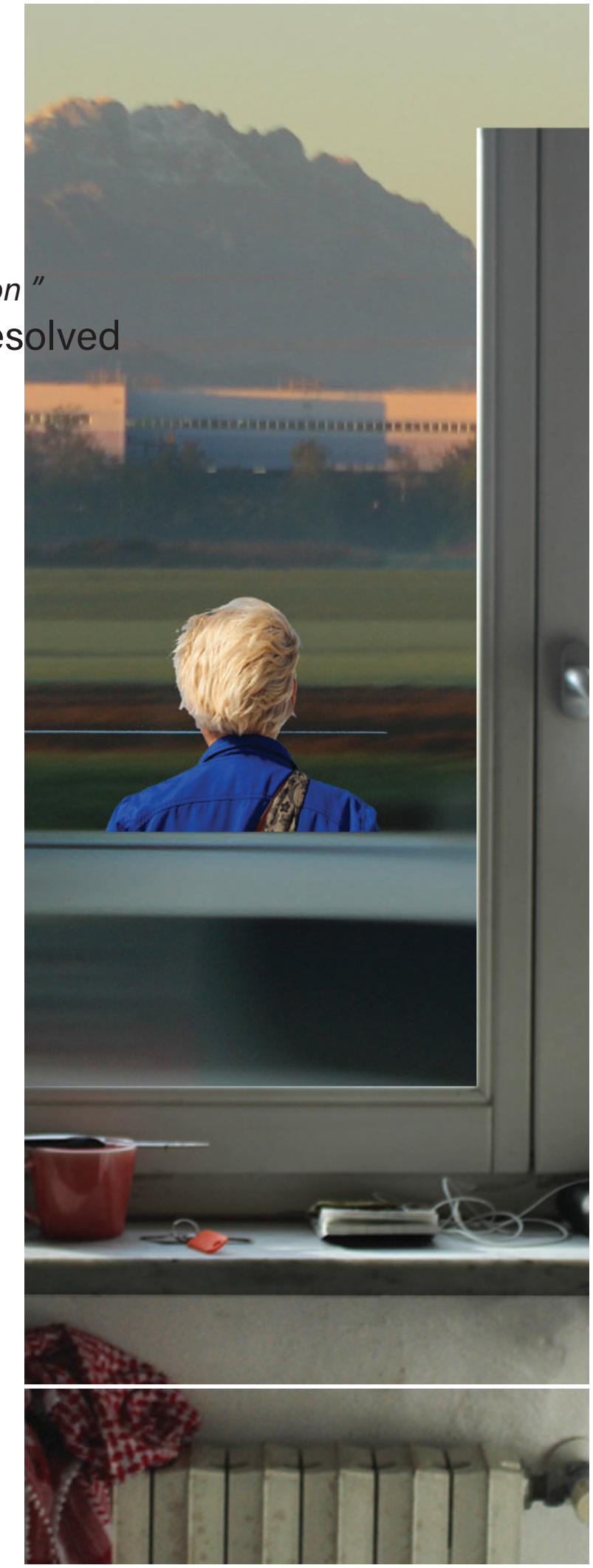
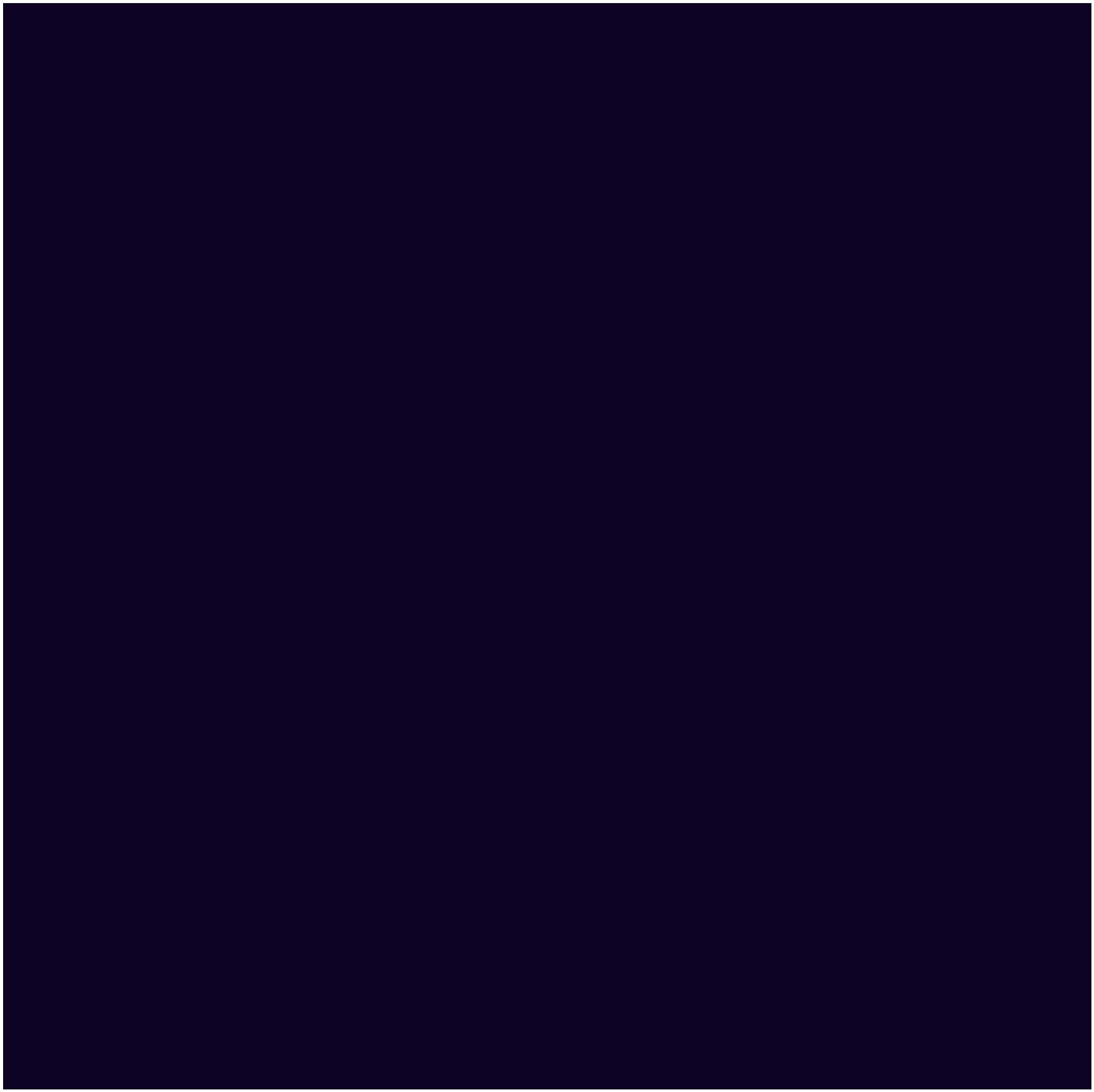
“Perpetually Under Destruction ”

The Architecture of the Unresolved

Sara Abi Merched
246883
Master’s Thesis
Academic Year 2025-2026





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The Architecture of the Unresolved
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March 2026 session

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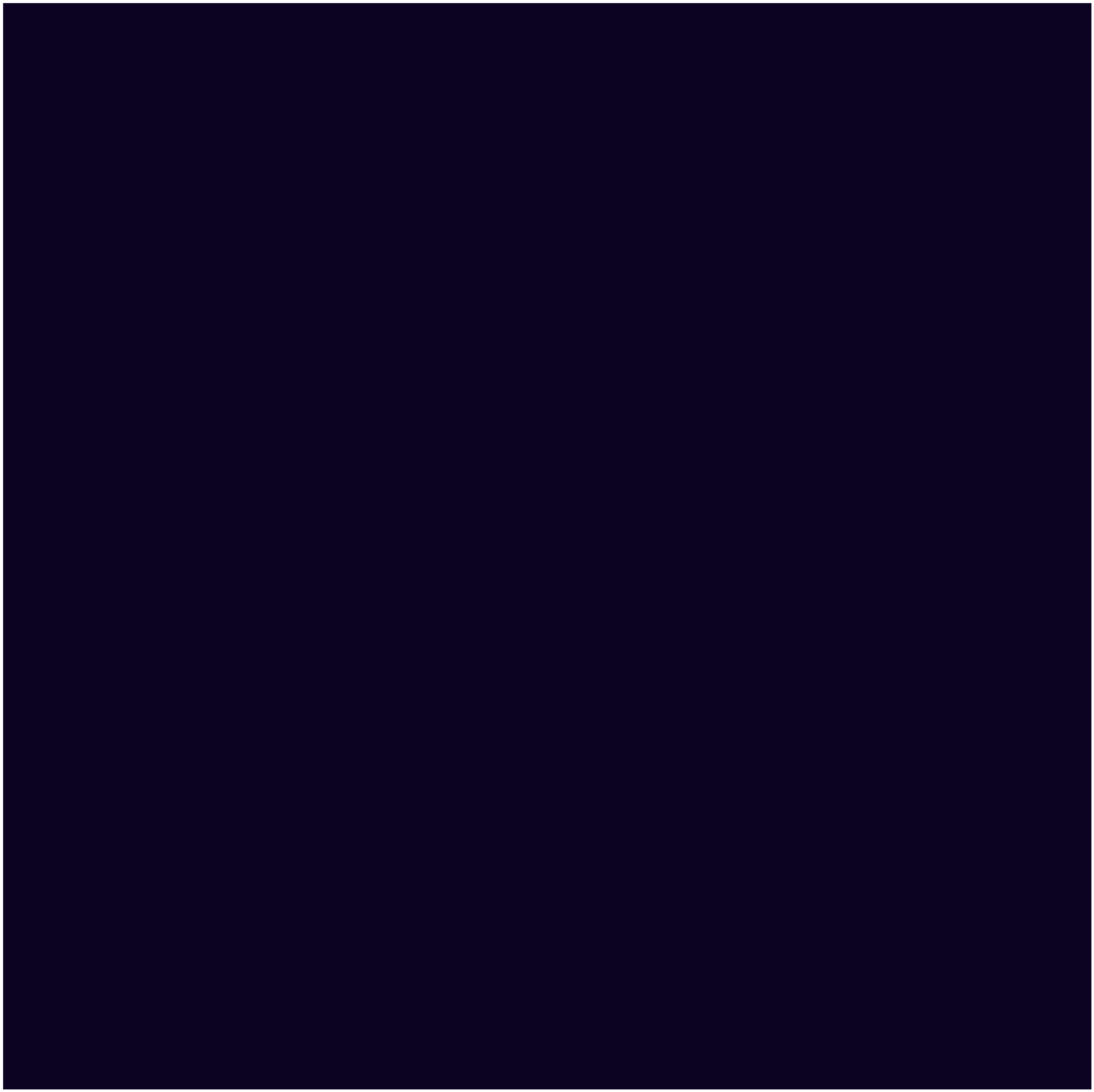


Acknowledgements

I would first like to express my sincere gratitude to Politecnico di Milano, for providing the academic environment, resources, and intellectual space in which this research was developed. The opportunity to explore architecture critically and deeply within this institution has been fundamental to the realization of this thesis.

My sincere appreciation goes to Professor Domenico Chizzoniti,for his mentorship, encouragement, and for challenging me to approach architecture with rigor, responsibility, and vision.I am equally grateful to Christian Gaenshirt,for his valuable reflections and discussions, which enriched the conceptual development of this research.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to Assistant Professor Tommaso Lolli, for his continuous guidance, thoughtful critiques, and intellectual generosity. His support and direction helped shape both the structure and the depth of this work.

To the Municipality of Khiam, thank you for your openness, trust, and collaboration. The documents you shared and the meaningful discussions we had were essential in grounding this thesis in the reality of the territory and its layered history.

To my mom, dad and sister Nay, thank you for being my first and constant home. Your love, strength, and unwavering belief in me are the foundation upon which everything I do stands.

To my friends and to my partner, I thank you for your presence, patience, and encouragement during moments of doubt. You are a constant reminder to me that the world is full of beauty, honesty and love.

To all the random discussions regarding topics of war, displacement, fear of distance, a sense of disconnection from home, an ability to accept the state of reality we face geo-politically... to the random people that cross ways and open their hearts: you made this thesis more rich and eclectic and for that: I thank you dearly.

For you,
For me,
Forlanini

I. Abstract

Architecture of Belonging

Isn't everyone, in some way, searching for home? This question forms the heart of an exploration into "home" as an elusive, deeply personal concept embedded in our architecture, culture, and memories. Is the search for home a quest with no definitive destination—a lifetime endeavor?

The interest of this reaserach is to question the elements that make architecture a powerful vessel of the past and a mirror to the actuality and the reality of the situations. It's a "voyage", across the definitions of home, their expressions and their importance.

This thesis investigates "home" as a constructed and contested condition rather than a fixed location. It begins from the premise that contemporary experiences of belonging, displacement, and spatial alienation are not only produced by recent crises, but are rooted in deeper historical shifts in how humans inhabit the earth. The study therefore traces the formation of home back to the cognitive and agricultural revolutions, when settlement, territoriality, and permanence became dominant frameworks through which space was organized, governed, and inherited. These origins establish a baseline for understanding why home is often imagined as unified, stable, and continuous—and why its rupture carries profound consequences.

Building from this foundation, the research situates home across philosophical, human-geographical, and geopolitical terrains. Home is examined as a layered phenomenon shaped by memory and embodiment, by collective identity and spatial practice, and by political violence, borders, and displacement. Rather than approaching these perspectives as parallel interpretations, the thesis treats them as a conceptual field through which a position must be articulated: a deliberate stance toward architecture's agency, responsibility, and limits in contexts of conflict and erasure.

The architectural dimension of the thesis engages critically with major theoretical frameworks that address memory, atmosphere, place, and power. Through selected architects and theorists, the study tests how domestic and collective belonging are produced materially and spatially, and how architecture responds—or fails to respond—when continuity is broken. This theoretical positioning is not pursued as an end in itself; it functions as a methodological apparatus through which the thesis defines the terms of intervention.

The outcome is a research-and-design methodology developed as an operative toolset for working within villages subjected to war and repeated destruction, with Lebanon as the central ground of inquiry and Khiam as the primary context. The thesis proposes an approach to reconstruction that resists erasure, avoids nostalgic restoration, and treats rupture as a spatial and political condition that must remain legible. By translating the concept of home into an architectural toolkit—combining analytical lenses, mapping criteria, and design operations—the research aims to support interventions that register memory, negotiate discontinuity, and enable collective life under conditions of ongoing instability. While grounded in southern Lebanon, the framework is intended to remain transferable to comparable contexts across Palestine, Syria, Sudan, and other territories marked by displacement and structural violence.

Fig 2. Home in Den Haag, Netherlands (2023, photo by Author).

I. Abstract (Italian)

Architettura dell'Appartenenza

Non è forse vero che, in qualche modo, tutti stiamo cercando un luogo d'origine, un luogo che sentiamo nostro? Questa domanda costituisce il cuore di un'esplorazione di questa condizione elusiva e profondamente personale, radicata nella nostra architettura, nella cultura e nelle memorie. La ricerca di questo luogo è forse un percorso senza una destinazione definitiva — un viaggio che dura tutta la vita?

L'interesse di questa ricerca è interrogare gli elementi che rendono l'architettura un potente veicolo del passato e uno specchio dell'attualità e della realtà delle situazioni. È un "viaggio" attraverso le definizioni di questo luogo dell'appartenenza, le sue espressioni e la sua importanza.

Questa tesi indaga questa condizione come costruita e contesa, piuttosto che come luogo fisso. Parte dal presupposto che le esperienze contemporanee di appartenenza, sradicamento e alienazione spaziale non siano soltanto il prodotto di crisi recenti, ma affondino le loro radici in trasformazioni storiche più profonde nel modo in cui gli esseri umani hanno iniziato ad abitare la terra. Lo studio ripercorre quindi la formazione di questo luogo d'origine fino alle rivoluzioni cognitiva e agricola, quando insediamento, territorialità e permanenza sono diventati i quadri dominanti attraverso cui lo spazio veniva organizzato, governato ed ereditato. Queste origini stabiliscono una base per comprendere perché questo luogo sia spesso immaginato come unitario, stabile e continuo — e perché la sua frattura comporti conseguenze così profonde.

A partire da questo fondamento, la ricerca colloca questa nozione attraverso ambiti filosofici, geografico-umani e geopolitici. Essa viene esaminata come fenomeno stratificato, plasmato dalla memoria e dall'esperienza corporea, dall'identità collettiva e dalle pratiche spaziali, ma anche dalla violenza politica, dai confini e dallo sradicamento. Piuttosto che affrontare queste prospettive come interpretazioni parallele, la tesi le considera come un campo concettuale attraverso cui articolare una posizione: una presa di posizione deliberata rispetto all'agenzia dell'architettura, alla sua responsabilità e ai suoi limiti nei contesti di conflitto

La dimensione architettonica della tesi si confronta criticamente con i principali quadri teorici che affrontano memoria, atmosfera, luogo e potere. Attraverso architetti e teorici selezionati, lo studio verifica come l'appartenenza domestica e collettiva venga prodotta materialmente e spazialmente, e come l'architettura reagisca — o non riesca a reagire — quando la continuità viene interrotta. Questo posizionamento teorico non è perseguito come fine a sé stesso; esso funziona come un apparato metodologico attraverso cui la tesi definisce i termini dell'intervento.

L'esito è una metodologia di ricerca e progetto sviluppata come insieme operativo di strumenti per lavorare in villaggi sottoposti alla guerra e a distruzioni ripetute, con il Libano come terreno centrale d'indagine e Khiam come contesto principale. La tesi propone un approccio alla ricostruzione che resiste alla cancellazione, evita restaurazioni nostalgiche e considera la frattura come una condizione spaziale e politica che deve rimanere leggibile. Traducendo il concetto di luogo d'appartenenza in un toolkit architettonico — che combina strumenti analitici, criteri di mappatura e operazioni progettuali — la ricerca mira a sostenere interventi capaci di registrare la memoria, negoziare la discontinuità e rendere possibile la vita collettiva in condizioni di instabilità persistente. Pur radicato nel sud del Libano, il quadro metodologico è pensato per rimanere trasferibile a contesti comparabili in Palestina, Siria, Sudan e in altri territori segnati da sradicamento e violenza strutturale.

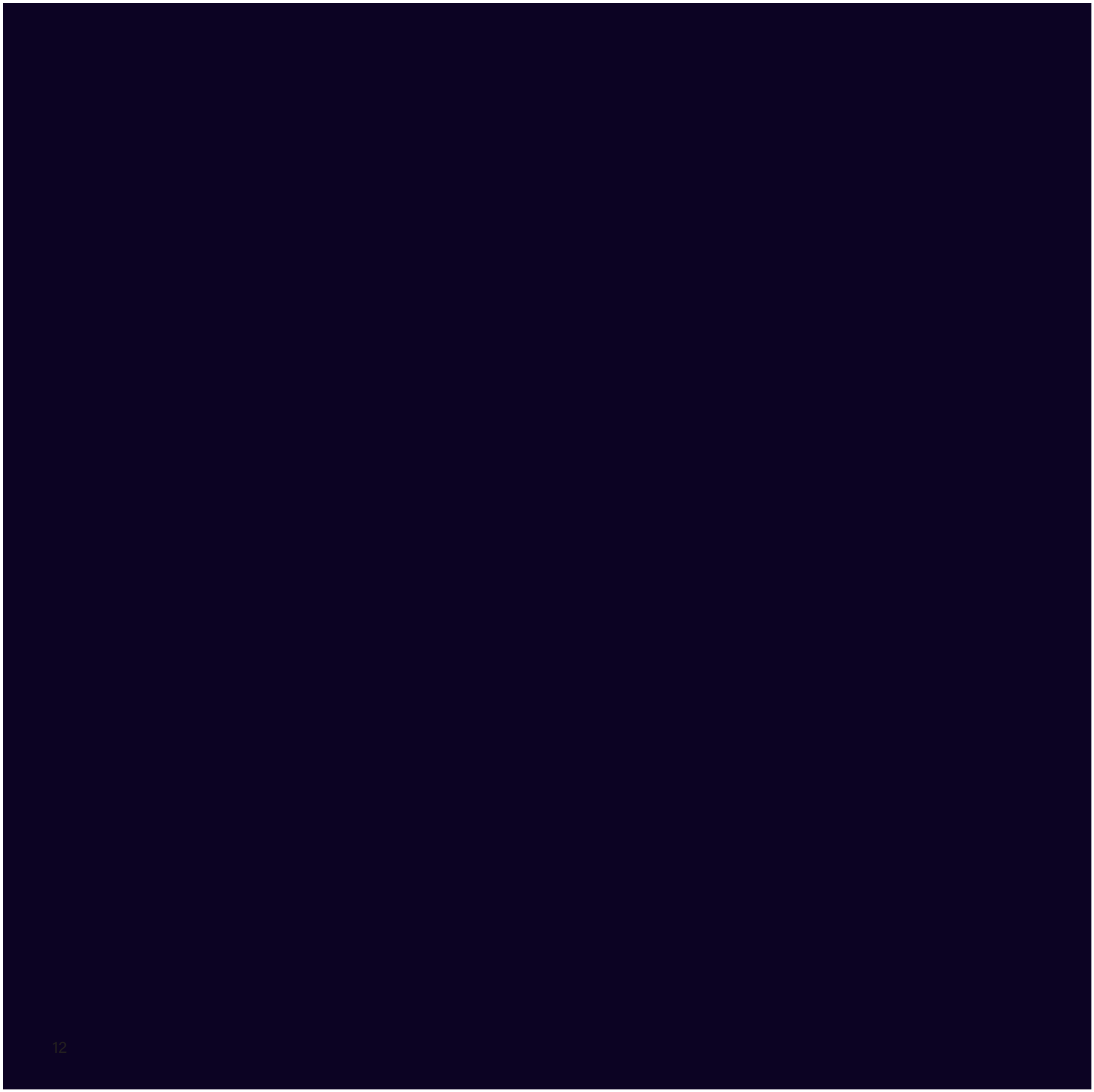
Fig 3: Road to Khiam .2025. Photograph by author.

Main text

The core narrative of the thesis.

Layers Under text

In-depth explorations and supporting investigations through “interdisciplinary” manner.



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II. Introduction

Situating the Question of Home

Positioning of the researcher

Architecture can be understood as the human practice of transforming matter and energy in order to construct physical reality. Through this transformation, abstract intentions such as - visions, desires, ideologies, and dreams - are materialized into spatial form.
Architecture therefore operates as the interface between human intention and the material world.

In this sense, architecture is not limited to buildings or formal design objects, but encompasses all deliberate human interventions that shape space and environment. What lies outside architecture is that which remains untouched by human action. Once matter is manipulated, organized, or framed with intent, it enters the realm of architecture.

As a result, architecture becomes the field through which humanity explores and projects its will: creatively, politically, economically, and instinctively. It is within architecture that power, care, imagination, and control are rendered tangible, forming the conditions through which human life is experienced. **In moments of crisis, neutrality reveals itself as a position in itself.** In a world marked by ongoing wars, forced displacement, and the systematic destruction of cities and communities, architecture can no longer operate as a silent observer. The question is no longer whether architecture is political, but whether it acknowledges the realities within which it is produced.

This research is rooted in the experience of witnessing the fragility of home: its loss, its persistence, and its continuous reconstruction across memory, land, and human relationships. The motivation of this thesis is the responsibility that the human condition calls upon academics, institutions, organisations to mobilize, it's undertanding that humans conditions depend heavily on each other, an urge to assist and re-imagine communities affected by conflict, occupation, and instability. In such contexts, home is not a given; it is negotiated, imagined, and often violently contested.

Fig 4. Collage of seven pitcures taken in Khiam Lebanon .2025. Photographs by author.

The thesis investigates the notion of home as an architectural, cultural, and political construct. It asks how architecture participates in the formation of belonging, identity, and security, and how these conditions are disrupted when land becomes a site of power, fear, and control. By examining philosophical interpretations of home alongside historical, territorial, and geopolitical frameworks, the research seeks to understand how architecture can act as both a vessel of memory and a mediator of present realities.

This research is rooted in the lived experience of witnessing the fragility of home: its loss, its persistence, and its continuous reconstruction across memory, land, and human relationships. After leaving Lebanon in 2021, in search for a connection with other cultures and a desire of travel, I inhabited seven different homes and living environments over the course of four years across France, the Netherlands, and Italy. This repeated displacement did not simply involve movement between dwellings, but a progressive destabilization of what "home" signifies. Over time, the notion of an initial home fractured—its meaning reshaped by distance, uncanny scenes of Lebanon accompaning me along my journeys, and a constant refusal to identify to one culture, one languague or one land.

This condition of mobility generated an intense inquiry into identity, belonging, and the extent to which home can remain tied to a single geographical place. Rather than resolving this tension, displacement exposed home as a negotiated condition:- constructed across memory, habit, social relations, and space—rather than a fixed architectural object.

The thesis emerges from this questioning and is grounded in a fragile and contested context: southern Lebanon. While contemporary discourse often focuses on the visible consequences of destruction—loss of housing, infrastructure, and territory: this research asks a deeper question: how can architecture respond to a system that is bound to create vulnerable and fragile contexts?

