population by means of spatial repair and material rearrangement, engaging with themes of architectural preservation, societal attachment, and balance between memory and time.



INTRODUCTION

“After the enormous disaster in which twelve thousand people were killed, there were no houses left in Messina for the remaining thirty thousand. Most of the buildings had collapsed and the cracked walls of the rest made them unsafe. So a barrack town was hastily erected in a large meadow north of the city. [...] All the booths and workshops are open to the street. Only a few of the larger buildings have entrances which can be closed, and even these rarely are, because those who live in them spend most of their time out of doors. They have been living under these conditions for three years now, and this life in shacks, huts and tents, even, has had a definite influence on their characters. The horror of that tremendous event, the fear of its repetition, drive them to take their delight in the pleasures of the moment.”

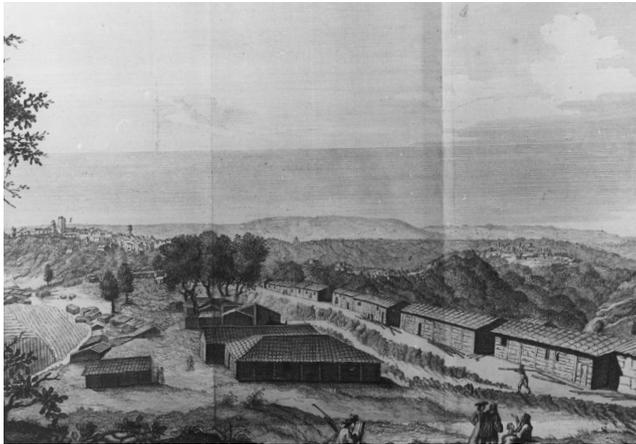
—Goethe, J.W. *Italian Journey*, 1786–1788¹

Amatrice

Between August 2016 and January 2017, three devastating earthquakes occurred in Central Italy, causing the annihilation of a large number of settlements in the Apennine landscape between the regions Lazio, Marche, Umbria, and Abruzzo. There is little imagination left about the challenges that followed the event. Since 2016, the clearance of the building remnants and the reconstruction of the built environment have become major financial and political concerns for the local communities.

During my visit to some of the sites affected by the disaster in September 2023, I came across Amatrice, a town whose fame is preceded by its remarkable culinary tradition, and that at the time of the disaster suffered one of the most unfortunate fates: the sheer force of the event had swept away the town in its entirety.

The uncanny image that I encountered during my



Mileto in the 16th century (Calabria, Italy). The destroyed town and the temporary town.
© Pompeo Schiantarelli, 1783

first visit and the ones that followed in the next months resembles closely what Goethe had found in Messina in 1786. If I was initially struck by the plain sight of the mountains in a landscape that, clearly, must have been dominated by stone buildings, terracotta roofs, and people not too long before, I became soon concerned with the precarious conditions in which the Amatriciani have been living for the past eight years, just like the Sicilians and Calabrians in Goethe's diary. While awaiting the completion of the reconstruction works, the population of Amatrice had found temporary accommodation two kilometers south-east the old center. As of 2024, the rebuilding remains an ongoing process, forcing the inhabitants to a condition of stark precarity in their temporary settlement.

As post-disaster reconstruction approaches in Italy have increasingly come to favour outputs over processes, they generate social precarity and a sense of collective oblivion that often jeopardise the well-being of the affected communities. These research and project explore possible practices and processes of reappropriating public grounds, encouraging open-ended narratives in spatial planning and architectural design.

Un Sentiero Abitato

Un Sentiero Abitato emerges as a cross-scalar architectural project ultimately dealing with the larger territorial, urban and programmatic issues of the reconstruction as well as the more tangible architectural, spatial, and material scales of intervention.

By retracing existing festivity pathways along the main road of the town, the project identifies possible grounds to reinstate public life, beginning with a square, a garden, and a church, a strategy that transcends the sterile and rigid lenses of zoning



Aerial view of the centre of Amatrice partially cleared from the debris
© Comando Carabinieri, 2020

and philological reconstruction and embraces incrementality and open-endedness. The path, or sentiero, creates a physical, functional, and symbolic connection between the old town and the new temporary town, between the mourned past and the unknown future, securing a spatial and temporal continuity between the two ends in the years of the reconstruction.

By understanding Amatrice's territorial condition not only as the cause for its seismic instability but also as the cause for its social, economic, and urban marginality, the project advocates for precise and resource-conscious interventions. The programmatic and architectural dimensions of the project propose inhabiting the sentiero by reallocating public functions in the three sites. While reflecting on the nature of the condition of Amatrice's public ground, the road, the garden, and the church become typological labels suggesting a latent potential lying behind neglected spaces. By reshaping the ground of these three sites the project provides accessible space for indoor and outdoor gatherings, intended for the community to reconnect, rebuild, and nurture its collective memory.

1 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Italian Journey, 1786-1788*, trans. Auden Wystan Hugh; Mayer, Elizabeth (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1982), 215-303.



QUESTIONS



Question I

How can one conceive the reconstruction of Amatrice in the forms dictated by its present condition of marginality rather than its idealised past?

Due to its location in the remoteness of the Apennines, Amatrice - with a population of two thousand - has witnessed progressive abandonment and decay for the past fifty years, leading to the loss of human capital and knowledge of the territory long before the events of 2016. Despite the elevated natural, environmental, and cultural resources in the area, the lack of primary services, such as healthcare, education, and transport, has induced a condition of marginality and degradation, which has led a large portion of the population to leave the town in order to seek better jobs and education in the closest urban centres - Rieti, L'Aquila, and Rome particularly. Amatrice is indeed one of the many towns that, in recent years, have participated in the growth of Rome's Metropolitan Area. However, unlike many towns that have been directly incorporated because of their proximity to the city, peripheral hamlets like Amatrice have experienced the exodus of their population and, subsequently, have been cut off from urban progress completely. In the sight of a forthcoming reconstruction, one might wonder whether Amatrice should be rebuilt at all, and, if so, why it should be recovered to its previous forms rather than addressing the current nature of its urbanity.

Reconstruction in the aftermath of a natural disaster should not only reinstate the condition unfairly taken away from the community stroke by the calamity. It should also invite critical reflection on its forms of existence in relation to the territory in the first place. Reconstruction is, after all, a form of construction, and it should undergo the same rigorous questioning about why, how, and what kind

of intervention should be carried out.

Instead of promoting a static and linear understanding of historical processes and cultural forms, how can a diverse poetic of time be proposed? In short, the question is not merely how to reconstruct, but how to reconstruct in the margins of urbanity. What is the meaning of the reconstruction in Amatrice, today?

Question II

What are the particularities of the town that, today, allow us to envision a physical and economic reconstruction that is proportional to the available resources?

Reflecting on the reconstruction of a marginal town like Amatrice means valuing practices of management and care for its landscape and buildings. Places like Amatrice strongly rely on the impact of individual actions and initiatives. Its 2'000 inhabitants share much in common with Christopher Alexander's Community of 7'000. As Alexander maintains, in any community as large as 500–10'000 people, individuals have an effective voice because the psychological and geographical distance between the citizens and the centre of power is much narrower than in larger cities.²

The community of Amatrice benefits from its small dimension in the individual freedom to initiate action and to make a change. This is the great advantage of operating and designing in the fringe, but it means that architecture should be thought of at a much smaller and human scale, in synergy with the place's social and material resources.

In this regard, two major projects are taking shape in Amatrice's townscape, which utterly contradict these principles: the new hospital and the welfare house, 'Casa Futuro'. While the historic



Practices
of care in
monastic
communities



Exquisite corpse,
creative incremental
growth
© André Breton,
1932

centre of Amatrice has been carefully studied and archaeologically retraced to reinstate the historic and authentic forms of the town, these two projects stand in stark contrast to ideals of identity and authenticity. The scale, language, and insensitivity to the context promise to overcome two major problems in marginal territories – lack of healthcare and education – by means of modernity, technology, and sustainability, all of which mirror the forms typical of heavily urbanised areas, implying that the only way to overcome marginality is, in fact, to become a city.

How can the plans for the reconstruction offer tools for the locals to become the caretakers and stewards of their territory?

Question III

How can post-disaster reconstructions enact spatial renewal rather than seeking definitive narratives?

Every so often earthquakes make their appearance in Italian historical records calling for exceptional measures to recover the built environment. The fear of annihilation, particularly in historical contexts, is a vivid concern that regularly nurtures debates and reflections. Questions about memory and reconstruction intersect with safety and future-proofing measures, opening up towards innovative technical and architectural solutions to protect existing heritage and newly built constructions.

However, the quality of such solutions is measured solely on the basis of their ability to withstand natural forces, a vision that relies upon blind trust in the power of science versus the unpredictable action of nature, exposing people to the dangerous illusion of safety in territories that are inevitably prone to future damages. The blindness to future liability and to the likelihood of change is a narrow outlook on the nature of buildings and cities. Seeking completion

and definitiveness inhibits the continuous evolution of the built environment and hinders the community's ability to adapt and recover from unexpected changes.

Strategizing around a community's capacity for renewal can open up new perspectives on reconstruction, shifting the attention from the outputs to the processes. It encourages both direct and indirect participation of the inhabitants in the making of their built environment, preserving a connection to the particularities of their territory. It keeps construction techniques alive in the collective memory, renewing a sense of architectural identity and specificity as well as strengthening the community's vulnerability towards future threats. Rather than envisioning decades-long plans to retrieve what was unjustly lost and deliver it back to an exhausted community, is it possible to imagine participatory and incremental growth in the making of the built environment?

Question IV

What is the role of architects?

According to Joseph Rykwert, cities and towns can be understood as artifacts made out of both intentional and random elements that are not entirely under control. They are neither the product of rational planning nor the physiological development of an organic creature, but rather take on qualities of dreams.³ Architectural artifacts, on the contrary, are rarely prone to this perspective. As buildings are often thought of as finite and unchangeable products, they resist incrementality and open-ended narratives. The possibility of reconstructing an identical town through the improvements of sound constructions – concrete structures clad with replicas of the old façades – and expanding the urban fabric through generic, placeless architecture, casts Amatrice's architectural character further away from its lost regionalism. Between the

populism of its scenography and the austerity of globalised technology, the architecture of the town and its environment appear ever more disconnected. Instead, one might wonder whether it is desirable to imagine ever-evolving spatial narratives that meet the prolonged schedule and its changes over time, thus shifting the focus from the reconstruction outputs to its process. It is perhaps possible to think of the reconstruction of Amatrice in an incremental pattern of growth, interlinking each activity in a consequential, yet consistent temporal concatenation of programs and spaces.

How can architectural practices react to this perspective? How can the figure of the architect operate beyond mere historicism and technocracy and reflect on the idiosyncrasies of Amatrice's destruction?

² Rykwert, Joseph. *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

³ Alexander, Christopher, Sara Ishikawa, and Murray Silverstein. *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 70–74.

METHODOLOGY

Said and seen

Understanding what kind of town Amatrice is today, what kind of town it was in the past, and what changes occurred over time is the greatest challenge encountered since the beginning of the research.

So much knowledge vanishes when the built environment disappears, and a great deal of immaterial and verbal testimonies need to supersede what the material traces had been able to preserve and communicate for centuries.

Through this research, I will seek to piece together the fragments of the past and present through verbal testimonies and visual reconstructions.

The words of different characters and their personal narratives will constitute a tool to evaluate and measure the design decisions. Interviewing locals and city council members, and cultivating a dialogue throughout the entire duration of the graduation project will assist the research in meeting the perspectives of the people most closely affected. The words of Alessio, Marzio, Juan Diego, Antonella, Mario, Roberto, Francesco, Leonardo, Brunella, Giorgio, Moreno, Daniela, Fabiana will provide invaluable insights about both the reality of the reconstruction and its indirect perception.

Photographs, alongside films, will materialise their words into tangible evidence. The visual collections will allow an evaluation of Amatrice's status quo, and a comparison not only to what was there before but also to what it could become - a concrete exploration of potential. Finally, as part of the research positioning, the film "Remember Amatrice" attempts to encapsulate the viewpoints of these characters, constituting a fundamental backbone expressing this project's intentions.

Chapter "Portrait of a town" is the result of these observations.

Locals

Administration

External figures

Feb ■

Marzio Mozzetti
journalist

Juan Diego Turatti
volunteer

Giorgio Cortellesi
mayor

Leonardo Quirini
*public reconstruction
engineer*

Cinzia Rotilli
*public reconstruction
engineer*

Mar ■

Liminal Lab
association

Apr ■

Fritz
young inhabitant

Brunella Fratoddi
architect

Marzio Mozzetti
journalist

Alessio
restaurant owner

Leonardo Quirini
*public reconstruction
engineer*

Daniela Monteriù
lawyer

Juan Diego Turatti
volunteer

Moreno Orazi
reconstruction architect

May ■

Andrea Natali
social worker

Jul ■

Liminal Lab
*association*Rina Rolli
*architect*Andrea Fossati
*architect*Moreno Orazi
*reconstruction architect*Fabiana Cesarano
*soprintendenza architect*Leonardo Quirini
*public reconstruction
engineer*Brunella Fratoddi
*architect*Giorgio Nibbi
council member-
pro loco chief-
*CAI Amatrice*Roberto
*hotel owner*Francesco Cicconi
*youth association chief*Antonella Palombini
*architect*Mario Ciaralli
writer

Aug ■

Since 2016, the three municipal administrations presiding over Amatrice have been expected to respond to the fundamental question of how to reconstruct the physical reality of the town. Interestingly enough, the last winning party competing for municipal elections bears such an architectural objective in its name *Ricostruiamo Insieme* (Let's reconstruct together). One might then wonder why so much of the reconstruction is the mere outcome of political and financial decisions rather than architectural ones, and whether it is possible to transform Amatrice's reconstruction into a living laboratory where architectural decisions can be discussed and evaluated. By challenging the idea that architecture should be a byproduct of political and financial decisions one might be able to pivot away from the idea that the reconstruction is a mere logistical exercise, and rather understand it as a medium to achieve desired socio-economic agendas.

As such, the translation of theoretical objectives and ideas into practical and tangible dimensions seems to be pivotal. For this reason, rather than framing the project as a finalised design proposal, this research will position design as a method of inquiry - a research tool allowing critical reflection, comparison, and evaluation - emphasising the benefits that researching by design can bring to the world of things, instead of solely lending its reflection to the often sterile world of ideas.

In short, this project aims at exploring architectural possibilities in a tangible manner and generating insights through design decisions. These decisions will be collected and recorded in the Project Journal, a document that allows the inquiry, measuring, and comparison of the design process. The chapter "*Un sentiero abitato II*" is the outcome of this investigation.

Spatial and temporal objects

The need to transform abstract intentions into tangible ideas inevitably asks for a pragmatic approach to design. The making of objects like drawings, models, and images will not only be essential to communicate ideas but also to bring them into the realm of the tangible world, where it can be physically perceived, evaluated, and altered.

The process of materialising thoughts, gestures, and statements will mirror a fundamental aspect of the research concerning the material culture of the site and its physicalities. As the remaining structures and fragments of the town are integral to the process of rebuilding, tracing their spatial and temporal states through drawings and models in an almost archaeological manner will help resist the notion of a lost past versus a blank and empty present.

In expressing the multiple spatial and temporal layers of the project, each element will become part of a transformative process in which every phase can stand in its own right. Within this suite of tools, the remnants of the town and its latest temporary developments will be legitimised as meaningful and valuable, composing a picture of the town that is not so easy to define as empty and uninhabitable anymore.

Chapter “Archaeological bricoleurs” elaborates further on this approach.



Samples of models used to explore the different scales of investigation of the project
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PORTRAIT OF A TOWN

Eight years of life after the earthquake

Having been almost annihilated, the town centre is now classified as a red zone. Since 2016, this restricted-access area was first subject to the clearance of the debris and then destined for reconstruction as of September 2023.

Before the earthquake, the centre was occupied by most of the dwellings in the town, as well as its services, shops, and religious and administrative buildings. The impossibility of accessing the site has posed the major problem of relocating these functions elsewhere in the area, to keep the metabolism of the community active throughout the emergency.

The new structures have been scattered right outside the edges of the old town, expanding beyond its borders into the territory of its neighbouring hamlet - Villa San Cipriano. The settlement follows a linear distribution which has been enforced by the natural configuration of the ground. The narrow and elongated plateau on top of which Amatrice is situated only allowed the expansion of the town parallel to the longest axis, which naturally drove the shanty town further and further away from its old centre. Two commercial areas, four residential areas, a food area, a healthcare centre, and an education site follow one another along the main spine for 1,4 km - as opposed to the previous configuration which comprised all the services within a radius of less than 500 m. The municipality office is the only construction that remained within that area. It was built much closer to the old town, replacing the school which collapsed in 2016.

The notion of temporality in the evaluation of this displacement is crucial. Temporary is the condition of the shanty town in sight of the definitive reconstruction, and so are its construction materials and architectural elements, which were meant to be fast and easy to assemble. However, eight years later, one may point out the illusory temporary nature of this condition which,



in fact, the inhabitants perceive as their permanent reality.

The oddity of this circumstance is enhanced by the contrast between the prolonged permanence in the new settlement versus the approaching decay of the constructions, patented for a lifespan of ten years, and expressed through an architectural language that appears utterly foreign to the identity of this territory. Not to forget the contradiction between the sprawled settlement and the original clustered nature of the town.

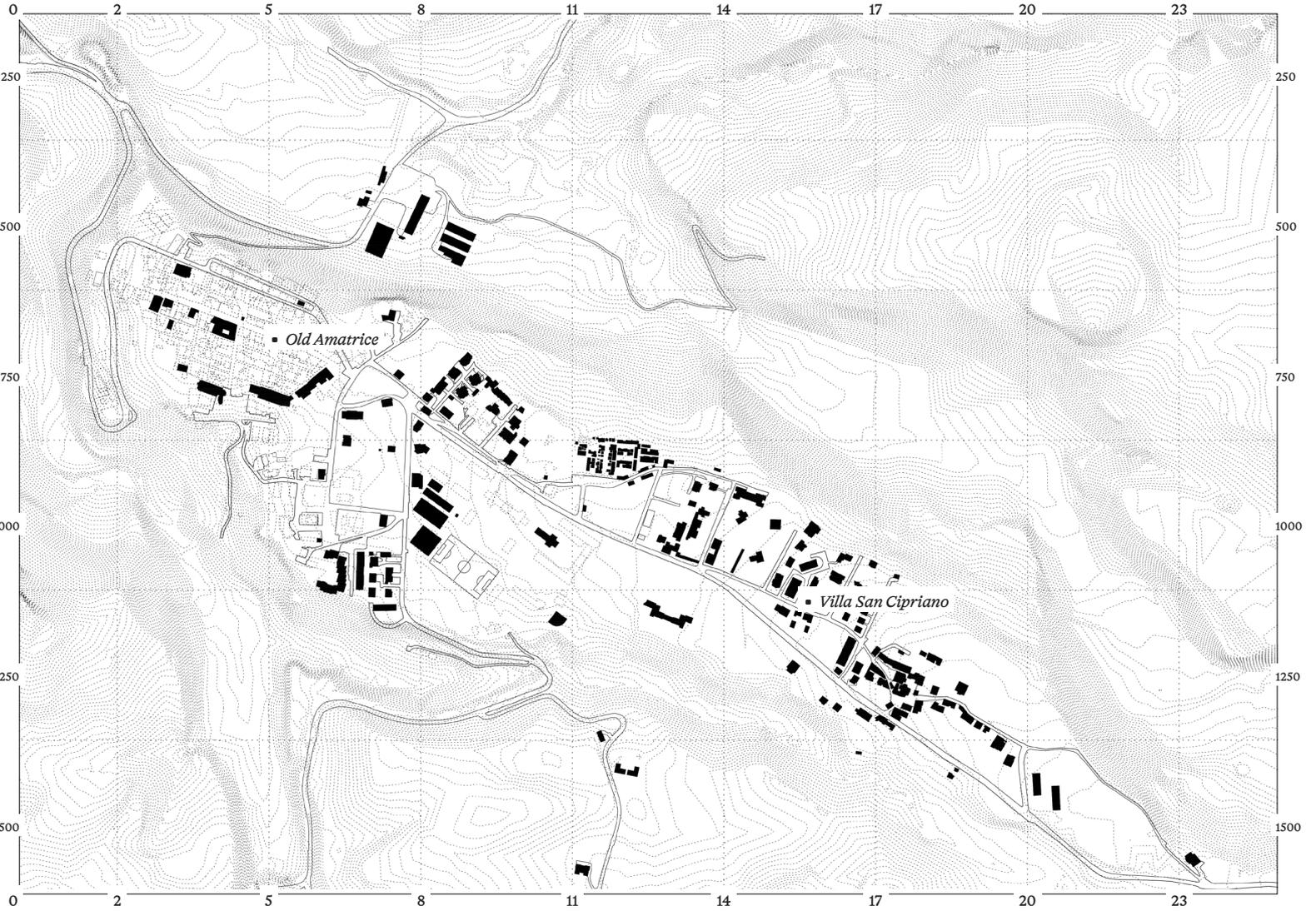
The permanence of this new condition brings about severe social implications regarding an abrupt, yet enduring change even in the way of experiencing the urbanity of this place, shifting from a human-centred to a car-needy model of transportation.

Oftentimes the inhabitants express their discomfort in the sense of isolation caused by the absence of both the old centre and a new functional one, feeling relegated within the boundaries of their temporary houses.

Not only is the old centre shielded behind the barriers of the red zone, but also, the new settlement lacks the gravitational energy embedded in the presence of a critical mass, where things convey and gather around one centre of attraction, loosening the sense of community and companionship.



walking time (mins)



The civic museum's
tower bell, history
and infrastructure.
© Sofia Manieri,
Autumn 2023

Sant'Agostino
Church, history and
infrastructure.
© Sofia Manieri,
Autumn 2023



Inside the red zone,
the ruins and the
mountains.
© Sofia Manieri,
Summer 2024



Inside the red zone,
the ruins and the
mountains.
© Sofia Manieri,
Summer 2024



Inside the red zone,
the ruins and the
mountains.
© Sofia Manieri,
Summer 2024



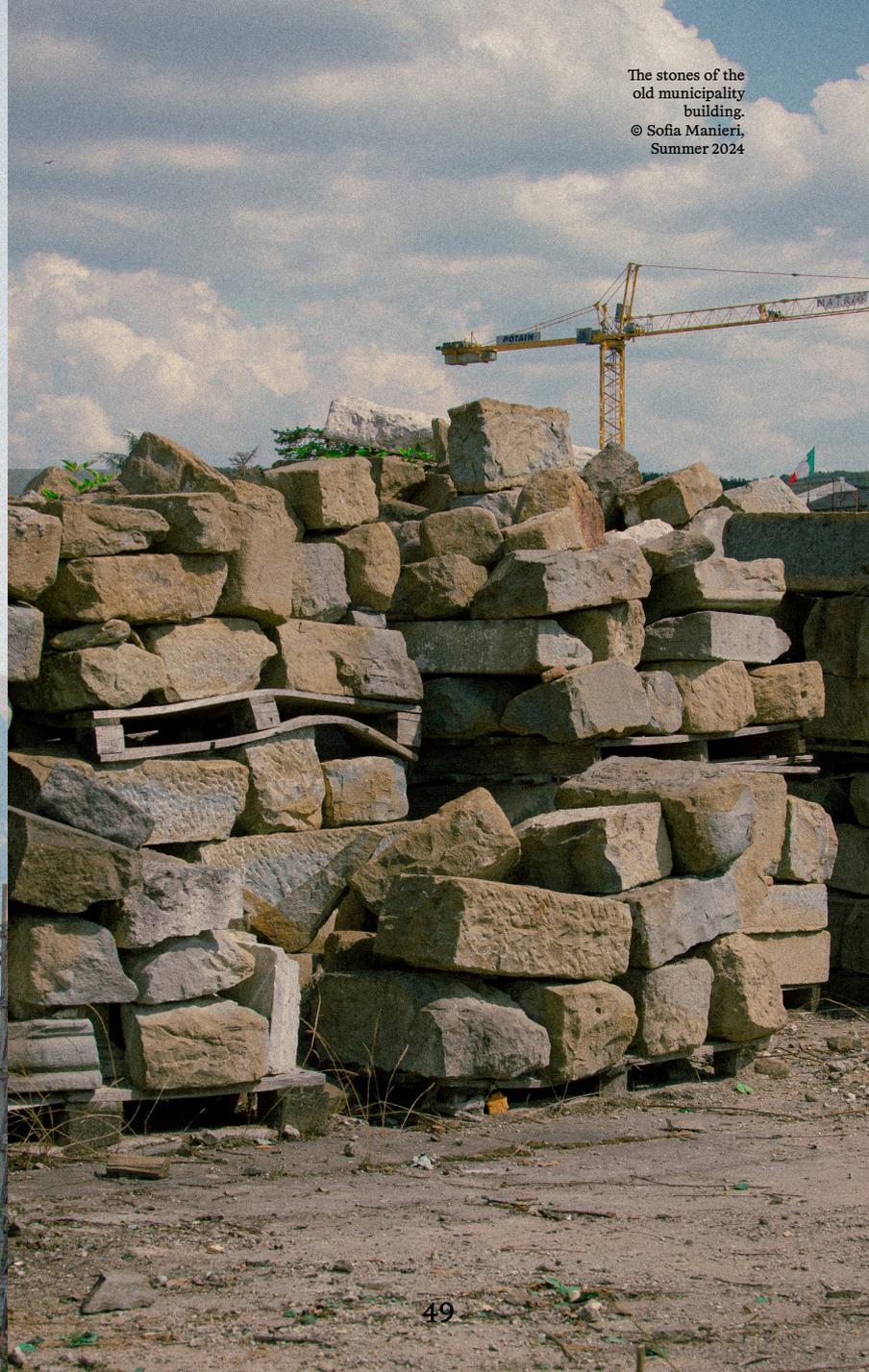
Inside the red zone,
building sites.
© Sofia Manieri,
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The civic tower bell.
© Sofia Manieri,
Summer 2024

