

A Cabinet of Architectonic Curiosities on a Path between Erosion and Sedimentation

A conceptual approach inspired by Land Art
for Cape *Dolojman* and the Danube Delta

Research Studio 2024-2025

TYPOLOGIES

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No sediment *is an island,*

Entire of itself;

Every sediment *is a piece of the continent,*

A part of the main rock.

Inspired by John Donne, “Devotions” (1624)

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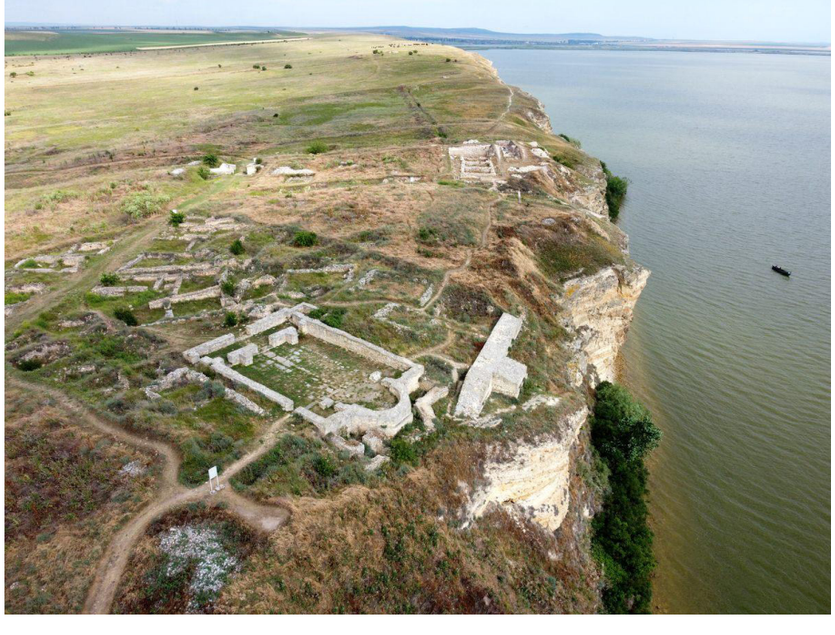


1. FASCINATION FOR A PLACE

1.1 Introduction

My special interest in the topic of insertions into archaeological sites was fueled by the many study trips (image 1) which allowed me to grasp the mysterious beauty of buildings that tell a story about themselves and other buildings that lie buried in the dungeons of time, waiting to be unearthed and brought to light.

Surpassing liminal thresholds to fathom existential enigmas has been a dear aspiration of mankind. Revealing other ways of knowledge, such as introspection, the ruin and the geological uncover hidden areas of the soul, engaging emotions, desires, and passions, as in the case of the Romantic Movement, for instance, which define the human condition. The ruin and the geological thus become modes of transcendence, overcoming the isolation of the individual in the universe. We succumb to another state of mind, delving deeper into our own immanence.

My first university project with a real context (a small visitor's center on the way to the ruins of a 15-century *Genovese* fortress perched on a hill not far from Cape *Dolojman*) also taught me a simple yet valuable lesson: in the struggle for ideas in architecture, always resort to the context as a faithful ally, meticulously decipher its *genius loci* with deeply interlocking meanings and it will not betray you. With this encouraging thought in mind, I ventured once again into the final step of the journey of "becoming with" architecture. On the cliffs of *Argamum* (image 2), inspired by the theme of the 2023 Venice Architecture *Biennale*, my first intent was to envision a "laboratory of the future", that sits on the ruins of the past, where nature[1] and artifacts are researched, explored, and experienced together.

1 "[...] a context marked by man and a place of special psychic relation, "Nature" as an external and independent force should instead be defined as the field for our imagination. In each civilization, nature is that which the culture designates to be such. This definition is applied to human nature as well." (Corboz,1983: p. 34)

1



1.2 Poetic narration

I and my twin sister used to spent much of our summer holidays hiking around the Carpathian Mountains, together with our father as an enthusiastic guide. In one such escape from the urban hustle and bustle, we embarked on a rather unusual trip to a remote place on the coast of the Black Sea in Romania. Once there, we enjoyed the sight of crossing the Danube by ferry, and marveled at the distant views of the former *Dobrogea* Mountains, looking more like hills now. We then crossed the *Babadag* Forest, and passed through fishing villages with *Lipovan* names.

The map indicated two routes: a shorter one, along the beaten path, where we could ride our bikes, and a longer one, winding on the cliffs (image 1), indicating the presence of some ruins. So, we faced a dilemma: which path to choose? Instinctively, we turned away from the beaten track and felt a mysterious attraction in anticipation of discovering the ruins on the cliff. Would they disappoint me, make me feel sad, or maybe give me a sense of uneasiness, an eerie *memento mori* [1] ? A lot of thoughts crossed my mind as I climbed and descended the hilly landscape that unfolded under my feet. No high trees, only small vegetation, that somehow looked precious to me judging by colours and appearance. Suddenly, the weather changed, clouds gathering, and the wind blowing. We looked for some shelter in case of rain, but we found none, apart from the stone wall ruins.

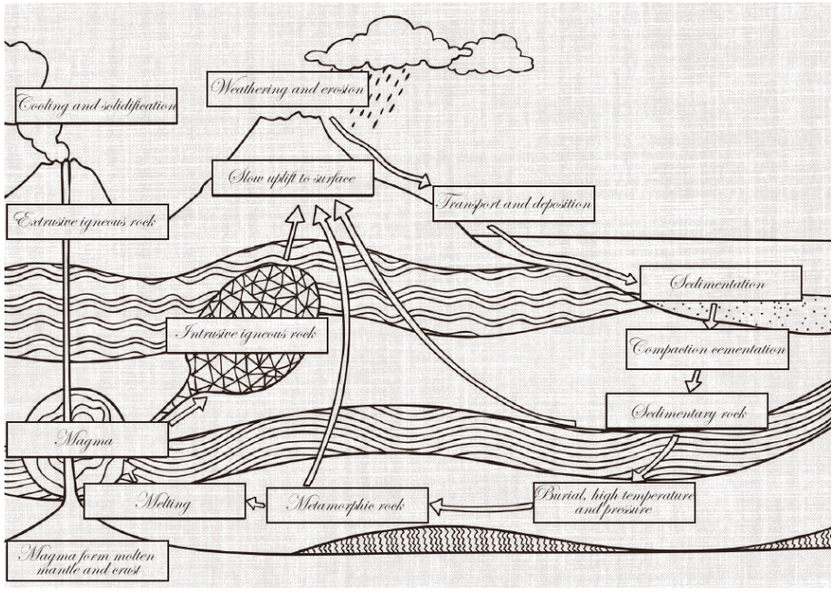
The memory[2] of that vast span of water opening ahead of us, while I was walking along the ruin paths was the spark that kindled my imagination and prompted me to embark on the Master thesis journey to discover the silent *perpetuum* by which natural materials become artifacts in the realm of architecture. In what follows, I would like to expand on the understanding of the broader context of this fascinating place.

1 Latin for "remember (that you have) to die"; see Makarius, 2011 on the meaning of ruins in art and history.

2 "The elements of architecture are not visual units or *gestalt*; they are encounters, interpretations, confrontations that interact with memory" (Pallasmaa, 2005: p. 62)

The Sediment *is father of* Erosion.

Inspired by William Wordsworth, “My Heart Leaps Up” (1802)



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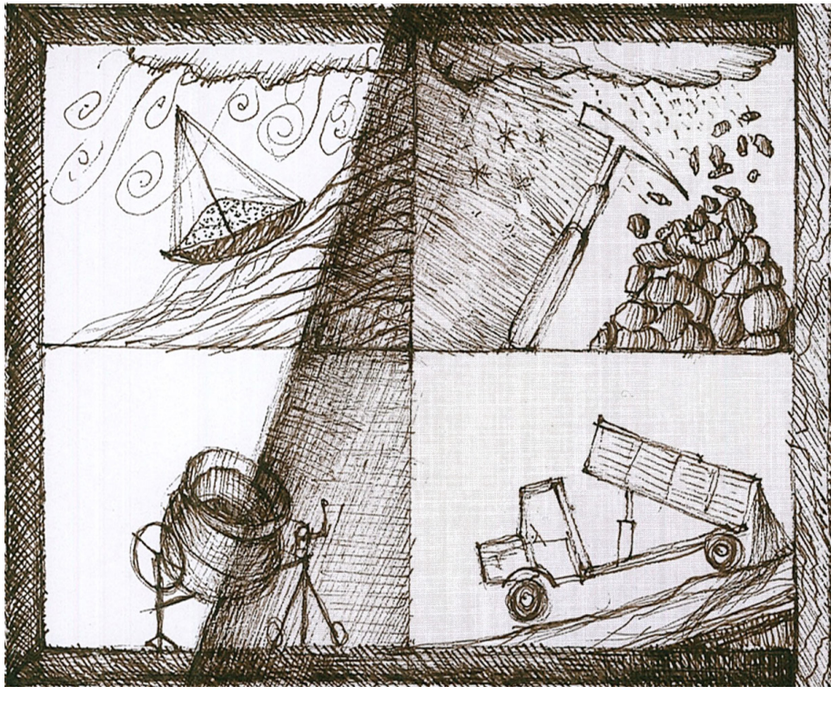

2. UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE

2.1 Erosion and sedimentation

Cape *Dolojman* is a landscape in continuous movement and transformation. It is a place monumental in its geological scale of time and space, but also very fragile, as it is at the mercy of the two powerful natural forces that have been shaping it: erosion and sedimentation. Living in the heightened ecological awareness of the *Anthropocene*, the current unofficial epoch of geological time, in which humans are considered the primary force to promote change in landscapes and climate, we can look at these two complementary phenomena as hyperobjects[1], a philosophical term coined by Timothy Morton, to describe entities of vast temporal and spatial dimensions that we can only see parts of their causes or effects, since their temporality far outweighs the average timescale of human life.

The upper illustration (from Plate I) portrays the three types of rocks (metamorphic, igneous and sedimentary) and all the mechanical, physical and chemical processes that turn one into another, as well as the seven steps of sedimentary rock formation: weathering, erosion, transport, deposition, burial, compaction, and cementation, a process called *diagenesis*.[2]

The lower illustration (from Plate II) depicts the four main phases of sedimentary rock formation from an anthropocentric perspective in a quadripartite visual metaphor to raise awareness that Earth could be viewed as a never-ending natural construction site.[3]

---

1 "The local is far from the totally known or knowable. It is familiar, which also means that it is uncanny (German *heimisch*, "familiar" and "unfamiliar","intimate" and "monstrous" at the same time). These hyperobjects remind us that the local is in fact the uncanny. [...] They are so massively distributed we can't directly grasp them empirically." (Morthon, 2016: p. 11)

2 Gorokhovich, 2007: p. 14

3 "Using *Henri Bergson*'s notion of the present containing all of the past within it, the thesis proposes the earth as being at once a relic, a ruin, and a construction site."(Winter, 2016: p. 5)



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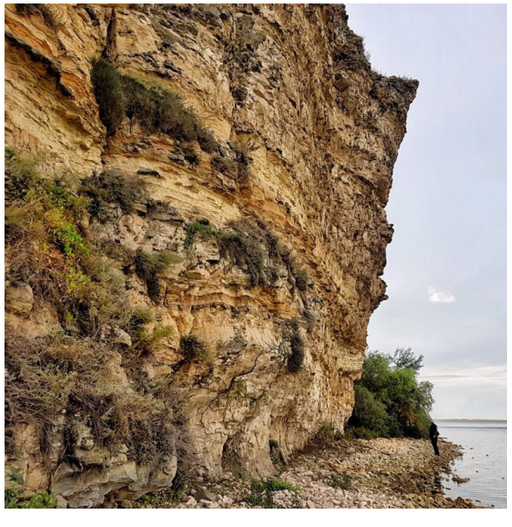
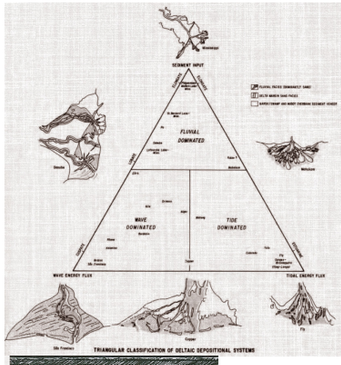


In the southwest region of the Danube Delta, on the shore of the *Razelm-Sinoe* Lagoon, there lies a rocky promontory known as Cape *Dolojman*. With *strata* that date back to the *Jurassic* and Cretaceous (about 145 to 66 million years ago), the cliff is primarily made up of calcareous limestone and sandstone rocks. Water and wind have sculpted the cape across *millennia*, to its current distinctively steep and rugged profile, as shown in images 2 and 3. The cliffs reveal successively deposed layers of sedimentary rocks, with *strata* of limestone intertwined with marl (a calcareous mud stone), typical of marine environments that emerged during the Mesozoic Era. They contain fossils of marine organisms, including ammonites and rudists (a type of bivalve), indicating that the region was once submerged under shallow sea. Wave action, especially in the past, when the sea level was higher and the lagoon was an open gulf to the Black Sea, contributed to the gradual erosion of the cliff, forming steep rock faces that descend directly into the *Razelm-Sinoe* Lagoon. Due to the lagoon's gradual closure, which isolated it from marine forces, erosion processes that still occur are much slower. Because of the limestone, Cape *Dolojman* has certain *karstic* features, like tiny caverns, fissures, and cracks that form as rainwater dissolves soluble rock.[1]

Figure 1 (from Plate VII) represents a personal work, a hand-drawn ink illustration from memory[2] of small rock samples piled one on top of the other from the oldest to the recently formed along the geological epochs in the Central and Northern *Dobrudja* County (where Cape *Dolojman* is located).

1 TILEA, Lucian, "Pasionat de viata: Cetatea Orgamè - Argamum", (part I) online documentary: < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPWZhDyu6x0&t=2513s>
2 After my visit in 4 April 2024 to the National Geological Institute of Romania, in Bucharest, to whom I am indebted for all the insightful exhibits.



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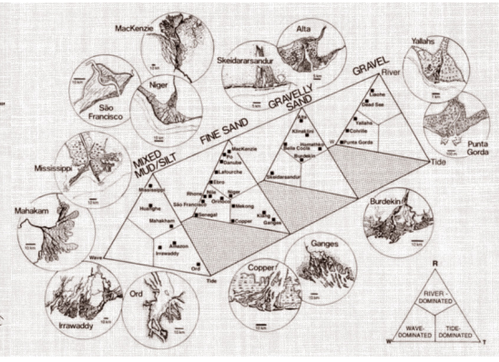

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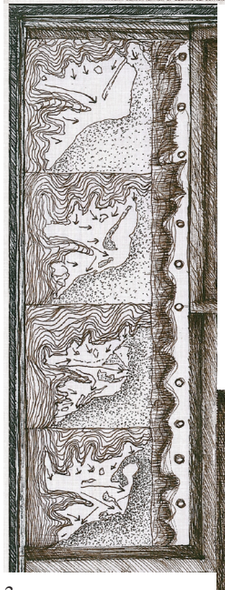

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2.2 Danube Delta UNESCO World Heritage Site

Coordinates: 45°10'N latitude and 29°15'E longitude

2.2.1 Geomorphology and biodiversity

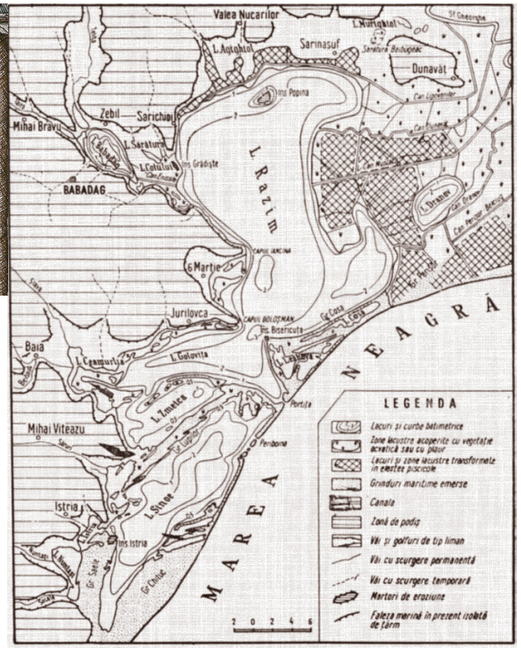
William Galloway introduced a classification scheme where three main types of deltas are distinguished according to the dominant forces in the formation process: river-, wave-, and tide-dominated deltas (fig. 1).[1] Under the *Galloway* classification system, The Danube Delta pertains to the predominantly river-dominated deltas. Orton and Reading (1993) proposed adding a fourth dimension (fig. 2) to *Galloway*'s tripartite classification to take into account the dominant size of the sediments deposited in the deltaic plain. Under the latter classification system, the Danube Delta falls into the mixed mud/silt category.[2] Its deltaic plain, with an area of 5800 km², is divided into two zones. The upper part is characterised by fluvial deposits (approx. 30 million tons each year; 67 million tons before the construction of the Iron Gates Dam). The lower part of the plain consists of fossil sand bars, isolated or grouped. It is composed of the *Saint George* lobes I and II, the *Sulina* lobe, and the *Chilia* lobes I, II, and III. The secondary arm of Saint George, the *Dunavatz*, also formed a small lobe that developed in the *Razelm-Sinoe* lagoon around 2000 calibrated years BP.[3]

Grigore Antipa (1910) proposed a theory for a progressive clogging of a lagoon isolated through a coastal strip by the river inflows of the Danube (fig. 5), the water level being below sea level, like the current Ukrainian limans. He identifies an old coastal strip in a NE-SW direction. This strip was pierced by the waters of the river in six places, constituting six river mouths. The order in which the three branches of the Danube arrived at the initial coastal strip is as follows: *Sf. Gheorghe* branch first, followed by *Sulina* and *Chilia* branches. This model proposed by *Antipa* is based on a separation of fluvial and marine actions and gives an important place to wind actions to the detriment of coastal drift.[4] The Delta continued to evolve and expand due to coastal progradation and sediment influx during the early *Holocene* (fig. 3) until the present times (fig. 4).

1 Bosboom, et al., 2023: p. 84; 86
2 Groparu, 2020: p. 24
3 Gâstescu, et al., 1973: p. 49
4 Groparu, 2020: p. 118, 119



1



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Located in northern *Dobrudja*, south of the Danube Delta, on the Black Sea coast, The *Razelm-Sinoe* lake complex represents the largest body of water in Romania (86,347 hectares). It is made up of several lakes belonging to three main types: limans, lagoons and stagnant waters or pits. Since 1991 The Danube Delta has been declared Biosphere Reserve, part of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. First mentioned by *Herodotus* around the 4th century BC, this place has not yet been fully affected by human action. However, the human presence in the Danube Delta dates back to 5000 BC. Many of the artifacts from prehistoric times, as well as several traces of ancient Greek, Byzantine and Roman civilisations, are still present here. The Danube Delta is made up of a complex network of canals, lakes and swamps, covering an area of 5,000 km^2 in average. It is the newest land in Europe that still expands naturally, a process which occurs due to *alluvium* brought by the Danube River. About 40 square meters of wetland is added to the territory of the Danube Delta every year, through a process of sedimentation that contributes to the creation of new islands and the expansion of existing ones. It is the second largest delta in Europe after the delta of the Volga river and ranks 23rd in the world. The climate of the Danube Delta falls within the area with semi-arid temperate climate specific to the *Pontic* steppes.[1]

Illustration 1 is a personal work from Plate VII (ink redrawing based on a map from the *Tulcea* Danube Delta Museum) that shows the main migratory bird routes across the territory of the Delta, most of them intersecting above the *Razelm-Sinoe* Lagoon. Illustration 2 comprises a detailed bathymetric and geomorphological map[2] of the same lacustrine complex. Image 3 is another personal work portraying a facade detail of a traditional *Lipovan* house from *Jurilovca* Village, famous for its thick thatched roof and blue-painted wooden walls. Illustration 4 from Plate I (personal work based on personal photographs from the Delta) depicts two Great White Pelicans, a strictly protected bird species whose main habitat is restricted to the *Ceaplace* Island in the *Sinoe* Lake), while illustration 5 (Plate I) represents an exotic flock of flamingos near the *Sacalin* island (one of the newest lands in the Danube Delta), in their long migratory routes.

1 Petrescu, 2021: p. 22-27
2 Gâstescu, et al., 1973: p. 57



The following is an illustrated catalogue of 32 common animal species encountered in the Danube Delta:[1]

1. *Cracticus nigrogularis* (Pied butcherbird)
2. *Sternidae* (Tern)
3. *Anax parthenope* (Lesser Emperor Dragonfly)
4. *Microcarbo pygmeus* (Pygmy Cormorant) male
5. *Microcarbo pygmeus* (Pygmy Cormorant) female
6. *Bubo bubo* (Eurasian Eagle-Owl)
7. *Strix aluco* (Tawny Owl)
8. *Alcedinidae* (Kingfisher)
9. *Nycticorax nycticorax* (Black-crowned night heron)
10. *Oenanthe pleschanka* (Pied wheatear)
11. *Chironomidae* (Non-biting Midges)
12. *Ixobrychus minutus* (Little Bitterns)
13. *Burhinus oedicnemus* (Eurasian stone-curlew)
14. *Papilio machaon* (Swallowtail)
15. *Apus apus* (Comon Swift)
16. *Circus aeruginosus* (Western Marsh Herrier)
17. *Tadorna tadorna* (Common Shelduck)
18. *Pelecanus onocrotalus* (Great White Pelican)
19. *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* (Eurasian Crag martin)
20. *Planorbarius corneus* (Great ram's horn snail)
21. *Melanocorypha calandra* (Calandra Lark)
22. *Anas platyrhynchos* (Mallard or Wild Duck)
23. *Aix galericulata* (Mandarin Duck)
24. *Pelecanus conspicillatus* (Australian Pelican)
25. *Natrix tessellata* (Dice Snake)
26. *Testudines* (Land Turtle)
27. *Mustela* (Weasel)
28. *Ursus meles* (European Badger)
29. *Martes martes* (European Pine Marten)
30. *Castoridae* (Eurasian Beaver)
31. *Bos taurus* (Cattle)
32. *Vormela peregusna* (Marbled Polecat)

1 Photo sources: info-graphic panels of the *Tulcea* Danube Delta Museum



The following is an illustrated catalogue of 28 flower species (some of which are either rare, protected or endangered species), encountered in the Danube Delta or at Cape *Dolojman*:[1]

1. *Astragalus vesicarius* (Balloon Milkvetch)
2. *Celtis glabrata* (Smooth Hackberry)
3. *Ziziphus jujuba* (Jujube)
4. *Cichorium intybus* (Chicory)
5. *Onopordum acanthium* (Scotch Thistle)
6. *Lysimachia vulgaris* (Yellow Loosestrife)
7. *Artemisia vulgaris* (Mugwort)
8. *Achillea millefolium* (Yarrow)
9. *Tanacetum vulgare* (Tansy)
10. *Tussilago farfara* (Coltsfoot)
11. *Trapa natans* (Water Chestnut)
12. *Centaurea jankae* (Janka's Knapweed - a species of knapweed)
13. *Dianthus pseudarmeria* (False Carnation)
14. *Typha latifolia* (Broadleaf/Cattail)
15. *Centaurea cyanus* (Cornflower/Bachelor's Button)

Counterclockwise from top left:

Arundo donax (Giant Reed)
Hyoscyamus niger (Henbane)
Iris pseudacorus (Yellow Iris/Water Flag)
Galium aparine (Cleavers/Goosegrass)
Phragmites australis (Common Reed)
Tanacetum vulgare (Tansy)
Schoenoplectus lacustris (Common Bulrush/Great Bulrush)
Tulipa hungarica (Hungarian Tulip)
Equisetum praealtum (Tall Horsetail)
Galium sylvaticum (Woodruff/Sweet Woodruff)
Papaver rhoeas (Corn Poppy/Field Poppy)
Maiden ferns (Fern)
Stratiotes aloides (Water Soldier)

1 Photo sources: info-graphic panels of the *Tulcea* Danube Delta Museum



1

The left image displays some dried plants that I picked up and that grow at Cape *Dolojman* and in the region of the Danube Delta, which have medicinal properties:

Poppies are bright red and grow in late spring to early summer. These red flowers, especially the opium poppy, have been used over the years as sources of alkaloids, which include morphine and codeine, for pain relief. They attract pollinators such as bees and beetles due to their abundant pollen and bright colour, even though they do not offer nectar. Poppies are dependent on cross-pollination by these insects while in full bloom to maintain genetic variability.[1]

Thistles are prickly, heavy-stemmed plants that generally flower from mid-summer into early autumn. Their purple, pink, or white flowers attract pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and moths, due to their copious nectar. Thistles provide an immense ecological role: feeding the wildlife and firming up the soil. Thistles are medicinally famous for liver protection owing to silymarin, the primary active ingredient of milk thistle. The spiny nature of the plant shields it from overgrazing by herbivores.[2]

Chicory is a hardy perennial that flowers from early summer into late autumn. Flowers are blue, lavender, or white. Its deep taproot grows well in poor soils, often appearing in meadows and along roadsides. This plant has long been prized for its roots, roasted as a coffee substitute and for its leaves, used to aid digestion. Flowers of chicory open in the morning and are closed by noon, when bees and butterflies are most active.[3]

Horsetail is considered a living fossil, part of an ancient plant lineage that does not bear flowers. It reproduces via spores, mostly in the spring to early summer, and can be found in wetlands and moist soils. The jointed, hollow stems contain silica, with medicinal value for treating bone, hair, and nail disorders. While it does not depend on pollinators, horsetail's spore dispersal benefits from wind currents that spread its seeds. This plant also plays a role in preventing soil erosion.[4]

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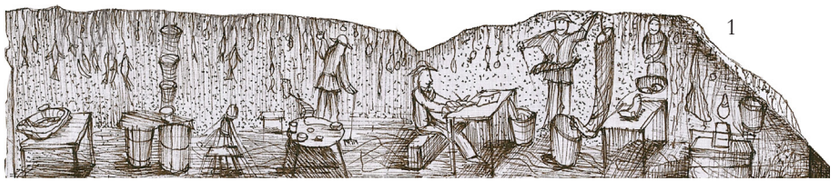
1 info-graphic panels of the *Tulcea* Danube Delta Museum, summer 2024
2 idem 1
3 idem 1
4 idem 1



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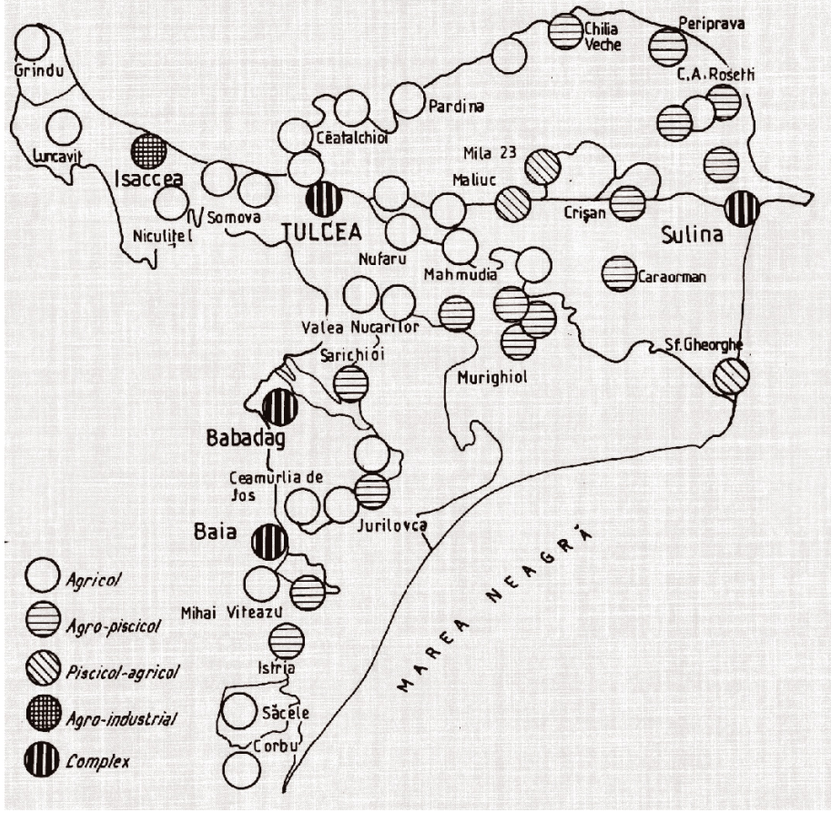

3



2.2.2 Human presence. Rewilding attemps

The vegetation of the Delta is mostly represented by plants specific to marshes (reeds mixed with dwarf willow) and occupies 78percent of the total surface. Small forests occupies 6percent of the Delta surface, including species such as willow, ash, alder, and poplar, which grow on the river banks, which are periodically flooded. The waterholes are covered by aquatic and floating vegetation, occupying 2percent of the Delta surface. Forests like *Letea* and *Caraorman* consist of oak, ash, aspen, elm, and climbing plants. This unique ecosystem is home to over 5,000 species of plants and animals, many of which endemic. It is the third largest area in the world in terms of biodiversity after the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the *Galapagos* Archipelago of Ecuador. It is home to 30 types of ecosystems and 5,380 documented species. It is one of the largest and most compact reed areas in the world, extending on 240,000 ha. Among the rare and endangered bird species there are the Dalmatian pelicans, little cormorants, red-breasted geese, the curly pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), common pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*), the white egret (*Ardea alba*), the small egret (*Egreta garzeta*). Some rare fish species including the sturgeon (Acipenseridae) and other rare mammals, such as the European mink (*Mustrella Lutreola*) and the otter (*Lutra lutra*) find shelter in the Danube Delta.[1]