Architecture as physical reality

Approximately 15,000 years ago, certain human communities began transitioning from mobile hunter-forager lifestyles to sedentary forms of living. This shift, while neither universal nor instantaneous, marked a decisive transformation in the conception of home. **Home became a place to return to rather than a condition of movement**; dwelling became anchored to land rather than to social continuity.

With the emergence of agriculture around , domestic space evolved into a productive unit, binding habitation to cultivation, storage, and surplus. Archaeological excavations at Dhra', Jordan, reveal some of the earliest purpose-built granaries: structures designed to store excess food by elevating it above ground to protect it from animals. (Arranz-Otaegui et al., 2018) This architectural gesture was replicated across continents and cultures, signaling a fundamental reorientation of human interaction with the earth.

The logic of storage altered human relationships to ground and soil. Land ceased to function as a shared, immersive environment and became a resource to be managed, optimized, and defended. Humans began grooming ecosystems, controlling the reproduction of plants and animals for human consumption. As Derrick Jensen and Lierre Keith describe, this process constituted a form of "biotic cleansing"—a systematic removal of ecological diversity in favor of monoculture and control. (McBay et al., 2011)

V. Gordon Childe described this moment as the "Neolithic Revolution," emphasizing its radical impact on social organization. (Childe, 2025) Anthropologist Tim Ingold later characterized this transition as a shift from dwelling in nature to operating on nature. The reciprocal relationship between humans and their environment was replaced by a hierarchical model in which nature functioned as background, input, or commodity. (Ingold, 2000)

Scholars such as Jared Diamond and James C. Scott have demonstrated that the Agricultural Revolution reshaped not only habitats, but the entire architecture of human life. Diamond documents how early farming societies experienced declines in health, increased disease, nutritional deficiencies, and the emergence of social and gender hierarchies previously absent among hunter-gatherers. (Diamond, 1999) Scott further argues that fixed settlements and grain surpluses enabled early states to impose taxation, labor control, and political hierarchy. (Scott, 2017)

Grain, unlike mobile resources, was measurable, storable, and taxable. Architecture thus became instrumental in making populations legible and governable. Domestic space evolved from a shared shelter into a unit of ownership, storage, and surveillance. These transformations produced unprecedented forms of concentration, inequality, and environmental strain: conditions that directly influenced the emergence of architecture as a spatial technology of order and control.

Following the Agricultural Revolution, a further cultural transformation unfolded, what this suggested as a description of the phenomenin is that of a revolution against nature. This shift, articulated most clearly in the ancient Greek world, introduced a conceptual separation between humans and their environment. Classical thought distinguished physis (nature) from nomos (human law and order), framing nature as something external—an object to be named, categorized, and controlled.

While philosophers such as Heraclitus described nature as a hidden harmony resistant to full comprehension, the rise of rational philosophy promoted the **belief that knowledge could elevate humans above natural uncertainty**. Through abstraction, geometry, and classification, humans sought to stabilize a world increasingly perceived as chaotic.

KEY WORDS :
-Memory
-Architecture as Physi-
cal Reality
-Debris
-Rupture
-Resistance
-Reconcstruction

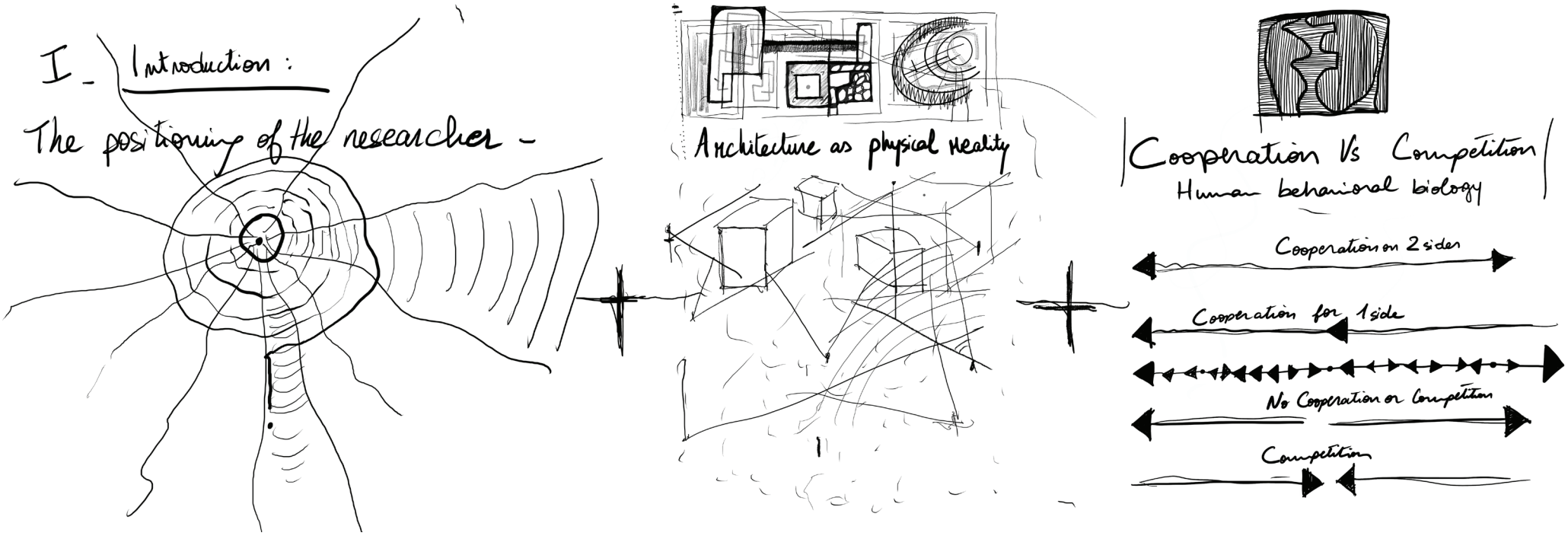

Fig 5. Diagram for introduction (2026, by Author).

Architecture, Mortality, and the Crisis of Meaning

As societies distanced themselves from immediate dependence on natural cycles, awareness of time, mortality, and finitude intensified. Freed from constant survival pressures, humans articulated existential questions through religion, philosophy, and later science. As Hannah Arendt observed, **mortality becomes the source of meaning, and the desire to overcome nature is inseparable from the desire to transcend human limits**. (Arendt, 2007) Architecturally, this worldview manifested in monumental forms that asserted permanence against impermanence. Greek temples and Roman cities embodied a cosmology in which human reason superseded natural irregularity: standing in stark contrast to earlier dwellings embedded in the earth, where life, death, and habitat were spatially intertwined.

Underlying these historical and spatial transformations is a broader behavioral pattern that extends beyond human societies. As articulated by Robert Sapolsky in his lectures on **Human Behavioral Biology**, interactions across species tend to oscillate between **two fundamental modes: cooperation and competition**. (Sapolsky, 2018) These are not fixed moral positions, but adaptive strategies, activated in response to environmental conditions, resource availability, and perceived threat. While competition and domination have repeatedly structured human political systems—manifesting in territorial control, hierarchical governance, and spatial exclusion; ***biological continuity across species suggests that long-term resilience is more often sustained through cooperative and adaptive modes of existence***.

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Certain non-human systems, such as fungal or mycelial networks, demonstrate forms of decentralized organization in which survival depends on mutual exchange, flexibility, and the capacity to reconfigure relationships rather than impose control. Humanity's architectural and territorial practices (oriented toward permanence, domination, and privatization) appear increasingly misaligned with the conditions that ensure continuity and flourishing. Knowing that th

This tension raises a critical question that frames the thesis: if control-based spatial systems repeatedly generate vulnerability, displacement, and rupture:

How can architecture respond to this the root causes of that system that enables loss and destrcution?

How can architecture behave to alternate the reality of the people affected by this system?

This thesis adopts a critical and project-based methodology that positions architectural design as a tool for inquiry rather than as a solution-driven outcome. The research is grounded in the premise that the notion of "home" is neither universal nor fixed, and that any architectural intervention engaging with it must first clarify the conceptual framework from which it emerges.

Research Methodology

1- Defining Home: Conceptual Positioning

The first phase of the methodology establishes a theoretical definition of home. Drawing on **Gaston Bachelard**'s exploration of domestic space as a vessel of memory and intimacy, **Edward Relph**'s phenomenological understanding of place and belonging, and **Doreen Massey**'s conception of place as relational, mobile, and politically constituted, the research situates home as a condition shaped by experience rather than geography alone. (Bachelard, 1994 ; Relph, 1976; Massey, 2007) This position is further expanded through Henri Lefebvre's conception of space as socially produced and Michel Foucault's analysis of spatial organization as a mechanism through which power, control, and hierarchy are enacted. (Lefebvre, 2013; (Foucault, 1986)) Together, these frameworks reinforce the understanding of home not as a neutral or fixed container, but as a spatial and political construct shaped by lived relations and power structures.

From this theoretical grounding, the thesis formulates its own definition of home as a form of resistance: resistance to the loss of an initial identity and reality with which individuals associate themselves. In this understanding, home is not bound to a fixed territory but is carried across borders through memory, habit, and spatial practice.

2- Translating Home into Architecture

The second phase of the methodology examines how the definition of home developed in the theoretical framework can be translated into architectural terms. Architecture is understood here as the physical realm through which human intentions: political, cultural, and instinctive are materialized. It is not approached as a neutral container of life, but as an active spatial system that both reflects and produces social realities. Architecture becomes the medium through which belonging, exclusion, memory, and power are constructed and contested.

Aldo Rossi's conception of architecture as collective memory establishes the role of permanence and repetition in the construction of identity. In The Architecture of the City, Rossi argues that buildings and urban artifacts persist beyond their original functions, accumulating meaning through time. (Rossi, 2007) This understanding supports an approach to architecture in which continuity and endurance become mechanisms for belonging, particularly in contexts marked by rupture and destruction.

Kenneth Frampton's theory of critical regionalism provides a further framework for translating home into architecture. Frampton advocates for an architecture rooted in place, materiality, and tectonic culture, while resisting both global homogenization and nostalgic historicism. His emphasis on construction, topography, and climate aligns with the research's concern for grounding architectural responses in specific contexts without reproducing essentialist or romanticized identities. (Frampton, 1983)

Within this grounded framework, the work of **Ignasi de Solà-Morales** and **Lebbeus Woods** becomes central for understanding architecture not as stable permanence, but as a field of vulnerability and resistance. Solà-Morales introduces architecture as fragile, contingent, and embedded within conditions of uncertainty. (de Solà-Morales, 1997) His notion of weak architecture does not imply inadequacy, but rather a conscious acknowledgment of instability: an acceptance that architecture operates within shifting political, social, and temporal forces. Weakness here becomes an ethical position: a refusal of monumental certainty and authoritarian closure.

Lebbeus Woods radicalizes this position by confronting architecture directly within zones of conflict and destruction. His speculative projects do not attempt to erase damage or restore an imagined wholeness; instead, they expose fracture as an operative condition. For Woods, architecture emerges precisely at the point of rupture. It becomes an instrument for revealing hidden structures of violence, occupation, and power, while simultaneously imagining alternative spatial possibilities. Resistance in his work is not nostalgic reconstruction, but the production of new spatial logics from within broken realities. (Woods, 1993)

Together, Solà-Morales and Woods frame architecture as simultaneously weak and resistant. Its weakness lies in its exposure: to politics, to violence, to time, to instability. Its resistance lies in its capacity to endure, adapt, reveal, and reconfigure these very forces. Architecture, in this sense, does not dominate reality; it negotiates it. It does not promise healing or symbolic reconciliation; it sustains tension, exposes conflict, and allows new forms of belonging to emerge without denying fracture.

Alongside these positions, the methodology critically engages with **Peter Eisenman**, whose theoretical stance resists the instrumentalization of architecture as a tool for healing, reconciliation, or symbolic closure. (Eisenman, 1984) Eisenman rejects the assumption that architecture can mend trauma through form, arguing that such approaches risk aestheticizing violence and neutralizing conflict. By framing architecture as a system of traces and spatial operations, his work functions as a methodological safeguard, ensuring that architectural intervention does not simplify rupture but reveals the structures embedded within it.

Together, these positions establish a methodological foundation in which architecture is understood as both a carrier of memory and a critical spatial practice: capable of sustaining belonging, while remaining conscious of its fragility and resistant to false resolution.

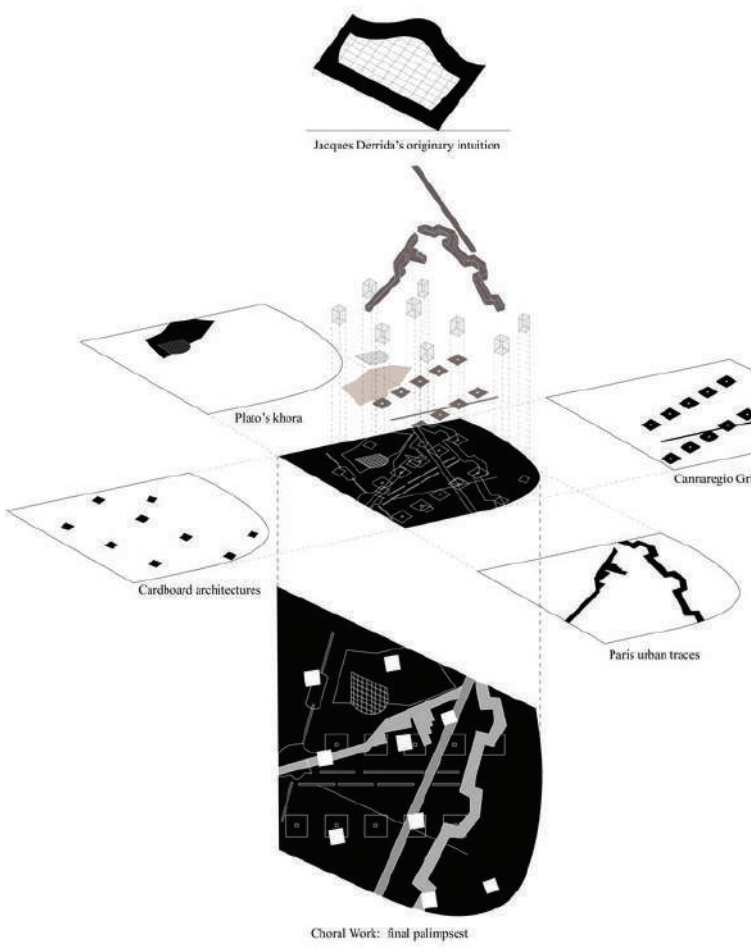
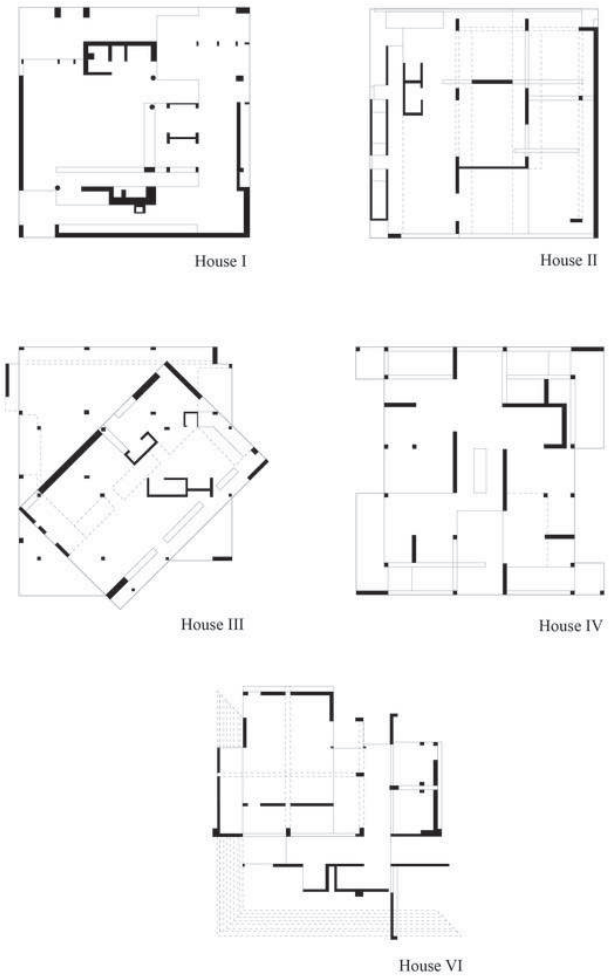


Fig 6. Corbo, Stefano. 2015. "From Formalism to Weak Form: The Architecture and Philosophy of Peter Eisenman." ArchDaily.

Fig.7 Corbo, Stefano. 2015. "From Formalism to Weak Form: The Architecture and Philosophy of Peter Eisenman." ArchDaily.



3- Historical and Political reading of the context

In addition to the conceptual and architectural frameworks, the research methodology integrates a context-specific **analysis of the historical, political, and territorial conditions** of the chosen context. The thesis assumes that architecture cannot be meaningfully produced without engaging the forces that shape land, settlement, and everyday life. In regions marked by conflict and instability, these forces are not peripheral but constitutive of spatial reality.

Accordingly, the research incorporates a historical and political study of southern Lebanon, with particular attention to the mechanisms through which territory has been contested, occupied, fragmented, and repeatedly reconstructed. This analysis is not approached as a chronological narrative, but as a means of understanding how power relations, borders, and military strategies have shaped patterns of habitation, infrastructure, and mobility. The political history of the region is thus treated as a spatial condition that directly informs architectural possibilities and constraints.

4- Geographical and enviromental reading of the context

Parallel to this, the methodology includes an investigation of the **geographical and environmental characteristics** of the site. Topography, landscape, and natural resources are examined not as neutral givens, but as active agents in the formation of settlement patterns and architectural responses. The study considers what the land enables and restricts: its slopes, elevations, agricultural capacity, visibility, and strategic position, recognizing that these elements have historically influenced both civilian life and military interest.

5- Study Cases

This societal reading enables the research to situate architectural intervention within lived realities rather than abstract or idealized models. It allows for the careful curation of **relevant case studies** that engage with similar conceptual intentions, positioning architecture not merely as a formal or technical discipline, but as an active tool of resistance, capable of negotiating memory, identity, and belonging within contested spatial and political conditions.

6- Architectural Methodology and Design Proposal: Representation, Method, and Intent

Following the analysis of study cases, the methodology culminates in the development of an architectural toolbox that defines what is represented, why it is represented, and how representation itself becomes a critical act.

This toolbox is not conceived as a neutral set of drawing techniques, but as an intentional framework through which architectural decisions are tested, communicated, and politicized. Plans, sections, mappings, diagrams, material studies, and narrative representations are selected according to their capacity to reveal relationships of power, movement, visibility, memory, and occupation rather than merely formal qualities. Representation is thus treated as an extension of architectural thinking: a means to make spatial conditions legible, to expose what is often concealed, and to articulate alternative possibilities of dwelling and belonging.
By explicitly defining the role and purpose of each representational tool, the research ensures coherence between theoretical position, contextual analysis, and architectural proposal, allowing the project to operate simultaneously as a spatial intervention and a critical argument.

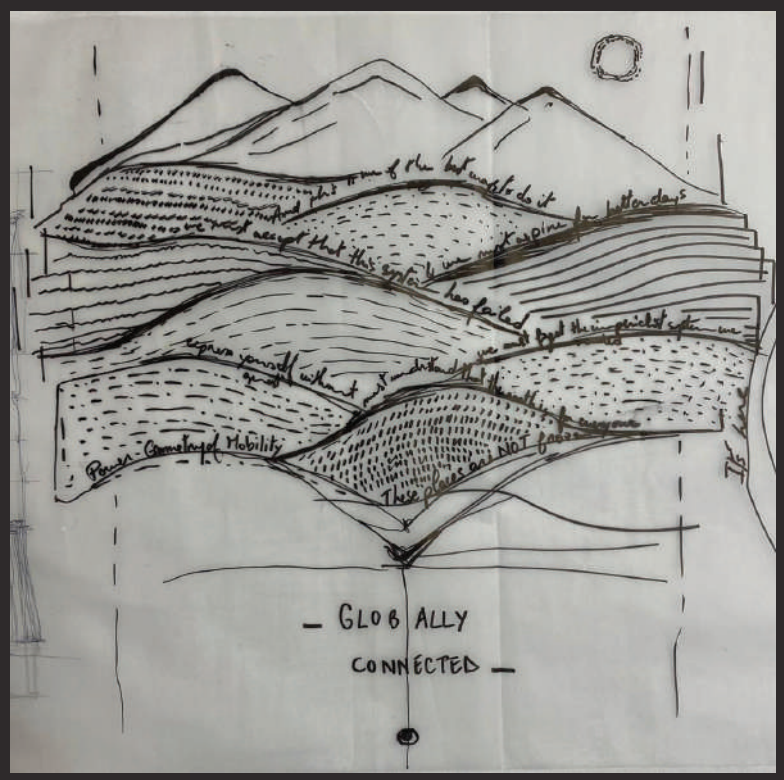
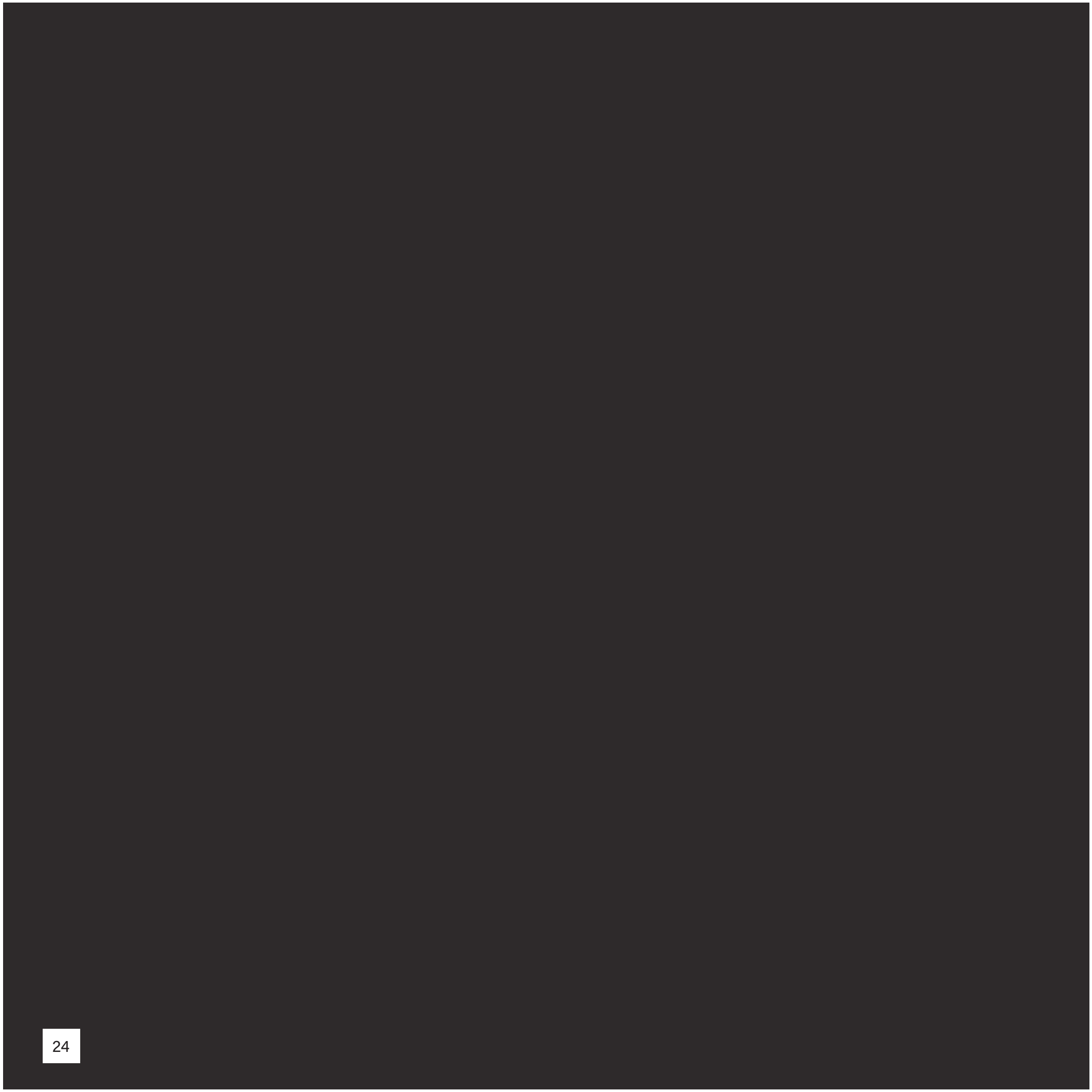


Fig. 8: Sketch for Introduction.2026. By author.