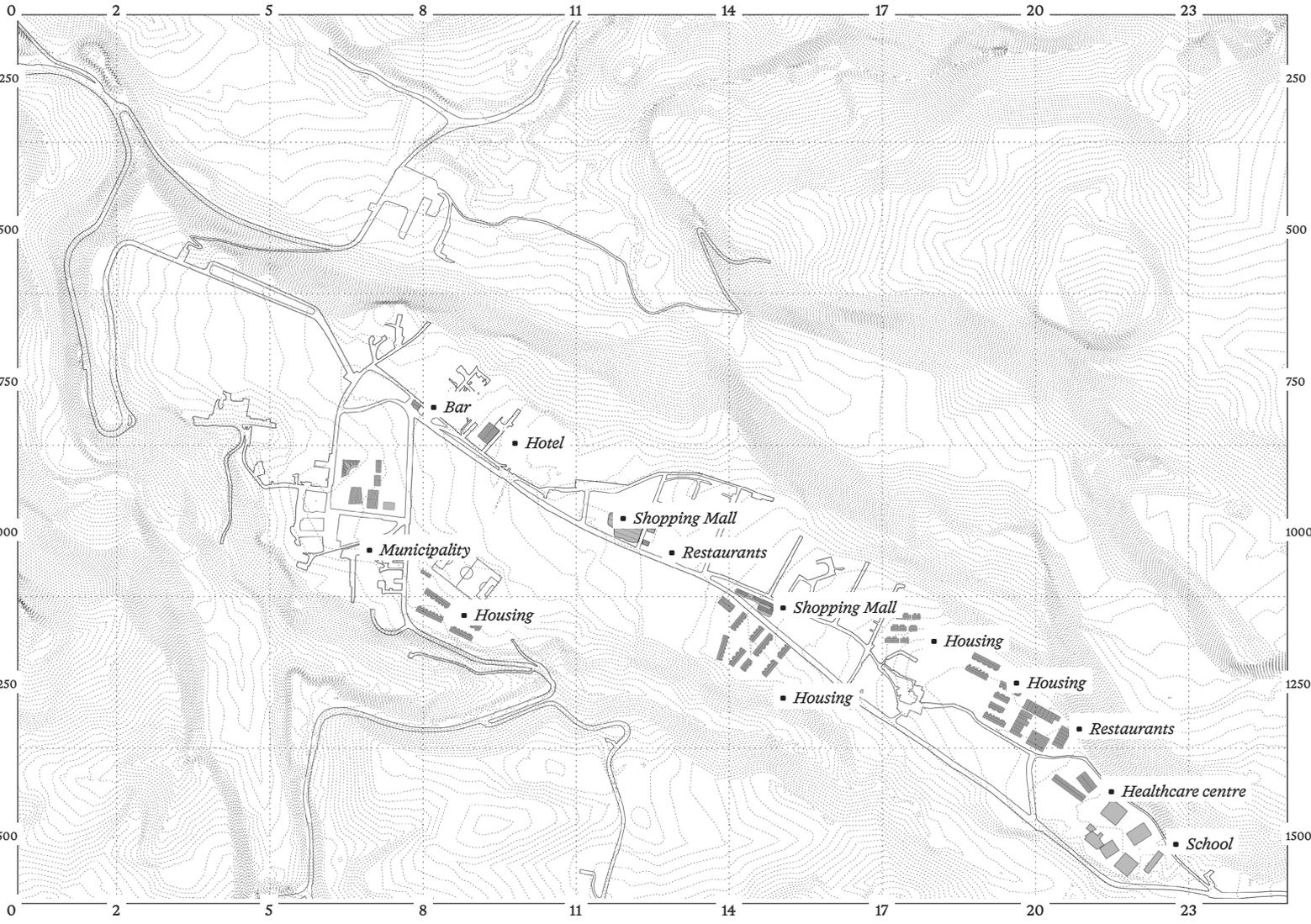


The stones of the
old municipality
building.
© Sofia Manieri,
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walking time (mins)



distance (m)

Gate to the historic
centre's red zone.
© Sofia Manieri,
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The new auditorium.
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Summer 2024











Transhumances and processions

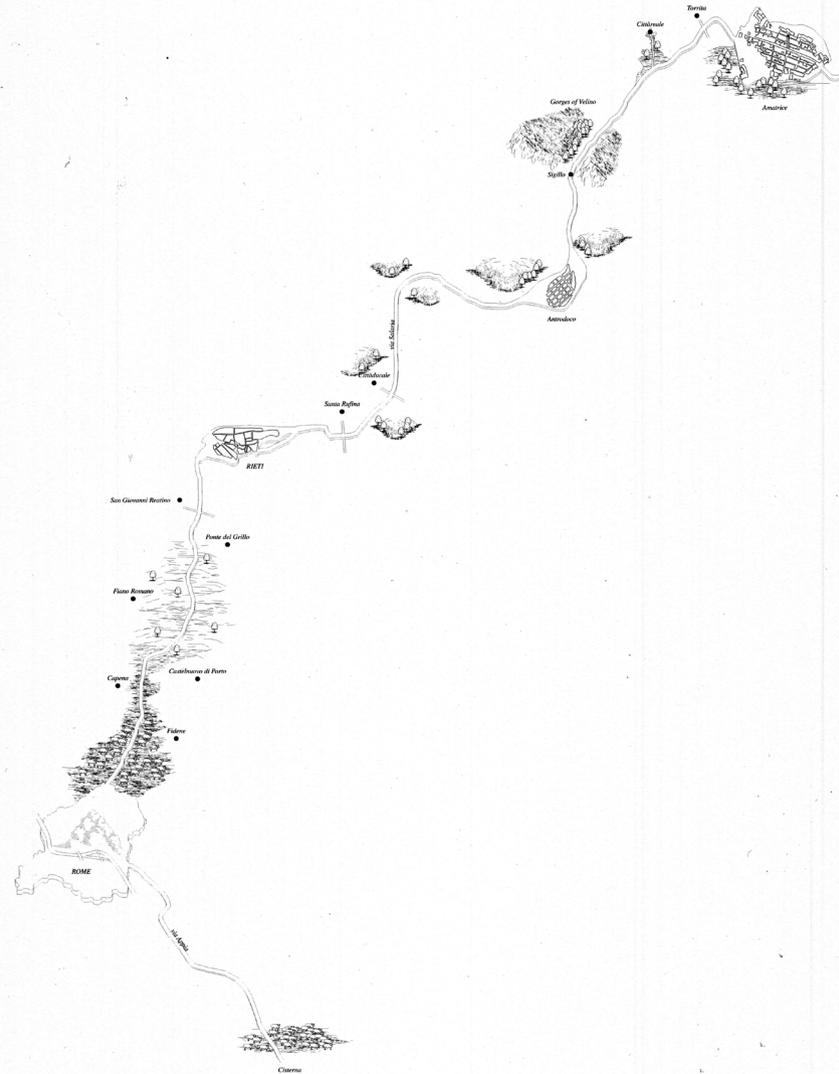
“In the early days of October, leaving behind the mountains and valleys above Cardito, which were already beginning to change in a myriad of colors, the long caravan of sheep on the move, after passing through the town of Amatrice, ascended the steep mule track of “Costa Sergiata” after a few hundred meters from the Chiesa della Croce, and then reached the nearby via “Romanella”. This was the only road that, until the early 20th century, connected the via Salaria to the town.

As one moved away from the houses, the shepherds once again sounded the bells of the sheep, which had been silenced shortly before near the hospital, as a sign of respect for the passage of the flock.

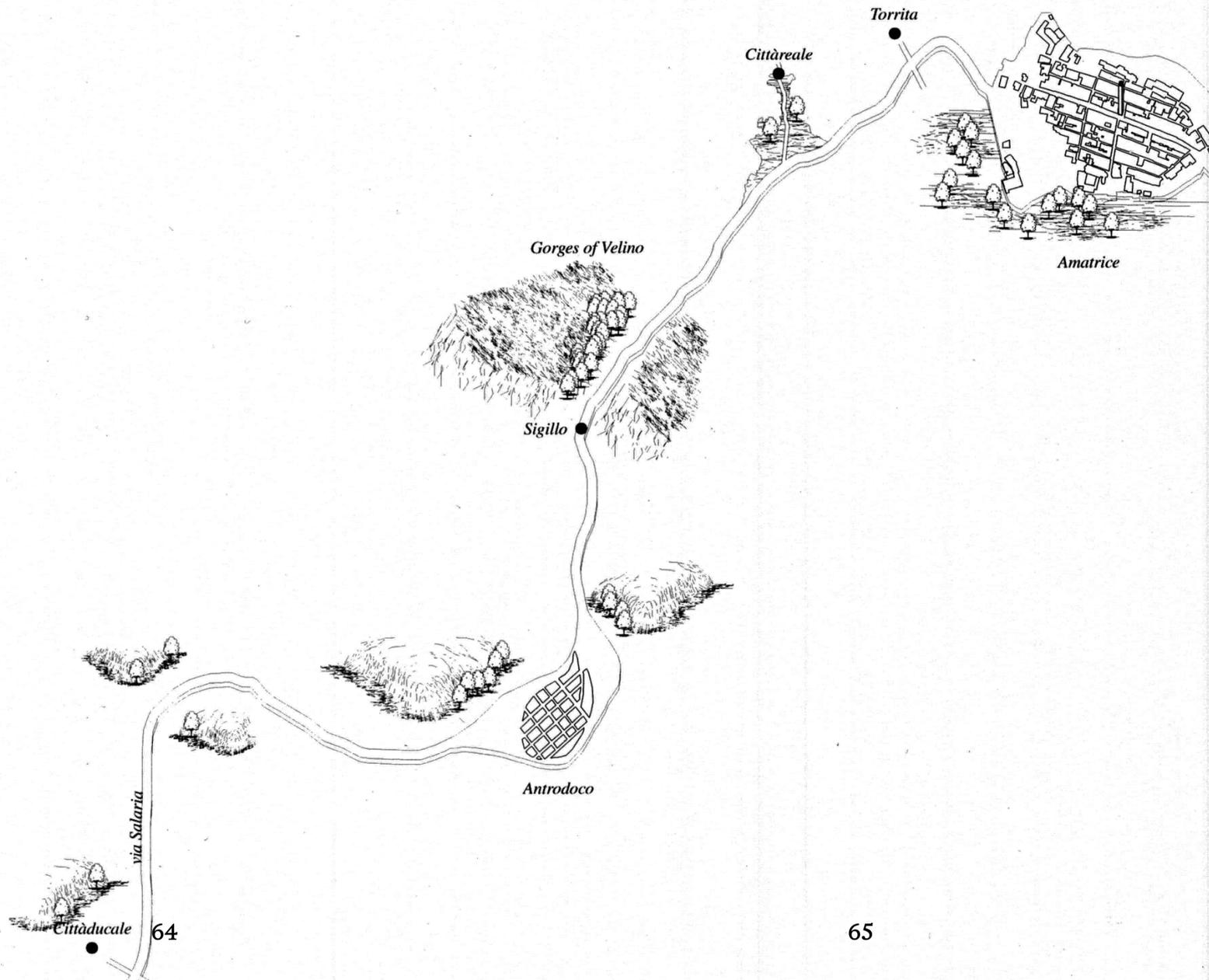
Upon reaching the road and taking the consular road at the Torrita pass, our grandparents, at the head of the numerous farms, sadly set out towards the “Piana” of Cittareale and further along the narrow gorges of the Velino river towards Sigillo and Antrodoco, until reaching the towns of Canetra and Cotilia, and then nearby the Reatina plain.

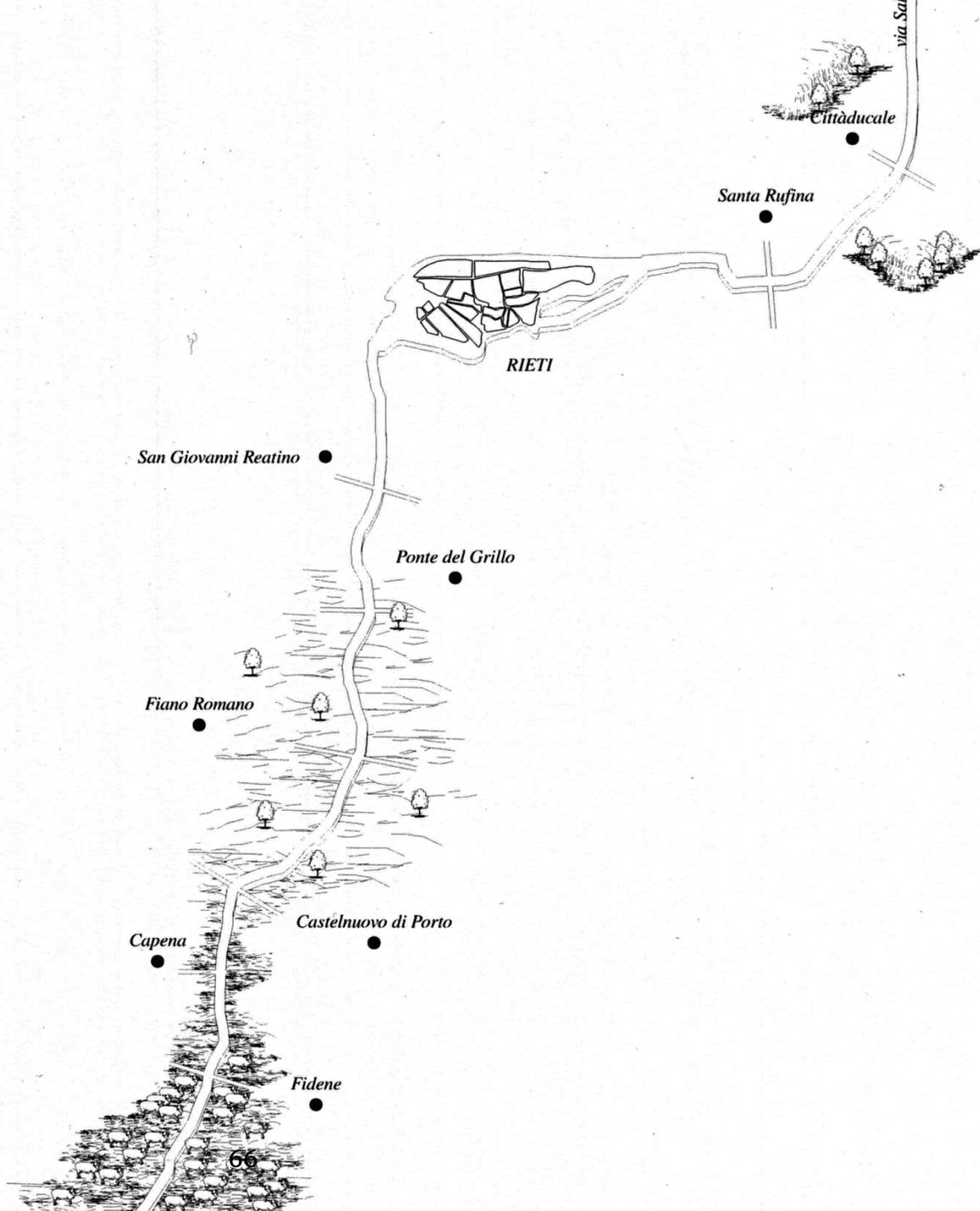
Here, near Santa Rufina, in the “Cardito Roselli” area, temporarily abandoning the via Salaria, a short “tratturello” allowed to shorten the route towards the Capital, thus avoiding passing through the Sabine capital. After a brief stop, a quick check of the mules and carts, filled with all the necessary items, then leaving behind the town of Rieti and later the town of San Giovanni Reatino, the endless line of sheep, now halfway through the journey, prepared to reach the deep valley of the Ornaro river and all those villages of the lower Sabina that lined the road. [...]

Finally, after a few days, where the landscape becomes wide and comfortable, the path to reach the sheepfolds and villages of huts was still quite distant, and already on the horizon appeared in the distance the boundless plain around the city.



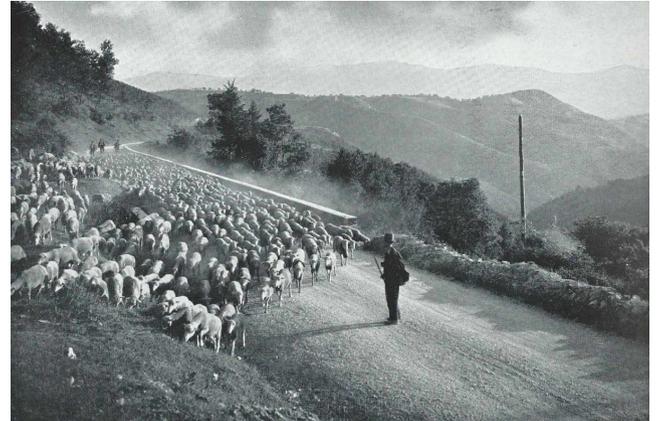
Interpretative map
of the journey
described by Mario
Ciaralli.
© Sofia Manieri,
2024







Rurality, from
the movie "Le
Quattro Volte".
© Michelangelo
Frammartino,
2010



Transhumances,
1950s circa.
© Author
unkown

At that point of the journey, the much-awaited stop for the shepherds, before reaching Rome, was an inn along the road, in the “Ponte del Grillo” area. In this inn, on the edge of the via Salaria, finally in the middle of the plain, the shepherds used to stop for a well-deserved rest and to reunite after the summer with fellow countrymen, guardians of flocks in various farms, before reorganizing everything and setting off again towards the final stretch. For some farms with estates near the inn between Monterotondo, Settebagni, and Fidene, the journey was just over.

Other farms, after leaving the via Consolare near the inn, entered shortly after on the via Tiberina to reach the nearby pastures of Fiano Romano, Nazzaro, and Filacciano. Still, others continued until they reached the territories of Castelnuovo di Porto, Riano, and Capena. In greater numbers, the endless stream of sheep marched to the gates of Rome, then took possession of the flat countryside of Palidoro, Castel di Guido, and Cerveteri on the via Aurelia, pastures leased from the “Pio Istituto di Santo Spirito”. [...]

From Porta Capena, crossing Rome, the remaining farms continued along the via Appia and further into the Pontine marshes to Cisterna.”

—Mario Ciaralli, “Le vie della transumanza attraverso i secoli e il viaggio da Amatrice alla Campagna Romana”²

In the two-hour journey leading from Rome to Amatrice, the landscape of the Appennini unfolds progressively from the flat topography of the capital to the intricate scenery of the mountains. When approaching one of the innermost rural areas in the centre of Italy, the sensation one gets is that of a remote land, both in time and space, immersed in the peaceful silence of nature and of a slow-paced life.

At the exit indicating Amatrice from via Salaria, the distance to the village and the first settlements is still quite considerable. More than a ten-kilometre

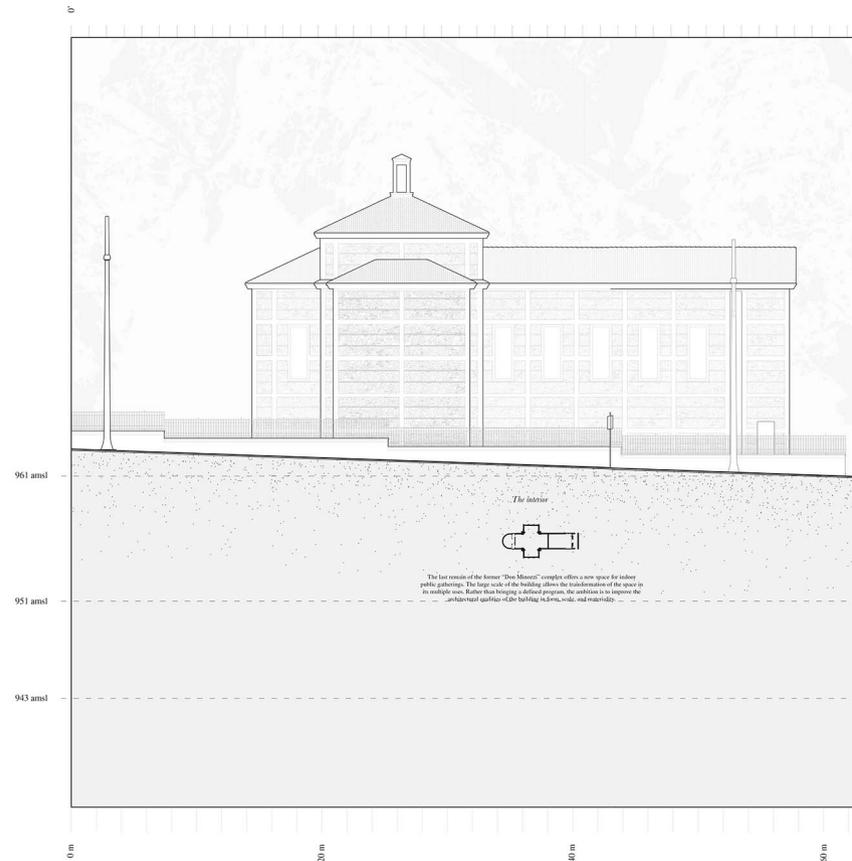


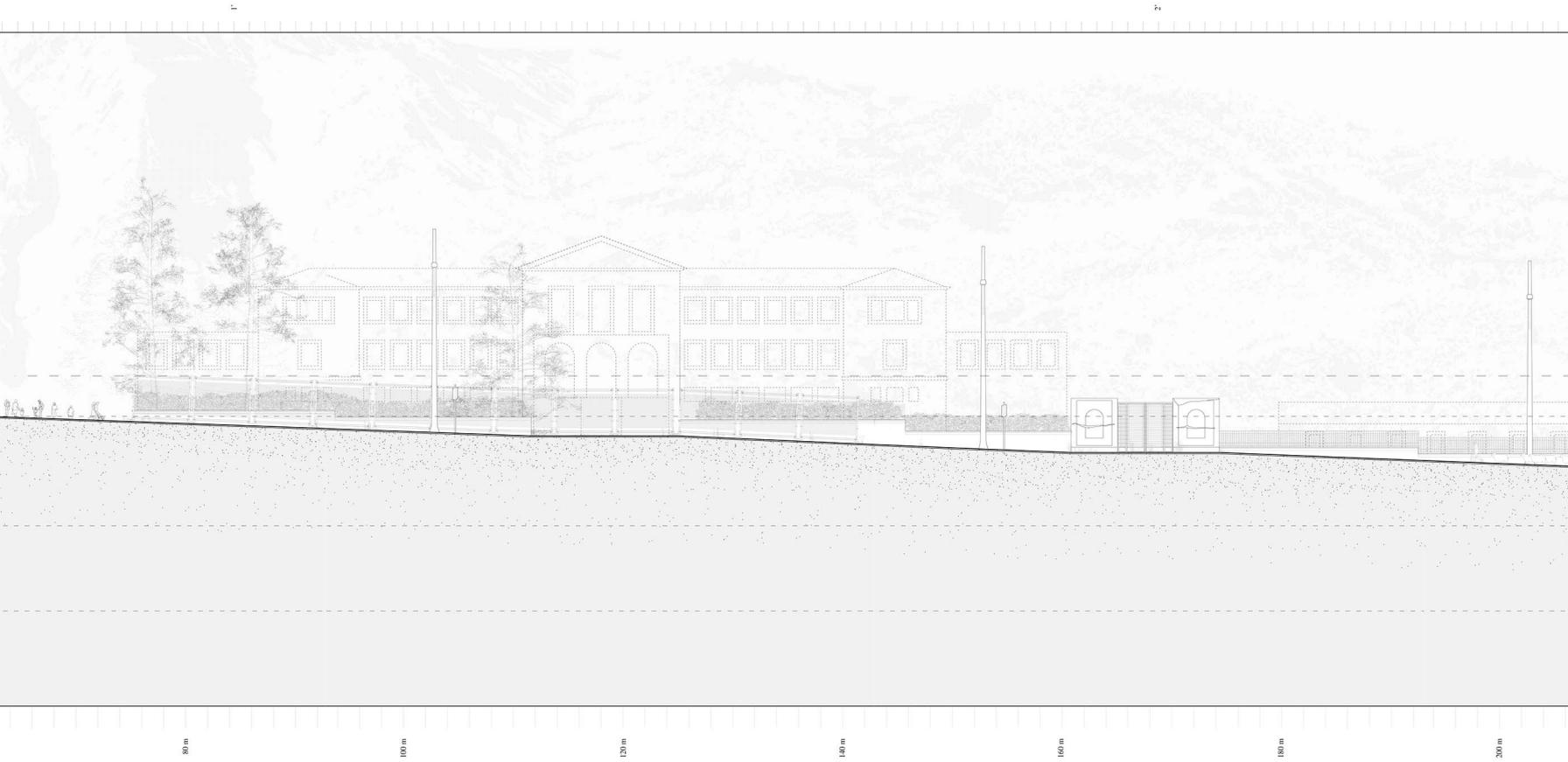
Interpretative map of part of the journey to Amatrice.
© Sofia Manieri, 2024

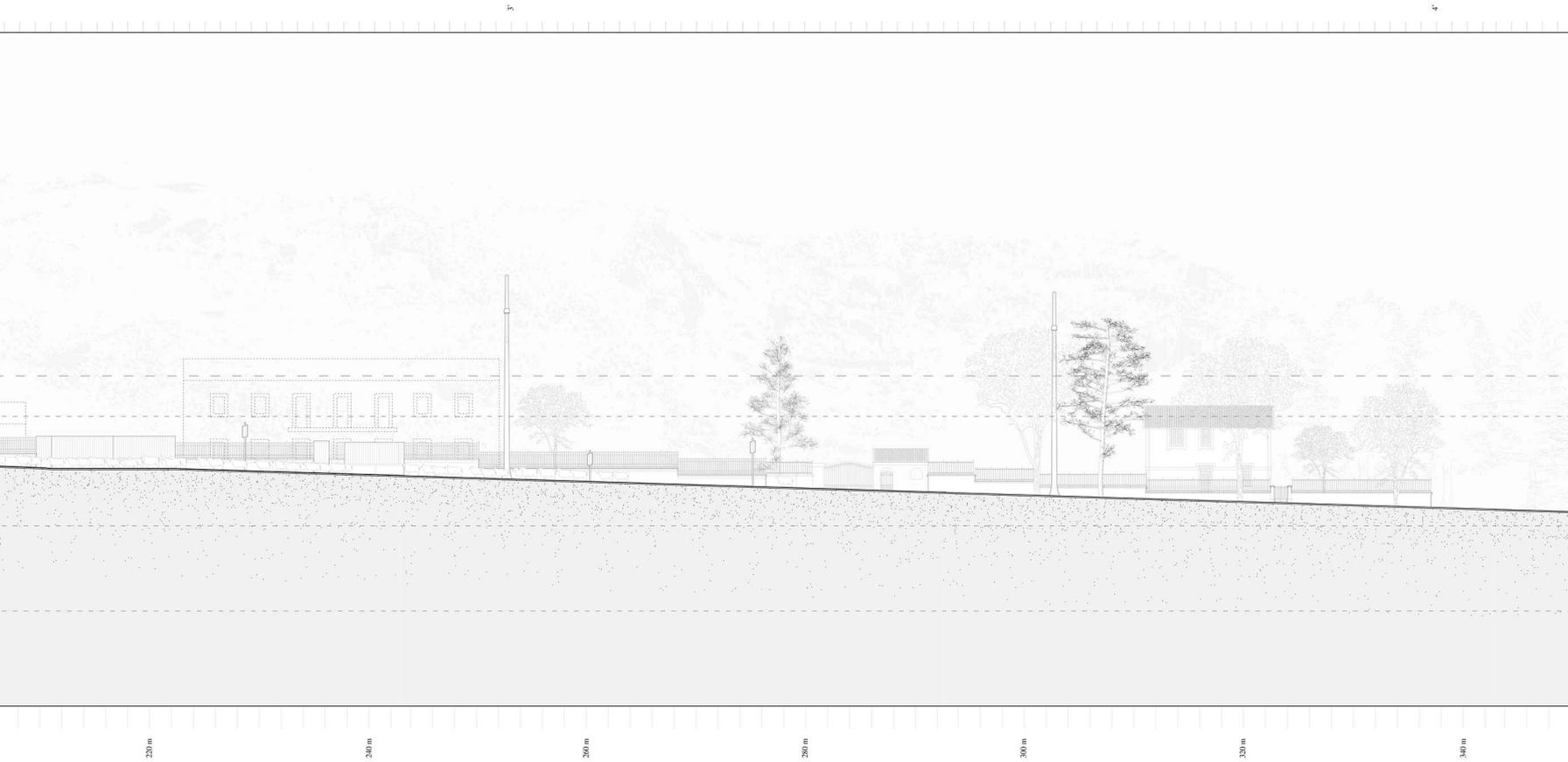
The Church (Chiesa di Santa Maria Assunta) stands as a ruin very close to the new town. This church survived the earthquake and remains a symbol of resilience. With its two large internal halls, the building is awaiting restoration to its original state. Once restored, a number of interventions could provide an indoor space for community gatherings, becoming a key location for public life. A more detailed account of those interventions can be found in the chapter “Una chiesa abitata”.