Illustration 1 depicts a reenactment scene in a traditional wooden household in a fishing village, called "*cherhana*" in Romanian, with people performing various activities related to the processing of fish. Image 2 is a map of all villages in the Danube Delta, specifying the main source of economical income of its inhabitants. Illustration 3 is a *vedute* of a traditional deltaic fishing village. With a fairly small population of 15,000 inhabitants, the Danube Delta has the lowest population density in Romania, one inhabitant per 30 hectares, 87 percent of its inhabitants being Romanians, 10 percent *Lipovan* Russians, 2 percent Ukrainians, and 1 percent other ethnicities. *Sulina* is the only major city in the Danube Delta, which is a harbour on both the Danube and the Black Sea. It is Romania's lowest altitude city, and also its sunniest.[2]

1 Pop, 2010: p. 22
2 ROMAN, Valentin, "Dunarea Slideshare", online: <https://www.slideshare.net/ValentinRoman1/dunarea-49023827>



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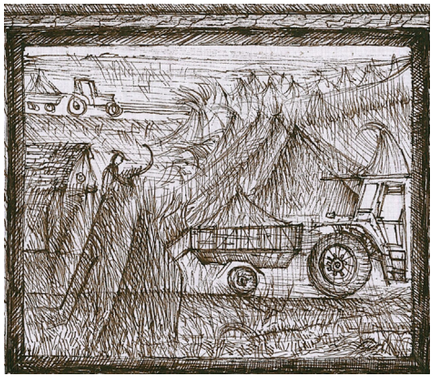

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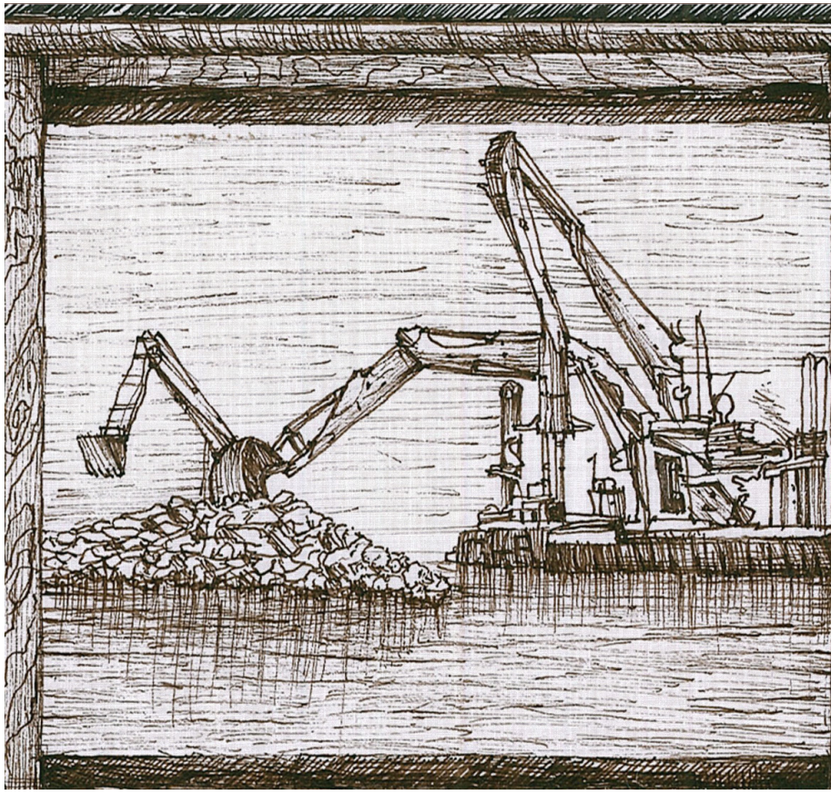
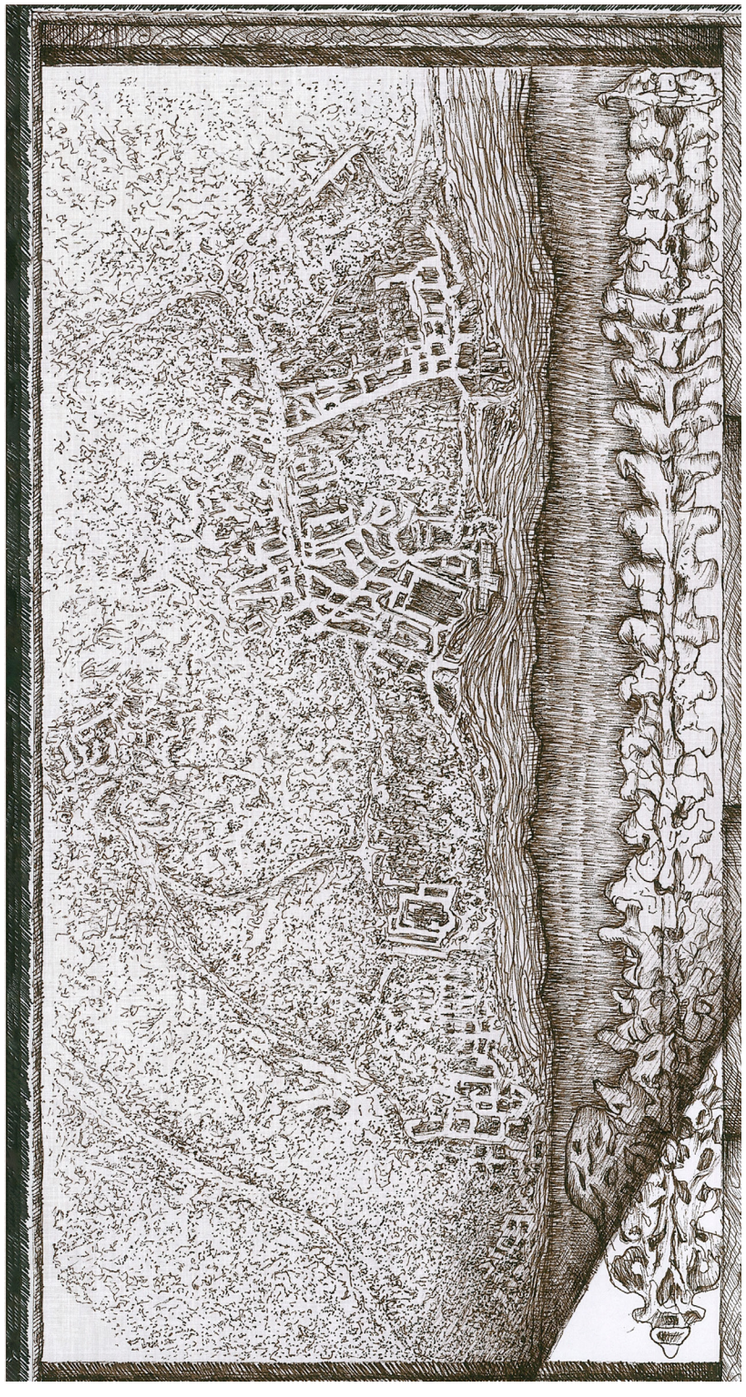


The first large-scale works in the Danube Delta took place under the guidance of Romanian scientist *Grigore Antipa*. The works of the European Commission transformed *Sulina* brunch into a navigable canal. Until the 1960s, only the digging of a few canals disturbed the ecological balance in the Delta. After this period, massive works began during *Nicolae Ceausescu*'s Communist regime, the most ambitious project of all being the partial drying-up of the *Razelm-Sinoie* lake complex and the transformation of vast areas of water into agricultural land, suitable for the cultivation of cereals, by artificial digging, diking, and dredging along the canals, blocking huge amount of sediments carried by the Danube. The lakes were thus separated from the sea by a strip of land, the coastal belt. *Ceausescu*'s decision transformed the brackish waters of *Razelm-Sinoe* into a fresh water basin, to ensure irrigation for the northern part of *Dobrudja*. The project meant the damming of the three arms, *Chilia, Sulina* and *Sf. Gheorghe*, with intensive agriculture developing in-between. In less than 20 years, 10 percent of the Delta's surface had already been drained [1], leading to a great loss in habitat biodiversity. Rewilding initiatives, particularly by WWF [2] and Rewilding Europe, aim to restore these wetland areas, reconnecting floodplains to the river, reintroducing key species, promoting natural grazing, controlling invasive species, fostering sustainable ecotourism, enhancing flood and climate resilience, and collaborating with communities and policymakers.[3] The Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation is divided into 20 functional areas, comprising strictly protected areas, where human access is limited or even prohibited, buffer zones, and economic zones, where agriculture, fish farming and tourism are allowed.[4]

Image 1 shows a peasant working the field, gathering reed, which he then transports on his tractor, as seen in image 2. Image 3 (observational drawing) could be a dredger widening and deepening a canal in the Delta, an operation with negative long-term effect on the fragile balance of the deltaic ecosystem, or it could also be an excavator pulling away the rubble of an ancient dam that used to block the natural flow of the river, in order to lower the sea level and reclaim fertile sedimentary soil for agriculture, resulting in a loss of biodiversity.

1 Năstase, 2005: p. 10
2 World Wide Fund for Nature
3 WWF, 2003: p. 93-223
4 INFODELTA, "Arii protejate incluse în Rezervatia Biosferei Delta Dunării"



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2.3 Orgamè / Argamum

Coordinates: 44°45'30"N latitude and 28°56'25"E longitude

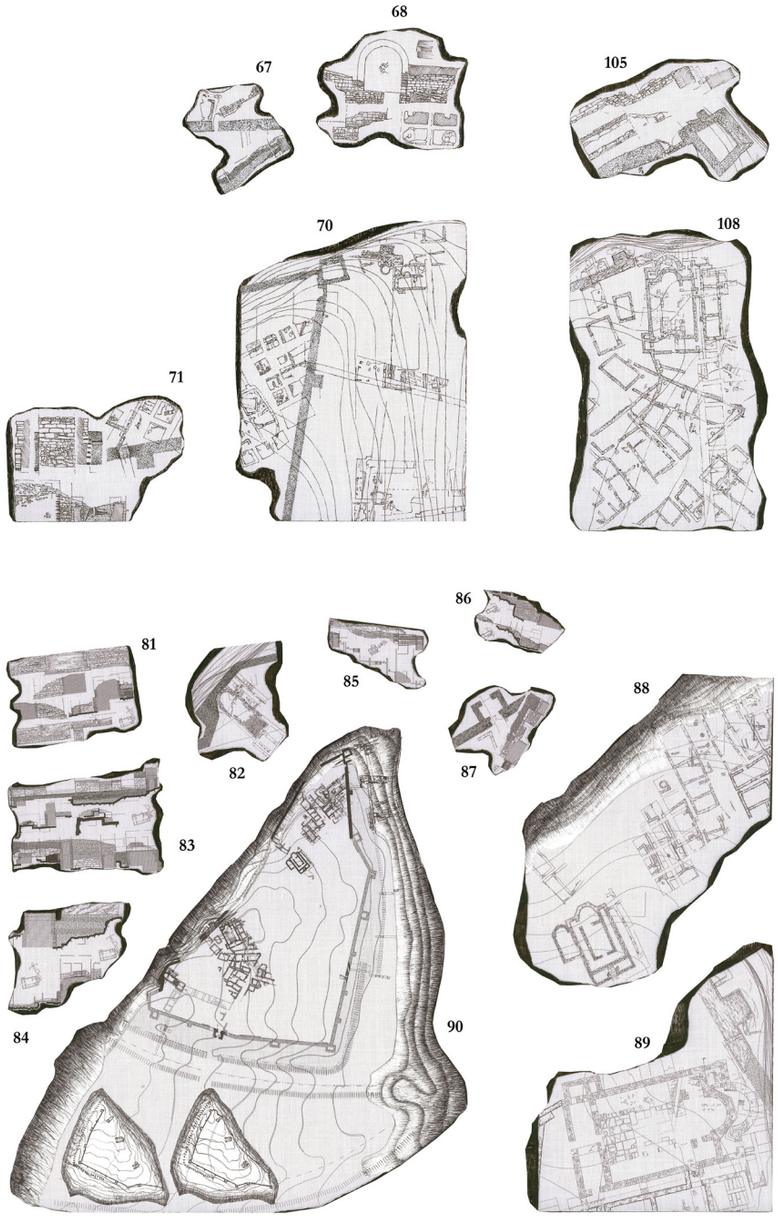
Orgamè is one of the four most ancient Greek settlements on the Black Sea and the oldest *polis* on the Romanian territory. It was founded around the middle of the VII century BC at the end of Cape *Dolojman,* on the shores of the *Razelm-Sinoe* Lake, which was an open bay of the Black Sea at that time. The Cape is one of the 18 Strictly Protected Areas of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, with a total area of 125 hectares.[1]

2.3.1 Early archaeological discoveries

The name of the settlement founded by the Greek colonists from *Miletus* is known to us due to a fragment from the geographical work (*Periegesis*) of *Hekataios*, an active *Milesian* logographer between the 6th and the 5th century BC. The fragment contains the following phrase: "*Orgamè*: *polis* next to the *Istros - Ister* (Danube)". At the same time, this lapidary fragment is the oldest written attestation for a city on the territory of Romania. The Latinised form of *Orgamè*'s name (*Argamum*) also appears in an epigraphic document, discovered during the first campaign of archaeological excavations at *Histria* (1914). It is about the text of a decree (*horothesia* from the Greek philosophical term *khôra*, meaning the act of fixing boundaries) issued in the year 100 AD by the governor of the province of *Moesia Inferior*, *Manius Laberius Maximus*, which settled the boundaries of *Histria*'s *polis* territory, among other things. It reads that to the north, it bordered with *do[minium] Argamensium* ("the domain of the *Argamens*", a territory owned by the residential community of *Orgamè*).[2] It was the Romanian archaeologist *Vasile Pârvan* who, in 1916, identified the ruins at Cape *Dolojman* with the Ancient Greek city of *Orgamè*. Archaeological exploration of the site began in 1926 at the initiative of archaeologist *Paul Nicorescu* before a regular excavation programme was launched in 1965 and is still active today.[3]

Drawing 1 (personal work from Plate II) depicts an aerial view of the site ruins covered in vegetation, along the paths and shore like a dorsal spine.

1 Baralis, et al., 2012: p. 165
2 Mănucu-Ademesteanu, 2001: p. 13
3 idem 2



From a typological point of view, the elements making up the monumental ensemble can be divided into two main categories: vestiges and funerary monuments, concentrated on a relatively small area of about 2.5 ha at the extremity of Cape *Dolojman*, enclosed within parts of the Greek and Roman fortifications, such as walls, earthen waves or *vallum* and defensive ditches. Inside the fortifications, four early Christian *basilicas* have been unearthed. On the south side of the fortification, an artisanal area comprising Greek and Roman kilns for ceramic tiles, bricks, and pottery was discovered. Unfortunately, the poor state of preservation of the vestiges from the archaic era identified in the East Cliff sector and the absence of an in-situ conservation programme at the date of the discovery (the 1980s) led to their disappearance from the field, due to erosion caused by natural environmental factors. The loss was due to the location of these traces in the most exposed place to the action of the strong winds from the northeast: at the extremity of the high cliff, devoid of defense against any type of obstacle. The only relics from the archaic era, two circular ovens remained in this sector for fired ceramics, from which only the lower part (combustion chamber) and the feed aisle (*praefurnium*) were preserved. In the same area, rock terracing works have been discovered, that were carried out in pre-Roman times. Further west and northwest to a distance of about 2 km from the fortress, there are the dense remains of the necropolis of Greek times. The funerary monuments (*tumuli*) were still visible in the inter-war period when the land was used as a communal islet. Strategic position drew military attention during the conflicts of the 20th century: on the surrounding hillsides traces of trenches are visible, and inside the fortress, there is evidence of the destruction of monuments by explosions. Later, the communist regime would use collectivisation for agricultural purposes, and most of the mounds disappeared under repeated plowing. One of the few that were left turned out to hide the oldest Greek burial site excavated so far on the Black Sea shore (mid-7*th* century BC – TA95).[1]

67: Small Gate Section; 68: West Gate; 70: The south-eastern corner of the enclosure with tower T8, zone A3-A4 and the walls of the fortified terrace from the Greek period; 71: Plan and section of the enclosure walls of the "*praetorium*"; 81: Bastion B6 and the adjoining curtains; 82: Small *Basilica* (I); 83: Sections through the Great *Basilica* (II) and curtain wall; 84: Sections through curtain wall and *Basilica* II; 85: Section through *Basilica* III; 86: Section through *Basilica* I and curtain wall; 87: West Gate; 88: *Basilica* III with Greek sector; 89: *Basilica* II with Bastion B6; 90: *intra-muros* area and cliff shore

1 Mănucu-Ademesteanu, 2001: p. 13, 14, 17

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Serious damage to the state of conservation (especially the artifacts located along the high cliff of Cape *Dolojman*) was induced by the creation of a stone quarry in the 1960s. The use of explosives to detach substantial pieces from the rock caused the collapse of many monuments, disturbing the stratigraphy and sliding some layers into the waters of Lake *Razelm*. The destruction of the site by the prospect of continued quarrying was stopped with the initiation in 1965 of the programme of systematic archaeological research by the Romanian Institute of Archaeology, which made it possible to read the entire archaeological stratigraphy at the foot of the cliff.[1]

Currently the archaeological complex "Greek-Roman citadel *Orgamè/ Argamum*" is included in the list of historical monuments from Romania. Responsibility for the preservation and enhancement of the immovable and mobile archaeological heritage on the site is within the competence of the *Tulcea* City Eco-Museal Research Institute. At the same time, the mobile inventory discovered on the premises of the archaeological reserve, through research or by chance, are collections of the Museum of Archeology of the Eco-Museal Research Institute, which takes care of their restoration, preservation, and display. An archaeological research base is installed within the site, which houses the team of specialists during the research campaigns; it also serves as a warehouse and provisional restoration laboratory, for the duration of each campaign.

The archaeological research programme of the site is coordinated by the Institute of Archeology "*Vasile Pârvan*" of the Romanian Academy (Bucharest), with the permanent collaboration of the *Tulcea* Eco-Museum Research Institute and other research and university institutions.[2]

Image 1: an aerial view of the TA-95 *tumulus*, discovered by archaeologist *Vasilica Lungu* in 1995
Image 2: Greek-Oriental ceramics from the earliest phase of habitation (650-625 BC)
Image 3: Archaic Greco-Oriental attic pottery from the 6th century BC)
Image 4: Aerial view of the *Faleza Est* sector

1 Mănucu-Ademesteanu, 2001: p. 17
2 Mănucu-Ademesteanu, 2001: p. 12, 13



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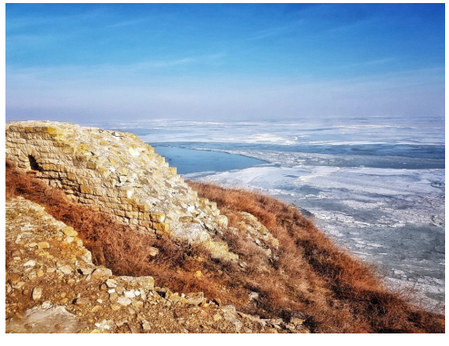

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2.3.2 Latest research and excavation campaigns

Archaeological excavations happen in summer every year, and the latest area to be excavated in the last years is the North Enclosure Sector (shown in photos 1 and 3). Research in this sector led to the discovery of a building consisting of three rooms, dating from the 5th - 6th centuries AD. This building, still under investigation, was located between the early Byzantine precinct and *Basilica* 1 and probably had a military role serving as one of the city's garrison. This hypothesis is supported by its placement in the most exposed place of the defensive system (North enclosure, respectively Tower 1), but also by the discovery of some weapons (shield umbones) in the middle room. The southern room is delimited by the north side of *Basilica* 1 through a narrow valley, probably used for access to Tower 1. Also, in this sector, a segment was investigated, from the early Byzantine precinct, that was rebuilt in the 6th century AD.[1]

Since 2009, *Orgamè* has been part of the "*Pont-Euxin*" programme of the French National Research Agency (coordinated by archaeologist *Alexandre Baralis*), that was developed for its Romanian section by the *Camille Jullian* Centre (University of *Aix-Marseille*), the Romanian Institute of Archeology "*V. Pârvan*" (archaeologist *Mihaela Manucu-Adamesteanu*) and the South-East European Studies Institute (archaeologist *Vasilica Lungu*) of the Romanian Academy. The objective of this collaboration is to approach the colonial strategies at work within this mobile space. This research is therefore part of a multidisciplinary framework, based on active participation from CEREGE[2] (CNRS[3]-University of *Aix-Marseille*) in geomorphology, and from Ecolab (CNRS-University of *Toulouse* III) in palynology.[4]

Image 2 depicts the emblematic T6 bastion section of the wall near the cliff in winter, with *Razelm* Lake partially frozen.

Image 4 shows a large ceramic vessel, called "*chiup*" in Romanian, unearthed during the most recent archaeological excavations in the summer of 2024.

1 Information taken from *in situ* tourist information panels
2 Research and teaching centre environmental geosciences
3 National Centre of Scientific Research
4 Bony, et al., 2013: p. 133

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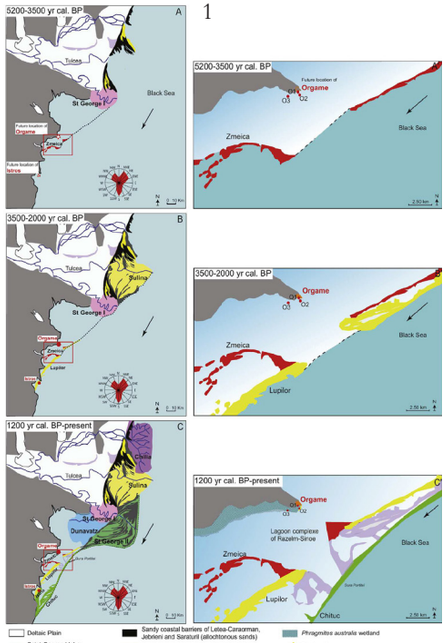

Source: Article - "History and influence of the Danube delta lobes on the evolution of the ancient harbour of Orgame (Dobrogea, Romania)", 2015, Journal of Archaeological Science

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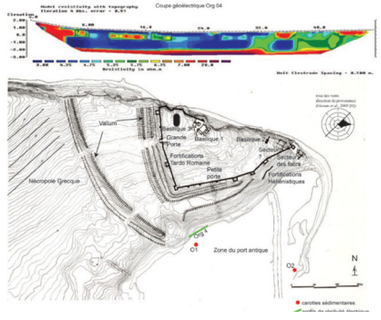

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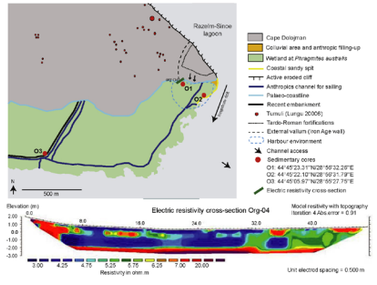

Source: Article - "History and influence of the Danube delta lobes on the evolution of the ancient harbour of Orgame (Dobrogea, Romania)", 2015, Journal of Archaeological Science

G. Bony et al. / Journal of Archaeological Science 61 (2015) 186–203

4



From a scientific point of view, 2012 presents itself as a year of transition, marked by the completion of the initial excavation programme at *Orgamè*, as well as by the launch of cross-sectional analyses, a prelude to the monographic publication of the results acquired in the field since 2010. This stage of the work responds to the delivery of numerous analysis results, both in the field of archaeometry and in paleoenvironmental disciplines (sedimentology, palynology, microbiology, etc.).[1]

Other granulometric, macrofaunistic, ostracofaunistic logs, chrono-stratigraphic comparison of multiple cores, paleo-environmental reconstruction of the shore, radiocarbon dating studies were undertaken (images 1, 2, and 3). Two sediment cores (O1 and O2) were taken around the ancient port, respectively at approximately 100 m and 300 m from the promontory. The third core (O3) was taken about 1.5 km northwest of the city. All three cores displayed identical stratigraphies. The conclusion was therefore that the evolution was similar in the ancient harbour area (cores O1 and O2), and outside it (O3).

As a result of the above-mentioned research, the following zones were identified: a marine bay on the Danube's edge, a quasi-closed lagoon, an oligohaline fluvial lagoon and a Phragmites wetland.[2]

The quasi-closure of the bay was dated around 4500-3500 cal. BP. The port area was then a lagoon environment naturally sheltered from the swells and storms of the open sea. In addition, the S-E foot of Cape *Dolojman* is ideally located opposite the pass. This environment therefore possessed all the qualities for the installation of a natural port activity without major development in the 7th century BC, which continued up to the 7th century AD, in spite of the gradual clogging of the bay. [3]

Image 4: map of systematic surveys, carried out by *A. Baralis* and *V. Lungu*, covering an area of 130 ha, or a little less than half of the peninsula which houses the settlement of *Orgamè*. [4]

1 Baralis, et al., 2012: p. 165
2 Bony, et al., 2013: p. 138-148
3 Bony, et al., 2013: p. 149
4 Baralis, et al., 2011: p. 228



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3. ACTING ON THE PLACE

In what follows a series of five projects previously proposed for the site are presented.

3.1 Prior projects on site: 5 case studies

3.1.1 Lut/Adobe 2006 - 2010 Project

Status: Built

At Cape *Dolojman*, the Lut/Adobe 2006 project was organized by the HAR Foundation (founded by sculptor and architecture professor *Alexandru Nancu*) in cooperation with the *Tulcea* cultural authorities (Manager *Xenia Hogea*) and participants, plastic artists, and architects, from Romania (*Mariana Celac* and *Cătălin Berescu*) and from abroad.[1] The three clay and shrub constructions (images 1, 2, and 3) insinuate themselves into a plant and animal environment, including beehives and horses; light, water, sound, smell, and diffuse neighborhoods of the necropolis of *Argamum* fortress. Experiments with asymmetries and curved lines are added and united with textures - clay wall, reed roof, floor made of bricks and stone or simple gravel, discreetly filtering natural light. The structural part is also adapted to the context: self-supporting structural elements on well-weighted beams, pillars embedded in the foundation stone, the median house half-hidden in the bank, on a typical half-board side. Poles were favoured on the north side which is exposed to the strongest winds *vs.* the gable roof made in *Jurilovca*. The details of the joints, the local reed ridge design, adobe bricks, shed, lateral closures for the reed roof are some specific elements of vernacular architecture that leave a lasting impression on the on-looker. The passage of time and especially the harsh winter weather have highlighted some problems (the houses require complete external and internal finishing, repair of the reed roof, bracing up the hut structure). The process of conception, insertion into the slope of the land, and dimensioning of the sanitary group are debatable, considering the importance of the sanitary space that was designed based on a mix of rural-urban customs. One can still enjoy the delights of the shower with solar-heated water, a view of the lagoon, and excellent natural ventilation.[2]

1 Ioan, 2006.
2 Berescu, 2010: p. 48-57

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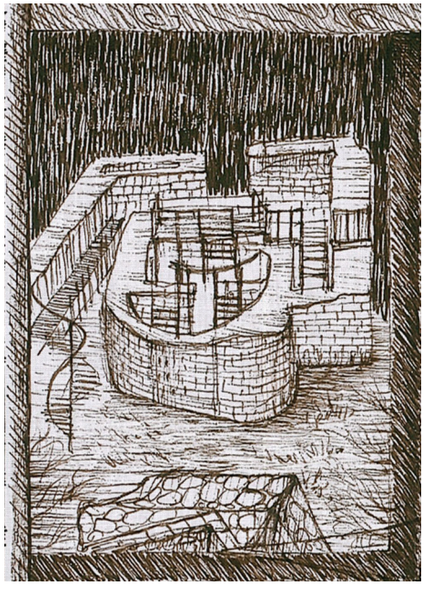

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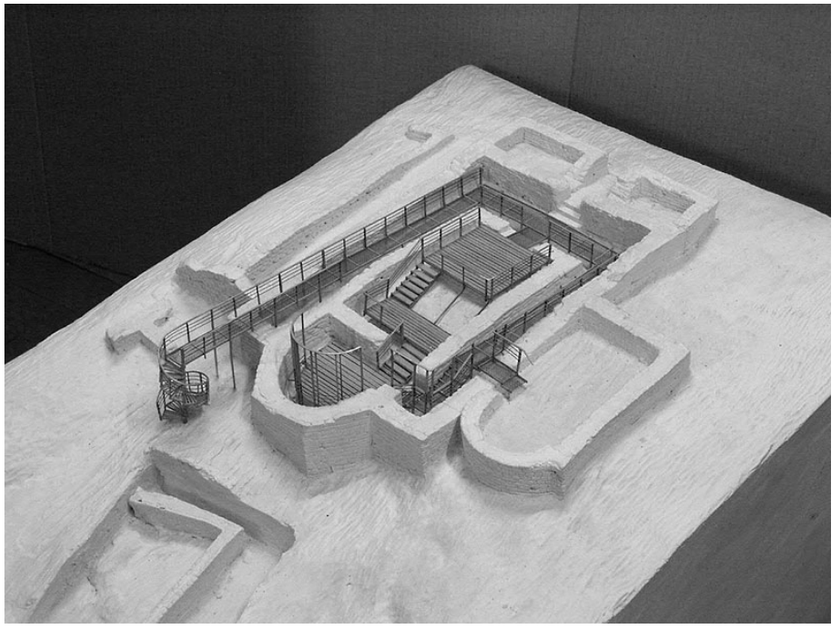

3.1.2 *Ștefan Bâlici* and *Virgil Apostol* Project (2001)

Status: Unbuilt

> *"The attitude towards a monument must fall within the limits of understanding and perception of the inherited image. The preserved object imposes the architectural solution. The proposals presented follow the line of interventions through clear differentiations at the level of language between the old and the new."* [1]

The premises of the project: the *Basilica* with *Umgang* is preserved at the level of the foundations and, in some places, the elevation sections do not exceed one meter in height. The walls are bound with earth in the area of the *narthex*, naves, chapel and annexes. The second constructive stage (an important repair that probably occurred following a partial collapse) includes the area of the apse and is made of limestone blocks bound with mortar. An important element recorded during their architectural survey led to the construction of the hypothesis regarding the difference in level between the *narthex* and the nave of the *basilica*: on the northern wall of the side nave, near the entrance to the nave, traces of the original plaster were preserved at a lower level (approx. 0.5 m) than at the entrance. The intervention aims at highlighting the qualities of the land and adapting it to the current morphology, suggesting the treading level, differentiating the elements of the former place of worship and preserving the masonry. Transparent metal platforms (metal grills) follow the tread level in the south-side nave or run parallel to the ground in the other collateral one. The nave that is outlined by a succession of wooden platforms placed on the ground is finished with the apse suggested by a semicircular metal structure, as shown in images 1 and 2. From the level of these suspended circulations, connections are made with the chapel and by means of a spiral staircase to the wall of the surrounding enclosure. To ensure the reversibility of the intervention, the scaffolds are designed from elements connected with bolts and are placed on the ground by means of soles. For the purpose of protection, the walls that are bound with earth and those bound with mortar will be completed using a maximum of two to three brick layers.[2]

1 Apostol, 2001, translation from Romanian
2 idem 1

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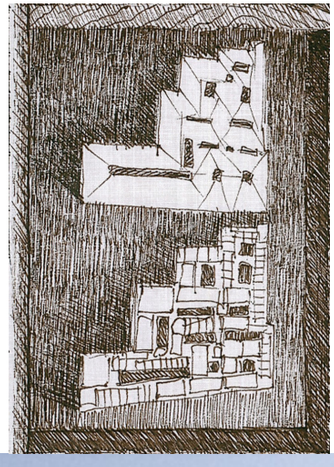

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3.1.3 *Serban Anghel* Diploma Project (2016)

Status: Unbuilt

DIPLOMA FESTIVAL 2016
"*Ion Mincu*" University of Architecture and Urbanism
The Faculty of Architecture
Coordinator: Prof. Dr. Arch. *Florin Biciuscă*

Anghel Serban is a graduate of the "*Ion Mincu*" University of Architecture and Urbanism in Bucharest, which seeks constant improvement in drawing and architecture. At the time of his diploma, he had completed an internship at the SYAA architecture office and collaborated as an illustrator with various companies.[1]

His diploma project entitled "Archaeological and Tourist Center at *Argamum*, *Tulcea* County" has, as the starting point, the underutilised cultural heritage of *Dobrudja*, including ruins of ancient fortifications. In the framework of this heritage, the archaeological site at *Argamum* fortress was chosen due to its Antiquity (the oldest fortress in Romania) and its location on the *Dolojman* coast. The predominantly flat land combined with the vertical accents of the coast, determined the volume of his project, which he simplified under a continuous line connecting the lake, the land, and the sky, as shown in the second render image.[2]

In his opinion, the lack of current typological references on the site and the history of the overlapping urban fabrics of the *polis* led to the orthogonal plan of the project, oriented towards the cardinal points. In the composition of the plan, the inner courtyards (image 1 in plan and 3 in perspective) define the functions (hotel, restaurant, research center, museum) and connect the spaces. The interplay between solid and void is mediated by the peristyle. From the volumetric composition, a tower acts as a visual link with the neighboring cities and a signal for the entire complex.[3]

1 <https://institute.ro/diploma/diploma-2016/serban-anghel-centru-arheologic-si-turistic-la-cetatea-argamum-jud-tulcea-1869.html>
2 idem 1
3 idem 1

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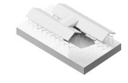





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3.1.4 *Vlad Ducar* Diploma Project (2021)

Status: Unbuilt

> *"Unfortunately, the archaeological site lacks any means of public displaying, which makes it unappealing to most visitors. In order to create means of presentation for Argamum and its surroundings, I chose three conceptual pillars that could define an enhanced learning experience for a visitor: Museion, Incubatio, and Slow Tourism."* [1]

Museion evolved from a temple which was part of a gymnasium in the Classical period. *Incubatio* represents an ancient practice present in multiple cultures such as Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Hebrew, and even Christian, which supposes sleeping in a sacred area to have a divine dream with curing aspects. The activities are separated in five categories: excavations, conservation, research, object creation and exhibitions. The excavation activity brings together the visitor and the professional and allows the scholar to be part of the discovered items.