III. The beginning of home

Historical Evolution of Homes through revollutions

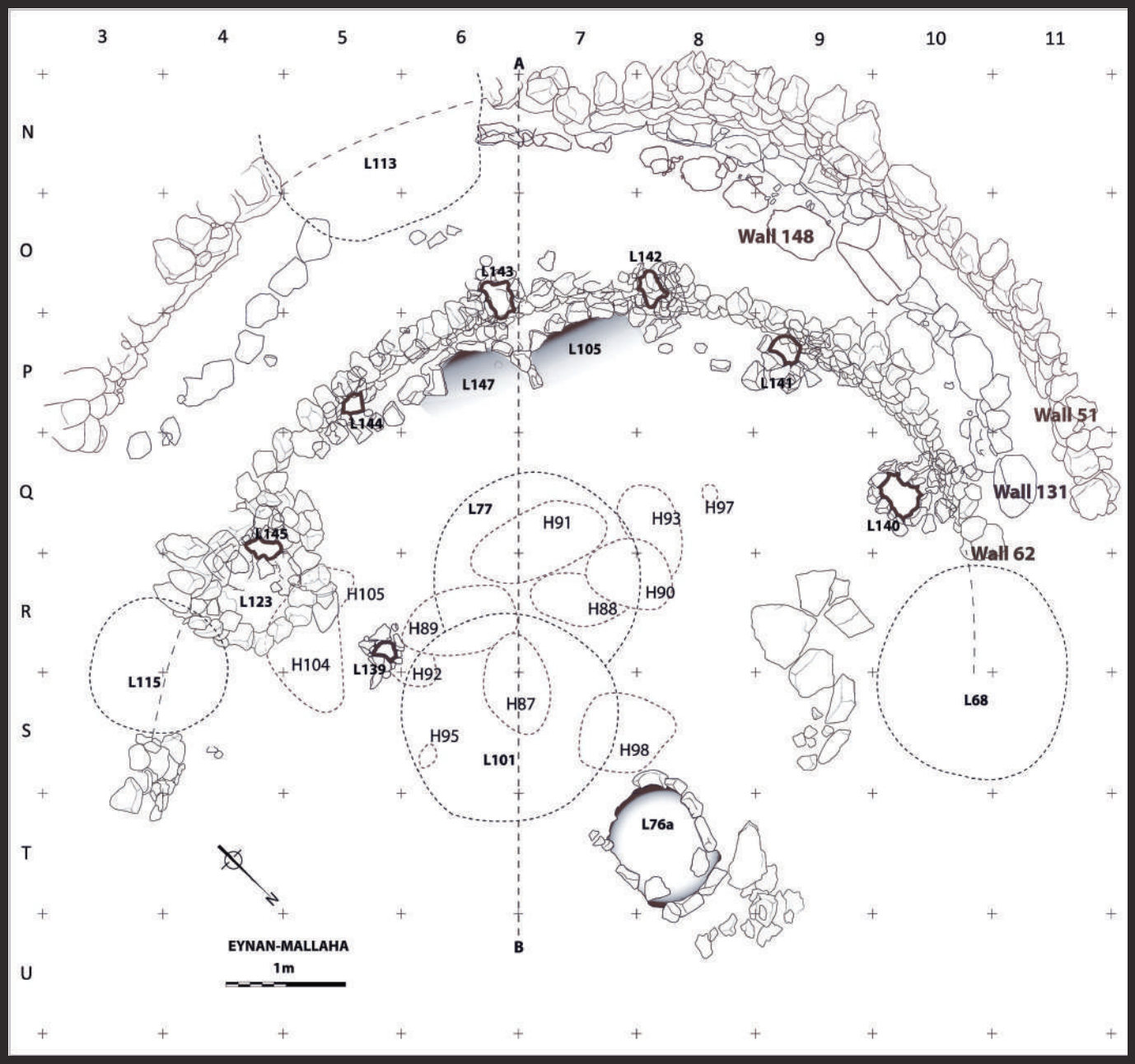


Fig. 9: Perrot, J., D. Ladiray, O. Solivérès-Masséi, and D. Ferembach. "Les hommes de Mallaha (Eynan), Israel, mémoires et travaux du Centre de Recherche Française de Jérusalem." Paris: Association Paleorient (1988).

Home as a place of return:
Cognitive Revolution

Between 15,000 and 12,000 BCE, during what is known as the Cognitive Revolution, human communities began to demonstrate a new capacity for symbolic thought, coordination, and shared meaning. One of the clearest architectural outcomes of this mental shift appears in the Natufian culture of the prehistoric Levant, especially at the site now known as Ain Mallaha (Eynan). Archaeologists describe the Natufian setting of Ain Mallaha as part of the prehistoric southern Levant. The name "Ain Mallaha" ;which could translates to Arabic as "The spring that provides salt"; was later on named by people living there. The term "The Levant" only emerged in the 1300s – 1400s BCE. The site's modern location corresponds to the Hula Valley region, today administered by the State of Israel but also identified in some political narratives as part of Occupied Palestine.

The Natufians represent one of the first human groups to develop semi-sedentary settlement patterns, and in doing so, they produced some of the earliest known architectural typologies of habitat. Their dwellings were semi-subterranean, circular structures cut into the earth, with floors lined in dry-laid stone slabs and walls constructed of stacked limestone blocks. Roofs were supported by timber posts and covered with brush and hides. These houses typically measured 3–6 meters in diameter and were arranged in loose clusters across the settlement, forming an early form of village morphology. (Perrot & Ladiray, 1988)

Fig. 10: Aerial view of Skara Brae in Orkney. Photograph © Charles Tait.

Home as a place of return:
Cognitive Revolution

A defining characteristic of Natufian[1] domestic life was the proximity of habitation and burial. Human remains were frequently found beneath house floors, beside walls, or within abandoned structures, indicating that life and death occupied the same architectural field. This practice suggests that the Natufians conceived of their inhabitat not as shelter but as a continuum of a life cycle, where the presence of the dead could be interpreted as an acceptance of the process or a practical matter, that seemed to be natural and intuitive for the Natufians. The merging of dwelling and burial reflects for the community's intimacy. this first ever village like settelment between 12,500 to 10,000 BCE.

This early form of architecture demonstrates how the Cognitive Revolution transformed the human relationship to place. Instead of temporary camps following seasonal movement, the Natufians invested labor into durable, earth-embedded structures, signaling a new concept of belonging. Their architectural choices reflect a deliberate and organized approach to spatial life—planned floors, prepared hearths, defined thresholds, and repeated reconstruction of similar house forms. Such patterns indicate that home was already becoming a structured environment, where daily life, identity, and memory were materially anchored.

In contemporary architectural discourse, Ain Mallaha is significant because it reveals the earliest evidence of home as both physical typology and cultural symbol. By embedding their dwellings into the earth and interring their dead within the same terrain, the Natufians created a direct, inseparable relationship between architecture, memory, and continuity. For a thesis concerned with the loss of home, displacement, and reconstruction (as in the case of Khiam, Lebanon) this early model shows that the earliest meaning of home was rooted in stability, return, and the long-term accumulation of identity within a specific landscape. This first revolution, therefore, introduces home as a deliberate cognitive construction: an architectural synthesis of survival, community, memory, and the recognition of place as an extension of human identity. (Childe, 2025)

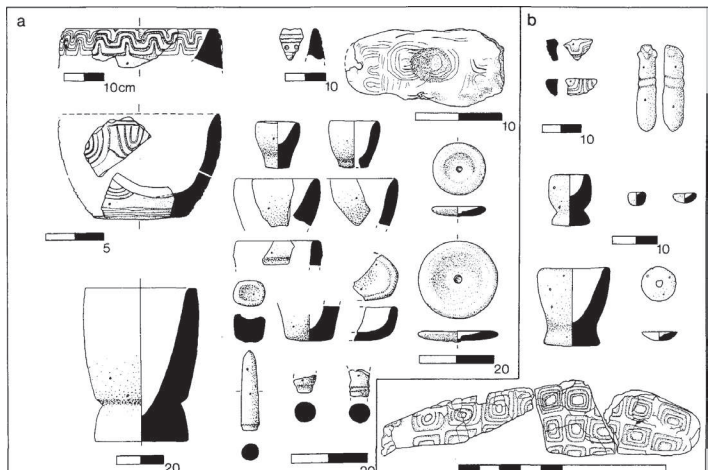


Fig. 11: Wright, Katherine I. "The Social Origins of Cooking and Dining in Early Villages of Western Asia." Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society 66 (2000): 89–121.

1. Natufian: Refers to the Natufian culture (c. 12,500–9,500 BCE) of the Levant, considered one of the earliest known sedentary societies.

Archaeologist **Klaus Schmidt** believes that the collective was a key mechanism in motivating a nomadic culture to take part in a communal lifestyle. It is through the labor and the investment in the act of building that one can develop a sense of responsibility, familiarity, attachment or even belonging to the space that becomes a "place".

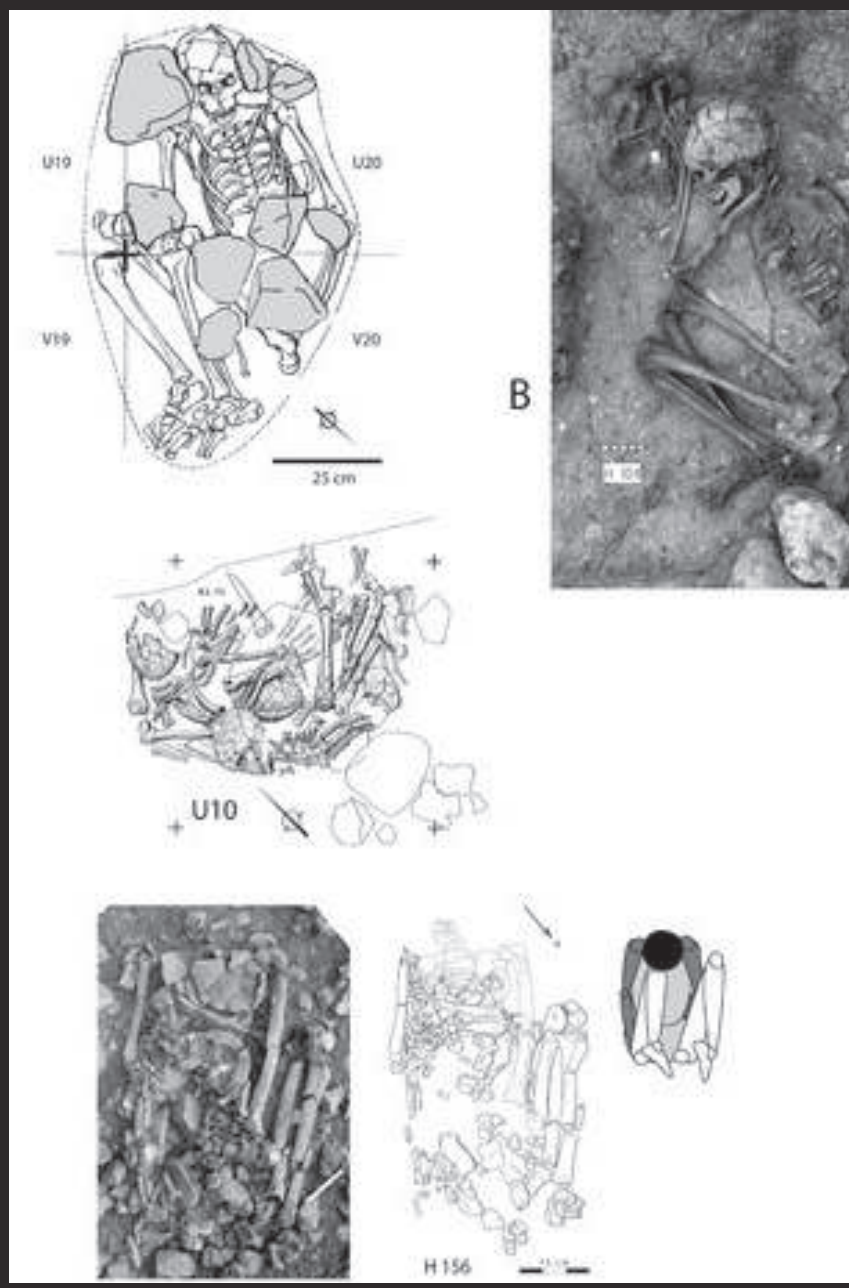
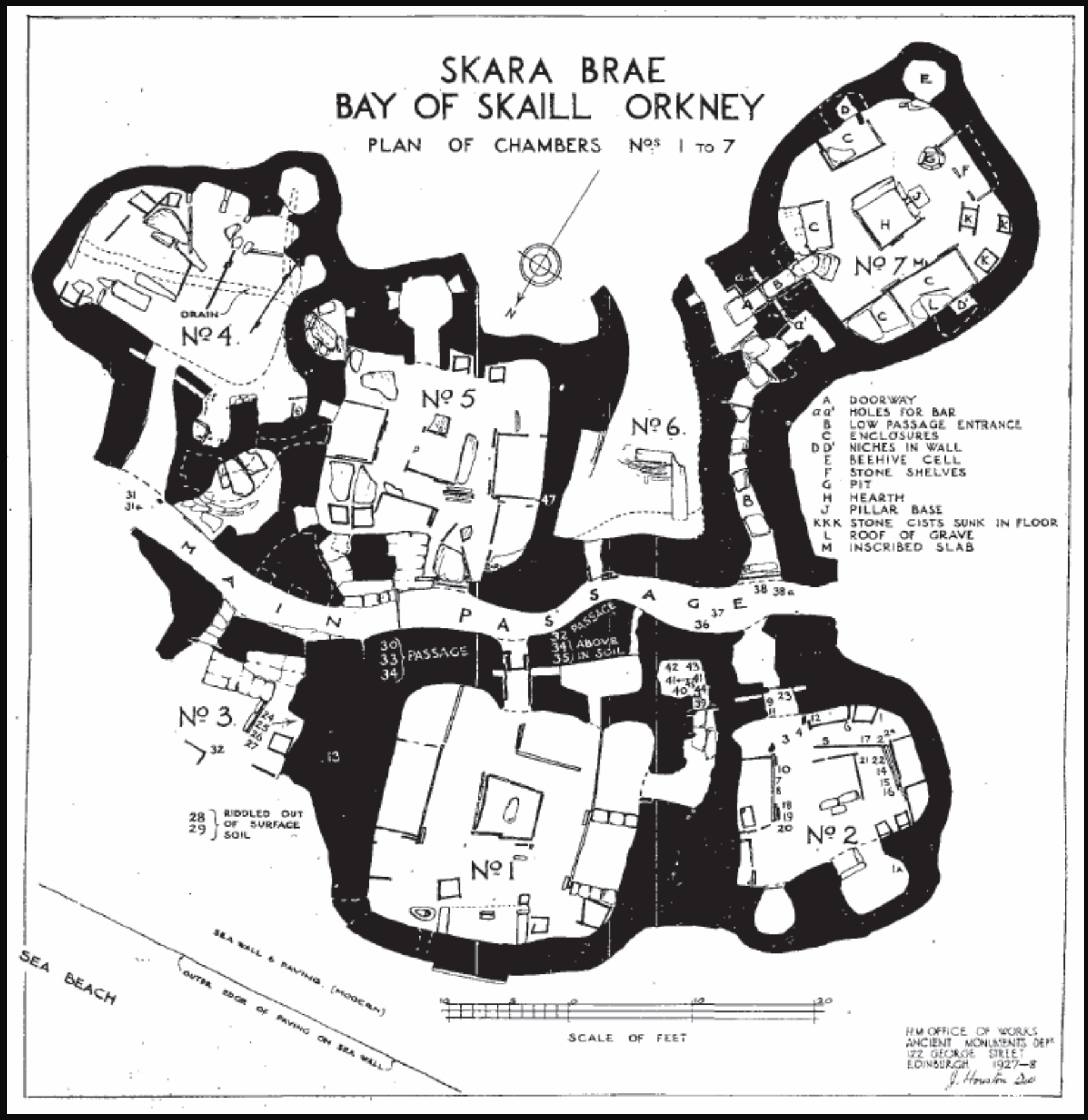


Fig. 12: General view of the site during season 1972, photographed facing southwest. Fonds Jean Perrot, Archives from Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Nanterre: JP649.

Fig. 13: François R. Valla et al., Excavations at Mallaha (Eynan) (Jerusalem: Centre de Recherche Français de Jérusalem)


SKARA BRAE
BAY OF SKAILL ORKNEY
PLAN OF CHAMBERS Nos 1 TO 7
Nº 1
Nº 2
Nº 3
Nº 4
Nº 5
Nº 6
Nº 7
DRAIN
MAIN PASSAGE
PASSAGE
32 PASSAGE
34 ABOVE
35 IN SOIL
28 } RIDDLED OUT
29 } OF SURFACE SOIL
SEA BEACH
SEA WALL & PAVING (MODERN)
OUTER EDGE OF PAVING ON SEA WALL
A DOORWAY
a a' HOLES FOR BAR
B LOW PASSAGE ENTRANCE
C ENCLOSURES
D D' NICHES IN WALL
E BEEHIVE CELL
F STONE SHELVES
G PIT
H HEARTH
J PILLAR BASE
K K K STONE CISTS SUNK IN FLOOR
L ROOF OF GRAVE
M INSCRIBED SLAB
SCALE OF FEET
H.M. OFFICE OF WORKS
ANCIENT MONUMENTS DEPT
122 GEORGE STREET
EDINBURGH 1927—8

Home as a place of return:
Cognitive Revolution

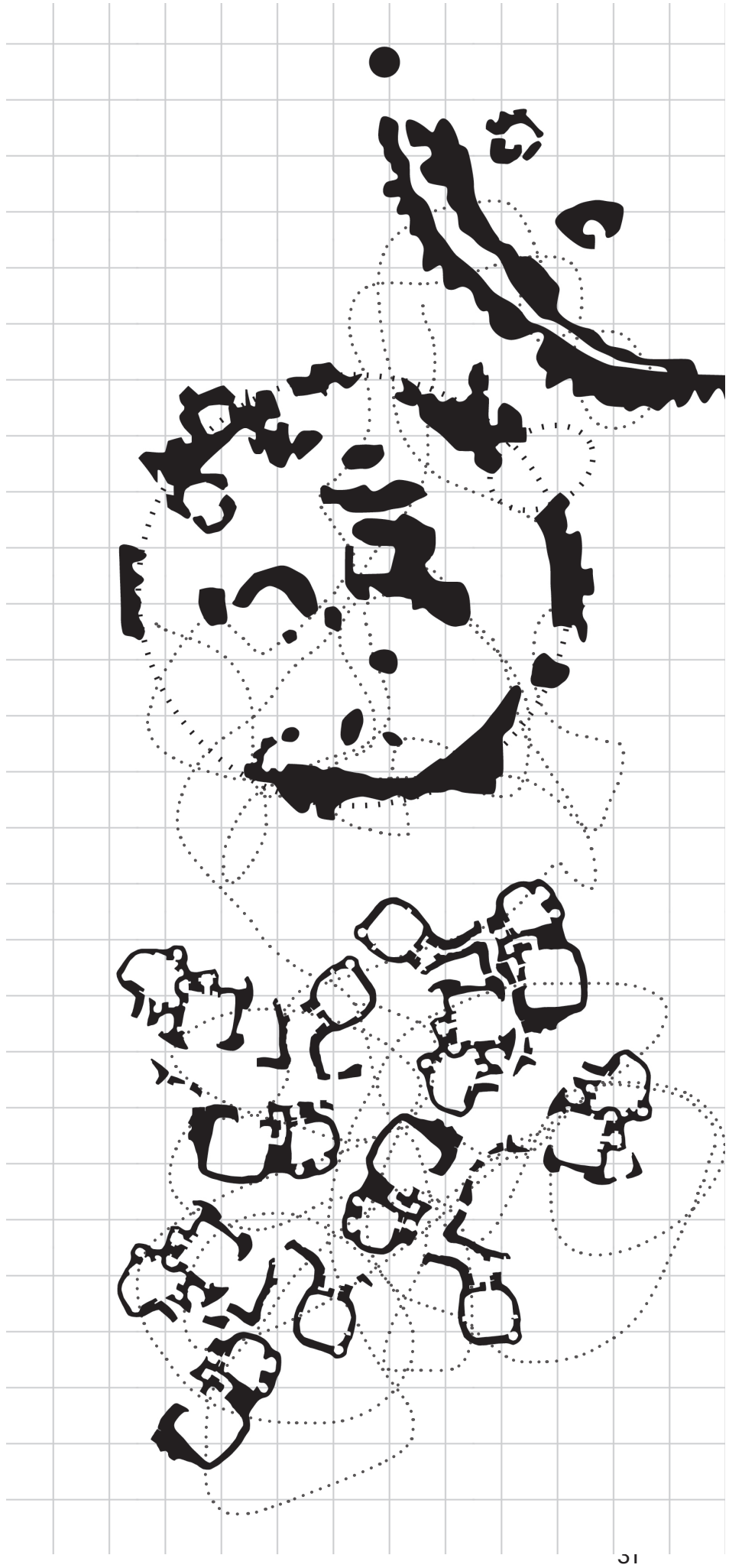


Fig. 15: Upper part: Skara Brae plan redrawn. By author. Lower part: Ail Mallaha plan redrawn. (Diagrams by author).

Five thousands year later and thousands of kilometers away in Scotland, the Neolithic Skara Brae[2] shares the same logic and startegy as Ain Mallaha. This settlement consisted of a cluster of semi-subterranean stone houses, built into midden mounds for insulation against the harsh northern climate. Like the Natufian dwellings, these structures demonstrate an intimate dialogue between architecture and ground: lowered floors, thick retaining walls, earth-protected roofs, and internal hearths that created stable thermal environments.

Archaeological plans show that Skara Brae housed approximately 50–100 people, forming a compact village organized around a network of covered passageways. What distinguishes Skara Brae within the evolution of domestic typologies is the remarkable uniformity of its houses. Each dwelling contains nearly identical features: a central hearth, stone-built beds, a shelf aligned with the doorway, and similar internal proportions. The repetition of the proportions, the typologies and the elements in each cell suggests that hierarchical differentiation within the group was inevident in the habitat's architecture.

Skara Brae does offer a clear reminder that the earliest forms of dwelling were shaped not by the logic of accumulation, financial systems, or institutionalized inequality, but by communal living, environmental pragmatism, and shared forms of identity. Both sites demonstrate early human attempts to create stable, earth-bound domestic worlds, yet each expresses this stability through a different spatial grammar: circular forms in the Levant, proto-rectilinear forms in Orkney.

Fig. 14: Plan of chambers by V. Gordon Childe and J. Wilson Paterson, Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, February 11, 1929.

2. *Skara Brae: A Late Neolithic stone-built settlement in Orkney, Scotland, dated to approximately 3100–2500 BCE.*

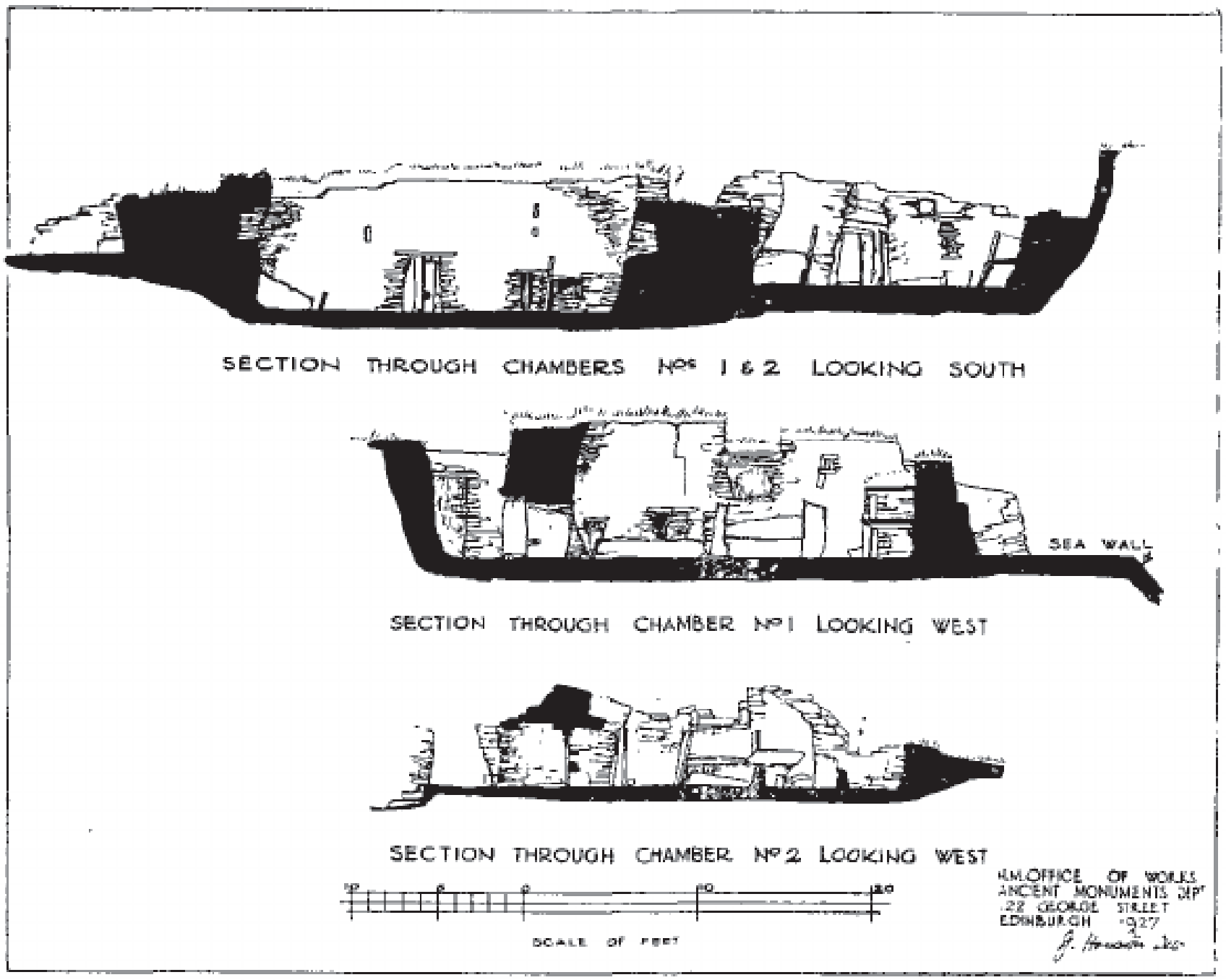


Fig. 16: Sections through chambers 1 and 2 from Provisional Report on the Excavations at Skara Brae and on Finds from the 1927 and 1928 Campaigns, by V. Gordon Childe and J. Wilson Paterson, Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, February 11, 1929.

