

n o s t o s

ΔΙΠΛΩΜΑΤΙΚΗ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑ

ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΜΕΤΣΟΒΙΟ ΠΟΛΥΤΕΧΝΕΙΟ

Νόστος: Ένα ταξίδι μέσα από έξι παρεμβάσεις - σταθμούς.

Σχολή Αρχιτεκτονικής

13 Οκτωβρίου 2016

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Η παρούσα διπλωματική εργασία είναι μία συνεργασία μεταξύ του Εθνικού Μετσόβιου Πολυτεχνείου και του Πολυτεχνείου του Μιλάνου.
Είναι το αποτέλεσμα της κοινής έρευνας με τον αδερφό μου, Γρηγόρη Πετρόπουλο, ο οποίος είχε επιβλέπουσα την καθηγήτρια Elisa C. Cattaneo.

CONTENTS

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Abstract	2 - 4
Scenario	5 - 9
Thesis theoretical approach	9 - 11
Bibliography	11

ANALYSIS

Mapping Peloponnese	13 - 28
Allegorical interpretation of Odyssey	29 - 42
Proposed interventions	43 - 48

RESOLUTION

Flea Market	49 - 56
Wildlife Shelter	57 - 64
Agrotourism Habitat	65 - 72
Thermal Baths & Aromatic Gardens	73 - 80
Museum of Memory	81 - 90
Naval Station	91 - 98

MODELS

99 - 107

n o s t o s

Pronunciation: /nästōs/

NOUN (plural nostoi /-toi/)

literary

A homecoming.

The Journey of Kanenas* through the
constrasting landscapes of the Peloponnese.

The current thesis topic will discuss the concept of a fictional journey through the eyes of a man. The vehicle of this narrative is a train which follows the now disused railway network of Peloponnese. Due to the limited resources of the country the route had to cease all operations in 2011, after having served the connection from Attica to Peloponnese for nearly one hundred and thirty years.

The story is set in the 1960's, when Kanenas, a French citizen begins his expedition through the contrasting Greek landscapes seeking his family roots and identity. Peloponnese, being the place where the narrative comes to life, is transformed into the generator of the myth. Nostos, is a term coined by Homer to describe the journey of Odysseus from Troy back to Ithaca. From this term emerges the concept of wandering, which in our story acquires a past, a present and a future, this time through the eyes of Kanenas. Being a modern traveler, he uses the train as a ship wandering the railway network, in order to compose his own narrative.

The existing stations, are enriched with a series of six interventions, through which the train passes. These are the elements which attract or repel, guide or mislead, celebrate the conundrums to follow but at the same time mourn what is left behind. Through their closed boundaries they reconstruct their own scenes, galvanized by the aura of the Homeric epic. In this way, the journey highlights notions of movement and stoppage, beginning and ending, experience and knowledge, myth and reality, which gradually unlocks the mysteries of traveling with the train. The landscape, having its own architectural quality, and each intervention, with its unique character, form a puzzle, creating a palimpsest of experiences and memories.

* The name by which Odysseus presented himself to the Cyclop Polyphemus. In Greek **Kanenas** means **Nobody**.



Caspar David Friedrich - *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*.

*Οὐτις ἐμοί γ' ὄνομα: Οὐτιν δέ με κικλήσκουσι
μήτηρ ἠδὲ πατήρ ἠδ' ἄλλοι πάντες ἐταῖροι.'*

Thesis scenario.

05.06.1964

21:02

Having travelled for several hours, I can now clearly see the greek landscape emerging from the distance. This trip had to be made years ago. Although, I never felt ready... The sudden loss of my mother led me to confront my past and follow my roots. I hope that this trip will be more than that. My parents named me after my great-grandfather, Kanenas. The meaning of the word in Greek means nobody. As the time passes by, I feel more and more trapped into the meaning of it.

06.06.1964

07:00

I am standing in front of Larissis station, ready for my expedition. My friend Pierre talked about a wild animal research centre near Elaiochori. This will be my first stop, as I am willing to spend a few days there. I don't know my next stop, although this uncertainty does not make me anxious. I am sure that during my stay in the shelter I will have the time to contemplate and think clearly. The train departs at 7:40am. On my way to the station, I happened to meet a fellow Peloponnesian who mentioned a few words about the railway network. Everything sounds fascinating to me! The network operates since 1882 although it was not completed until 1904. It moves in a circular route, from and to Attica, covering a total distance of 750 km. It consists of 159 regular stations as well as 6 major interventions along the way, which set their own mark along the rail tracks. The shelter is one of them. This is where I am headed.

8:15

The announcer just mentioned the first stops. Among them, Corinth, is the first major city we meet on our way. The train will reach Corinth in 2 hours. Along the way the landscape is constantly changing, like a movie scene. Valleys, sea and rocky cliffs follow one another, forming a rich and surprising skyline. The urbanization level is gradually changing, as we leave Attica, leaving the greek landscape in command. It creates its unique character as a protagonist on a play. The train operates, the 750 Km route, once per day, although the connection between Athens, Piraeus and Patras, which is the biggest city in the Peloponnese, is more frequent.

09:40

We left Corinth behind. In 10 minutes, we will arrive in a flea market, just outside the city. Our stop will be 30 minutes long, as the train will have to fill the engines with charcoal. Merchants will load local products in the storage wagons, that will be distributed along the journey, in various villages.

09:50

We finally arrived. Since I have some time to kill, I decided to walk around the flea market. This station feels different from the others. Its morphology defers from the previous typical stations. The space is large. The flea market stretches around leaving the core empty. At the center of this intervention, the large patio, is the heart of the of the whole, capturing and framing the surrounding landscape. The train tracks are located in the middle of this intervention, penetrating the inner courtyard. As I stepped my foot out of the train, I was immediately overwhelmed by the unexpected picture I was facing. The patio full of people, flavors and colors was a treat for my

every sense. Wandering through the stalls I found myself in the middle of fruits, vegetables and everything the greek land had to offer. There is a certain craziness to this environment as everything sounds very loud. All people act very fast! Merchants are bargaining and people are rushing! Such a spontaneous experience! It is nothing like my Parisian daily routine. It is like world, inside the real world. In this space I can still feel the breeze of the summer air, but at the same time I can sense that it is a place with its own pace and rules. I don't mind the fuss! It feels nice. Below, the ground is raw, plain soil. This intervention does not feel like a regular building, rather if I could describe it, I would call it "a double wall facade" which surrounds this internal environment. In my eyes it can be characterized as both extroverted and introverted. In this surrounding double wall, there are many sheltered spaces. A number of small shops are operating, street vendors are trying to sell their ware, while fishermen are under their booths organising their products, while fishnets are laying next to the stalls. A brown lantern fills the atmosphere with its light and ethereal tunes.

12:18

The train was running late. We left the flea market and the landscape quickly started to change again. The plain fields gave their way to a more wild and mountainous scenery. The estimated arrival time at the shelter is set at 12:20pm. I started talking with the passenger next to me who is also going to this centre as he is a botanist researcher. This will be his second time at the shelter. He talked about this place with the most alluring words. The wild animal shelter is located at a high altitude near the Arcadian village of Elaiochori, anyone can easily gaze the view towards the plain fields and inhale fresh air. As we are approaching our destination the surface of the intervention appears, which looks like a rock, placed on a steep slope, the shelter seems almost inaccessible.

12:25

Two passengers are waiting to board the train. The beauty of the landscape is very intriguing and unique. I cannot wait to explore this place! From a distance, this stop seems a lot like the last one. It is huge! This time, the train did not enter the patio. The train platform, is just under the cantilevered wing of the shelter. The cliff is very steep. A big stone staircase leads to the intervention.

13:18

The first sign of life as one climbs up the stairs is the reception hall where an old lady helped me settle in my room. Soon after settling in the room I went back to the reception. She handed me a paper with all the scheduled activities of the centre throughout the day. This program is for one week only, as it changes on a weekly basis... After having a look at the things I could, I headed back to my room, as I was awfully tired. The view from my bed is stunning! The Arcadian valley is laying in front of my eyes. I am sure the sunsets from here, will be an unforgettable experience. Hawks and eagles are flying nearby... just outside my window. The whole environment is filled by the wild presence of wild flora, aromatic herbs and flowers.

20.06.1964

21:03

Two weeks passed by very quickly. Time flies! I just realized, I have not written all this period. I met a lot of interesting people during my stay here. From scientists, working on analysis and research programs, to lonely travelers, who chose the shel-

ter as a place of isolation and peace. This space is tempting, like an earthly paradise. I could really get used to it... Although, I must not get distracted. I should continue my trip! I have a long way to Patras and I feel like I need to rest for a while. At 12:20 I heard the sound of the train coming towards the platform.

12:45

As soon as I boarded the train, the controller was waiting at the door to issue the passenger's tickets. My next planned stop is Kalamata, an important port along the journey. The train ride will last 3 hours... I took this time as an opportunity to explore the interiors of the train. Different wagons were joined together: The locomotive, the restaurant, the first class wagon with the separated compartments, the economy wagon which seemed much more like a luxury living room and the dining-bar wagon. There, some people were having lunch while others were drinking a beverage at the bar. After grabbing a quick bite, I soon turned to my seat. Most of my fellow passengers were absorbed into their conversations, while the gramophone was filling the entire room with blissful melodies.

14:59

As we were approaching Kalamata, the door of my wagon opened up and as I looked up I recognized the figure of my classmate Guillame. A feeling of joy surrounded me as I was greeting him. We soon began to talk about the purpose of our trips, as he had no idea what my business here was. He always loved to travel, and especially to Greece. This was his third time in the country. He urged me to follow him to an agrotourism habitat where he would spend some time. He told me that this place is located a few miles away from Kalamatas port. Having no fixed plan in my mind, his words convinced me to follow him in his adventures.

16:02

Our long talk, lasted hours. We soon arrived at our destination. The intervention complex, had the same typology as the flea market and the shelter. The large patio encloses part of the surrounding landscape as I noticed in the previous stops as well. The aura of this habitat stroke me as quite, friendly and very warm. Around the train platform, the big courtyard was filled with olive trees, gardens and vineyards. The character of this intervention reminded me of the Cascinas, I visited last year in Florence. Looking around, some people were cultivating the fields while others were looking after the crops and the animals which lived inside this enclosed space. If one word could describe this place, this would be: calmness.

18:34

As we were walking towards the reception, a woman burst out of her hanged white sheets. She introduced herself to us. Her name was Amphithea and we soon discovered that she was the person who is running the place. She led us to our apartment which contained two large bedrooms, a reading space, a bathroom, the kitchen and a spacious living room which faced the olive trees outside the intervention. She informed us about several things that were taking place during the day. The rule of this habitat was one: Both locals and travelers can stay for free, as long as they are willing to help on a daily basis with the cultivation of the land in and out of this habitat. The products of this hard work, are used by the residents of this intervention or they are distributed to local markets in the nearby city of Kalamata. This small community seemed very organized. Depending on the season the cultivation of the land was different. Apart from the work that needed to be done, there are a number of activities that happen in the evening hours, in the communal spaces of the habitat.

10.07.1964

21:03

I have lost the count of days. The time here passes by so quickly. Even though farming is a demanding preoccupation, everyone is having so much fun. I feel more and more attached to this place. The daily routine of the people is more carefree and everyone is really enjoying themselves... I have stayed for too long. Almost a month. It is time for me to go. As I feel ready for my next stop I am pretty sure I will miss a whole bunch of stuff that happen around this place. The bookclub, "Livas" cinema club and the small but always crowded tavern of "Gregos". Although I knew Guillame since my childhood, we never truly had the opportunity to get to know each other. During the last days we developed a strong friendship, through our common work and effort. Unfortunately, Guillame has to leave soon for Italy, so we decided to catch the morning train. To be honest, I have no idea where this trip will lead me next...

11.07.1964

15:00

We quickly packed our bags as the train was set to depart at 15:35. As usual I was running late, for no good reason. Since I woke up, I have this unsettling feeling. My daily routine here passed very joyfully. I will miss this place very much. That's why I made a promise to myself and my friends here to come back very soon... We handed the keys to Amphithea and then we left for the train platform. She warmly said goodbye and gave us a few goods for the trip to thank us for all the hard work we did during the past weeks.

17:01

I left Guillame in the lounge wagon as I was thirsty for a beverage. I moved to the dining car which consists of a series of wooden tables and a small bar at the end. Here, some people are having snacks while others are standing in front of the bar. The whole atmosphere has a luxurious but unpretentious aura, with wooden furniture, porcelain dishes and small alabaster lamps which enrich the quality of lighting inside the wagon. Outside the window, the plain fields of the inner land quickly gave their way to the shoreline of the Ionian Sea. On my right side, the mountain peaks, form a beautiful skyline while on the left, the sea seems like a never-ending blue veil. The train, now, is passing through Kagiapas where the sea and the lake are separated by a thin piece of land. As I looked outside the window, the view of a great white wall appeared. The long closed wall seemed familiar, as its presence, did not differ from the past three interventions I came across, during my journey. As we approached, the train entered the large space. In the patio, the strongest element is the abundant vegetation, which dominates over the architectural qualities of the building. The rich fauna, and the water elements, are evident in the surrounding landscape. I couldn't help but think of this: Like the previous interventions, the main purpose of the large patio is to entrap the different landscapes of the Peloponnese. The scenery drastically changes from place to place, but the typology of each intervention remains the same. Although the perimetrical wall gives the impression of a unity, the complexity and the program of each intervention, is completely different. The entire courtyard, despite its natural variety, appears as a complex but organized system. Along the courtyard tall imperious trees and climbing plants form a blended scene, while in the middle, a grid of low shrubs and herb plants work as an intermediate element which balance the roughness of the landscape. Dunes and running water complete the setting, creating a buffer zone between the sea and the lake. Some people in this

enclosed and mystical world, are walking along the shrubs and the trees while some others are emerging from the vapors of the hot springs in the semi open-air spaces of the complex. Perimetrically, there are a series of spaces ranging from swimming areas and tea rooms, to rows of well-trimmed vegetation and greenhouses. The nature is urging to penetrate the internal spaces of the built form, and leave its stigma to the intervention. It is as if nature is trying to create an enigmatic setting between the occupant and the building itself.

17:06

As the train departs, I see a young woman dressed in white, handing towels to the bathers. She looks like a nymph! The environment of this intervention is like a movie set, which comes to life, like a fairytale. For some reason the whole atmosphere is refined by a strong feminine element. I don't know why. Everything is green, running water echoes in the background, while the human figures seem to haunt the space, quietly enjoying the tranquility of the setting. Every aspect of this space seems tempting, like a strange world, full of desires and temptations. My mind drifts! I should continue with my trip! I have a long way to Patras and I feel a growing need to rest for a while.

20:15

Three hours passed in a glimpse of an eye. The glimmering lights of Patras appeared from the distance, like stars in the night sky. However, the stillness of the night was interrupted by the familiar sound of the controller. In a short message, he announced to us that the train will have to stay overnight in the station, due to a mechanical issue. The departure from Patras had to be postponed for the morning. Passengers, continuing their trip will be able to stay overnight in the sleeping wagons of the train. An extra set of sleeping compartments will be added to the train once we reach the city.

20:40

A lot of passengers disembarked. A few of us were led by the staff into our sleeping compartments. The rooms are small but seem quite comfortable for two people. This space only contains two folded bunk beds, a bed side table and a tiny bathroom. However, I am in no mood for sleeping! As feel fresh from my nap and I have plenty of time to kill. I think I am going to take a walk around the city...

12.07.1964

02:19

I just came back from my city tour. Patras is a fantastic city. The scale of this urban centre appears very different from any other town or village I have visited during this trip. The train station is just right by the city port which is also located fairly close to the city's centre. Once I stepped out of the train I took the opportunity to walk along the big seafront. There, I watched fishermen leaving for their usual night fishing, while taverns and traditional cafes were full of people, drinking, eating and listening to the melodic sounds of greek music. The St. George Square is very impressive, with its imposing neoclassical buildings which create an effortless unity. Everything is refined and harmoniously organized in this architectural ensemble. The municipal theater, designed by Ziller, dominates the scene, proudly standing as a landmark of this quite spectacular square. In the background, on the top of the hill, the ancient acropolis stands like a guardian, over watching the city, night and day. During my long walk, I had the chance to take a lot of photographs. People, architecture, music. In one sentence: The joy of everyday life. Unfortunately, soon enough, fatigue took

a toll on me. I soon realized I had to return to the station, and use as much sleeping time as I could get. The train would depart in a few hours.

08:50

I heard the voice of the controller who announced that the train will be departing in 20 minutes. Before leaving France, I took with me some letters my mother left to me. In her memoirs, she was writing about her childhood experiences, here in Greece. Places, her parents used to take her during their summer holidays and people she met. In these scripts, I came across the name of, Derveni. Derveni is a village, not very far from Patras. As I was gathering my thoughts, the voice of the controller shouted the following stops: Psathopyrgos, Aighion, Diakopto, Nekyia(museum), Derveni... Nekyia. The name sounds familiar. I have read about Nekyia, in the Homeric epic: Odyssey. It is the world of the dead. But why is this station named after this specific scene?

09:10

The train now departs. The scenery is changing again, as the train speeds just by the coastline. The average velocity of the train must be around 80 kilometers per hour. Although speed is irrelevant. Being inside the wagon, I feel like the world outside is totally different. Standing still in my seat, I watch the landscape moving like picture frames, giving life to the world that lays in front of me... I decided to find some information about Nekyia. At this stop, I will find the fifth intervention. It is a museum. A museum of memory. I decided to stop there. I want to continue my trip and visit this museum. After that, I hope I can proceed to Derveni to see the place where my mother used to spend her childhood's summers... Looking around, the train now seems more crowded than ever. This must be due to the delay in Patras. The railway company decided to take action and add an extra wagon for the passengers' convenience.

09:30

The Gulf of Patras, is the protagonist of the landscape. Mountains, sea and a lot of green, blend with one another, to create a picture of harmony. In the horizon the sea meets the sky. The mountains seem to mark an in-between zone, creating a delicate filter. The opposite shore is now clearly visible. This is where Central Greece lays... I started wondering: How much have I missed? All these years, I could not have imagined that a place like this could exist...

10:30

We just left behind us, Diakopto's station. Diakopto gathers all the great qualities of the small villages I had met along my trip. As I was examining the map I discovered that a narrower gauge starts from this station and leads to Kalavryta, a town in the mountainous east-central part of the regional unit of Achaea. That's where Guillaume disembarked. I wholeheartedly greeted him and we made a mutual promise: to meet again in Paris...

11:00

I am standing in front of the platform. The train is ready to depart. There is no clear sign of a museum in front me as this time the train did not go through a large patio. The only clear sign of a place is a large ramp and a staircase which lead to an underground level. The transition from light to dark becomes more and more apparent as I am descending into the ground. The wall is cold!

11:02

A bright light in the background, indicates the reception area. In this subterranean building, time seems irrelevant. Once I reached the reception's threshold I stood in front of the bright patio. Although the morphology of this intervention did not differ from the previous ones, the feeling was completely different. Large openings enable the daylight to pierce through the roof. The rocky seafront, is trapped within this double wall. In the distance the sea, seems to pierce through a big opening, enabling the connection with the open sea beyond.

18:04

Seven hours passed by. I found some time to sit and write in the big library. I let my self get lost in this meandering interior, loosing the track of time. It seems that this museum isn't like any other museums I've ever visited. There are no exhibits. The building itself is the exhibit. Engravings, documents, photographs, antique objects and printed materials float in the spaciousness of the vast space, reflecting the collective memory of the landscape. Soft music playing and the sounds of pacing steps echo throughout the premises. People are gathering in the larger areas, while others choose to isolate in the auxiliary rooms around. Reading spots, service areas and points where one can gaze the view, complete the program. Only small openings in the walls allow the visitor a few glimpses towards the external environment. The intention is clear. The visitors' attention is turned deliberately inwards. The big courtyard, captures the landscape, underlining its natural beauty, like a precious ornament. Large rocks, plenty of sunlight and trees create a rough but breathtaking scenery. The main spaces of the museum succeed one another, depending on the era exhibited in each space and the thematic category. The landscape becomes the background, transforming the aura of the museum into a blended scene composed by different elements. I am lost in my thoughts! I need to snap out of it and move on...

15.07.1964

11:04

After spending a few days in Derveni, I found myself once more standing in front of the station, waiting to hear the familiar whistle of the locomotive.

11:10

The voice of the controller starts to announce the next stops once more: Xylokaastro, Kiato, Corinth, Megara, Eleusis, Athens and finally Piraeus. I know this trip is coming to an end. I am not ready to go yet...The way back to Athens seems very long. The wagon is fairly crowded. Some passengers are chatting while others are gazing out of their windows. Among them, the familiar figure of a woman sits at the end of the wagon. She is the woman I saw at the thermal baths of Kagiafas as the train was departing. This is not a coincidence, I should introduce myself! I have to seize this opportunity as my time in this train counts backwards.

11:40

Our conversation flows very naturally. She will stop at the naval station before Megara and take the boat to Hydra as this is her hometown. She told me that she will visit her parents there for two weeks before she returns to her usual routine. I feel guilty. Why? I lied to her, saying that my destination is the same. Maybe that's an excuse. I really want to spend a few days here before heading back to Paris..