The Gate – Research center (fig. 2, 3): The building acts as a landmark and a gate, by being placed above the crossroad that takes the visitor to the *intra-muros* area and to the beach. In terms of functionality, the structure will accommodate two workshops, a small archive, office area, common areas, a deposit and other secondary spaces (toilets, small annexes).

The Roof – Housing space: This structure has a double role, the first one being the protection of the 3rd *basilica* remains and six two person bedrooms. The housing units are lifted from the ground and placed inside the roof, with one opening looking towards the building's ridge and the other one down, towards the *basilica*. Under the housing space a visiting area with a cantilevered deck is designed. (render image 1)

The Lighthouse – Learning space (fig. 2, 3): The tower houses several public-related spaces, such as a pottery workshop, a conference room, a multi-functional space, a library, and a coffee shop. Next to the tower, placed in the reed field, a small annex acting as a technical space and bathrooms for the temporary housing can be found.[2]

1 <https://www.uauim.ro/evenimente/best-diploma-projects-uauim-fa-2021/>
2 idem 1

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3.1.5 *Adrian Timar* Project (2023)

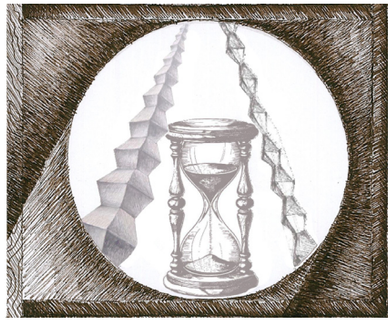
Status: Unbuilt

"Mysticism and the phases of desertification between Dolojman and Bisericuta"
AI Art exhibition at *Orgamè* / *Argamum* Info Point (image 1)
May - October 2023

> *"If I didn't live a thousand years ago, or maybe I don't remember, I pray to the Artificial Intelligence to take me back, so that I can see things as they were when the Istros met the sea in front of the Orgamè fortress, straightening the fish cards towards the island of Bisericuta, held by the shadows of witches. The hero's pyre smoking, broken pots thrown at the fortress wall (fig.4) and the sand that makes the ships stand still, (fig.2) a league from the shore, brought in images throw like children, back. Images of the erosion of the Dolojman cliff, ruins on the island of Bisericuta, (fig.5) armor from the graves of heroes, triremes mooring at Dolojman, the witches' feast at the Great Gate of the Orgamè fortress, (fig.3) fish market as in the old days, amphorae, libations and cremations, dishes and Easter eggs.. .*
> *PS: people from the future will live in the past."* [1]

> *"I found it suitable the proposal to make an exhibition "in the wilderness", in a place, Orgamè, which has seen a lot of history, and with this I want to give my message a responsible social-historical involvement. I propose an approach to the image of the Delta from another angle, trying to identify the "pests" of the Delta, with works for which the lake of yellow water lilies and the green weeping willows of the melancholic landscapers may not even exist... The present exhibition is the continuation of the discovery and the identification of areas of conflict. That's why the colors in the works are those found in the Delta, but aggressively presented, in a dramatic, everyday context, transforming like a joyful cry of a child into a cry of deaf pain, fear... For several years wandering between Sinoe, Parches, and Ceatalchioi, I didn't find the World of the Romantic Delta, but I did find a turbulent, chaotic, disorientated Delta. The tradition, the balance of the places is still present, vaguely, finding value in the gestures of the few locals left in the area, in the confused attitude of their lives."* [2]

1 <https://www.artimar.ro2020catalog2020.pdf> translation from Romanian
2 idem 1, translation from Romanian



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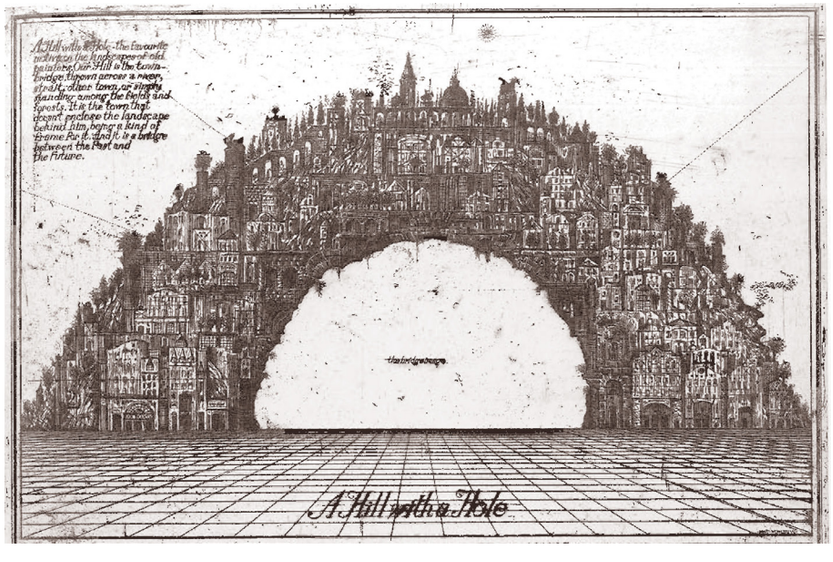

3.2 Concluding analysis

Each of the proposed projects covered in the previous pages possesses various valuable stances on architecture, that enrich its discourse. Firstly, the "Lut/Adobe" summer workshops project that led to the completion of two lodging and one toilet mud and straw huts emphasizes the vernacular potential of local materials to create an architecture that offers climate comfort with little means. Secondly, *Ștefan Bâlici* and *Virgil Apostol*'s restoration proposal for the *Umgang basilica* highlights a very scholarly and conservative attitude towards a monument, merely searching to enhance its accessibility through elevated wooden walkways above the preserved ruins. Thirdly, *Șerban Anghel*'s diploma project seeks to find a contextual typological reference for his Archaeological Tourist Center in a place where hardy any building has endured, apart from the ruins of *basilicas* and the *tumulus* complex, which led him to explore the central courtyards with peristyle instead. Fourthly, *Vlad Ducar*'s master thesis provides a strong conceptual ground, engaging the history and symbolism of the Ancient Greek *Museion* and *Incubatio*, while offering a complex materialization, that would require extended means, both at the scale of the territory and the site. Last but not least, *Adrian Timar*'s AI *capriccios* coupled by his thoughtful narratives shed light upon the true contemporary atmosphere of the Delta region along with its ecological and societal problems: at the edge of architecture, with the least of means, meant to stay on paper. [1]

The fact that currently Cape *Dolojman* is a strictly protected area of the Danube Delta UNESCO World Heritage Site ensures that any tentative design scenario envisioning a permanent structure on a bigger scale than that of an elevated pathway winding along the ruins will almost certainly remain unbuilt. This honest acknowledgment, rather than triggering lamentation over the impossibility of acting upon this picturesque place, infused with poetic qualities, opens the opportunity for a temporary intervention.[2]

1 The bottom left image (2) depicts a famous "paper architecture" etching entitled "A Hill with a Hole" by Russian architects *Alexander Brodsky* and *Ilya Utkin* for whom I hold a deep fascination. The etching will prove to be a key reference in my work.
2 The upper left image (1) from Plate VII illustrates an hourglass as a symbol of the passage of time, flanked by two representations of *Constantin Brancusi*'s "Endless Column" sculpture, whose stacked rhomboids also resemble an hourglass.

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Here,
nowadays,
I constantly view,
When I look at architecture
a collection of unresolved dichotomies:
in-between techne and art, pragmatic and poetic,
the concrete and the abstract, the natural and the artifact,
the contingent and the autonomous, the ephemeral and the timeless,
the already-built and the yet-to-be. Unlike skin and clothing, architecture is providing shelter for our basic, primordial physical needs but also a home for our metaphysical homelessness. Architecture implies the act of creation, but unfortunately, the mere gesture of edification leaves a void somewhere, depleting the Earth of resources in order to be built. Therefore, in my projects, I seek to cultivate a sense of mystery and nostalgia, reverent to the past, towards an unforeseeable future.

4. A PATH TO THE PLACE

4.1 A path not taken

My approach starts with a reflection on the site's spatial and poetic qualities: the seemingly never-ending horizontal flatness of the plateau, occasionally coupled with upward and downward paths towards the ruins along the steep rugged cliffs, the song of birds and swarms of insects, the tranquil rippling of waves that wash the pebbled wild beach shores. It suffices for some to gaze upon the once unearthed stone walls that gradually get buried again with time, to sense an evocative atmosphere of harmonious entanglement between Nature and Artifact.

Not long ago, I pondered upon the essence of architecture and conjured the incoming thoughts in a *calligramme* (1). I truly believe that at the commencement of any creative endeavor, and all the more so in the case of architecture, one must introspectively reflect on its purpose, which may stay almost hidden in the deep recesses of the collective unconscious, the abode of distant memories. Architecture's privileged state of being at the threshold of science and humanities opens up an often disregarded or even contested tension (triggered by what I call the "unresolved dichotomies" in my *calligramme*) that nevertheless holds the unexpected potential to coalesce around it the entire project, according to: the needs, the question raised by them and the means to fulfill them, in a way that may challenge the *status quo*.

In terms of the needs, I believe the locals know best how to care for their basic needs themselves through a vernacular architecture. An infrastructure that addresses those basic needs (like housing and sanitation) already exists, with part of it in need of restoration. Therefore, I aim at creating something that may not necessarily be needed *a priori* by the local people. However, *a posteriori*, they may find it captivating or intriguing and start inhabiting it in an intuitive way based on their sensory experience of space and what it instills upon them. As *Louis Kahn* said:

> *"The creation of Art is not the fulfillment of a need but the creation of a need. The world never needed Beethoven's 5th Symphony until he created it. Now many could not live without listening to it."* [1]

1 Latour, 1986: p. 327

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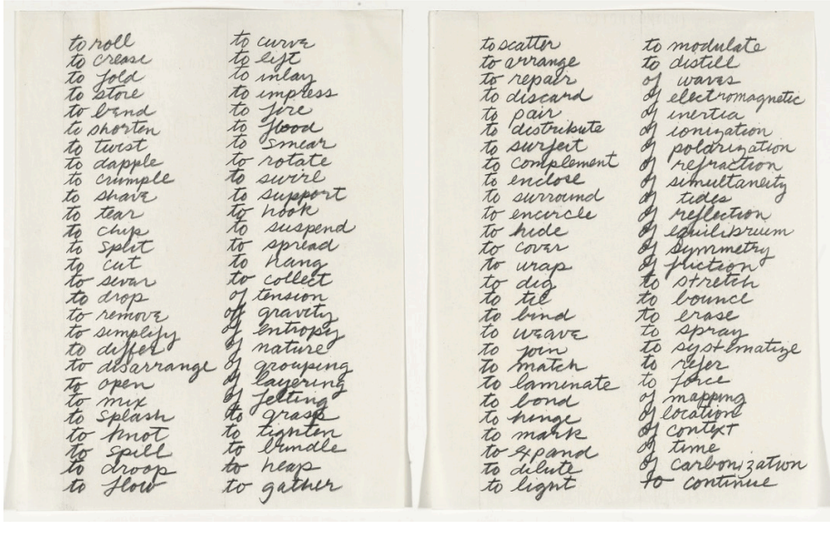

Richard Serra's Verb List (1967)
"Actions to relate to oneself, material, place, and process"
Courtesy of MoMA.

What if architecture could borrow this lofty *desiderata* from the arts and focus on its overlooked ability to address not only one's basic physical needs, but also the more abstract, metaphysical, or intellectual needs: subjective feelings, perceptions, emotions, or the phenomenological and aesthetic experience of space? Such an architecture would not even need physical materialization to fulfill this goal. Be it only in a drawing state, as a graphic narration or fiction, it would content the observer and stir impressions that trigger repercussions in the souls and minds of people. This paper architecture would require the least of means to be built.

In terms of the question raised by the needs, instead of asking the obvious question: "How can architecture serve, or respond to erosion and sedimentation?" what if we ask, instead, the opposite: How can erosion and sedimentation serve to enrich architecture and its *corpus* of ideas? What if the transient natural processes that erode rocks and carry sediments across vast spaces in time, in perpetual motion and evolution, would inspire us to conceive a more itinerant architecture, challenging the old established discourse that champions situatedness and the "place" over the foreigner and the uprootedness? As our contemporary world is becoming increasingly globalized, cosmopolitan, and even non-referential, as some might argue[1], maybe it is time to question an architecture born from its ground, because in nature, *pantha rhei* ("all is in movement"). A *Genius Locomotoris* would be better prepared to face natural and artificial disasters than *Genius Loci*.

Lastly, in terms of the means that are required to fulfill the needs, I believe we should view architecture more as an end-in-itself rather than a means towards another end[2]. A tool, a hammer can hardly be poetic. Therefore, the excessive instrumentalisation of architecture (focusing almost exclusively on what it does - its function, rather than also on what it is - its essence) has led to the loss of an *architecture parlante*, capable of engaging with imagination, symbolism or allegorical thinking, similar to language and literature. As a future architect, I am fascinated by an architecture that doesn't dwell solely in the realm of the utilitarian, but also in the aesthetic-creative domain. Being a student project, my master thesis will not necessarily be implemented. Therefore, I indulged in my propensity for the conceptual emphasis on the abstract, that unlike the project's function, does not depend on materialisation for its relevance.

1 Olgiati, 2018: p. 14
2 Kant's concept "end-in-itself" in "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals"(1785)



1

I am particularly interested in ways of managing soils[1] that are excavated to reach the first *strata* which contain anthropological traces. Currently, these soils are simply dumped into the sea if the archaeological excavation happens close to the cliff, or inserted into the ancient walls ditch, called *vallum*. These first layers of earth, the fertile *strata* most rich in *humus*, are covered with rare and protected plants in many areas of the *intra-muros* section at *Argamum*, which further complicates archaeological excavations. Should the earth be used to cover back and preserve the ruins as soon as excavations finish and human traces are studied? Or should it be used for cultivation and the investigated sites left open for tourists to visit them, if the findings are of significant value? Would this fertile excavated earth have the potential to become a botanical garden, fostering pollination and allowing further ecological research?[2]

If one looks at the act of archaeological excavation as a process of artificial (man-made) erosion and sedimentation, a parallel can be made with the Land Art movement that started in the United States of America in the 1960s, and also dubbed "Earthworks", emphasizing the manner in which it operates and its prime matter: the displacement of earth. Moreover, another insightful link between archaeology and Land Art is the early life story of one of its founders, *Michael Heizer*.

Having grown up with a Cold War pioneering archaeologist father, *Robert Heizer*, he had been regularly exposed to ancient sites, artifacts, and remains from the past since his youth (like the remnants of the *Olmec* civilization in *La Venta*). Visiting the digs with his father and seeing the scale, form, and materiality of ancient structures instilled in him a profound appreciation for timeless artifacts that transcend the test of time, along with a deep connection to the land and its geological features. As it has often been stated, this relationship informs much of his practice, where so many of this works are based either on manipulating or working directly with earth and the landscape.[3] Let us therefore delve deeper into Land Art in the following chapter to find other sources of inspiration from it.

1 For further heritage management information, I am indebted to UCLouvain Professor *Thérèse Claeys*.
2 Left drawing (1) from Plate II, depicts *intra-muros Argamum* in a utopian future scenario where all the ancient *polis* would be excavated (only thicker walls are currently unearthed), resulting in approx. 18.000 cubic meters of soil which could be planted.
3 Kett, 2015: p. 18



1

Pictures 1 and 2 show “Land Art” attempts by tourists on

2



4.2 A path to Land Art

If we are to look at ruins through the *Vitruvian* triad of attributes[1], could it be argued that beauty is the only one of the three still standing when the integrity of their structure and the habitation is gone? What if we view ruins not as mnemonic devices speaking about the past, but rather as transient sculptures on the landscape created through the entanglement of human and non-human erosion and sedimentation in time? Perhaps we could answer these questions reading *Richard Long*, who perceives walking as an action that not only leaves traces, but becomes a sign on the ground, along a route; it is an element that constitutes:

> *“one more sediment, a mark which is added to the thousands of other sediments deposited on the surface of the territory and coming from human history and geological evolution”* [2]

Other founder of Land Art, *Robert Smithson*, aptly stated:

> *“The strata of the Earth is a jumbled museum. Embedded in the sediment is a text that contains limits and boundaries which evade the rational order and social structures which confine art. In order to read the rocks we must become conscious of geologic time, and of the layers of prehistoric material that is entombed in the Earth’s crust. When one scans the ruined sites of pre-history one sees a heap of wrecked maps that upset our present art historical limits”* [3]

His words reflect sensible and poetic ways of thinking and acting upon the landscape that illustrate a deep schism from the dominant current paradigms: the overly pragmatic and material world that sees in everything only tools and means towards end goals and profit, in complete disregard of the metaphysical and sensitive experience, leading to ultimate impoverishment and divorce between Nature and Culture.

In what follows, I bring forth a series of personal thought-provoking questions and impressions of over fifty Land Art (and not only) references.

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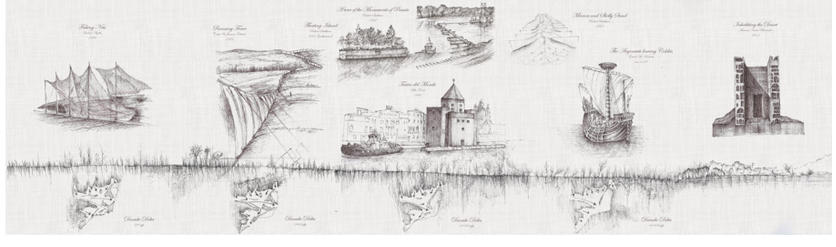
1 *Firmitas*, *Utilitas*, *Venustas*, as mentioned in his famous first architecture treaty, *Vitruvii de architectura libri decem*
2 Tiberghien, 2010: p. 110
3 Smithson, 1968: p. 89







How does nature's blowing breath quietly tensions the drying nets, and ladens them with remnants of labor from yesterday's catch? The feel of a dusty translucent web throbbing in *Andrew Wyeth*'s "Fishing Nets".

How far can a fence stretch the fabric of our imagination's flowing vastness? On the fleeting dance of *Christo & Jeanne-Claude*'s "Running Fence" that neither separates, nor binds, but simply dances with the wind.

When does a theatre become less about its performance and more about the impermanence of its stage? On the itinerant nature of *Aldo Rossi*'s "Teatro del Mondo", a vessel of both unconscious and collective memory.

How long does it take for the weight of myth to become light enough to sail through time, and never lose its meaning? On the mythic and heroic departure of *Ercole De' Roberti*'s "The Argonauts leaving Colchis".

How does one inhabit walls as rooms, when wind and sand are the only constants and constraints of a seemingly inhospitable environment? On the hidden carved niches "Inhabiting the Desert".

How long will it take for erosion to set a path on the edge of a cliff in cantilever? On the downward path of *Dani Karavan*'s "Walter Benjamin Memorial", an inquiry into the afterlife of thought in sunken horizon.

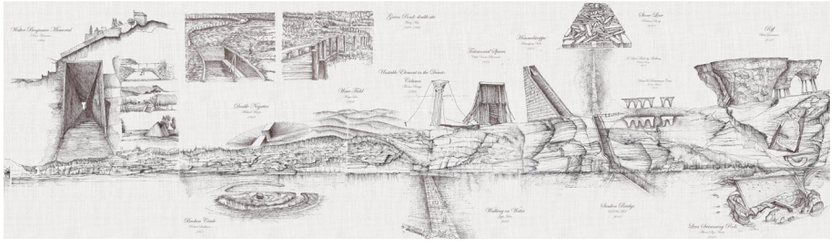
How much mass must be removed before an excavated void becomes an inverted drawing? On the act of displacement in *Michael Heizer*'s "Double Negative", turning a carved absence into a voided presence.

Why does a circle remain unclosed, when the tides wash it over time? On the incomplete wholeness and fractured symmetry of *Robert Smithson*'s "Broken Circle" that remains seemingly unfinished.

How long can waves persist on solid ground, before the earth itself begins to ripple in response? On the experience of waves captured in a static, sculptural form by *Maya Lin*'s "Wave Field".

How long does a pond remember its own ecology and interconnected essence? On the experience of movement on a path gradually hiding under the wetlands in *Mary Miss*' "Green Pond: Double Site".







Can a Greek column succumb to the shifting sands of time? On the tensile anchoring of *Franco Raggi*'s "Unstable Element in the Desert", an architectural gesture in the vastness of an unyielding landscape.

How light must one be to truly walk on water, and how heavy an illusion to feel as real as sinking? On the perception of water as both a barrier and a pathway in *Jeppe Hein*'s "Walking on Water".

How many stories can the timber walls of a formwork hold before their silence becomes a loud testimony? On the resonant silence of Chile's Venice *Biennale* 2021 Pavilion "Testimonial Spaces".

How high must a staircase climb before it reaches the horizon of thought in the desert of the mind? On the aspiration of elevation of an unconscious ascent in *Hannsjörg Voth*'s "Himmelstreppe".

How deep must a bridge sink before it becomes indistinguishable from the water it crosses? On the harmonious blend between human engineering and natural topography in RO & AD's "Sunken Bridge".

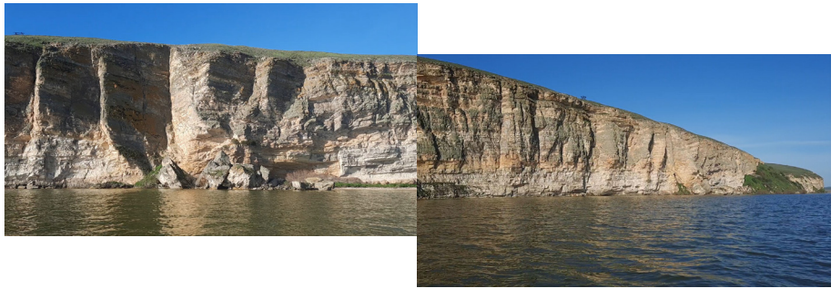
How long must one toodle the grass to make place for a path? On the elemental, enduring trail of *Richard Long*'s "A Line Made by Walking", a recurring walk across time and terrain in a grounded continuity.

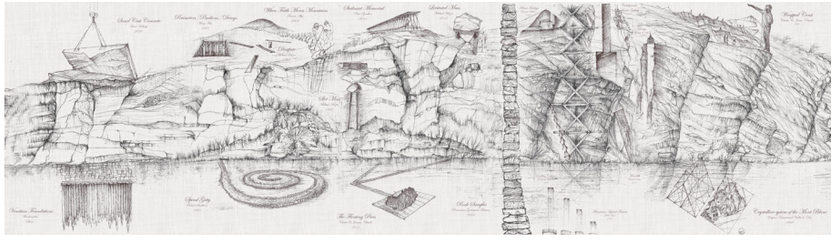
How long does a walk between heavy stones have to be before the earth remembers the steps that shaped it? On the experiential mark of *Richard Long*'s "Stone Line" and its fleeting imprint.

How can concrete appear as a geological formation when earth is its formwork? On the excavated intimacy of *Jun'ya Ishigami*'s "House & Restaurant Cave" that recedes into the landscape below.

How many tidal waves must crash against the pool's edge before rock and pool dissolve into the ocean's embrace? On the fluid integration of *Álvaro Siza Vieira*'s "Leça Swimming Pools".

How turning the mold inside out reveals space defined by negative form? An installation between architecture and archaeology, by casting a large cavity in the ground with concrete: *Bob Gramsma*'s "Riff".







How many poles to anchor a city that seems forever afloat on the murky waters of history, on the ebb and flow of time, and how long until they petrify? On the subterranean roots of a floating city: Venice.

How can the fleeting nature of sand be captured in the permanence of the concrete surface? On the tactile dialogue of a perishable formwork: *Anne Holtrop*'s rock-like concrete, casted from sand.

Pebble stones in mud, endlessly coiling and uncoiling? On the seemingly celestial nature of a curvature in *Robert Smithson*'s "Spiral Getty", a loop in eternal rotation with the rhythms of water.

How many hands are needed to shift the weight of a mountain, even if only by a single grain of sand? On challenging the immovable with monumental persistence: *Francis Alÿs*' "When Faith Moves Mountains".

How can the weight of remembrance counterbalance the lightness of a suspended structure? On the somber suspension of *Peter Zumthor*'s "Steilneset Memorial", a vessel of forgotten voices.

On the dissolving force of *Michael Heizer*'s "Dissipate", random slits in the ground, emphasizing erosion and displacement, allowing the land to slowly dissipate through time and erosion.

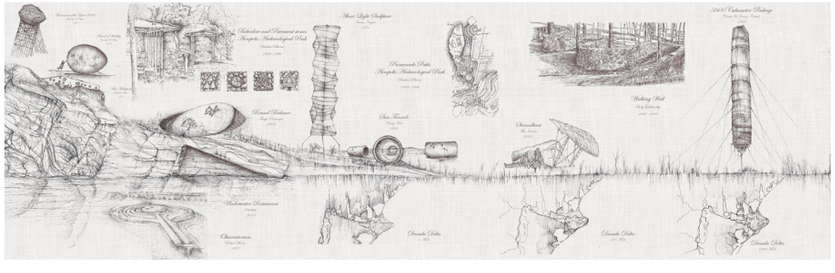
How narrow can a cut through the earth be, while still bearing the weight of its surrounding mass? On the piercing depth of *Michael Heizer*'s "Slot Mass", and the tension between mass and absence.

How long does it take to thread the line of impermanence and float on its surface? On the transient and transitory surface of *Christo & Jeanne-Claude*'s "The Floating Piers" and their ephemeral buoyancy.

How many signatures must cover a monument before it buries the weight of history beneath it? On the subversive descent of *Jochen Gerz*'s "Monument Against Fascism", and its participatory testament.

How heavy must a stone be to levitate the weight of our own perception of mass? On the weightless imposition of *Michael Heizer*'s "Levitated Mass", defying perception with its precarious floating.







How can a mountain become an altar that invites skylight in a spiritual way, bridging the gap between earth and the firmament? On the inviting reverence and contemplation of *Eduardo Chillida*'s unrealized dream.

On the infinite ascent of *Constantin Brancusi*'s "Endless Column" and its stacked rhomboids, a bridge to the heavens, transcending its earthly roots in a singular upward thrust, a symbol of ascension and longing for the sky.

How does the rusted patina of a weathered steel monolith, bearing marks of time and exposure, transforms cold metal into a symbol of endurance and organic decay? On *Richard Serra*'s "East-West/West-East" monoliths.