Fig. 17: Aerial view of Skara Brae in Orkney. Photograph © Charles Tait.

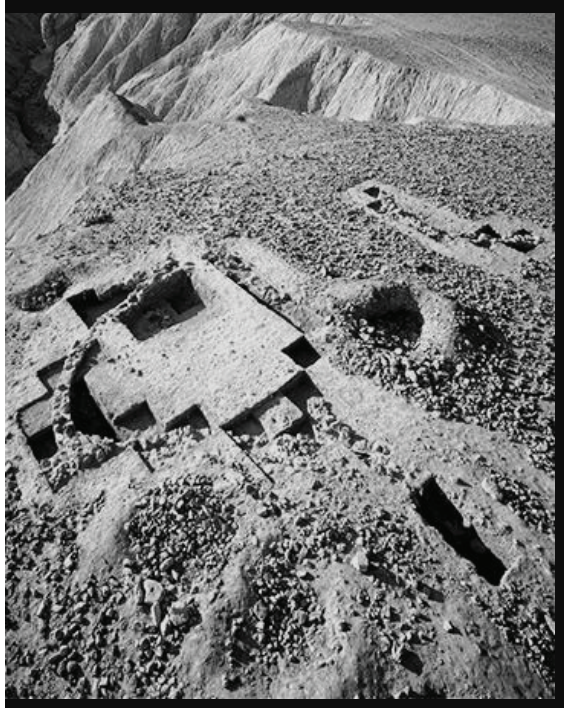


Fig. 18: The four pictures are retrieved from the Site néolithique de Çatal Höyük. Photograph by Umut Özdemir. © Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Home as a producing unit:
Argricultural Revolution

The Agricultural Revolution (ca. 10,000–6,000 BCE) marks a decisive shift in the evolution of domestic architecture. While the Natufians of Ain Mallaha represent an early form of sedentism rooted in cognitive and symbolic changes, **the transition to agriculture transformed the dwelling from an earth-bound habitat to a producing unit**, embedded in a structured landscape of fields, storage, and labor. This revolution occurred independently in several regions, but its architectural implications are most clearly observed in the early Neolithic settlements of the Levant and Anatolia. 10,000 years ago, a more sedentary life began to exist for humans following the possibility to cultivate instead of chasing food.

The adoptation of agriculture practices brought life to a new typology for houses and homes, and for the first time humankind needed to store excess food. Excavations at Dhra, Jordan shows purpose-built granaries that represent a critical evolutionary shift in the relationship between people and plant foods. The logic of granary (raising food off the ground to protect it from animals) was adopted by argricultural societies in almost all continents.[1] This revelation altered humankind's relation to the ground, to the earth. Humans started to groom the natural inviroment, controlling and manipulating the reproduction of plants and animals for human consumption. **Derrick Jensen and Lierre Keith describe this a "biotic cleansing"**, a destrcutive clearing of all living things.

The birth of agriculture marks a fundamental shift from the mobile, hunter-forager existence to a more controlled ecological setting that functioned independently from the uncertainties of nature. With the Neolithic transition; described by V. Gordon Childe as the "Neolithic Revolution". **Land and soil became resources to be managed, cultivated, and optimized.** The reciprocal relationship between humans and nature was replaced by a model in which nature was reinterpreted as a productive asset. Anthropologists such as Tim Ingold have noted that this shift reoriented humans from dwelling in nature to operating on nature. (McBay et al., 2011; Childe, 2025)

As scholars such as Jared Diamond and James C. Scott demonstrate, the shift to sedentary agriculture transformed not only habitats but the entire architecture of human life. Diamond argues that farming societies experienced declines in health, rises in disease, nutritional deficiencies, and the emergence of social and gender hierarchies previously unknown among hunter-gatherers. (Diamond, 1999) Scott adds that **early agricultural states used fixed settlements and grain surpluses to create systems of taxation, labor control, and political hierarchy, fundamentally reshaping human relations to land, animals, and ecological cycles**. Together, their work shows that the Agricultural Revolution produced unprecedented forms of concentration, inequality, and environmental strain; transformations that directly influenced the evolution of domestic space and the emergence of architecture as a tool of order and control. (Scott, 2017)

The appropriation of land by function, price, boundary, and name became the new organizing logic of human society.

Home as a producing unit:
Argricultural Revolution

In Fernand Braudel's longue durée, human history is only a thin layer over the far deeper temporalities of geology, climate, and evolutionary adaptation; reminding us how short our presence on Earth truly is, and how rapidly we reshape environments that took millennia to form. A person from the early 1800s; barely two centuries ago; would struggle to comprehend the technological and spatial world we now inhabit. The airplane, the skyscraper, the internet, artificial intelligence, instantaneous global communication; none of these were imaginable in their conceptual universe. **We now live in the "future" that earlier generations believed to be impossibly distant**.

With agriculture came the need for permanence, predictability, and infrastructure. Homes were no longer constructed solely to shelter a family but to support the storage, processing, and protection of accumulated resources. This led to the development of rectilinear, above-ground dwellings, often organized around shared courtyards or clustered into tight agglomerations. In Jericho (Tell es-Sultan), early Neolithic houses shifted from the circular pit-dwellings of the Natufians to rectangular mudbrick units, marking one of the earliest examples of a settled, fortified town. The construction of defensive walls and a monumental stone tower (ca. 8000 BCE) suggests a new relationship between settlement, territory, and communal organization (Kenyon 1957; Bar-Yosef 2002).

In Çatalhöyük (central Anatolia), the architectural response to sedentism took a different form. Here, houses were packed tightly together without streets, entered through openings in the roof, and built in repeated cycles on top of earlier structures. The interior of the home became a highly charged space of domestic ritual: plaster reliefs, wall paintings, symbolic installations, and the burial of ancestors beneath platforms and floors. While the spatial typology had shifted from circular to rectilinear, the practice of embedding the memory of the passed individuals of the community under or around the habitat; seen earlier among the Natufians; persisted. Hodder interprets this as evidence that early agricultural societies continued to negotiate identity and ancestry through architecture, even as their economies and social structures changed. (Hodder, 2006)

The Agricultural Revolution also intensified community interdependence. Shared courtyards, collective ovens, and neighborhood clustering created a morphology where domestic life was simultaneously private and communal. The repeated rebuilding of houses on the same foundations, particularly at Çatalhöyük, produced a form of layered domestic stratigraphy: architecture as a physical archive of memory and continuity. (Russell, 2007)

This concept of continuity is highly relevant to the modern crisis of habitat and the fragmented physical realities presented through contemporary architectural expressions. In early settlements, the stratification of functions, the repeated rebuilding on the same foundations, and the incremental adjustments to the original dwelling created a powerful sense of attachment between human communities and their environment. Each new layer: whether structural, spatial, or symbolic; reinforced the dialogue between people and place, producing what can be described as an intimate continuity of habitation.

KONYA, TURKIYE: one of the first urbanization models in the world,
where about 8 thousand people lived together during the Neolithic period.

Fig. 19: Konya, Türkiye: one of the first urbanization models in the world, where about 8,000 people lived together during the Neolithic period.

Fig. 20. Photographs by Serhat Cetinkaya/ Anadolu via Getty Images.

Fig. 21: Hieronymus Bosch, The Garden of Earthly Delights, c. 1490–1510. Oil on oak panel. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. Public domain.

Following the Agricultural Revolution, which bound humans to land through cultivation, storage, and settlement, a new intellectual shift unfolded: the revolution against nature. This was not a single event but an extended cultural transformation, strongly articulated in the ancient Greek world (ca. 800–300 BCE), where **humans began to conceive of nature as something external to themselves; an entity to be named, analyzed, categorized, contested, and ultimately controlled**.

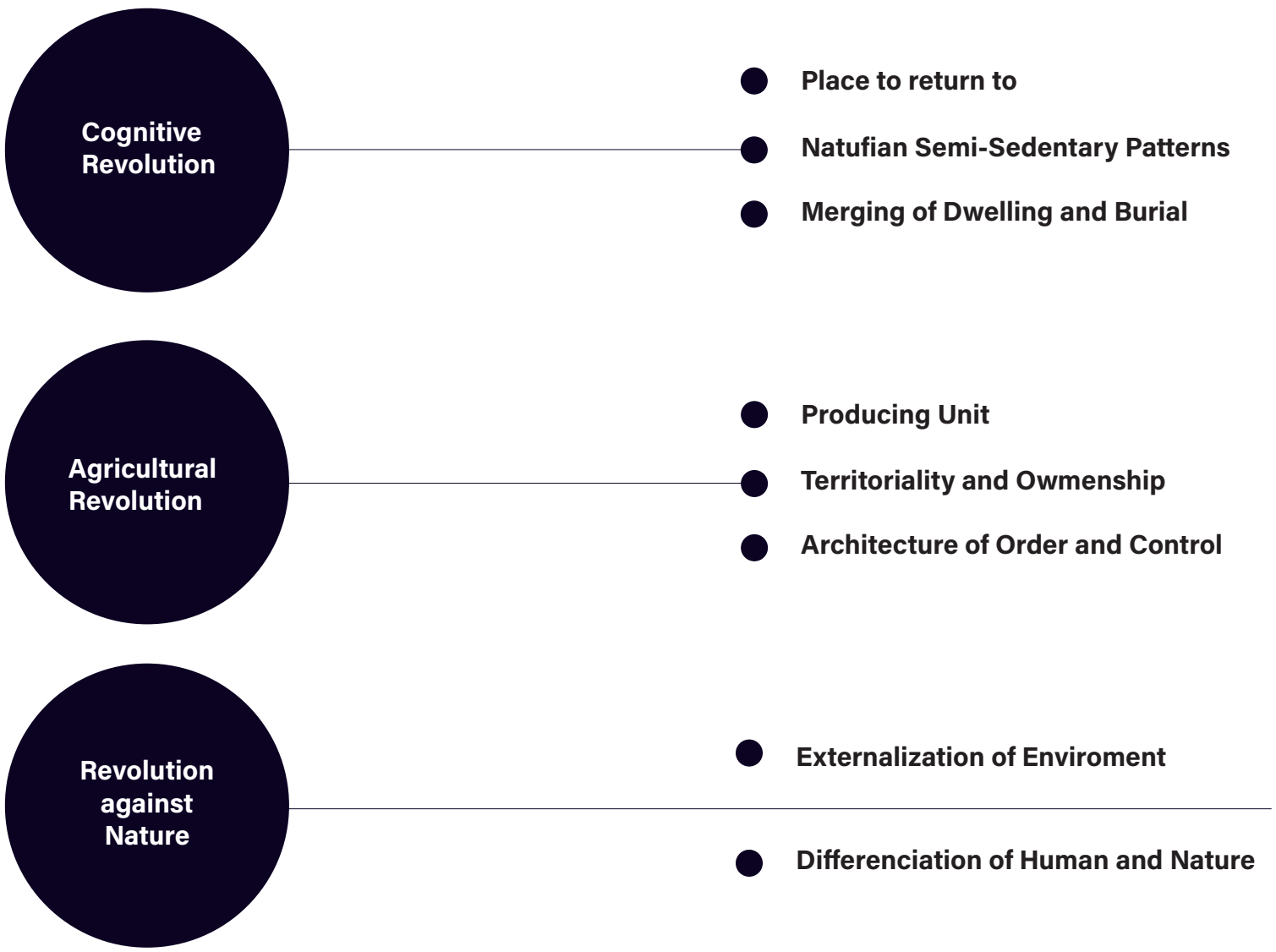
Classical Greek thought introduced a fundamental distinction between physis (nature) and nomos (human-made law or order). According to the philosopher Heraclitus, nature is "a hidden harmony," a dynamic order that resists full human grasp. Yet the emergence of rational philosophy; beginning with the Pre-Socratics and culminating in figures like Plato and Aristotle; formalized a worldview in which humans sought to know nature in order to rise above it. Through naming, defining, and dissecting the world, humans separated themselves from the "chaotic" and unpredictable logic of natural processes.

As anthropologist Philippe Descola writes, this marks the transition from "continuous cosmologies" (where humans and non-humans belong to the same world) to "naturalist cosmologies," where nature becomes "the background against which human history unfolds" (Beyond Nature and Culture, 2005). In this worldview, nature is no longer an immersive habitat but a resource, a metaphor, or an aesthetic object. It becomes "the other"; to be admired from afar, exploited for growth, or controlled through technical systems. (Descola, 2013)

Although separated from the classical world by more than a millennium, Bosch's work visually embodies the cultural consequences of the human/nature split initiated in ancient philosophy: **an increasingly symbolic, moralized, and anthropocentric understanding of the world, where nature becomes a backdrop for human desire, transgression, and domination.**

Mind Map of the evolution of home through revolutions

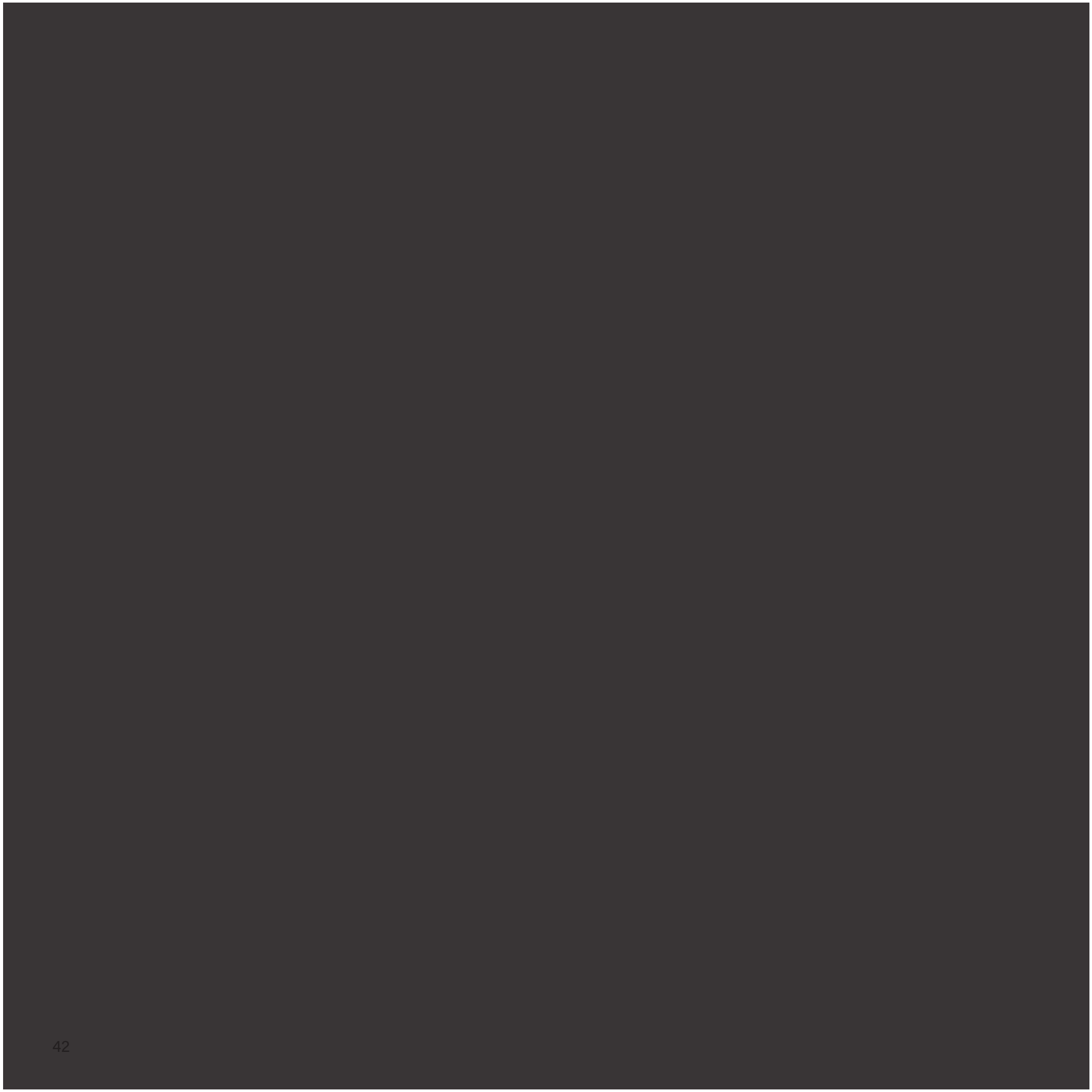
beginningof *“home”*



The beginnig of *“home”*

The conflict observed in Khiam is not an isolated geopolitical accident, but the spatial manifestation of a longer civilizational trajectory. From the moment humans began narrating land symbolically, to organizing it agriculturally, to abstracting it as a controllable resource, territory shifted from lived ground to strategic instrument.
The contemporary fragmentation of Khiam is therefore not merely political; it is ontological[3].
It is the culmination of a historical desire for control and permanence imposed upon land.

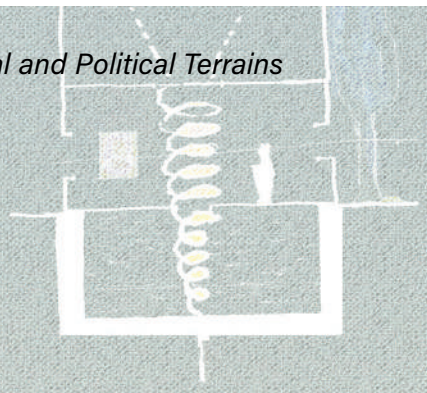
3. Ontology is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of being and reality. Here, it refers to the underlying transformation in the human–land relationship: from being embedded within nature to conceiving of land as an external, controllable object.



IV. Imagining Home

Across Philosophical and Political Terrains

The Attic (Grenier):
"the ascension towards tranquil solitude"



the house,
particularly the natal house,
is not just a building,
but a "body of dreams"
where every corner
can be
a haven for reverie

memories of past dwellings
are relived as reveries,
making them
imperishable
within us

the Cellar (Cave):
the "obscure being of the house,"

Part 1. home as the first refuge in the world

In order to create an understanding of "home" to be able to build a new home for the ones that lost their homes in the on-going wars, different concepts merge to fulfill this mission.

Gasron Bachelard (1884–1962) was a French philosopher known for his work on the philosophy of science and, later, on poetics and the imagination.
According to Gaston Bachelard in "La Poétique de l'Espace", the home is a profoundly intimate and deeply personal space, serving as a privileged being for the phenomenological study of intimacy values. (Bachelard, 1994). It is not merely an object for objective description, but a living entity that transcends its physical reality to become a sanctuary for reverie and a repository of dreams. Here are Bachelard's key ideas on the nature of home:

1 ▪ **A "Corner of the World" and a Cosmos:**
The house is "our corner of the world" and "our first universe," truly a cosmos in every sense of the word. It is where we are initially "deposited" and begins life as a place of being-well, enclosed and protected.

2 ▪ **Sanctuary for Reverie and Dreams:**
The most precious benefit of the house is that it "shelters reverie, protects the dreamer, and allows us to dream in peace". It is a place where deep human values, often tied to reverie, are formed and experienced. The house, particularly the natal house, is not just a building, but a "body of dreams" where every corner can be a haven for reverie.

Fig. 22: Collage of three pitcures taken in Netherlands, Lebanon and Italy .2023, 2024 & 2025. Photographs by author.

3 ▪ **Integration of Memory and Imagination:**
The house is a "great power of integration for human thoughts, memories, and dreams". Memory and imagination are inseparable within the home; they mutually deepen each other, forming a "community of memory and image".

4 ▪ **Topo-analysis and Spatialized Memories:**
Bachelard proposes "topo-analysis" as the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate life. In this framework, memories are "lodged" and "spatialized," becoming immobile and solid within the space of the house. The unconscious is "well lodged," happily situated in the space of its happiness.

5 ▪ **Verticality and Centrality:**
The house is imagined as a vertical being, differentiating itself from cellar to attic.
-The Cellar (Cave): Represents the "obscure being of the house," participating in subterranean powers and the irrationality of depths. It is a place where dreams have no limits, where fears can be exaggerated, and where the walls feel ancient and deep.
-The Attic (Grenier): Signifies ascension towards tranquil solitude. Thoughts associated with the attic are clear and rational, embodying the solid geometry of construction. This verticality creates a polarized space that illustrates subtle psychological nuances. Urban high-rises, lacking cellars and attics, lose this intimate verticality and "cosmicity," reducing dwelling to mere horizontal living.

Part 1. home as the first refuge in the world

6 ▪ **House as Body and Soul:** The house is described as having both "body and soul," and is the "first world of the human being". It can be seen as a "plant of stone" growing from rock to sky, illustrating human verticality and being "onirically complete".

7 ▪ **Primitivism of Refuge:** The home connects to primal forms of shelter. The concept of a "hut" or "nest" (and "shell") emerges as a primitive and fundamental image of dwelling, representing concentrated solitude and an "absolute refuge". Even within a modern house, one can find a "dream of a hut," seeking out cozy corners to "huddle". The nest, though precarious in reality, triggers a powerful reverie of security, suggesting that "the world is the nest of man". The shell, too, signifies an interior form shaped by the living being, suggesting a "physically dominating intimacy".

8 ▪ **Protection Against the World:** The house acts as a strong defense against external forces. In winter, for example, the severe cold outside enhances the warmth and intimacy within. It becomes a "resistance of man," a "fortress of courage" for the solitary inhabitant, teaching resilience and helping to overcome fear.

9 ▪ **The Dreamed House:** Beyond the natal house, there is the "dreamed house" – a future, often unrealized home that holds aspirations and provides a space for escape and imagination, emphasizing the provisional over the definitive. This imagined house can expand to immense, even cosmic, proportions, integrating natural elements like wind and mountains.

Fig. 23: Collage of six pitcures taken in Lebanon, Portugal, Netherlands and Italy. 2023, 2024 & 2025. Photographs by author.

The House as a "Body of Dreams"

Topo-analysis treats the house not as a mere building, but as a "body of dreams" and a "sanctuary for reverie". It is viewed as our "first universe" or a "cosmos" that shelters the dreamer and allows them to dream in peace.
By analyzing the various corners and rooms of a home: especially the natal house: topo-analysis reveals how these spaces integrate human thoughts, memories, and imagination into a unified "community of memory and image".

The Spatialization of Memory

The central tenet of topo-analysis is that memories are "lodged" and "spatialized" within the architecture of the house. Rather than existing as abstract thoughts in time, memories become immobile and solid when tied to specific locations. Through this process, the unconscious becomes "well lodged," finding a permanent situation in the spaces associated with happiness and protection.

The topo-analysis examines the house as a strong defense against external forces. It is seen as a "fortress of courage" that teaches resilience. In this framework, even a simple "hut" or "nest" can be analyzed as a fundamental image of absolute refuge and concentrated solitude.

This approach takes a different angle than the personal endeavour that Gaston Bachelard put into evidence, to create a communal approach that is based in collectivity rather than personal experiences within the first house used by humans as children. Edward Relph, particularly in his seminal 1976 book Place and Placelessness, approaches the notion of "place" through a phenomenological lens, aiming to understand human experience of space. His work challenges the superficial understanding of place prevalent in geography at the time, arguing for a deeper, more experientially-based perspective. (Relph, 1976)

"Astrology has the heavens, history has time, and geography has place."

But what exactly is place? One of phenomenology's greatest strengths lies in its ability to interrogate the seemingly obvious. It draws our attention to everyday concepts that often go unquestioned, urging us to reexamine them. In this spirit, Edward Relph explores the concept of place not merely as a physical location but as a rich and layered phenomenon of human experience. Relph defines the identity of place through **three interrelated components:**
1)The physical setting – the tangible, material environment.
2)The activities, events, memories and situations.
3)The meanings attributed by individuals and groups – the emotional, symbolic, and experiential layers developed over time.

These three dimensions form a holistic understanding of place as something **inherently collective**, shaped by the lived experiences, intentions, and memories of those who inhabit it. Place acquires significance not in isolation but through the shared consciousness and interactions of a community.