The Garden will take over an area that currently consists of two separate parks, divided by the main road. It benefits of a privileged position overlooking the old town, and it acts as a knot between the old town and the new town. A transition point that could bridge the two temporal and spatial realities of Amatrice. Reimagining the garden could create a space where the community can connect with both the landscape and one another.

The Square emerges along Corso Umberto I, and it is in fact the transformation of the road into a stretched square, an open-air public room. Within the ruins of old Amatrice, the square is among the first areas to be impacted by rebuilding efforts. Reopening this space would allow residents to engage with parts of the town that they once called their own, creating a sense of familiarity and belonging.



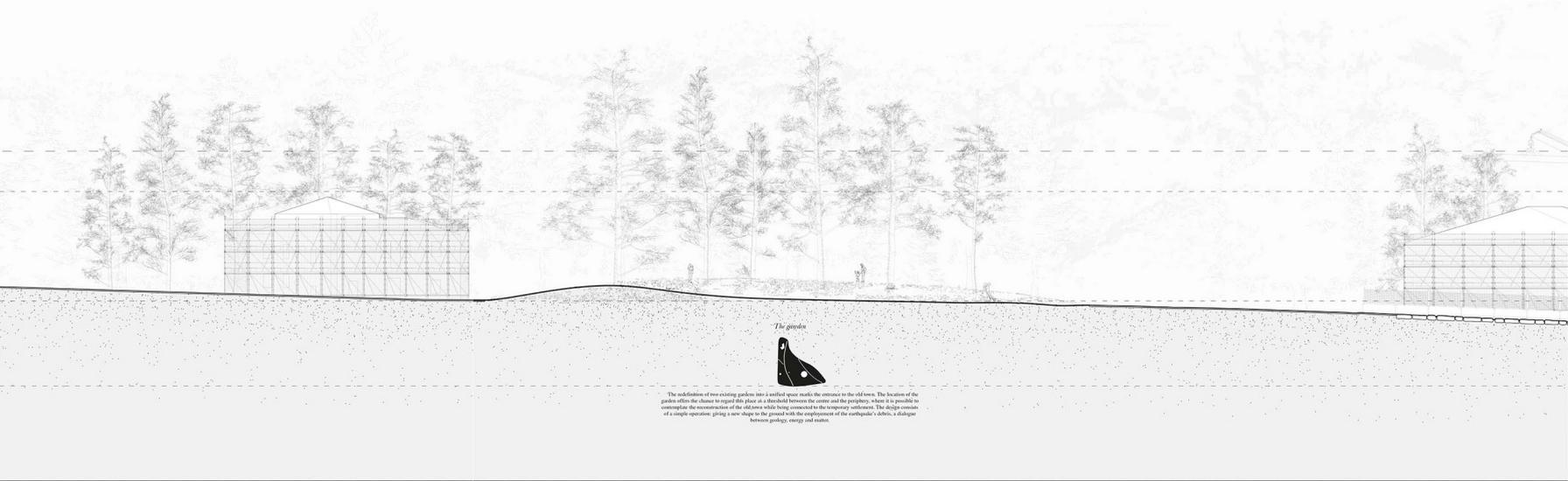




The Reclaimed Route



The Reclaimed Route is both the experience of Amatrice's urbanity and the memorialisation of the tragic event of the earthquake. It provides a place to mourn the tragedy in synergy with the beginning of the new life of the town. The route unfolds along three interventions: the interior, the garden, and the square around the tower.



The garden



The rehabilitation of new existing gardens into a structured open space marks the entrance to the old town. The location of the garden offers the chance to regard this place as a threshold between the center and the periphery, where it is possible to contemplate the reconstruction of the old town while being connected to the temporary settlement. The design consists of a simple operation: giving a new shape to the ground with the employment of the earthquake's debris, a dialogue between geology, energy and water.

360 m

380 m

400 m

420 m

500 m

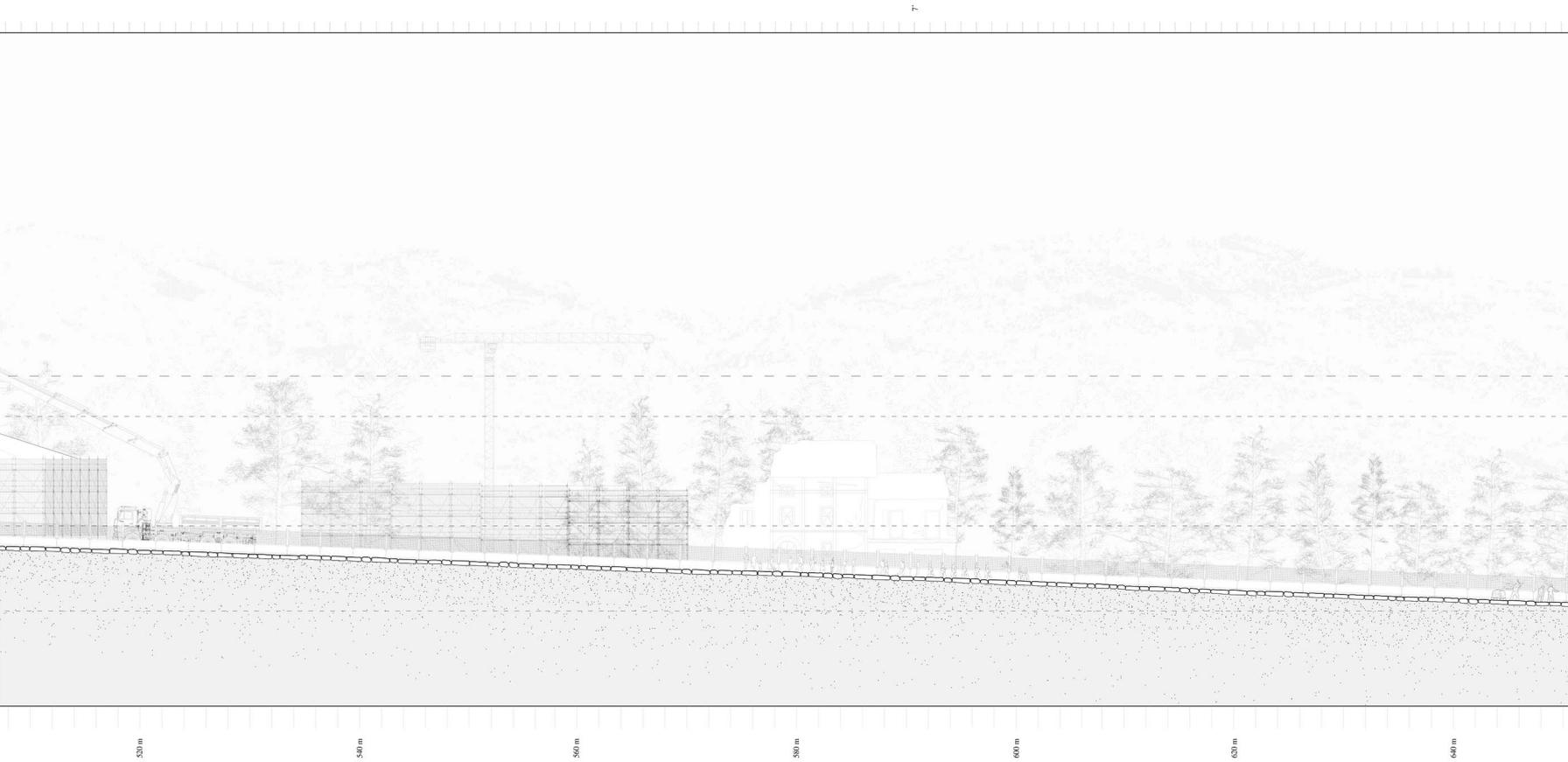
440 m

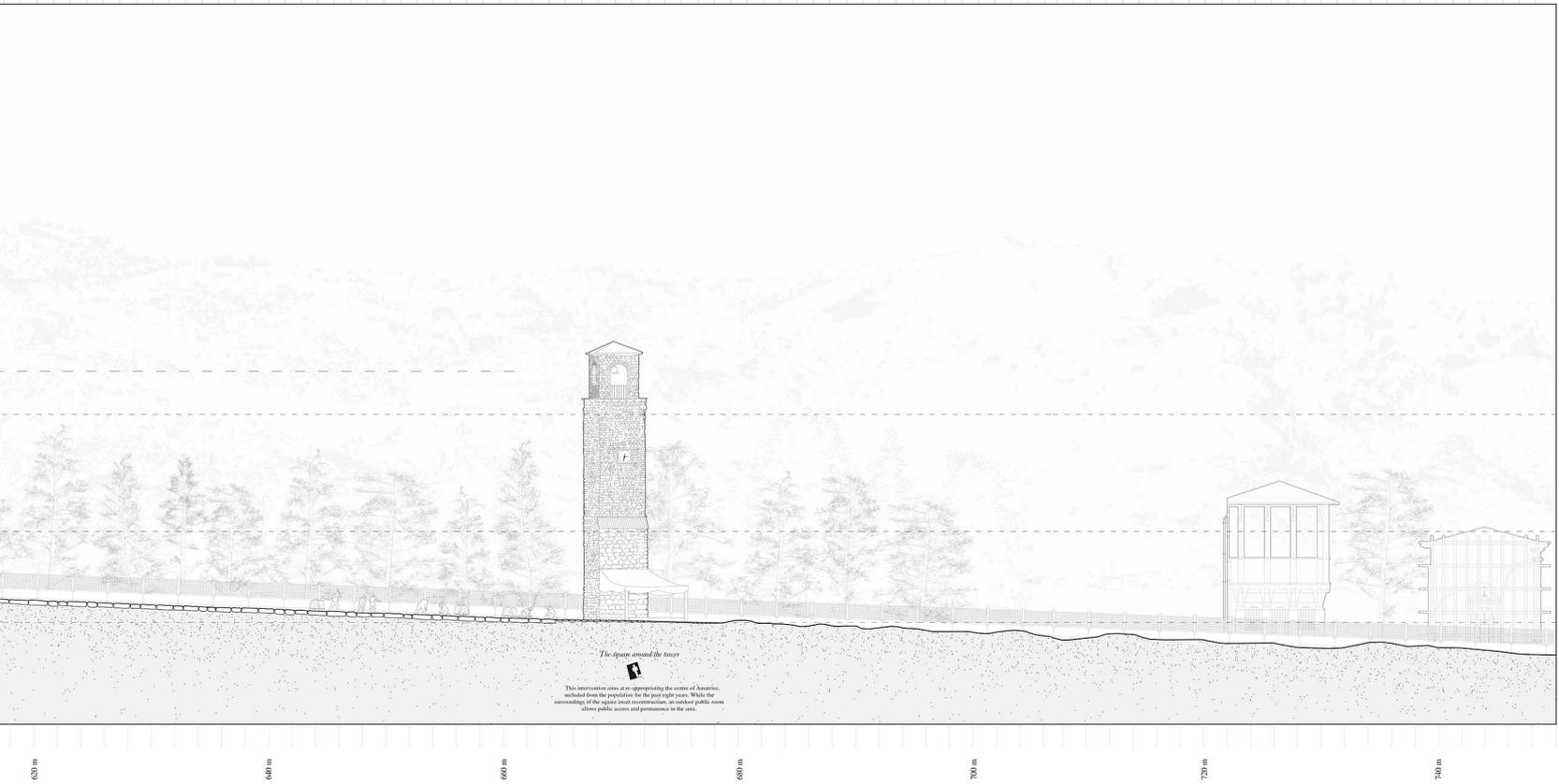
580 m

460 m

600 m

480 m





The square around the tower

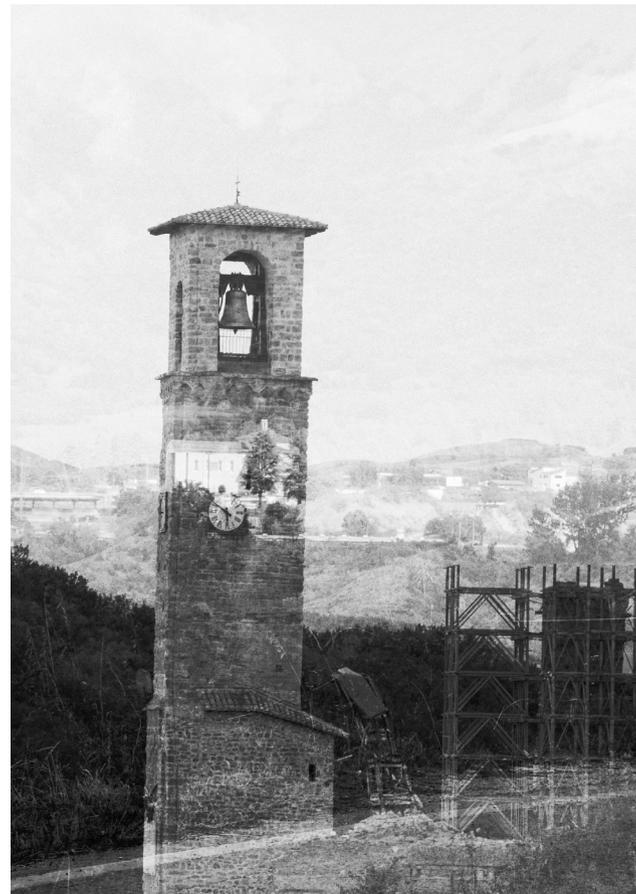
This intervention aims at re-appropriating the centre of American
settlement from the population for the past eight years. While the
surroundings of the square (road reconstruction, on-site public space
allows public access and permeability in the area.

These three sites, connected by the main road, have the potential to bridge the gap between the past, present, and future of Amatrice. The church could become a renewed landmark alongside the historic tower, providing a sheltered space for interaction. The garden offers an opportunity to strengthen ties between the people and their surrounding environment. The square, at the heart of the town, provides a platform for shared experiences as Amatrice begins to rebuild.

By bringing these spaces back to life, the project aims to gradually restore Amatrice's public realm through its traditional symbols.

Parallel narratives I:
Ruins

The town and the church

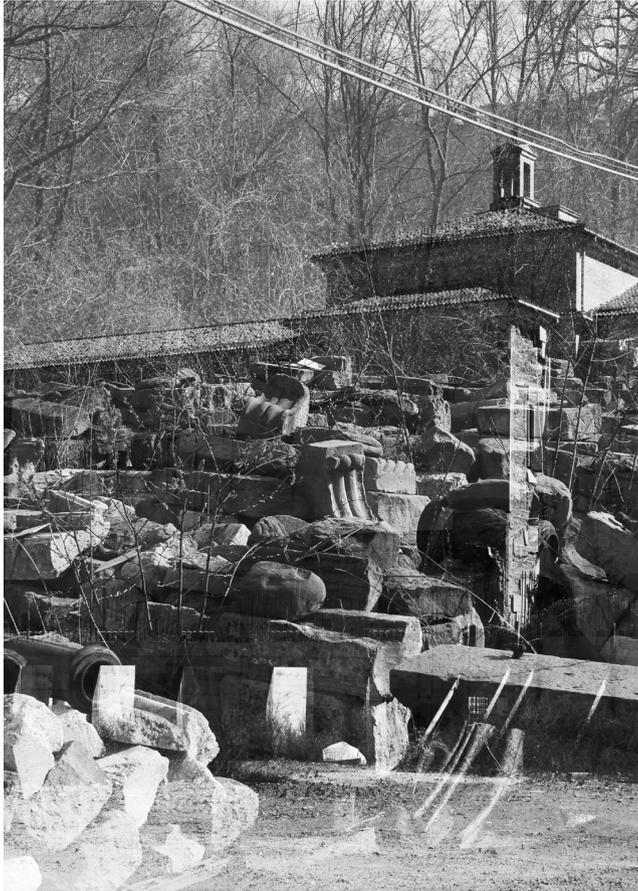


4 Mario Ciaralli, "Le vie della transumanza attraverso i secoli e il viaggio da Amatrice alla Campagna Romana", in *Le vie della Transumanza: Un patrimonio bio-culturale per la rigenerazione territoriale*, ed. Letizia Bindi. (Amatrice: Palladino Editore, 2020), 149–182.

5 "Mappa Transumanza", Amatrice Transumanza, accessed January 25, 2025, at <https://www.amatricetransumanza.it/luoghi/mappa-transumanza/>

Parallel narratives II:
Occasions

The rubble and the church



Parallel narratives III:
Geology and time

The mountains and the debris



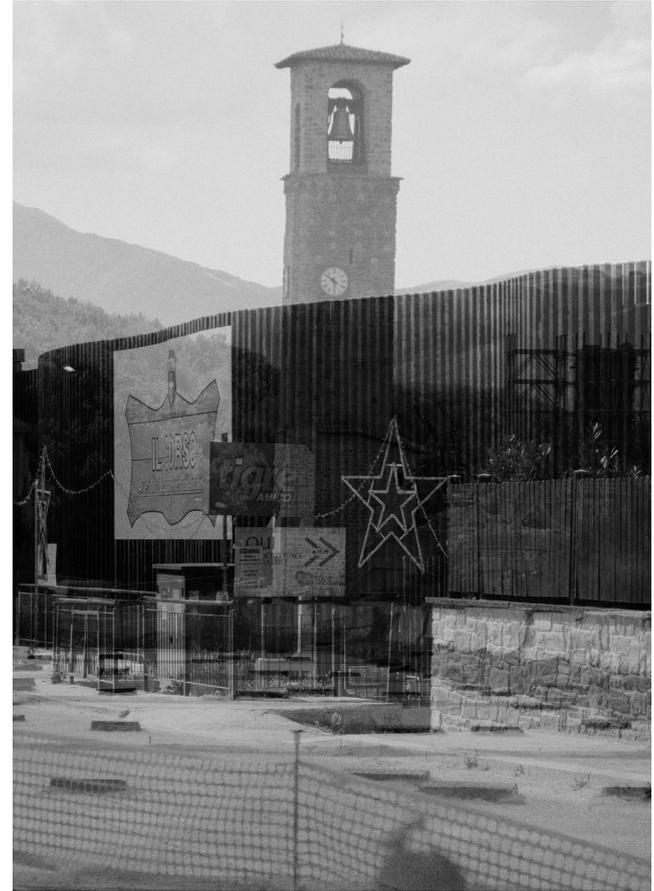
Parallel narratives IV:
Temporariness

The church and the SAE



Parallel narratives V:
Temporariness

Il corso



Memories of Amatrice



Fettuccine
or bucatini, maccheroni or vermicelli,

Teleregione
Il Quotidiano
© Emanuele Carioti, YouTube



by a crowd of 20.000 people, coming
mainly from Rome

Teleregione
Il Quotidiano
© Emanuele Carioti, YouTube



Sagra
dell'Amatriciana,
2013
© RTR, YouTube

Sagra
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2013
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dell'Amatriciana,
2013
© RTR, YouTube



Sagra
dell'Amatriciana,
2013
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Processione per la
Madonna di Filetta
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL
BRICOLEURS

Ship of Theseus paradox

“The ship on which Theseus sailed with the youths and returned in safety, the thirty-oared galley, was preserved by the Athenians down to the time of Demetrius Phalereus. They took away the old timbers from time to time, and put new and sound ones in their places, so that the vessel became a standing illustration for the philosophers in the mooted question of growth, some declaring that it remained the same, others that it was not the same vessel.”

- *Plutarch. Plutarch's Lives.*⁶

Heritage protection in Italy is a Constitutional duty.⁷ In protecting the historical traces embedded in the architecture of old cities and towns, practices of conservation, restoration, and, in times of destruction, philological reconstruction constitute fundamental ethos.

“*Com'era, dov'era*” (as it was, where it was) is a slogan that repeatedly comes forth in circumstances of destruction, calling for historicistic approaches to reconstruction. The post-earthquake rebuilding of Venzona, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, is a prime example of such a practice. As the population submitted a petition to recover the old forms of the town, reconstruction efforts focused on the rescue of the rubble and its assemblage into old forms through practices of anastylosis.⁸

With similar goals and objectives in mind, the current plans for the reconstruction in Amatrice prescribe a hybrid strategy to ensure the reproduction of the archetypal stone facades while maintaining seismic safety.⁹ This time, though, old volumes, colours, and forms are newly crafted to resemble the original appearances, shielding new and seismically sound concrete structures behind their surfaces.

The revival of the town's lost vernacular sublimates



The Ship of Theseus
© Edward Keble,
1911



Anastylosis in Venzone.
© Francesco Doglioni,
1976

the desire for the direct experience of what was unjustly taken away from the local community and it is a legitimate eagerness for the re-appropriation of one's own identity and memorialisation of history. But it is also only a literal response to reclaim what was tragically lost.

In Amatrice as in Venzone, the spatial transformation wrought by the disaster revealed a rupture between the town's architectural image and its inability to withstand the forces of the earthquake. And so, one might wonder whether reducing the reconstruction to mere scenography is sufficient to solve the divide between nature and humans.

The Ship of Theseus paradox proves that post-disaster reconstructions often pose unresolvable dilemmas; but it also suggests that the essence of preservation may not lie in physical replication, but rather in perpetuating the spirit of building practices. On this matter, in his book *Thinking and Building on Shaky Ground*, Yun Fu elaborates on the notion of quickness as a possible strategy to approach post-earthquake reconstructions.¹⁰ Quickness is the readiness to respond to destruction. It is the aliveness of building practices in people's minds and the awareness of an unavoidable natural condition.

Perceived as such, reconstructions become opportunities for knowledge transfers and for the establishment of long-term frameworks of development, beyond a seemingly definitive recovery. What very often causes the destruction of historical buildings is their paralysis in time. Imagining heritage as a process rather than a fixed artifact, architecture becomes a tool for maintenance and care, rather than an immovable and unchangeable asset.

Archaeological bricoleurs

This research project aims to introduce and formalise an instance of archaeological bricoleurs who, in the context of the reconstruction, constitute figures of maintenance of the built environment, responsible for cultivating building practices.

The bricoleur is a professional profile described by Irénée Scalbert in his essay *Bricolage*,¹¹ which is partly inspired and influenced by Claude Lévi Straiss's *La Pensée Sauvage*.¹² Scalbert's bricoleur rejects the apriorism of the project, drawing his design directly from the immediate context and his finite inventory, operating at the intersection of the practical and the intellectual and thriving in complex and ambiguous circumstances. While borrowing the theories formulated by Scalbert, this research expands towards an archaeological and collective perspective that meets the specificities found in Amatrice, giving a purpose and a context to Scalbert's bricoleur.

The image of the archaeological bricoleurs is an invitation to bring emotional and cultural upheaval to the tangible solutions of the reconstruction, reflecting on the possible usages of Amatrice's material and spatial remains, to look beyond the tabula rasa of Amatrice's historic centre and recount its historical layers in their complex forms, rather than in a simplistic and literal manner.

Portrait of the archaeological bricoleurs

The bricoleurs have untamed minds that put order into things.

Their inventory is made of all kinds of different things, but it always remains limited.

The “pre-constrained” materials that they use bear no relation to their tasks. They are the results of previous constructions.



Robinson Crusoe
© Author unknown

The bricoleurs interrogate their materials, to find new possibilities. What before was an end, now becomes a means. The bricoleurs subordinate the project to their materials.

They recycle the leftovers of older projects.

Their result will be a compromise between their original project and the objects available to them.

The bricoleurs are the opposite of the engineers, who imagine their project in the context of universal laws. The engineer imposes their concepts on reality, while the bricoleurs look for signs in the reality around them.

They operate with sensibility, resourcefulness, skills, and experience.

The archaeological bricoleurs investigate layers and meanings concealed behind their tools and materials.

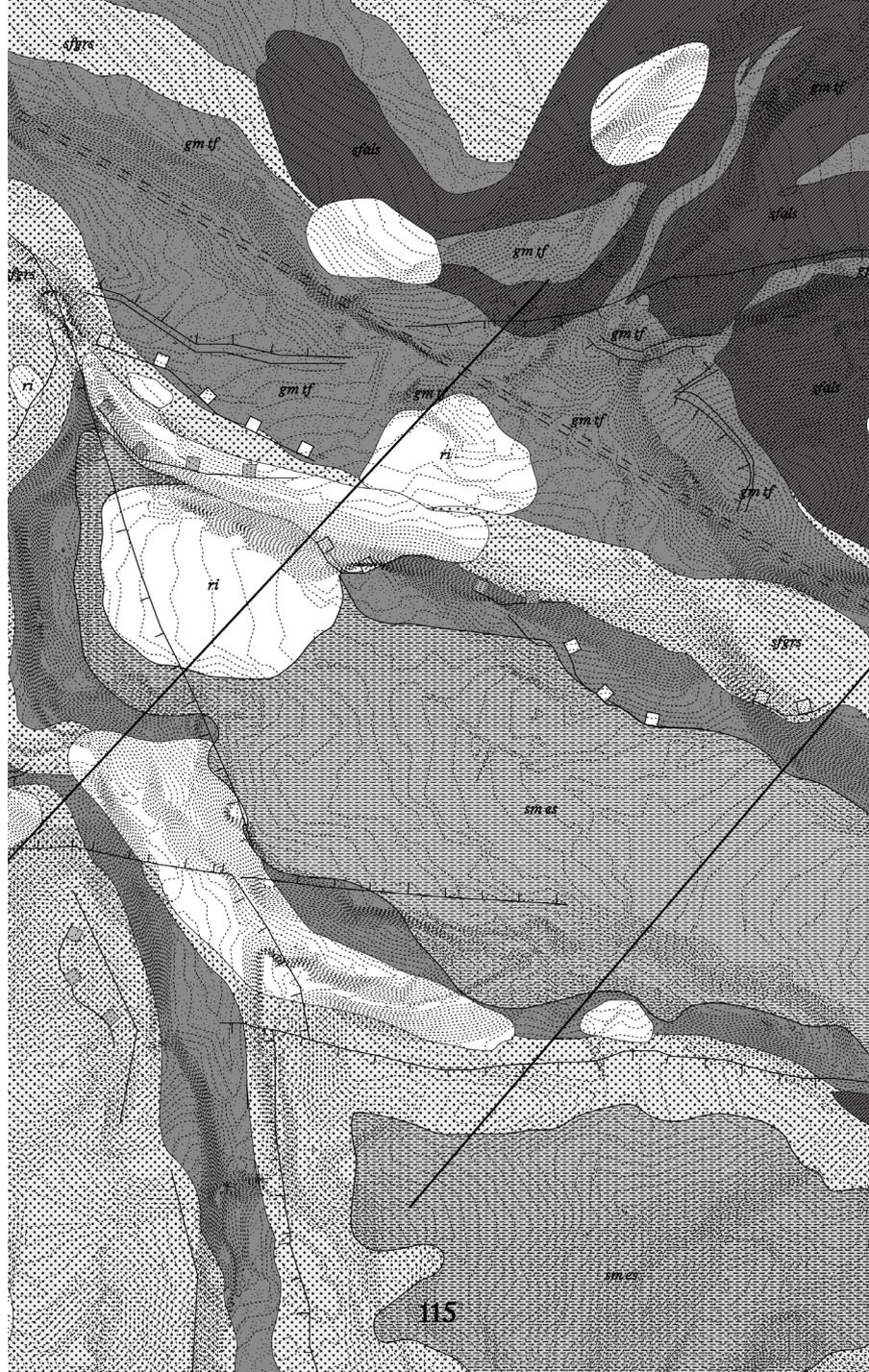
They reveal old meanings and craft new ones, reviving the past in new forms and compositions responding to the necessities of the present.