How does a towering, narrow concrete entry evoke primordial geological awe, enigmatic as the mountain crevice itself? On the fortified renewal of *Aurelio Galfetti*'s "Castelgrande Renovation".

How does a bridge connect not only places but the realms of imagination and reality? On the surreal span and the bridging of worlds in *Brodsky & Utkin*'s surrealist etching work entitled "A Bridge".

How many facets does a mountain bare? On the inherent geometry in nature and its geological origin illustrated by *Viollet-le-Duc*'s drawings "Rhombohedral Crystalline system of the Mont Blanc".

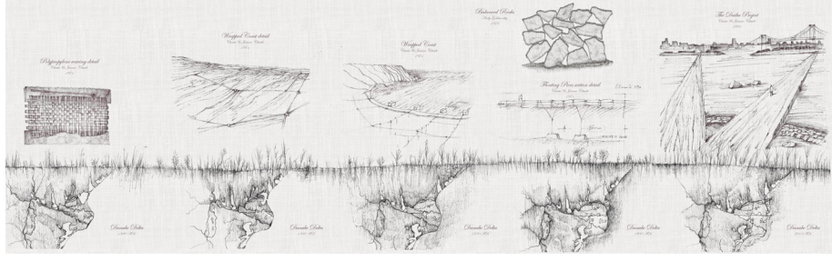
Why does the act of wrapping an untamed coastline reveal the fabric of its contours? On the concealed horizons and the veiled expanse of *Christo & Jeanne-Claude*'s "Wrapped Coast", a cloaked landscape.

How does a boulder on scaffolding stilts reflect the shifting sands of time, capturing the essence of an era in flux? On the timebound aspirations in *Brodski & Utkin*'s etching drawing "Monument of the Year 2000".

How long can *Sisyphus* carry his boulder on an uphill path? On the steadfast persistence depicted by *Brodski & Utkin*'s "Island of Stability" in a sea of uncertainty and deep philosophical inquiry.

How do we perceive balance in a world that constantly shifts beneath our feet, challenging our very understanding of stability? On *Tanya Preminger*'s "Round Balance" between the opposite sides of one entity.







How can the stones of the past guide the footsteps of the present toward the alleys of the future? On the historical resonance and the timeworn meanderings of *Dimitris Pikionis*' "Promenade Paths on the Acropolis".

How does a villa perched on a cliff merge with the sea and the sky, becoming a solitary island of thought? On the rugged isolation of *Adalberto Libera*'s "Villa Malaparte" and its rebel statement of defiance.

How much light can a delicate paper structure hold before it becomes weightless? On the ethereal translucent glow and the illuminated delicacy of *Isamu Noguchi*'s "*Akari* Light Sculpture".

How deep must one dine beneath the water's surface in order to truly taste the essence of a quiet communion with the mysterious, ever-shifting depths of the ocean? On *Snohetta*'s "Underwater Restaurant".

How many suns must pass through four tunnels before time itself bends to the light, filtered through small round apertures? On the cosmic and celestial alignment of *Nancy Holt*'s "Sun Tunnels".

How much wind is needed to breathe life into a myriapod-like creature of air, wind and imagination, strolling on the shores of the seas? On the mechanical life of *Theo Jansen*'s "Strandbeest".

How far must a wall walk across the land before it leaves an indelible trace of its craftsmanship in permanent transcience? On the winding path of *Andy Goldsworthy*'s "Walking Wall".

How many cubic meters of fabric can the air contain as it expands the void it holds steadfast in cabled tension? On the inflated immensity of *Christo & Jeanne-Claude*'s "5600 Cubicmeter Package".

How long can a rock balance before gravity reminds it of its place in the Universe and that even the smallest shift can topple its most seemingly stable arrangement? On *Andy Goldsworthy*'s "Balanced Rocks".

How much fabric does it take for the wrapping of islands to also provoke thoughts about unseen layers and narratives? On the fabricated dreams of *Christo & Jeanne-Claude*'s "The Daiba Project".



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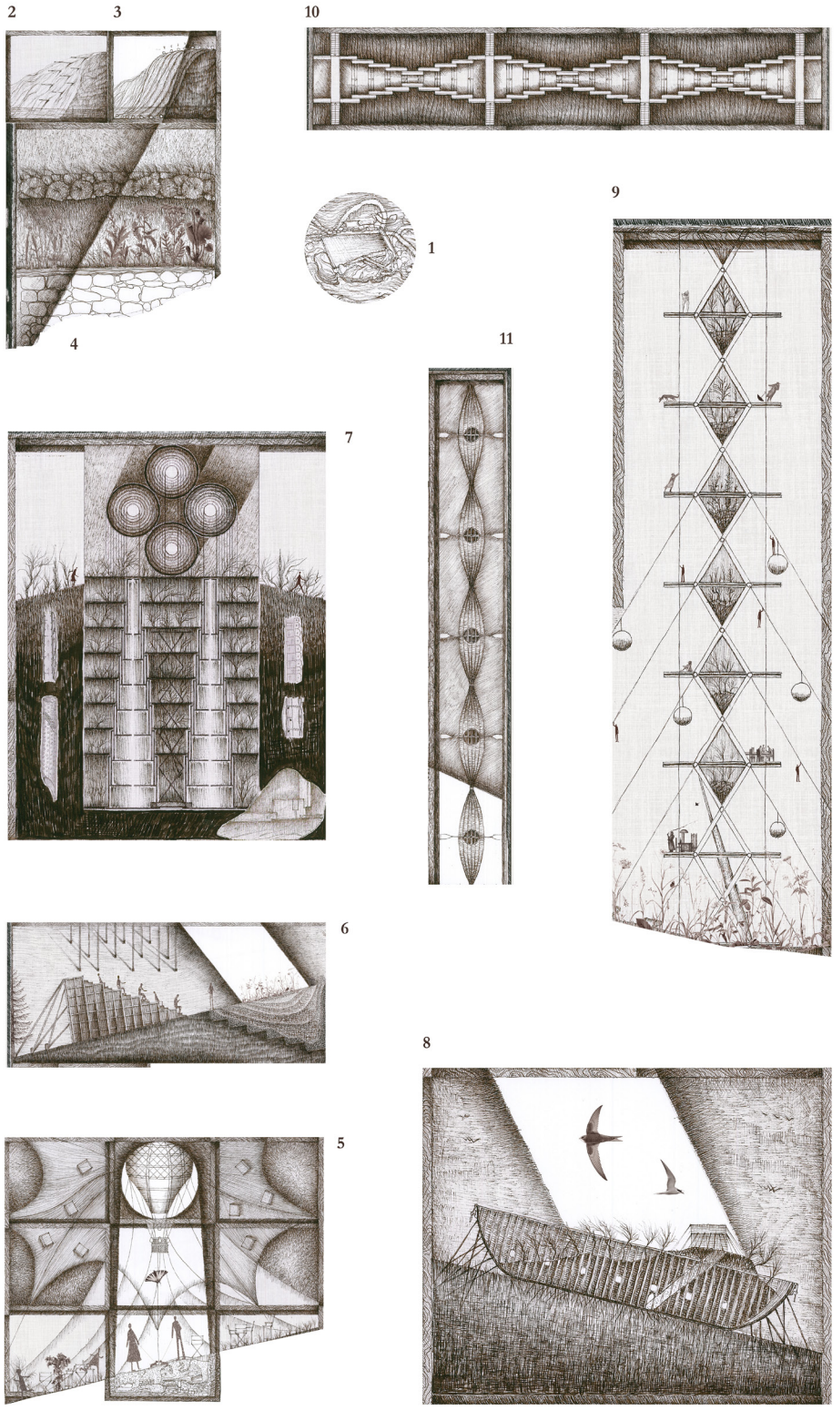
4.3 Concluding analysis

Considering the historical resonance and timeworn meanderings of *Dimitris Pikionis*' "Acropolis Promenade"; the elemental, enduring trail of *Richard Long*'s "A Line Made by Walking"; the experience of movement on a path gradually hiding under the wetlands in *Mary Miss*' "Green Pond Double Site"; the indelible trace of craftsmanship in *Andy Goldsworthy*'s "Walking Wall" and the inquiry into the afterlife of thought in sunken horizon of *Dani Karavan*'s "Walter Benjamin Memorial", the left page image depicts the catalogue of Land Art references placed in ascending order based on the means they required for their construction, with the notable example on top, the "Montanya Tindaya" project, whose *mise-en-oeuvre* implied such magnanimous effort that it remained unbuilt to this day.

Indeed, when a certain artistic or architectural *oeuvre*, either requires extensive means and costs, or faces insurmountable technical challenges, its practical feasibility is put into question in the context of scarcity or depletion of resources. As an alternative to nostalgic lamentation that the object will never materialize as a consequence of the above causes, and indulging in fictitious *oneiric* aesthetic experience, a step further could be made, by stipulating a less thought of perspective on the world as a huge construction site, by analogy to human and non-human processes of erosion and sedimentation. That is to say, it took nature *millennia* of years of heavy effort to erode, transport and cement all these sediments it had washed and carried with the hydraulic and eolian motric forces. We are currently witnessing the last dramatic stages of this hyperobject event: we are in such temporal closeness with the future moment of a potential collapse of the cliff, and so far from the moment of its inception. This in turn helps us to understand the impetus to act and deploy a proportionate response in terms of the amount of means brought forward in a hypothetical future attempt to save the cliff. Would it be possible?

At our best, we could immortalize the cliff in our memory from a uniquely framed perspective until it is no more, by temporarily enabling visitors to further become aware of the vast expense of time and space defining geological events that had led to its creation, as opposed to nature's forces at play, that render us powerless on the path. Would the high means of construction of an itinerant device be justified, allowing for multiple future uses in different locations, implying a need to build less?

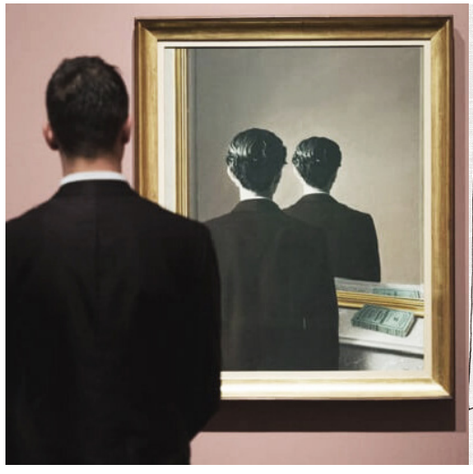




5. DREAMING ON THE PATH

To visit this landscape, at the same time monumental in its scale of time and space, but also very fragile, one is in need of a path, to tread this landscape in movement. A plethora of intertwining paths already exists, which would become mnemonic paths, when braided with the thoughts of a *flâneur*. In 19th century Paris, *Walter Benjamin* was interested in the figure of the *flâneur* whom he considered to be the symbol of the modern man confronted with the old romantic individual-versus-collective struggle and the phantasmagoria of large metropoles.[1] Walking is humanity's simplest and oldest mode of travel, an action that combines the physical, the sensitive, and the mental. It allows us to rediscover our bodily experience of being-in-the-world. Our apprehension of space occurs, either at rest, or in movement. The first modality is topological, related to the Greek *topos* and implies the place where we remain surrounded by a limit that encloses and defines our interiority. The second modality is hodological, from the Greek *hodos* (path). The place is therefore circumscribed and stable, while the path is open and transitory. The place is the expression of abode, of stability, to be distinguished from space, which is characterised by movement. This active relationship between man and the world occurs in the hodological space, an intermediate instance between the subjectivity of the lived space and the objectivity of the outer world.[2] When I stroll on *Argamum*'s paths, I imagine going down the rabbit hole on a hill with a hole[3] (a sum of all archaeological digs) and eleven scattered objects (fig. 1-11) without a precise location. Their presence is not necessarily simultaneous, and their temporal ambiguity is marked by each plate starting with a fictional year followed by the scientific abbreviation cal BP (calibrated before present)[4]. Akin to the Little Prince, an anonymous visitor encounters an *Artchitectologist* [5] in each voyage on site. At the end of each story, an artifact stone is revealed, engraved with an aphorism about architecture. Erosion and sedimentation of the mind would gradually discover all these meaningful entities in a mysterious cabinet of curiosities, having no labels (open for interpretation) which stands on *Piranesi*-style lapidary fragments engraved with maps of local ancient ruins.

1 For the philosopher, "the city is the realisation of an ancient dream of humanity, the labyrinth. The *flâneur* unknowingly devotes himself to it." (Benjamin, 1997: p. 464)
2 Delcommune, 2024: p. 39, 40
3 See *Lewis Carroll*'s idiom and *Brodsky* & *Utkin*'s eponymous work "A Hill with a Hole"
4 The fictional present of the omniscient-narrator story, without reference to 1950 AD
5 art+architect+archaeologist (a personal word coinage)



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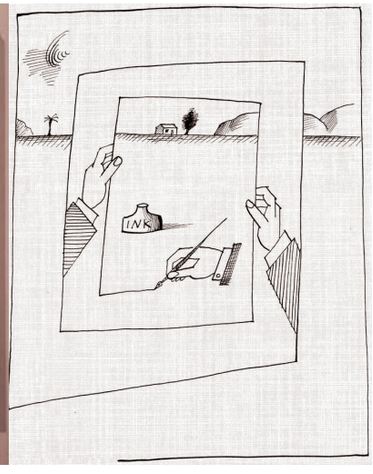

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Fig. 1: A museum visitor standing in front of *René Magritte* "La reproduction interdite"
Fig. 2: Saul Steinberg untitled drawing in The New Yorker, November 30, 1963
Fig. 3: *David Teniers the Younger*'s Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in his Painting Gallery in Brussels

3



5.1 Artistic references

The drawing is composed of 9 A1 size plates, each made up of multiple puzzle-like pieces separated by a pattern of wooden frames that can be decomposed and recomposed. The drawing borrows from the narrative flexibility of a *myriorama*[1]. Its apparently nostalgic and melancholic atmosphere, infused by the shades of sepia to suggest aging and confuse its timeline, along with the fantastical and imaginative traits of a *capriccio*[2], evokes themes of decay and the passage of time. The panoramic perspective of a *vedute*[3] follows the view of a bird in flight. Various instances of symbolism of mortality and decay along with the subdued, somber color palette are reminiscent of a *vanitas*[4], while the dense, detailed scenes, intricate narrative layers and the lack of a central focus reflects a *wimmelbilder*[5]. The close proximity of elements in the drawing and its richness of detail succumb to Aristotle's concept of *horror vacui* (nature abhors vacuum) and become a manifesto for the purpose of the current thesis, suggesting an economy of means even at the level of the canvas used. *Herman Hesse*'s glass bead game inspired the metaphor of a mental synthesis of seemingly unrelated scattered parts.

When standing in front of the famous 1937 painting by Belgian surrealist artist *Rene Magritte*, the viewer is left wondering about the underlying hidden meaning of the visual trickery depicted in the work. One remains mostly unaware that his very presence in front of the painting, when viewed by another person from behind, creates an interesting *mise-en-abyme*, which appears to complete the painting itself, only to further develop its visual motif: the reflection. Two other references illustrated on the left page further explore this *Droste* effect in art, which will become the main visual framework for my *myriorama*, where the frames of the embedded drawings become the irregular shelves of the cabinet of curiosities.

1 Illustrated cards arranged in any order to create endless panoramic scenes. From the Greek words *myrio* (meaning "countless" or "ten thousand") and *orama* (view/sight).
2 Meaning "caprice" in Italian. 17th century style of painting emerging in Italy, that combined real architectural elements, like ruins, with fantastical ones.
3 Meaning "view" in Italian. A highly detailed, large-scale painting that represents a cityscape or a landscape with great accuracy, born in 16th century Italy.
4 Meaning "vanity" in Latin. A type of symbolic artwork, most often found in still-life painting, that originated in the Netherlands in the 16th and 17th centuries.
5 Meaning "teeming pictures" in German. A type of richly detailed and densely populated illustration, pioneered by *Hieronymus Bosch* and *Pieter Brueghel* the Elder.



Plate I

5.2 Plate I - Gateway to the Pathway
A Sheltered Pool by the Enclosing Gulf

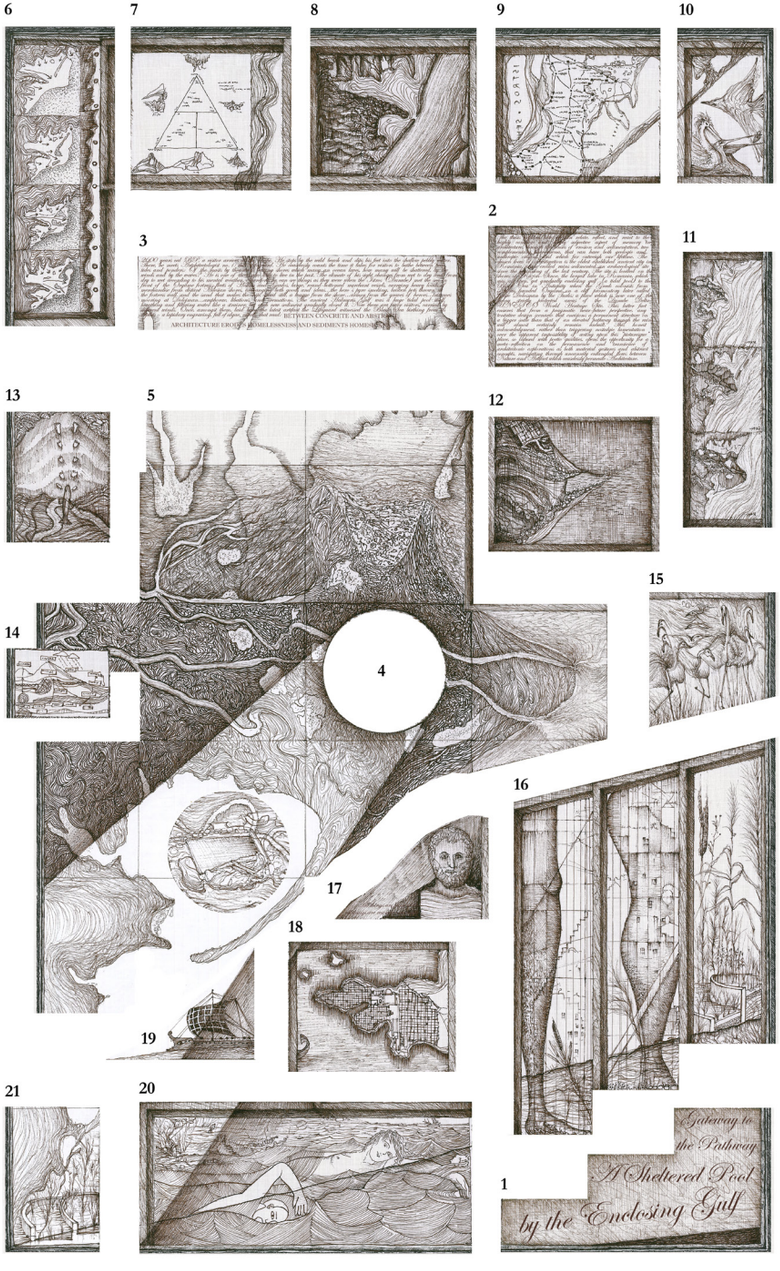
2600 years cal BP: a visitor arrives to Cape *Dolojman*. He stops by the wild beach and dips his feet into the shallow pebbly water. There, he meets *Artchitectologist* 1: the Lifeguard. He ceaselessly counts the time it takes for visitors to bathe between two tides and ponders:

"Of the masts by thousands leaving
Shores which many an ocean laves,
O, how many will be shattered,
By the winds and by the waves?" [1]

He is one of those who likes to live in the past. The climate of his sight changes from wet to dry and from dry to wet according to his mental weather. Therefore, he can see things as they were when the *Istros* (Danube) met the sea in front of the *Orgamè* fortress: fleets of *Holkas* and *Gaulos*, large, round-bottomed merchant vessels, carrying heavy loads of merchandise from distant *Milesian* shores, exchanging both goods and ideas…the hero's pyre smoking, broken pots thrown at the fortress wall and the sand that makes the ships stand still, a league from the shore…armor from the graves of heroes…triremes mooring at *Dolojman*…*amphorae*, libations, and cremations. The ancient *Halmyris* Gulf was a huge tidal pool itself, breathing and filtering water like a strainer, but each new sediment gradually closed it. Now there are fewer visitors, carried by different winds. Once, amongst them, laid bare, the latest artifact the Lifeguard witnessed the Black Sea birthing from its depths: - a lapidary engraving, full of algae and tiny corals, that read:

Between Concrete and Abstract,
Architecture erodes Homelessness
and sediments Homesickness.

1 First stanza from the poem "Dintre sute de catarge" ("Of the masts") by *Mihai Eminescu*, translation from Romanian by *Petre Grimm*, (Levitschi, 1978: p. 508, 509)



4. The main central reference: *Álvaro Siza*'s "Leça Swimming Pools"
5. Map of the Danube Delta at the time when the Greek colonists from *Miletus* first set foot at Cape *Dolojman* and founded the *Orgamè polis* (7*th* century BC)
6. Series of maps showing the geomorphological evolution of the Danube Delta from 1 AD to present times
7. A diagram of the tripartite classification of river's deltas according to *William Galloway* (river-dominated, tide-dominated and wave-dominated)
8. *Grigore Antipa*'s 1910 hypothesis of a progressive clogging of a lagoon isolated by a coastal strip due to Danube river's inflows
9. A map showing the location of all the Ancient Greek *polises* and Roman fortifications (*limes*) in *Dobrudja* Region
10. Artistic depiction of three Danube Delta White Pelicans
11. Series of maps showing the geomorphological evolution of the Danube Delta during the *Holocene*
12. Plan of the proposal to create a small enclosed tidal pool similar to *Leça* on the shores of Cape *Dolojman*, currently a wild naturist beach
13. Allegoric depiction of the origin of life from water, showing a fish exiting the water and reptile footsteps on sand
14. A diagram of the geological rock types formation cycle
15. Artistic illustration of flamingos arriving to the Danube Delta
16. A copy of a fragment from an etching by *Brodsky* & *Utkin* entitled "Glass Tower", showing a caricature anatomy of a pair of human legs, contextualized to suggest a person emerging from the pool, preparing to stroll *Argamum*'s paths
17. A portrait of a stone bust showing *Thales* from *Miletus*. Although not among the Greek colonists that at Cape *Dolojman*, his famous stance on Water as a primordial origin of all things makes him a relevant philosophical reference
18. A map of *Miletus* from the Greek Antiquity. Noteworthy is its regular Cartesian grid streets, the work of *Hippodamus* of *Miletus*
19. An Ancient Greek *Trireme* boat
20. A man and a woman swimming nude towards the shore, inspired by *Thomas Rowlandson*'s "Swimming in the sea at Margate*"* (1800)
21. A detail of a Phyto-purification system (using water plants) for natural swimming pools

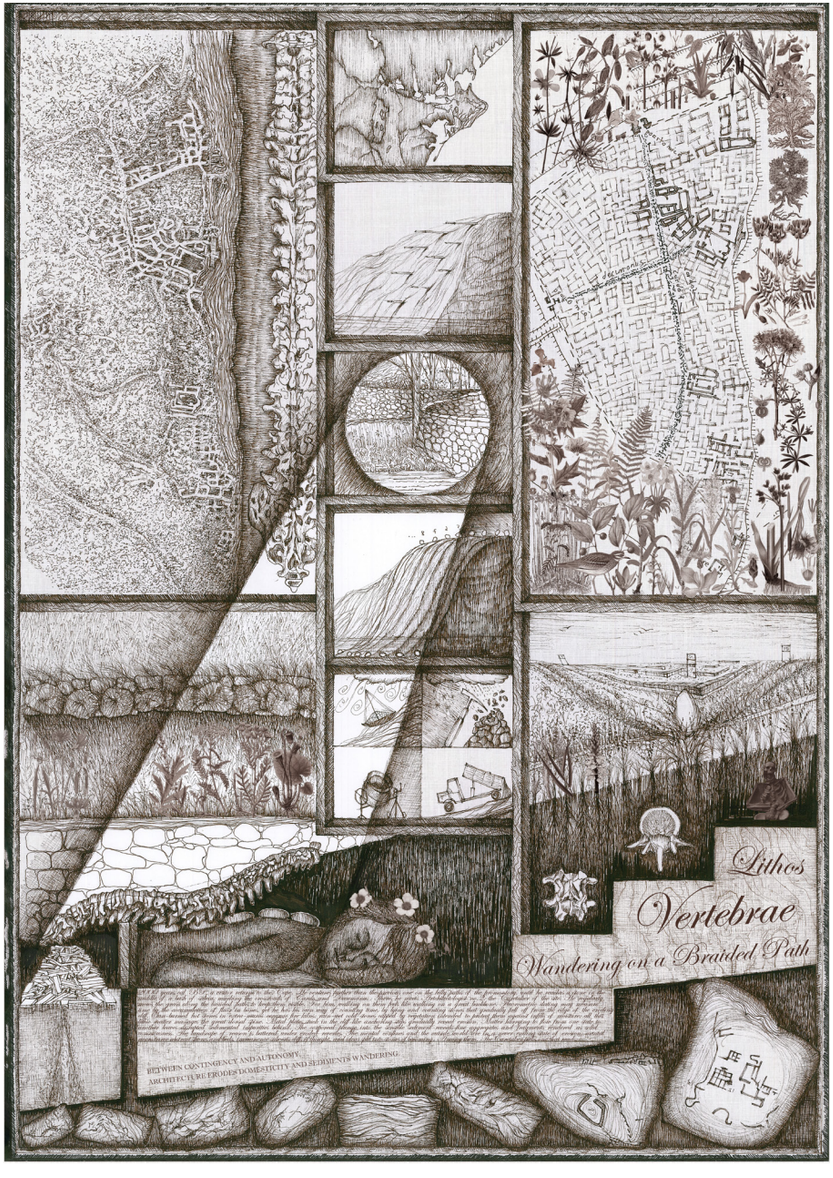
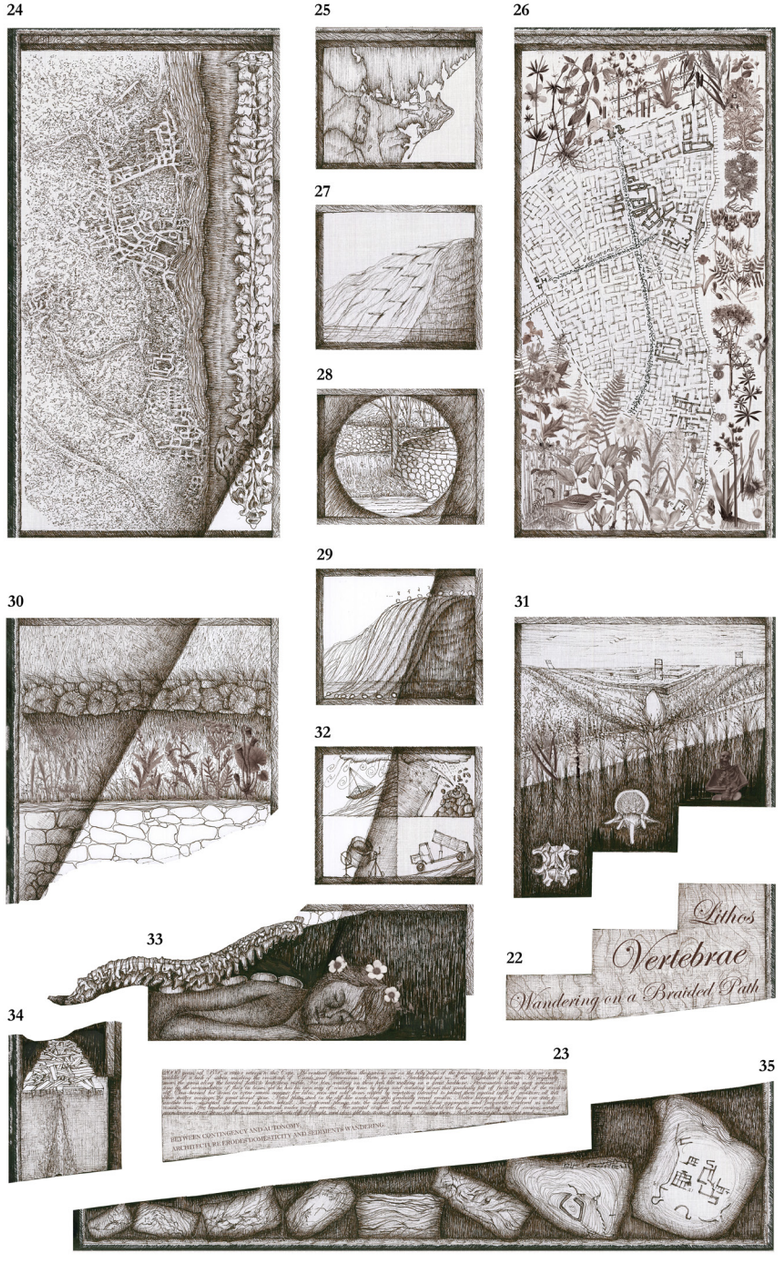


Plate II

5.3 Plate II - Lithos Vertebrae Wandering on a Braided Path

2000 years cal BP: a visitor returns to the Cape. He ventures further than the previous one on the hilly paths of the promontory, until he reaches a stone in the middle of a bush of *salvia*, marking the crossroads of *Cardo* and *Decumanus*. There, he meets *Artchitectologist* 2: the Caretaker of the site. He regularly mows the grass along the braided paths to keep them visible. For him, walking on the paths feels like walking on a great backbone. Fluorometric dating may measure time by the accumulation of fluorine in bones, yet he has his own way of telling the time, by lying down and counting stones that gradually fall off from the edge of the eroding cliff. Sun-burnt hot stones in *extra-muros* ceramic fire kilns … Rain-wet cold stones capped by vegetation intended to protect them against infills of moisture… all this *lithic* matter massages the great dorsal spine. Metal plates stuck in the cliff-like anchoring steps gradually reveal erosion. Matter hurrying to flow from one state into another leaves disrupted sedimented impurities behind. The recurrence of thought posits the sedimentation of matter. The corporeal plunge into the sensible sediment reveals fine aggregates and fragments rendered as solid consciousness. The landscape of reason is battered under eroded reveries. The mental confines and the outside world are in a never-ending state of erosion, mental rivers carve abstract shores and beds, immanence subverts cliffs of thought, and ideas split into stones of becoming. Among them, the Caretaker picks one that reads:

Between Contingency and Autonomy,
Architecture erodes Domesticity
and sediments Wandering.