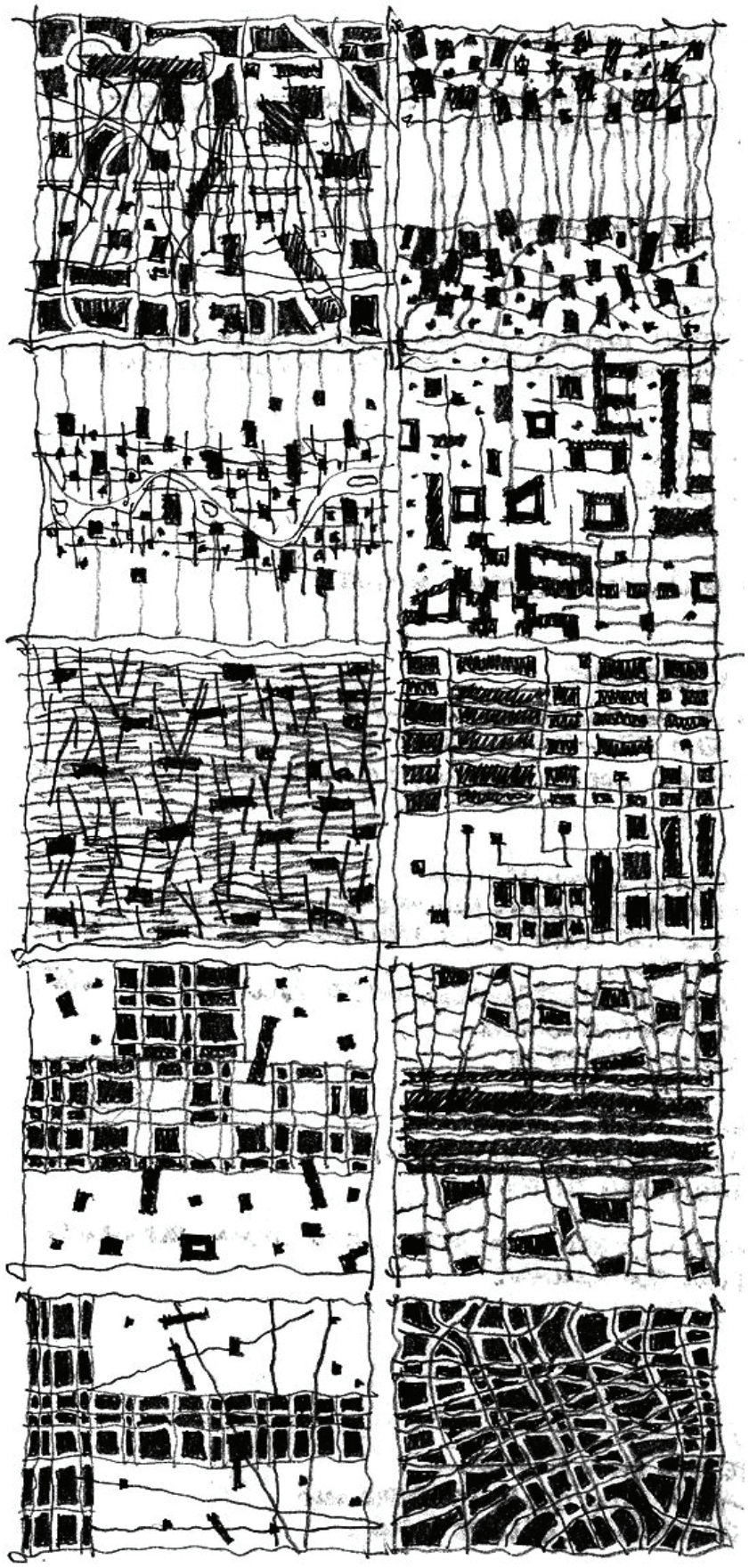
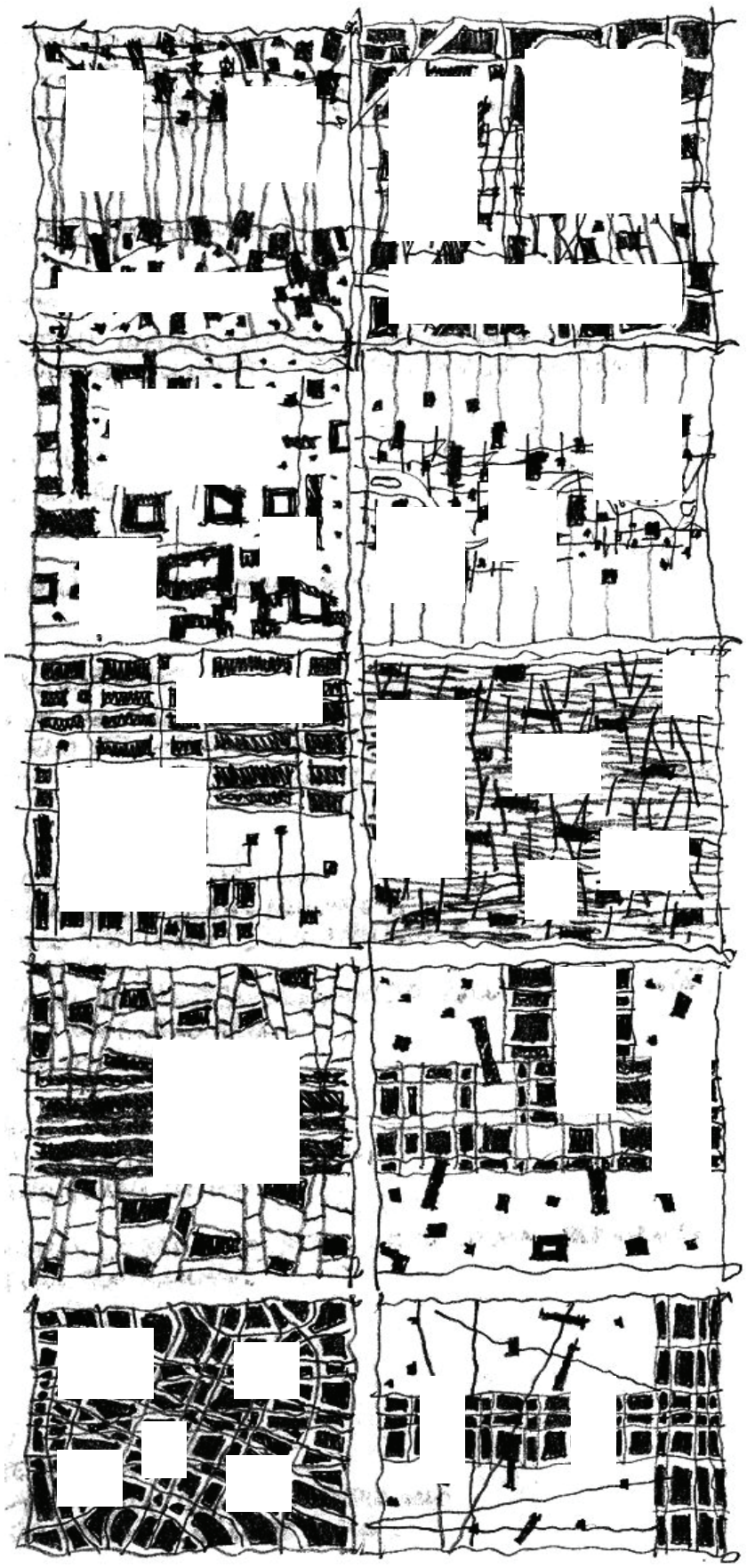


Fig. 24: Sketch of patterns of spaces and communities by Fabio Alessandro Fusco, in Città e territori, 2004. Modified by author.



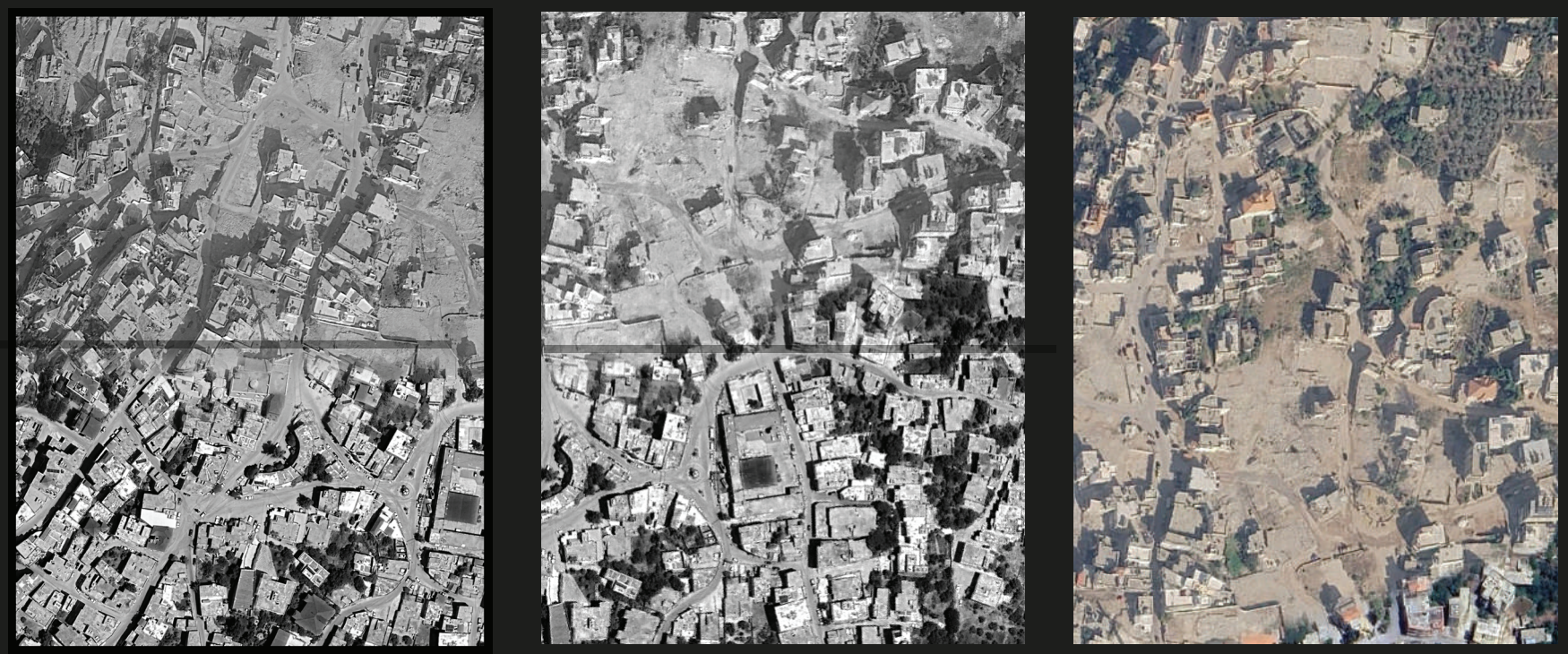
Relph introduces insideness and outsideness to describe the degree of attachment or alienation one experiences in relation to place. Insideness denotes a deep sense of belonging, in which identity is closely intertwined with the spirit of a location. As Gaston Bachelard suggests, memory is inseparable from place; even in physical absence, places persist within the conscious and unconscious mind.

Outsideness, by contrast, refers to estrangement from place, often resulting from prolonged distance or from radical transformations caused by war, displacement, or destruction. In such conditions, recognition and continuity are disrupted, and the identities rooted in place become fragile.

Within this framework, Relph introduces placelessness as the erosion of authentic place identity. Placelessness emerges through standardization, commodification, and the loss of local specificity. Relph distinguishes authentic place experiences: rooted in direct engagement with historical and cultural context; from inauthentic ones shaped by homogenization and detachment. Driven by mass communication, centralized control, and commercial uniformity, placeless environments replace meaningful places with anonymous, interchangeable spaces, weakening both cultural memory and the human capacity to feel rooted in the world.

In Khiam, a village located in southern Lebanon, the destruction of approximately 60% of the built fabric directly undermines the conditions through which place is constituted. The loss of buildings does not only affect the physical setting, but interrupts the activities, memories, and shared meanings anchored to them. As familiar spatial references disappear, lived experience is fragmented and collective continuity is broken. This condition marks the production of placelessness: space remains, yet place - as a meaningful and collective human construct - is destabilized and disconnected from its previous state. Khiam is therefore not only physically damaged, but structurally displaced, demanding an architectural response that addresses the reconstitution of place rather than the replacement of form.

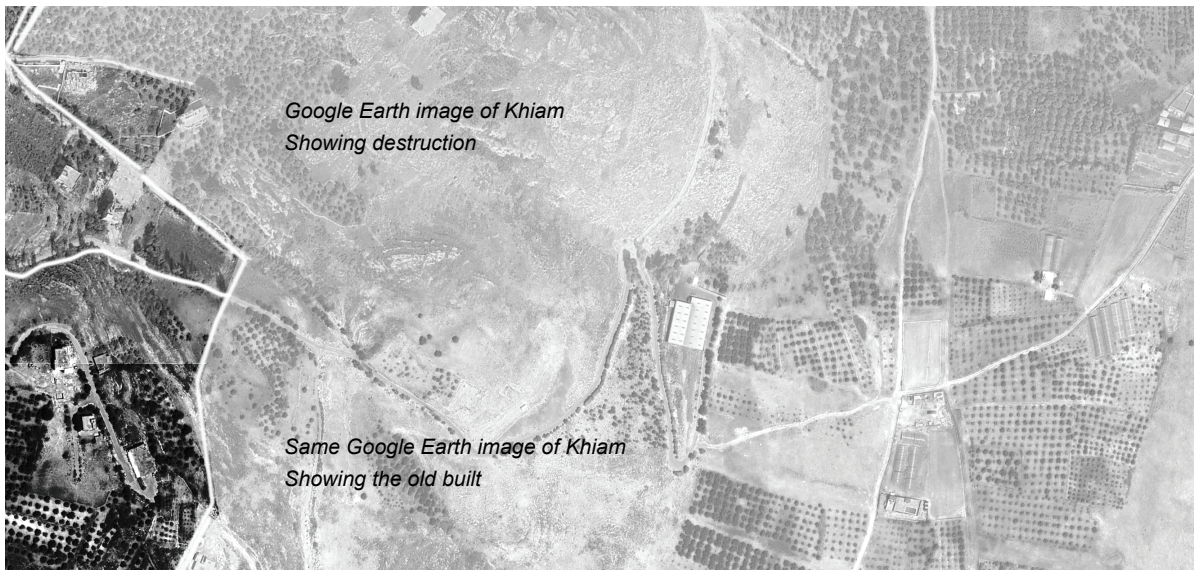
Fig. 25: Map of the village of Khiam, Lebanon. Google Earth image, scale 1:5000. 2026. Modified by author.



Google Earth image of Khiam, Lebanon, Scale: 1/200. Google image merges in one map the destruction and the old built fabric of Khiam, Lebanon _Data of Google Earth updates half de de-struction in Khiam, Lebanon. Data consulted on 3 February 2026, 2 years after the destruction.

Fig. 26: Google Earth image of Khiam, Lebanon, scale 1:200 (accessed on the 3rd of February 2026).

Fig. 27: Map of the village of Khiam, Lebanon. Google Earth image, scale 1:5000. 2026. Modified by author.



Google Earth image of Khiam
Showing destruction

Same Google Earth image of Khiam
Showing the old built

Through Edward Relph's framework, the contemporary condition of Khiam can be understood as a spatial manifestation of placelessness produced through rupture rather than homogenization. The juxtaposition between intact portions of the village and vast empty plots: where schools, mosques, municipal buildings, libraries, and nearly half of the residential fabric once stood, reveals a fracture in the physical continuity through which shared meanings were historically produced. These absences are not neutral voids; they interrupt the repetitive practices, memories, and symbolic associations that constituted place over time. As key spatial anchors disappear, residents are confronted with a landscape that no longer corresponds to their accumulated experience, inducing a condition of outsideness in which recognition and identification are destabilized. In this sense, placelessness in Khiam does not emerge from anonymity or standardization, but from the violent removal of the very elements that sustained collective consciousness, transforming familiar space into an estranged and discontinuous terrain.

Part 3. home as a construct

To move from th e notion of community to a broader understanding of belonging and identification with space, Doreen Massey offers an expanded and inclusive perspective. A British geographer who redefined how we think about place, Massey challenges traditional and static notions of spatial identity. In her essay "A Global Sense of Place" (1991), she argues that **places are not fixed or isolated entities, but dynamic processes shaped by global interconnections**. (Massey, 2007)

Places as Processes, Not Static Entities: Massey argues that places are not motionless or "frozen in time," but are processes. Therefore, a "home," in her view, would also be a d ynamic entity continually shaped by ongoing social interactions and changes, rather than a fixed, unchanging location. She argues that places have **multiple and contested identities.** She strongly refutes the idea that places have "single, essential, identity". Instead, she posits that places are "full of internal conflicts" and are a "complex mix" of various influences.

Applying this to "home," it suggests that a home's identity is not singular but multifaceted, potentially accommodating diverse experiences and even conflicts among its inhabitants. The notion of coherent and homogeneous communities inhabiting places is "dubious". A progressive sense of place, according to Massey, is not "self-enclosing and defensive" but **"outward-looking"** and conscious of its links with the wider world, positively **integrating the global and the local.** This implies that a "home" is not an isolated refuge but is inextricably connected to broader global flows of people, goods, and information, and that its identity is influenced by these external linkages.

She emphasizes that the experience of **"time-space compression"** (the speeding up and spreading out of things in the world) is socially differentiated. Different groups and individuals have distinct relationships to mobility, with some initiating flows and others being "on the receiving-end" or "effectively imprisoned by it". This implies that the experience and meaning of "home" would vary greatly depending on an individual's position within this "power-geometry."

Fig. 28: The City as a Responsive Environment: The Urban Mark as City by Peter Cook. Print, colored pencils and airbrush. © Peter Cook.

Part 4. home as liquid

Bachelard, Relph, and Massey each offer valuable perspectives on home. For Bachelard, home is an intimate, personal space: the attic, the cellar, the quiet corners; where memory and dreams live. Relph broadens this by showing how places gain meaning through shared experiences, connecting the personal home to the community around it. Massey takes this even further, reminding us that identity and home are fluid, spread across a global landscape that constantly shifts. Together, these views show home as an extension of ourselves, a way we root our identity in the physical places we inhabit.

But today, this connection is changing. As the "Domestic Boundaries" book (2018) explains, particuraly in the passage of "liquid homes, a crisis of belonging", our modern experience is marked by nomadism and constant movement, where home is no longer fixed but becomes a temporary, sometimes virtual, place. Architecture, once understood as creating stable places of belonging, now faces the challenge of responding to this fluid, mobile reality. The "house as origin of all action" shifts to being a point in a space of possibilities, where emotional ties to place are often weakened or fragmented. (Martella, 2018)

This shifting relationship with home and space is amplified by technology, which blurs the lines between physical presence and virtual experience. Our reality fractures into multiple, overlapping timelines, leaving us suspended between connection and detachment. Architecture today reflects this complexity, needing to accommodate the fragmentation and fluidity of how we live, remember, and relate to space. It becomes a space for both memory and possibility—a way to hold on to identity even when the physical anchors of home are no longer stable.

The anchors of home are increasingly unstable; not only due to the overlapping realities presented through digital forms, but also because of the constant displacement and shifting of physical spaces, particularly in the Global South. Countries such as Sudan, Lebanon, and Palestine face a persistent compulsion to move, driven by contemporary political and territorial conflicts.

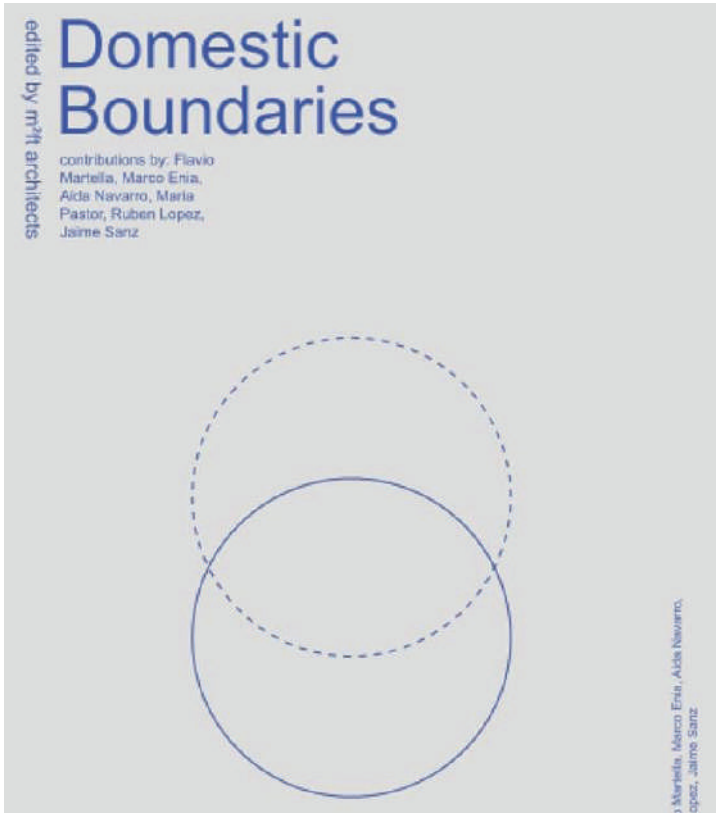


Fig. 29: Cover of Domestic Boundaries (Martella, 2018).

Within this context, losing a physical home carries profound significance. The absence of a "safe haven," once meticulously constructed over time, underscores the human attachment to spaces imbued with memory and familiarity. Repetition and the passage of time cultivate recognition and belonging, extending even to national identity. Beyond ideology, politics, or socially constructed systems, humans inherently resist the loss of assets acquired over a lifetime—whether lives, possessions, routines, or habits. This resistance intensifies when such loss is imposed rather than voluntary.

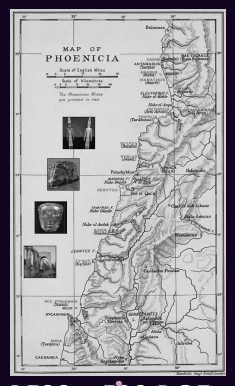
From this tension emerges an architecture of resistance. Tents, ephemeral shelters, makeshift cabins, the reconstruction of debris, or relocation to new sites are not merely survival strategies; they are architectural expressions of resistance to change, to forget or be forgotten, to be substituted. Architecture, in this sense, is a tangible projection of lived experience, manifesting the memories, struggles, and realities of those who inhabit it.

To conceptualize "home" and design its architectural replacement for those who have lost it, one must consider this dimension of resistance. Home is defined by the ways individuals resist its continual transformation and loss. It is shaped through memory, forging continuity within a discontinuous world. Home becomes the thread linking past, present, and future_ physically and mentally, consciously and unconsciously_ responding to fundamental human instincts: the desire for protection, familiarity, and comfort.

Historical succession of passengers in Lebanon and the Levant Region.

The Different civilisations and empires that have walked the Levant (from 3000 BCE - 2026).

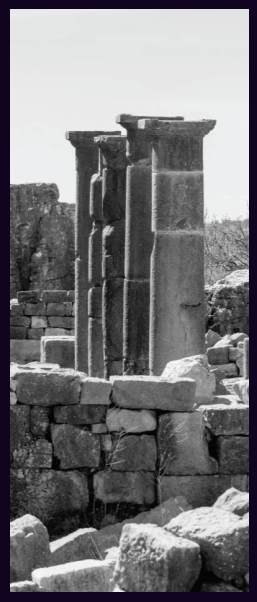
3000 - 1200 BCE



1500 - 539 BCE

1200 - 586 BCE

539 - 322 BCE



330 BCE - 64 BCE

64 BCE - 395 CE

395 CE

Canaanites
Indigenous Semitic people living in the Levant

Phoenicians
Alphabet, trade networks, Mediterranean colonies

Hebrews / Israelites
Development of Monotheism and Text-Based Collective Identity

Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians
High autonomy in exchange for naval support

Hellenistic Period
Greek urban planning, theaters, agoras

Roman Empire
Massive infrastructure, roads, temples, law

Byzantine Empire
Christianization of the landscape

Fig. 30: Image of Phoenicia. From Phoenicians in Phoenicia, phoenicia.org

Fig. 31: The Kingdoms of Judah and Israel. By W. Hughes. Printed from stone by Standidge & Co., London.

Fig. 32: Campement nomade, Tabriz, Azerbaïdjan oriental, Perse, dynastie safavide, 1539–1543.

Fig. 33: Image of the Faqra archaeological site. From Faqra Archaeological Site, Moovtoo Guide.

Fig. 34: Baalbek, Lebanon. Photograph by Martin Gray.

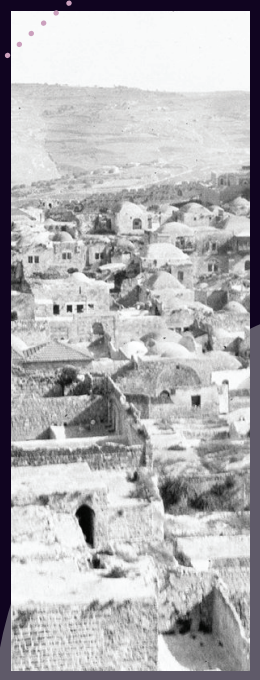
WORLD WAR I
1914-1918

969 CE

Islamic Caliphates
Rashidun, Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid rule (Ruling from Cairo)

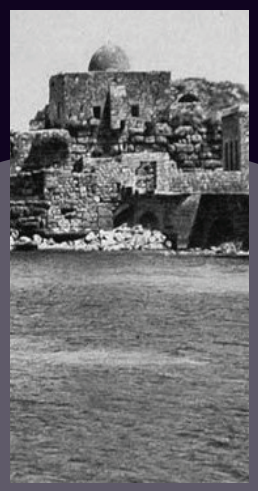
1516 - 1918

Ottoman Empire
ruling over a diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-religious Levant



1918

British Mandate
British Mandate administring Palestine, Nothern Jordan,



1920

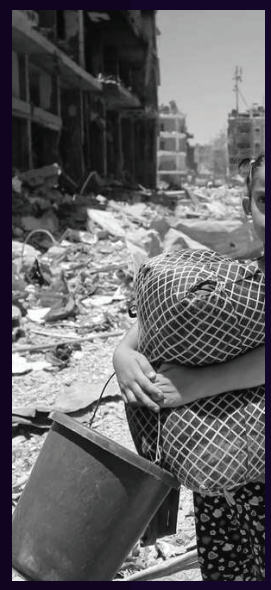
French Mandate
French Mandate administring "Greater Lebano" and Syria

1948
AL Nakba

Establishment of Zionist Israel
immense conflict and displacement for the palestinian community

1967
the Six Day War

Occupation of Gaza/West Bank



2025-2026-

The wars continue to wage across the Levant, reminding...