The coastal route is now receding as the narrow strip of Corinth's Isthmus can be seen in the horizon. After a few kilometers, before the train reaches Megara, a horizontal strip of line, runs parallel to the sea of the Saronic gulf. This strip sits on a group of rocks which protect it from the waves of the open sea. Something unusual is happening though. The train, has entered the rail tracks which float on the sea. There is no way out nor an alternative choice. In a few meters I can see the last intervention. It appears as a solid rock, emerged from the sea bed. Secluded and isolated, it stands like a lighthouse, forgotten in time. The rail tracks seem to lead in a dead-end. But that's not the case. The line tracks stop, after the train has entered large courtyard opening. The line transforms into a platform, and at the end it concludes, becoming a port for small boats and ships. The large patio is filled with water and the perimetrical wall consists of a number of spaces ranging from resting points and pick-nick areas to vegetation strips. I can't quite figure out what is the use of this place... Is it a station? Is it a port? Does it matter, though? I stand on this platform, watching small boats getting ready to welcome the passengers who are waiting to get on board. Big openings in the facade, allow small boats to enter the intervention's interior space. In the surrounding areas, people can spend a few time as the train is set to stop here for about 30 minutes or so. Passengers, can stay, return or travel to other islands of the Saronic Gulf and the Aegean Sea. One thought keeps coming back to my mind: I should continue my trip...

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

PELOPONNESE

The Peloponnese is one of the nine geographic departments of Greece. Located in the southern part of the mainland it is detached by a narrow strip of land, the Isthmus of Corinth, which was constructed in 1893. The Rio-Antirio, also, connects the city of Patras with central Greece since 2004.

The Peloponnese covers an area of 21,549.6 km² and constitutes the southernmost part of the country's mainland. The peninsula has a varying morphology, which is characterized by the mountainous interior and the extended coastal lines along its edge. The highest peak of this land is at 2,407 m above sea level, in Mount Taygetos. Peloponnese possesses four south-pointing peninsulas: the Mani Peninsula, the Messenian Peninsula, the Cape Malea Peninsula, and the Argolid Peninsula in the far northeast part of the Peloponnese.

The Ionian Islands to the west and the Argo-Saronic Islands to the east, form the two groups of islands that surround the Peloponnesian coastal line. The Peloponnese is divided administratively into seven provinces (Achaia, Messinia, Ilia, Arkadia, Argolida, Lakonia and Corinth, with a small part of it belonging to the prefecture of Attica).

RAILWAY

The railway line of the Peloponnese is inextricably linked with the history of Greece. Axis occupation, civil war, urbanism expansion, special models of agricultural production, financial issues, erroneous state policy and memorandums left their traces on the network, which subsequently had to seize all operations in 2011. Nowadays, only three small parts are in operation : Diakopto - Kalavryta (Odontotos Railway Track), Katakolo - Pyrgos - Olympia (Tourist Route), Agios Vasilios - Rio - Patra (Suburban Railway).

During its peak period, the network transported 1.740.000 passengers and 251.000 tons of merchandise per year. Covering a total distance of 750 km, the network consisted of 159 stations. It served major cities like: Athens, Megara, Eleusis, Loutra-ki, Corinth, Kiato, Diakopto, Aighion, Patras, Kalamata, Tripoli, Argos, Nauplia, Nemea. The railway was the transportation medium which contributed to the growth of the country. After extended discussions, dating back to 1835, the construction of two local rail lines finally started in 1882. However, the first construction phase only

covered 13 km, connecting Pyrgos with Katakolo. It was not until 1889, when the line Thision - Piraeus (Athens) was created. Charilaos Trikoupis, who served as the country's Prime Minister, between the years 1875 and 1895 wished for an extended rail network between major productive areas of the country. These lines would connect the main ports to the hinterland.

In 17.10.1882 Piraeus, Athens and Peloponnese Railway company (Σ.Π.Α.Π) is formed, which would undertake the construction and command over the network. The construction phases can be broken down to four different stages: Firstly, in 1885 the link between Athens and Corinth was completed. Secondly, in 1886 the connection between Argos, Nauplio and Myli was created and in 1887, the railway line reached Patras. In this way, Athens was finally linked with the major ports of the northern Attica and the Peloponnese. By 1904 the whole network was constructed and was ready to serve each connection.

For a long time, Peloponnese rail network had a major impact on the local communities of the inland. It served as the only vehicle of public transportation, while transferring the agricultural products along the route. It also functioned as a postal service provider until 1970. For some villages, until 1980 it was the only public transportation, i.e : Elaiochori, Arcadia.

Nowadays, a big part of the network is preserved in good condition, demonstrating the timeless forms of the public work's heritage designed by the engineers of the era. Characteristic stations of the 19th century which sometimes followed the neoclassical idiom of the epoch while sometimes the design of foreign engineers, was well adapted into the greek land. The architectural and historic value of some stations is so rich, that the Ministry of Culture declared all of them, as monuments of our heritage since 1895. Meanwhile, many discussions have been made, so that the section between Nauplia, Tripoli and Kalamata can also be protected as a monument.

ODYSSEY

The Odyssey is one of the two major ancient Greek poems by Homer. The first part is Iliad while the sequel is the Odyssey. It is the second oldest extant work of Western literature (Iliad is the oldest) and therefore it is described as a fundamental landmark among Western Literature's canon.

Odyssey, mainly focuses on Odysseus, and his journey back home after the fall of Troy. The return to Ithaca lasts for ten whole years after the end of the Trojan War. During Odysseus' absence, he is assumed dead. However, Penelope and Telemachus, his wife and son respectively, are forced to deal with a group of unruly suitors, the Mnesteres, who compete for Penelope's hand in marriage. Odyssey ends, when Odysseus proves his identity, slaughters the suitors and reclaims his throne in his palace.

Many scholars around the world believe that the original poem was spread orally and it is more likely that it presents a story, which is intended to be heard rather than read. Odyssey was written in a poetic dialect of Greek - a literary amalgam of Ionic, Aeolic and other ancient Greek dialects. The poem contains 12.110 lines of dactylic hexameters.

Some of the noteworthy elements of the text are: its non-linear plot as well as the influence on events and the choices made by women and slaves, besides the actions of the fighting men. Odyssey is subdivided into three main thematic sections: Tilemacheia, Nostos, Mnesterophonia. This word in the English language is used to describe an epic voyage.

The design thesis mainly focuses on Nostos, which is the second part of the homeric epic. The section refers to the return of Odysseus from Troy back to Ithaca through the reference of the scenes and the variety of adventures he had to deal with along the way.

The chronological order of the scenes in Nostos is:

Cicones, The Lotus Eaters, The Cyclops, Aeolus, The Laestrygonians, Circe, Nekyia (Underworld), Sirens, Scylla & Charibdis, Helios, Calypso, Phaeaians. These twelve

scenes compose the narrative of Nostos. However, in the design thesis and after the similarities between the following scenes, the narrative of each intervention is perceived as an alternative way, while the basis of the original scenes remains intact.

For the design thesis these twelve scenes of Nostos were studied and grouped into six. The selection of this grouping was made after the careful study in similarities between the thematic entities of each scene. For this matter, strong dipoles were taken in consideration, such as dark/light, lonely/populated, masculine/feminine etc.

Thematological grouping:

Cicones - Lotus Eaters, Cyclops - laestrygonians, Aeolus - Phaeaians, Circe - Calypso, Nekyia, Sirens - Scylla & Charybdis - Helios

DESIGN & STRATEGY

The design thesis studies the architectural quality of a duplicated model, each time located in a different contextual environment around the Peloponnese, in Greece. The six (6) proposed interventions are designed according to a specific model-rectangle with certain rules based on a regular grid. Each intervention proposes a different programme:

Intervention 1: Flea Market, Corinth [Valley]

Intervention 2: Wild Animal Shelter, Elaiochori, [Mountain]

Intervention 3: Agrotourism Habitat, Kalamata, [Valley]

Intervention 4: Thermal Baths & Aromatic Gardens, Kagiakas, [Seaside]

Intervention 5: Museum of Memory, Diakopto, [Underground, right by the sea]

Intervention 6: Naval Station, Megara, [Sea]

Although the the main design principles come from a certain model-rectangle, each intervention is modified depending on each settlement's needs. The interventions acquire their meaning and existence through the landscape they occupy. They are not conceived as buildings, but rather like interpretational devices, which study the landscape by the act of framing and sampling. They can be read like pauses, subtle interruptions in the continuity of the geomorphological environment.

Each intervention is a 95.25 meters square. The certain size was chosen for two main reasons:

- A standard train of the network is consisted by the locomotive wagon, three passenger cars and one merchant car. This specific train fits properly in each intervention, leaving a gap of 5 meters from the edges of the central courtyard.

- The second reason was the desire to free a sufficient space for the proper framing of the landscape.

The theoretical background of the thesis partly focuses on the decision to create entities with a specific and absolute form. In this way, it is worth mentioning Pier Vittorio Aureli's book "The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture".

As Aureli describes architecture only makes sense if it is a singular/finite object within the dimension of the city. By finite he describes the architects decision to a strong border of marking the edge between the external and internal environments. He studies various models through an interesting historical analysis beginning from the model of the greek polis and the temenos where the separation between the external and the internal is very evident. Although, Aureli writes about architecture in an urban context, my thesis takes a rather different road. Following his theory, each intervention works as a subtle interruption of the landscape which aims, through each internal courtyard, to highlight the contrasting environments around the Peloponnese. According to the needs of each location different openings are created in the facade to underline or to downplay the major elements around the intervention. Aureli uses the term as a form of a political act while the design thesis exploits the absolute form mainly as an interpretational device. Therefore, a main canon is set: A rectangle traps the changing landscapes of the Peloponnese.

The main guide on how to subtly differentiate each rectangle is mainly based on two factors: the location and the environmental needs. Another theory, which was studied during the analysis, is that of Peter Eisenman, who developed a theory among the New York Five. The former is a group that wished for an architecture without context. His most important study is that of the cube. By adding lines and cuts on the pure form of the cube he creates an independent style, starting from a seemingly simple approach.

PROGRAMME

The selection of each program is not a coincidence as each intervention draws its theme from the following: The history each area, as well as, the different scenes of Nostos. The main programme includes six interventions:

Intervention 1: Flea Market, Corinth, [Plain fields]

This intervention was inspired by the scenes of Cicones and the Lotus Eaters, where Odysseus' crew stopped for food supplies. Corinth was a city-state (polis) on the Isthmus of Corinth, which is the narrow stretch of land that joins the Peloponnese to the mainland of Greece. The new town of Corinth is located approximately 5 kilometers northeast of the ancient ruins. Systematic archaeological investigations, have been taking place since 1896 by the American School of Classical Studies of Athens. Their research has revealed large parts of the ancient city. Recent excavations conducted by the Greek Ministry of Culture have brought to light important new facets of antiquity, such as the ancient agora, temples, fountains, arcades etc.

The agora in ancient Greece was the center of the ancient city: A large, open square where citizens could gather for a variety of purposes. The space was used for different reasons ranging from marketplaces to cultural, social and religious activities.

Intervention 2: Wild Animal Shelter, Elaiochori, [Mountain]

This intervention draws its aura from the scenes of Cyclops and the Laestrygonians as read in the Homeric epic of Odyssey. Both scenes are described, as being located on rocky and steep terrains. Seclusion, is their main element. In the same way, Elaiochori is a mountain village in Arcadia. Arcadia is well known for its mountainous landscapes and its very rich nature. According to Greek mythology, Arcadia was the domain of Pan, a virgin of the wilderness. A home and fort of the God, where the court of dryads, nymphs and other spirits of nature live. It is worth mentioning that since 1970 the only public transportation of Elaiochori was through the train, so it can be assumed that it is a quite secluded area. The nature of this land varies, with unique types of vegetation. Lake Take is considered a prime ecosystem, which a very rich fauna and flora. Important species of reptiles, amphibians, mammals and migratory birds live around the area. All this nature offers a wide range of activities throughout the year such as rafting, hiking, mountain climbing.

Intervention 3: Agrotourism Habitat, Kalamata, [Plain fields]

The scene is inspired by the stories and the hospitality of Aeolus and the Phaeaians during Odysseus' trip. Kalamata is the second largest city of the Peloponnese and the largest city of the Messenian administrative region. This region became one of the most important ports in the Mediterranean sea. Kalamata has the second largest population and mercantile activity in the Peloponnese. It exports important goods and especially local products, such as olive oil, olives and raisins.

The strong relationship between exporting and distributing local products, led me to the decision of proposing an agrotourism habitat. Agrotourism brings the visitor closer to nature through daily activities. In addition, it is a great chance to get to know the traditional cuisine and the local products firsthand. The selected site area was carefully chosen located in between Kalamata's airport and the urban centre. In this landscape olive trees dominate the picture. The greatest thing about agrotourism is the fact that each visitor participates in the farm life. In this way he or she goes beyond the simple traveling experience, acquiring a strong motive to return to tradition through simple activities. This immediate, personal relationship between people and the land is the strongest element of this type of tourism.

Intervention 4: Thermal Baths & Aromatic Gardens, Kagiakas, [Seaside]

Inspired by the scenes of Circe and Calypso, the thermal baths are located in the area of Kaiakas. The thermal springs of the area are well known since ancient times and they include two main springs, Anigrades Nymphes and Geranio or Atlantis Nymphes. They flow from caves of the Lapitha's mountain, where the myth has it, that nymphs lived. The systematic operation and exploitation of the therapeutic qualities of the springs, began when the railway line opened and Kaiakas became easily accessible. The Kaiakas Thermal Springs operates from the beginning of June until the end of October while the proposed thermal baths operate throughout the whole year in order to attract more visitors.

Intervention 5: Museum of Memory, Diakopto, [Partly underground - partly besides the water]

Located a few kilometers outside of Patras, Diakopto becomes the place where the Museum of Memory is nestled, mainly underground. This decision was taken, after studying one of the scenes of the homeric epic and especially Nekyia. Nekyia represents the underworld, where Odysseus travels to Hades in order to search the information he needs from the dead prophet, Tiresias. The proposal revolves around the design of a Museum of Memory, where one may find archives, material and information from different eras. Its specific location was chosen so that it could be close to the biggest city of the Peloponnese, Patras.

Intervention 6: Naval Station, Megara, [In Water]

The last intervention represents the dilemmas which Odysseus came to face, as described in three main scenes: the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis and Helios. The scenario ends in a naval station located in Megara, a few kilometers away from Athens. The dilemma is caused by the uncertainty that Kanenas feels about the next steps of his journey. He has the opportunity to continue or end his trip. Megara, is the town nearby, which is a historic town and a municipality in West Attica. It has two harbors: Pegae, to the west of the Corinthian Gulf and Nisaea, to the east of the Saronic Gulf and the Aegean Sea. The intervention faces the Saronic Gulf where one can easily access the islands of Aegina, Agistri, Hydra, Spetses, Spetsopoula, Kithyra, Antikithyra as well as the Aegean Sea.

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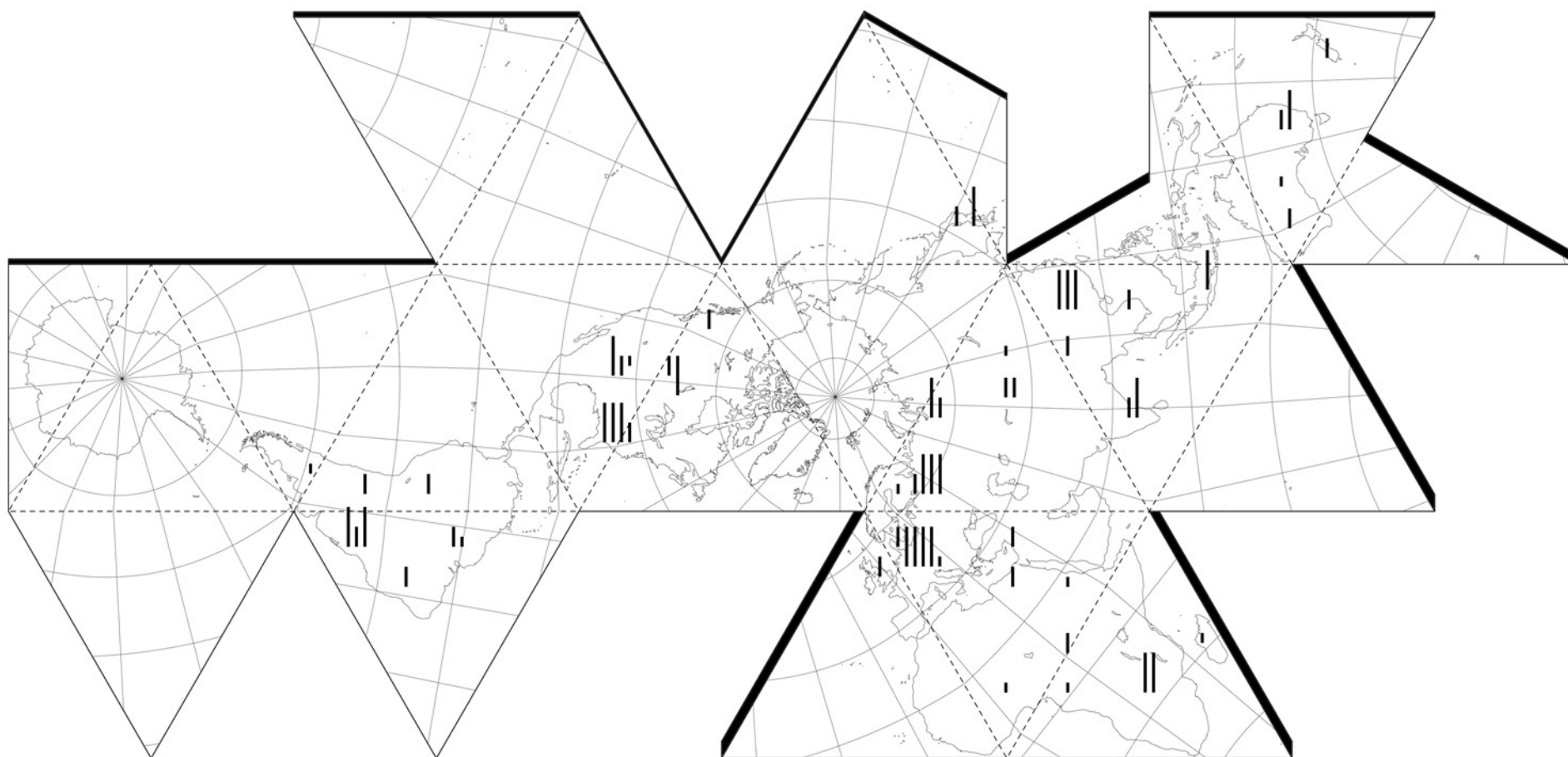
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Abandoned rail density network.







Chile - Argentina

Tren a Las Nubes
Salta - La polvorilla
1948-
1m narrow gauge
217 km



USA

Atchison - Topeka
and
Santa Fe Railway
1859-1996
1.435mm
standard gauge
21.107 km



Russia

Transpolar Mainline
Salekhard - Igarka
Railway
1947-1953
1.524 mm
board gauge
1.297 km



Greece

Peloponessus
1882-2011
1.000 mm
narrow gauge



Africa

Cairo - Cape Town
1832-1920
1.435 mm
standard gauge
6.400 km



Australia

Murwillumbah
railway line
1894-2004
1.435 mm
standard gauge

Legend

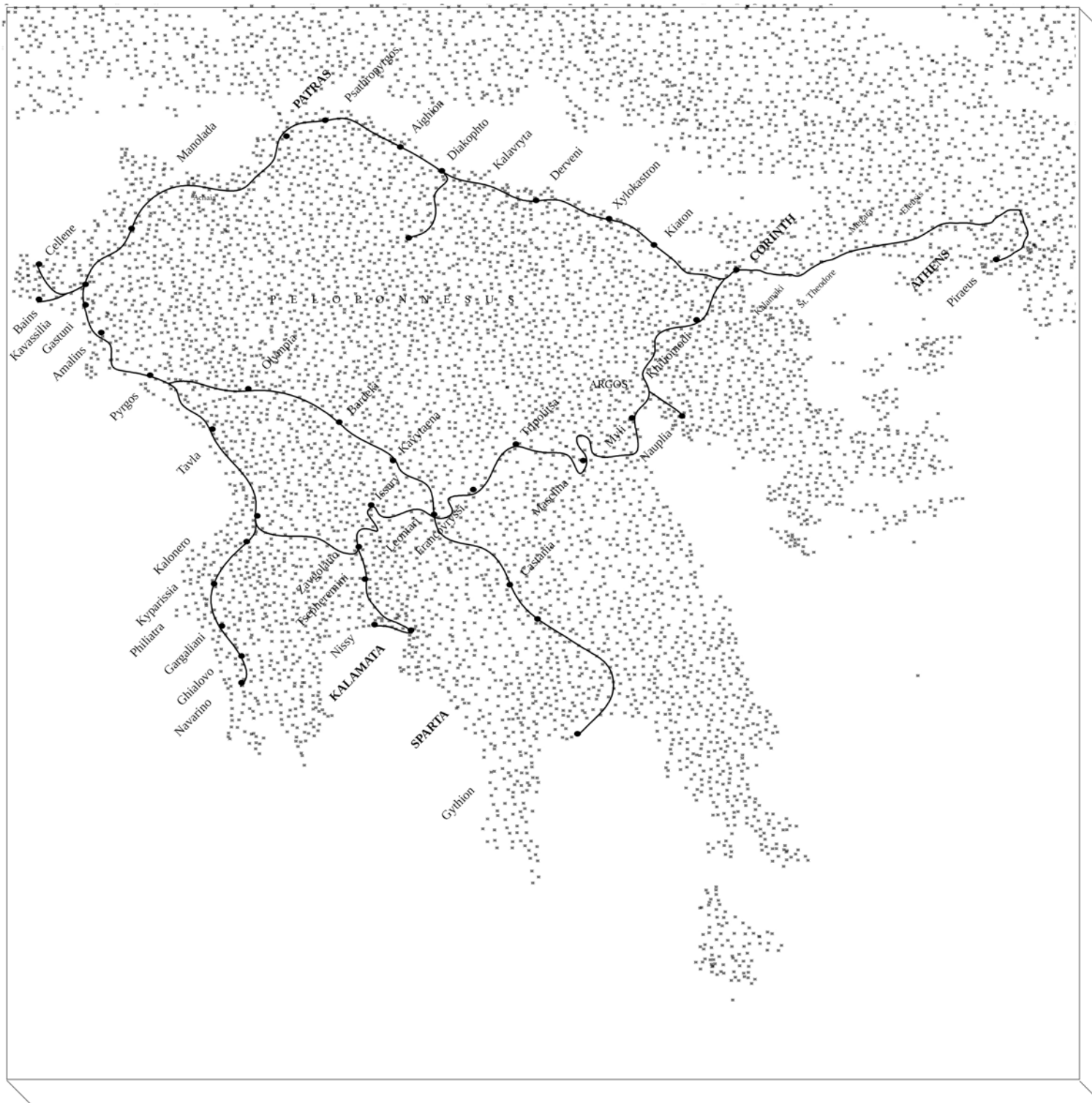
Country
Trainline name
Starting - Ending Point
Start of construction-seized operations
Train track width
Line span in kilometers



scale 1:50.000.000



Peloponnesse Railway Network.