24. A map of the *intra-muros* area of *Argamum* archeological site, showing the main excavated areas and the paths linking them near the cliff shore. An intrusive *vanitas* element makes its way into the frame
25. A map of the Danube Delta from cca. 500 AD
26. A map of the *intra-muros* area of *Argamum* in a utopian future scenario where the entire ancient *polis* would be excavated (only thicker walls are currently unearthed), resulting in approx. 18.000 cubic meters of soil which could be planted with all sorts of rare endemic plants or medicinal plants (chicory, the horse's tail, thistle and poppy)
27. A Land Art proposal for anchoring metal or *corten* steel horizontal thin plates into the cliff like the steps of a threadless staircase, to signal a potential dangerous path, that would gradually stick out of the cliff due to erosion
28. The main central reference: *Andy Goldsworthy*'s "Walking Wall"
29. A Land Art proposal of placing various rocks from the site perpendicular to the cliff, enabling them to count the time until they gradually fall into the sea due to erosion
30. A conservation method of the ruin's walls, consisting of planting moss or grass on a thin layer of earth over the last row of stones on top of the ruined wall, in order to prevent moisture infiltration that could further accelerate the wall's decay
31. A Land Art proposal that consists in placing a large boulder at the crossroads of the ancient *Cardo* and *Decumanus* roads to help tourists better find their way around. On the lower part, a top and a side views of a human vertebrae, along with a hidden skeleton on the bottom right
32. The four main phases of sedimentary rock formation from an anthropocentric perspective, portrayed in a quadripartite visual metaphor aim at raising awareness that Earth can be viewed as a never-ending natural construction site
33. A "muse" sleeping with hot and cold massage stones on her back and a spinal cord like a caterpillar sitting on her back. I feel like I am walking on a great dorsal spine
34. *Richard Long*'s "Stone Line" (above) and "A Line Made by Walking" (below) as additional references
35. On the last two right stones are maps of the ancient cities of *Salsovia* and *Noviodunum* (Romania)

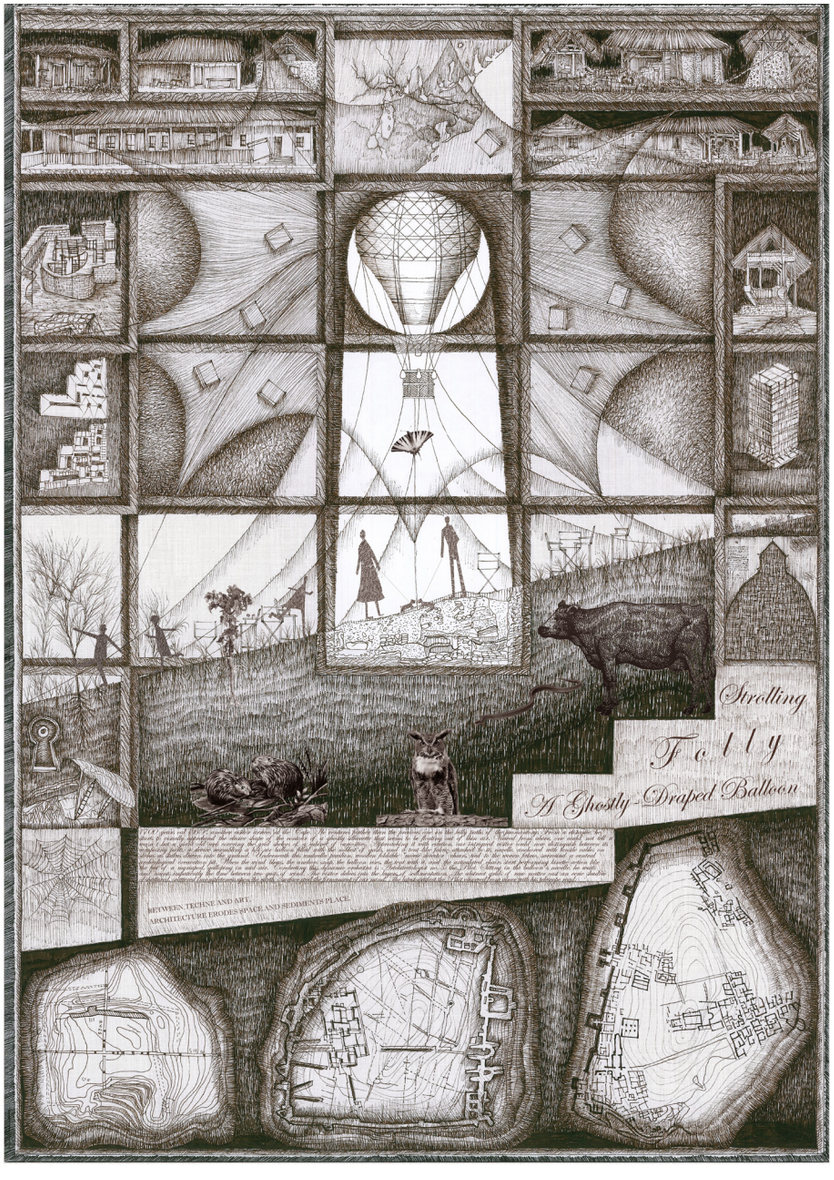
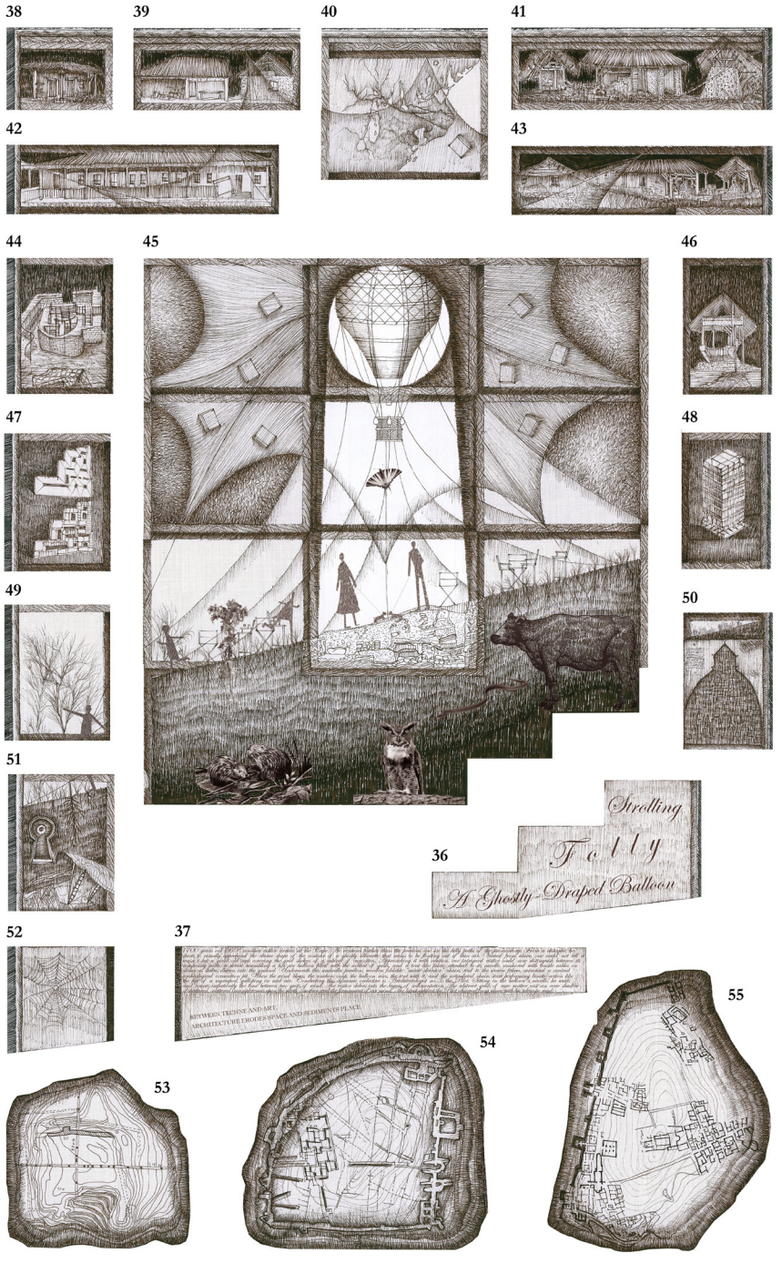


Plate III

5.4 Plate III - Strolling Folly
A Ghostly-Draped Balloon

1700 years cal BP: another visitor arrives to the Cape. He ventures even further on the hilly paths of the promontory. From a distance, he can visually apprehend the elusive contour of a ghostly silhouette that seems to be floating in mid-air. Viewed from above, one could not tell if it wasn't but a giant old web covering the grid shelves of a cabinet of curiosities. Cautiously approaching it, our intrigued visitor could now better distinguish between its composing parts: a device resembling a hot-air balloon filled with the noblest of gases, and a tent-like fabric attached to its nacelle, anchored with tensile cables onto stones as stakes driven into the ground. Underneath this umbrella pavilion, wooden foldable movie director chairs, tied to the woven fabric, surround a central archaeological excavation pit. When the wind blows, the anchors snap, the balloon rises, the tent with it, and the articulated chairs start performing kinetic action like the feet of a myriapod, galloping in mid-air. Conducting this dynamic orchestra is *Artchitectologist* 3: the Pilot. Sitting in the balloon's nacelle, he waits and counts impatiently the time between two gusts of wind. The visitor delves into the layers of sedimentation. The abstract grids of raw matter casts an eerie shadow of shattered, scattered incompleteness. Deep curling recesses occur in these geological entanglements. The latest artifact the Pilot observed from above with his telescope would read:

Between Techne and Art,
Architecture erodes Space
and sediments Place.



38. "Lut/Adobe" summer workshop mud brick & thatched roof hut
39. Brick warehouse for the archaeological site maintenance tools
40. Map of the Danube Delta around 1000 AD
41. "Lut/Adobe" summer toilet hut
42. The tourist info point house: trademark *Jurilovca* blue tinted wood
43. "Lut/Adobe" summer workshop mud brick & thatched roof hut
44. Drawing of *Ştefan Bâlici* and *Virgil Apostol*'s *Basilica with Umgang* project proposal for a *pasarelle* above the largest *Basilica* II
45. Central main drawing piece, depicting the ghostly-draped balloon pavilion in plan and elevation juxtaposed. Hidden below the ground in foreground are animals from the site (cattle, owl, beaver) and a butterfly in the air
46. Drawing of *Vlad Ducar*'s proposal for an accommodation unit with a cantilevering *pasarelle* as a "roof" for *Basilica* I
47. Plan drawing of *Vlad Anghel*'s proposal for a Tourist and Archaeological Center, featuring a cluster of inner courtyards
48. Axonometric view of *Vlad Anghel*'s proposal for a Lighthouse Tower housing a pottery center and other public learning spaces
49. Drawing of a *Dobrudja* olive tree
50. Drawing of *Theo Jansens*' wind-powered "Straandbest" and a keyhole (the latter chosen as a purely formal reference)
51. Redrawing of *Brodsky* & *Utkin*'s "Dome of Ladders" (also a formal reference: convex dome vs. concave drape)
52. Drawing of a spider web (formal and structural reference; also a *vanitas* element)
53. Drawing of a stone with the map of Ancient Roman-Byzantine *castrum* at *Carsium* (Romania)
54. Drawing of a stone with the map of the Roman fortress of *Ulmetum* (Romania)
55. Drawing of a stone with the map of the Ancient Greek *polis* of *Histria*, the largest and considered until recently also the oldest established by the Greek colonists, until *Orgamè* was certified as having been founded a generation earlier

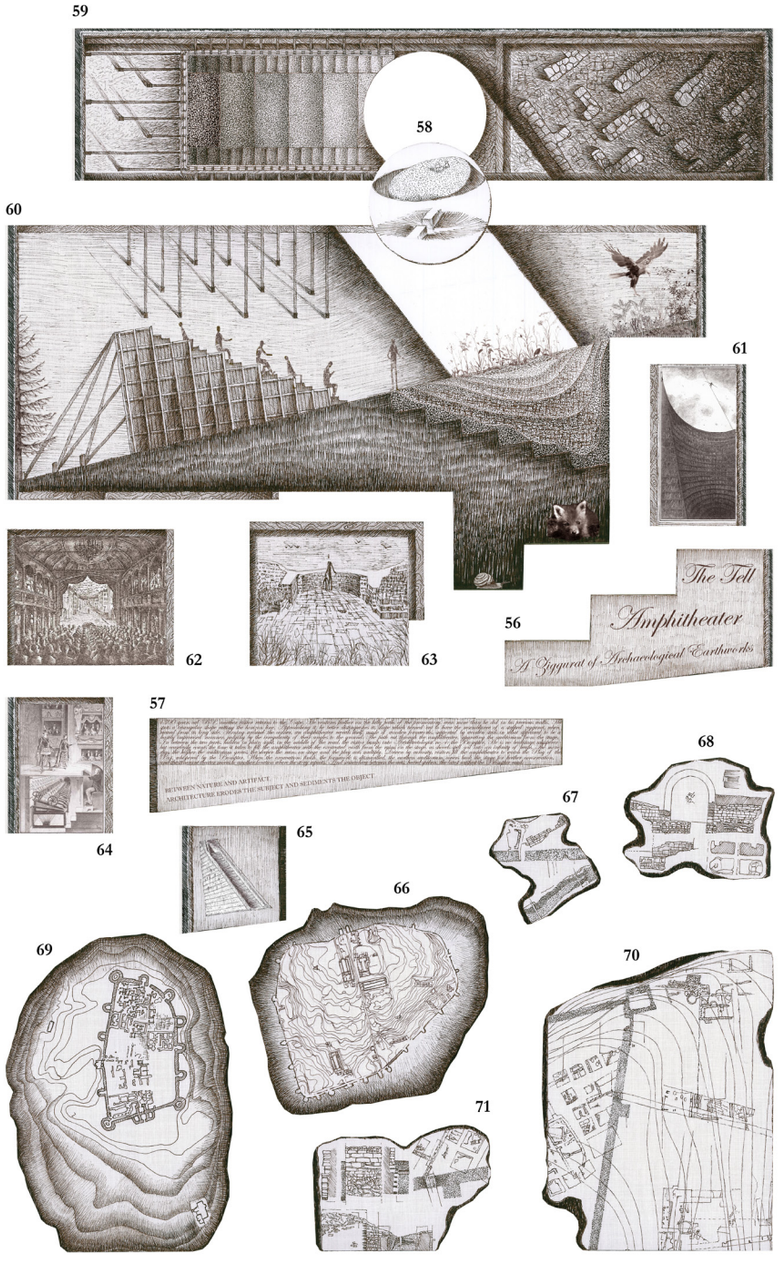


Plate IV

5.5 Plate IV - The Tell Amphitheatre
A Ziggurat of Archaeological Earthworks

1300 years cal BP: a visitor returns to the Cape. He ventures further on the hilly paths of the promontory. He spots a triangular shape cutting the horizon line. Approaching it, he could better distinguish its shape which turned out to be a stepped ziggurat, when viewed from its long side. Turning around the corner, an amphitheatre reveals itself, made of wooden formworks, supported by wooden studs in what appeared to be a hastily improvised manner, judging by the irregularity of their angles to the ground. The path cuts through the amphitheatre, separating the auditorium from the stage. In between the two parts, the visitor bumps into *Artchitectologist* 4: the *Souffleur*, hidden in plain sight, in the middle of the road. He is no backstage whisperer but ceaselessly counts the time it takes to fill the amphitheatre with the excavated earth from the ruins on the stage, as shovels spill soil into an infinity of heaps. The more he digs, the higher the auditorium grows; the deeper the ruins get on stage, the more play acts multiply. Driven by curiosity, visitors fill the amphitheatre to watch the Play of the Past, whispered by the Prompter. When the excavations finish, the formwork is dismantled, the earth auditorium covers back the stage for further conservation, and the itinerant theatre moves to another location, where a new play begins. And somewhere between the acts, the visitor hears the Prompter reading from the latest artifact:

Between Nature and Artifact,
Architecture erodes the Subject
and sediments the Object.



58. The two main central references: *Tanya Preminger*'s "Round Balance" (above) and *Michael Heizer*'s drawing, "Double Negative" showing the solid/void interplay
59. Plan view of the Earthworks Amphitheatre (on the right, the pit of the stage showing the unearthed ruins in the archaeological dig)
60. The main drawing piece, an elevation/section of the Earthworks Amphitheatre, with various plants on the stage, an ancient pine framing the left edge of the frame, a vulture on the right; a snail and a pine marten hiding in the lower foreground
61. *Brodsky* & *Utkin*'s 1989 etching entitled "Amphitheatre"
62. Interior scene featuring the auditorium and the stage of the "Stageless Theatre", another thought-provoking work of *Brodsky* & *Utkin*, reminiscent of the *Shakesperian* leitmotif of the world as a theatre stage
63. Sketch showing tho visitors on the stage of the formworks amphitheatre, among the walls of newly unearthed ruins
64. A depiction of a theatre *souffleur* in his pit under the stage; the archaeologist serving as guide becomes the *souffleur* of past plays.
65. *Hannsjörg Voth*'s "Himmelstreppe", another powerful sculptural reference for a ziggurat structure
66. Drawing of a stone with the map of the Ancient Roman city of *Civitas Tropaensium* (Romania), displaying *Tropaeum Traiani*, the trophy monument celebrating Roman Emperor *Trajan*'s conquest of *Dacia* (today Romania)
67. A section of the Small Gate of *Orgamè/Argamum*
68. West Gate of *Orgamè/Argamum*
69. Drawing of a stone with the map of the ancient *Geto-Dacian* fortified settlement of *Dinogetia* (ruins, Romania)
70. The south-eastern corner of the enclosure with tower T8, zone A3-A4 and the walls of the fortified terrace from the Greek occupation period
71. Plan and section of the enclosure walls of the *praetorium*

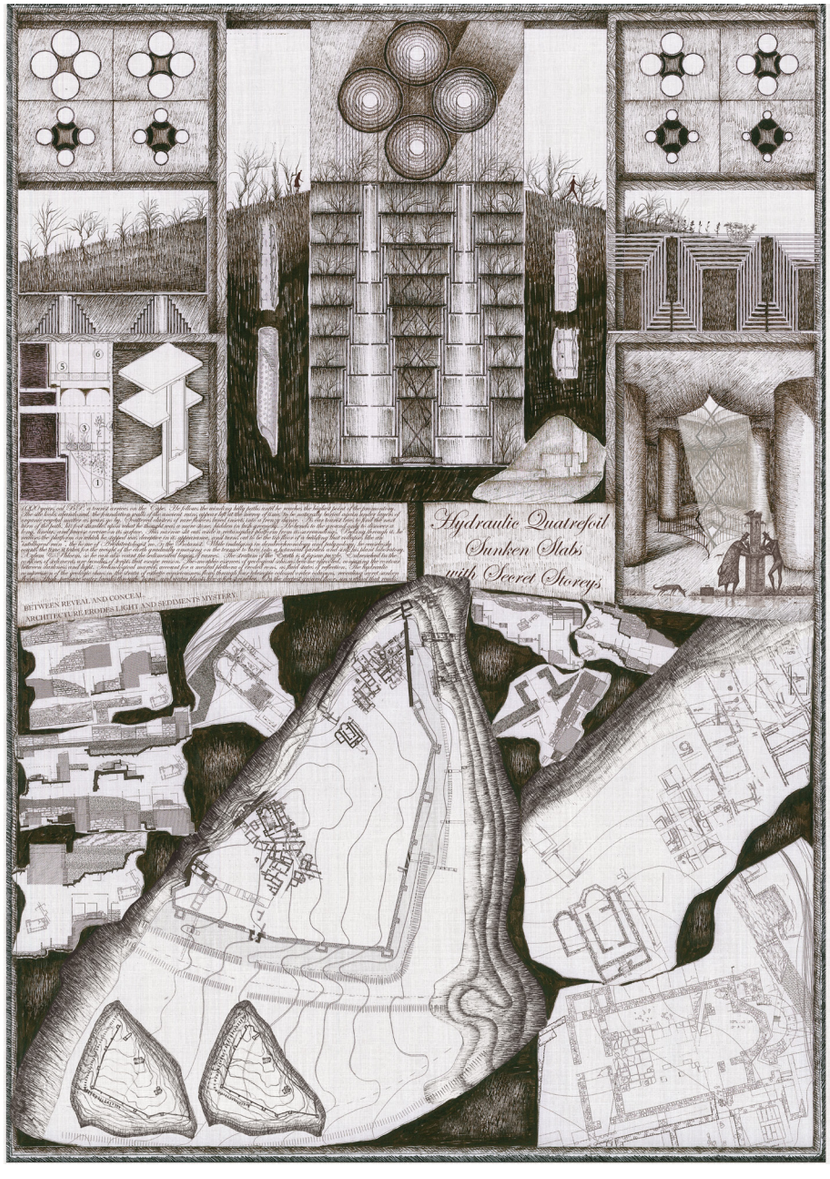
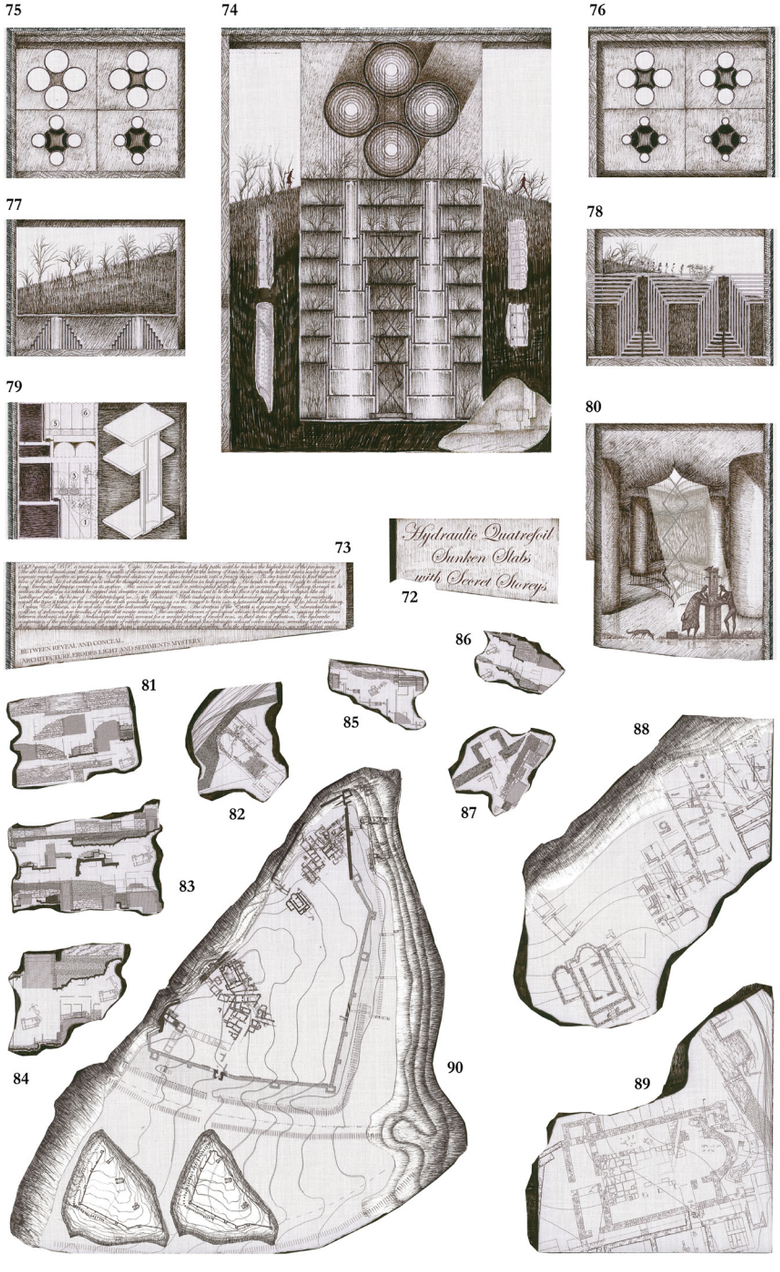


Plate V

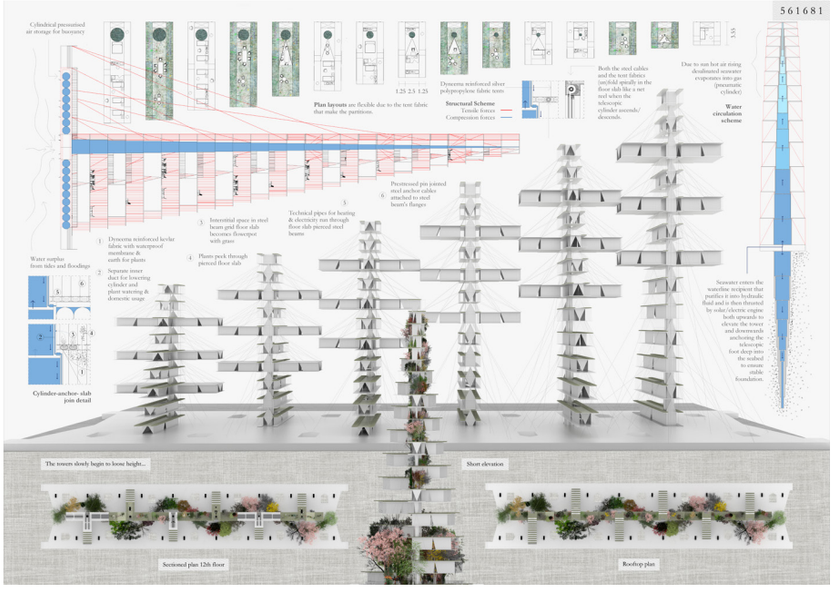
5.6 Plate V - Hydraulic Quatrefoil Sunken Slabs with Secret Storeys

1000 years cal BP: a tourist arrives on the Cape. He follows the winding hilly paths until he reaches the highest point of the promontory. The site looks abandoned, the foundation walls of the ancient ruins seem to have been left at the mercy of time, to be naturally buried again under layers of organic vegetal matter as years go by. Scattered clusters of rare flowers lure insects into a frantic dance. As our tourist tries to find the next turn of the path, his foot stumbles upon what he thought was a mere stone, hidden in lush greenery. He bends to the ground only to discover a long, linear, and precise crevice on its surface. This narrow slit cuts aside a rectangular platform from its surroundings. Peeking through it, he realized the platform on which he stepped was deceptive in its appearance and it turned out to be the top floor of a building collapsing like an intelligent ruin, the home of *Artchitectologist* 5: the Botanist. While indulging in dendrochronology and palynology, he ceaselessly counts the time it takes for the weight of the earth gradually amassing on the terrace to turn into a botanical garden and sink his plant laboratory, *Xylem & Phloem*, so he can also count the sedimented layers of varves. The stratum of the Earth is a jigsaw puzzle. Entrenched in the confines of sediments there are bundles of scripts that escape reason. The morphic essences of geological schisms define the contour between darkness and light. A technological marvel comes in search of eroded eons. The hydraulic compression of the geologic strata flows through four telescopic colossal order columns, revealing secret sunken floors. High pressurized water breaks through valves and feeds plants like a fire sprinkler. On the deepest ground floor, an artifact reads:

Between Reveal and Conceal,
Architecture erodes Light
and sediments Mystery.