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

- Santayana, 2011

Fig. 35: Pier Paolo Racioppi, "Zisa", Museum With No Frontiers, 2026.

Fig. 36: Beirut's Sursock Museum. Photograph by Joseph Eid.

Fig. 37: Jerusalem , Photograph by Frank Scholten

Fig. 38: Saida (Sidon) Sea Castle Fort, Lebanon, 1926. Photogravure by Karl Grober.

Fig. 39: U.N. Special Committee on Palestine formed. Photograph. From Israel Ed.

Fig. 40- 41 : Palestinians marking 69 years since the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, Photograph by Reuters.

Emergence of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The Different religions that have emerged in the Levant and Western Arabia.

After tracing the succession of empires and populations that occupied the Levant, it becomes necessary to address another fundamental layer that shaped identity beyond political authority: religion. In this region, religious traditions did not simply emerge alongside historical events, but actively inscribed meaning onto space, transforming cities, landscapes, and sites into enduring vessels of memory. **The Levant's role as the geographical setting for the emergence of Judaism, Christianity, and its proximity to the geographical place of the emergence of Islam** produced a dense overlap of sacred narratives, anchoring global systems of belief to specific localities. As a result, religious identity became a powerful mechanism of continuity, capable of sustaining belonging even when political structures shifted or physical environments were fragmented.

Judaism emerged in the central and southern Levant among Israelite communities, developing a monotheistic belief system grounded in covenant, law, and a strong attachment between faith, land, and collective memory. Christianity arose in the same Levantine landscape during the first century CE, rooted in Jewish tradition but reoriented around the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, transforming specific places into sites of pilgrimage and universal spiritual significance. Islam emerged later in the seventh century in western Arabia, in Mecca and Medina, articulating a monotheistic ideology centered on divine unity, revelation, and social order, while simultaneously anchoring its sacred geography to the Levant through Jerusalem. Together, these traditions layered the region with enduring religious meanings, binding belief, place, and memory into a shared yet contested spatial history.

Fig. 42: Musée d'Israël, Jérusalem: maquette du Second Temple de Jérusalem. Unknown author.

Fig. 43: The Church of the Nativity, or Basilica of the Nativity is a basilica located in Bethlehem in the West Bank. Photo by Sameeh Karram

Fig. 44: Al-Aqsa Mosque, Dôme du Rocher, de la vieille ville de Jérusalem. Unknown author.

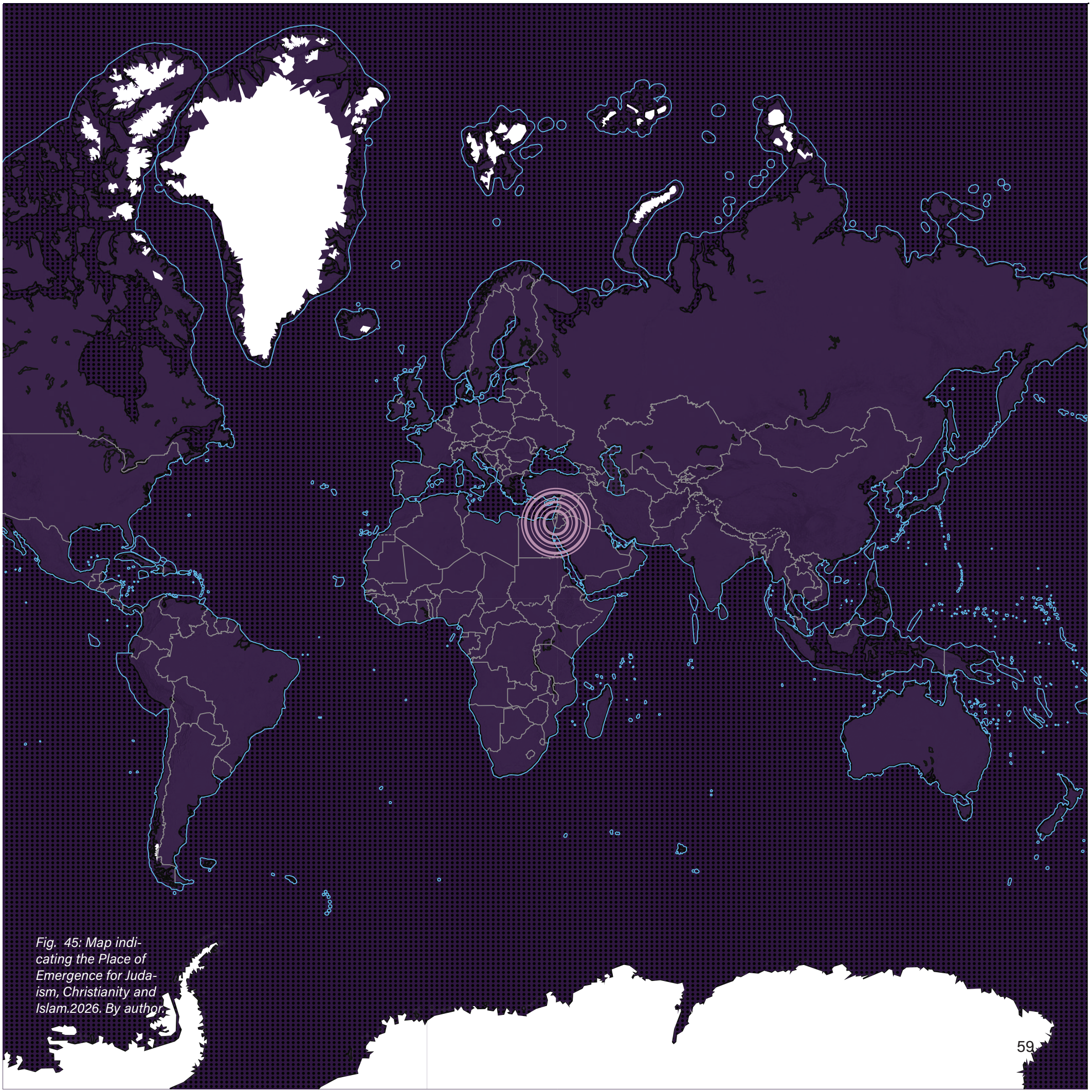
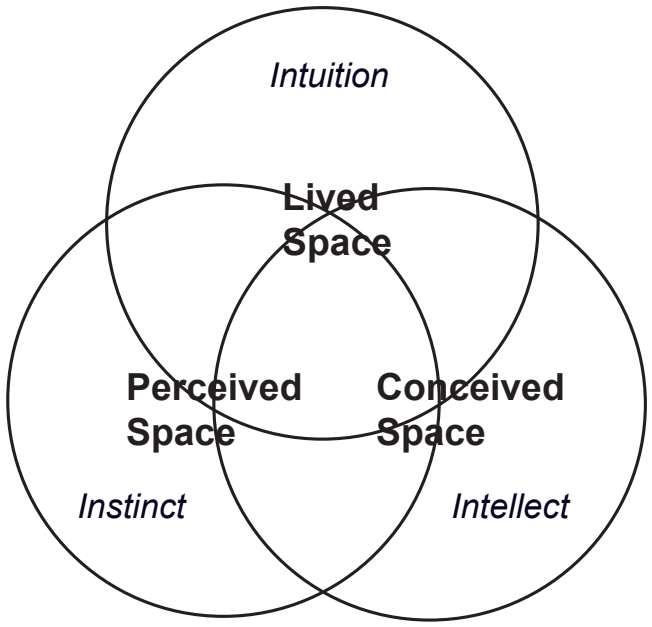


Fig. 45: Map indicating the Place of Emergence for Judaism, Christianity and Islam.2026. By author.

Part 5 . Home as a lived production



The translation of home into architectural terms requires an understanding of space not as a neutral or passive container, but as a condition actively produced through social relations, political structures, and institutional logics. In this regard, the theoretical contributions of Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault provide a critical foundation for approaching architecture as a medium through which power, identity, and lived experience are materially organized. Both thinkers reject the notion of space as an inert backdrop for human activity and instead frame it as an operative field in which social realities are constructed, regulated, and contested.

In The Production of Space, Lefebvre advances a theory of space as socially produced, arguing that spatial forms emerge through the interaction of economic systems, political authority, and everyday practices. Space, in this framework, is not pre-given but continuously re-produced, shaped by historical forces and institutional mechanisms. (Lefebvre, 2013)

Central to Lefebvre's theory is his triadic conception of space: spatial practice, representations of space, and spaces of representation. Spatial practice refers to the routines, movements, and rhythms through which everyday life unfolds, grounding space in bodily experience and repetition. Representations of space correspond to the abstract and conceptualized spaces produced by planners, architects, and institutions, articulated through drawings, codes, measurements, and regulatory frameworks.

Lefebvre emphasizes that modern societies are increasingly dominated by abstract space: a spatial logic characterized by homogeneity, quantification, and fragmentation. Abstract space supports the operations of state power and capitalist production by rendering space legible, divisible, and controllable.

While it claims neutrality and universality, abstract space suppresses difference, marginalizes lived experience, and disrupts the continuity through which meaning and belonging are formed. Within this condition, home cannot be reduced to a stable physical entity; it becomes vulnerable to processes of abstraction that detach space from memory, practice, and collective identification.

Michel Foucault's work complements and sharpens this critique by examining how space operates as a technology of power. Across texts such as Discipline and Punish and the lecture "Of Other Spaces" (1967), Foucault analyzes the ways in which spatial organization produces discipline, visibility, and control. For Foucault, architecture is not merely reflective of power relations but instrumental in their enactment. The arrangement of space regulates movement, structures perception, and organizes bodies within hierarchical systems. Space becomes a mechanism through which authority is exercised and normalized. (Foucault, 1986)

Where Lefebvre foregrounds the production of space through social processes, Foucault emphasizes the micro-physics of power embedded in spatial arrangements. Architectural form, circulation, enclosure, and segmentation operate as techniques that shape behavior and subjectivity. Through spatial ordering, power becomes diffuse and internalized, embedded not only in institutions but in everyday environments. From this perspective, architecture participates in the governance of life by prescribing rhythms, defining thresholds, and controlling access.

Taken together, Lefebvre and Foucault allow space to be understood simultaneously as a socially produced condition and as a disciplinary apparatus. This dual reading is essential for translating the notion of home into architectural terms. Home is not only shaped by lived practices and collective memory, as Lefebvre suggests, but also by spatial structures that regulate intimacy, privacy, visibility, and belonging. Domestic space operates at the intersection of affective experience and political organization, where personal life is inseparable from broader systems of control and regulation.

Importantly, neither Lefebvre nor Foucault frames space as a closed or deterministic system. While both expose the mechanisms through which power operates spatially, they also acknowledge the instability of these structures. Lefebvre's emphasis on lived space introduces the possibility of appropriation and resistance through everyday practices, while Foucault's analysis of power as relational implies that spatial control is never absolute. Space remains a contested field in which meanings can be reconfigured, disrupted, or re-signified.

By integrating Lefebvre's conception of space as socially produced with Foucault's analysis of space as a mechanism of power, this research positions architecture as both a carrier of memory and a critical practice. Translating home into architecture thus requires acknowledging the political dimensions of spatial organization while remaining attentive to lived experience and collective meaning. Architecture, in this sense, operates not as a solution to social conditions, but as a field in which the tensions between power, belonging, and everyday life are materially negotiated.

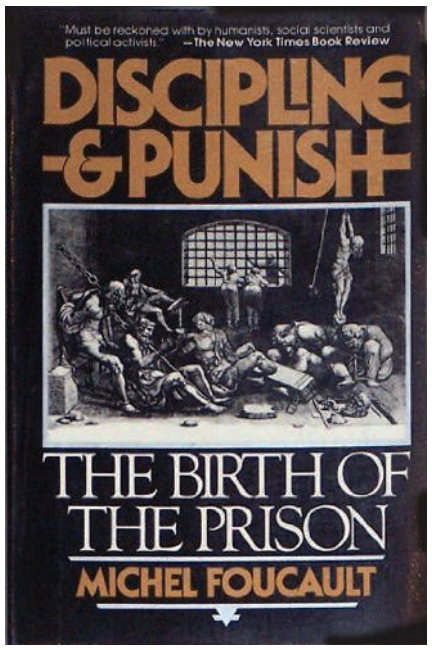
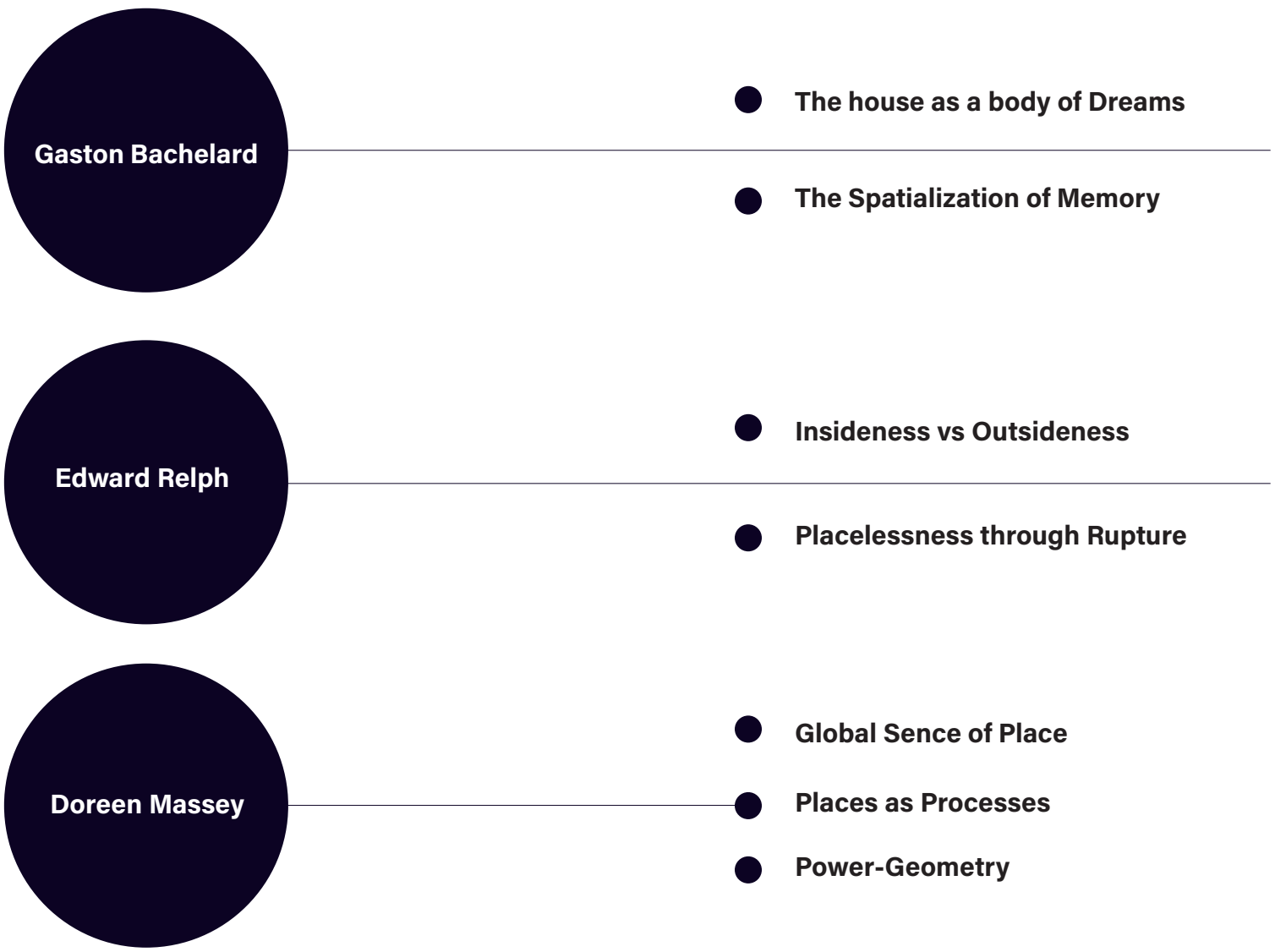


Fig. 46: Cover of Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison by Michel Foucault. Vintage Books edition, 1977

Mind Map of the philosophical, social and geopolitical perspectives for understanding *"home"*



Defining *"home"*

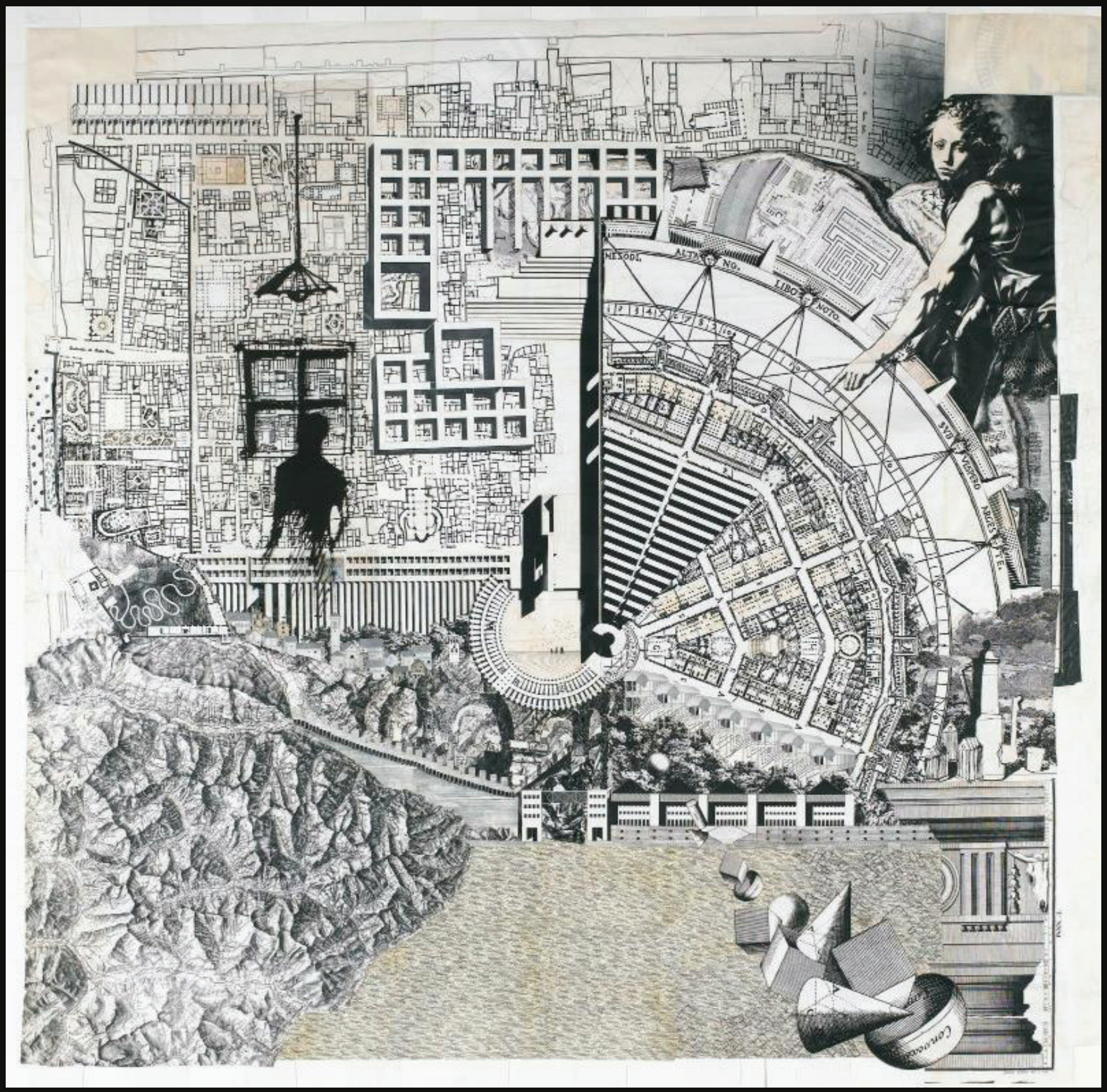
Building upon Bachelard's intimate phenomenology of domestic space, Relph's temporal production of place, and Massey's relational understanding of spatial becoming, this thesis understands home not as a static geographical condition but as an active process of continuity.

Home is defined here as the resistance to the disengagement from one's foundational identity, a resistance that transports, adapts, and reconstructs itself across distances, ruptures, and territorial transformations.

V. Translating home to Architecture

Architectural foundations for the methodological approach

Fig. 47: Overlapping cultures and realities, Square in Lisbon, Portugal. 2022. Photograph by author.


MESODI.
ALTA
NO.
LIBO
NOTO.
SVB
VESPERO
ARGES
TE.

Part 1 . Home as an urban artifact

To effectively translate Aldo Rossi's ideas into the formation of a village, particularly in a context like Khiam, it's essential to first grasp his fundamental understanding of the city. Aldo Rossi perceives the city as a "gigantic man-made object," a work of engineering and architecture that is large and complex and growing over time. It is considered the human creation par excellence, where architecture serves as the "physical sign of this biography". For Rossi, the city is pro foundly tied to its history and memory, acting as a "repository of history" and the "collective memory of its people". (Rossi, 2007)

Rossi's drawing La Città Analoga[4] visually condenses this theoretical framework by assembling fragments of monuments, urban artifacts, and typological forms into a single composite city. In this sense, La Città Analoga does not represent a collective mental structure: an accumulation of persistent forms through which history continues to inhabit the present. He views urban artifacts as similar to works of art, possessing their own unique history and form. This perspective emphasizes that the city, even when "reduced to its skeleton by some catastrophe," remains "haunted by meaning and culture". Rossi's analytical framework for understanding the city includes several key components:

A- Urban Artifacts: These are the tangible elements of the city, individual buildings, streets, or districts. They are seen as "material constructions" that are "very similar to a work of art" and "constitute form rather than continue other forms". Each artifact carries its own "history and memory" and contributes to the city's overall identity. The city itself is a "collective artifact," literally "made by the hands of men".

B- Primary Elements and Monuments: These are dominant, often public and collective, structures that serve as "nuclei of aggregation". They are "made by the collective for the collective" and are "fixed points in the urban dynamic". Examples include mosques, schools, or historically significant structures. Monuments are particularly important as they possess "permanence," meaning their form can endure and accommodate different functions over time, becoming "propelling elements" that bring the past into the present, rather than "pathological" museum pieces.

Fig. 48: Rossi, Aldo. 1976. La Città Analoga. Collage. Exhibited at the Venice Biennale.

C- Dwelling Areas and Individual Dwellings: Rossi considers the "individual dwelling" as "primary in the composition of the city", noting that residential districts persist as "permanences" while individual houses within them may change. The form of dwellings is "closely bound up with the urban form," and their material embodiment of a people's way of life "is modified very slowly".

D- Locus: This refers to a "specific place" defined by its physical attributes, topography, and the "succession of both ancient and more recent events" that have occurred there. The locus is deeply tied to collective memory and is marked by "signs that come to mark the occurrence of these events". It's the place upon which architecture or form is imprinted.

E- Type: Distinct from a model, "type" is a "logical principle that is prior to form and that constitutes it". It is a "constant" that allows for diverse manifestations while ensuring an underlying coherence. Type is seen as the "essence of design" and a "catalyst for invention", allowing for variations while maintaining continuity.

F- History and Collective Memory: The city is a "repository of history", and its history is "inseparable from its geography". Rossi argues that "the city itself is the collective memory of its people", associated with objects and places. He suggests that: "memory begins when history ends," especially when a form no longer serves its original function, yet its enduring presence continues to signify.

G- Analogy: Rossi's "most important apparatus", analogy, is a design process that links type-forms and specific places, transforming them by fusing history and memory. It allows for the "dissolution of scale," where an individual building can analogically refer to the city as a whole, or vice-versa.

4. La Città Analoga (The Analogous City): A theoretical and graphic project by Aldo Rossi (1976) proposing the city as a composite of architectural fragments, memories, and typological references assembled through analogy rather than literal representation.

Fig. 49: Installation view at Centre International d'Art et du Paysage de l'Île de Vassivière (FR). Photograph by Claudio Abate.

Fig. 50: Bâtiment du centre d'art, conçu par les architectes Aldo Rossi et Xavier Fabre. Photograph by Claudio Abate.

Fig. 51: Centre d'art, Île de Vassivière, France. Designed by Aldo Rossi and Xavier Fabre, 1988. Museum.

Fig. 52: Entrée principale du centre international d'art et du paysage de l'Ile de Vassivière.

Fig. 53: Yona Friedman, La licorne de Vassivière (2009). © Marguerite Despature.