0 10 30 60 km

I



1882-1885

Athens - Corinth

II



1886

Argos - Nauplio - Myli

III



1887

Corinth - Patras

IV



1890

Patras - Pyrgos

V



1892

Kalamata - Issary
Myli Tripolitsa

VI



1892

Kalamata - Issary
Myli Tripolitsa

VII



1899

Myli - Issary

VIII



1904

Pyrgos - Kalonero - Kyparissia

The development of the railway network.

I



II



III



IV



V



VI

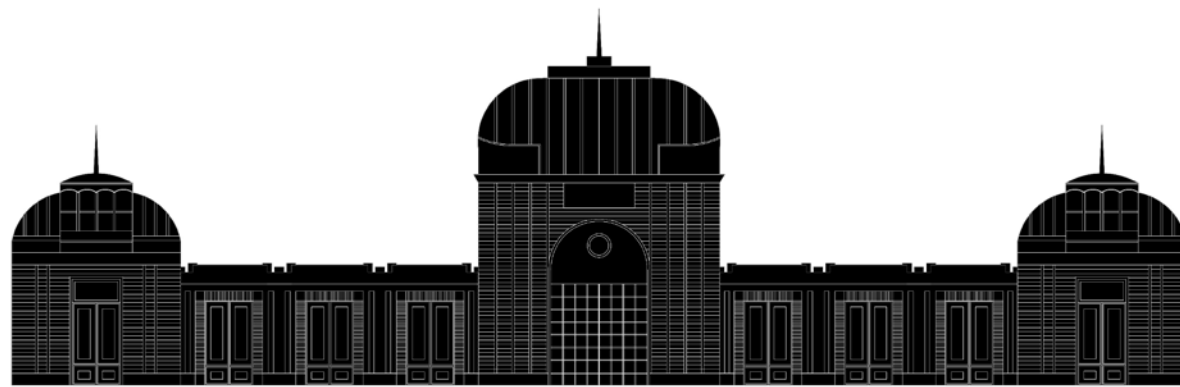


VII

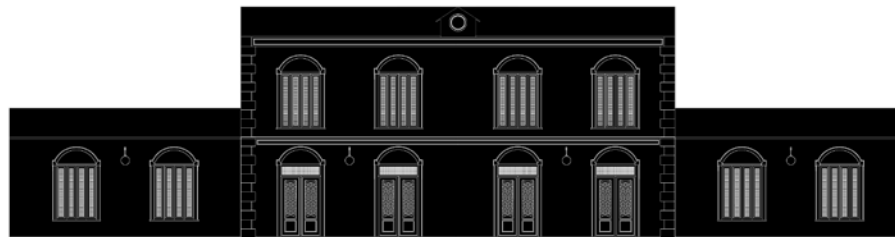


VIII





L A R I S S I S - A T H E N S



K A L A M A T A



P Y R G O S



P I R A E U S



A R G O S



T R I P O L I T S A



K A L A V R Y T A



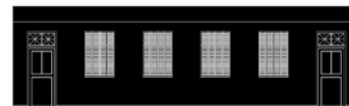
N A F P L I O N



S P A R T A



M I K I N A I



D E R V E N I



L E O N T A R I



B A I N S

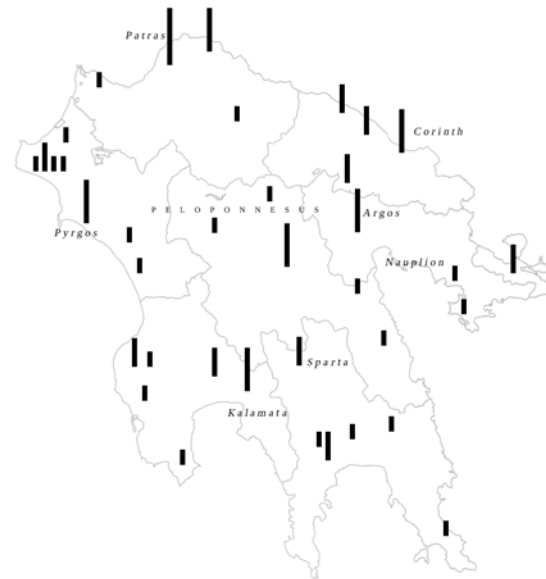
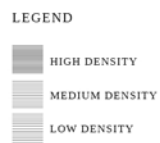
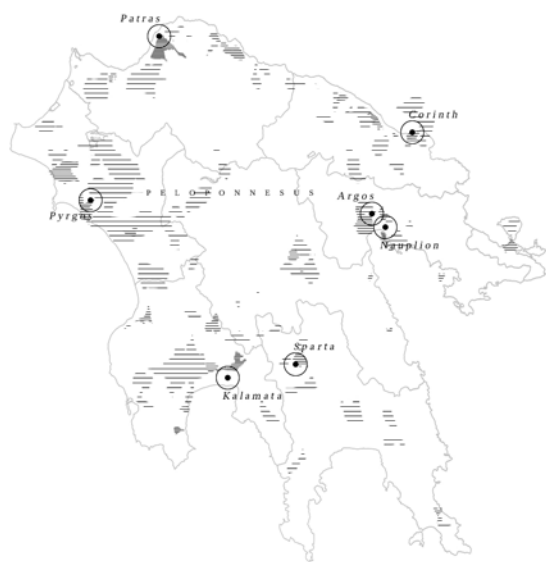
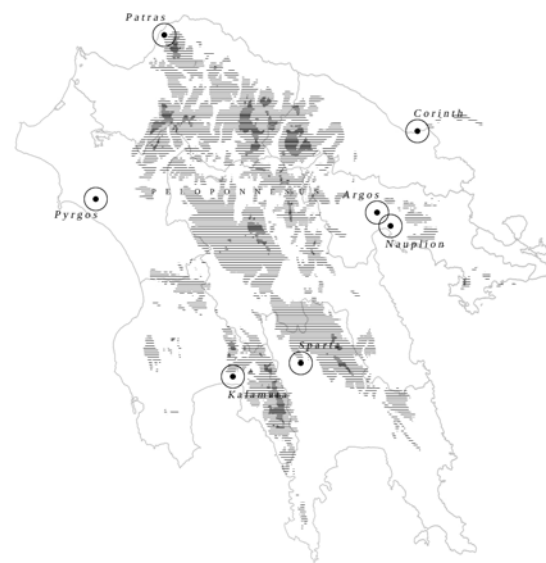
Typological study of existing train stations across the network.

Typological study of existing bridges.

Roadtrip.

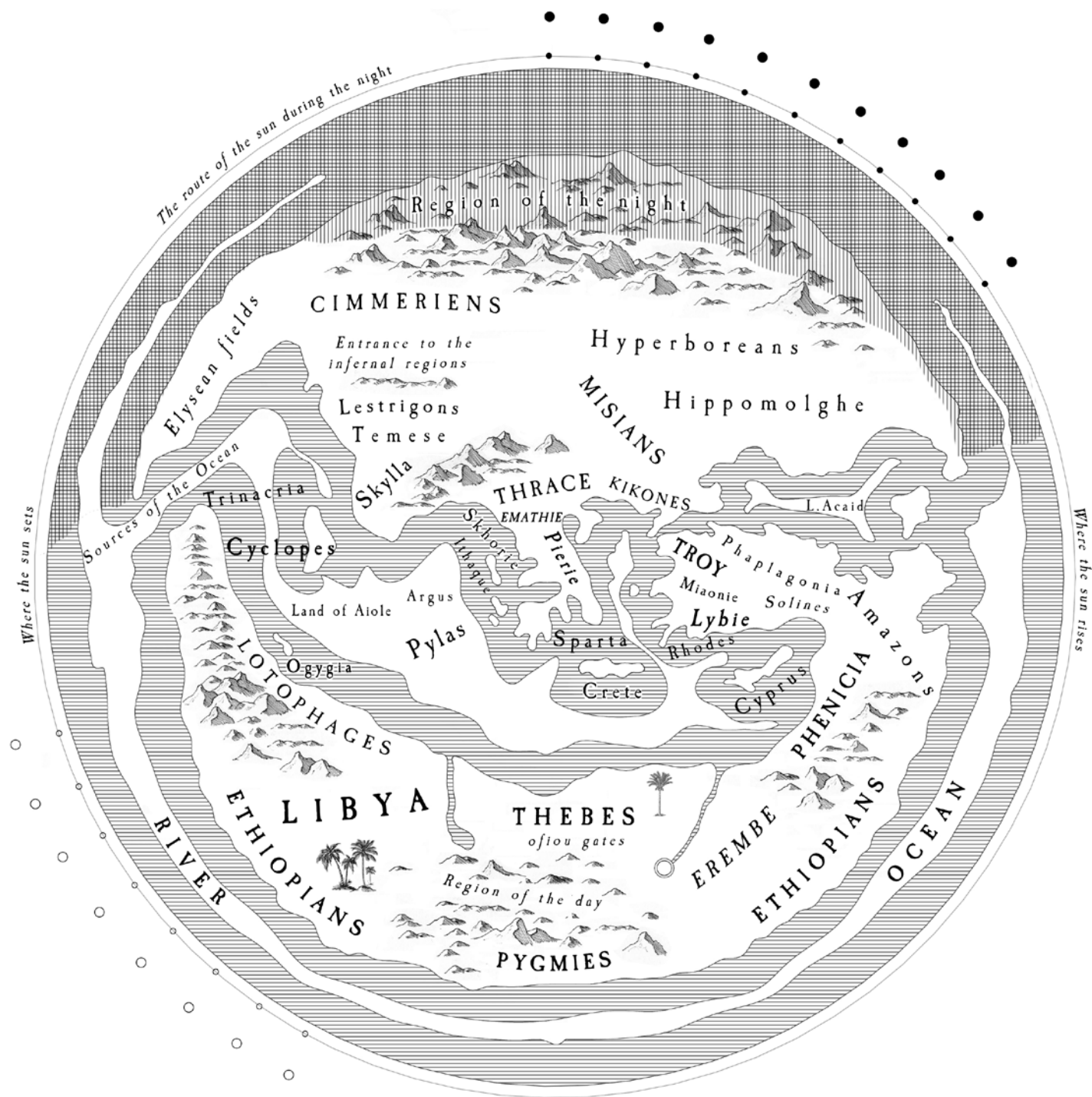


Peloponnesse's Dynamics.



Homeric Cosmogony

The World Map as people perceived it during the Homeric Period.





Cicones



Calypso



Phaeacians



Sirens



Lotus Eaters



Cyclops



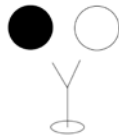
Aeolus



Circe



Hades



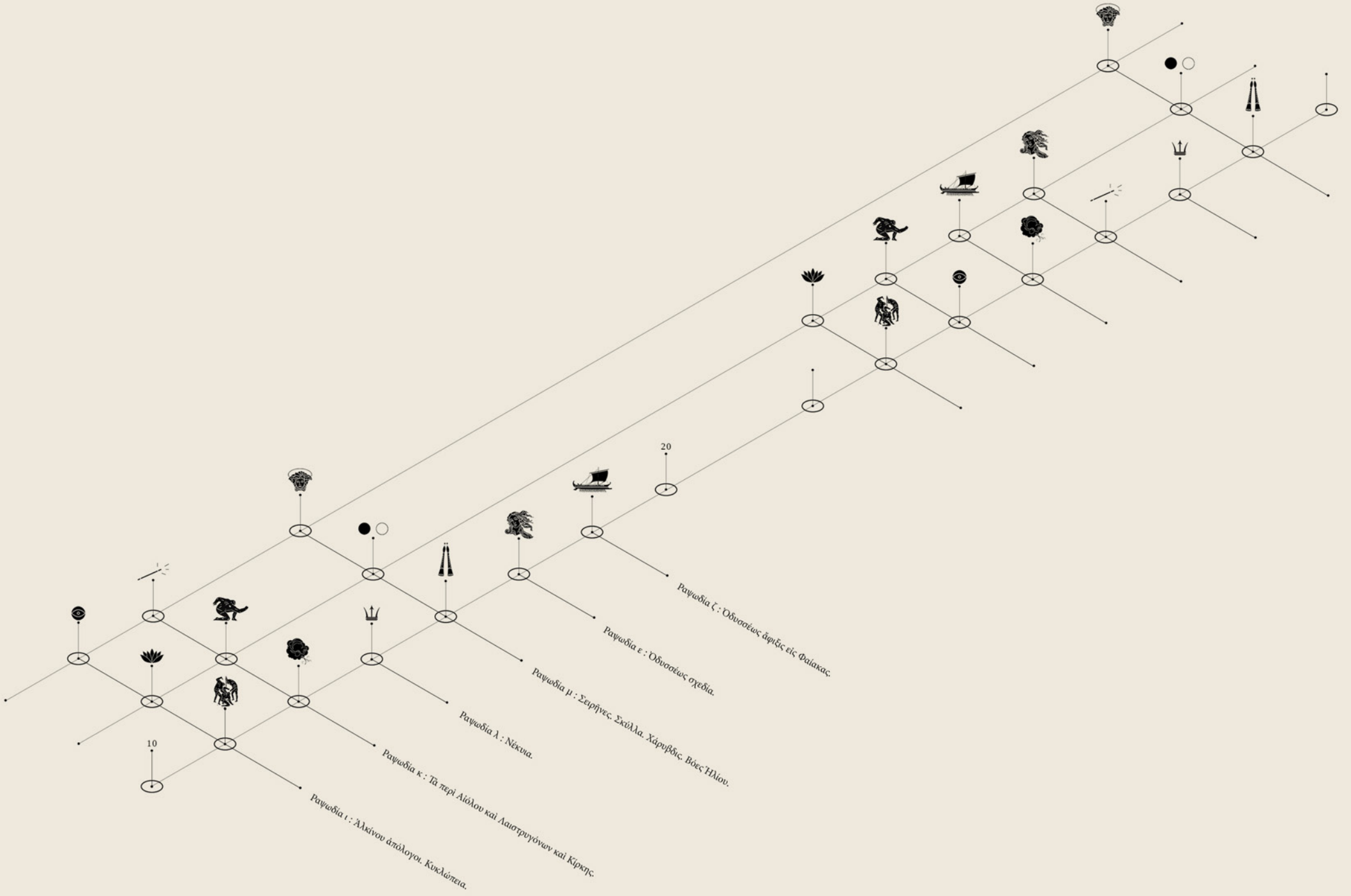
Scylla
Charybdis



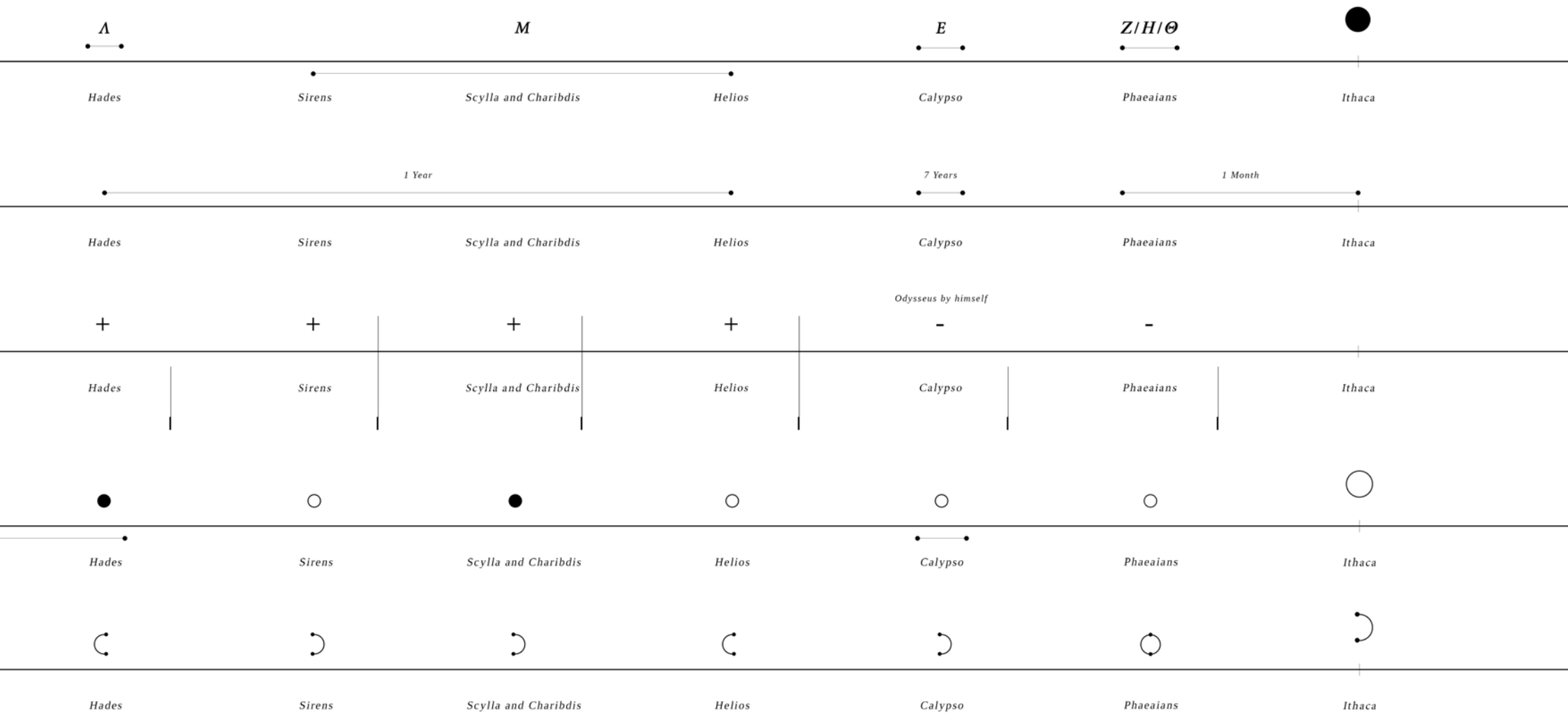
Laestrygonians



Helios









Cicones

Thomas Cole - *The Course of Empire Destruction*.



Lotus Eaters

Thomas Cole - *View on the Catskill-Early Autumn*.