74. Central main drawing depicting in plan (above) and section (below) a Utopian structure containing oversized telescopic hydraulic cylinders filled with water from the depths of the earth that lowers and heightens the floors of the underground laboratory
75. Plan drawing of floors no.1, 2, 5, and 6 of the structure
76. Plan drawing of floors no.3, 4, 7, and 8 of the structure
77. Drawing of the retracted hydraulic cylinders telescopic structure, under the weight of the excavated earth on top of it
78. Drawing of the retracted hydraulic cylinders telescopic structure showing the entirety of the cylinders and less earth above it, in an intermediary phase
79. Detail drawing (left) showing the joint between two stages of a hydraulic cylinder, their link with the slab, and the pressurized flow of water for the plants. Schematic sectioned axonometric view of a two stage hydraulic cylinder used as a column to support three floors (right)
80. Interior perspective view of an underground floor with zenithal light through the central vertical circulations scissors lift shaft
81. Drawing of Bastion B6 and the adjoining curtains of *Orgamè*
82. Drawing of Small *Basilica* (I) of *Orgamè*
83. Section drawing through the Great *Basilica* (II) and curtain wall
84. Section drawings through curtain wall and *Basilica* II of *Orgamè*
85. Section drawing through *Basilica* III of *Orgamè*
86. Section drawing through *Basilica* I and curtain wall of *Orgamè*
87. Drawing of *Orgamè*'s West Gate
88. Drawing of *Basilica* III with Greek sector of *Orgamè*
89. Drawing of *Basilica* II with Bastion B6 of *Orgamè*
90. Main stone drawing depicting the *intra-muros* of *Orgamè* and a cliff shore hypothesis before and after Justinian earthquake



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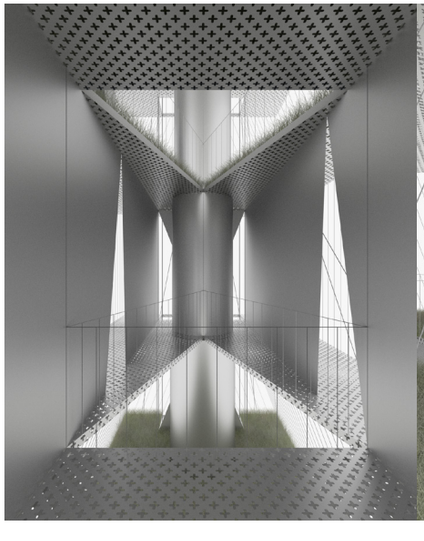

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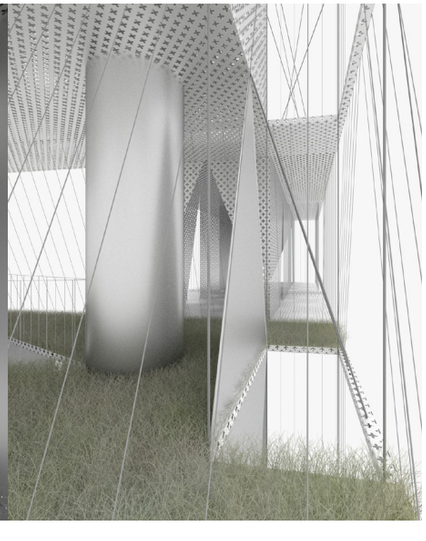


> *"We can consider architecture everything that has already been designed and/or built. That would define a realm of conventional solutions, often repeated in a self-referential system. We imagined a counterpart, a "non architecture". A world of unexplored designs and countless possibilities, that if found, could enlarge and change permanently the boundaries of architecture. A universe of chances and opportunities never challenged by architects before. A limitless field of investigation that includes everything that is not architecture, yet. Non Architecture aims to find unconventional and unexplored design solutions in the field of architecture."* [1]

It was this challenging brief put forth by the Non Architecture Award competition that inspired me to take part in it (images 1, 2, 3), exploring the same structural visions expressed in the underground laboratory depicted in Plate V. As humans thrived when their cities were established along sources of water, it is water again that proves to be both a menace and a medium for contemporary nomadic architecture, fusing with Metabolist ideas about architectural mega-structures that are not static entities but rather kinetic ones that can organically mutate and adapt: resilient, autonomous, and archetypal floating ziggurats with hydraulic structures that are filled with the surplus of water during high tides and rain flooding, allowing to grow organically like the inner vessels in the stem of a plant. While *Frank Lloyd Wright* believed in the idea of organic architecture, where a building should be born out of its natural surroundings, *Le Corbusier*, on the other hand, sought to create a more abstract, standardized, and functional architecture, a "machine for living" less tied to specific contexts, as he believed that architecture should offer a universal solution to urban problems. Therefore, a "think global, act local" approach that keeps a fine balance between the generic and the specific is required. Further inspired by *Frank Lloyd Wright*'s unbuilt *Seacliff* House, whose geometry resembles an upside-down telescopic hydraulic cylinder, my competition proposal envisioned cable-stayed folding tents like a bridge infrastructure that rise like the veiled mast of a ship and plug into various existing contexts in need of humanitarian aid or temporary housing in a poetic expression of structural fragility and monumental transience. Given these itinerant steel structures are fully recyclable, they not only have multiple lives wherever they are placed, but they can also be recycled into the same material of the same quality and serve a different function, unthought of *apriori*.

1 <https://www.nonarchitecture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/220926_AWARD-Brief.pd>

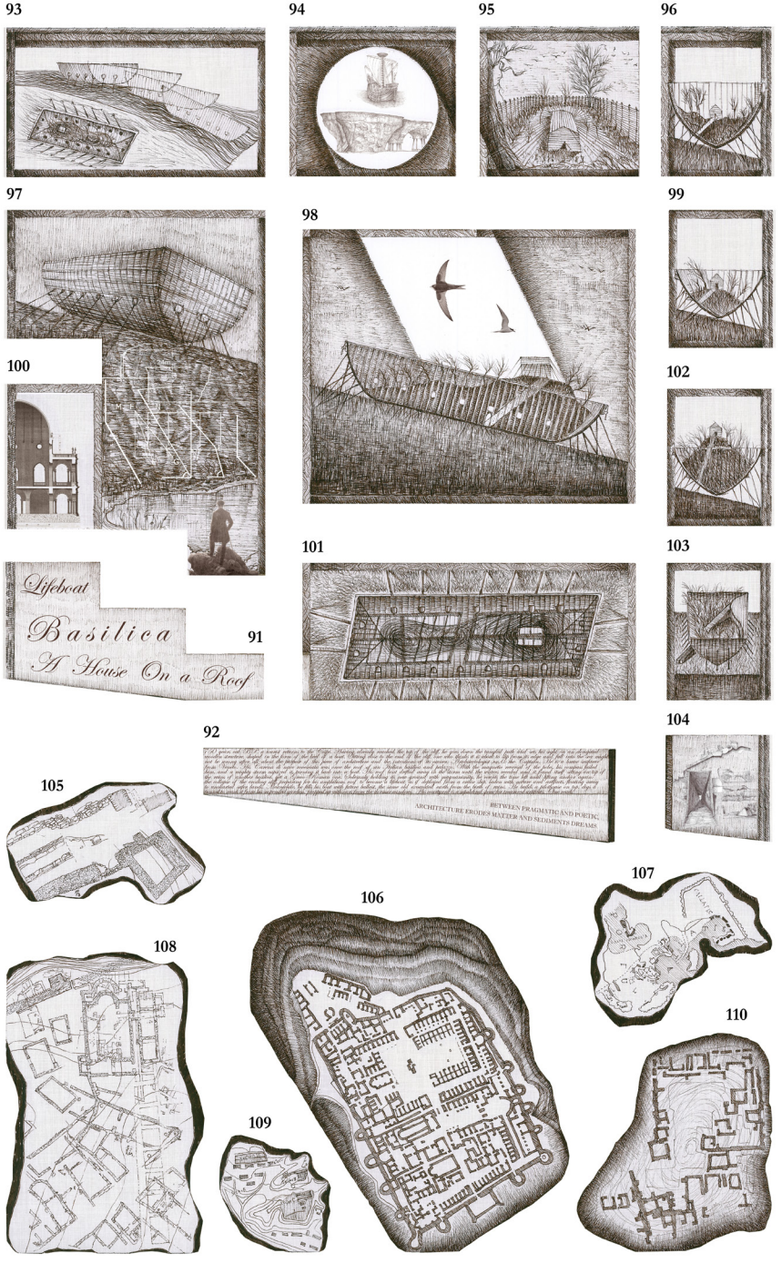


Plate VI

5.7 Plate VI - Lifeboat Basilica
A House on a Roof

750 years cal BP: a tourist returns to the Cape. Having already reached the top of the cliff, he goes down the tangled path and sets his sight on an elongated wooden structure shaped in the form of the keel of a boat, sitting close to the end of the cliff. Who thinks it is about to slip from its edge and fall into the sea might not be wrong after all about the purpose of this piece of architecture and the intentions of its owner, *Artchitectologist* 6: the Captain. He is a brave seafarer from *Veneto*. His *carena di nave rovesciata* was once the roof of an Italian *basilica* and *palazzo*. With the magnetic reversal of the poles, his compass failed him, and a mighty storm capsized his ship, turning it back into a boat. His roof boat drifted away in the storm. When the waters receded it was found sitting on top of the ruins of another *basilica*, yet a Greco-Roman one. The boat solemnly holds its new ground, while the captain counts the time left until lifting anchor again. When the eroding cliff will collapse, his amphibious roof will become a lifeboat, as if deployed from a cruise ship, laden with nature and artifacts, floating away to uncharted safer lands. Meanwhile, he fills his boat with future ballast, builds a pilothouse on top, digs a tunnel to reach it from his suspended courtyard, propped up with oars from the *lucarnes* windows. He buries in the garden an unearthed artifact that reads:

Between Pragmatic and Poetic,
Architecture erodes Matter
and sediments Dreams.



93. Diagram showing the falling of the *Basilica* Roof from the cliff (above). The *Basilica* Roof is already floating in the *Razelm* Lake (below)
94. Main central references: *Ercole De' Roberti*'s "The Argonauts leaving *Colchis"* (above) and *Bob Gramsma*'s "Riff" Land Art sculpture
95. Aerial view inside the *Basilica* Roof when filled with earth, showing the central pitched tent and planted trees
96. Drawing of the initial stage in the evolution of the filling with earth of the *Basilica* Roof
97. Perspective drawing of the *Basilica* Roof propped with diagonal spits (the future rowing oars) on the rows of skylights. Complex scientific graphics with white contour can be deciphered on the profile of the cliff that try to simulate past and future cliff erosion cycles. *Caspar David Friedrich*'s "Wanderer above the Sea of Fog" can be seen in the foreground
98. Main central drawing depicting a longitudinal section of the *Basilica* Roof filled with planted earth and the tent on top
99. Drawing of the intermediary stage in the evolution of the filling with earth of the *Basilica* Roof
100. Half section drawing of the *Basilica Palladiana* in *Vicenza*, Italy
101. Plan drawing of the *Basilica* Roof filled with planted earth
102. Drawing of the final stage in the evolution of the filling with earth of the *Basilica* Roof
103. Drawing of a frontal axonometric view of the Roof, showing the underground and ground access tunnel to the house on top
104. Drawing in sections and perspective of *Dani Karavan*'s "Walter Benjamin Memorial" as a reference for how erosion changes the relation between the architecture and the land it stands on
105. Drawing of T8 Tower of *Orgamè*
106. Drawing of a stone with the map of the ancient *Dacian* town and later ancient Roman city and legionary fortress of *Troesmis*
107. Drawing of a stone with the map of the ancient Greek city and port of *Callatis* (Romania)
108. Drawing of the Central Sector of *Orgamè*
109. Drawing of a stone with the map of the ancient Roman and Byzantine fortress of *Beroe* (Romania)
110. Drawing of a stone with the map of the ancient Greek fortification at *Albesti* (Romania)



1

Palazzo della Ragione in *Padova* and *Basilica Palladiana* in *Vicenza* both stand as curious testimonies of a particular spatial typology: the empty *nucleus* of the great hall atop, a vast chamber ingeniously covered by a wooden-ribbed roof resting upon the condensed cellular conglomerate of rooms below, ordered by a network of walls, arches and vaults, that seem to be bound through the public square's pavement to the merchants' stalls and the other rooms of the city, rather than to the great hall above.[1]

My fascination for the two monuments deepened when I first had the chance to visit *Basilica Paladiana* in autumn 2021 (image 1) and *Palazzo della Ragione* two years later, both during master study trips. Upon entering each, I remember having a somehow peculiar and mysterious experience of space, when climbing the hidden staircase behind the porticoes that leads to the quiet otherworldly chamber. It was like a fleeting instance of transition from the bustling city unfolding on the ground floor to the strangeness and contemplative solemnity of the *Salone*, that seamed abstracted, a world in itself, almost a heterotopy. The persistence of this tension between the two superposed registers, opposite in nature, one pertaining to the domestic and merchant exchange life of the city, the other silently awaiting more ceremonious events in the city, ensures that the autonomous upper hall overlooks and defends the ephemeral and structurally fragmented ground floor. This overlapping configuration is a standpoint for deciphering any house:

> *"In every built thing, there is a latent upper hall alongside a scaffolded conglomerate of lower chambers; in every building, there is both the estranged alienated sequence, as well as the one that speaks of doorways available for connections and compromises with alterity, a magnanimous and fastidious something that disregards the usually mundane. For this reason, the backbone of the basilica, this colossal dorsum, has nothing to do with familiarity, but, on the contrary, it is the unfamiliar itself."* [2]

1 Stanciu, 2020: p. 16-17
2 idem 1.

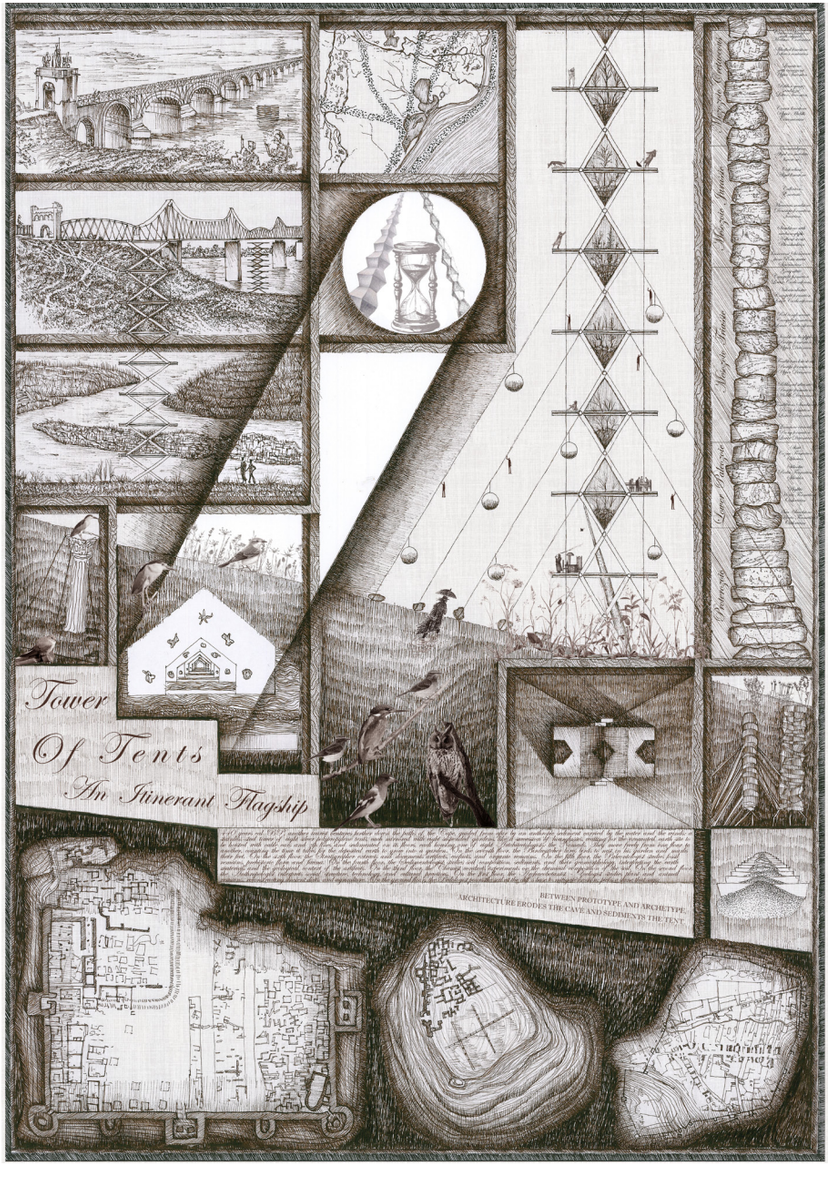
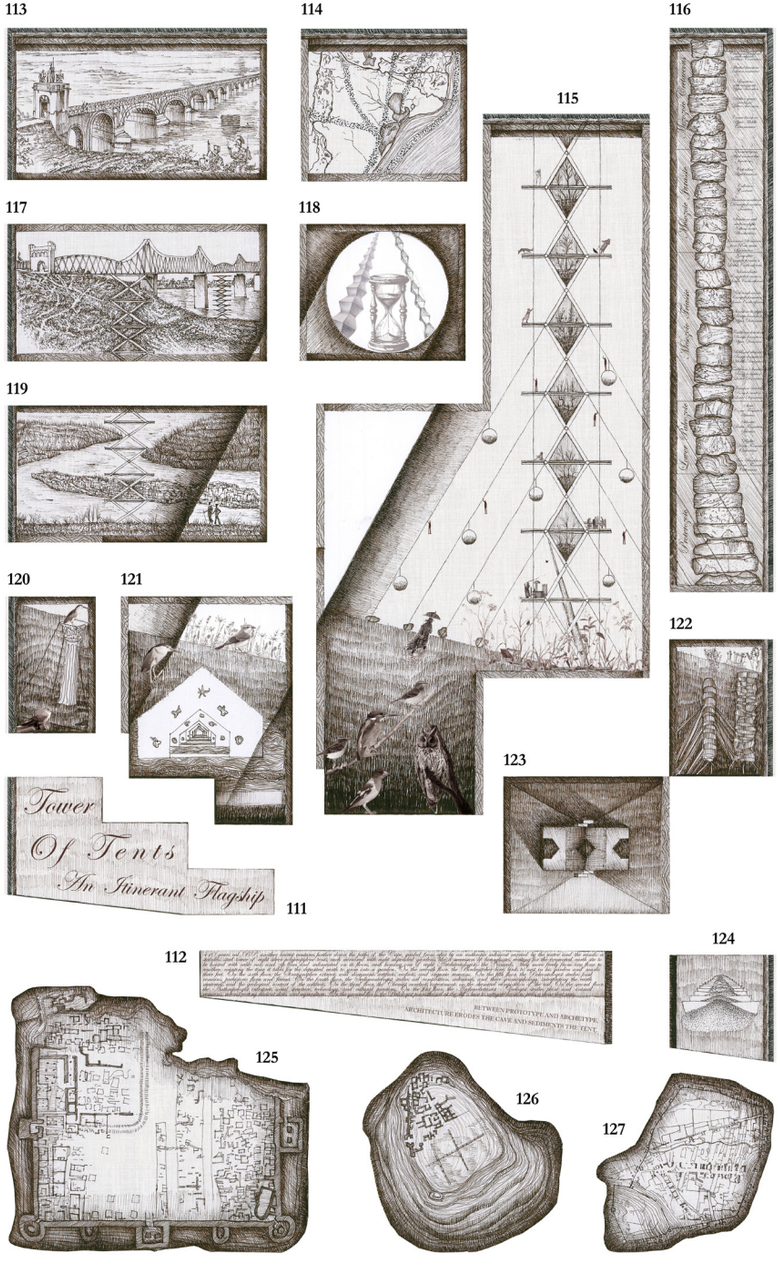


Plate VII

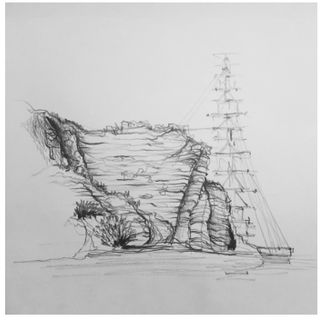
5.8 Plate VII - Tower of Tents
An Itinerant Flagship

440 years cal BP: another tourist ventures further down the paths of the Cape, guided by an anthropic sediment carried from afar by the water and the winds: a stainless-steel tower of eight silver polypropylene tents, each mirrored with eight suspended gardens, like a succession of hourglasses, oozing from the same raw matter of the earth that provided the primitive tools to the caveman, waiting for the excavated earth site to be hoisted with cable cars and zip lines and sedimented on its floors, each housing one of 8 *Artchitectologists*: the Nomads. They move freely from one floor to another, counting the time it takes for the deposited earth to grow into a garden. On the seventh floor, the Birdwatcher lures birds to nest in his garden and marks their feet. On the sixth floor, the Stratigrapher extracts and documents artifacts, ecofacts, and organic remains. On the fifth floor, the Paleontologist studies fossil remains, prehistoric flora and fauna. On the fourth floor, the Sedimentologist studies soil composition, sediments, and their geomorphology, interpreting the earth materials and the geological context of the artifacts. On the third floor, the Chemist conducts experiments on the chemical composition of the soil. On the second floor, the Anthropologist interprets social structure, technology, and cultural practices. On the first floor, the Archaeobotanist - Zoologist studies plant and animal remains, reconstructing ancient diets, and agriculture. On the ground floor, the Pedologist repurposes the soil to mitigate erosion at the cliff base. And there, a lost artifact reads:

Between Prototype and Archetype,
Architecture erodes the Cave
and sediments the Tent.



113. A depiction of *Apollodorus of Damascus*' famous marvel of engineering, the first and longest bridge at that time over the Danube, built for the Roman emperor *Trajan*'s conquest of *Dacia* (today Romania) with the folded time-traveling Tower of Tents passing under it
114. A map showing the main bird migration routes in the Delta
115. Main central illustration depicting a view of the Tower of Tents with its suspended gardens, populated by fictional characters form *Brodsky* & *Utkin*'s etchings, with an owl and other birds hidden in the foreground
116. Illustration of sedentary rock samples seen in the Romanian Museum of Geology, piled on top of each other in the chronological order they formed in the *Dobrudja* region
117. A view of another marvel of engineering, *Anghel Saligny*'s steel truss bridge over the Danube (the longest in Europe at that time), with the lowered Tower of Tents next to it
118. Main central references: an hourglass flanked by two depictions of *Constantin Brancusi*'s "Endless Column" sculpture
119. A *vedute* of the now sunken island of *Ada Khaleh* on the Danube river, visited by the Tower of Tents
120. *Franco Raggi*'s "Unstable Element in the Desert: Column" reference drawing, with a local bird on top
121. Illustration of the Geological Enfilade of Time, a descending perspective through the slabs of the Tower of Tents, with rocks and fossils from each geological epoch exhibited on them, accompanied by other local birds
122. Two additional references, *Isamu Noguchi*'s "Akari Light Sculpture" (right) and *Christo & Jeanne-Claude*'s "Cubicmeter 5600 Package" (left)
123. Plan view of the Tower of Tents
124. Illustration of *Robert Smithson*'s Mirrors and Shelly Sand artwork
125. Drawing of a stone with the map of *Geto-Dacian Capidava*
126. Drawing of a stone with the map of the ancient Greco-Roman and Byzantine port fort of *Halmyris*. (Romania, Danube Delta)
127. Drawing of a stone with the map of the ancient Roman *Moesian* town of *Ibida* (Romania)



1



2

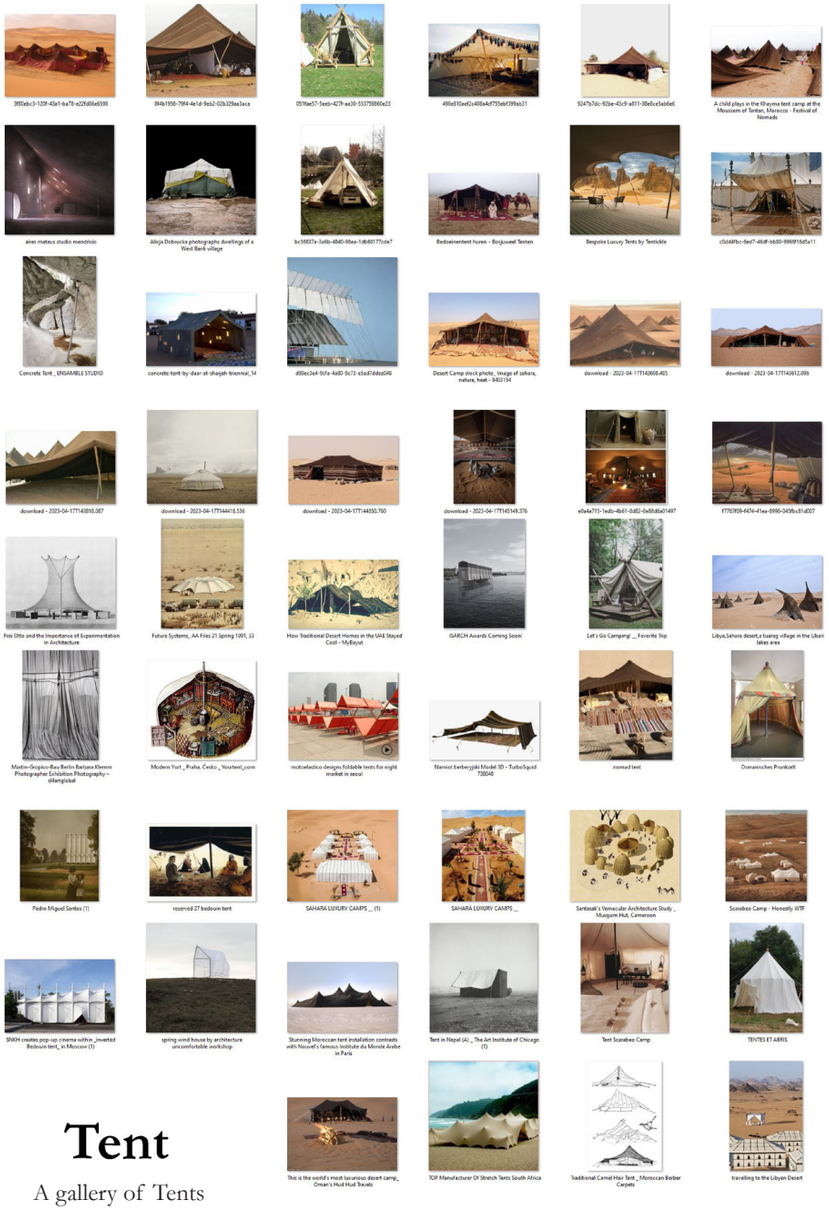
"Architecture is inhabited sculpture [...] If he had the power to fulfill one ambition he would build one of his columns of infinity in Central Park, New York. 'I would like to make my column in Central Park,' he said. 'It would be greater than any building, three times higher than your obelisk in Washington, with a base correspondingly wide – sixty meters or more. It would be made of metal. In each pyramid, there would be apartments and people would live there." [1]

More than 2 *millennia* after the first Greek triremes arrived from *Miletus* to the shore of Cape *Dolojman*, a new floating and itinerant device (image 2) would make its way into the landscape, like in a *capriccio* collage, a mysterious Land Art monolith casting an eerie shadow on the ruins of the past. This laboratory structure takes the form of a tower, to reinterpret the archetype of a lighthouse or a ship mast (image 1), and ensures a different, more poetic and dramatic access route for tourists. Its collapsible structure extends upwards as if emerging from the underground and enables tourists to approach the old cliffs and get to the ruins. In this case, the tower could also rise high above the ruins to provide an interesting panorama of the site, and a shelter for the protected birds inhabiting or transiting the area. Could it structurally support or reinforce the cliff as well?

An *architecture parlante* whose kinetic structure is also its ornament, an anthropic sediment carried from afar by the water and the winds, the tower of tents mirroring one another, like a succession of hourglasses, is waiting for future excavated earth from the archaeological site to be lifted on its cables and deposited on its floors, in gradual sedimentation.

Moreover, could a technologically advanced ephemeral structure be a valid answer in a possible future scenario, acting as a "foreign" contrasting object that temporarily visits the shores to collect, research and exhibit artifacts, an offshore itinerant structure leaving no trace of its own, but helping to discover the traces of the past. Could such structure respond to the challenges of protecting natural and historical heritage?