Part 1 . Home as an urban artifact

In the International Centre of Art and Landscape on Île de Vassivière (1988), Aldo Rossi, in collaboration with Xavier Fabre, translates his theoretical apparatus into a precise architectural operation. Rather than treating the island as a neutral landscape, the project frames a portion of territory and renders it legible as an event: transforming land into an urban artifact. The architecture does not dissolve into the natural context, nor does it dominate it; instead, it establishes a clear formal boundary that isolates, marks, and monumentalizes the site. Through this act of framing, Rossi asserts the autonomy of architectural form while simultaneously anchoring it to a specific locus.

Materiality plays a central role in this operation. The use of brick, plastered surfaces, and restrained chromatic contrasts reinforces the project's tectonic clarity and historical resonance. These materials do not seek expressiveness or scenographic effect; they emphasize permanence, weight, and repetition, aligning the building with Rossi's conception of architecture as a bearer of memory rather than a responsive object. Working with Fabre, Rossi constructs a building whose formal rigor and material sobriety allow it to function as a fixed point within the landscape: an enduring artifact capable of accumulating meaning over time, independent of programmatic change.

Fig. 54: Photos taken in the village of Khiam. 2025. By author.

Applying Rossi's urban repertoire to a village context, especially post-conflict like Khiam, emphasizes continuity, memory, and adaptive transformation:

A- Urban Artifacts in Khiam: Absence as Form

This condition aligns with Aldo Rossi's assertion that the city, even when "reduced to its skeleton by catastrophe," remains haunted by meaning and culture. The project responds by treating these empty plots not as obstacles to be cleared, but as operative urban artifacts: transforming these plots collectively and intentionally to create a new narrative that engages with the past structures, but stands as a differenciated and unified narrative to represent the discontinuity and the emergency of the new constructions of the village of Khiam.

B- Primary Elements and Monuments in Khiam:

The primary elements of Khiam: its mosque, school, library, municipality, and a substantial portion of its residential core—have been systematically destroyed. Yet their absence does not negate their role as monuments in Rossi's sense. On the contrary, their destruction intensifies their symbolic presence. These structures function as testimonies of collective memory, whose permanence now operates through memory, trace, and ruin rather than intact form.

In Rossi's framework, monuments are not defined by preservation or function but by their capacity to persist as fixed points within the urban dynamic. The project interprets this condition through the notion of exposed monumentality, where new architectural interventions do not conceal or overwrite ruins but engage them directly. By allowing monumental forms to remain visible, fragmented, and re-articulated, architecture enables these sites to accommodate new functions over time while retaining their role as propelling elements that carry the past into the present.

C- Periphery as Spatial Freedom

In contrast, the periphery of Khiam operates under different spatial and social conditions. Areas less affected by destruction, or more recently developed, allow for greater individual expression in dwelling form, land use, and spatial organization. Drawing from Rossi's discussion of varied housing typologies, the periphery is understood as a zone of relative openness and adaptability, where single-family or semi-detached dwellings can evolve more freely in response to personal needs, landscape, and agricultural practices.

This differentiation does not imply hierarchy but acknowledges a dual structure:
–a core that must remain coherent, dense, and in dialogue with ruins and collective memory, and
–a periphery that allows spatial flexibility and individual agency.

Together, these zones reflect Khiam's conditional identity: a village shaped by threat, erasure, and persistence, where architecture negotiates between permanence and freedom, memory and transformation, collective responsibility and individual life.

Fig. 55: The destroyed buildings of the village of Khiam, Lebanon. 2026.
By author. Data retrieved from the Municipality of Khiam, Lebanon, 2025.

Fig. 56: Mapping of the limits of the damaged plots of the village of Khiam, Lebanon. 2026. By author. Data retrieved from the Municipality of Khiam, Lebanon, 2025.

Part 2 . Home as lived materiality

While the theoretical positions of Juhani Pallasmaa and Kenneth Frampton are often discussed in parallel, their value within this research lies not in a total synthesis but in their selective application. Each offers a distinct lens through which home and space can be understood, yet neither can be adopted in full without critical adjustment—particularly in contexts marked by rupture, displacement, and political instability. Pallasmaa's contribution operates at the scale of experience. His work provides tools to understand home not as a form, typology, or symbol, but as a sensory condition that unfolds through the body over time. In The Eyes of the Skin and The Thinking Hand, Pallasmaa insists that space is apprehended multisensorially: through touch, sound, smell, weight, temperature, and movement. (Pallasmaa, 2009) Architecture, in this sense, is not perceived from a distance but inhabited from within. Operationally, this perspective guides the design process in several ways:

-Material choice is evaluated for tactile, acoustic, and thermal performance, as well as its capacity to age and register time.

- Spatial sequences are designed to support bodily orientation, rhythm and intimacy.

- Atmosphere becomes a design parameter: light filtered rather than exposed, enclosure calibrated rather than monumental, thresholds emphasized over openness.

Through Pallasmaa, home is understood as a space that stabilizes identity through sensory repetition and familiarity. This is particularly relevant in contexts of loss, where continuity cannot be restored through form alone but may be re-established through bodily recognition. However, Pallasmaa's framework assumes a minimum continuity of dwelling and does not address how architecture should respond when home has been violently interrupted or erased. His theory explains how home is felt, but not how it survives rupture.

Frampton's theory of critical regionalism operates at a different scale—that of architecture as a cultural and territorial practice. In Modern Architecture: A Critical History and "Towards a Critical Regionalism," Frampton defines an architecture that resists global homogenization by grounding itself in site, climate, topography, and tectonic logic. (Frampton, 1983) His concern is not intimacy, but positioning: how architecture situates itself within broader cultural and economic forces. Materially, Frampton's framework provides guidance through:

-Tectonic clarity: architecture is defined through construction and structure rather than surface or image.

-Climatic responsiveness: spatial organization, massing, and material are shaped by environmental conditions rather than abstract formal agendas.

-Cultural mediation: architecture negotiates between global techniques and local conditions without resorting to nostalgic reproduction.

In this sense, Frampton offers criteria for determining how architecture resists becoming placeless. However, critical regionalism presumes a relatively stable cultural and territorial ground. In contexts of occupation, destruction, or displacement, this presumption becomes problematic. Rootedness can risk turning into normalization, and continuity into denial of rupture.

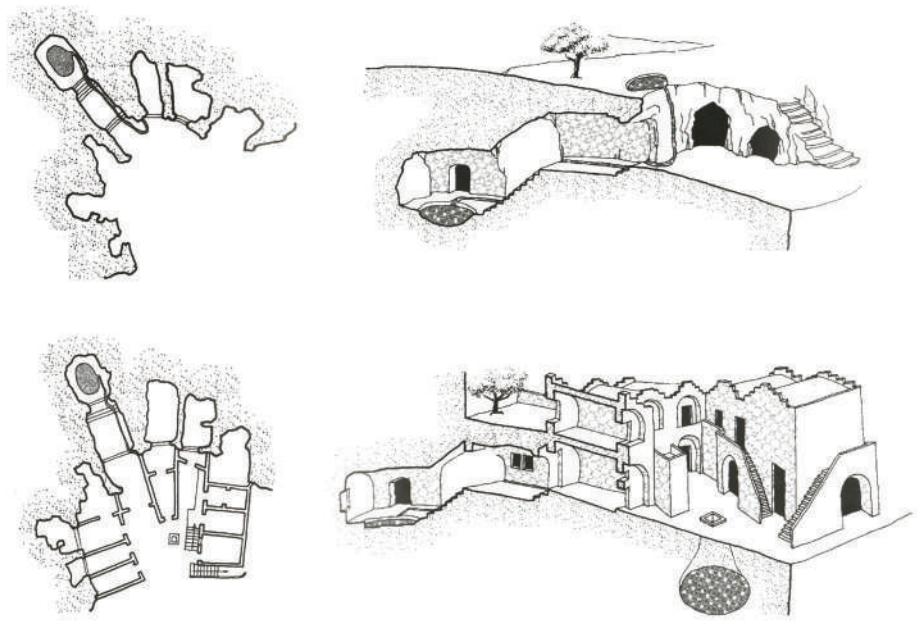


Fig. 57: The terracing of dwellings illustrating the ground as both roof and street or public space. Photograph by Pietro Laureano.

An architectural condition that reflects this selective alignment between sensory experience and tectonic grounding can be observed in the historic settlement of Matera, particularly within the Sassi districts. Matera[5]'s built fabric emerges from a direct negotiation with material, topography, and constraint. Excavated from local tuff stone rather than constructed as autonomous ojects, dwellings, streets, and public spaces form a continuous spatial system in which architecture, ground, and landscape are inseparable. This results in a unified architectural language not defined by stylistic coherence, but by consistency of construction logic and material response.

From a phenomenological perspective, Matera exemplifies the bodily and sensory conditions described by Pallasmaa. Interior spaces are characterized by thermal mass, subdued light, acoustic softness, and tactile surfaces shaped by erosion and use. These environments are apprehend ed through proximity and movement rather than visual dominance, reinforcing the notion of home as a space felt through the body and stabilized through repetition. Material here operates mnemonically, registering time and habitation rather than resisting it.

Simultaneously, Matera embodies key aspects of Frampton's critical regionalism. Its architecture is not representational, but tectonic: defined by excavation, structural continuity, and climatic responsiveness. Form is inseparable from construction, and identity emerges from the sustained negotiation with environmental and material constraints rather than from symbolic reference. Importantly, the coherence of Matera's urban fabric is not the result of a fixed master plan, but of cumulative adaptation over time, allowing continuity without aestheticization or nostalgia. Matera is therefore not presented as a model to be replicated, but as a demonstration of how architectural specificity can emerge when materiality operates both sensorially and tectonically, and when constraint functions as a generator rather than a limitation. In this sense, it offers a spatial precedent for thinking about architecture that remains grounded and experiential without denying the presence of historical rupture.

Fig. 58: An underground house in the Sassi di Matera, Italy. Credit: Alamy Stock Photo

5. Matera: A historic city in southern Italy known for the Sassi cave dwellings. In the mid-20th century, it was labeled a national "shame" due to extreme poverty and unhealthy living conditions, leading to the displacement of residents. Since the 1980s, it has undergone gradual restoration and was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993.

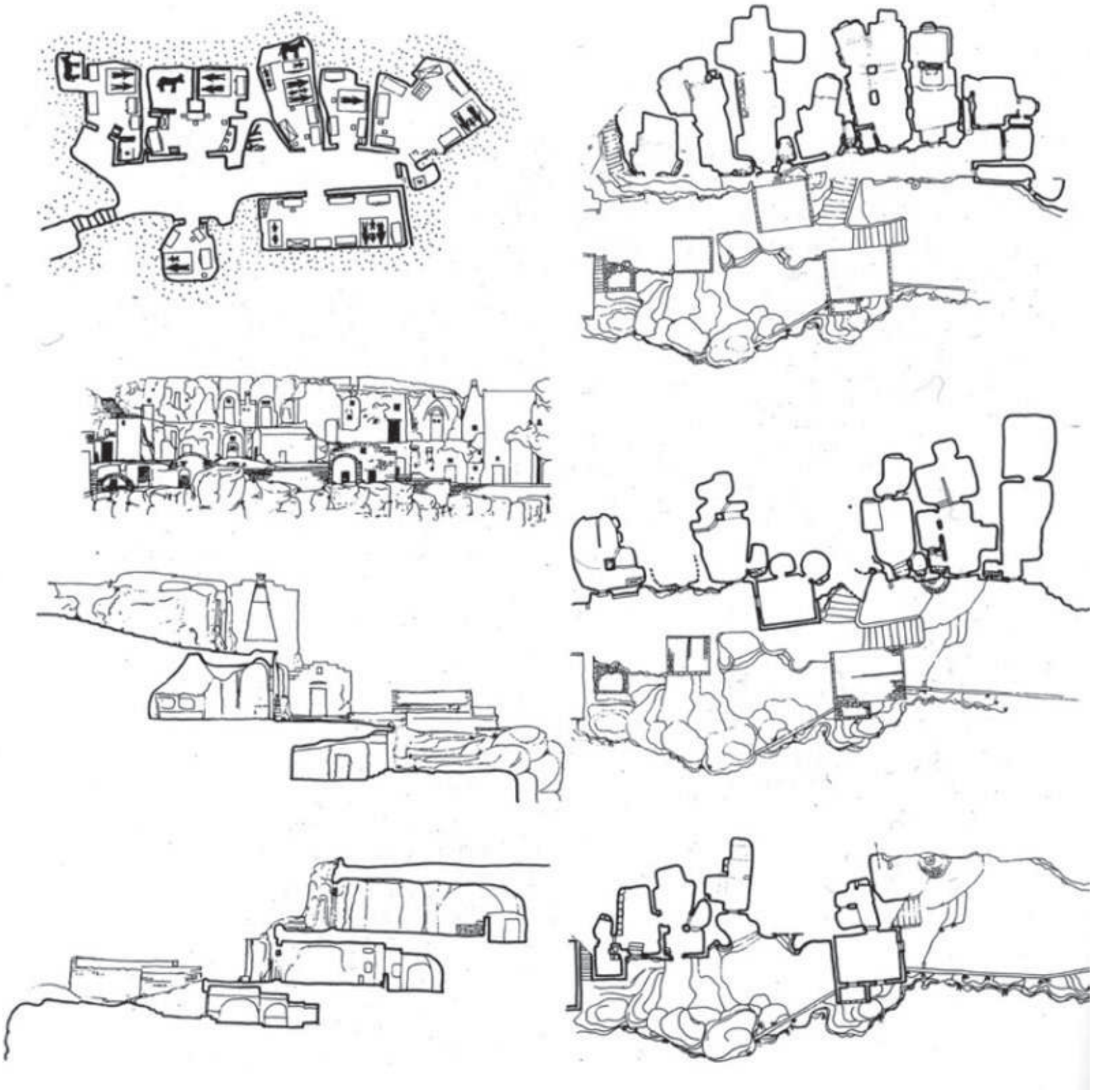


Fig. 59: Terracing of dwellings illustrating the ground as both roof and street or public space. Photograph by Pietro Laureano.

Fig. 60: The Sassi of Matera. Photograph by Etienne Issa.

Fig. 61: The Sassi of Matera. Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo.

Part 3 . Home as agent

In the writings of Peter Eisenman, architecture is not understood as a passive container of life, nor as a neutral backdrop for social events. Rather, it is an active producer of conditions. Eisenman challenges the humanist assumption that architecture merely reflects reality; instead, he argues that architecture structures experience and therefore constructs subjectivity. Architecture does not represent meaning: it generates it. It does not simply house identity: it participates in its formation.

This position is made spatially explicit in projects such as House VI (1975) and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (2005). Though radically different in scale and program: one domestic, the other monumental, both projects demonstrate how architecture operates as a system that produces experiential and political realities rather than merely enclosing them. (Eisenman, 1984)

In House VI, Eisenman deploys a formal grid subjected to systematic transformations. The resulting spatial "accidents": a column that interrupts a bedroom, a stair that disrupts functional expectation, walls that fracture alignment, are not arbitrary gestures. They are consequences of a conceptual operation. The inhabitant is confronted with spatial misalignments that destabilize habitual occupation. Domestic space no longer performs as seamless comfort. Instead, it produces awareness. The house forces its occupants to recognize architecture as an autonomous system that structures their movement, perception, and bodily relation to space.

The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe operates at a different scale but through a similar logic. Composed of 2,711 concrete stelae distributed across approximately 19,000 square meters, the memorial establishes a repetitive grid that appears uniform at first glance. Yet subtle variations in ground level and block height produce a progressively disorienting experience as one moves inward. The city recedes. Orientation shifts. The body becomes submerged within a field that is both ordered and unstable.

Importantly, the memorial does not narrate loss through figurative symbolism. There are no names inscribed on the stelae; no singular focal point commands attention. Instead, memory is materialized as a spatial condition. The visitor experiences isolation, immersion, and loss of reference. **Architecture here does not represent tragedy: it produces a bodily encounter with dislocation and absence.** The political force of the project lies not in iconography, but in the spatial system that reorganizes perception.

Together, these two projects clarify the theoretical foundation of this thesis. House VI reveals that domestic space can destabilize and reorganize the subject through internal structural collisions. The Berlin Memorial demonstrates that architectural fields can construct collective memory through repetition, variation, and immersion. In both cases, architecture is not illustrative but operative. It produces a condition within which identity is negotiated.

Fig. 62: Interior view of House VI. Eisenman Architects

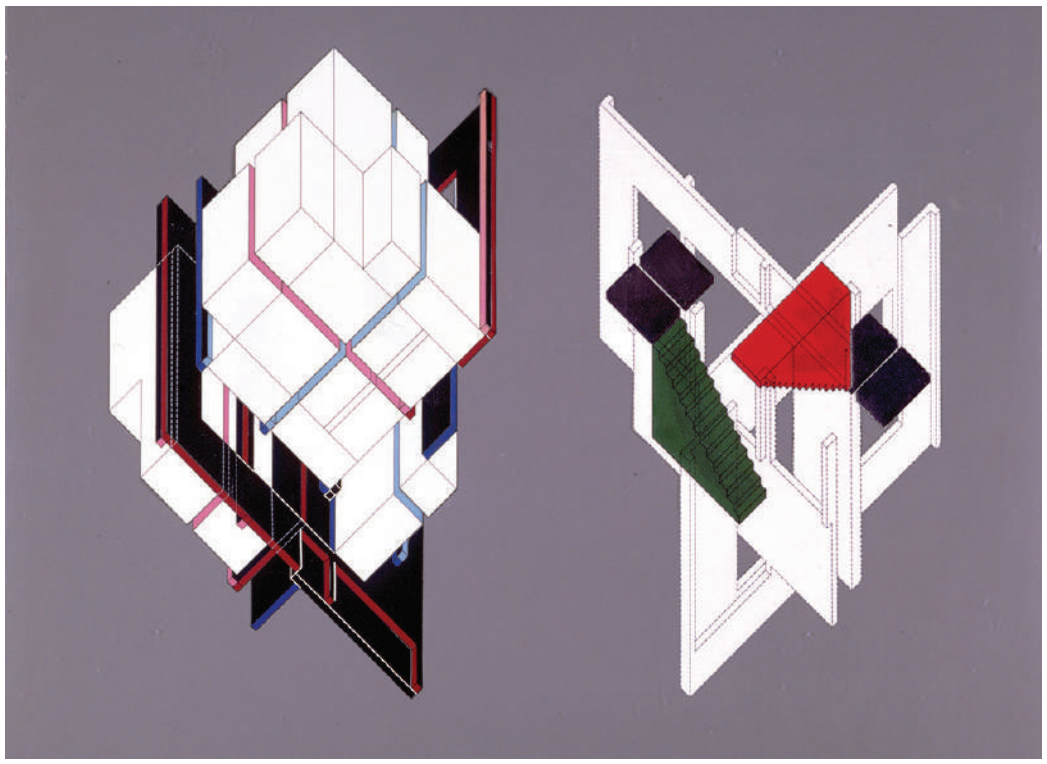


Fig. 63: Peter Eisenman, House VI, Cornwall, Connecticut (Axonometric). 1972–1975.

Fig. 64: Buro Happold. 2026. Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe Project Page.

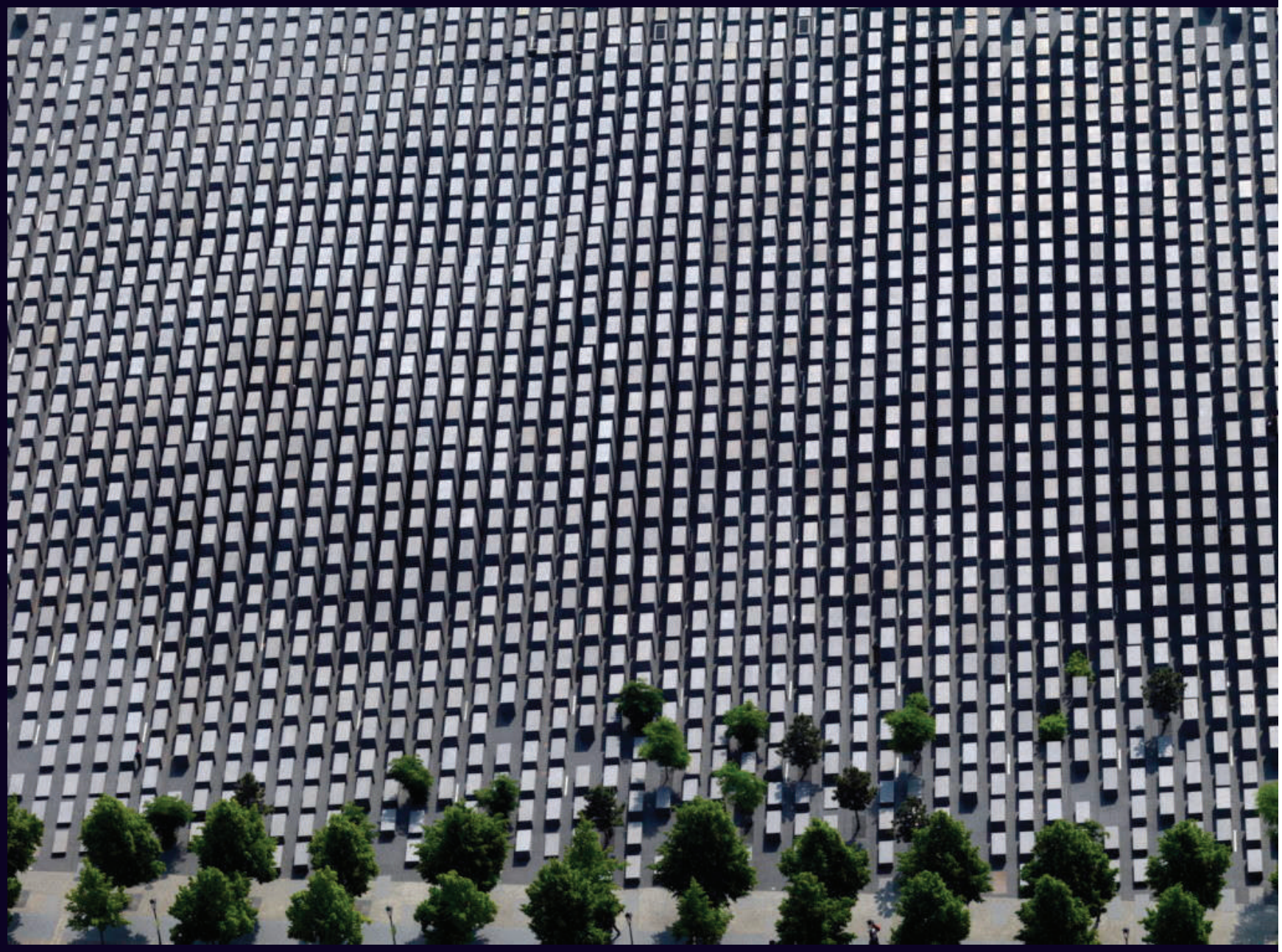


Fig. 65: Stiftung Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas, Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.

Part 4 . home as fragmented reality

We now inhabit a world of plural temporalities and fragmented realities. Technological mediation, especially through our phones and screens, has fractured the continuity of time, producing parallel experiences that coexist but rarely intersect. It is important to note the plurality of realities and the co-existance of many possibilities because it is crutial to situate one-self onto one reality when curting the direction of the project, in order to echo multiple factors into the design. The on-going wars, genocide, and systemic violence are no longer distant events; we witness them live, unfolding pixel by pixel in the palms of our hands. And yet, this immediacy does not deepen our connection to reality, it distorts it. Because ultimately, the physical reality and the immediacy of what we face have a greater impact on us than the distant events happening beyond the seas. The screen becomes a filter, a buffer-zone that both delivers and deflects the urgency of what is seen. We are suspended in a contradictory space: present yet absent, implicated yet numb. Reality, once anchored in a unified trajectory, now folds in on itself, forming simultaneous, conflicting timelines that blur the boundary between witnessing and forgetting.

This fragmented perception of time and experience echoes what Ignasi de Solà-Morales calls “weak architecture” : a spatial condition not grounded in monumentality or centrality, but in juxtaposition, superimposition, and fragility. Just as reality today is not constructed through a singular order but through overlapping fragments that may touch, repel, or drift apart, “weak architecture” as the author described it, resists the dominant narrative. It does not impose meaning not a message. In this context, architecture becomes a mirror to our contemporary condition: it no longer dictates how time should be experienced but allows for its multiplicity and adaptability. It holds space for divergent temporalities, for memories remembered out of sequence, for histories suppressed and reemerging, for a politics of resistance that operates in quiet, folded gestures rather than grand statements. (de Solà-Morales, 1997)

It becomes, in its weakness, a stronghold for the plurality of realities we now inhabit, and an enduring refusal to let the fragments disappear. In a world where media has become the dominant stage of power, architecture has to take on the description of “flexibility” and “adaptability”.