They see materials as part of a continuous cycle of transformations.

Destruction

Archaeological bricoleurs are deeply grounded in the reality they inhabit. In Amatrice, the cause and the effects of the earthquake's destruction constitute the setting in which the bricoleurs' actions take place.

The architectural configuration of destruction is the unique representation of the specificities of a place as well as the conditions in which the destruction occurs. When Kenzo Tange described the state of Japanese cities after the Second World War, he noted how, unlike the mountains of rubble that covered the remains of the German towns, the wooden structures of Tokyo burned down to a different type of debris: ashes. The grey desert was a reflection not only of



the weapons used for the destruction but also of the architecture of the city.¹³

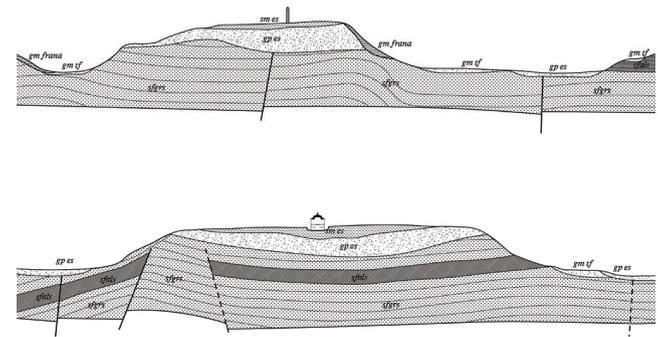
Similarly, in Amatrice and any other town damaged by earthquakes, the remains of the aftermath allow the reflection on the nature of the event, the geology of the territory, and the architecture that occupies it. A great deal of Amatrice exists now in the form of rubble and debris. While the first type is regarded as recognisable, salvageable, and valuable material, the second appears to be a dispersed and atomised collection of unrecognisable matter, whose form and grain size directly manifests the violence of the geological power.

Alberto Burri, in designing the town-sized sculpture of the Cretto di Gibellina, operated in dialogue with the nature of the destructive event of 1968. Thanks to the indulgence that – unlike architecture – only the artistic discipline can forgive, Burri could work directly with the wounds of the catastrophe. Through his concrete-coat sculpture, the artist retraced the lost forms of the town while incorporating the debris of the tragedy. He enacted a reversed archaeology in which the sculptural forms withheld the lost reality and at the same time were generated by it, a reconciliation of energy, forms, and matter.¹⁴

Debris and rubble

Destructions as consequences of natural disasters are not so often accounted for in the same strand of inquiry associated with warfare and human-induced annihilation, being largely regarded as unpredictable and unavoidable events. The reason, I think, lies in the distance that we recognise between the power of natural phenomena and our limited ability, as humans, to resist them.

Unlike the intentional destructiveness of wars, the uncontrollable chance of these events escapes our



gm frana
gm tf
gp es
sfals
sfgrs
sm es

landslide
silty gravels, mixture of gravel, sand and silt of river terrace
clean gravels with little grain size; mixture of gravel and sands
alternating lithotypes, stratified, fractured/altered
granular cement, layered, fractured/altered
silty sands, mixture of sand and silt of banks/barriers/canals

will. There is, however, a fair share of responsibility held by human actions. I am not only referring to the failures of construction, the miscalculations, or the negligent oversight of regulations. In fact, despite the fundamental role held by technological guidelines, our safety should not rely upon the blind execution of regulations. I am talking instead about the synergy that should exist between regulations and the environment in which they ought to operate – its idiosyncrasies or, in simpler terms, the awareness of a specific natural condition.

The particularities of Amatrice are reflected in its remains: the debris and the stones, which are labeled, classified, and categorised. We know exactly where they come from and where they belong. This bunch of material suggests that the emotional reconstruction of the town could occur through the shift and the rearrangement of this material, their reincarnation into something else. One might be able to revive the past in new forms and compositions that respond to the necessities of the present, seeing materials as part of a continuous cycle of transformations, in which destruction is just their tragic, yet temporary configuration.

To do so, instead of conceptualising the whole of urbanism, critical architecture can emerge by exercising the art of doing nothing or very little, of practising small and meaningful actions. Instead of working with the big and the general, one could work with the minute and highly specific: the idiosyncratic.¹⁵

Memorialisation through gestures

Cities and towns are indeed repositories of history, and we must ensure their longest survival through the means of technology. But even more powerfully, they manifest particular living cultures and realities. The vernacular of Amatrice can only be found in its present. The role of the architecture



Osaka after the war
© Author unknown,
1945

Amatrice after the
earthquake
© BBC, 2016

of the reconstruction, besides securing the safety of the town for the future, should restore the harmony between the population and the reality they inhabit, which is the nature around them, the destruction that it caused, and the remains that it left behind. Suppose we see the environment beyond constraints and regulations – which are necessary, but not sufficient – and we start looking at it at an emotional level, as the relation between energy and culture, between matter and human endeavour, sustaining the sentimental charge embedded in the past and present of Amatrice: we might achieve the authenticity that was lost.

In exploring possible memorialisation approaches through the lens of the archaeological bricoleur, this research proposes five gestures as instances of practice. Collecting, setting, piling, peeling, and laying manifest different modes of interaction with the stones of Amatrice.

- 6 Plutarch. *Plutarch's Lives*. with an English Translation by. Bernadotte Perrin. (Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press, 1914)
- 7 European Union Open Heritage H2020, *Mapping of current heritage re-use policies and regulations in Europe: Complex policy overview of adaptive heritage re-use*. December, 2019. https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/d_1.2_mapping_of_current_heritage_re-use_policies_and_regulations_in_europe.pdf
- 8 Michele Zampilli, "Il restauro del tessuto urbano", *Com'era, dov'era. Dopo il terremoto, o la guerra*. Ricerche di Storia dell'Arte 99. (2009): 42–49.
- 9 Comune di Amatrice. *Proposta di Programma Straordinario di Ricostruzione*, 1.0 Relazione Generale. (Amatrice: Comune di Amatrice, 2020). Ret. 25 May 2024 <https://www.comune.amatrice.rieti.it/programma-straordinario-ricostruzione/>
- 10 Fu, Yun. *Thinking and Building on Shaky Ground: On Architecture in Seismic Regions*. (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2023).
- 11 Scalbert, Irénée. "Bricolage: Irénée Scalbert on bricolage, Lévi-Strauss, Colin Rowe, Charles Jencks, Giuseppe Penone, Robinson Crusoe and other topics". Lecture at ETH Zürich, Zürich, March 08, 2011.
- 12 Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *La Pensée Sauvage*. (Paris: Plon, 1962).
- 13 David Gissen, "Debris", AA Files 58, (2009).
- 14 Francesca Crotti, "Il Grande Cretto di Burri, a question of meaning and identity: A focus on Gibellina's earthquake, reconstruction and re-semantization" (Architectural Thesis, TU Delft, 2021), 46, TU Delft Repository.
- 15 Caruso, Adam. *The feeling of things*. (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 2008), 15.









GESTURES

	<u>Collecting</u>	<u>Staging</u>	<u>Piling</u>	<u>Peeling</u>	<u>Laying</u>
<u>Temporal qualities</u>	preparatory preservative divergent	executory preservative divergent	executory transformative convergent	executory transformative divergent	executory transformative convergent
<u>Spatial qualities</u>	mechanical predictable results from gathering	interpretive predictable results from applying	mechanical unpredictable results from applying	mechanical predictable results from gathering	interpretive unpredictable results from applying
<u>Materials</u>	rubble: sandstone (arenaria), travertine, basalt, in regular shapes or complex, three-dimensional shapes	rubble: sandstone (arenaria), travertine, basalt, in regular shapes or complex, three-dimensional shapes	debris: crushed concrete, wood, rubble, stone, bricks, tiles, plastic, synthetic materials	stone tiles: travertine 5mm	rubble: sandstone (arenaria), travertine, basalt, in regular shapes or complex, three-dimensional shapes; sand and gravel
<u>Labour</u>	does not require manual labour; low skills	does not require manual labour; low skills	requires a small amount of manual labour; high skills	requires manual labour, highly precise; high skills	requires manual labour, highly precise; high skills
<u>Machinery</u>	loading truck for transportation; forklift for arrangement; pallets and crates for storage	forklift for arrangement; pallets and crates for storage; steel supports	loading truck for transportation; conveyor belt and funnel for piling; measuring tapes and strings	loading truck for transportation; scaffolding for accessibility; rotary hammer drill with chisel, crowbar to dismantle; hoist to remove	Loading truck and wheelbarrow for transportation; rake, spirit level and stakes for ground preparation; measuring tape and string line, vibrating compactor, hand tamper, rubber mallet, aluminum screed to lay the stones

Piling

A landscape shaped by its own landscape

The intervention stems from the challenge of reusing bulk debris, which is often downcycled into roadbeds. Instead of this conventional approach, the debris left by the earthquake is repurposed in its raw, bulky state to create a meaningful new use. This loose and irregular form demands constraints and structure to guide its integration into the landscape.

The process of form-finding is guided by the necessity to preserve vital ecological connections, such as keeping tree roots in contact with oxygen. This constraint leads to an arrangement that responds directly to the existing elements on-site—from monumental features to mature trees. Together with the scattered piles of debris, these elements unify and bridge the two previously disconnected gardens within the site.

The resulting landscape evolves in density, height, and prominence according to the distribution of trees. Areas with a denser canopy are lower and more shaded, while sparser zones allow for higher, more dramatic expressions of the terrain. This adaptive design transforms the debris into a living component of the site, inspired by precedents such as Robin Hood Gardens, by Alison and Peter Smithson, and the Cretto di Gibellina, by Alberto Burri. However, unlike the Cretto, which freezes destruction in a static form, this landscape aims to remain dynamic, alive, and playful.

By leaving the debris exposed, nature is invited to reclaim and transform it, enabling the landscape to grow and shift alongside the town itself. Over time, this intervention becomes an evolving expression of resilience and renewal, where destruction gives way to life once again.



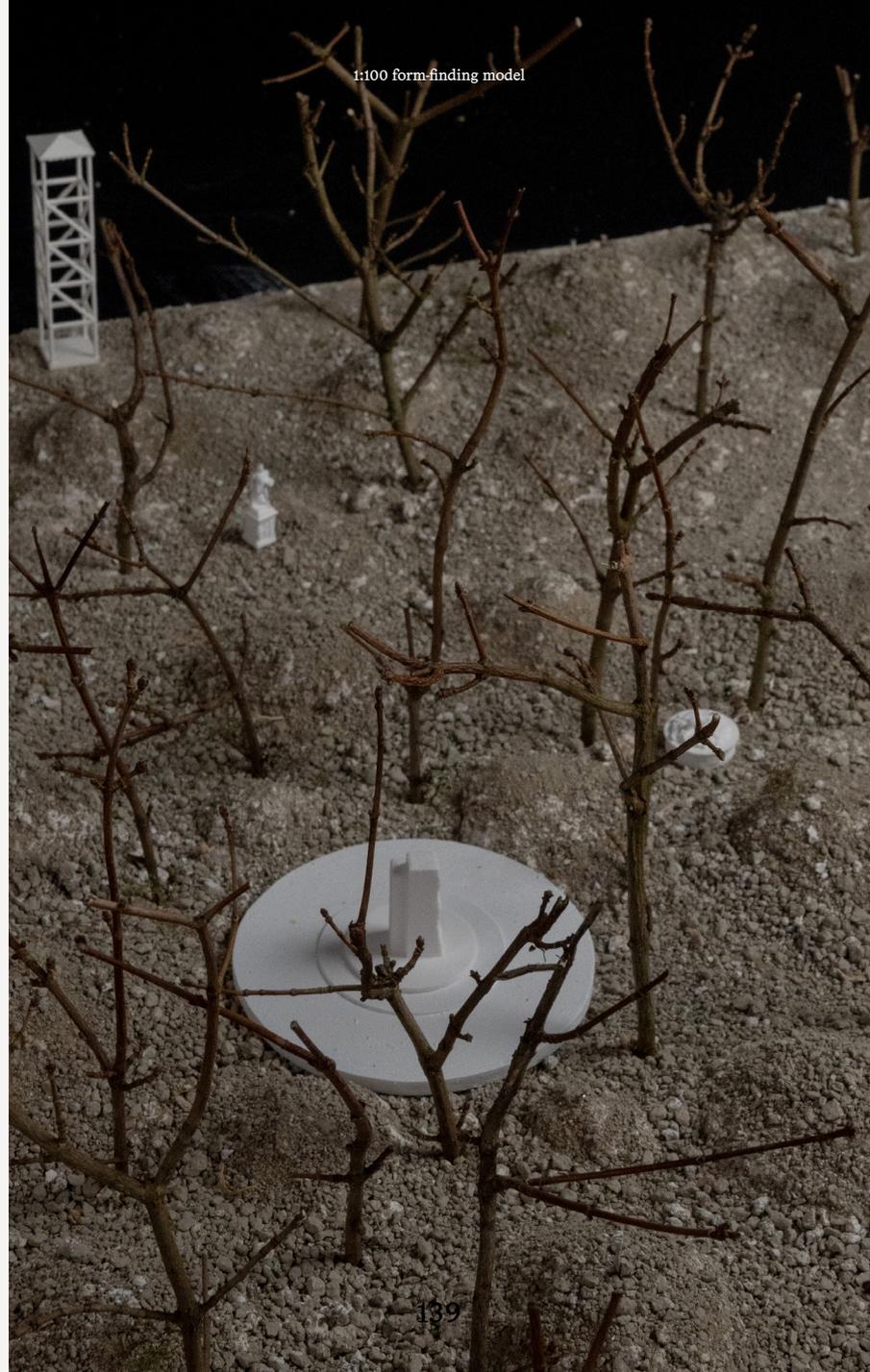
1:20 construction detail



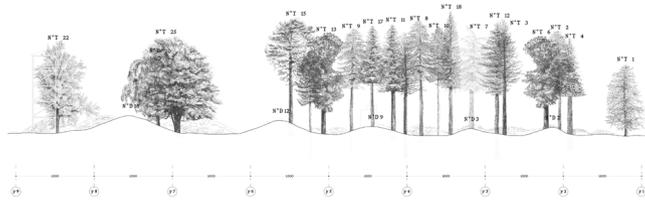
3d scans of existing monuments



1:100 form-finding model



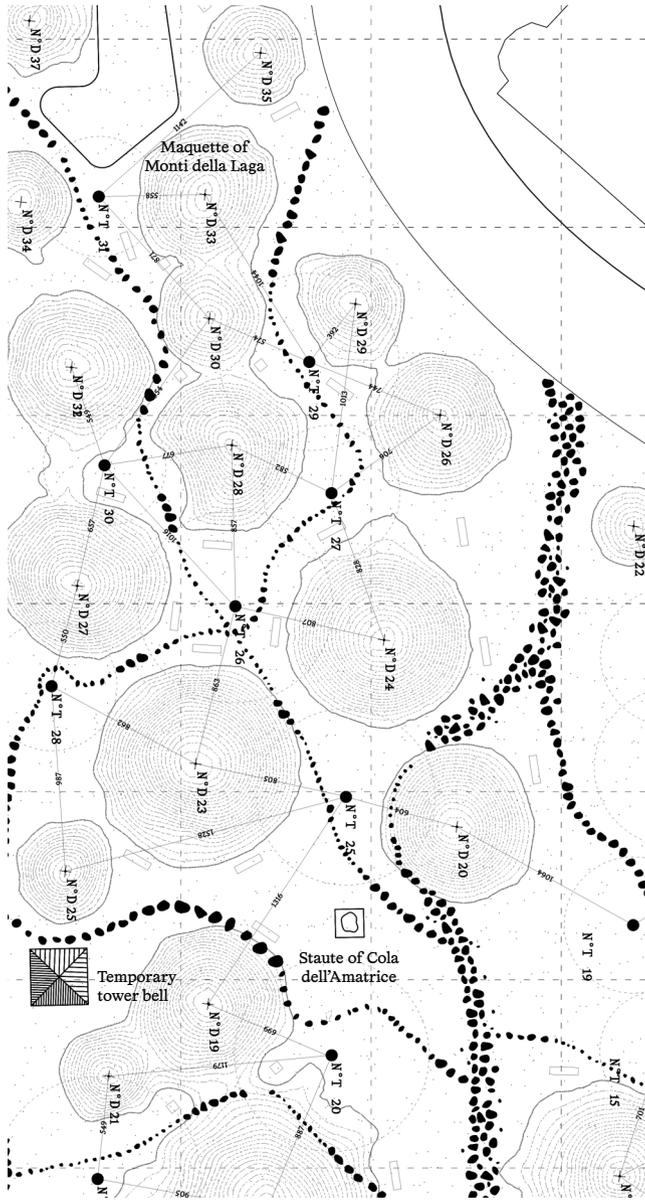
1:100 garden section



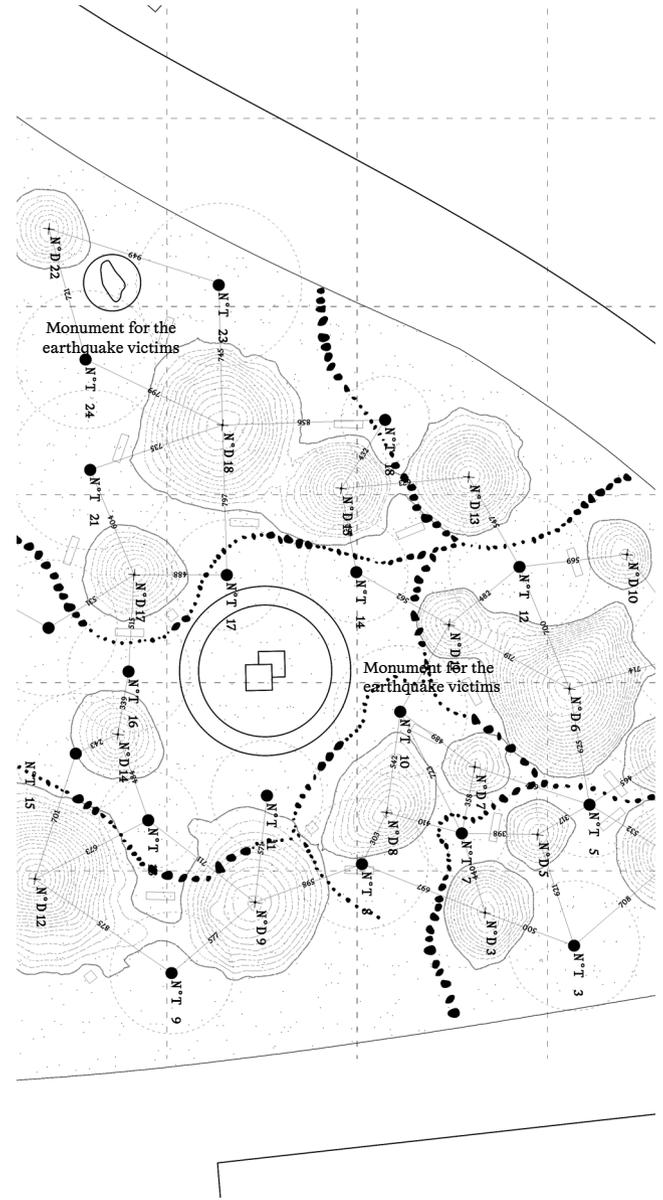
1:100 garden plan



The left side of the garden



The right side of the garden



Laying *A Townscape Shaped by Its Own History*

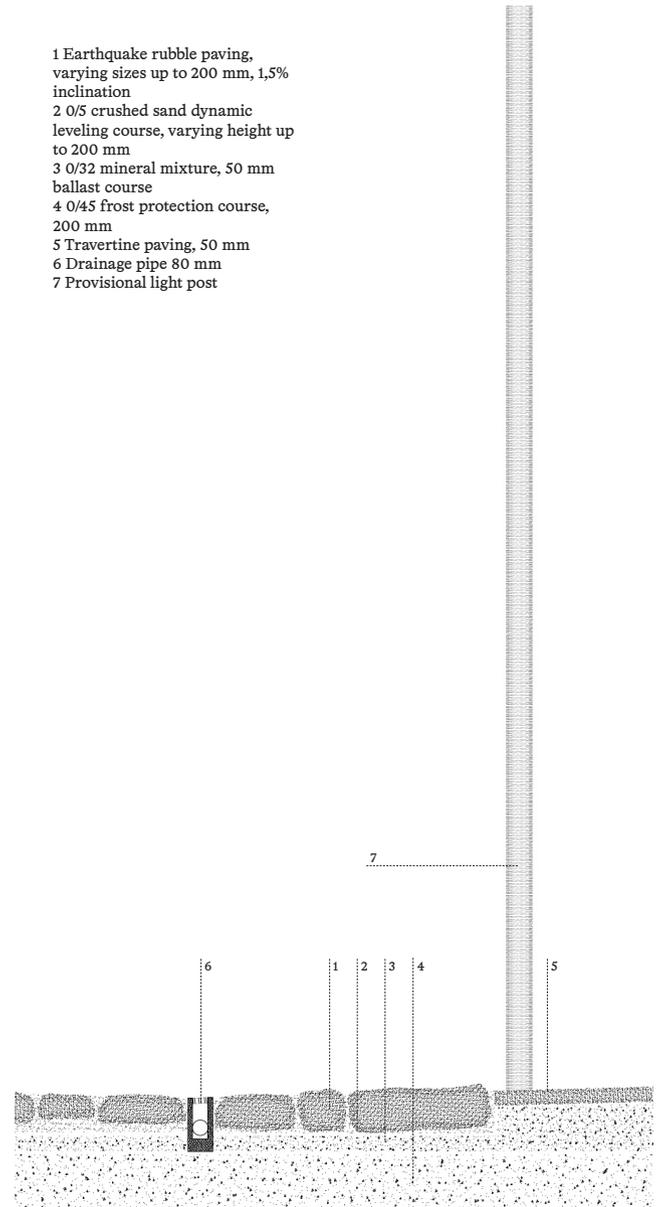
Amid the ruins of the town, the road leading to the tower holds the potential to once again serve as a vibrant space for public life. This pathway, historically central to the town, can transform into a place for reconnection and collective activities—markets, festivals, and outdoor gatherings—providing a vital stage for community life as the town rebuilds and evolves.

To enable this transformation, the foundation must first be laid, quite literally, using the salvaged rubble from the destruction. Stones from ruined buildings can be carefully assembled, retracing and mapping their original locations, creating a pavement that acts as a tactile and visual tapestry of remembrance. The resulting groundscape, composed primarily of sandstone, reclaims the story of the town while reimagining its future.

This new surface, designed for pedestrian use, makes car circulation incompatible. Instead, alternative traffic plans pave the way for a slower, human-centered environment. The salvaged fragments, as a form of spoliation, are recontextualized—integrated into this new design where their historic and material value is both memorialized and reinterpreted.

By sorting stones according to size and dimension, the irregularities of the rubble are transformed into functional features, enabling the creation of gentle drainage slopes. Smooth surfaces are prioritized for wheelchair accessibility, while rougher textures define peripheral areas, adding character and distinction.

- 1 Earthquake rubble paving, varying sizes up to 200 mm, 1,5% inclination
- 2 0/5 crushed sand dynamic leveling course, varying height up to 200 mm
- 3 0/32 mineral mixture, 50 mm ballast course
- 4 0/45 frost protection course, 200 mm
- 5 Travertine paving, 50 mm
- 6 Drainage pipe 80 mm
- 7 Provisional light post



1:5 constructive detail





1:10 road mock-up



1:10 road mock-up





A tapestry of remembrance

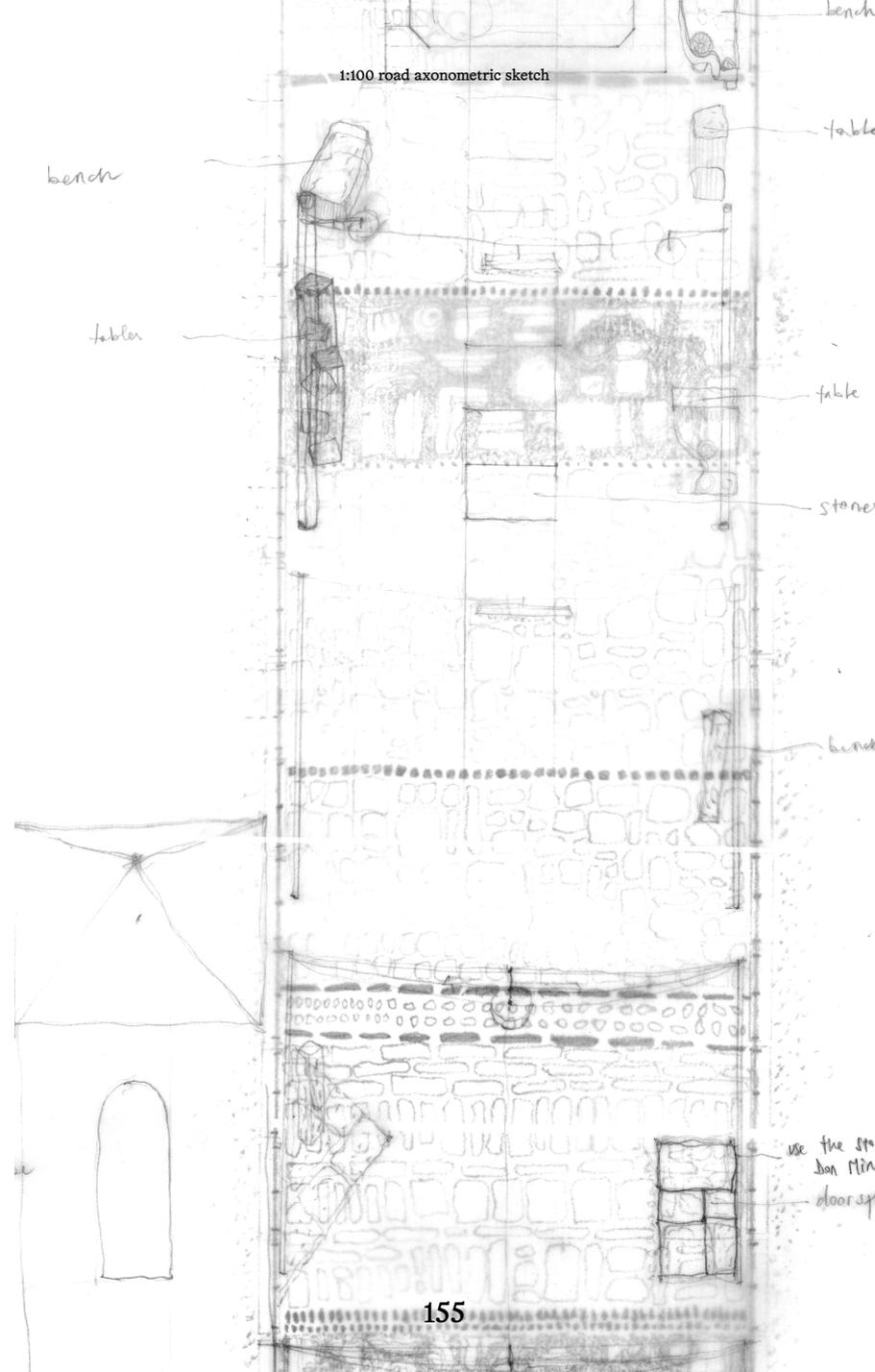
Staging

To illuminate and furnish an open-air public room

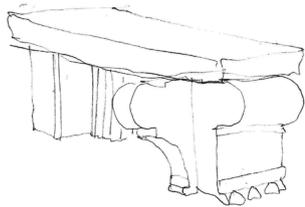
To fully inhabit this renewed space, lighting, furniture, and infrastructure such as outlets are introduced, transforming the road into an open-air public room. Irregular, three-dimensional fragments of rubble find new life as benches, tables, and armrests, turning scattered remnants into functional and sculptural elements. These compositions not only furnish the square but breathe life into it, offering a meaningful reinterpretation of objects that once belonged to the inhabitants.