Cyclops

III. J.M.W. Turner - *Ulysses Deriding Polyphemus*.



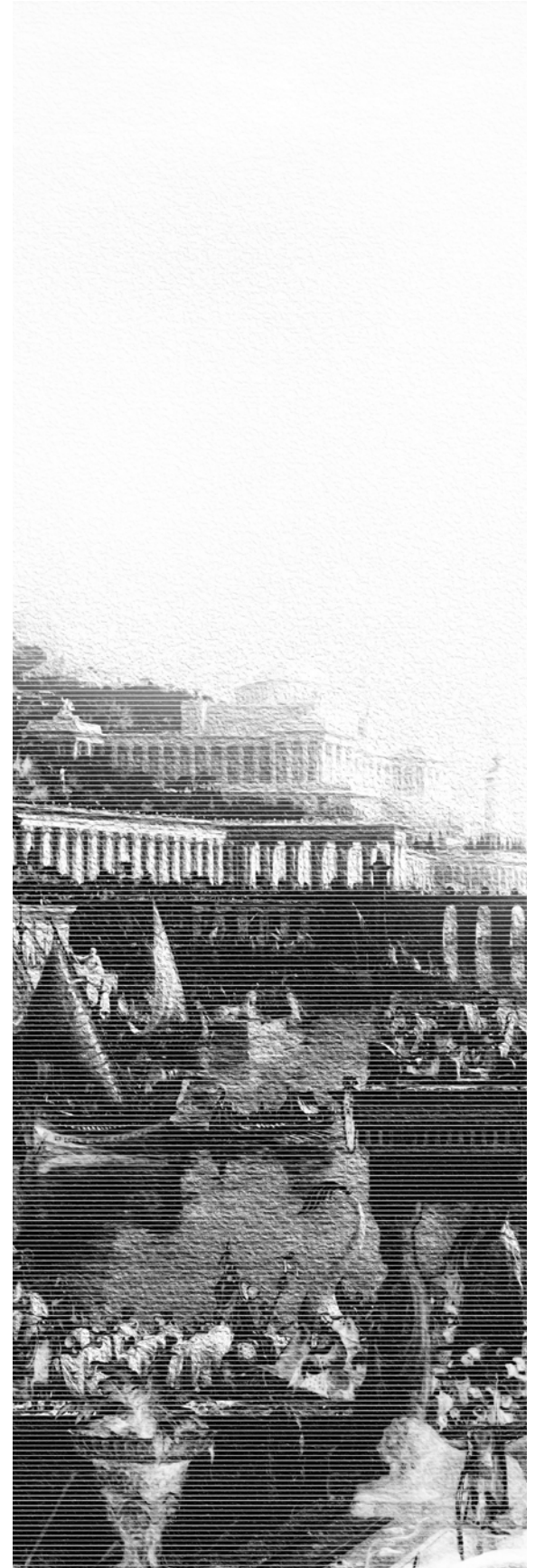
Laestrygones

Wijnand Nuijen - *Shipwreck off a Rocky Coast.*



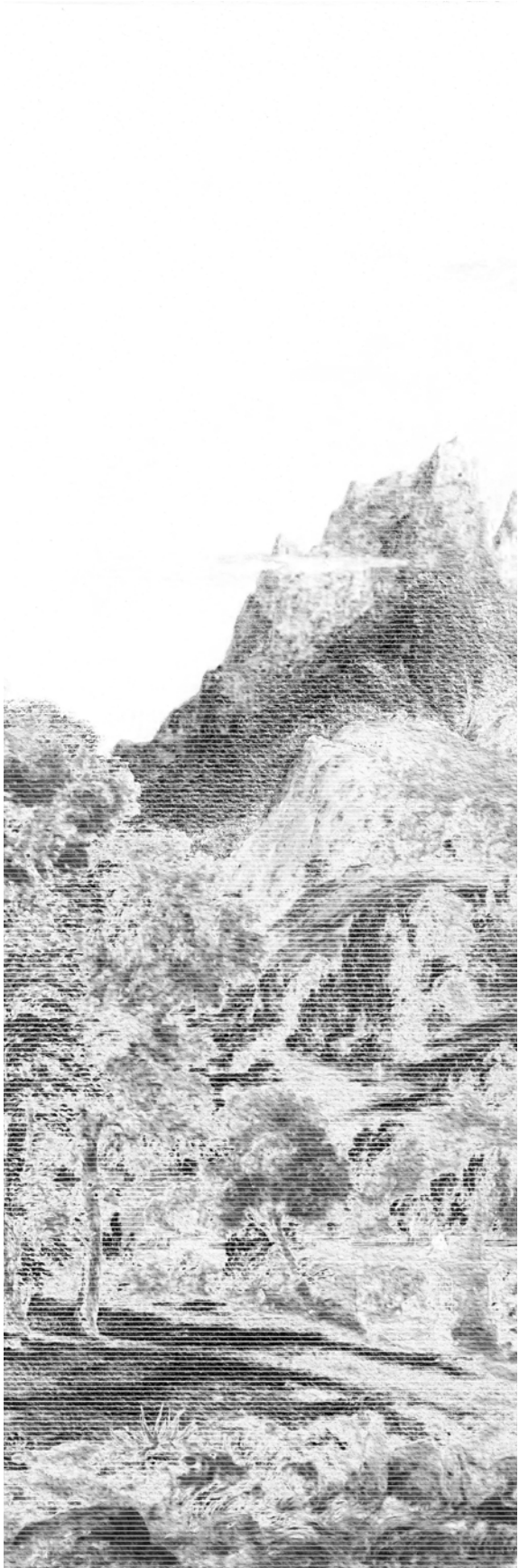
Aeolus

François Boucher - *The Birth and Triumph of Venus.*



Phaeacians

François Boucher - *Juno Asking Aeolus to Release the Winds.*



Circe

Thomas Cole - *Dream of Arcadia*.



Calypso

Henri Lehmann - *Calypso*.



Hades

Ivan Aivazovsky - *Tvanas*.



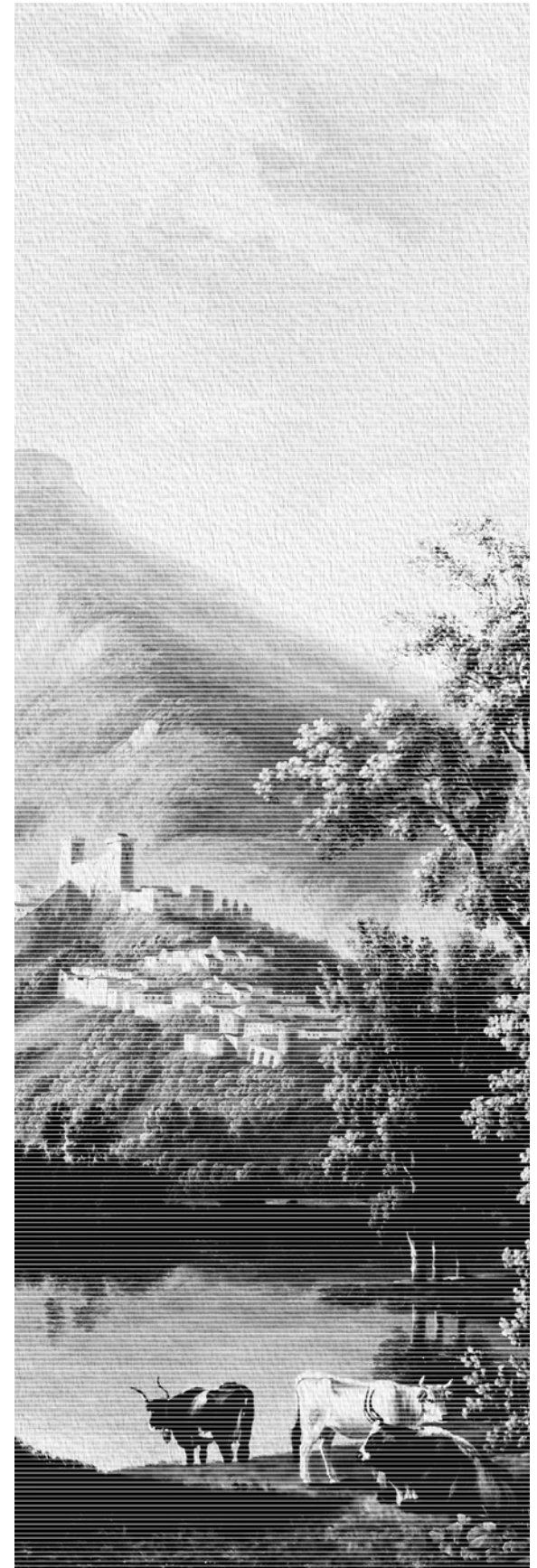
Sirens

J.M.W. Turner - *The Angel Standing in the Sun.*



Scylla and Charybdis

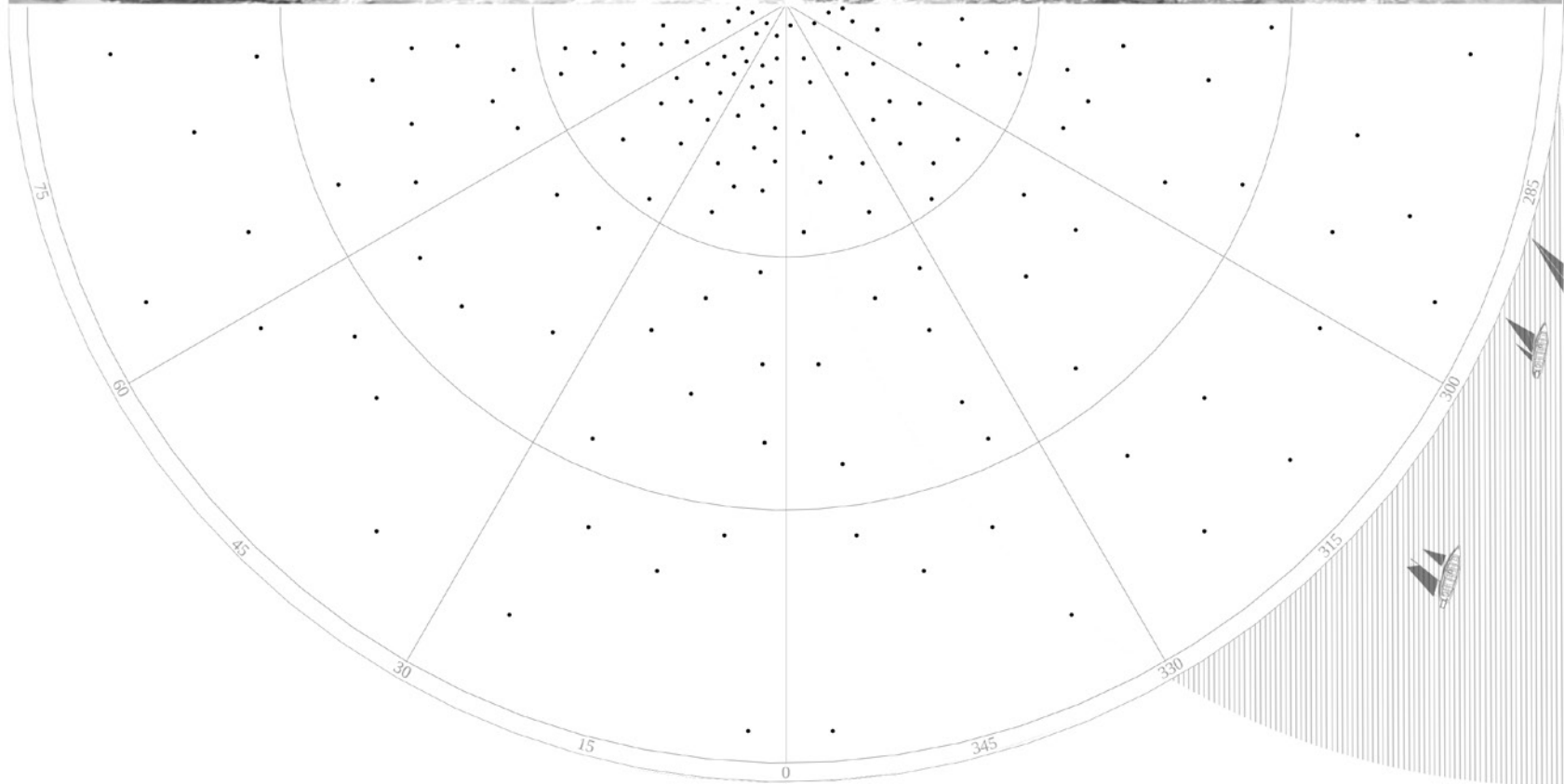
Théodore Géricault - *Le Radeau de la Méduse.*



Helios

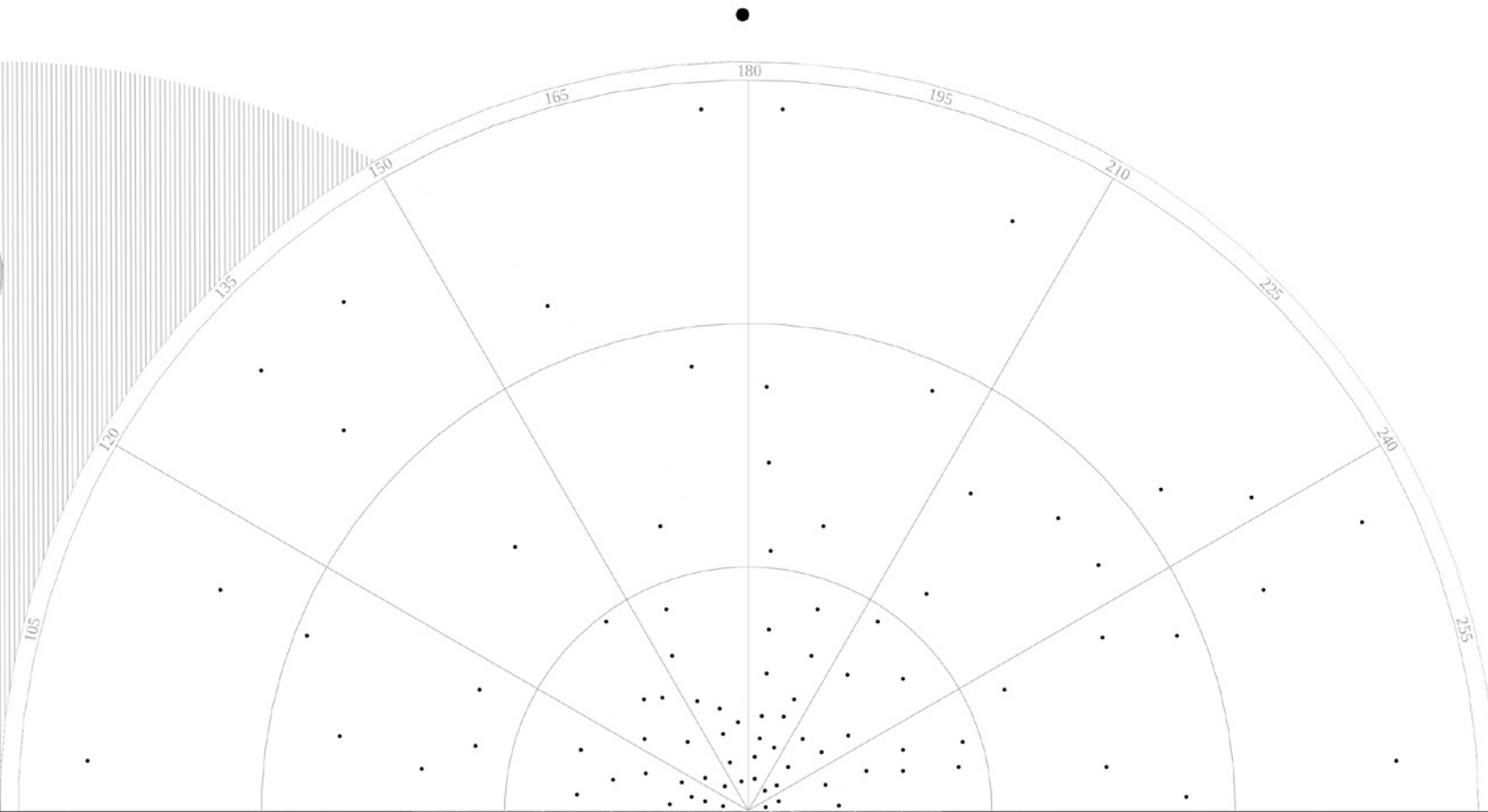
Jakob Philipp Hackert - *Veduta d'Itri.*

6 fatalities



Scylla

The whole crew



Charybdis

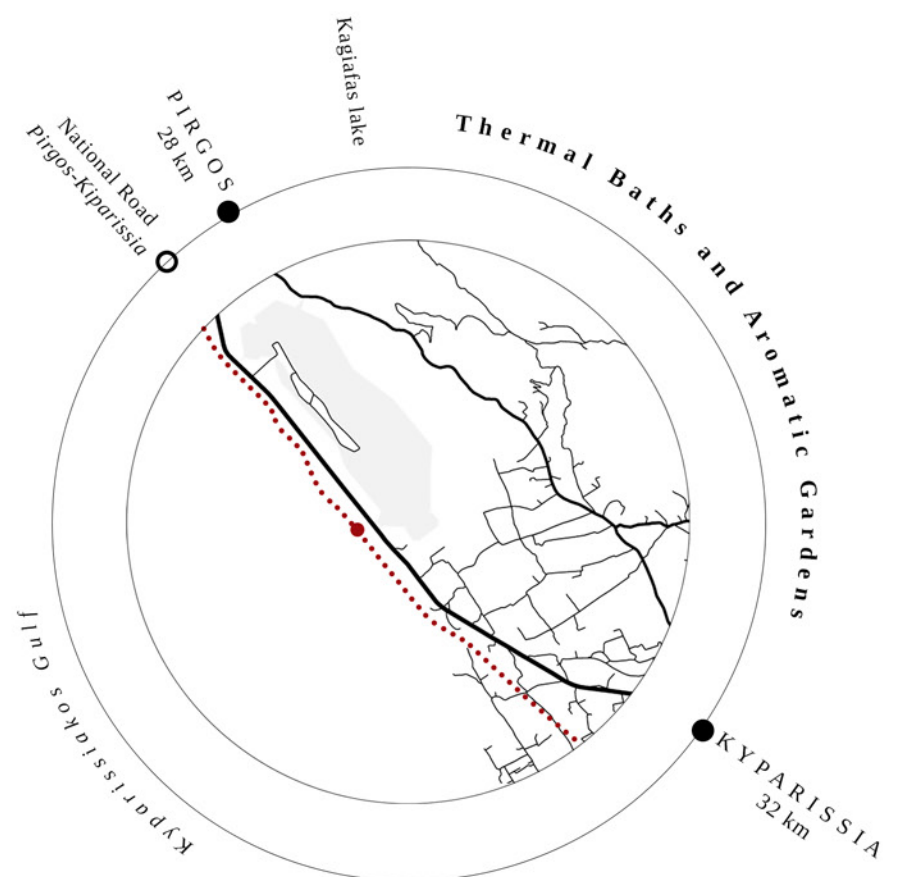
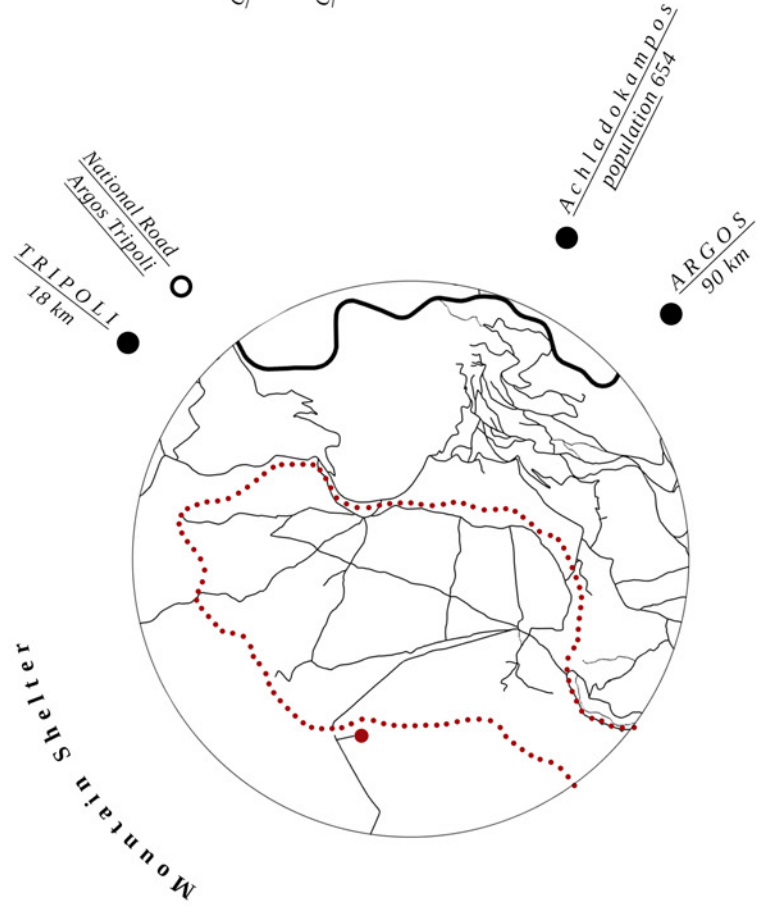
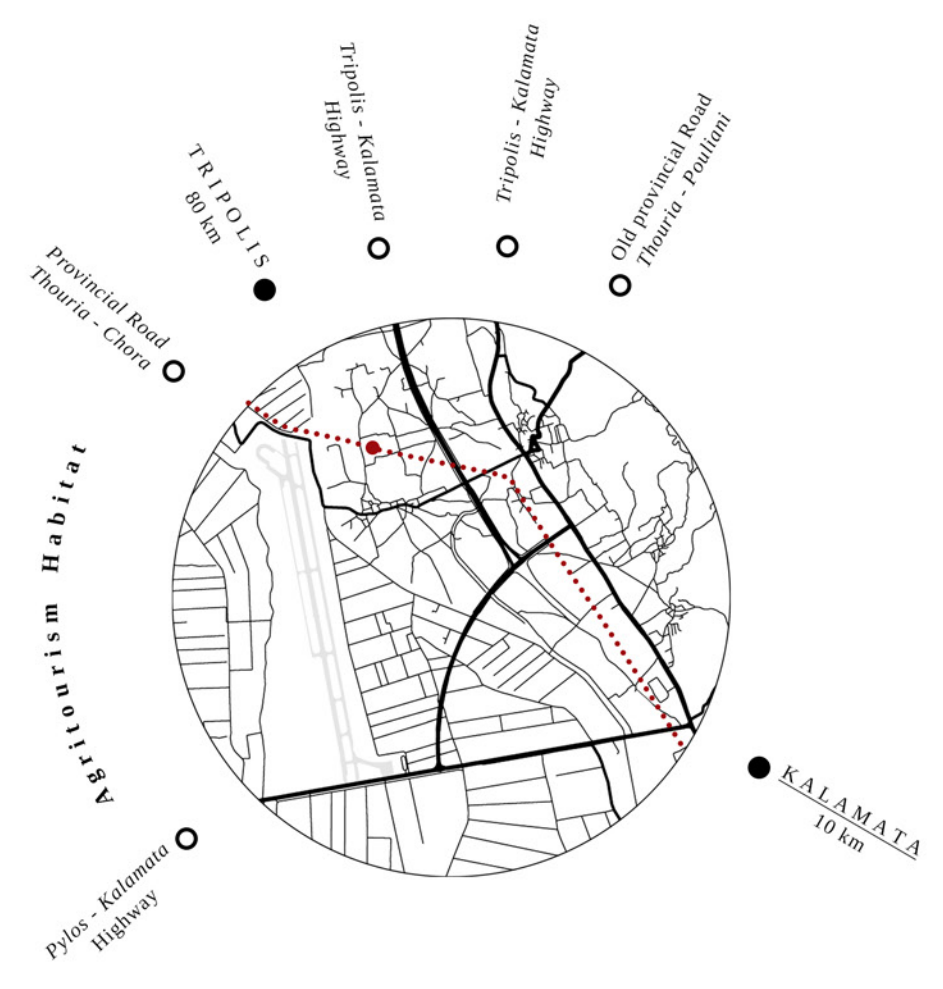
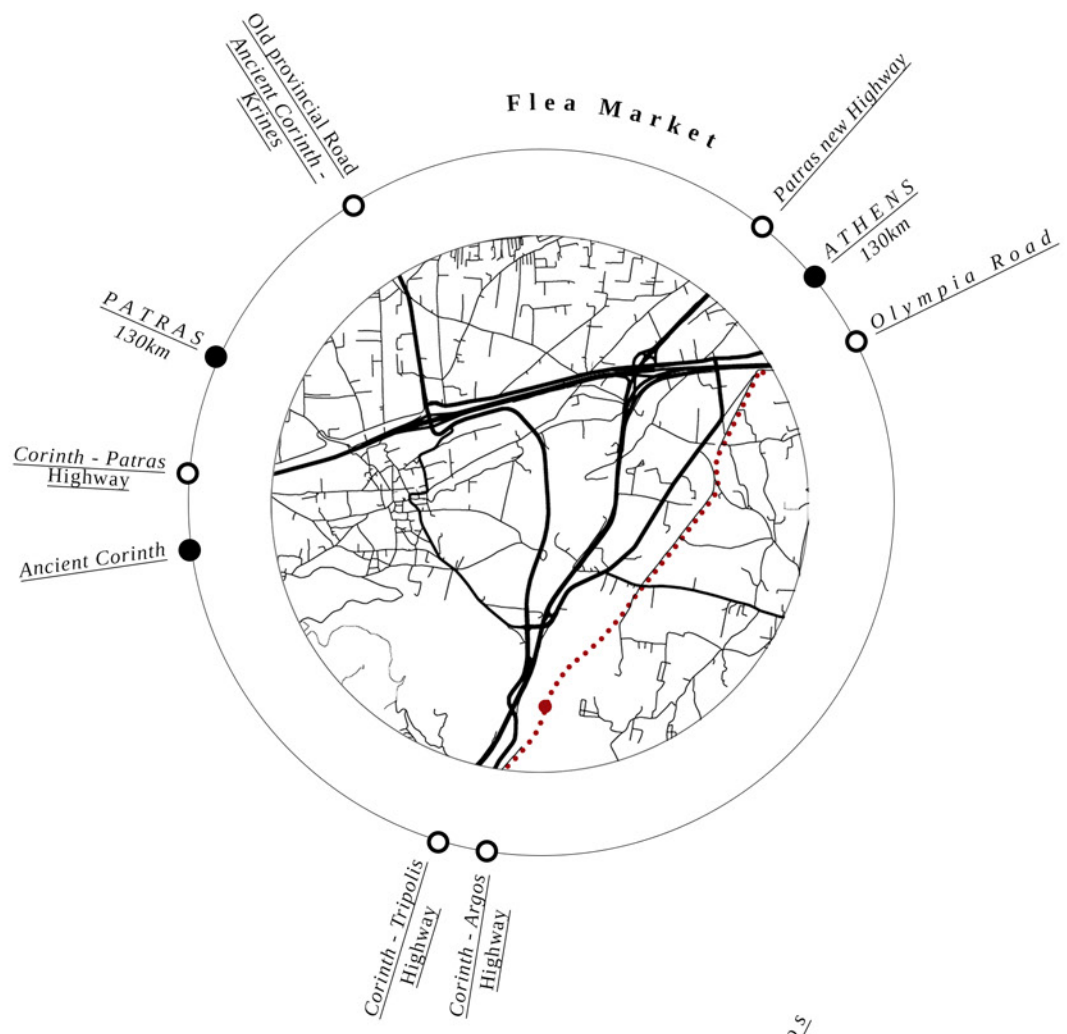