1 Quoted by *Constantin Brancusi* in Merrill, 1926



Tent

A gallery of Tents

Some still question the extensive use of technology in architecture based on the *Heideggerian* stance of transforming nature into a "standing-reserve" (*Bestand*).[1] My fascination is for the poetic appropriation of technology, the latter displaying the potential of having its novelty absorbed into a symbolic framework. In his book "Forget *Heidegger*", *Neal Leach* proposes *Walter Benjamin* and *Theodor Adorno*'s interpretations of *mimesis*, not as simple "imitation" (*Plato*), but rather as "imagination" and offers a more subtle approach to the problem of alienation through technology Imagination operates at the level of fantasy, which mediates between the unconscious and the conscious, between dream and reality.[2] Leach also tackles "situatedness" in architecture, a key aspect of the tent, in a thought-provoking way, uncovering the *unheimlich* in the process:

> *"If, furthermore, we are to understand our current condition as largely that of a transitory, fleeting society, the predominant - if not universal - mode of existence, it could be argued, is often precisely that of the "wanderer". The Jew, then, the gypsy, the "other" of society provides in some senses the model for the contemporary moment - the rootless, international, mobile, deterritorialized. This is in opposition to the rooted, the nationalistic, and the static. If the dominus, the stable and controlling master of the domus is the creature of the traditional community, the "wanderer" represents the freedom and flux of the city. As such, the wanderer is the archetypal creature of our contemporary condition, a creature whose existence reflects the very transiency of life and nature. [...] The "wanderer" does not fit within a concept of situatedness or rootedness to the soil, and therefore does not fit within the philosophy of the heimat. The "wanderer" is the element that cannot be controlled, cannot be domesticated, and cannot be contained within the logic of the domus. [...] The "wanderer" is therefore treated as the "other", the excluded one, and is perceived as a threat. For it is precisely the fear of flows and movements that cannot be stemmed that turns the Heimlich of the homeland into the unheimlich of nationalism. [...] We should be cautious of all those who call for a regional architecture, an architecture of the heimat, for such claims for an architecture of the soil are in many cases informed by the same thinking that underpins nationalism, since architecture tends to be politicised, as it always exists in a certain political context."* [3]

1 Explained in his 1954 work "The Question Concerning Technology"
2 Leach, 1998: p. 39-43
3 idem 2

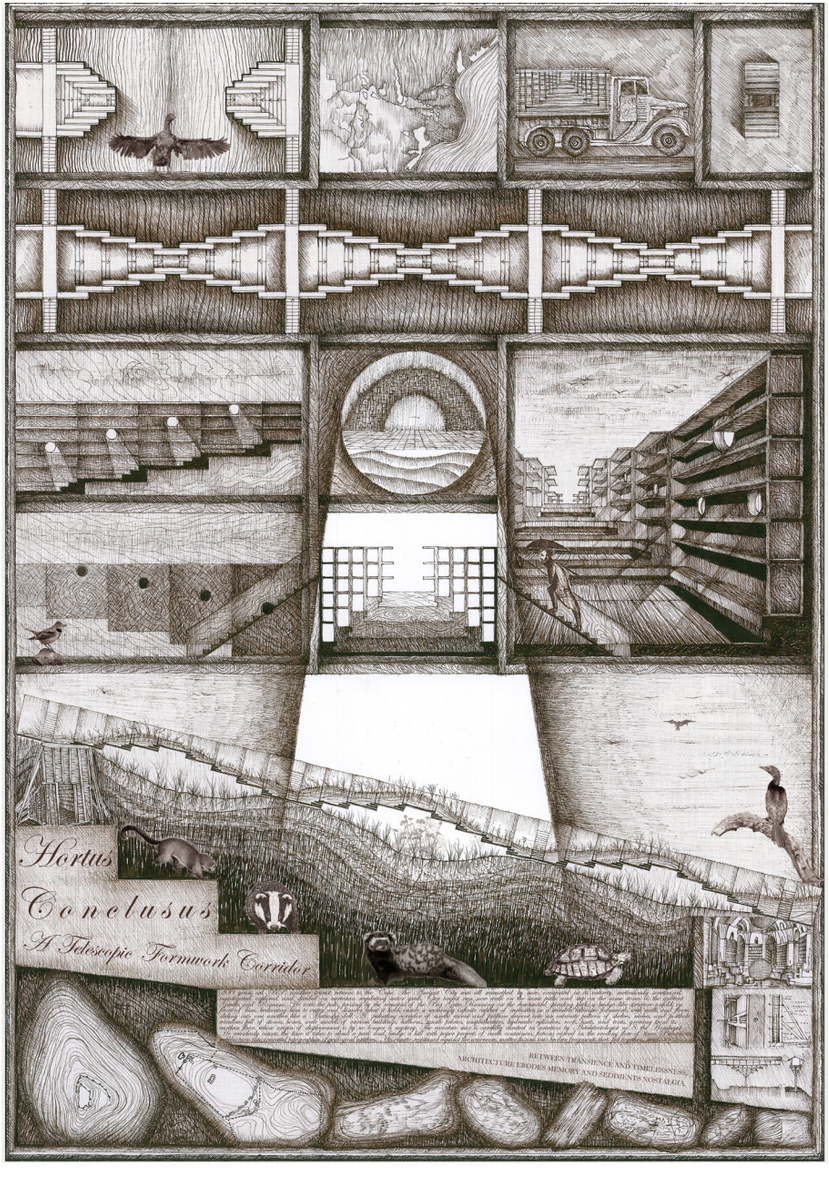
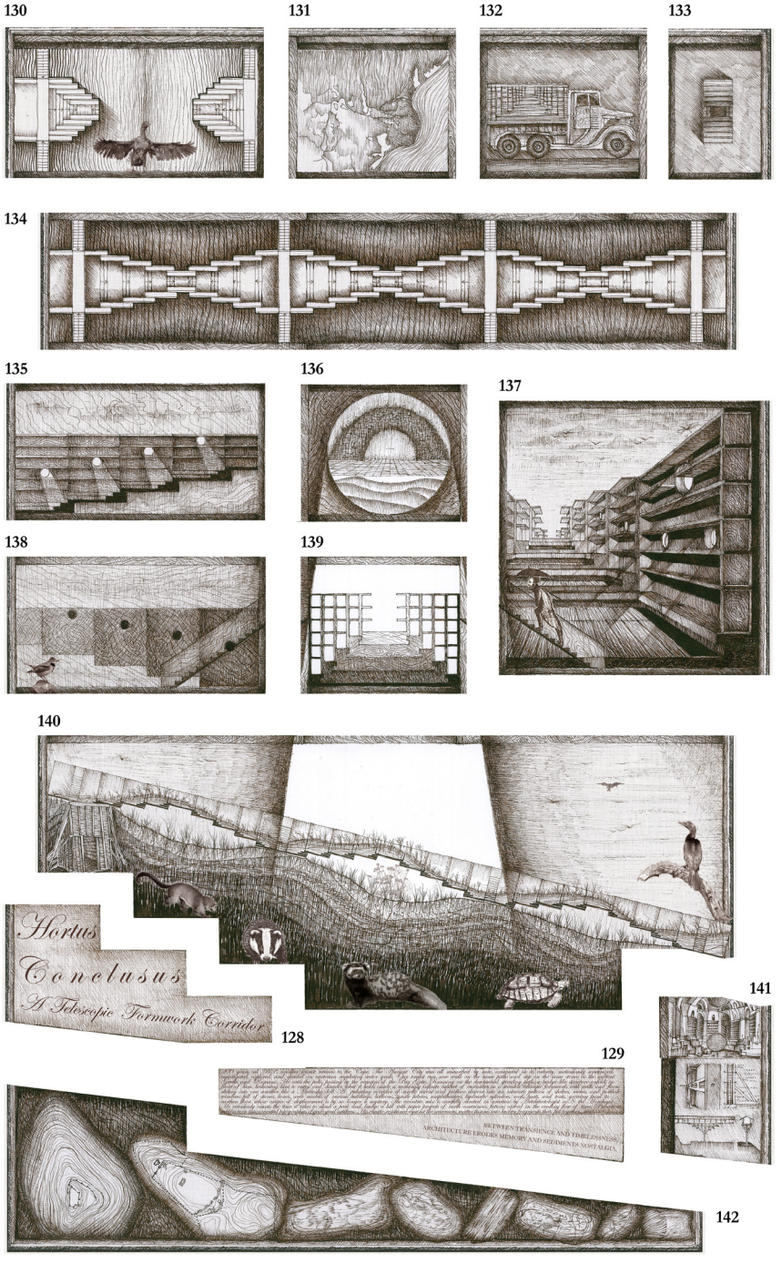


Plate VIII

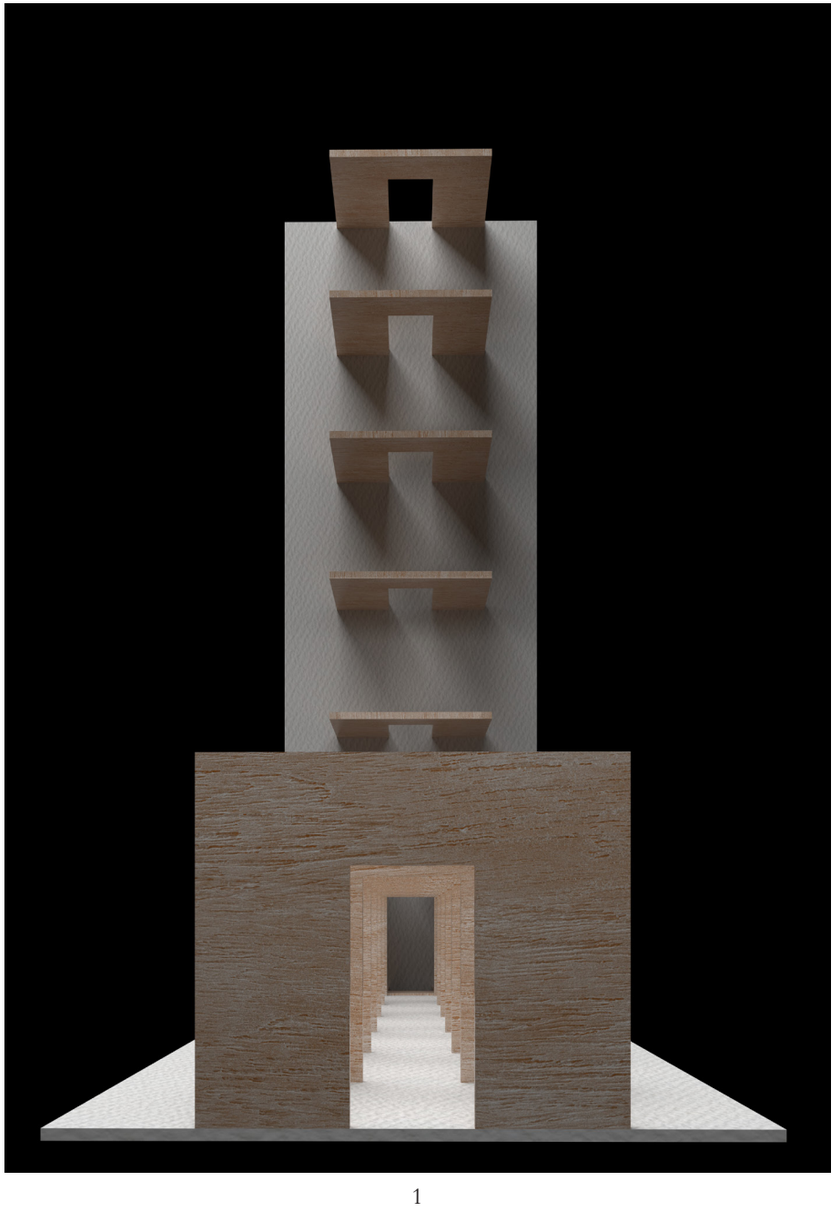
5.9 Plate VIII - Hortus Conclusus A Telescopic Formwork Corridor

200 years cal BP: another tourist returns to the Cape. The Ancient City has been all excavated and unearthed by now, meticulously scrutinised, investigated, and divided on Cartesian regulating sector grids. The tourist now walks on the same paths and step on the same stones like ancient Greeks and Romans. He exits the *polis*, passing by the remains of the Big Gate. Strolling along the downward spiraling path, a roofless bridge-like structure unfolds in front of him, luring him to discover inside it a seemingly infinite cabinet of curiosities nested in a wooden telescopic formwork, with sliding walls and floors. A pulsating corridor of enlightenment following an ascending and descending staircase pattern with shelves, niches, and porthole windows. There he beholds stones, bones, and scale models of buildings, balloons, tensile fabrics, amphitheatres, hydraulic cylinders, roofs, boats, and tents, growing from its earthen floor. The eccentric mix is carefully curated in a stratigraphy of seriation by *Artchitectologist* 8: the Horologist. He ceaselessly counts the time it takes to climb a peak and bridge the archaeological digs. The fictions carved in the eroding flow of time are in peril of being drenched at any moment. His mind resembles an eroded rock from which ideas stream freely. Precarious pebbles turn into invented topographies of geological artifices. His heroic resistance against the cavernous matter fissures into paper projects of earth containers.

Between Transience and Timelessness,
Architecture erodes Memory
and sediments Nostalgia.



130. Plan view of the opened Telescopic Formwork, from a vulture's point of view
131. Map of the Danube Delta from cca. 1500 AD
132. Personal drawing of a truck used to carry *Brodsky* & *Utkin*'s "Stageless Theatre" through the city, re-purposed to carry the Telesopic Formwork
133. Plan view of a retracted module of the Telescopic Earthwork
134. Plan view of four fully extended modules of the Corridor
135. Section view of a half module of the Telesopic Formwork with round porthole windows as an endless staircase
136. Main central references: *Brodsky* & *Utkin*'s "A Hill with a Hole" (above) and *Maya Lin*'s "Wave Field" Land Artwork
137. Interior perspective view of a *Brodsky* & *Utkin* persona climbing a stair inside the Telescopic Formwork, with god rays of light through the portholes in the shelves
138. Exterior elevation view of a half module of the Telesopic Formwork with a local bird sitting on the lower frame
139. Short section/elevation view of the Telesopic Formwork
140. Main central illustration depicting a longitudinal section of four fully extended modules of the Telescopic Formwork, filled with earth and planted, bridging several archaeological digs. On the lower foreground, from left to right: Chile's Venice *Biennale* 2021 Pavilion "Testimonial Spaces"; a weasel, a badger, a polecat, a tortoise and on the right frame, a cormorant on a tree brunch
141. Three additional references: *Erik Desmazières*' engraving depicting an imagined interior of *Jorge Luis Borges*' fictional novel "Library of Babel" (top); a technical detail of a formwork (middle); a longitudinal and transversal section of *Kengo Kuma*'s "Yusuhara Wooden Bridge"
142. First two stones from the left depict on them the maps of *Enisala* fortress and the Ancient Greek city of *Axiopolis* (Romania)



1

I find the play of solids and voids an interesting leitmotif in architecture, present also in the way many architects conceive space, either by gradual sedimentation of solids, or by subtraction, carving, and eroding of the whole into multiple parts. What if we could use a wooden formwork as a temporary and transient element, akin to a scaffolding on a construction site, to create temporary pavilions filled with the excavated earth that further develops into a botanical garden, while also reinforcing the archaeological pit. Therefore the act of archaeological excavation, although a destructive process in itself, as it disturbs the existing layered stratigraphy in the process of digging for artifacts, retains the potentiality of an artificial garden, with uprooted soils, to blossom and reveal itself to the viewer in a medium scale Land Art intervention, in the form of a temporary pavilion. It could shelter both artifacts and cultivate protected flowers. Once the archaeological investigations are finished, if the findings are not considered of utmost importance to be further left open, the telescopic formwork structure could be removed, and the transient garden dismantled, with the soil used to cover the ruin back once more, for future preservation.

The proposed enclosed corridor structure is a modular one, comprised of four units increasing in dimension, in order to telescope one into the other for compact transport on and off the site. Each module consists of a wooden floor linked to two lateral walls sculpted to host shelves for the various temporary exhibits. The resulting structure acts like an endless modular stair bridge on the span of the archaeological pits. When filled with the excavated earth, the formwork becomes a hilly landscape creating a powerful liminal[1] experience of climbing and descending.

Walls as floors, from a horizontal enfilade to a vertical one (image 1) is a conceptual render model that inspired the transition from Plate VII (the tower) to Plate VIII (the corridor formwork).

1 Liminality, derived from the Latin *limen* (meaning threshold), refers to transitional or in-between spaces. In architecture, liminal spaces often manifest as corridors, staircases, atriums, or waiting areas, places that are neither fully one environment nor another. They evoke feelings of ambiguity, transformation, or unease.

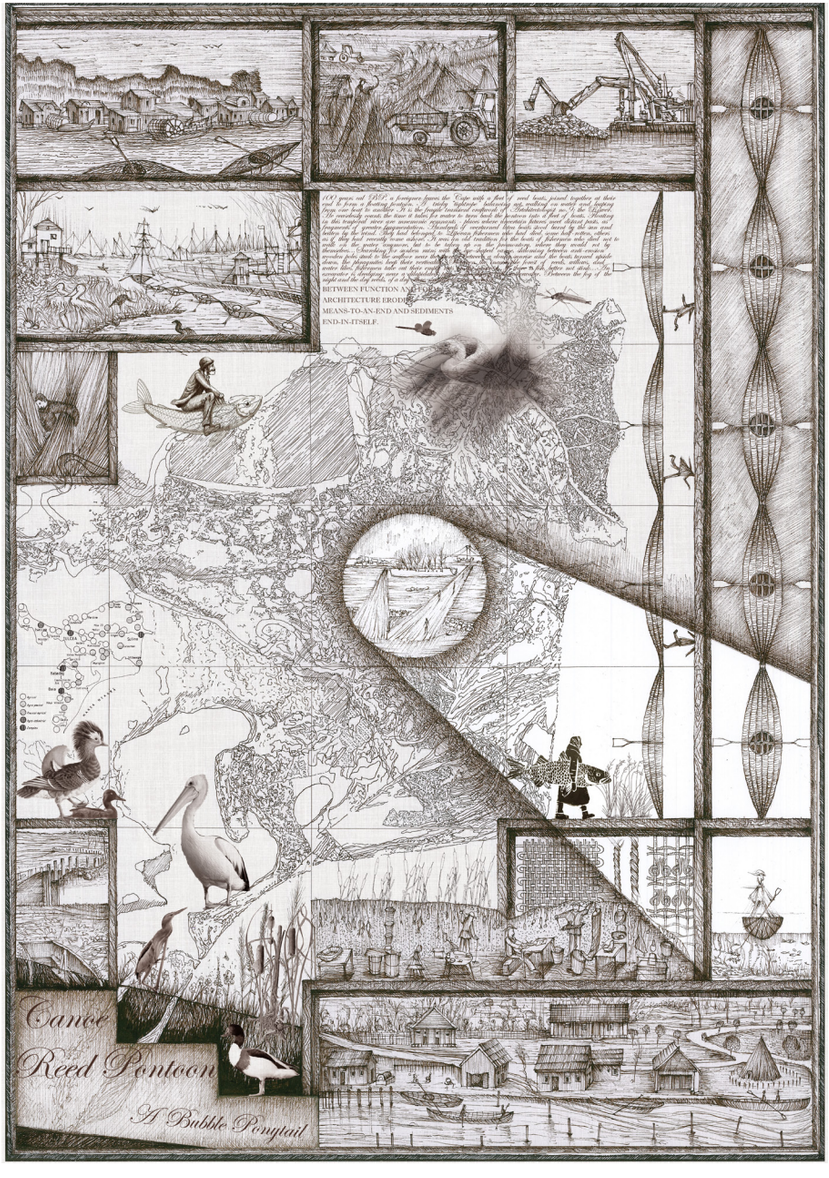
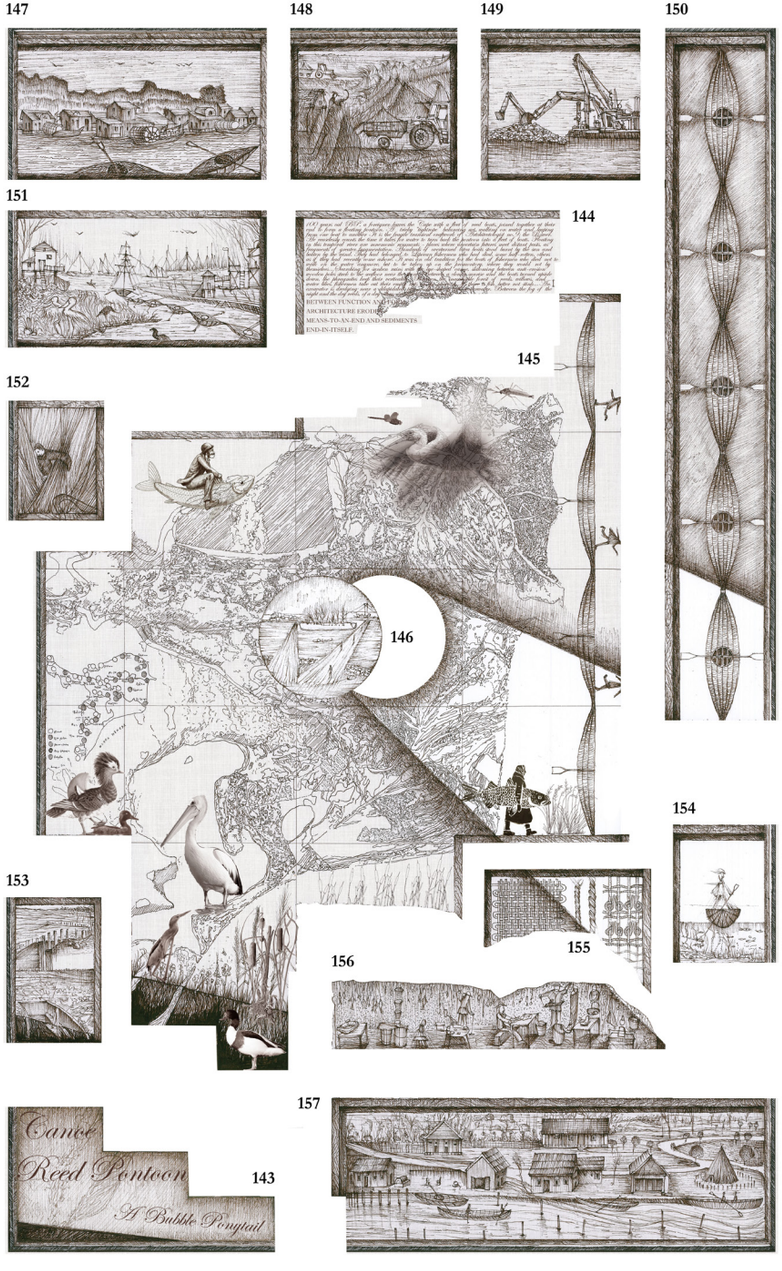


Plate IX

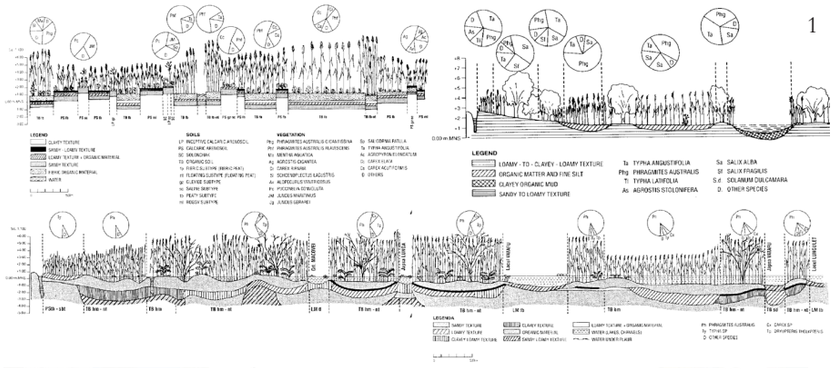
5.10 Plate IX - Canoe Reed Pontoon A Bubble Ponytail

100 years cal BP: a foreigner who is about to leave the Cape on a fleet of reed boats, joined together at their ends to form a floating pontoon, performs a tightrope balancing act, leaping from one boat to another to get on this fragile transient craftwork of *Artchitectologist* 9: the Rower, who ceaselessly counts the time it takes for water to untie and dismantle the pontoon back into a fleet of lonely boats. Here they are floating in the temporal river of mnemonic remnants where uncertain futures meet distant pasts. Hundreds of overturned *lotca* boats are burnt dry by the sun and the wind. They once belonged to *Lipovan* fishermen. Some are half-rotten, others look as if they have recently been brought ashore. It was an old tradition for the boats of fishermen who died not to go on water anymore, but to be taken up on the promontory, where they would rot by themselves…On the lookout for sunken ruins on the eye-shaped canoe, they are slaloming between anti-erosion wooden poles on the seafloor near the shore. Between a cloudy sunrise and the overturned boats, the *phragmites* keep their verticality…Between the inaccessible forest of reeds, willows, and water lilies, fishermen take out their empty nets on the reed pontoon...if there is fish, better not stink...An excavator is dredging near an abandoned pier… The remnants of a dike is still underwater. Between the fog of the night and the dry ochre colour of the reeds, one last lost stone reads:

Between Function and Form,
Architecture erodes Means-to-an-End
and sediments End-in-Itself.



145. Main central illustration depicting the present day map of the Danube Delta. Displayed along its left frame, a diagram map shows the main economical activities in the Danube Delta's cities, while on its right frame, there is a long elevation view of the Canoe Pontoon; various species of ducks, pelicans, and traditional fishermen surround the maps.
146. Main central reference: *Christo* & *Jeanne-Claude*'s "Daiba Project"
147. A traditional water mill village in the middle of the Danube Delta, visited by the Canoe Pontoon
148. Reed harvesting and loading into tractors
149. Observational drawing: this industrial activity could represent either a dredger widening and deepening a canal in the delta, or an excavator pulling away the rubble of an ancient dam that used to block the natural flow of the river.
150. Plan view of the Reed Boats linked to one another to form a floating pontoon
151. Traditional port village in the Danube Delta, visited by the Canoe Pontoon
152. A peasant working the field (reed gathering)
153. Additional reference: Mary Miss' "Greenwood Pond: Double Site" Land Artwork
154. Short elevation view of a Reed Boat and its rower (allusion to *Charon* on the waters of *Styx* from Ancient Egyptian mythology) with underwater flora and fauna
155. Various weaving patterns, braids of knots as craftsmanship references for the boat reed bundles
156. Personal illustration of a traditional wooden household in a fishing village, with people performing various activities related to the processing of fish, as documented in the *Tulcea* Danube Delta Museum
157. A *veduta* of a traditional fishing village from the Danube Delta, made of fish processing and cuisine huts (called "*cherhana*" in Romanian), placed in a row along the shore



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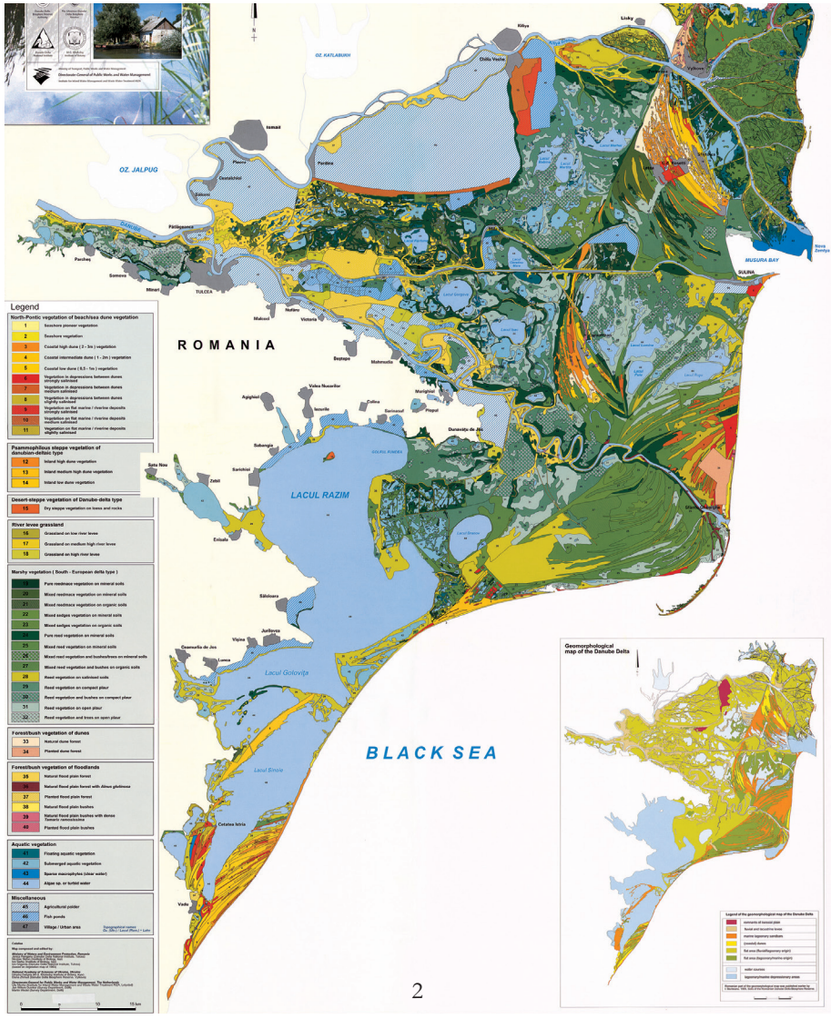


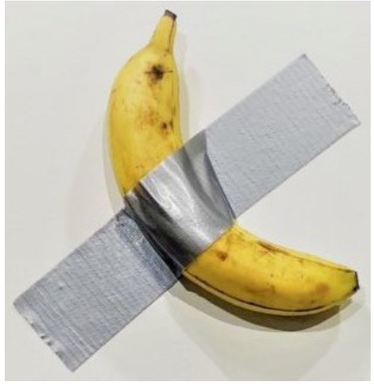
2

As already shown in the prior scientific analysis of the *Razelm-Sinoie* Lake, there is a clear need for preserving and protecting this complex ecosystem, with rewilding efforts and wildlife restoration attempts currently underway. The gradual natural siltation and later the artificial closing of the lagoon have substantially modified the sediment flux and the "breathing" mechanism of the lagoon. Nevertheless, the Delta keeps growing year by year, and parts of its Easternmost points, like the Island K and the *Sacalin* Peninsula, are considered to be Europe's and subsequently Romania's newest land.[1]

What architectural ideas could be projected upon this transient and ever-changing landscape? With both a territorial master plan framework, a conceptual and site-specific land-art approach in mind, a parallel could be drawn with the *Flevoland* Land Art project, the largest of this kind in the world, built in the wake of the Netherlands' newest land reclamation project, celebrated through the invitation of famous architects and Land Artists, including *Robert Morris*, *Richard Serra*, and *Daniel Libeskind*. Flevoland consists of a suite of objects that tell subtle allegorical stories to the contemporary generation about the past use of that land, such as: The Deltawerk (2018), which makes use of an abandoned concrete structure, once a hydraulics wave-testing laboratory; show the patina of time on contrasting industrial materials, like in *Richard Serra*'s Sea Level (1996); provide small functions for visitors, like in *Richard Morris*'s Observatorium (1977) and *Paul de Kort*'s 2016 Pontoon.[2]

Similar to the Land Art structures built on the Netherlands' newest artificial land, could Romania's newest natural land benefit from a Land Art project as well, such as a reed boat pontoon? Given its durability and tensile strength, could reed, as the most plentiful locally sourced material, hold potential in my project area, apart from the existing thatched roofs? Both tourists and local dwellers who depend on boat fishing for their daily life could use reed as an ecological boat construction material, an alternative to the light wood used for their traditional boats called "*lotca*". Moreover, could a floating reed pontoon, inspired by the visual imagery of *Christo & Jeanne-Claude*'s Floating Piers become a seasonal tourist attraction, based on the wealth of existing reed bed roots and stalks as raw material?