Lighting becomes a crucial layer of the intervention, addressing the vulnerability of an uninhabited townscape that would otherwise fall into darkness at night. To ensure safety and usability, a system of steel posts is introduced, spaced at regular eight-meter intervals. These posts support an array of hanging lights that illuminate the space while maintaining a light, understated presence.

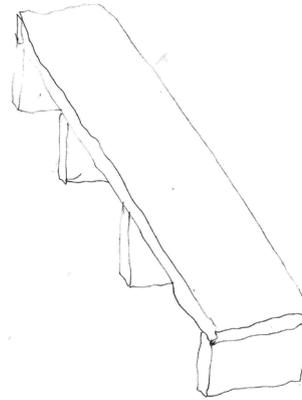
As the town begins to rebuild and new structures emerge, the lighting design adapts. The steel posts, initially temporary, can be removed, allowing the lights to transition to the buildings themselves. This approach reflects the project's sensitivity to the evolving urban fabric, ensuring the infrastructure evolves alongside the town's reconstruction while maintaining its role as a unifying element of the renewed public realm.



bench



bench for many people



seating or table or step

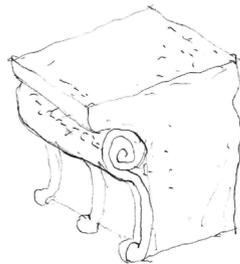
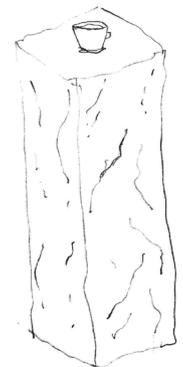
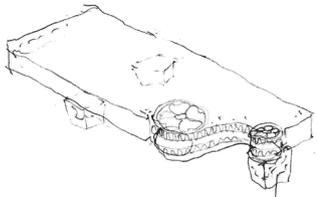
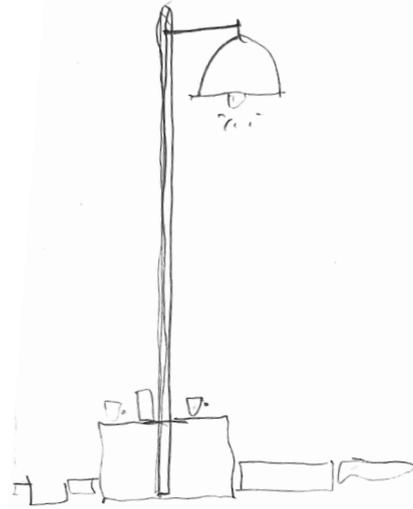


table or armrest

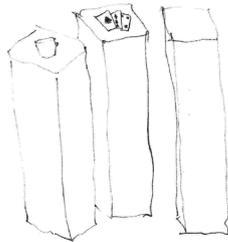




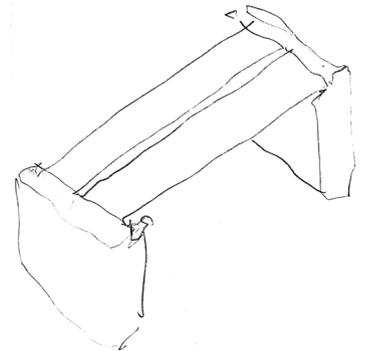
Sampietini



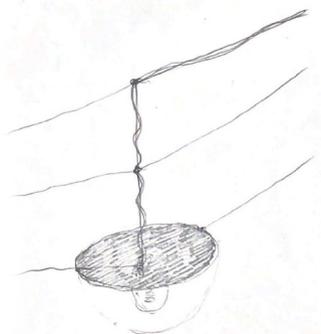
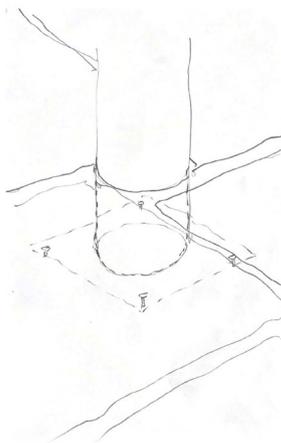
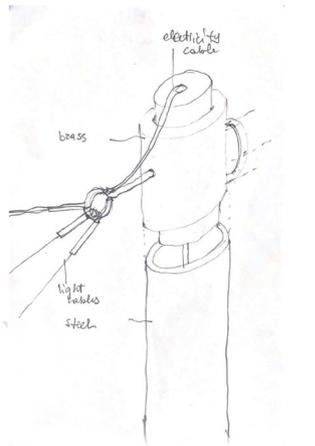
three little tables



158



159



View of the road in construction



The underground crypt
as it is and as proposed

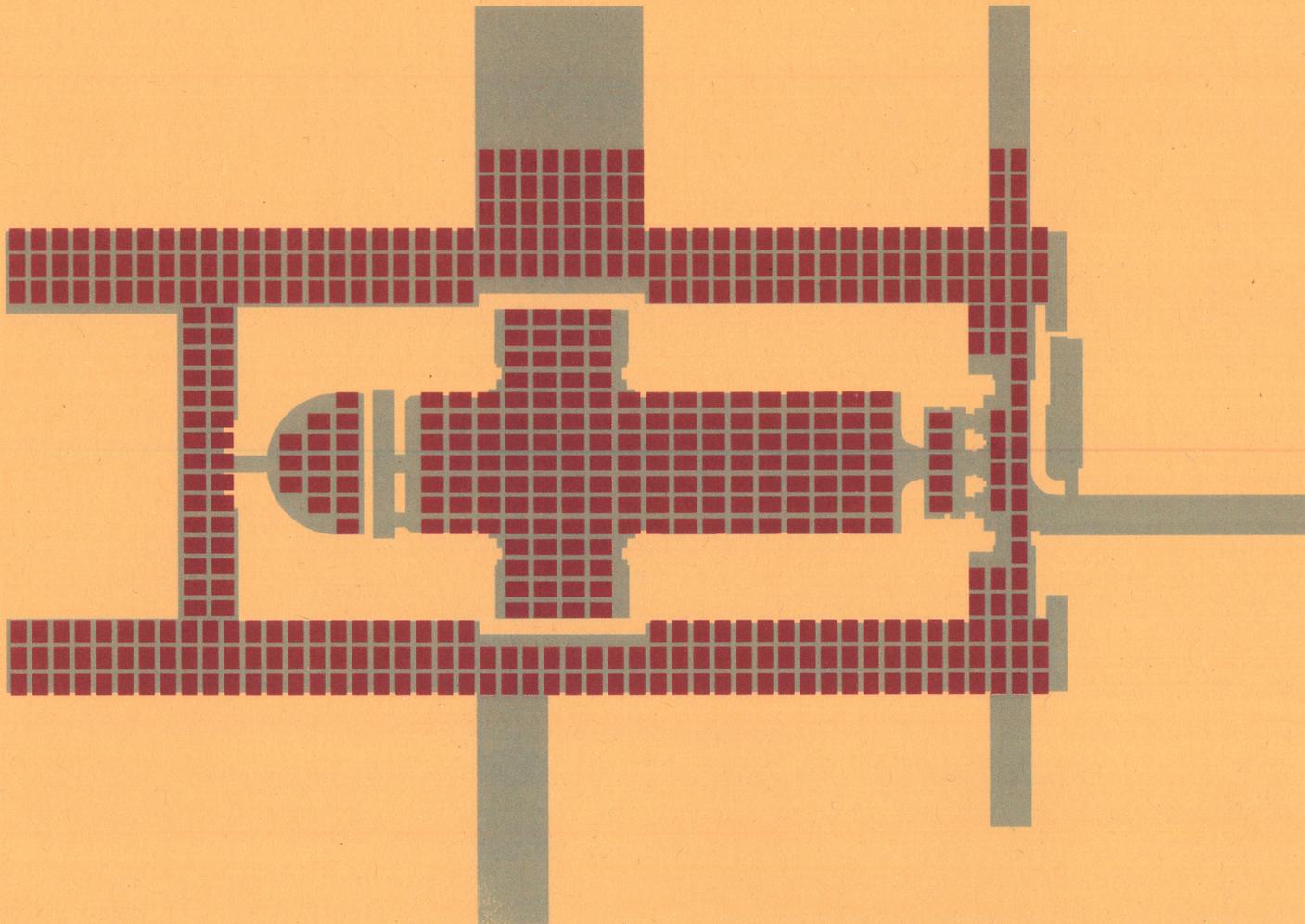


Transformation into a materials and tools depot, accessible
to the inhabitants—the co-owners of the stones.



The depot site is given
back to nature

Hypothesis of maximum capacity.
The underground crypt filled up with 393 crates, all laid on a single-level storage.





170

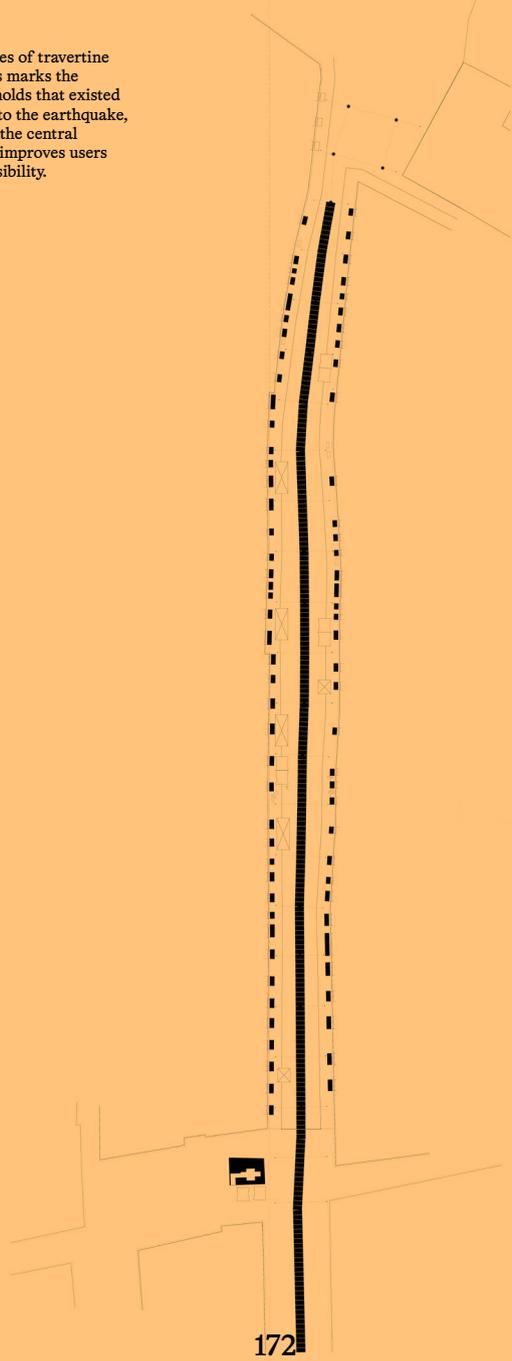
The road paved with the stones inherited in the collapse of the buildings



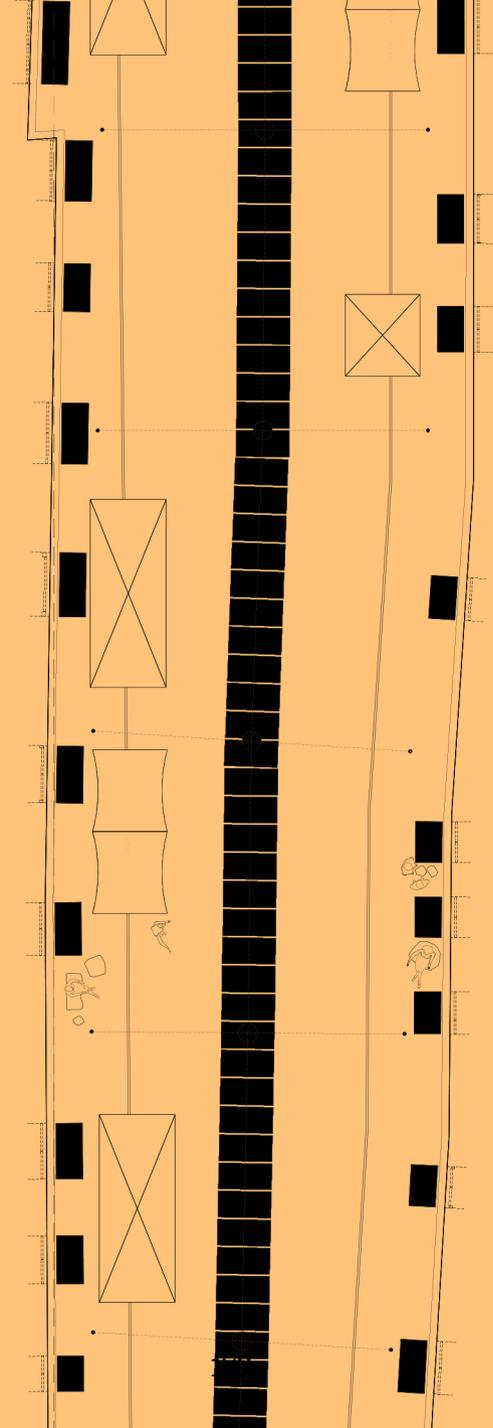
1:10 road fragment

171

A series of travertine stones marks the thresholds that existed prior to the earthquake, while the central array improves users accessibility.



172



The underground crypt
as it is and as proposed



The inhabitation of the space after the road is completed.
Markets and gatherings populate the underground crypt.





The garden, as it was
and as proposed



The privileged spot on the road that looks directly at
the towerbell is freed from cars, offering a space for the
inhabitants to contemplate the evolution of the town's
reconstruction.

A LEFTOVER SPACE

Renewing purposes

The Church of Santa Maria Assunta, designed by Arnaldo Foschini and completed in the 1960s, was conceived as part of the Don Minozzi orphanage complex in Amatrice. Intended as a symbol of the *Opera Nazionale per il Mezzogiorno*, an institution founded by Don Minozzi himself, the church is the only remains of the orphanage complex and it holds the founder's thumb as a relic. Yet, despite its symbolic significance, the church has never fully integrated into the life of the town. Unlike the rest of the complex, which functioned as an educational center in different formats from 1928 until 2016, the church holds little resonance in the collective memory of the community, as few can recall spending time within its walls.

Today, the church stands in ruins, awaiting restoration as part of the Casa Futuro intervention by Stefano Boeri Architetti, a 13,000-square-meter civic center designed to revive Amatrice. However, within this grand vision, the church remains underutilized, and effectively abandoned. The space, with its two large halls measuring 10×20×14 meters and 10×20×4 meters, holds untapped potential to address the town's immediate needs. In Amatrice, the community faces every year long, harsh winters, requiring a covered indoor space for public gatherings, markets, and events—a safe haven to sustain social life even in the coldest months. The church, as it stands, could fulfill this role, offering shelter and functionality to a town still in recovery.

Reimagining the church's purpose means letting go of its original, unfulfilled intent, transforming it instead into a space for the present. This renewal echoes the original ambition of Don Minozzi: to provide care and refuge for those in need. By repurposing the church as a warm, inviting indoor public space, it can once again embody the spirit of shelter and support, offering the people of Amatrice—a community orphaned from its town—a place to gather, connect, and rebuild.





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Chiesa di Santa Maria
Assunta
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2024



Chiesa di Santa Maria
Assunta
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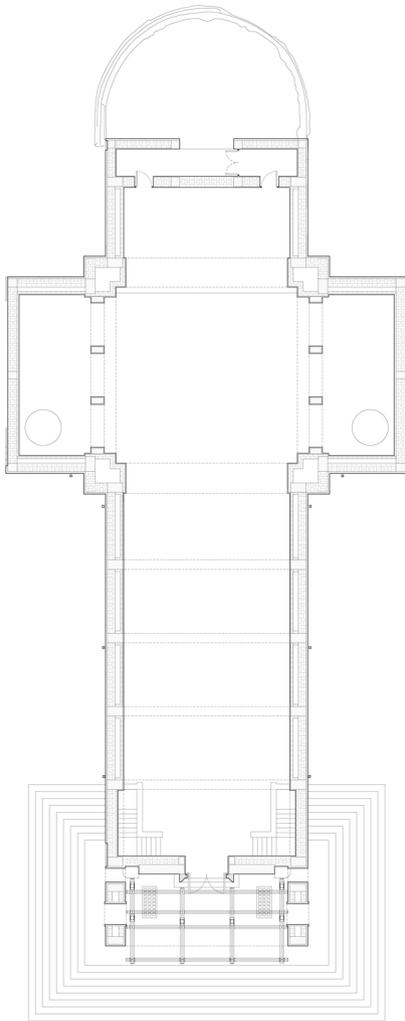




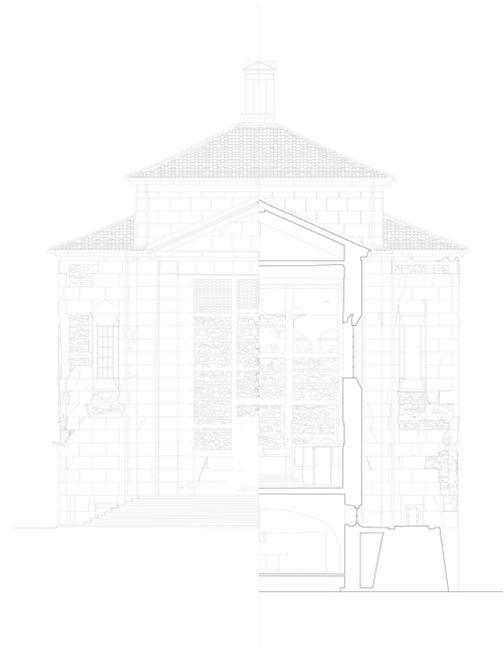




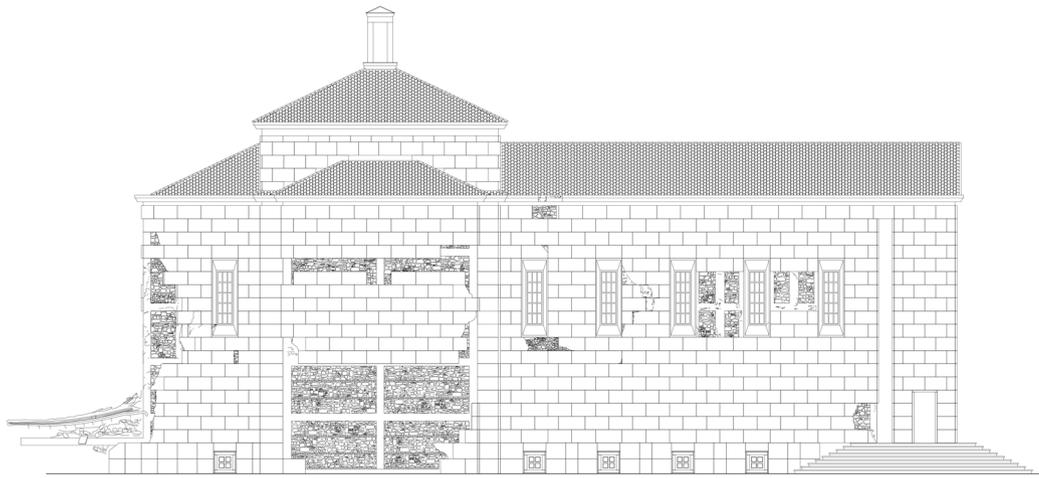
First floor plan,
as found



North elevation and
cross section,
as found



East elevation,
as found



Site sections,
as found



The orphanage football team in the 1950s
© Unknown author



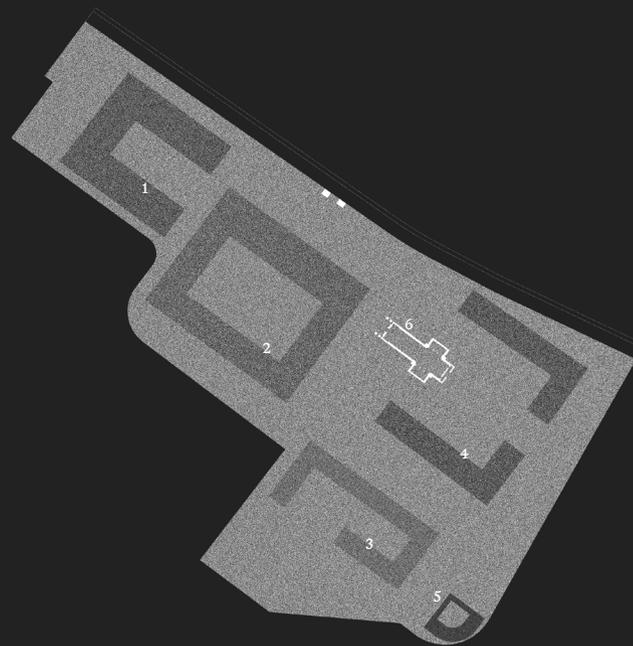
The church in construction, the
Travertine facade is missing and the
arenaria stone is still visible
© Unknown author



Casa Futuro. Vision to redevelop the orphanage into a civic centre
© Stefano Boeri Architetti



- 1 Civic courtyard 4720 m²
- 2 Silence courtyard 5072 m²
- 3 Hospitality courtyard 5408 m²
- 4 Arts and crafts courtyard 1150 m²
- 5 Farm 270 m²
- 6 The church 860 m²



The following pages illustrate a counter-proposal to the plan envisioned by Boeri, one that encourages tactical and minute actions to optimise efforts and time and that values the leftovers of destruction, enhancing their potentials.

In the vision for Casa Futuro, the Church of Santa Maria Assunta—which offers roughly 860m²—is only restored to its original image and function.

LA VECCHIA CHIESA AL DON MINOZZI

Occupation

Inhabiting the Church of Santa Maria Assunta

The inhabitation of the church of Santa Maria Assunta offers an opportunity to explore themes of time and transformation. To occupy this space is to redefine both its spatial and material program in time. Two potential stages of use emerge: initially, the church could serve as a shed, supporting the reconstruction of Amatrice. Over time, and in parallel, the upper floor could be partitioned to accommodate some of the dispersed functions within the town, consolidating their activity within this structure.



The underground floor can accommodate up to eighty people for events, shows, and projections. The centre of the cross becomes an introspective space, which is connected to the upper floor too.



The underground crypt is transformed into an indoor public square, and it is able to accommodate markets and small gatherings in the cold winter days.

Programmazione di Settembre

PER LA SALA SOTTERRANEA

LUN	MAR	MER	GIO	VEN	SAB	DOM
1 SAGRA AMATRICIANA	2 SAGRA AMATRICIANA	3	4 (M) MERLATO ORTOFRUTTICOLO (S) PROIEZIONE FILM	5	6	7 SPETTACOLO TEATRALE
8	9 (S) PROIEZIONE FILM	10	11 (M) MERCATO ORTOFRUTTICOLO	12	13	14 (M) MERCATO USATO VESTITI
15	16	17	18 (M) MERCATO ORTOFRUTTICOLO (S) PROIEZIONE FILM	19	20	21 (M) MERLATO ARTIGIANALE
22	23 (S) PROIEZIONE FILM	24	25 (M) MERLATO ORTOFRUTTICOLO	26	27	28 CONCERTO
29	30					



The partition of the main church hall allows flexibility of use. In festival and party days, the rooms in the building can become one.

Vecchia Chiesa al Don Minozzi

Programmazione di Settembre

PER LA SALA GRANDE

LUN	MAR	MER	GIO	VEN	SAB	DOM
1 SALA AMERICANA	2 SALA AMERICANA	3 CORONA PULIZIE	4	5	6	7 SALA PROVE CONCERTO
8 spazio (M) RICERCHATEL COMUNE	9	10	11 (M) SPAZIO RICERCHATEL COMUNE	12	13	14 SALA PROVE TEATRO
15 INIZIO SCUOLA (M) AULA STUDIO	16 (P) AULA STUDIO	17 (P) AULA STUDIO	18 (P) AULA STUDIO	19 (P) AULA STUDIO PULIZIE	20 CENTRO GIOVANI SALA GIOCHI	21 SALA PROVE CONCERTO
22 (M) ATTIVITA' CLASSI II (P) AULA STUDIO	23 (M) ATTIVITA' CLASSI II (P) AULA STUDIO	24 (M) ATTIVITA' CLASSI III (P) AULA STUDIO	25 (M) ATTIVITA' CLASSI III (P) AULA STUDIO	26 (M) ATTIVITA' CLASSI IV (P) AULA STUDIO PULIZIE	27 CENTRO GIOVANI SALA GIOCHI	28 SALA PROVE TEATRO
29 (P) AULA STUDIO	30 (P) AULA STUDIO					

Associazioni, enti e istituzioni:
 • SCUOLA PRIMARIA
 • AULA STUDIO PER COMUNE E STUDENTI
 • PRO loco
 • CONFRATTA LOCALE
 • CENTRO GIOVANI • ASSOCIAZIONE TEATRALE

Regolamento per la condivisione degli spazi:
 • riordinare gli arredi prima di andare via
 • pulire settimanalmente e "onor"
 • lasciare chiavi alla diocesi quando si va via

The new structure lays against the existing fabric, and reveals it occasionally.



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On a day-to-day basis, the main room is occupied by kids for morning school activities and researchers in the afternoon. A weekly schedule allows the space to be shared and managed collectively.



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The new upper floor offers a new space for the community. It can be used as a religious space on weekends and as an intimate place for conversation and support on weekdays.