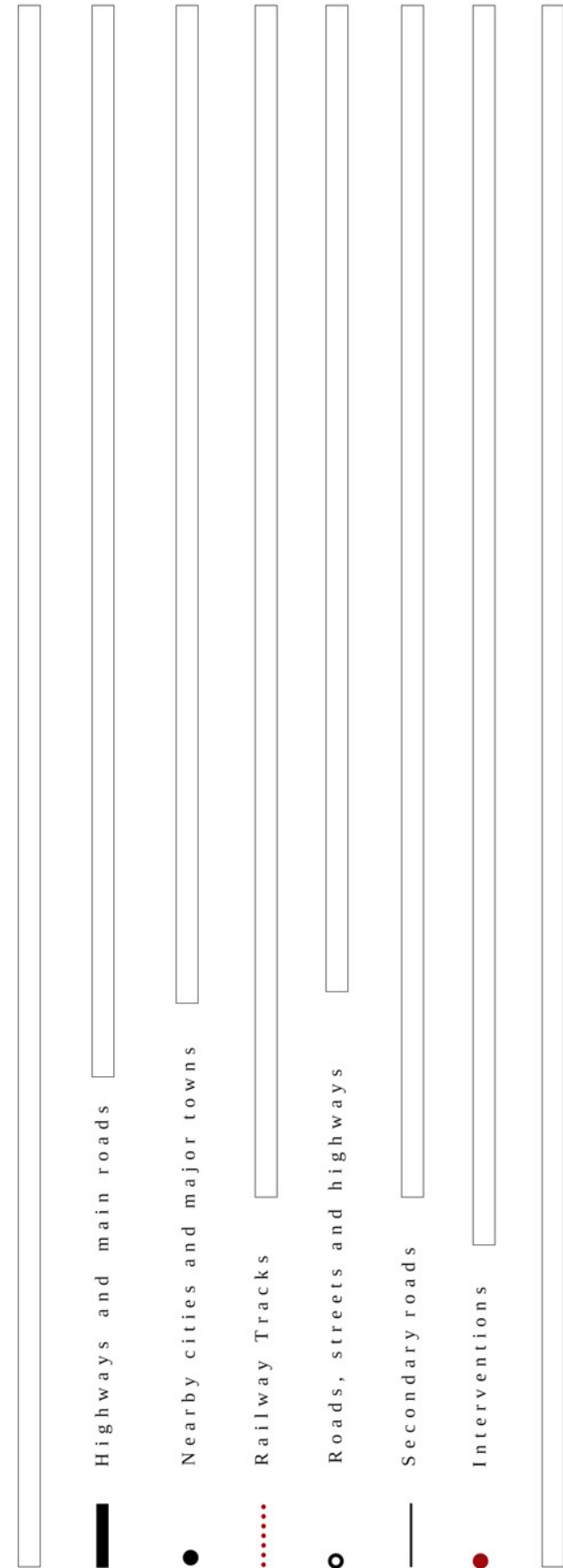
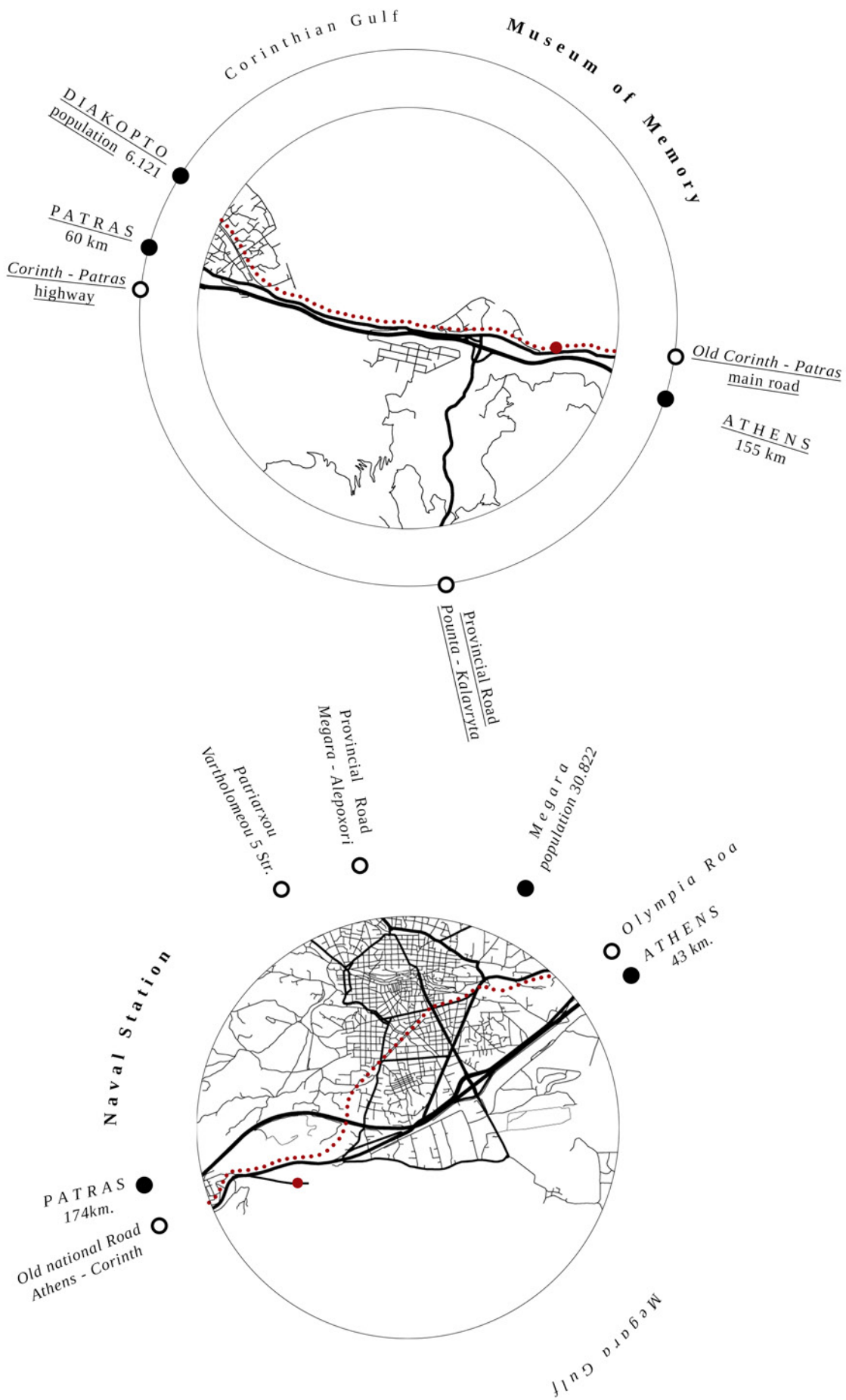
Strategic locations of proposed interventions.



0 10 30 60 km

A horizontal scale bar with tick marks at 0, 10, 30, and 60 kilometers. The bar is a simple line with short vertical segments at each tick mark.





Accessibility.

The design of the interventions is based on a modular concept with certain rules, based on a regular grid. The elements are analyzed below. Each intervention is seen as a double wall, which creates the internal spaces of the built environment. The thickness of the wall becomes the enclosure of life itself.

Axonometric view analysis:

I. Roof.

II. Column corridor.

The column corridor is the transitional point where the external spaces are distinguished from the internal.

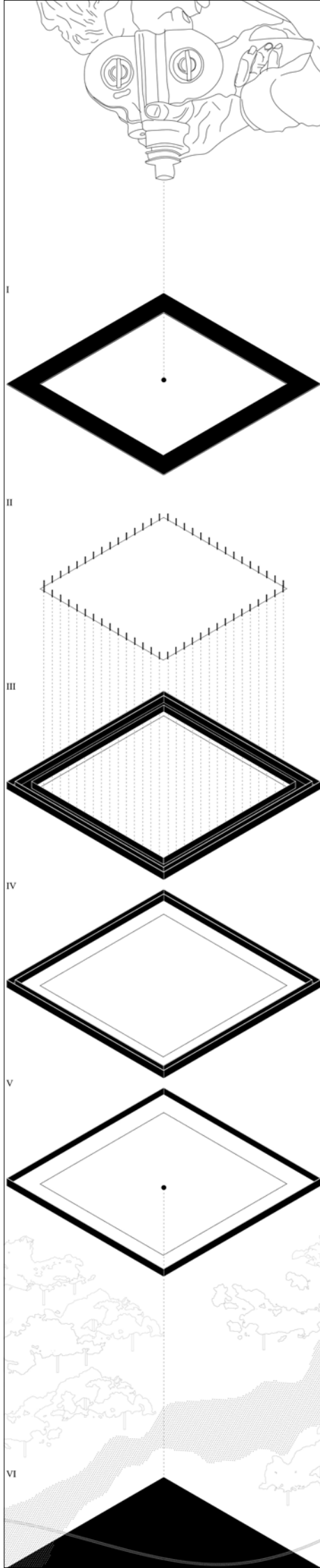
III. Auxiliary spaces.

IV. The void - Thickness of the wall.

The double wall forms a line which creates a boundary between the landscape and the built environment of each intervention.

V. Framing the surrounding landscape.

Each intervention is framing and sampling the chosen landscape. Each time the location changes creating a series of different contextual sceneries.

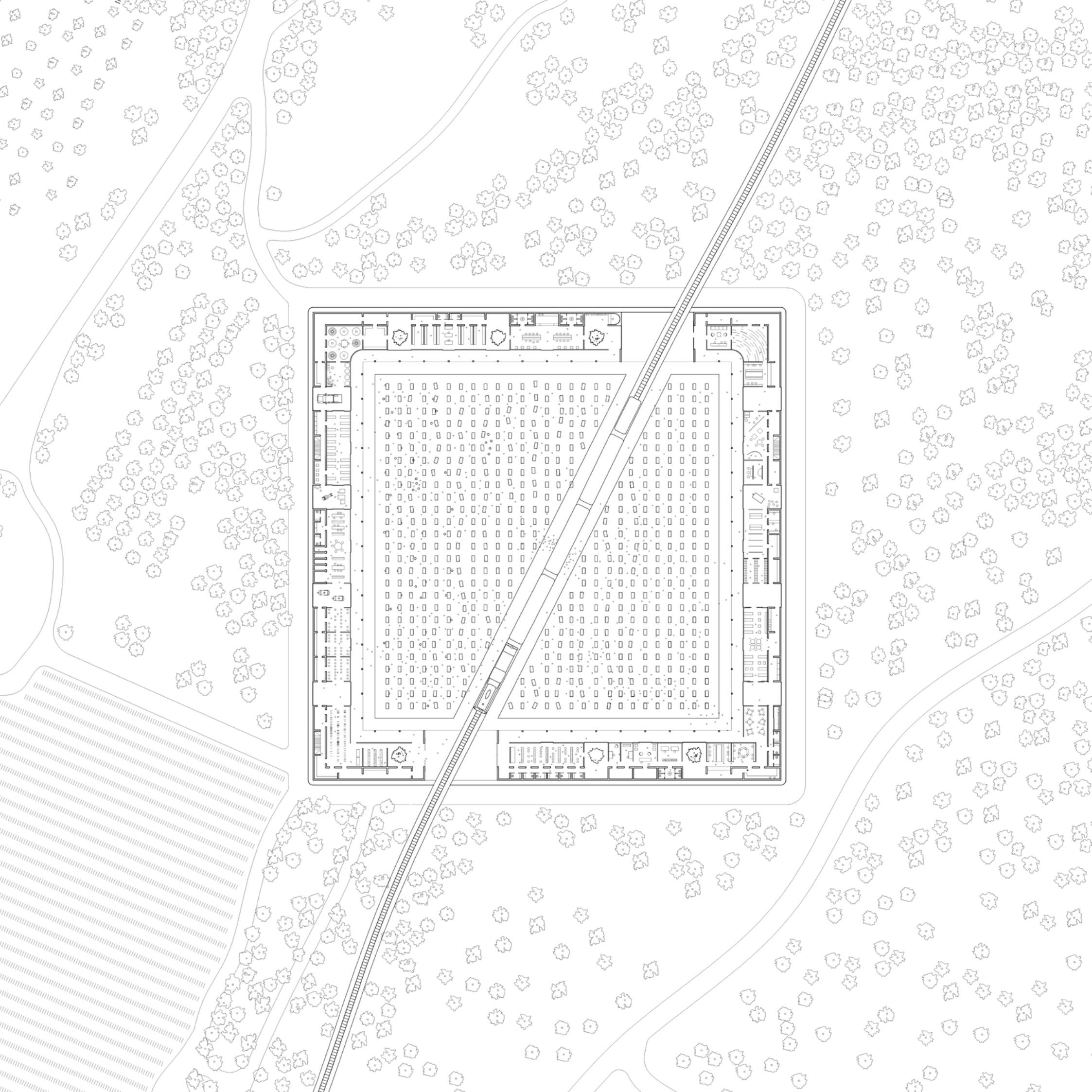


Flea Market.





Korinthos, Korinthia ■ **Coordinates** [37.890273, 22.898173] ■ **Scale** 1/750, Reading from top center to left following the spaces as one proceeds the other. **01.** Foyer I **02.** Traveler's leisure and resting area **03.** Restrooms **04.** Snack and refreshments point **05.** Transcript offices and administration center **06.** Restrooms **07.** Virgin oil storage areas **08.** Testing area and quality control **09.** Auxillary secondary space **10.** Fruits' and vegetables' benches **11.** Storage and packaging areas **13.** Conference room and library **14.** Individual reading areas **15.** Restrooms **16.** Herbs, oitments and oil selling point **17.** Shelves and boxing area **18.** Clothing shops **19.** Changings rooms **20.** Staircase **21.** Exhibition space **22.** Foyer II and entrace area **23.** Resting room **24.** Restrooms **25.** Employers' offices and ticket point **26.** Snack bar **27.** Commitee meeting table **28.** Restaurant **29.** Kitchen **30.** Cloak room **31.** Exhibition space and products selling point **32.** Secondary rooms **33.** Agricultural tips and infos and tasting spaces **34.** Private study spaces **35.** Permanent product collections and conference tables **36.** Nuts and small brewery **37.** Smaller projection rooms **38.** Coffee place **39.** Seed selling point **40.** Foyer III and sittin area **40.** Large Market Area.



Cross Section.

Scale 1:500



The Flea Market as one approaches it from the highway.

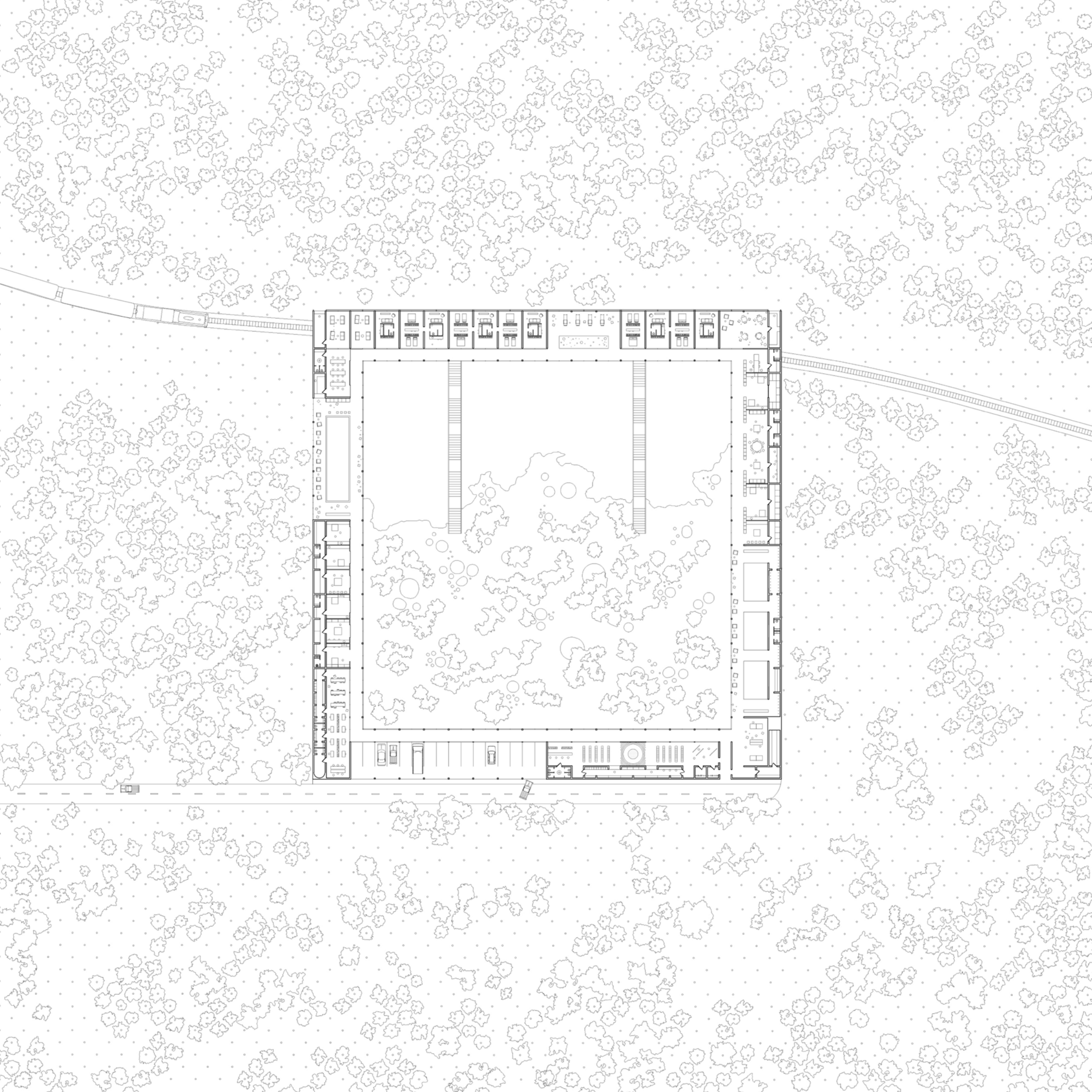


Mountain Shelter.