1 <https://www.info-delta.ro/delta-dunarii-17/curiozitati-din-delta-dunarii/html>
2 <https://www.landartflevoland.nl/>



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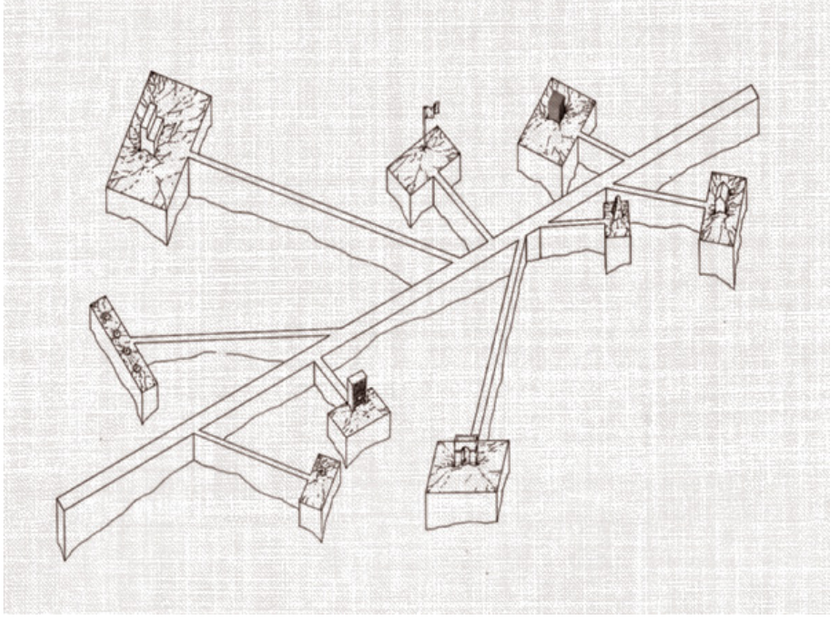


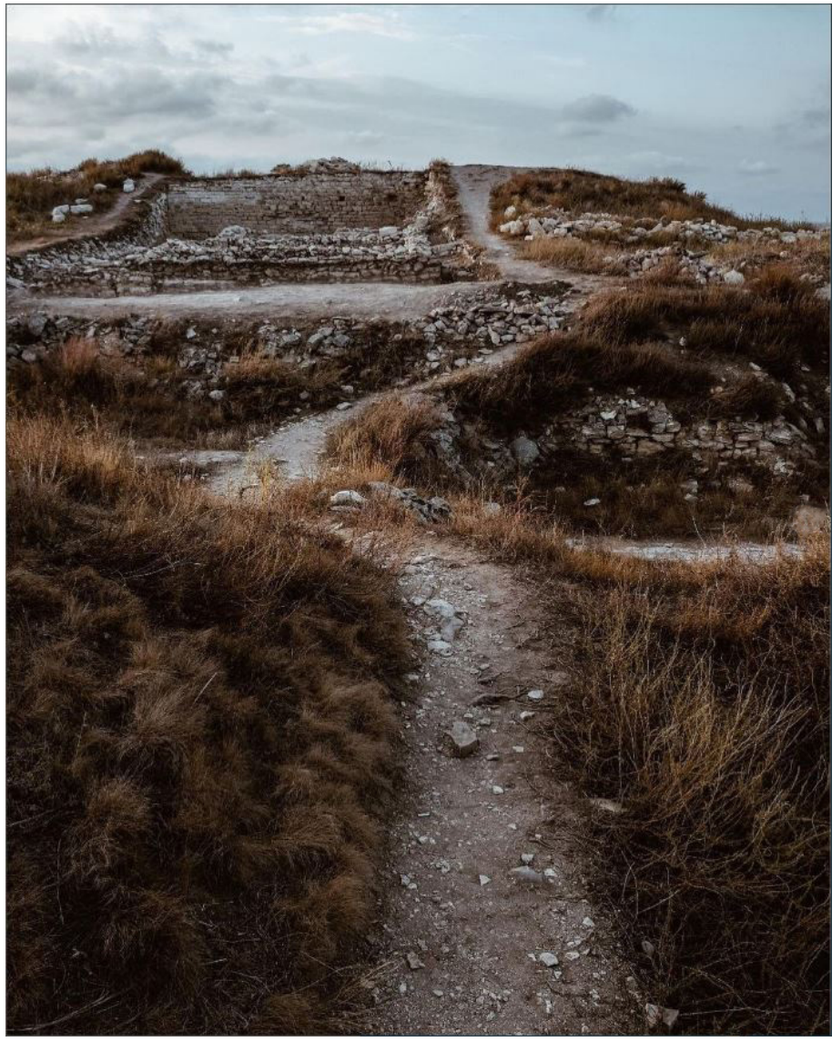
6. CONCLUSION

Starting from a "Fascination for a Place", I delved into a scientific "Understanding of the Place", and the two forces that sculpted it (erosion and sedimentation). The following chapter, "Acting on the Place", highlighted other prior projects that had been proposed for the site, most of them unrealised, only to reach the conclusion that a temporary intervention is preferable. In the chapter "A path to the place", a path not taken, a path to Land Art arose, using *Robert Smithson*'s seminal work "A Sedimentation of the Mind" and *Michael Heizer*'s "Earthworks" approach inspired from archaeology to finally settle on imagining and imaging both a physical and mental path. *Hans Dieter Schaal*'s drawings from his 1970's work "Paths, Passages and Spaces" (fig.2)[1] greatly influenced my overall intent, as the starting point for the construction of an imaginary yet achievable possibilities.

In addition, the statement made by cryptocurrency entrepreneur *Justin Sun* after buying and eating the famous taped banana (the "Comedian", a 2019 conceptual artwork by Italian artist *Maurizio Cattelan*) (fig.1): "the real value is in the concept itself"[2] made me think that similarly in conceptual architecture the finished building product can be seen of secondary importance to the ideas that birthed it, represented primarily by texts, diagrams, art installations, and in my case, a graphic narration.

I choose to look at erosion and sedimentation as processes occurring both outside and inside ourselves, as experienced by the disembodied mind: erosion and sedimentation of memory itself. In the current era of rising social-ecological pressure, we are forced to grapple with the fact that architecture will find an increasing refuge in the realm of unaccomplished dreams, that do not deplete the Earth of its intrinsic resources. Dreams take the least of means to flicker into the darkness of thought and prevail at long last over our metaphysical homelessness.

1 <https://socks-studio.com/2014/03/02/about-the-spatial-experience-hans-dieter-schaals-paths-passages-and-spaces-1970s/>
2 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comedian_(artwork)>



1

In the context of my master's thesis, I sought to develop a critical way of relating architecture to the purpose it can serve, emphasizing an inherent aspect of it that is fiction, as a representation produced by the imagination that has no correspondence in reality at the time it is imagined. The hypothesis of a discourse focusing on visual fiction and utopian structural visions is laden with qualities that transcend the buildable spectrum. Architecture implies not only the construction of a real environment, but also a mental *topos*, built from pieces of fiction that enhance its theoretical dimension as an autonomous domain. Hence the choice of the term "architectonic" instead of "architectural" in the title of my work, as the first term is relevant to the study of architecture as a discipline *per se*.

The concept of architecture for the sake of architecture or architecture for its own sake[1] distances from the usual purpose of architecture, the built object, and therefore faces preconceptions, often labeled as a form of escapism, an instrument of illusion, lacking social involvement. Like a hermetic poem whose words serve language alone, the paper architecture that derives from it serves mainly the discipline itself.[2]

Strolling *Argamum*'s paths (image 1) and the mental wandering through the collective unconscious and its reservoir of archetypes transcend utilitarian functionalism, anchored stably in culture, resisting the erosion of time, through creation (*poiesis*), action (*praxis*), and sensory experience (*aesthesis*), illustrating the marriage between "*homo ludens*" and "*homo faber*" [3].

Even though the current project is at the level of concept for the time being, it is not unlikely to arise interest of stakeholders in the near future, as a nature preservation project through temporary Land Art installations.

Now, I am looking back retrospectively on my architecture education through the metaphor of a lighthouse on a rock island.[4] I see the architecture school as a bastion-laboratory of ideas for the future, never fearing novelty and experimentation, while paving the way forward through the unchartered waters of the construction sector and beyond.

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1 Similar to *Ars gratia artis*. *Theophile Gauthier*'s "*Émaux et Camées*" (1852)
2 Sabău, 2022: p. 21
3 Arendt, 1961: p. 229, 230 quoted in Delcommune, 2024: p. 175
4 Inspired by a lecture by Romanian architect *Dan Coma*, while a student at *Ion Mincu* University of Architecture and Urbanism, held somewhere in 2019 or 2020.

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Front cover illustrations: own work



2600 years cal BP, a visitor arrives [illegible] Cape. He stops by the wild beach and dips his feet into the shallow pebbly water. There, he meets Architectologist no. 1, the Lifeguard. He ceaselessly counts the time it takes for visitors to bathe between two tides and ponders: Of the masts by thousands leaving shores which many an ocean laves, how many will be shattered, by the winds and by the waves? He is one of those who [illegible] to live in the past. The climate of his sight changes from wet to dry and from dry to wet according to his mental weather, therefore he can see things as they were when the Istros (Danube) met the sea in front of the Orgame fortress; fleets of Hellas and Gaulos, large, round-bottomed merchant vessels, carrying heavy loads of merchandise from distant Milesian shores, exchanging both goods and ideas...the hero's pyre smoking, broken pots thrown at the fortress wall and the sand that makes the ships stand still, a league from the shore...armor from the graves of heroes...triremes mooring at Dolojman...amphorae, libations and cremations. The ancient Halmyris Gulf was a huge tidal pool itself, breathing and filtering water like a strainer, but each new sediment gradually closed it. Now there are fewer visitors, carried by different winds. Once, amongst them, laid [illegible] the latest artifact the Lifeguard witnessed the Black Sea birthing from its [illegible] – a lapidary engraving, full of algae, [illegible] that read: BETWEEN CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT

ARCHITECTURE ERODES HOMELESSNESS AND SEDIMENTS HOMESICKNESS.

The thesis [illegible] relate, reflect, and react to the highly complex and [illegible] subjective aspect of memory in architecture, through the lenses of erosion and sedimentation, two complementary phenomena, that can have both geologic and anthropic origins and which far outweigh our lifetime. The chosen locus of investigation is the oldest established ancient city in Romania, whose eroded ruins sedimented an archaeological site since the beginning of the last century. The site is located on the shores of Razim-Sinoe, the largest lake in Romania, which was, back then, yet gradually enclosing gulf (a tidal pool) to the Black Sea in Antiquity when the Greek colonists from Miletus founded Orgame on a cliff promontory later called Cape Dolosman by the Turks: a place which is now one of the many strictly protected areas of the Danube Delta UNESCO World Heritage Site. This latter fact ensures that from a pragmatic near-future perspective, any tentative design scenario that envisions a permanent structure on a bigger scale than that of an elevated pathway through the ruins will almost certainly remain unbuilt. This honest acknowledgment, rather than triggering nostalgic lamentation over the apparent impossibility of acting upon this "picturesque" place, is infused with poetic qualities, opens the opportunity for a meta-reflection on the permanence and transience of architectonic explorations as both material gestures and abstract concepts, navigating through uncannily entangled flows between Nature and Artifact which ceaselessly permeate Architecture.

Gateway to the Pathway

A Sheltered Pool by the Enclosing Gulf



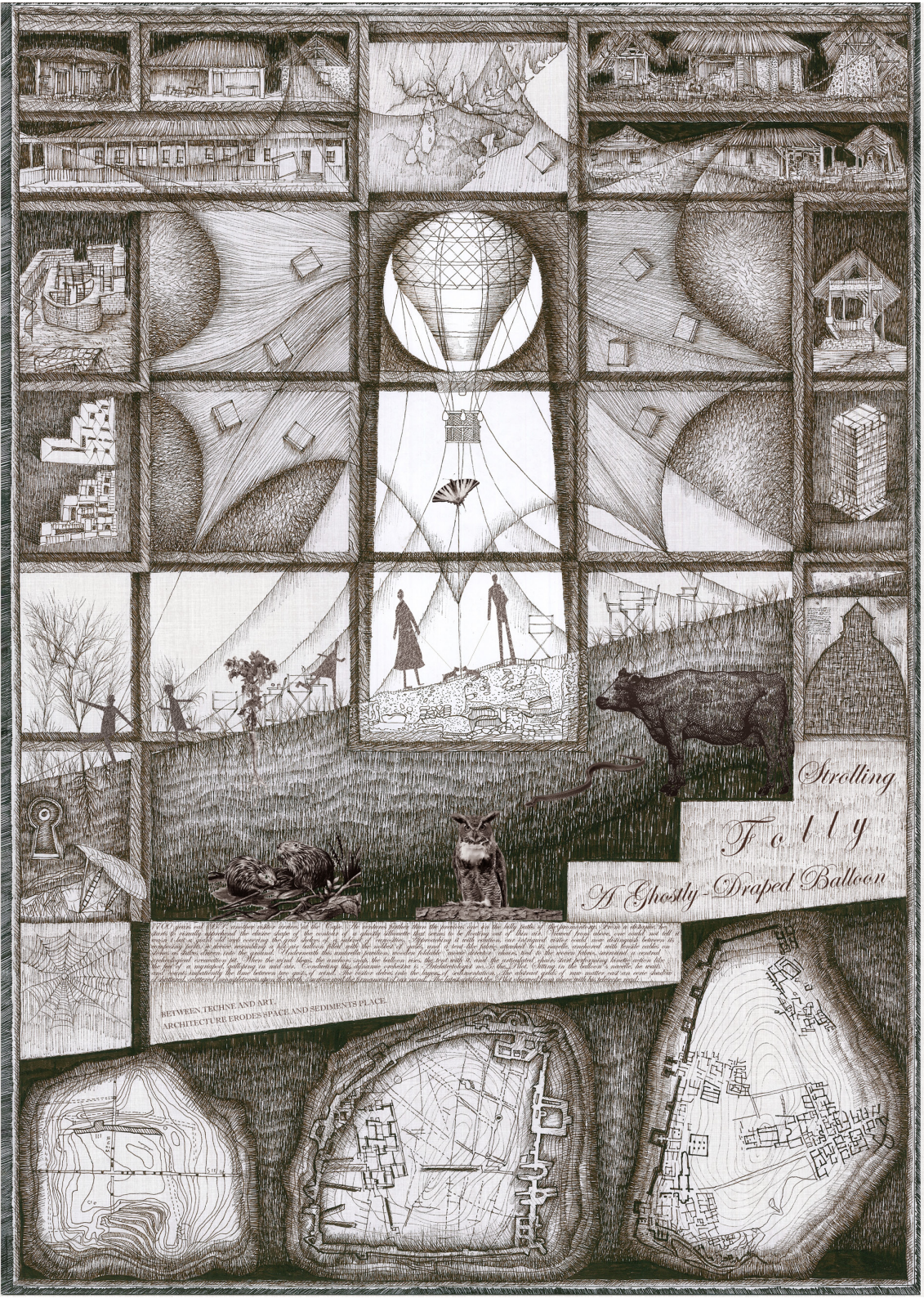
Lithos Vertebrae

Wandering on a Braided Path

[illegible] years cal BP, a visitor returns to the Cape. He ventures farther than the previous one on the hilly paths of the promontory, until he reaches a stone in the middle of a bush of salvia, marking the crossroads of Cardo and Decumanus. There he meets Architectologist no. 2, the Caretaker of the site. He regularly mows the grass along the braided paths to keep them visible. For him, walking on them feels like walking on a great backbone. Fluorometric dating may measure time by the accumulation of fluor in bones, yet he has his own way of counting time, by lying and counting stones that gradually fall off from the edge of the eroding cliff. Sun-burned hot stones in extra-muros ceramic fire kilns; rain-wet cold stones, capped by vegetation intended to protect them against infills of moisture: all this lithic matter massages the great dorsal spine. Metal plates stuck in the cliff-like anchoring steps gradually reveal erosion. Matter hurrying to flow from one state to another leaves disrupted sedimented impurities behind. The corporeal plunge into the sensible sediment reveals fine aggregates and fragments rendered as solid consciousness. The landscape of reason is battered under eroded reveries. The mental confines and the outside world are in a never ending state of erosion, mental [illegible] abstract forms and [illegible] cliff of thought, and ideas fall into stones of becoming. Among them, The Caretaker [illegible] one that reads:

BETWEEN CONTINGENCY AND AUTONOMY

ARCHITECTURE ERODES DOMESTICITY AND SEDIMENTS WANDERING.



Strolling Folly

A Ghostly-Draped Balloon

1700 years cal. B.P. another visitor arrives at the Cape. He ventures farther than the previous one on the hilly paths of the promontory. From a distance, he starts to visually apprehend the elusive shape of the contour of a ghostly silhouette that seems to be floating out of thin air. Viewed from above, one could not tell it wasn't but a giant old web covering the grid shelves of a cabinet of curiosities. Approaching it with caution, our intrigued visitor could now distinguish between its comprising parts: a device resembling a hot-air balloon filled with the noblest of gases, and a tent-like fabric attached to its nacelle, anchored with tensile cables on stones or stakes driven into the ground. Underneath this umbrella pavilion, wooden foldable "movie director" chairs, tied to the woven fabric, surround a central archaeological excavation pit. When the wind blows, the anchors snap, the balloon rises, the tent with it, and the articulated chairs start performing kinetic action like the feet of a myriapod, galloping in mid-air. Conducting this dynamic orchestra is Architectologist no. 3, the Pilot. Sitting in the balloon's nacelle, he waits and counts impatiently the time between two gusts of wind. The visitor delves into the layers of sedimentation. The abstract grids of raw matter cast an eerie shadow of [illegible] scattered [illegible] upon the earth's surface and the firmament of raw mind. The latest artifact the Pilot observed from above with his telescope read:

BETWEEN TECHNE AND ART,
ARCHITECTURE ERODES SPACE AND SEDIMENTS PLACE.



The Tell Amphitheater

A Ziggurat of Archaeological Earthworks

1300 years cal. B.P. another visitor returns to the Cape. He ventures farther on the hilly paths of the promontory, even more than he did in his previous walks. He spots a triangular shape cutting the horizon line. Approaching it, he better distinguishes its shape which turned out to have the resemblance of a stepped ziggurat when viewed from its long side. Turning around the corner, an amphitheater reveals itself, made of wooden formworks, supported by wooden studs in what appeared to be a hastily improvised manner, judging by the irregularity of their angles to the ground. The path cut through the amphitheater, separating the auditorium from the stage. In between the two parts, hidden in plain sight, in the middle of the road, the visitor bumps into Architectologist no. 4, the Prompter. He is no backstage whisperer but ceaselessly counts the time it takes to fill the amphitheater with the excavated earth from the ruins on the stage, as shovels spill soil into an infinity of heaps. The more digs, the higher the auditorium grows, the deeper the ruins on stage and the play acts multiply. Driven by curiosity, visitors fill the amphitheater to watch the Play of the Past, whispered by the Prompter. When the excavations finish, the formwork is dismantled, the earthen auditorium covers back the stage for further conservation, and the itinerant theater moves to another location where the story repeats. And somewhere between the acts, heard spoken, the latest artifact the Prompter read:

BETWEEN NATURE AND ARTIFACT,
ARCHITECTURE ERODES THE SUBJECT AND SEDIMENTS THE OBJECT.



Hydraulic Quatrefoil Sunken Slabs with Secret Storeys

1000 years old BP, a tourist arrives on the Cape. He follows the winding hilly paths until he reaches the highest point of the promontory. The site looks abandoned, the foundation walls of the ancient ruins appear left at the mercy of time to be naturally buried again under layers of organic vegetal matter as years go by. Scattered clusters of rare flowers lured insects into a frenzy dance. As our tourist tries to find the next turn of the path, his foot stumbled upon what he thought was a mere stone, hidden in lush greenery. He bends to the ground only to discover a long, linear, and precise crevice on its surface. This narrow slit cuts aside a rectangular platform from its surroundings. Peeking through it, he realizes the platform on which he stepped was deceptive in its appearance, and turns out to be the top floor of a building that collapses like an "intelligent ruin", the home of Architectologist no. 5, the Botanist. While indulging in dendrochronology and palynology, he ceaselessly counts the time it takes for the weight of the earth gradually amassing on the terrace to turn into a botanical garden and sink his plant laboratory, Xylem & Phloem, so he can also count the sedimented layers of varves. The stratum of the Earth is a jigsaw puzzle. Entrenched in the confines of sediments are bundles of scripts that escape reason. The morphic essences of geological schisms become upended, conjuring the contour between darkness and light. Technological marvels account for a mental plethora of eroded eons, as fluid states of reflection. The hydraulic compression of the geologic chaos in the strata of esthetic consciousness flows through four telescopic colossal order columns, revealing secret sunken floors. High-pressure water bursts through [illegible] and water plants, like a fire sprinkler. On the deepest ground floor, [illegible] that reads:

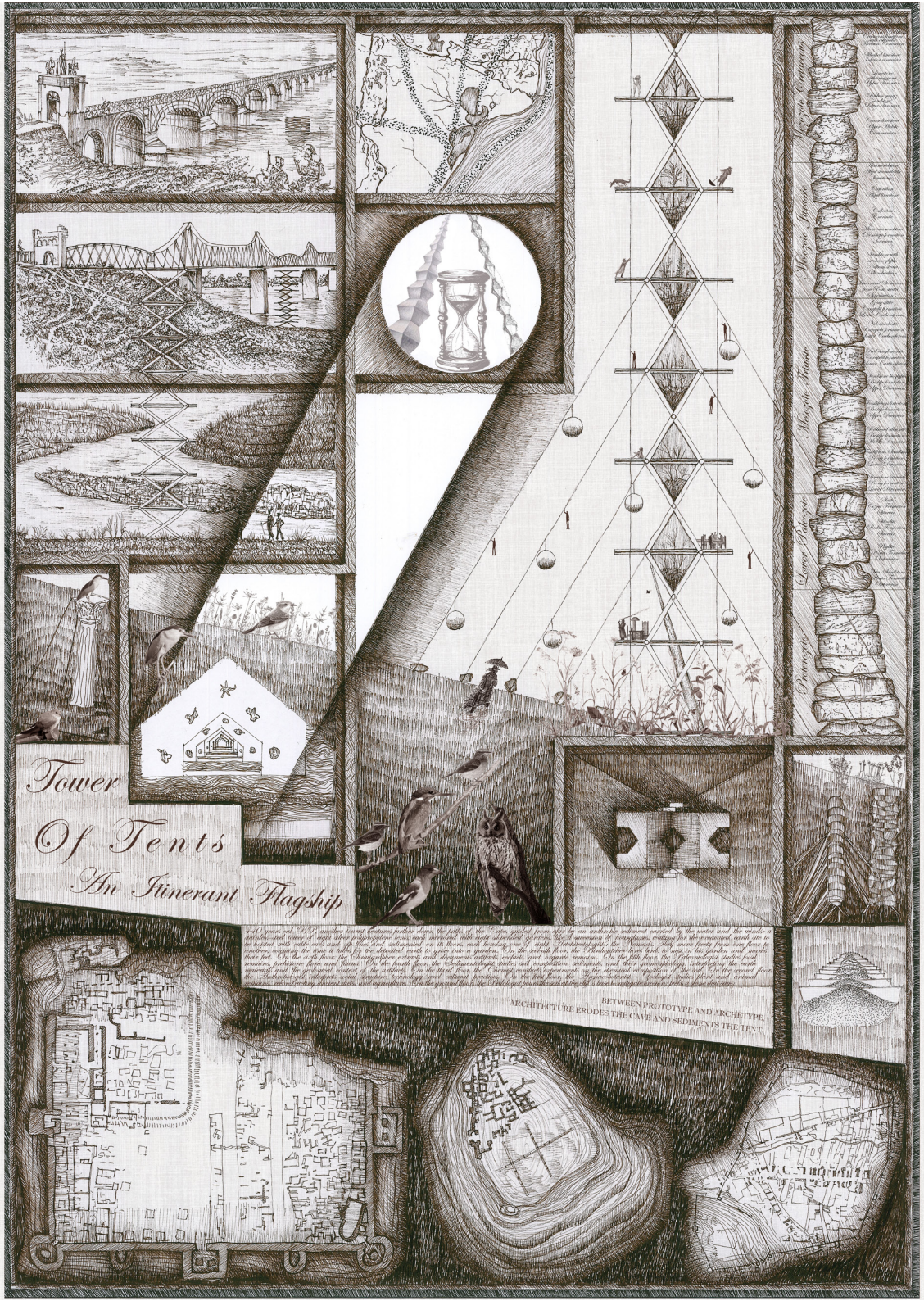
BETWEEN REVEAL AND CONCEAL,
ARCHITECTURE ERODES LIGHT AND SEDIMENTS MYSTERY.

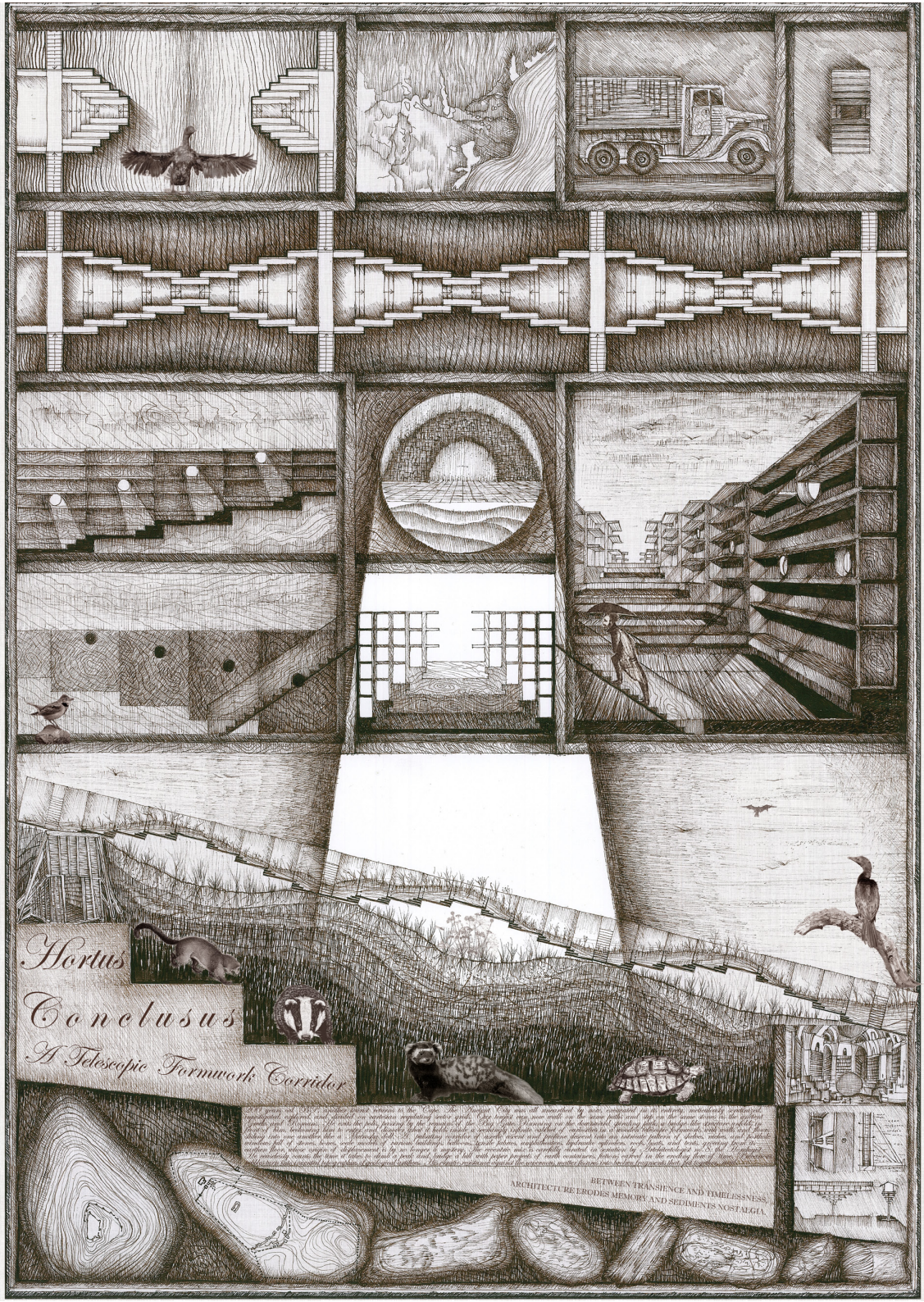


Lifeboat Basilica A House On a Roof

750 years old BP, a tourist returns to the Cape. Having already reached the top of the cliff, he goes down the tangled path and sets his sight on an elongated wooden structure, shaped in the form of the keel of a boat. Sitting close to the end of the cliff, one who thinks it is about to slip from its edge and fall into the sea might not be wrong after all about the purpose of this piece of architecture and the intentions of its owner, Architectologist no. 6, the Captain. He is a brave seafarer from Veneto. His Carena di nave rovesciata was once the roof of an Italian basilica and palazzo. With the magnetic reversal of the poles, his compass failed him, and a mighty storm capsized it, turning it back into a boat. His roof boat drifted away in the storm until the waters receded and it found itself sitting on top of the ruins of another basilica, yet a Greco-Roman one. Solemnly holding its new ground with magnanimity, he counts the time left until lifting anchor again: the collapse of the eroding cliff, preparing for his amphibious roof to become a lifeboat, as if deployed from a cruise ship, laden with nature and artifacts, floating away to uncharted safer lands. Meanwhile, he fills his boat with future ballast, the same old excavated earth from the birth of ruins. He builds a pilothouse on top, digs a tunnel to reach it from his suspended garden, propped up with oars from the dormer windows. His courtyard is a sepulchral space for treasured artifacts. One reads:

BETWEEN PRAGMATIC AND POETIC,
ARCHITECTURE ERODES MATTER AND SEDIMENTS DREAMS.


Tower
Of Tents
An Itinerant Flagship
BETWEEN PROTOTYPE AND ARCHETYPE,
ARCHITECTURE ERODES THE CAVE AND SEDIMENTS THE TENT.


Hortus
Conclusus
A Telescopic Formwork Corridor
BETWEEN TRANSIENCE AND TIMELESSNESS,
ARCHITECTURE ERODES MEMORY AND SEDIMENTS NOSTALGIA.



100 years cal BP, a foreigner leaves the Cape with a fleet of reed boats, joined together at their end to form a floating pontoon. A tricky "tightrope" balancing act, walking on water and leaping from one boat to another. It is the fragile transient craftwork of Architetologist no. 9: the Rower. He ceaselessly counts the time it takes for water to turn back the pontoon into a fleet of boats. Floating in this temporal river are mnemonic remnants - places where uncertain futures meet distant pasts, as fragments of greater fragmentation. Hundreds of overturned lotca boats stood burnt by the sun and beaten by the wind. They had belonged to Lipovan fishermen who had died, some half-rotten, others as if they had recently come ashore. It was an old tradition for the boats of fishermen who died not to walk on the water anymore, but to be taken up on the promontory, where they would rot by themselves... Searching for sunken ruins with the eye-shaped canoe, slaloming between anti-erosion wooden poles stuck to the seafloor near the shore, between a cloudy sunrise and the boats turned upside down, the phragmites keep their verticality. Between the impassable forest of reeds, willows, and water lilies, fishermen take out their empty nets [illegible] there is fish, better not stink... An excavator is dredging near a dilapidated [illegible] underwater. Between the fog of the night and the dry reeds, of a dry [illegible]

BETWEEN FUNCTION AND FORM
ARCHITECTURE ERODES
MEANS-TO-AN-END AND SEDIMENTS
END-IN-ITSELF.

Canoe
Reed Pontoon

A Bubble Ponytail

Architecture

Erodes Homelessness
And sediments Homesickness
Erodes Domesticity
And sediments Wandering
Erodes Space
And sediments Place
Erodes the Subject
And sediments the Object
Erodes Light
And sediments Mystery
Erodes Matter
And sediments Dreams
Erodes the Cave
And sediments the Tent
Erodes Memory
And sediments Nostalgia
Erodes Means-to-an-End
And sediments End-in-Itself.