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Vecchia Chiesa al Don Minozzi

Programmazione di Settembre

PER LA SALA SOPRALCO

1 (M) MESSA	2	3	4	5	6	7 (M) MESSA
					(S) MESSA	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 (M) MESSA
		(S) SABATO DI RILCORTO			(S) MESSA	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 (M) MESSA
(S) ASSEMBLEA COLLETTIVA					(S) MESSA	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 (M) MESSA
		(S) SABATO DI AL CAURO			(S) MESSA	
29	30					
(S) ASSEMBLEA COLLETTIVA						

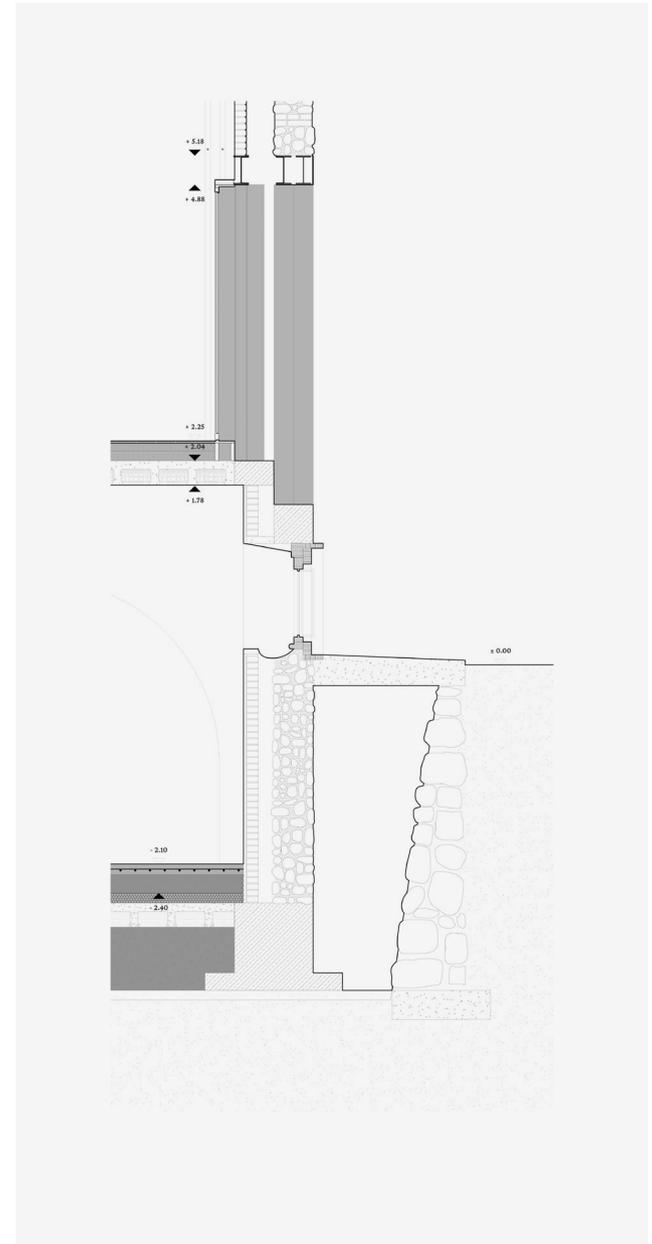
Associazioni, enti e istituzioni:

- PAPA LUCA
- CHIESA
- ACCIOMETTI SOCIALI (COMUNE)

Regolamento per la condivisione degli spazi:

Leveling

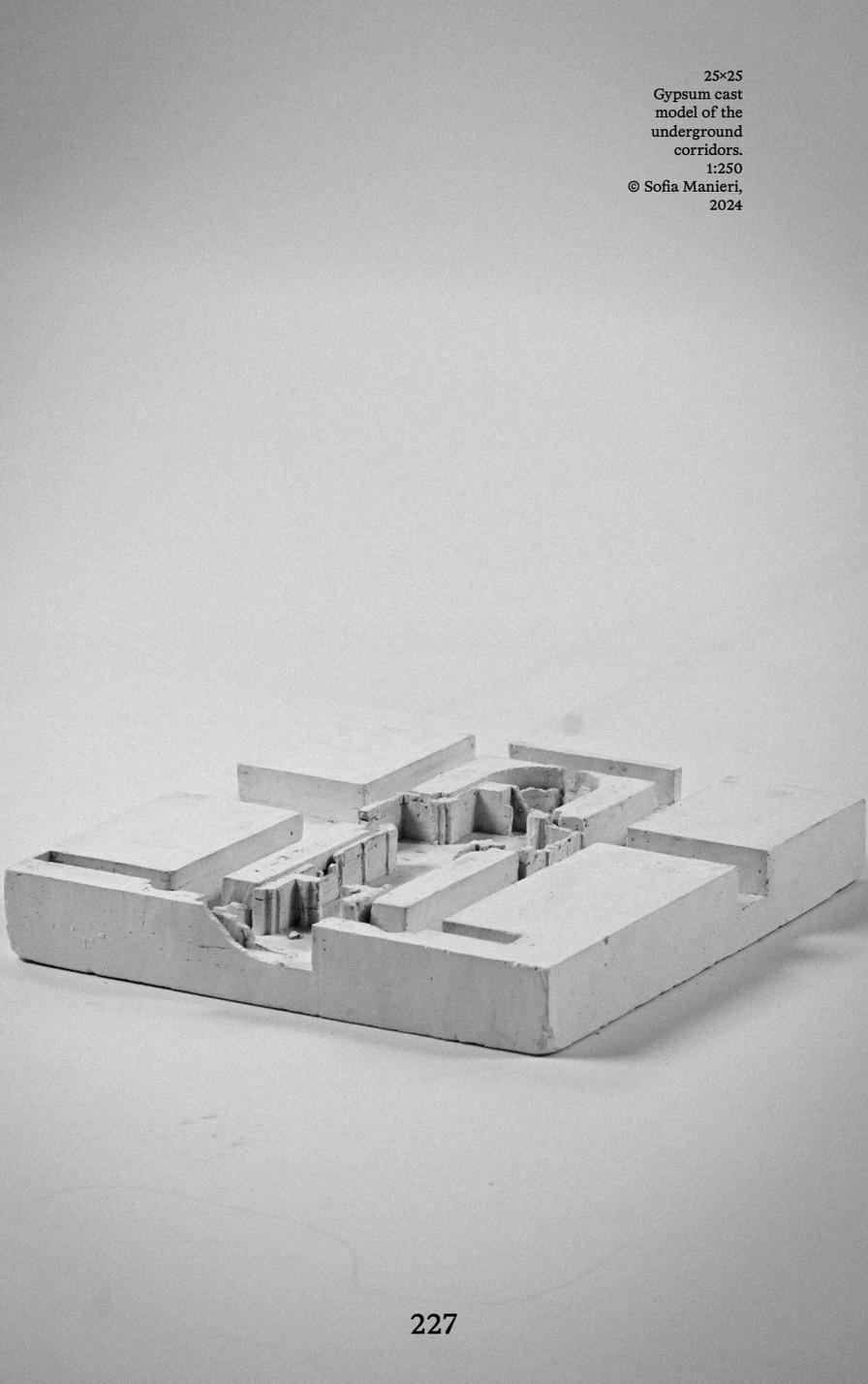
The underground floor is envisioned as a space for storing materials, tools, and salvaged stones—keeping them protected and accessible while fostering a deeper relationship between people and the objects of reconstruction. This reuse demands a rethinking of the church's accessibility. The existing levels—a main floor located 2 meters above ground and a basement 3 meters below—necessitate a leveling gesture to reconcile these disparities. A network of ramps and stairs reconfigures the ground, creating multiple access points from all directions, while the act of raising the floor with the use of compacted sand and cement strengthens the church's foundations and further uniforms the strength of the floor in supporting the weight of the stones.



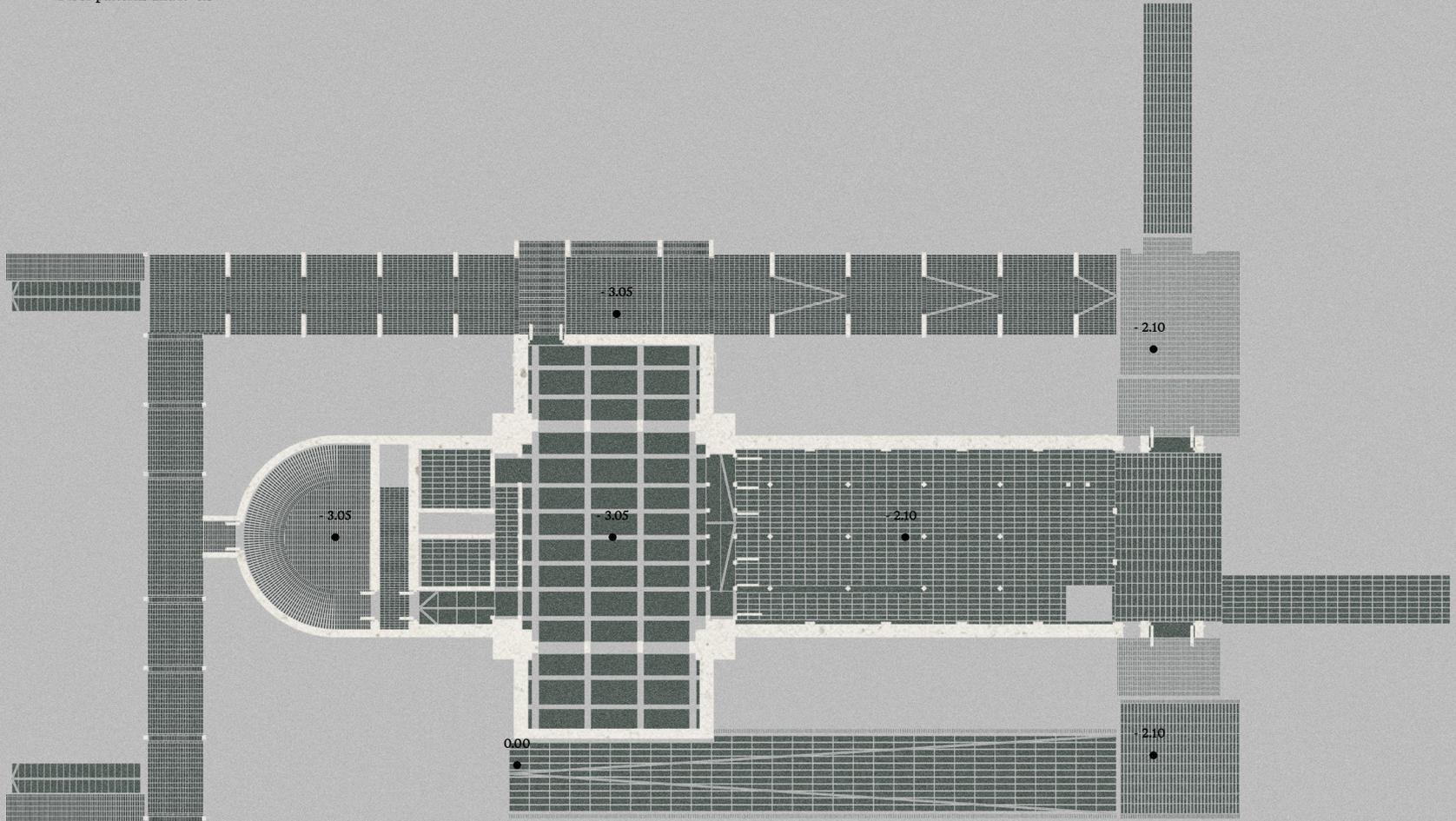


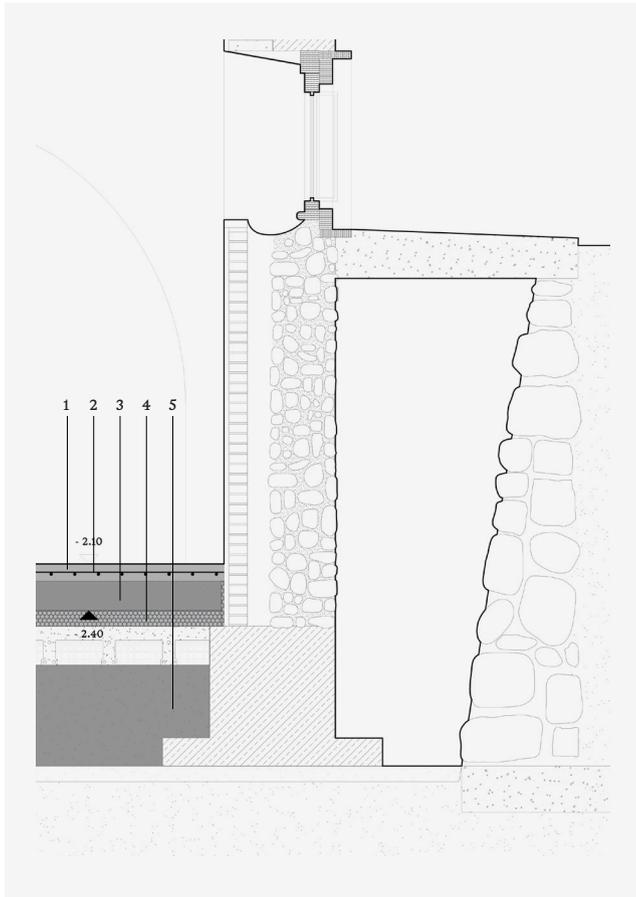
226

25*25
Gypsum cast
model of the
underground
corridors.
1:250
© Sofia Manieri,
2024



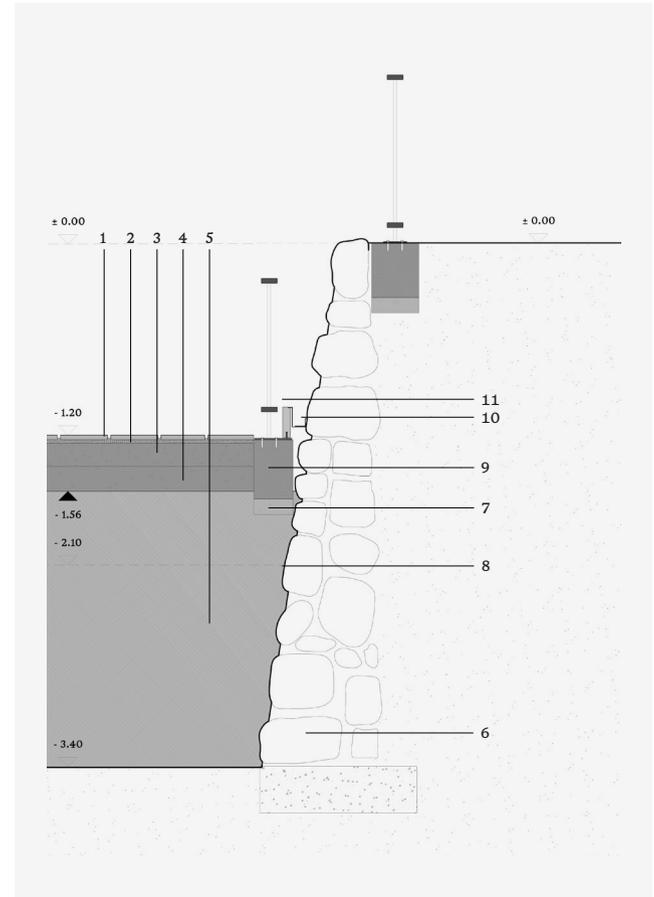
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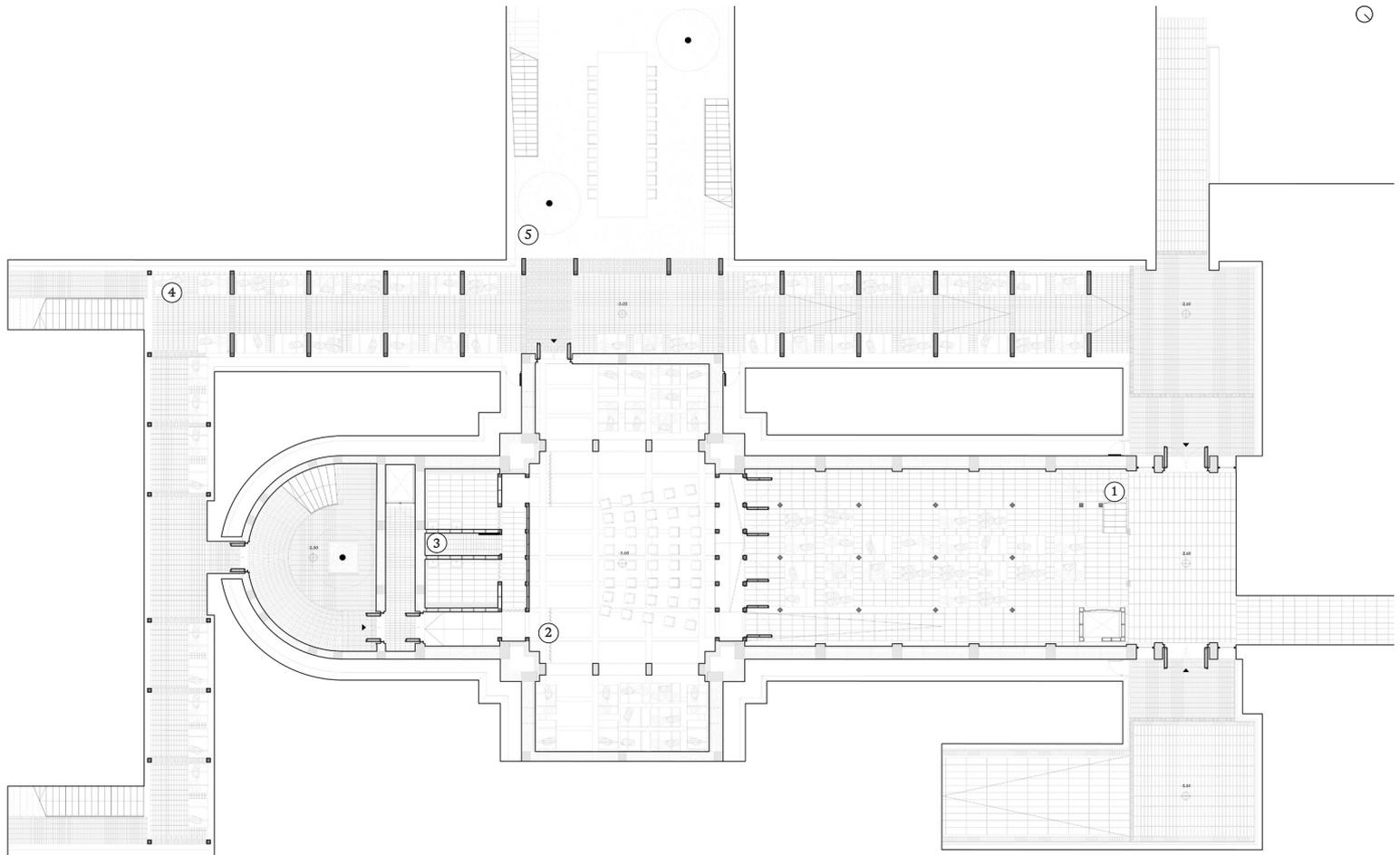
Leveling in the church interiors

- 1 Paving tiles, sandstone and gravel, 20 mm
- 2 Underfloor heating, insulation layer and pipes 60 mm
- 3 Reinforced concrete underfloor layer to distribute the loads, 200 mm
- 4 Rigid insulation layer extruded polystyrene XPS, 100 mm
- 5 Filling base course, mix of sand, gravel and cement to fill the crawl space and improve structural stability, 650 mm



Leveling in the trenches

- 1 Sandstone, 30 mm paving stone tiles
- 2 0/5 crushed sand dynamic leveling course, 20 mm
- 3 0/32 mineral mixture, 150 mm ballast course
- 4 0/45 frost protection course, 190 mm
- 5 Building ground substructure, 5% inclination, min height 94 mm, max height 3040 mm
- 6 Existing retaining wall
- 7 0/45 sleeve foundation on ballast, 100 mm
- 8 Point foundation, reinforced concrete C25/30, 380×300 mm
- 9 Through-wall anchor steel connection from foundation to railing
- 10 Draining gutter, copper, 80 mm x 80 mm
- 11 Skirting, 50 mm skirting stone tile
- 12 Railing, steel, 1100 mm

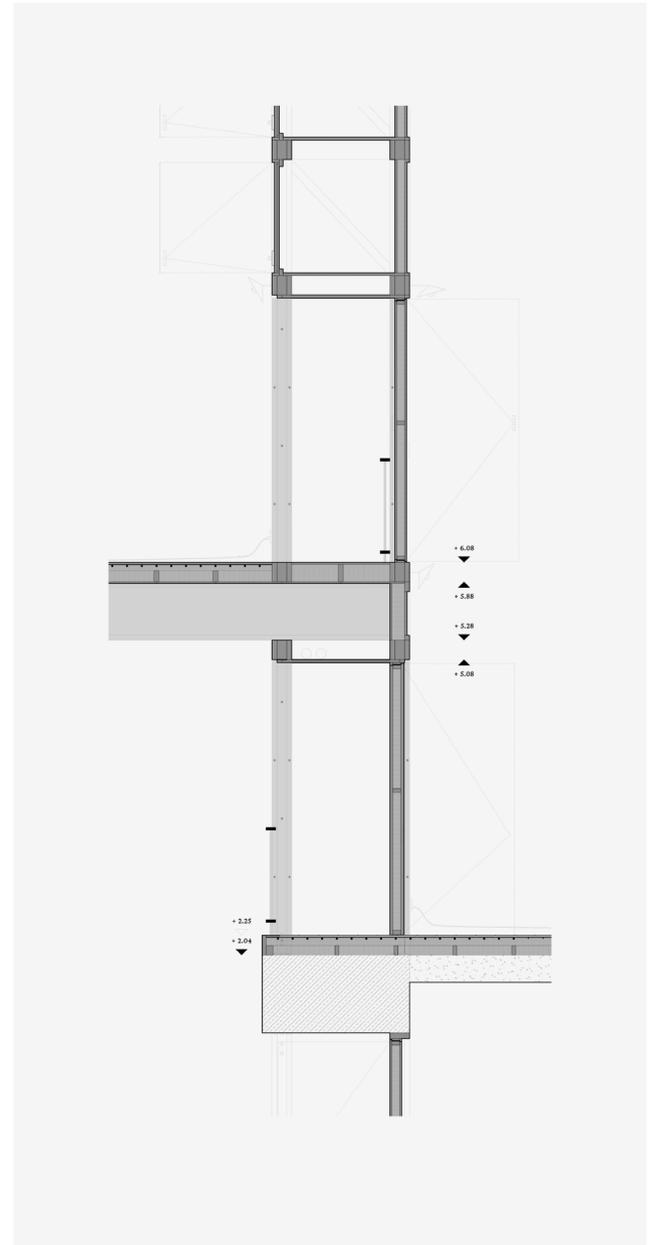


- 1 Crypt - depot and markets space (2.10m)
- 2 Theatre and cinema space (3.05m)
- 3 Changing room and services (3.05m)
- 4 Permanent depot (3.05m)
- 5 Garden (3.05m)

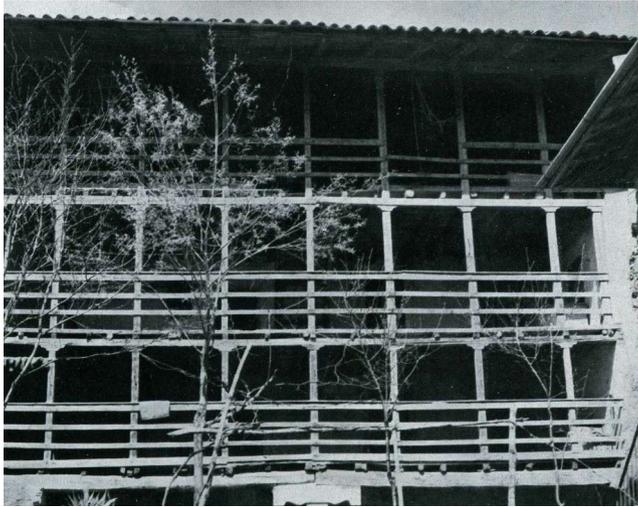
Partitioning

A detailed mapping of functions across Amatrice reveals an emerging program for the church. It can provide shared and autonomous spaces for key civic functions, including the youth center, school, church administration, and municipality—currently operating from temporary containers. Larger gatherings—festivals, performances, or public events—normally hosted by local associations could also find a home within the church’s adaptable interiors.

To accommodate these varied functions, a large, modular wooden structure is inserted into the church. Crafted from small timber elements assembled into a scaffolding-like framework, this structure offers flexibility and acknowledges its temporary nature. It reflects rural traditions where timber was used as a provisional extension, later dismantled or integrated into permanent constructions. This intervention celebrates the dignity of impermanence, creating a flexible space that evolves alongside the community’s needs.