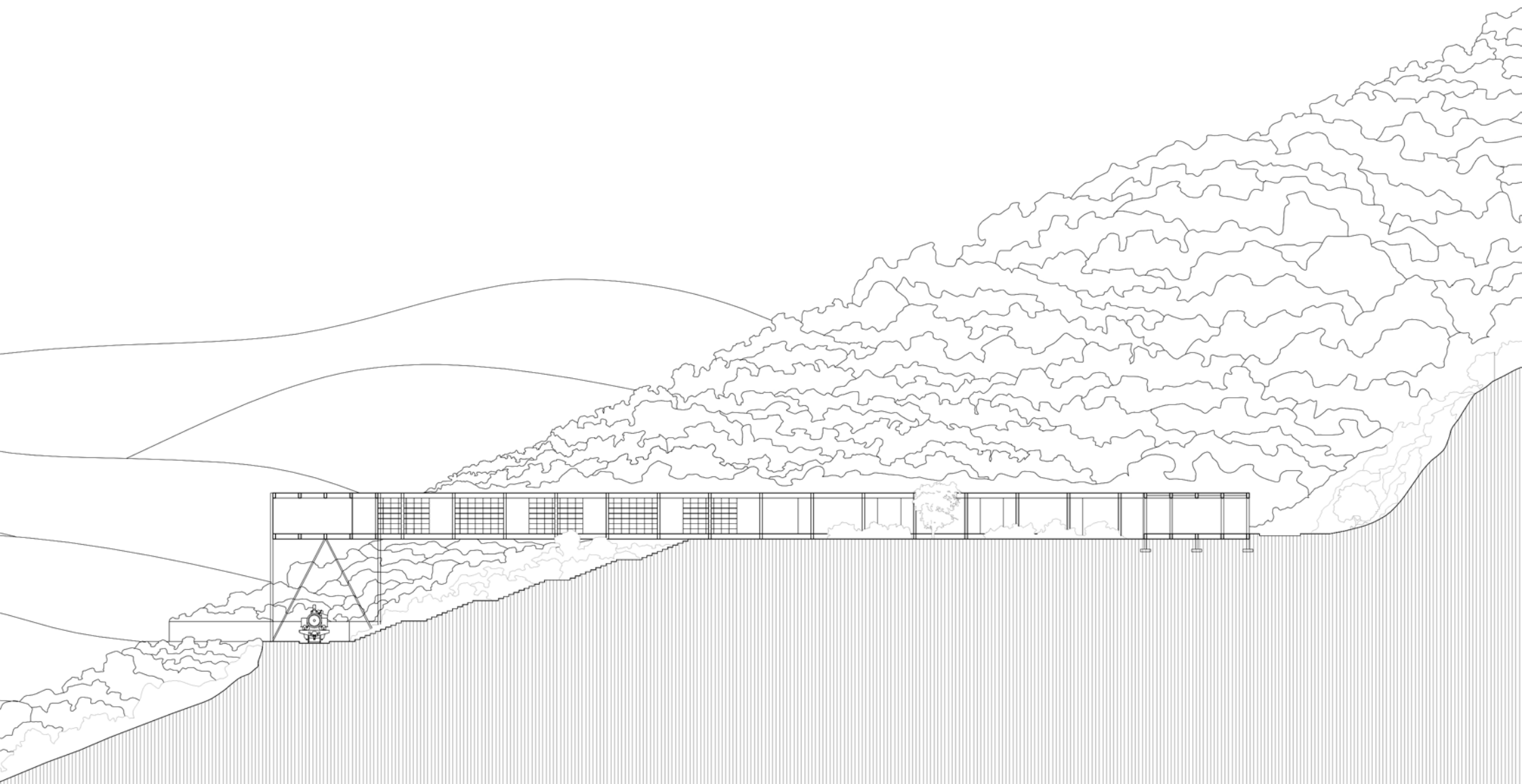


Achladokampos, Arkadia ■ Coordinates [37.504295, 22.550441] ■ Scale 1/750 Reading from top center to left following the spaces as one proceeds the other. **01.** Observation and resting area overlooking the valley **02.** Guests' and staff's rooms **03.** Living room and small lounges **04.** Secondary small areas for reading **05.** Dining area and kitchen **06.** Observation point, in which the nature has a strong presence through the floor opening **07.** Animal examination spaces, wards and surgeries **08.** Utility rooms and cages for injured animals **09.** Library and research point **10.** Garage and supply area **09.** Foyers and waiting spaces **10.** Smaller area for gatherings **11.** Three small ponds and auxillary spaces. Each pool has a different water temperature. **12.** Second examination point and conferece halls for consultation and meetings **13.** Staff's lounge **14.** Staff's rooms **14.** One must descend through the main courtyard to reach the train platform.

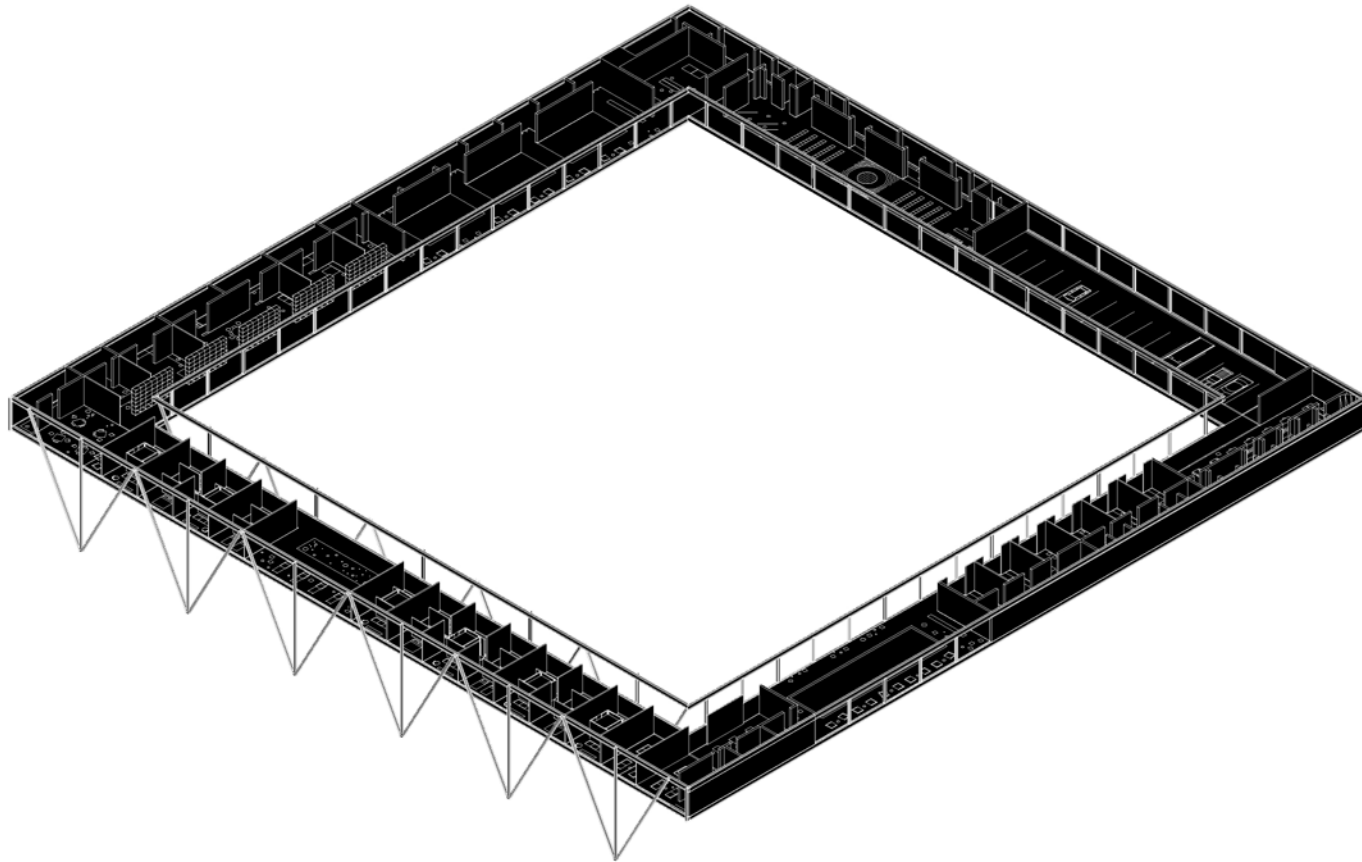


Cross Section.

Scale 1:500





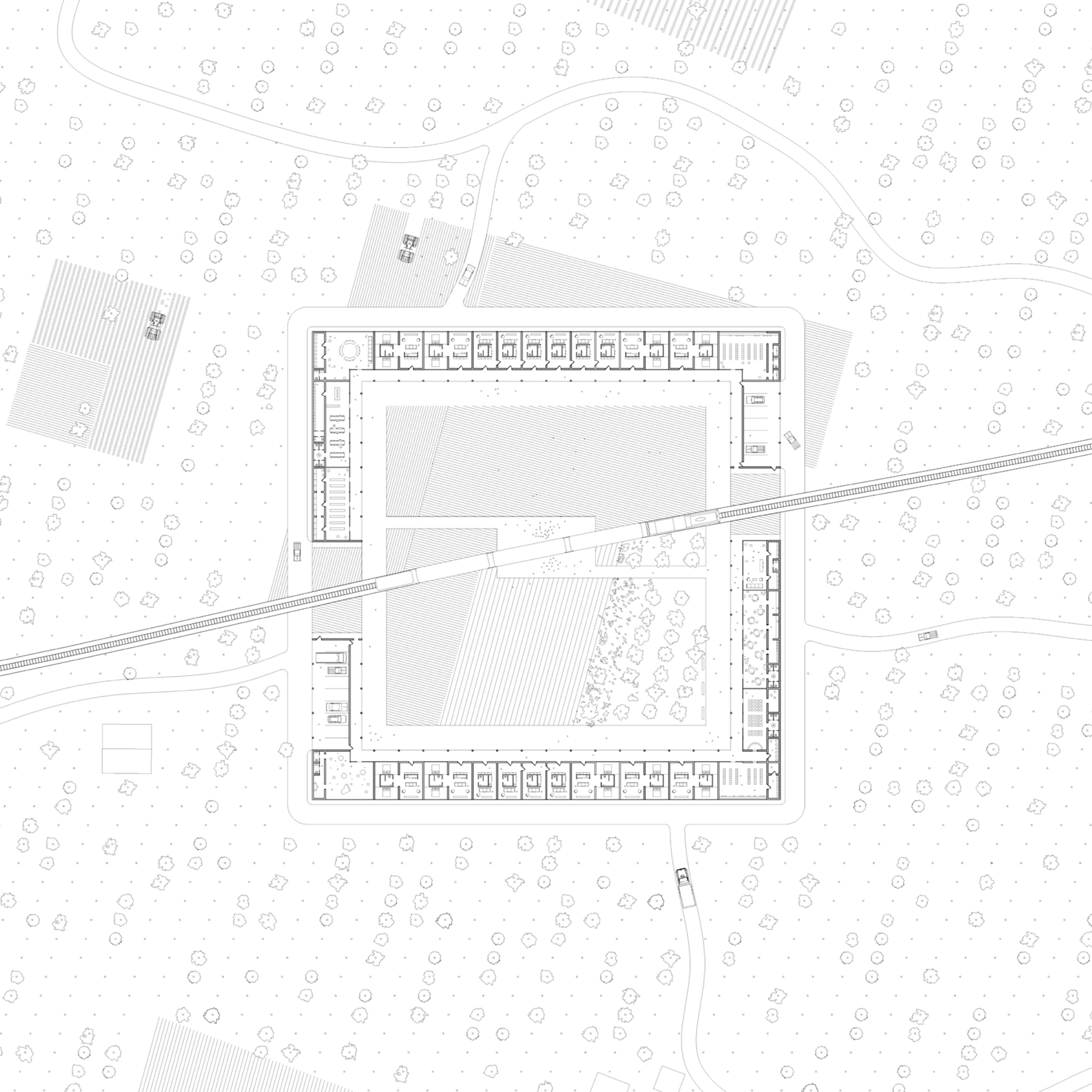


Agrotourism Habitat.



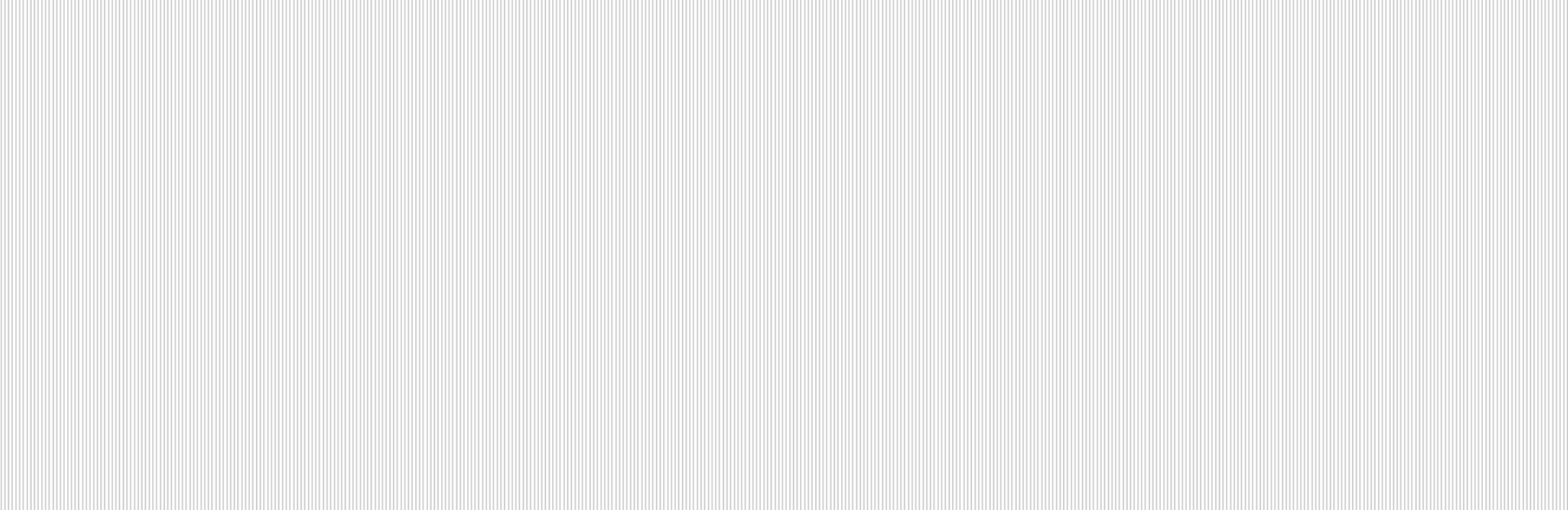


Kalamata, Messenia ■ Coordinates [37.082150, 22.031898] ■ Scale 1/750 Reading from top center to left following the spaces as one proceeds the other. **01.** Private reading space **02.** Restroom **03.** Private reading space **04.** Library. **05.** Two-bedroom flat **06.** Two-bedroom flat **07.** Single studio **08.** Single studio **09.** Single studio **10.** Single studio **11.** Single studio **12.** Single studio **13.** Single studio **14.** Single studio **15.** Four-bedroom flat **16.** Living room **17.** Laundry area **18.** Restroom **19.** Common Kitchen. **20.** Storage unit **21.** Restroom - Staff only **22.** Changing room - Staff only **23.** Restroom **24.** Playroom **25.** Car Parking **26.** Restroom **27.** Restroom **28.** Private reading room **29.** Music room **30.** Two-bedroom flat **31.** Two-bedroom flat **32.** Single studio **33.** Single studio **34.** Single studio **35.** Single studio **36.** Kids club **37.** Laundry room **38.** Cinema club **39.** Restroom **40.** Restroom **41.** Storage unit **42.** Meeting point **43.** Traditional tavern **44.** Restroom **45.** Storage unit **46.** Kitchen **47.** Kitchen **48.** Reception - Waiting area **49.** Storage **50.** Restroom - Staff only. **51.** Archive **52.** Outdoors- Agricultural fields



Cross Section.

Scale 1:500



Agirtourism Habitat. South view.

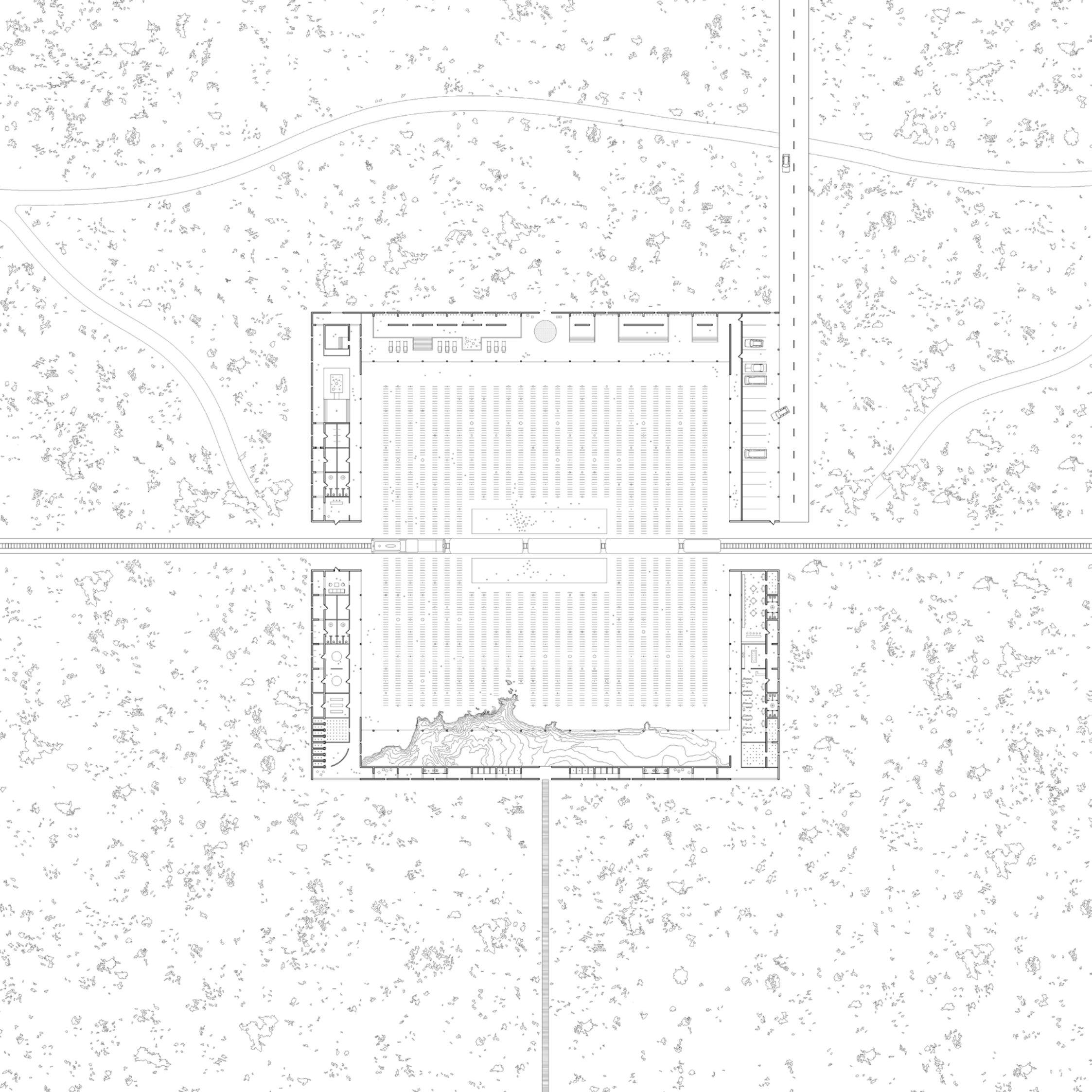


Thermal Baths and Aromatic Gardens.



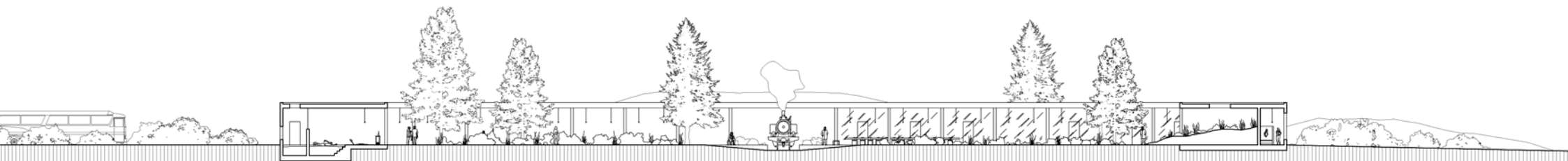


Kagiafas, Ilia ■ Coordinates [37.499316, 21.609652],
Reading from top center to left following the spaces as
one proceeds the other. **01.** Outdoor bath (Temperature
30-33C) **02.** Fire bath (Temperature 40C) **03.** Cold Bath
(Temperature 14C) **04.** Outdoor bath (Temperature 36C)
05. Car parking **06.** Tea room **07.** Interior courtyard **08.**
Services **09.** Storage **10.** Kitchen **11.** Restaurant **12.** Arti-
ficial cliff **13.** Sitting areas **14.** Restrooms **15.** Changing
rooms **16.** Showers **17.** Showers **18.** Changing rooms **19.**
Restrooms **20.** Sitting areas. Thermal Bath **21.** Interior
courtyard. **22.** Sweat stone **23.** Staff room **24.** Turkish
bath - Hammam **25.** Showers. **26.** Restrooms **27.** Changing
rooms **28.** Waiting area - Lounge **29.** Foyer **30.** Changing
rooms **31.** Showers **32.** Indoor Pool (Temperature 32C)
33. Sound Bath (Temperature 35C) **34.** Flower Bath (Tem-
perature 33C) **35.** Outdoors - Aromatic garden



Cross Section.