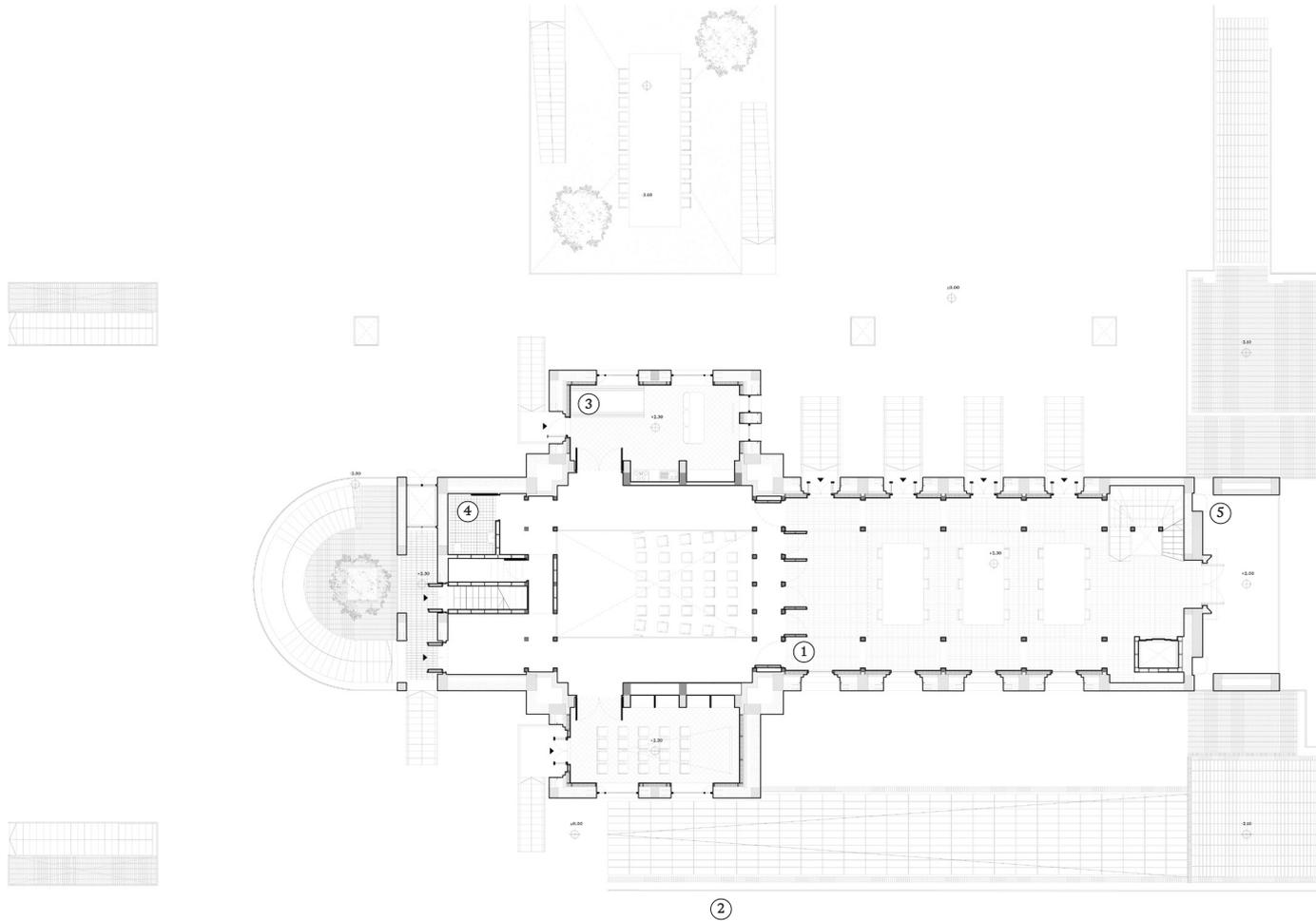


A house in Gandino with wooden loggias
© Giuseppe Pagano and Guarnier Daniel,
1936

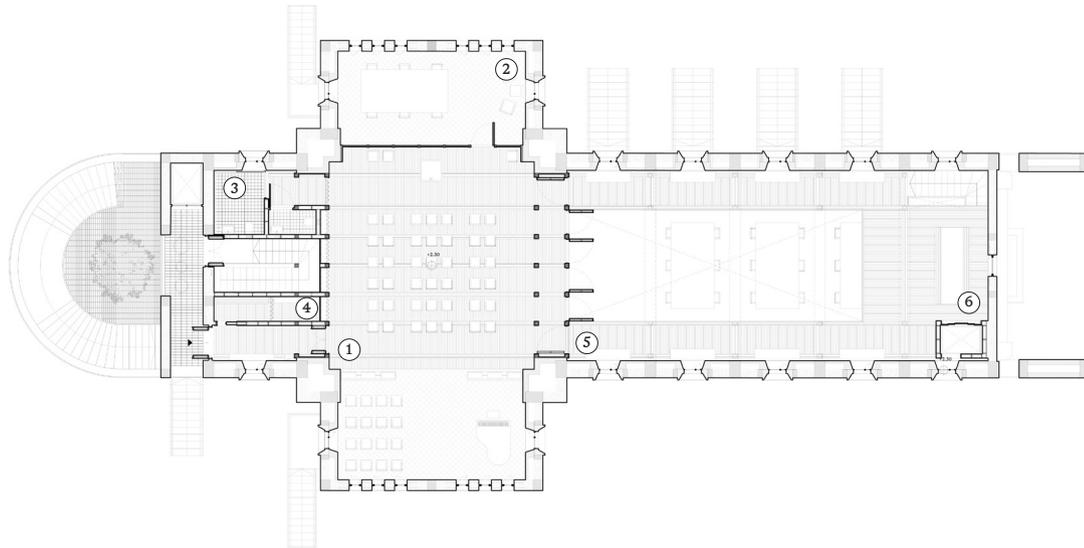


Wooden balconies in Primolano
© Giuseppe Pagano and Guarnier Daniel,
1936

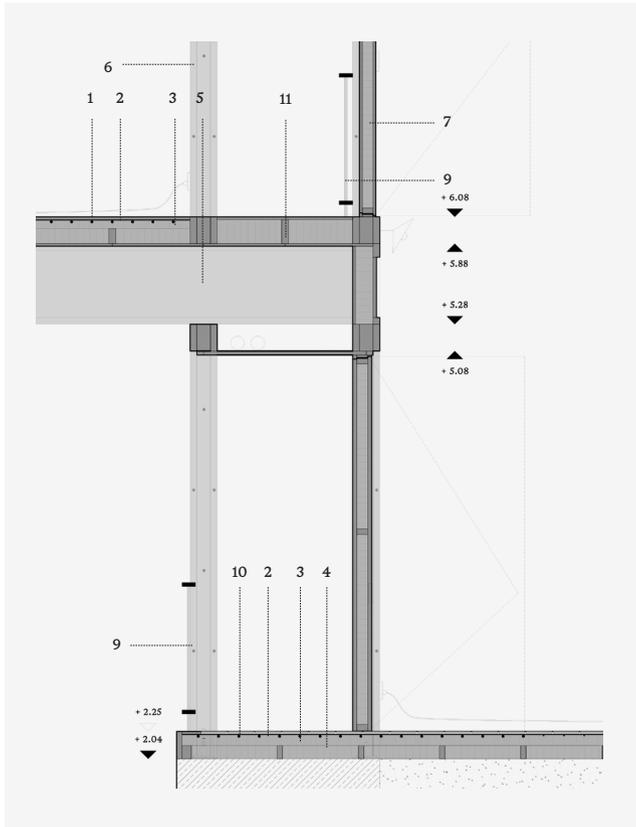




- 1 Reading room (+2.30m)
- 2 Projection room (+2.30m)
- 3 Living room (+2.30m)
- 4 Toilet (+2.30m)
- 5 Terrace (+2.00m)



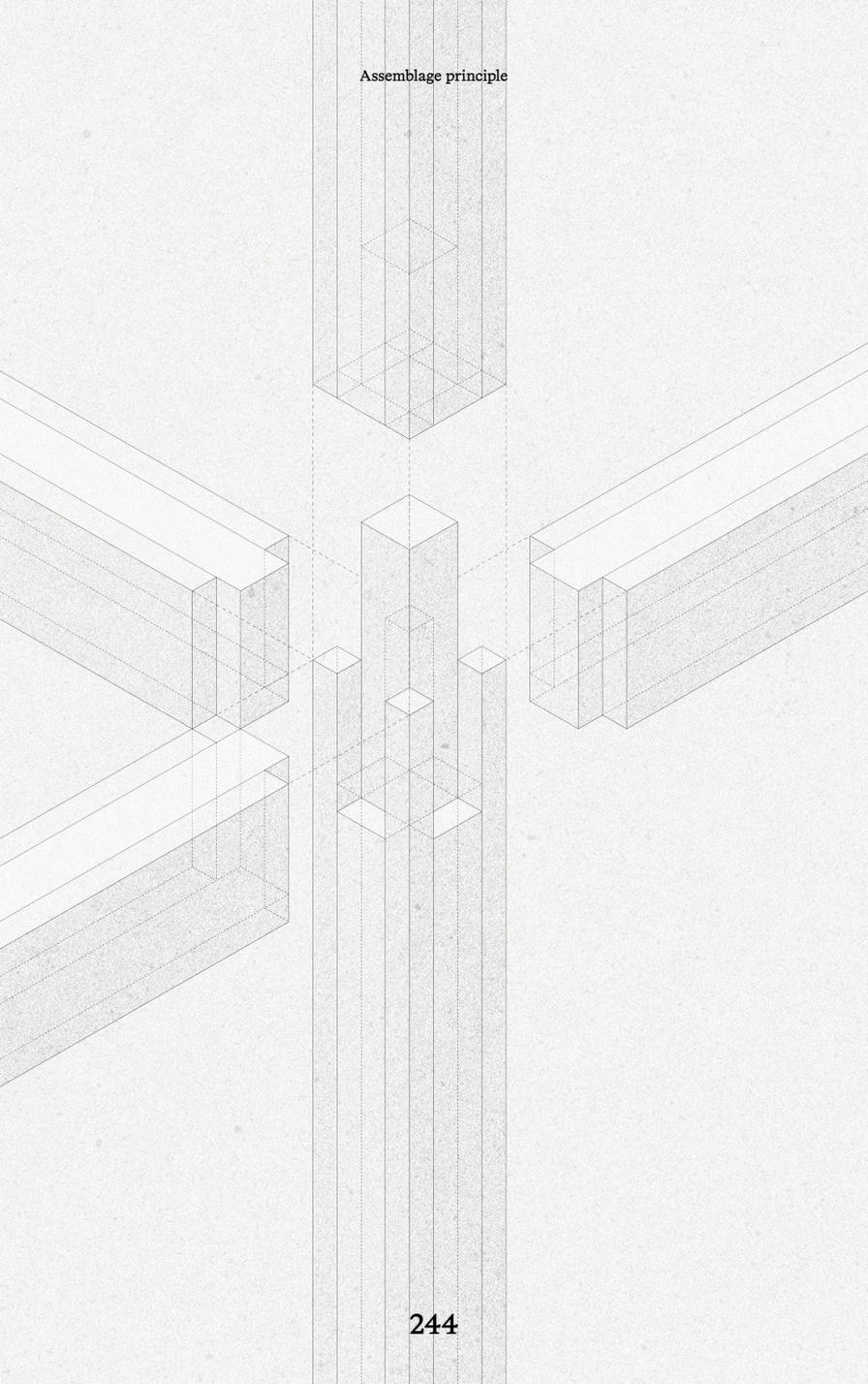
- 1 Community space (+5.95 m)
- 2 Church office (+5.95 m)
- 3 Toilet (+5.95 m)
- 4 Changing room and storage (+5.95 m)
- 5 Balcony (+5.95 m)
- 6 Reading room (+5.95 m)



- 1 Hardwood flooring, 20 mm
- 2 Underfloor heating system, steel pipes and thermal insulation, 60 mm
- 3 Sound insulation, hemp, 110 mm
- 4 Plywood board for ceiling finish, 30 mm
- 5 I-Joist beam, LVL flanges 50×100 mm, OSB core 30×550 mm
- 6 Timber column 200×200 mm, timber sections 100×100 mm, 50×100 mm, 50×50 mm
- 7 Sound insulating wooden door, 140×2700 mm
- 8 Cavity for electric services, 40×50 mm
- 9 Steel railing, 107 mm
- 10 Stone tiles floor finish 60 mm
- 11 Timber floor supports 50×100 mm

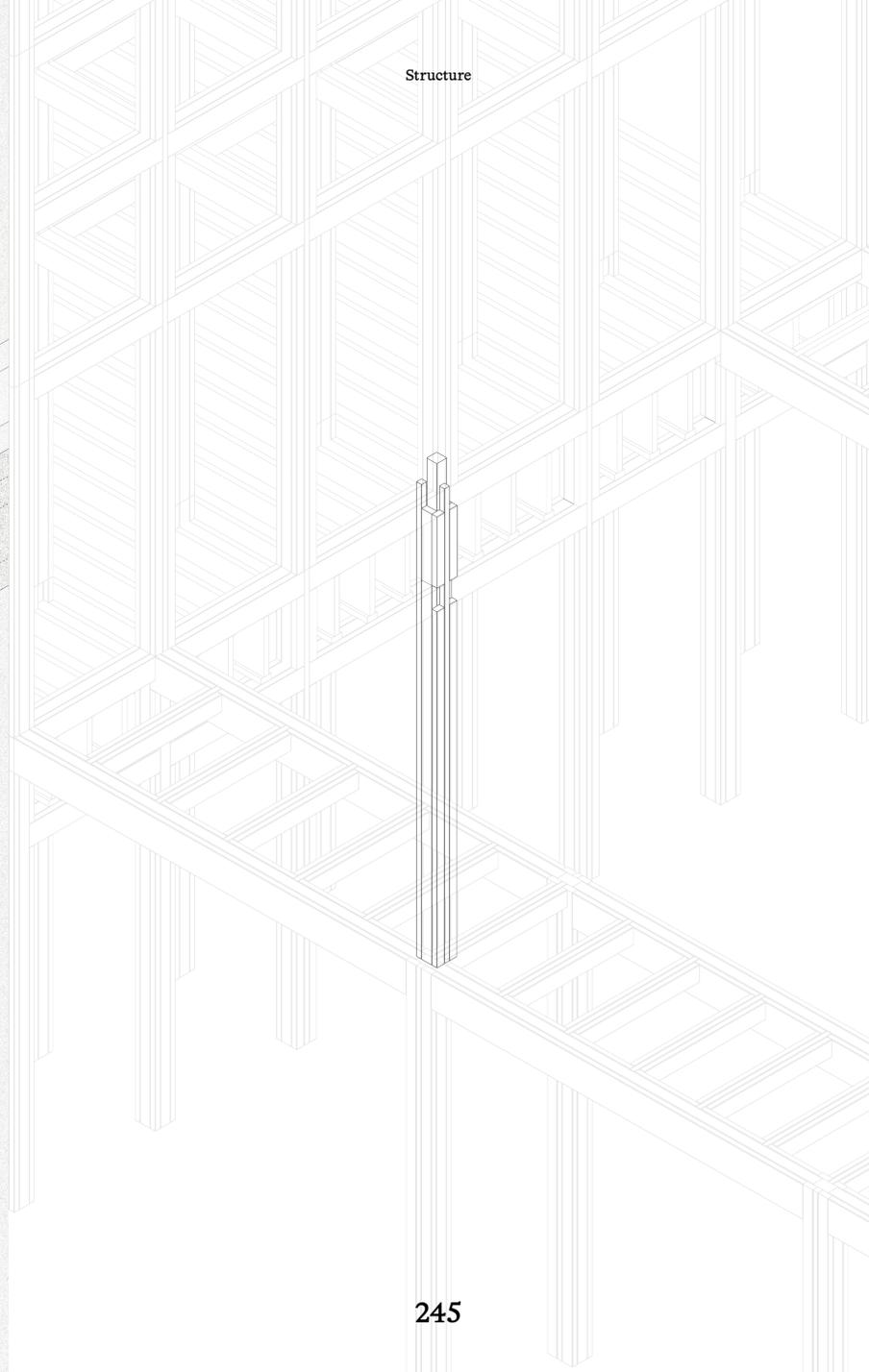


Assemblage principe

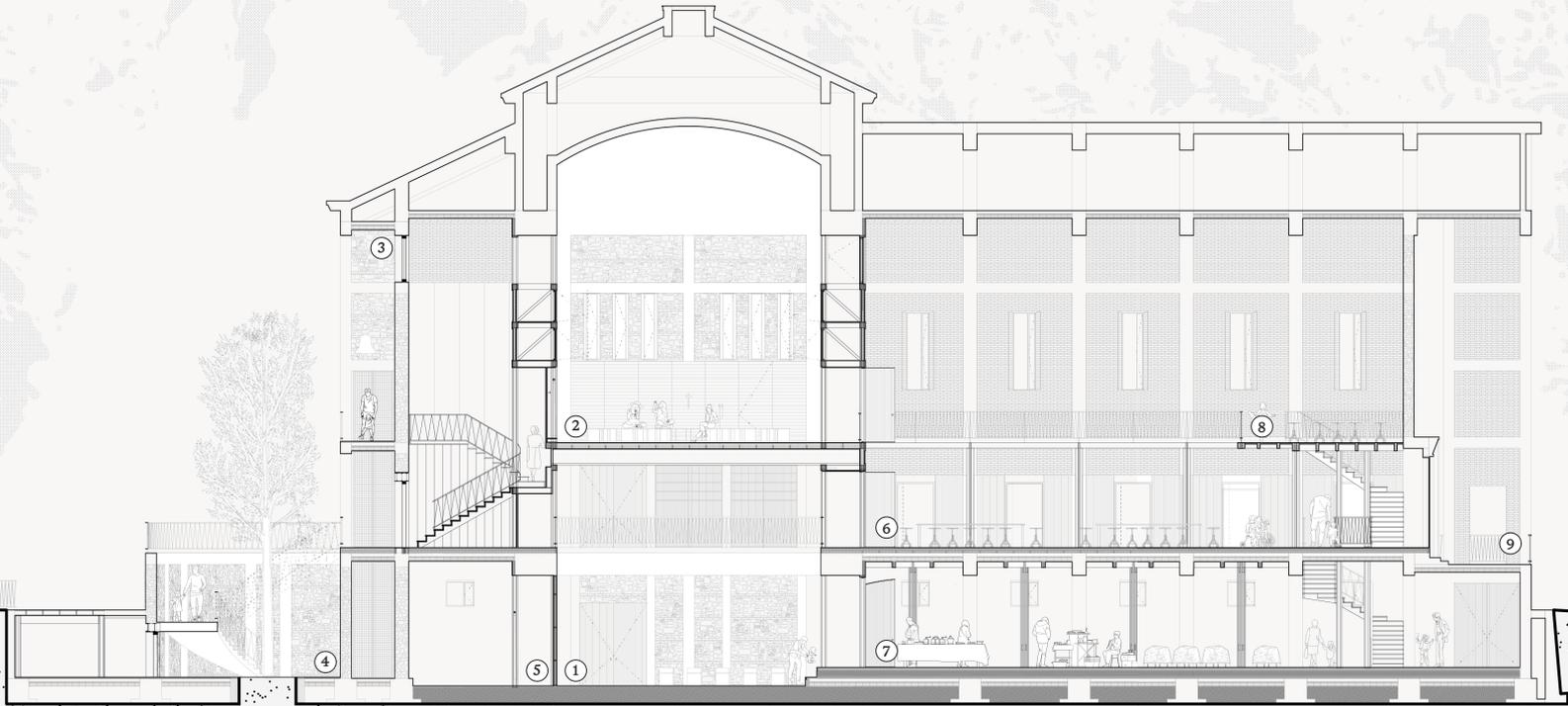


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Structure

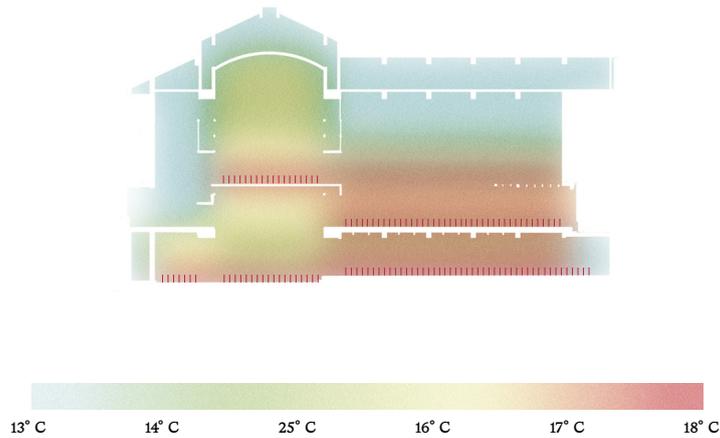


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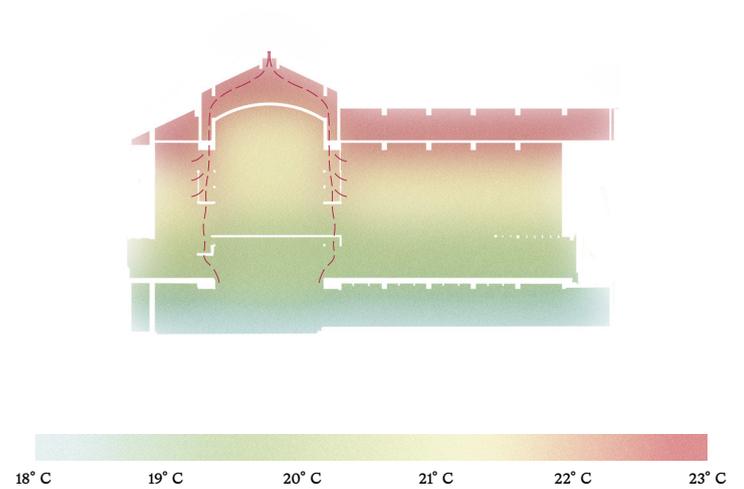
- 1 Théâtre
- 2 Church
- 3 Terrace
- 4 Entrance
- 5 Changing rooms
- 6 Reading room
- 7 Crypt
- 8 Gallery
- 9 Terrace

Winter surfaces temperature



In winter, the underfloor heating system provides an immediate feeling of comfort. Each room is equipped with different degrees of wall insulation, from total insulation to partial wall covering, depending on the expected occupancy duration.

Summer surfaces temperature



In summer, the underground floor remains cool, as heat can escape through the demolished portion of the first floor. The structure channels the heat into the roof, which releases the hot air through the existing chimney.

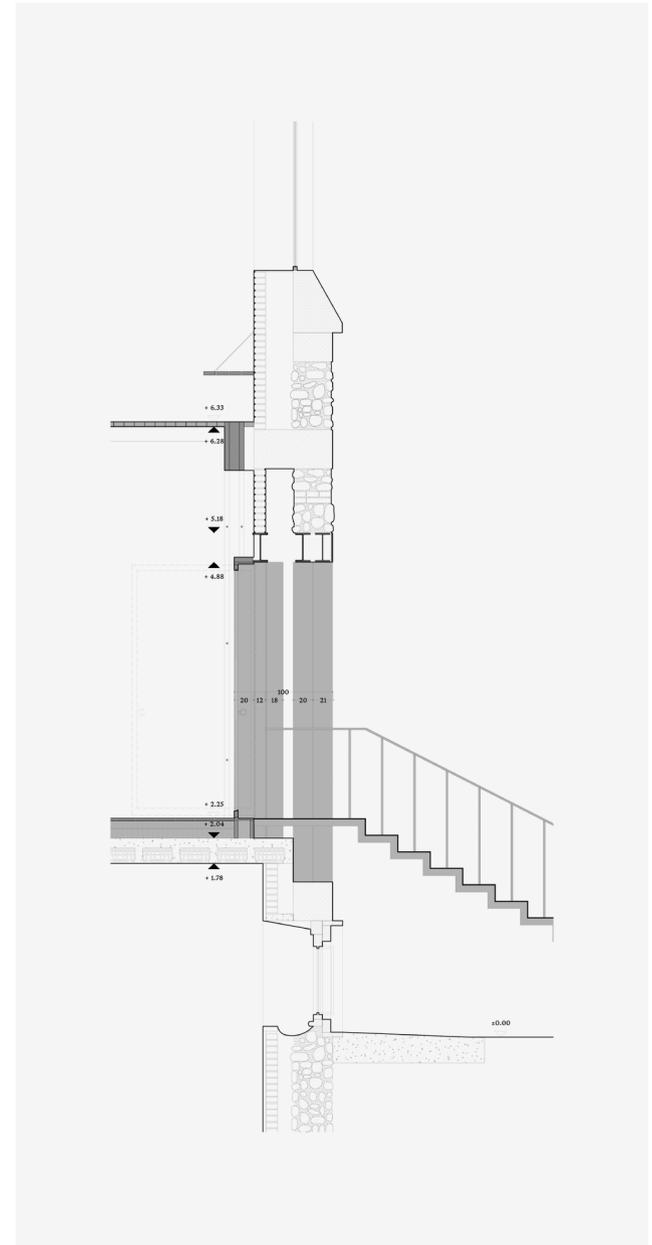
Breaching in

To transform the church into a community space, its entrance system must be fundamentally rethought. The central hierarchy of the original front access is disrupted, and replaced by multiple entry points. Steel elements are introduced to “breach” the building—symbolically and structurally. Steel stairs, assembled through welding, pierce the façade. The openings are supported by a steel frame that jackets the two existing layers of masonry. This constellation of doors offers alternative routes into the building and emphasizes its multiplicity of uses.

This approach draws inspiration from the seismic-proofing techniques commonly seen in Amatrice, where steel jackets are used to stabilize damaged masonry. By incorporating these familiar forms, the intervention weaves the new design into the broader narrative of the town’s reconstruction. The central front entrance, no longer the sole point of access, is reimagined as a terrace—a platform overlooking the old town, offering a contemplative gaze toward its reconstruction.

At the opposite end, a second terrace emerges, facing the new town. This reorientation subtly shifts the building’s axis, allowing the memory of the church to fade, making way for a new identity as a civic space.

Through these interventions, the church transforms into a living space that reflects the livelihood of the community, bridging the different temporalities of the reconstruction.





The collapse of the semi-circular apse at the back of the church offers an opportunity to carve a new underground entrance. The perimeter of the circle supports now a descending concrete staircase leading down to the courtyard, where a maple is planted in the middle. From here, the visitor can either enter the building or walk around the trenches.



The new entrances pierce the existing masonry and allow autonomy of use. Every wing of the building can be occupied autonomously and independently.

The monumental stair is demolished. The old, original entrance is transformed into a terrace overlooking the old town.



Likewise, the back of the building, where the bells are left as a reminder of the building's old function, becomes a terrace overlooking the new, temporary town. The back and the front have now the same function, subverting the hierarchy of the old church structure.



South-East Elevation



256

Nort-West Elevation



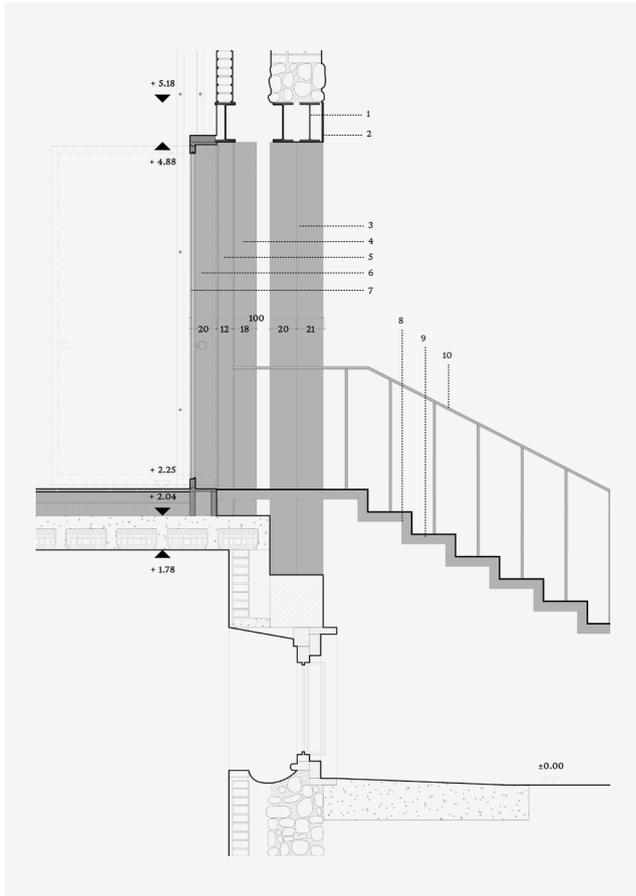
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North-East Elevation
and South-West Elevation

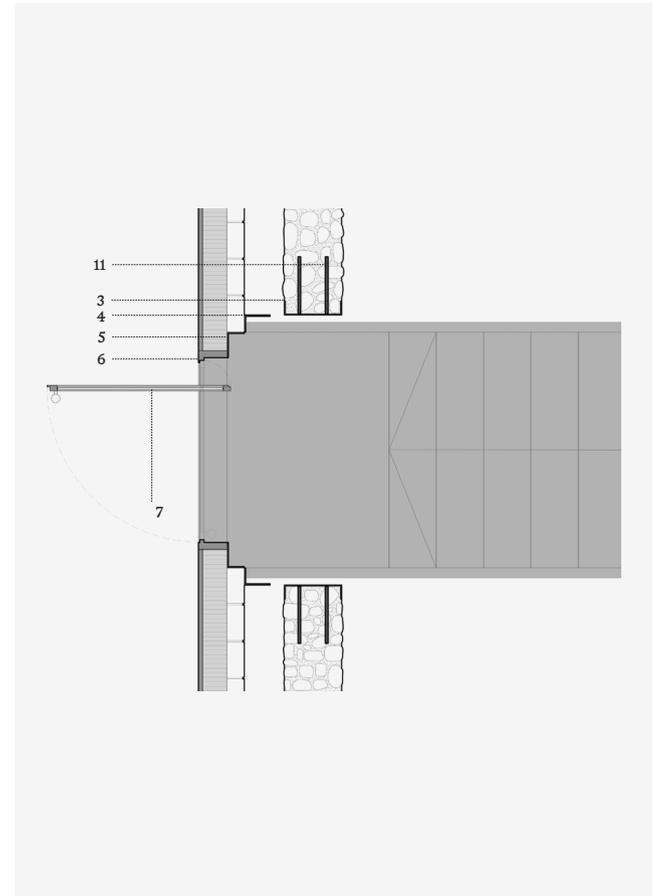


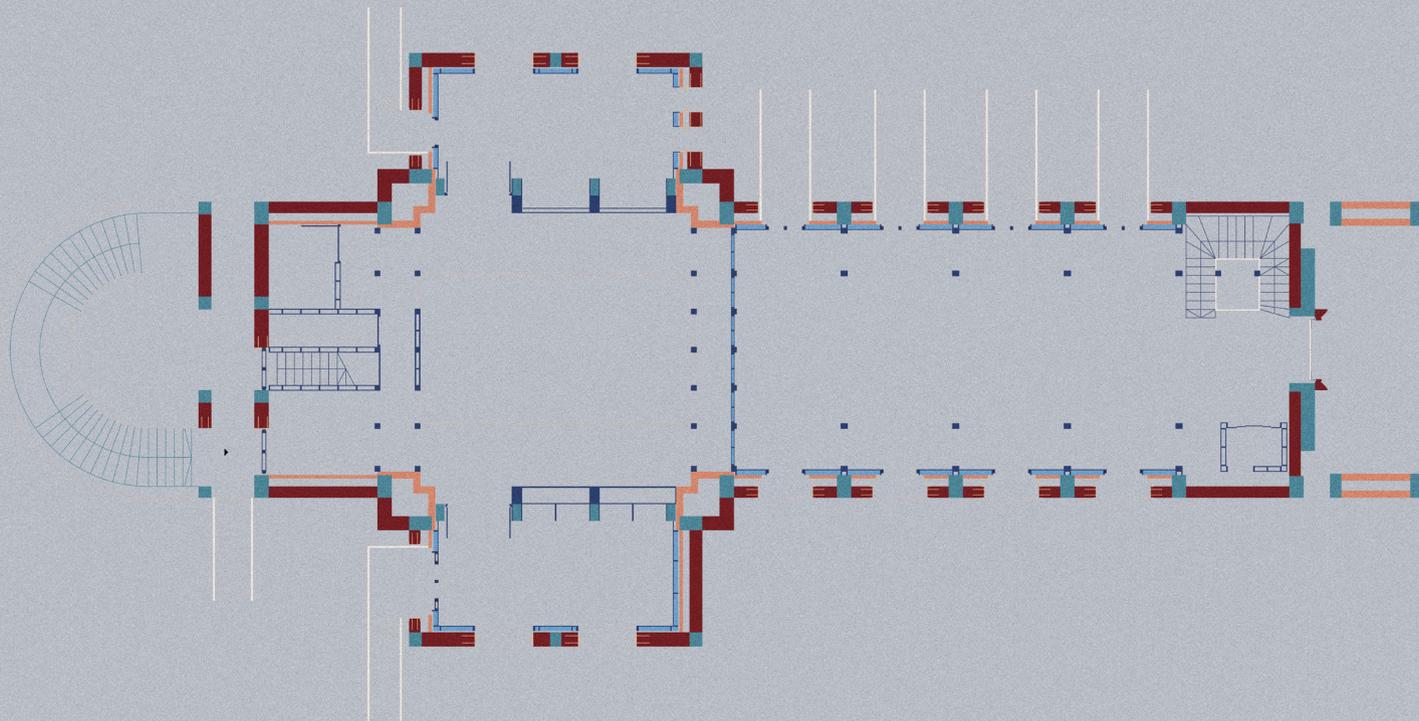
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259



- 1 IPE300 beam
- 2 Steel plate 5 mm
- 3 Steel column, two L profiles 200×200 mm
- 4 Steel column, L profile 180 mm
- 5 Steel column, L profile 120 mm
- 6 Timber door frame, 200×50 mm
- 7 Pivot glass door, 1200×2800 mm
- 8 Steel beam, rectangular hollow section 70×30 mm
- 9 Folded steel plate, 5 mm
- 10 Railing, 1000 mm
- 11 Stabilising steel rods, 20 mm





- Concrete structure - 80 years
- Stone facade - 500 years
- Brick walls - 80-100 years
- Steel stairs - 70 years
- Timber structure - 70 years
- Hemp insulation - 100 years

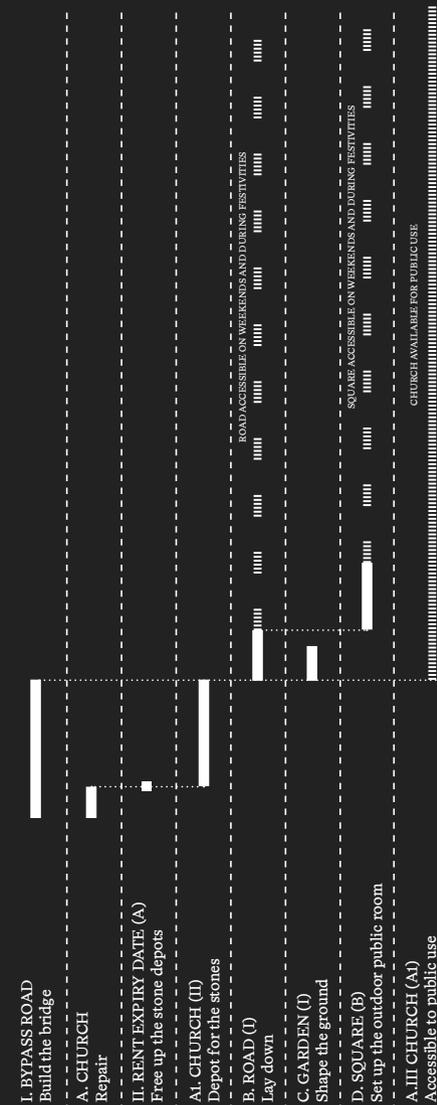
TIMING

Along the road, the interventions are neither fixed, nor temporary, neither definitive, nor fleeting, but rather provisional, coming forth as infrastructures for use and adaptation. This vision implies that the key to reconstructing within Amatrice's social context lies in prioritizing processes and evolving spatial narratives over fixed outputs, reconciling the legacy of the past and the evolving reality of the present.

The gesture of timing reflects a deliberate awareness of shifting functions and changing needs, as well as the natural decay of materials and their eventual renewal.

As a strategy, timing focuses on mapping the potential of spaces that may not endure indefinitely but can still contribute meaningfully to a fulfilling and dignified public life.

Timing challenges the traditional view of heritage as fixed assets. It instead sees heritage as inheritance, as the aliveness of old meanings through time, in other forms, otherwise.





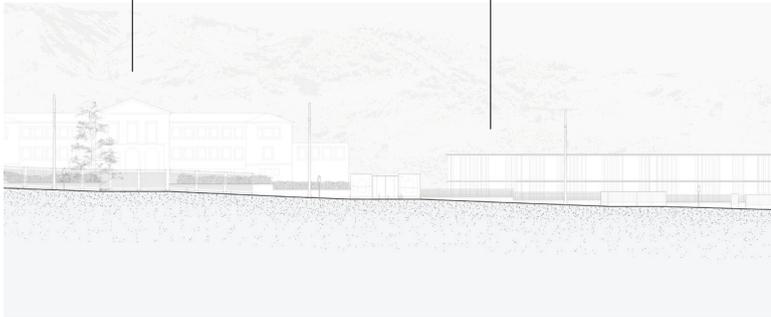
The route leading down from the church to the garden.
Timing of history and legacies.

A space for
Amatrice's
community (2025)

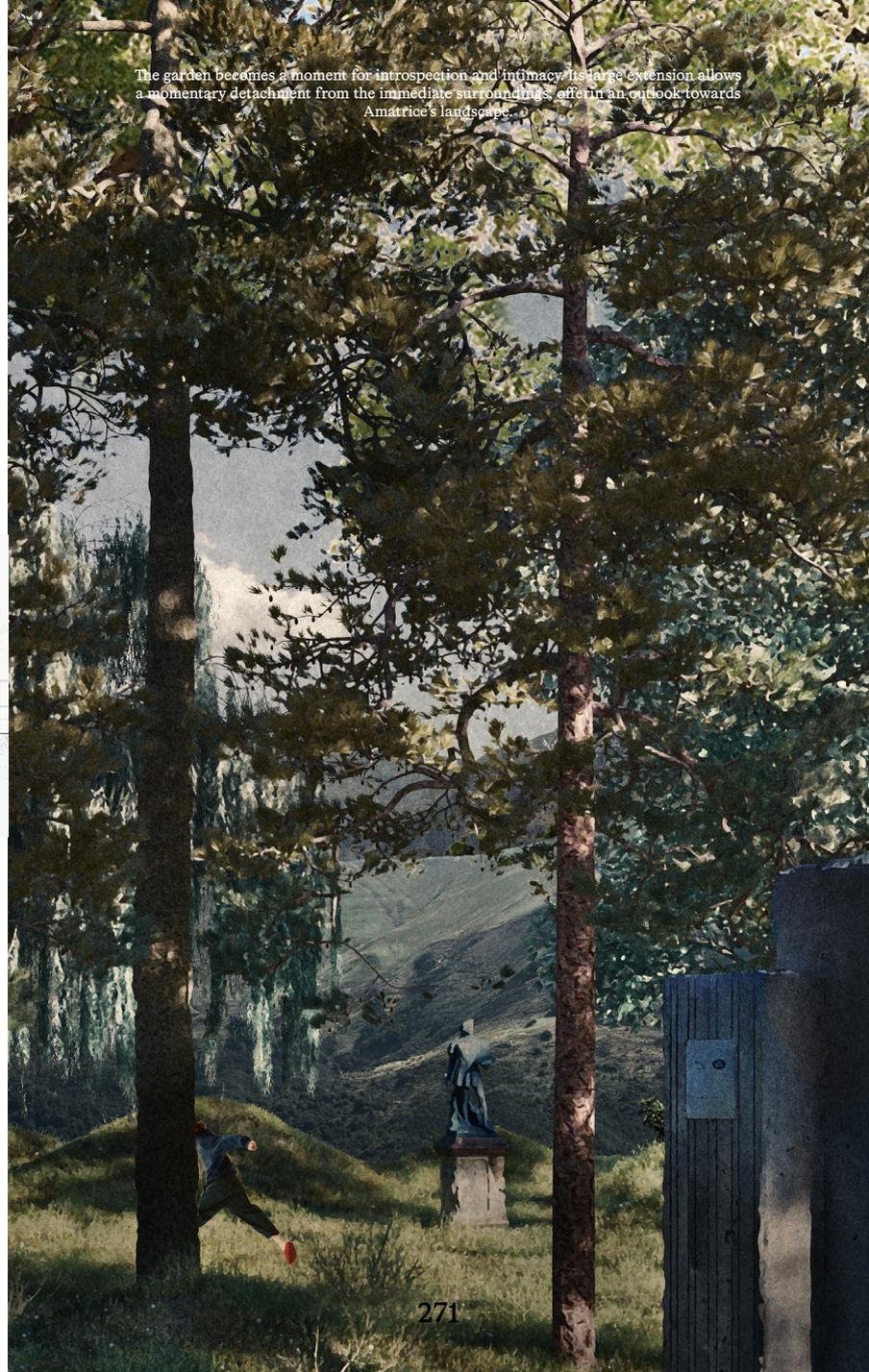


The collapsed Don Minozzi's Orphanage
(2016)

The new Casa Futuro
civic centre (yet to be completed)



The garden becomes a moment for introspection and intimacy. Its large extension allows a momentary detachment from the immediate surroundings, offering an outlook towards Amatrice's landscape.

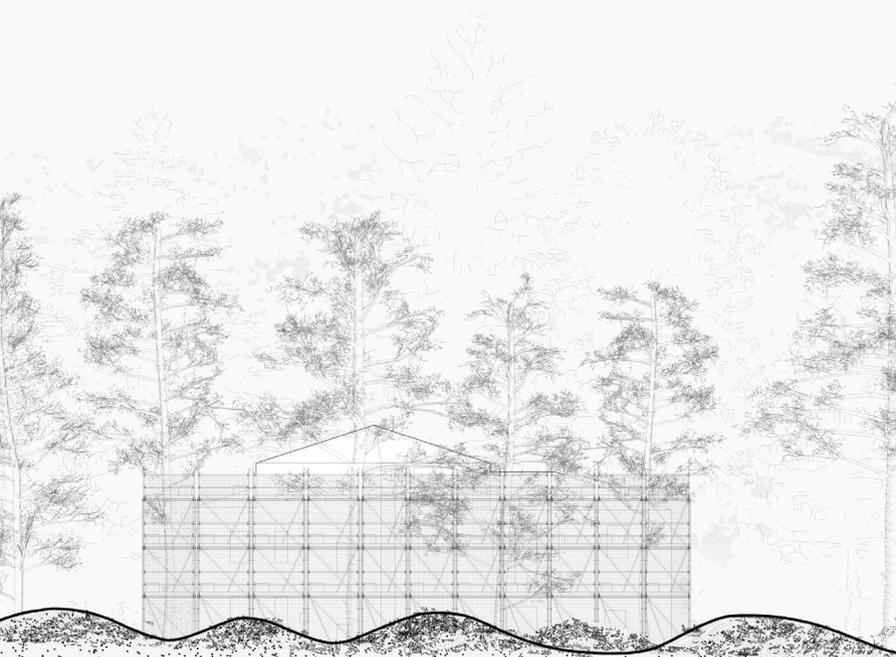


At the same time, it frames the view towards the old town, offering a place to contemplate the reconstruction.



The garden an intersection between the old town and the temporary town (2025)



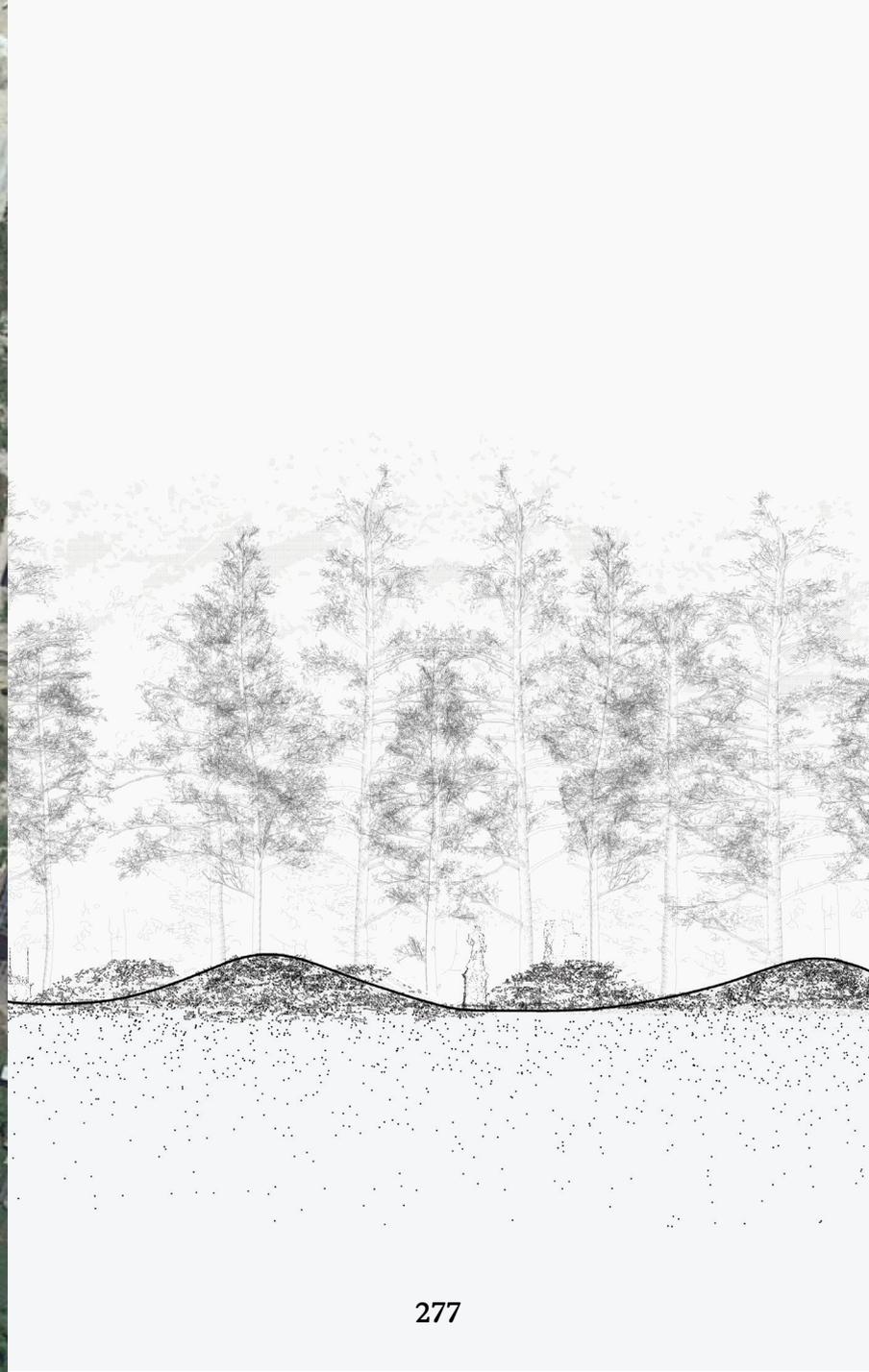


As nature appropriated debris in the old centre, so it is possible to imagine it appropriating the debris in the garden.





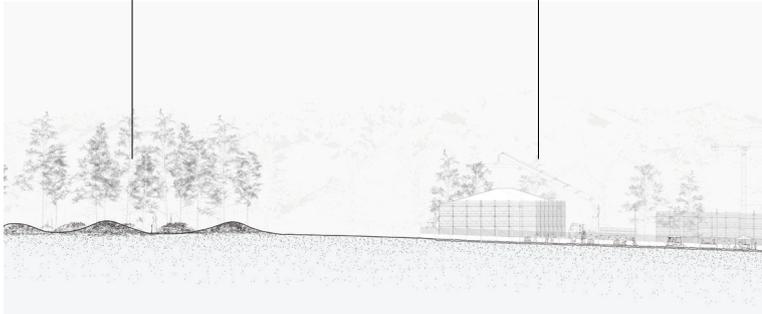
2020



The route leading down from the garden to the towerbell.
Life throughout the reconstruction phases.

The garden as a lookout point
(2025)

Reconstruction works
(2025)



The garden offers a privileged view of the old towerbell, the only completed building as of 2025. A path crossing the garden creates a junction between the road leading toward the old centre and the road leading toward the new centre. It is a space where processions, festivities and parades can walk through again, today.



In the await for the completion of the old town, the main road becomes the only accessible space. All sorts of activities can take place on the road. It is a new, stretched, square in the town. An infrastructure of lights allows its occupation at any time of the day and night.



The corso
inhabited (2025)



The town reconstructed
(year unknown)



The tower bell
completed (2024)



CONCLUSIONS

The Independent Group graduation studio focuses on the dependencies between societal issues and architectural design. In setting out a proposal for this project more than a year ago I imagined exploring post-disaster reconstructions in Italian marginal areas, and I soon realised how the state-of-the-art approaches have widely come to favor outputs over processes, causing social precarity and threatening collective memory throughout the prolonged recovery efforts. This year has been an exploration of alternative design practices as well as a reflection on the role of architects in circumstances and contexts that rely so heavily on the consequences of design decisions. The town of Amatrice has offered grounds for this exploration.

Looking back at my first proposal in November 2023, I immediately suggested focusing on notions of time, scale, and identity. At the time, those themes emerged from an instinctive reading of the town's present and planned physical reality which had left me perplexed. However intuitive and somewhat unsophisticated, these concerns have proven to be right intuitions, and the project has progressively become a more substantiated elaboration on those matters.

The approach to holistic master planning – where every area is meticulously zoned, whether rebuilt “as it was, where it was”, or newly constructed – often results in each building being designed as an isolated entity, detached from its broader context. Guided by a desire to experiment with the possibilities that an incremental approach to reconstruction could give, I identified the concept of acupuncture as a tool to operate at the urban level of the town. This allowed me to explore small, intentional actions and avoid relying on grandiose gestures that demand enormous resources and that often emerge in stark contrast with the identity of the place. I initially chose the church, the garden, and the square as three “pain points” within Amatrice's townscape that could offer grounds for public life, and it later became clear that however far apart in the town,

these interventions could integrate into a cohesive and complementary program. The design resulted not only in a reaction to each site's specificities but also in a definition of possible synergies between them.

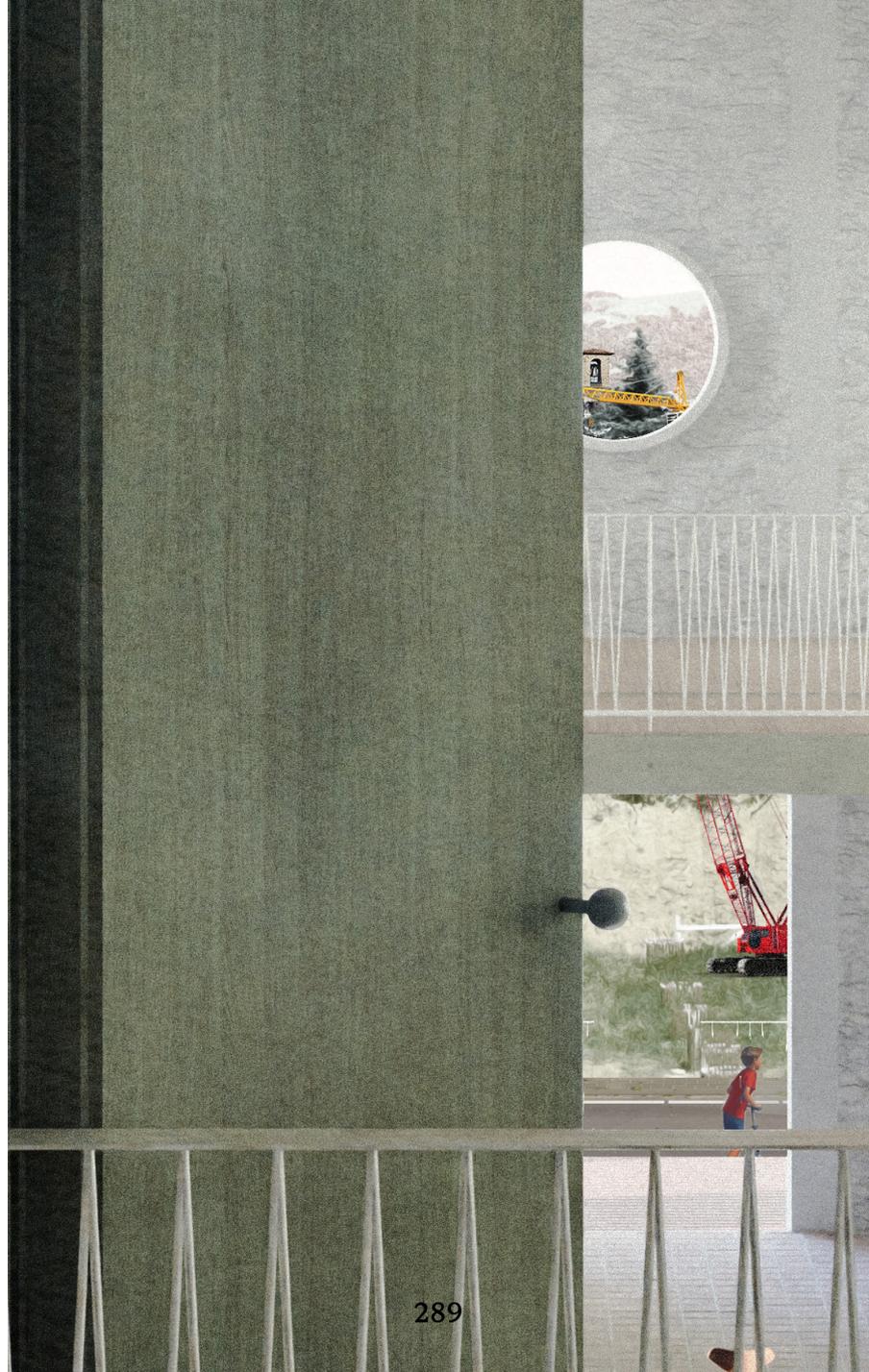
The temporal unfolding of the project is an aspect that only became clear halfway through the year. Initially, I was skeptical of the concept of temporariness, and I had only come to terms with it when I began to understand temporariness as provisionality. This change – from viewing it as something fixed within a set timeframe to something that evolves over time – was pivotal in recognizing that the essence of reconstruction lies in prioritizing processes over static outputs. Provisionality represents an open-ended narrative, emphasizing spatial renewal and adaptability rather than finite solutions. For this reason, the interventions at the three selected sites are neither definitive nor fleeting, but they come forth as infrastructures for use and adaptation. Therefore, the architectural expedients in both their spatial and technical aspects are conceived to enable the occupation of these three neglected spaces.

Shifting the attention from outputs to processes might relieve the weight of the fundamental, daunting question of which forms and language the reconstruction should take. Heritage protection in Italy is a Constitutional duty. In protecting the historical traces embedded in the architecture of old cities and towns, practices of conservation, restoration, and, in times of destruction, philological reconstruction constitute fundamental ethos. “Com'era, dov'era” (as it was, where it was) is a slogan that repeatedly comes forth in circumstances of destruction, calling for historicistic approaches to reconstruction. Early in the project, I encountered the Ship of Theseus paradox, which framed a compelling question: if all the parts of a structure are replaced over time, does it remain the same entity? As a paradox, it proves that post-disaster reconstructions often pose unresolvable dilemmas;

but it also suggests that the essence of preservation may not lie strictly in physical replication, rather in perpetuating the spirit of building practices.

To navigate the paradox, I chose to explore forms of building practices that engage directly with the material reality of the town and its destruction. This exploration began by borrowing the theory of bricolage from Irene Scalbert's essay *Bricolage*, inspired by Claude Levi Strauss's *La pensée sauvage*. Over time, Scalbert's bricoleur has been increasingly reshaped and tailored to the specific context of Amatrice. I have tried to operate as one too, grounding the project in the tangible reality of Amatrice while engaging with practical tasks, all while envisioning the interventions as a collaborative effort - imagining a multitude of bricoleurs contributing to the renewal of the town. In the end, I believe to have approached the project as an archaeological bricoleur, deeply concerned with the traces and fragments of the past and their evolving future forms.

To conclude, since the beginning of the graduation studio, we have been encouraged to approach the research project through the lens of design. Rather than treating design as the outcome of research conclusions, the two processes were intended to inform and shape each other throughout the year. This integration underscores what I believe to be the core and conclusion of my reflection: positioning this design not as a definitive proposal but as a method of inquiry. Design, in this project, has been a research tool - one that facilitates critical reflection, comparison, and evaluation - emphasising the benefits that research by design can bring to the world of things - and to the reconstruction - instead of solely lending its reflection to the often sterile world of ideas.



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