Scale 1:500





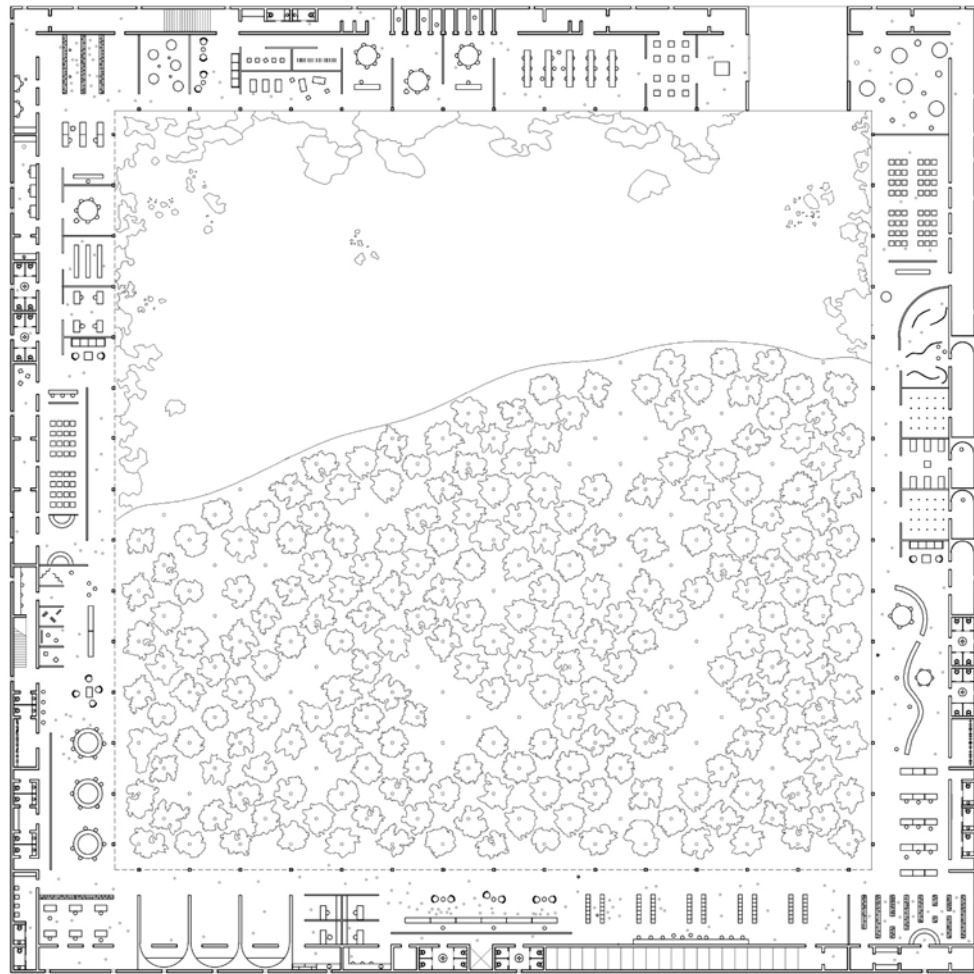


Museum of Memory.

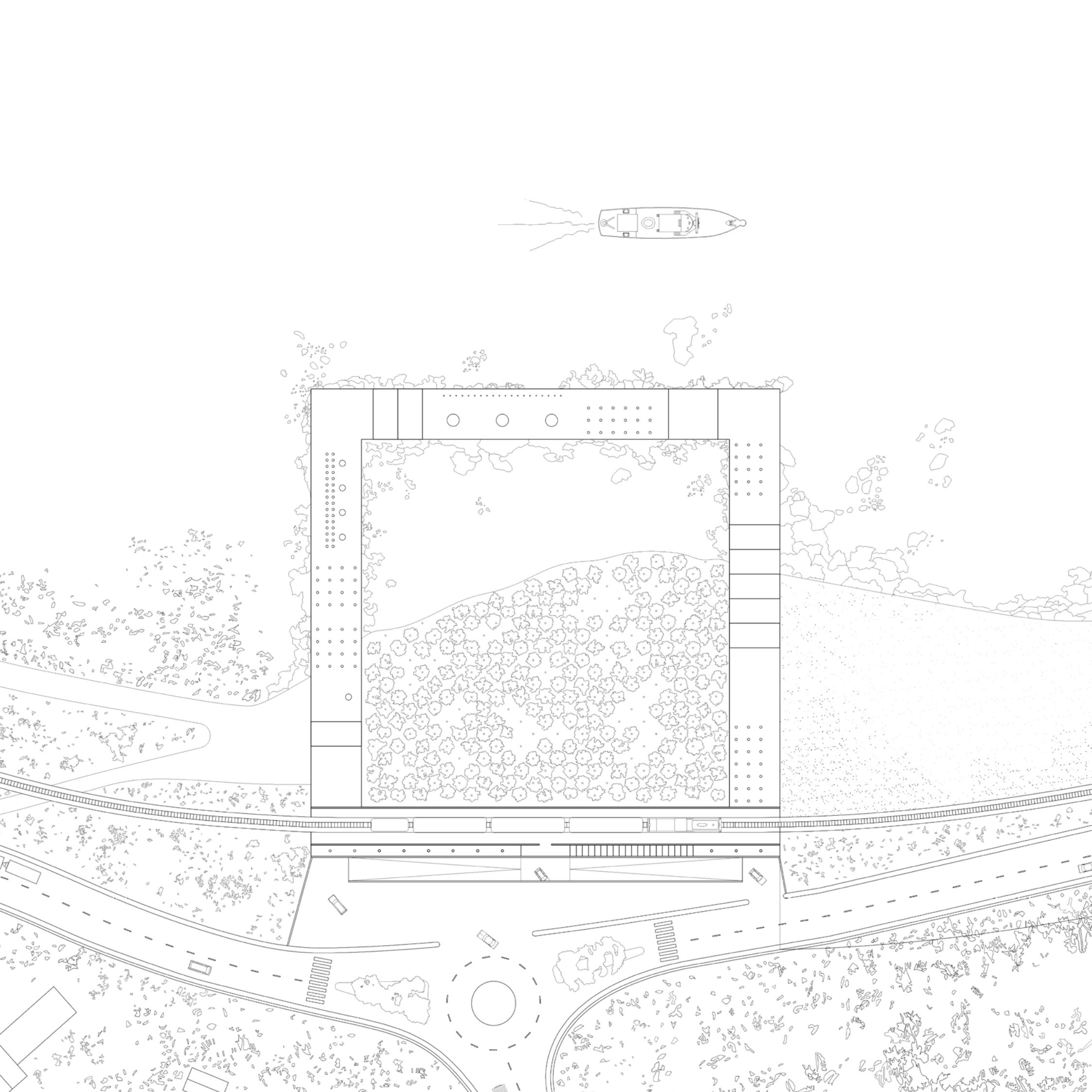




Diakofto, Korinthia ■ Coordinates [38.179940, 22.218642] ■ Main level plan ■ Scale 1/750 01. Open space I 02. Small exhibition spaces 03. Big Library 04. Snack and refreshments point 05. Transcript offices and administration center 06. Restrooms 07. Resting and sitting areas 08. Small Library 09. Conference spaces and rooms 10. Restrooms 11. Conference hall 13. Exhibition rooms and experience areas 14. Gathering tables 15. Restrooms 16. Small offices and administration 17. Big exhibition area 18. Reception offices 19. Reception areas and counters 20. Staircase 21. Waiting open space 22. Book selling point 23. Study tables 24. Restrooms 25. Cloak rooms 26. Reception 27. Experience and senses' rooms 28. Smaller theater and conference hall 29. Video projection areas.

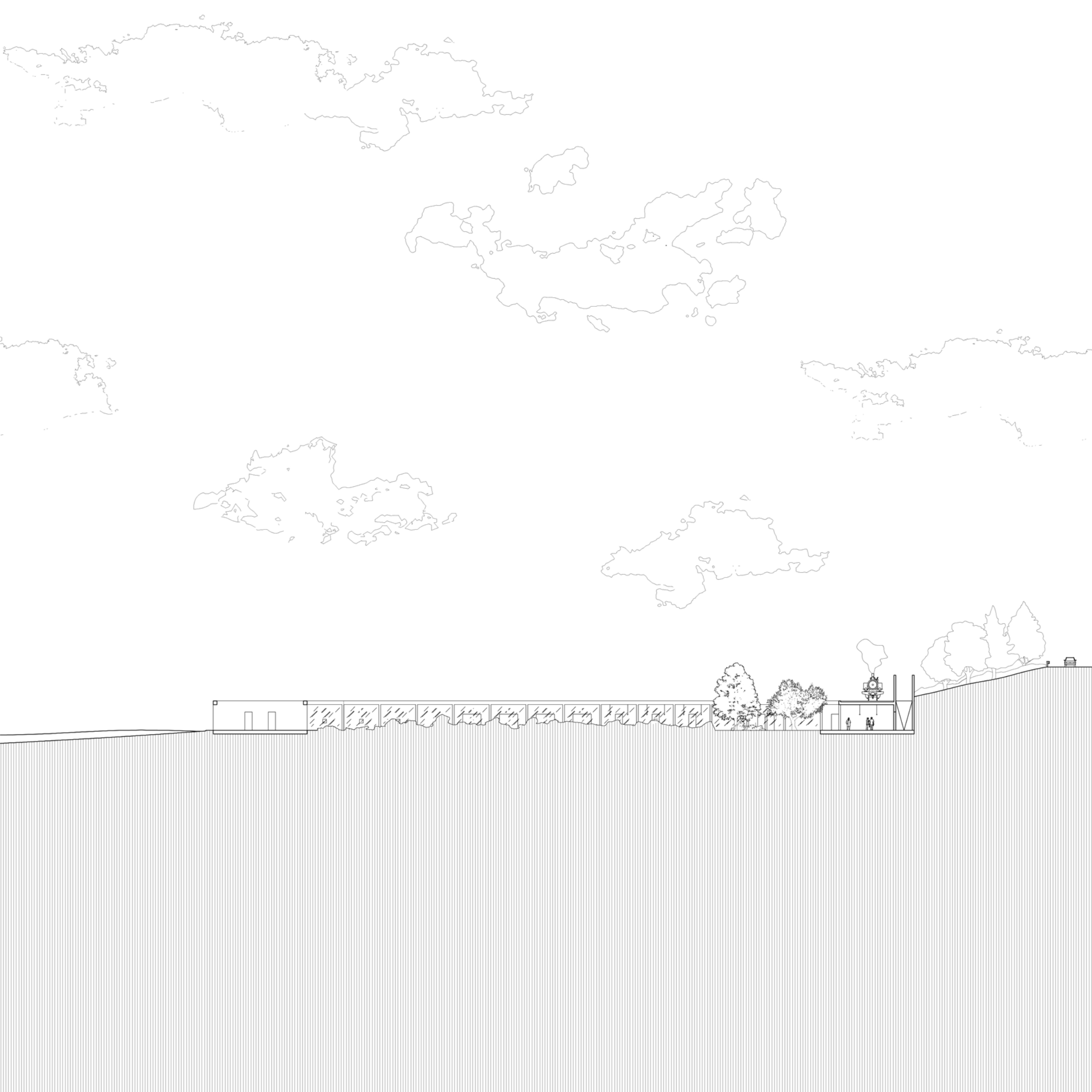


Museum of Memory - Roof Plan.



Cross Section.

Scale 1:500

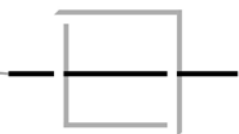


The Museum of Memory as one approaches it from the sea.

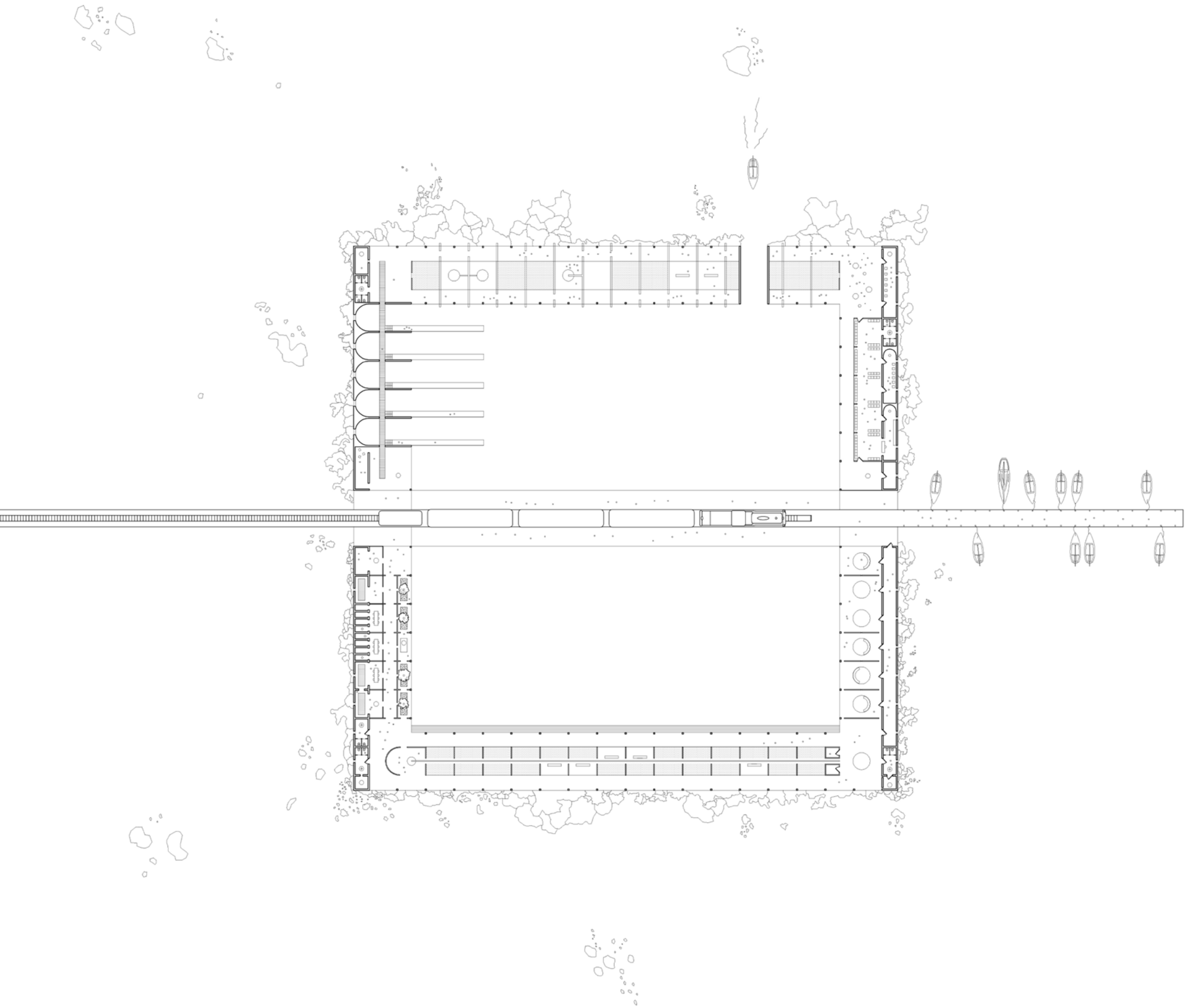


Naval Station.



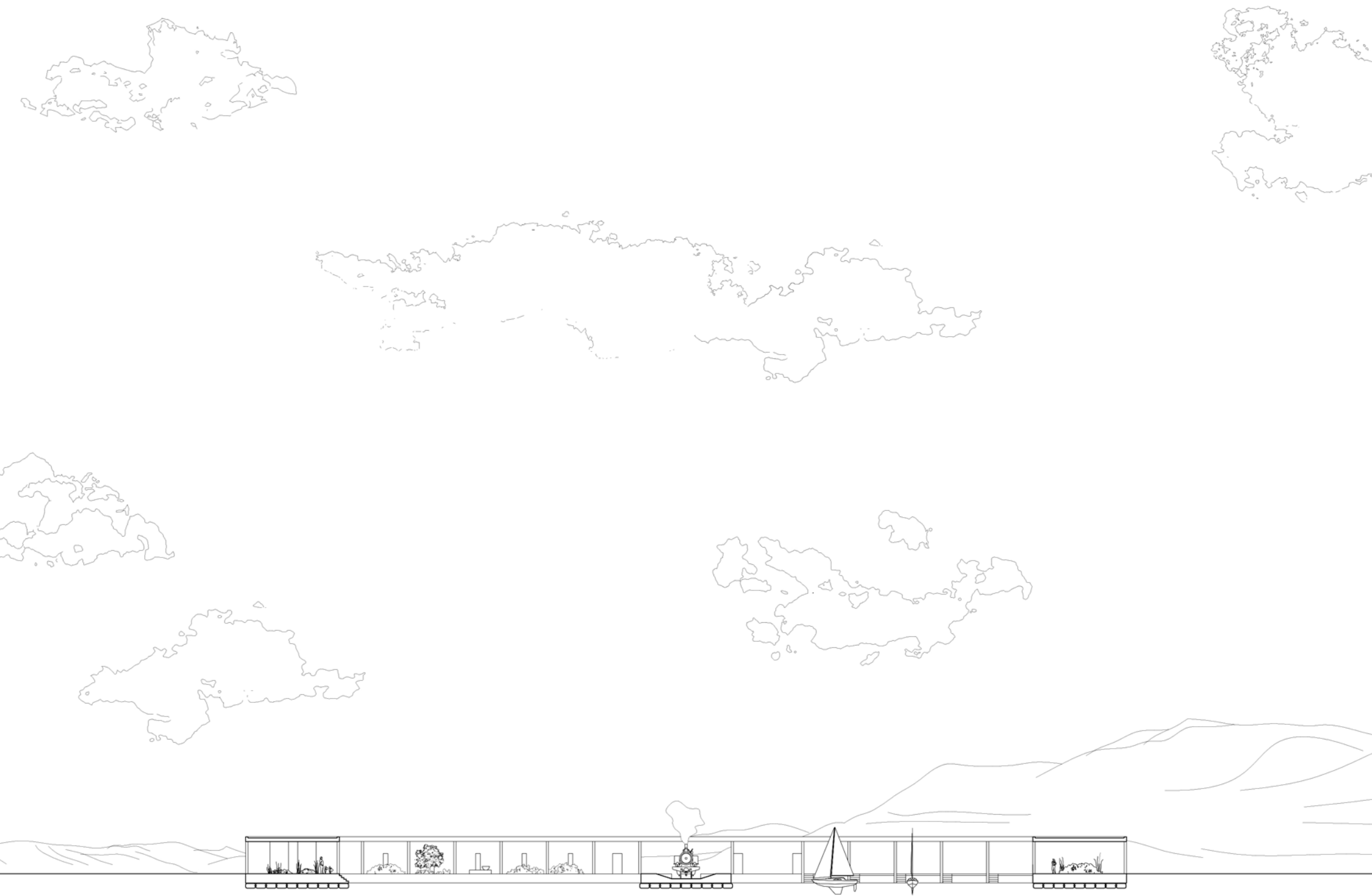


Megara, Attiki ■ Coordinates [37.974413, 23.338151]
■ **Scale 1/750**, Reading from top center to left following the spaces as one proceeds the other. **01.** Restroom **02.** Water stone **03.** Vegetation, water elements, Sitting areas **04.** Vegetation **05.** Playground **06.** Terminal station **07.** Restroom **08.** Vending machines **09.** Canteen **10.** Drinking stone **11.** Water elements and sitting areas **12.** Restrooms **13.** Water stone - Sound **14.** Ship promenade **15.** Vegetation, sitting areas **16.** Water stone **17.** Restrooms - Men **18.** Restrooms - Women **19.** Picnic spot **20.** Vegetation rooms **21.** Naval station **22.** Outdoors - Water ponds -1m.



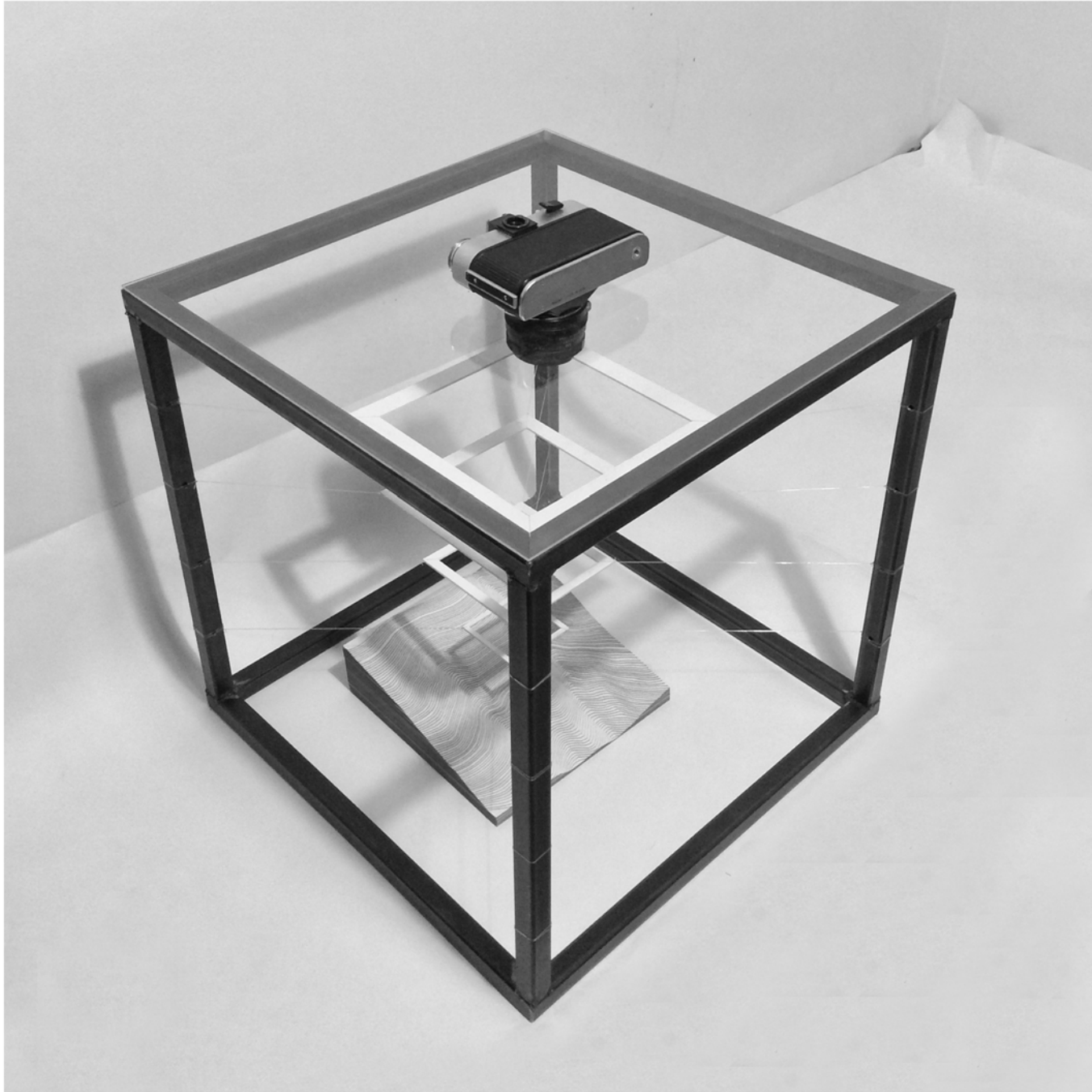
Cross Section.

Scale 1:500



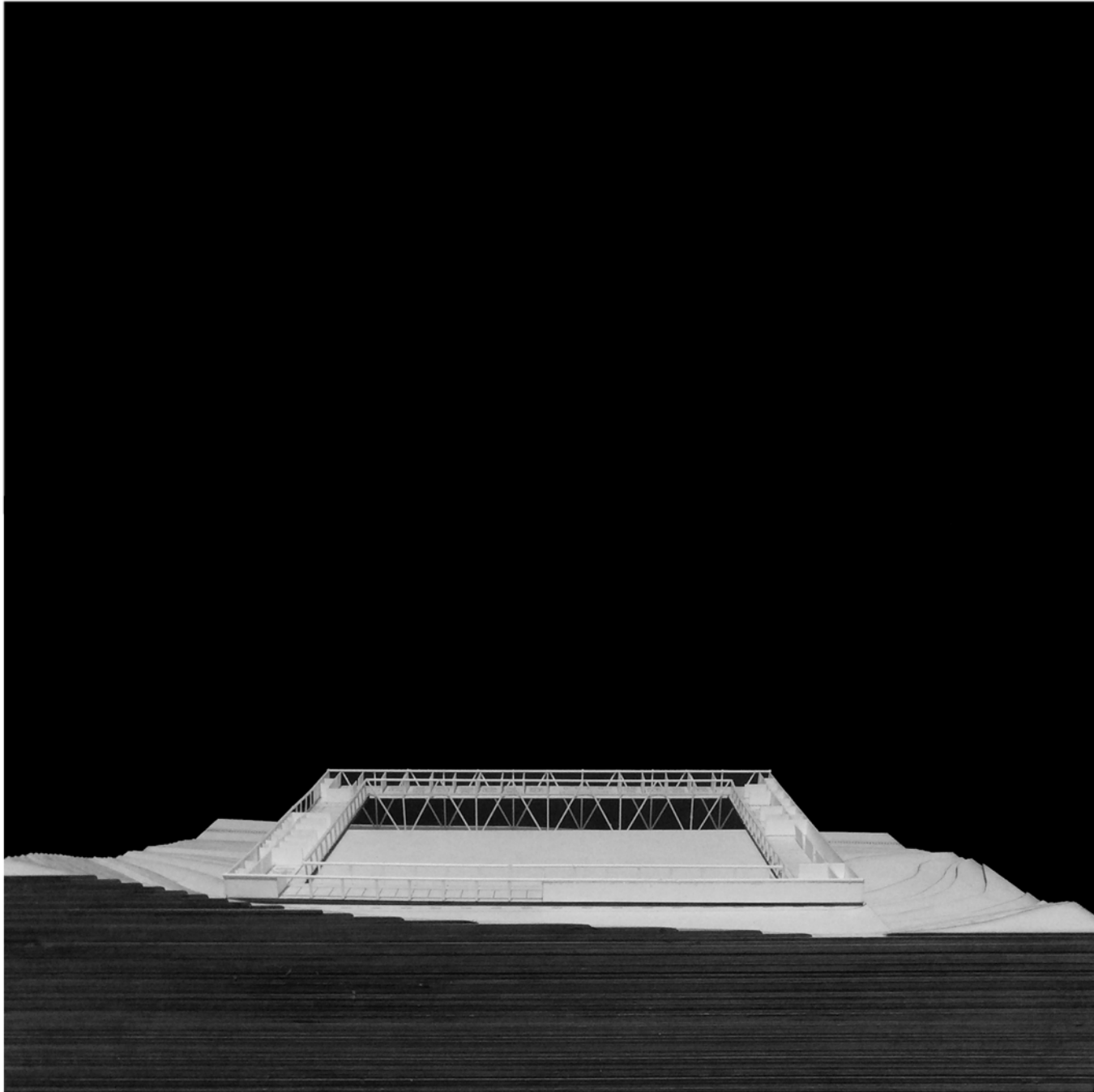
Naval Station as seen from the south.





Framing the landscape.

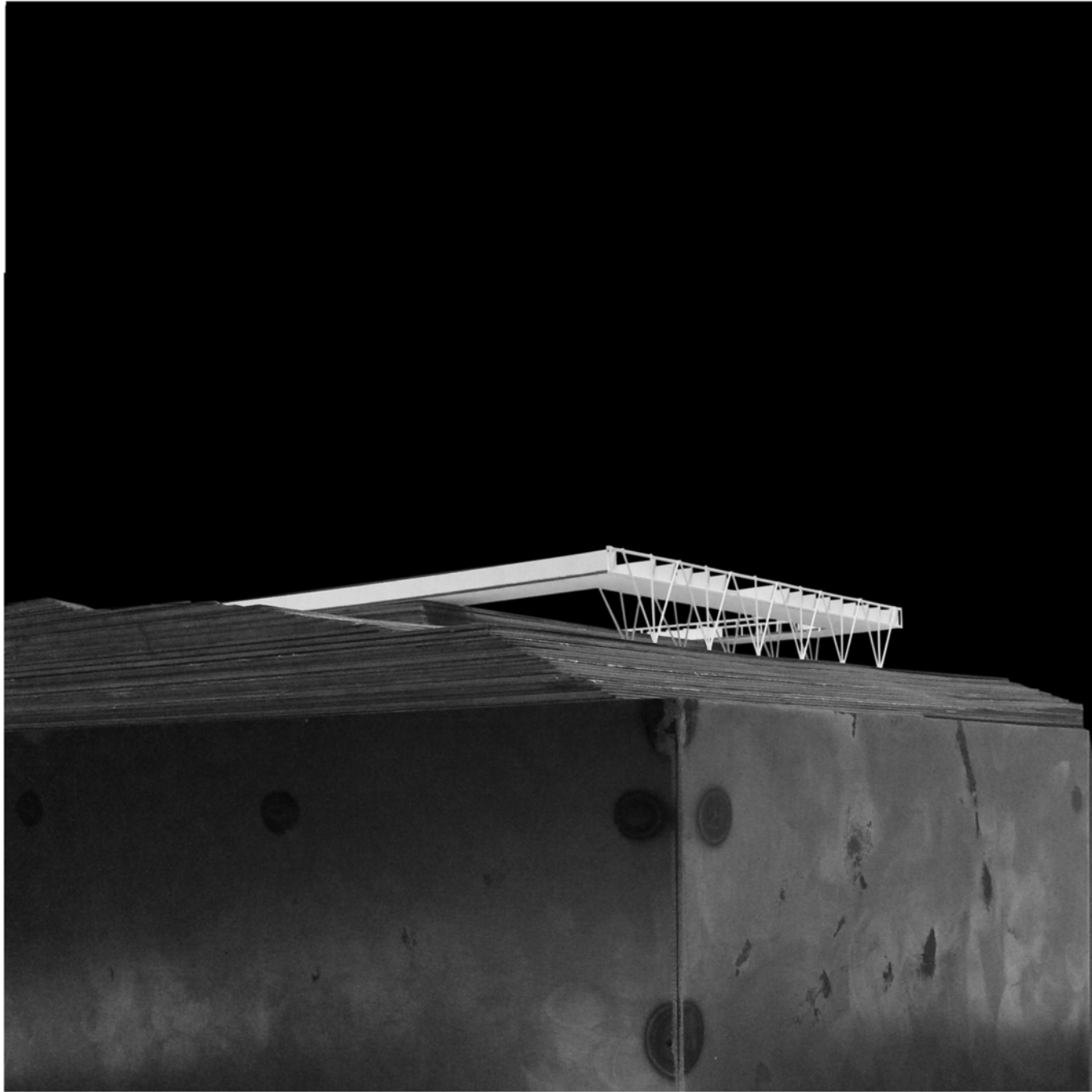
• Conceptual Model •



Wildlife Shelter's Model.

• Scale 1/500 •

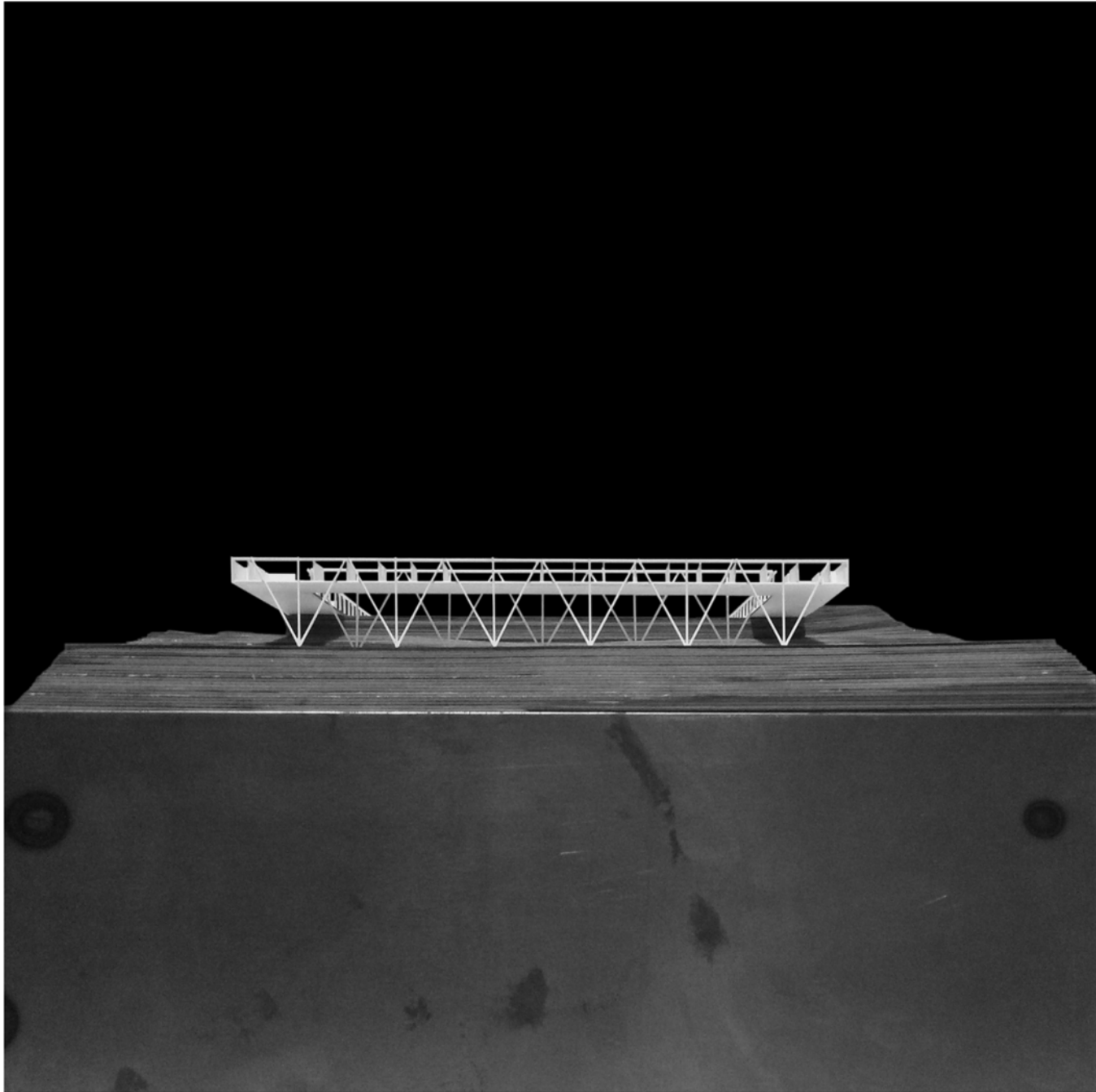
A



Wildlife Shelter's Model.

• Scale 1/500 •

B



Wildlife Shelter's Model.

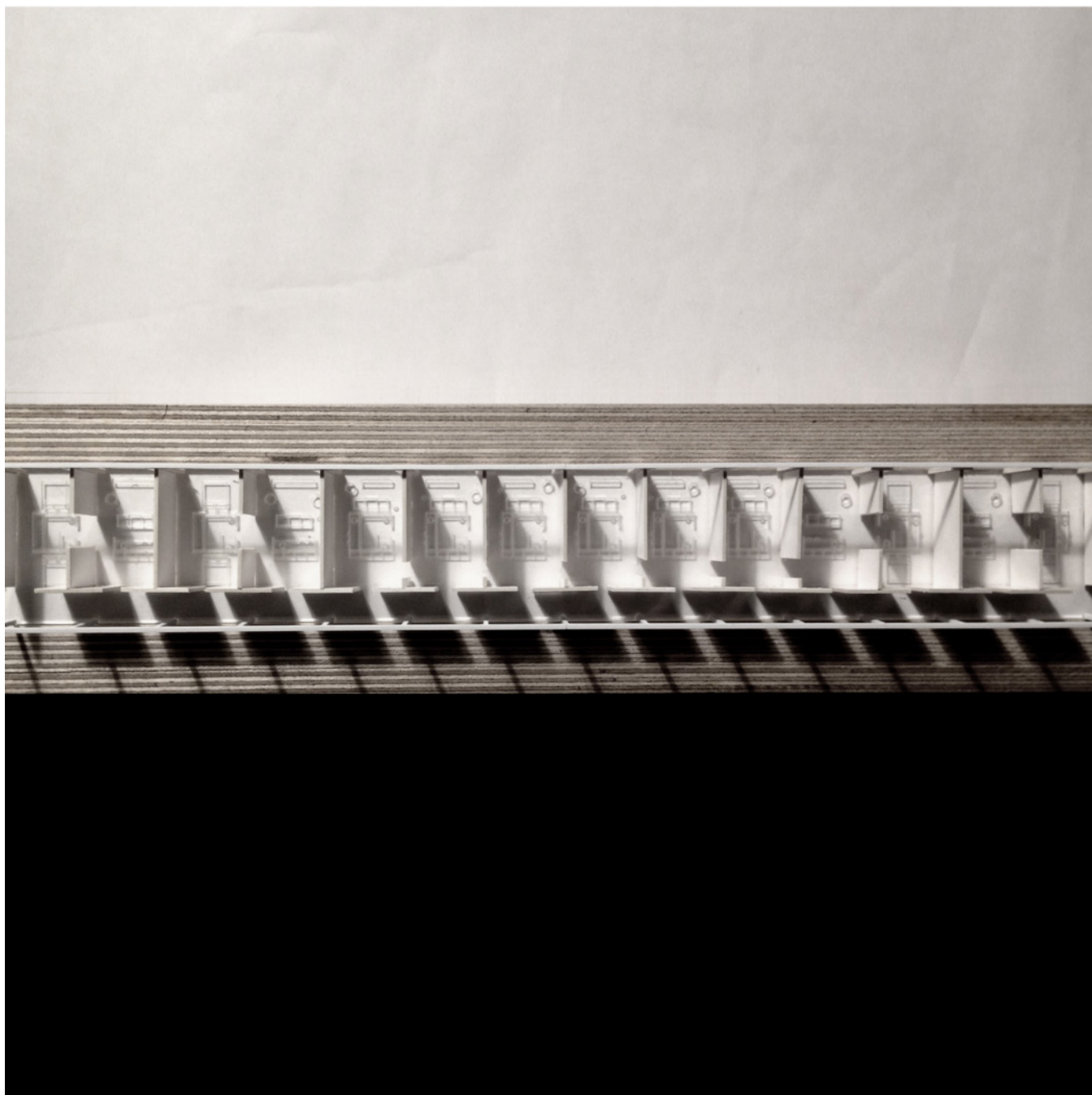
• Scale 1/500 •

C



From left to right. Agrotourism Habitat, Wildlife Shelter, Museum of Memory.

• Scale 1/250 •



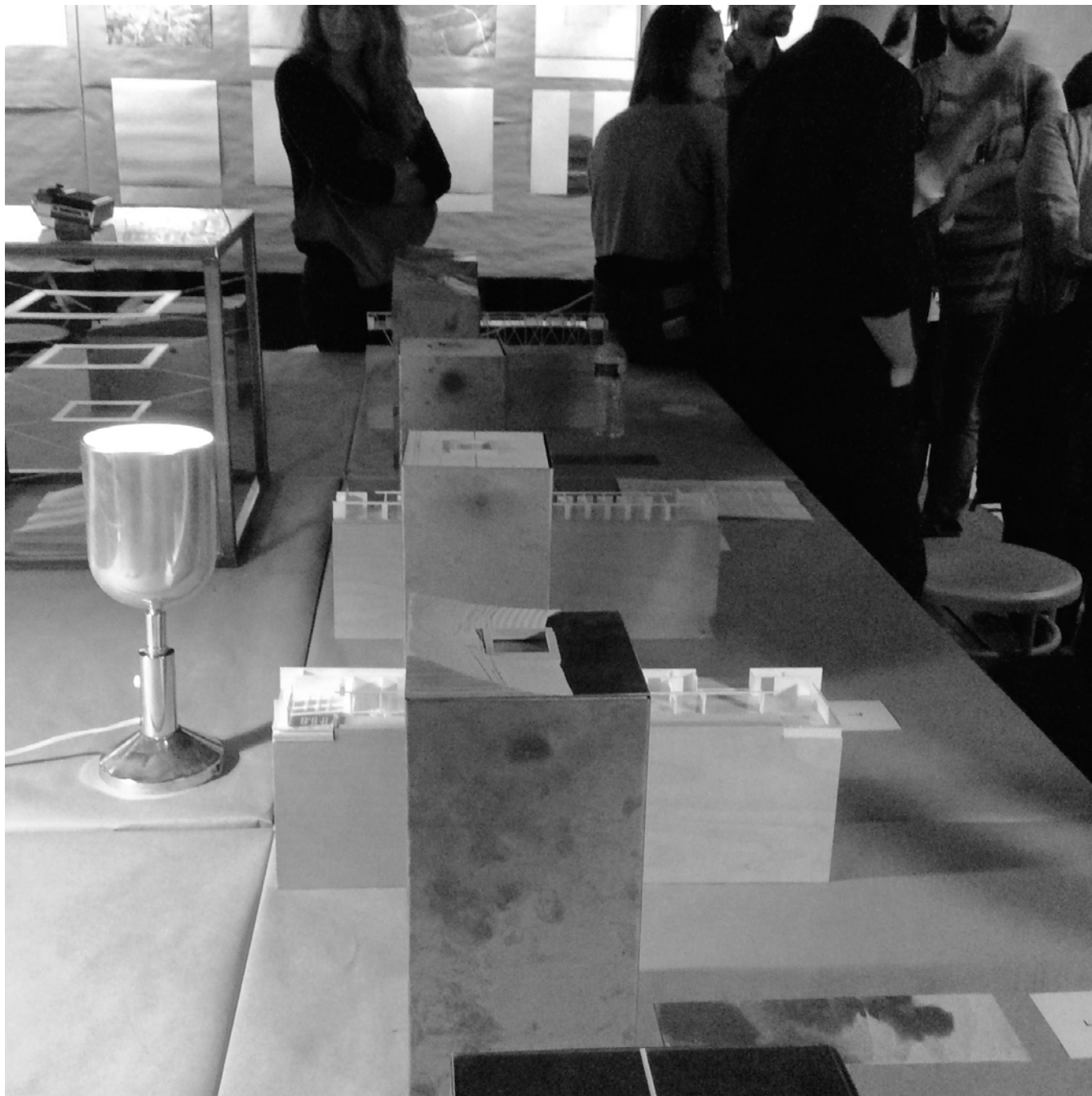
Close up. Agrotourism Habitat.

• Scale 1/250 •



The six interventions.

• Scale 1/2000 •



Presentation Day.

A



Presentation Day.

B

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