The failure of rigid modernity gave way to what Bauman (2004) calls liquid modernity, a condition in which acceleration, technological development, and globalization dissolve solid structures. Liquids, by definition, adapt to changing conditions; similarly, contemporary societies are characterized by constant transformation. In this context, power becomes extraterritorial, space loses relevance, and time assumes primacy. The focus shifts to speed, mobility, and instantaneous exchange, favoring light, portable, and ephemeral objects over durability and permanence. (Bauman, 2004)

In architecture, this produces lightweight, transparent, and ephemeral forms, dominated by surfaces, façades, and fleeting aesthetic encounters. Spaces are designed for instant appreciation, lacking narrative depth or durability. The hyperkinetic temporality[6] described by Han mirrors Bauman’s notion of liquid modernity: the present dominates, the future is irrelevant, and architecture becomes a reflection of transient, fast-moving experiences rather than enduring spatial and temporal relationships. (Han, 2015)

Ignasi de Solà-Morales explicitly rejects the notion of architectural neutrality, arguing that every architectural intervention constitutes an act of violence. As he states, “any architectural operation is an imposition, a colonization of space that cannot avoid a certain degree of violence” (Solà-Morales, 1987). For Solà-Morales, architecture inevitably exercises power by transforming existing conditions, whether material, social, or symbolic. He further asserts that architects are therefore confronted with only three possible responses to this condition: submission, delinquency, or resistance. Submission aligns architecture with dominant systems and norms; delinquency seeks to escape responsibility through transgression without accountability; resistance, however, acknowledges the violence inherent in architectural action while attempting to engage it critically. This framework is central to the present research, which understands architectural intervention not as a neutral act but as a positioned practice that must consciously negotiate its impact on memory, identity, and place.

6. Hyperkinetic temporality: A term used by Byung-Chul Han to describe the accelerated, fragmented experience of time in contemporary society, characterized by constant stimulation, productivity, and the erosion of continuity and contemplative duration (Han, 2015).

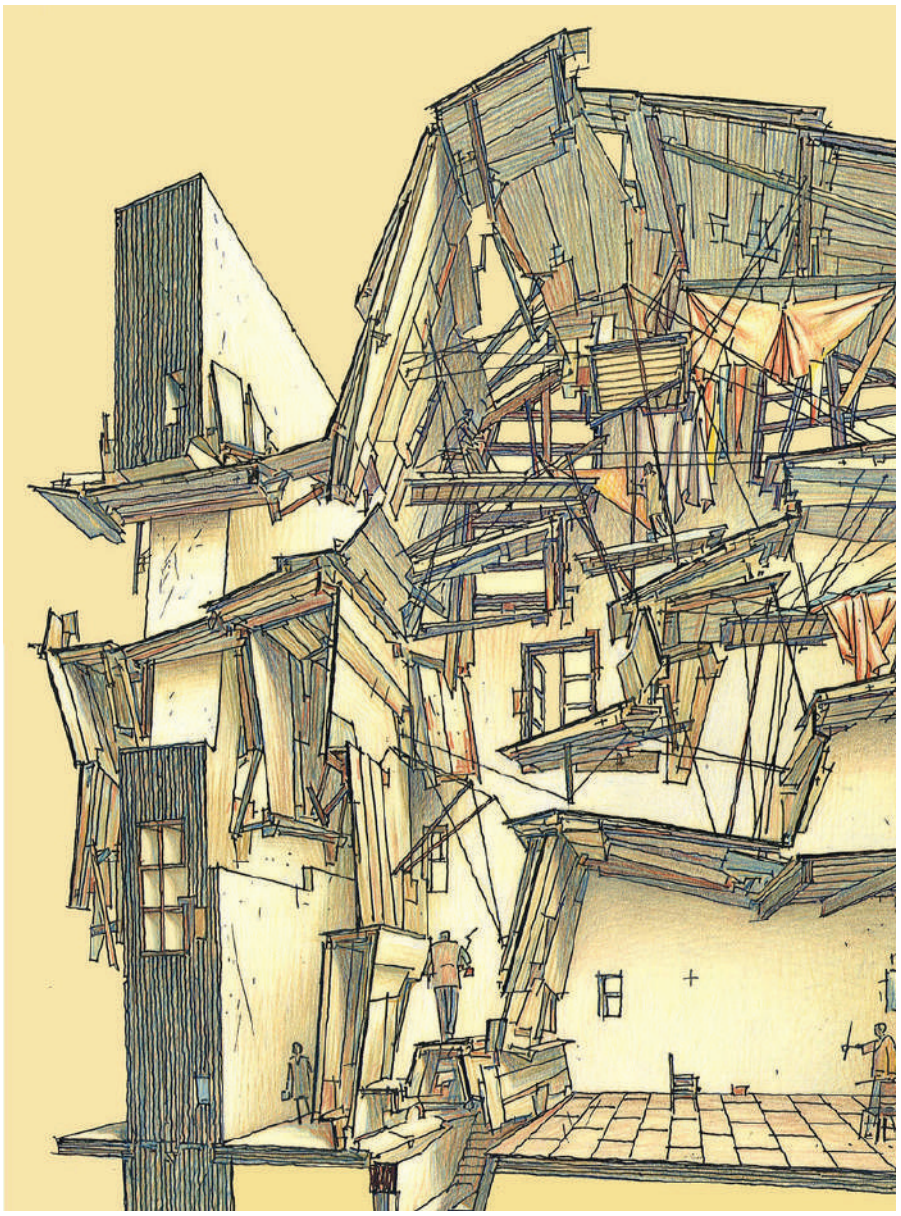


Fig. 66: Woods, Lebbeus. War and Architecture. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993.

However, this acceptance of fragmentation and indeterminacy raises a critical question: **if architecture mirrors instability too closely, does it risk becoming complicit in the very alienation it seeks to register?**

It is precisely at this threshold that the work of Lebbeus Woods introduces a necessary counter-position. In War and Architecture, Woods rejects any conception of architecture as neutral, adaptive, or merely reflective of its context. For him, architecture is never innocent. Every architectural intervention constitutes a political act, one that inevitably transforms material, social, and symbolic conditions. War, in Woods' argument, does not represent an exceptional rupture external to architecture; rather, it exposes architecture's latent role as an instrument of power, control, and conflict.

Where weak architecture withdraws from dominance, Woods insists on confrontation. He argues that the instability produced by war and political violence cannot be absorbed through flexibility or aesthetic indifference. Reconstruction, when conceived as a return to a prior condition, becomes a form of denial: an erasure of lived trauma and historical rupture. Instead of smoothing over conflict or restoring continuity, Woods proposes an architecture that acknowledges irreversibility. (Woods, 1993) Destruction, in this framework, is not the negation of architecture but its transformation. The fractured city becomes a site where new spatial logics must emerge, not through replacement or repair, but through :
differentiation.

Part 4 . home as fragmented reality

Woods' speculative drawings articulate this position through precise architectural operations. His projects imagine structures that graft onto damaged buildings, parasitize existing frameworks, and accumulate new systems atop ruined ones. These hybrid constructions deliberately maintain the legibility of rupture, allowing scars, collapses, and exposed infrastructures to remain operative within new spatial organizations. Architecture does not seek reconciliation with what preceded it; it presents itself as a fundamentally different entity, one that grows from conflict without attempting to resolve it. In this sense, architecture becomes a spatial record of violence, embedding political and historical realities directly into its form and structure.

This position complicates the notion of weak architecture by introducing a more explicit political depth. While Solà-Morales frames weakness as a refusal to dominate, Woods frames resistance as a refusal to normalize. Both reject totality, permanence, and authoritative meaning, yet they operate at different intensities. Weak architecture responds to fragmented realities by creating space for multiplicity and coexistence; Woods responds by insisting that fragmentation itself must be made legible and materially unavoidable. His architecture does not mirror instability; it confronts it. It does not adapt to fractured temporalities—it inscribes them.

Within the broader condition of mediated reality, Woods' work can be read as a refusal of architectural passivity in the face of alienation. If screens filter and buffer violence, rendering it distant and abstract, Woods' architecture re-materializes conflict, forcing it back into spatial experience. In doing so, it challenges the anesthetizing effects of mediation, countering the tendency of contemporary architecture to dissolve into surfaces and fleeting encounters. Architecture, for Woods, must take a position within the polarity of contemporary reality: between presence and absence, destruction and construction, memory and erasure.

"Weak architecture" and Woods' resistance architecture do not oppose one another; they delineate a critical spectrum. On one end lies architecture as withdrawal, indifference, and adaptability: a necessary response to plural temporalities and fragmented experience. On the other lies architecture as confrontation, differentiation, and political inscription, a refusal to let instability dissolve into neutrality. Between these positions, architecture negotiates its role within a world shaped by mediation, alienation, and conflict. It becomes neither monument nor image, neither repair nor spectacle, but a spatial practice capable of registering fractured realities while resisting their disappearance.

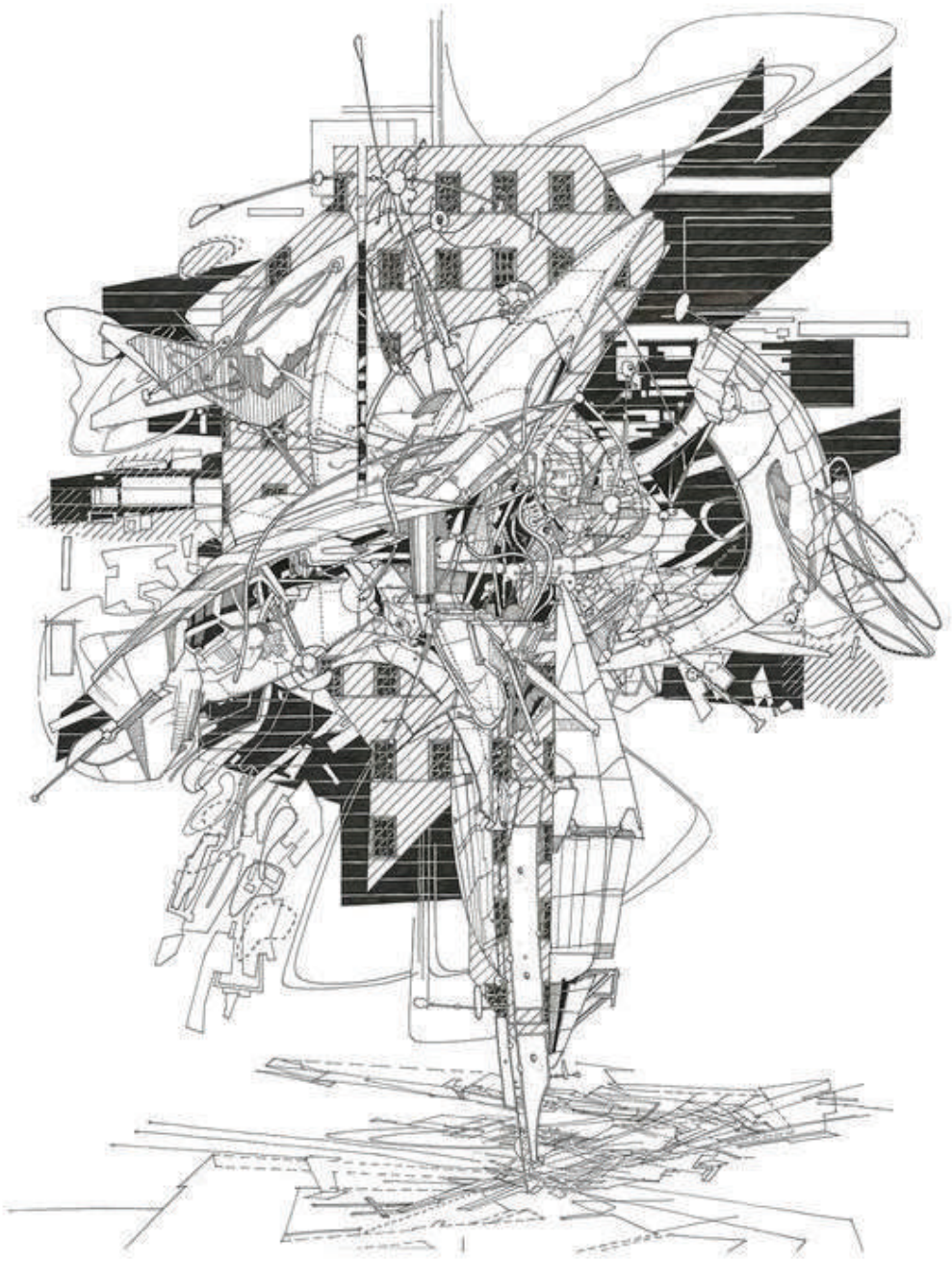
In this sense, architecture operates not as a stabilizing force, but as a mediator of instability itself. It does not restore continuity where none exists, nor does it surrender to fragmentation without critique. Instead, it acknowledges that contemporary reality is irreversibly plural, and that architectural practice must engage this condition ethically, materially, and politically. Whether through weakness or resistance, architecture remains implicated in the production of reality—and it is precisely this implication that demands responsibility rather than innocence.

Inspired by the book of War and Architecture (1993), this thesis proposes a methodology that resists traditional notions of post-war reconstruction. Rather than erasing the marks of destruction or nostalgically attempting to restore the village of Khiam to a pre-war condition the project embraces the scars of conflict as integral to the architectural and spatial identity of the place. The ruins are not treated as obstacles to be cleared, but as carriers of memory, pain, resilience, and future potential.

To apply this approach meaningfully, a comprehensive assessment of the existing built fabric is conducted, examining each structure through four interrelated lenses:

-physical condition,
-cultural significance,
-collective memory,
and geographical importance.

Fig. 67: A visual map, Behance.net. (2025). by Alexander Daxböck, on Behance. [online]



This thesis positions itself against an architecture that mirrors reality without engaging it. While flexibility and adaptability are acknowledged as necessary conditions, they are not treated as ends in themselves. Architecture is understood as a spatial practice that inevitably participates in shaping experience, whether consciously or not.
Claiming neutrality does not absolve architecture from responsibility; rather, it obscures the ways in which urban and spcial decisions contribute to normalization, erasure, or disengagement.

In response, the research advocates for an architectural position that remains critically engaged: capable of accommodating plurality while maintaining spatial intention. Rather than prescribing meaning or enforcing singular narratives, architecture is positioned as a framework that actively conditions experiences. *The pressing question, then, is: how can architecture facilitate the healing of those living in high-risk regions? In what ways can it embody and shape the new realities of people who project their suffering, hopes, and fears onto the spaces they inhabit?* **How can architecture encompass the complex interplay of factors in southern Lebanon—a region marked by a desperate affirmation of life alongside an ever-present fear of death?**

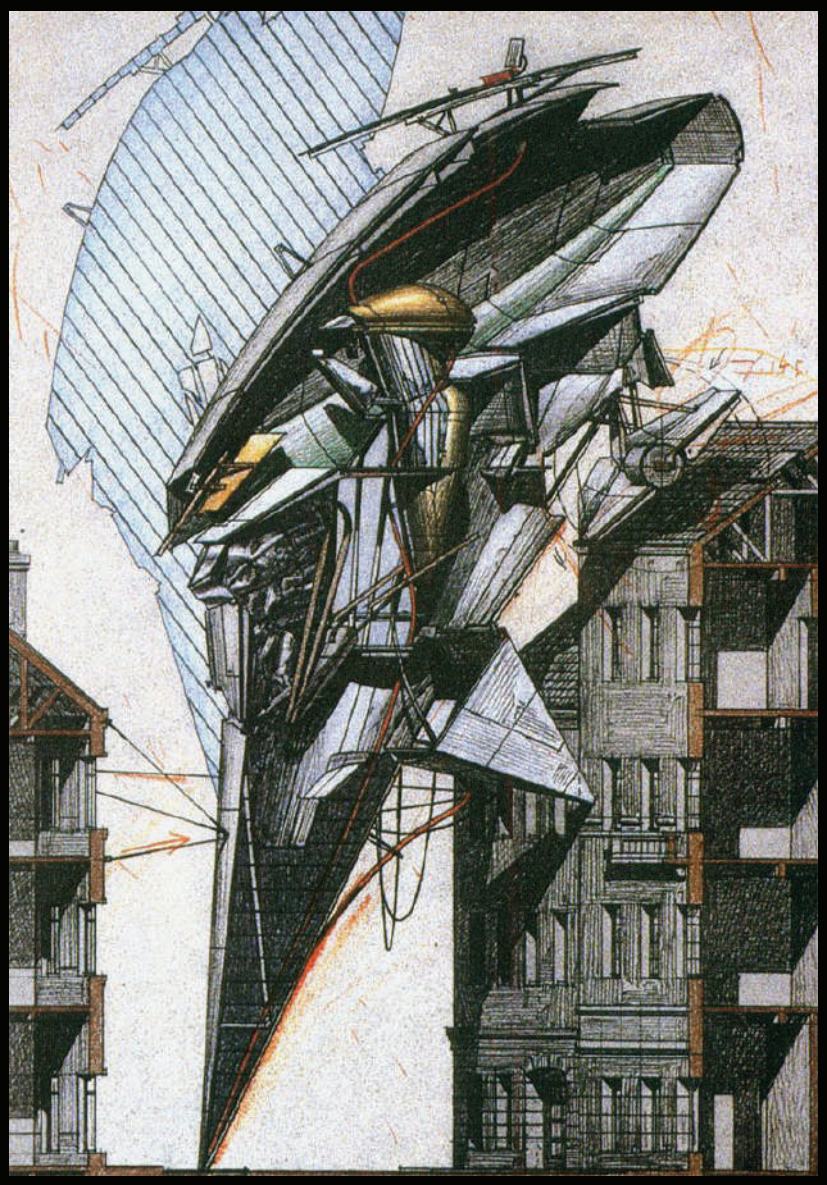


Fig. 68a, 68b: Lebbeus Woods, Political Machines (drawings), 2009. Website archive.

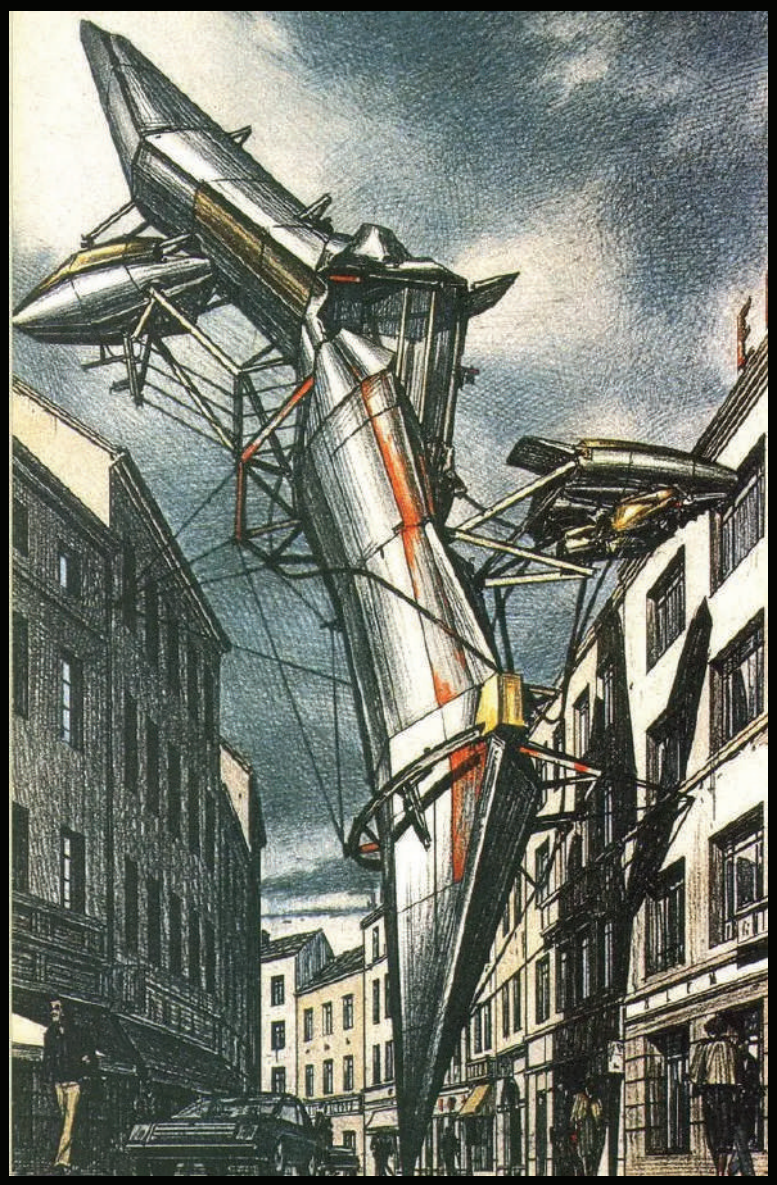
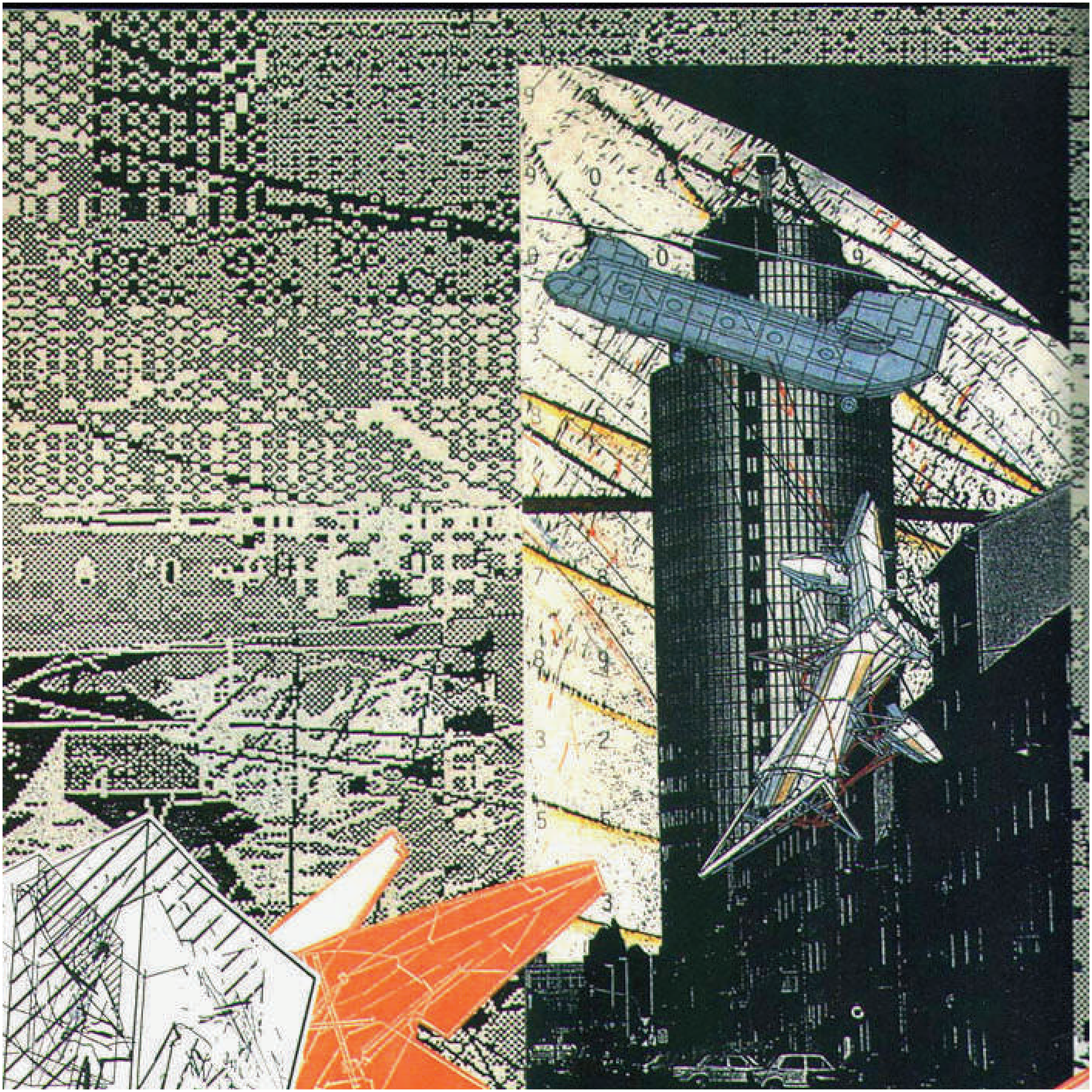


Fig. 69: Lebbeus Woods, Political Machines (drawings), 2009. Website archive.



Part 4 . home as fragmented reality

Extract of Solà-Morales, Ignasi de. "Weak Architecture."In Differences: Topographies of Contemporary Architecture, 57–72. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995.

"Seeing architecture not as a linear fashion but as a process of juxtaposition is the way of understanding the overlapping of cultures and stories in the physical realm... There is no doubt that this way of thinking has a direct translation into the experience of certain recent architecture is the experience of superimposition. The reality is not constructed by means of an order but by means of pieces that may ultimately touch, that approach another, at times without touching, that draw nearer to one another yet never make contact, that overlap, that offer themselves in a discontinuity in time.,. we can read these pieces as juxtapositions as the closest approximation to reality at our disposal.

Time- couldn't sustain the classical or be rogue illusion - as time was considered central - or as continuous rather than flag rented or juxta-positioned. But in contemporary time, we find the plurality of time, various times, the times with which our experience of reality produces itself...

Time in the cubist experience, futurist time, time in Dadaism, time in the formalist experiences of the optical and the Gestalt experiences of formalism, are versions of a' diversified juxtaposed time that constitutes one of the basic conditions of modernity...

With Corbusier, and his "promenade architectural" it's an itinerary that admits the possibility of control.... Which is an illusory hope that cannot be fulfilled. The times constitute and become central to what the author called weak architecture. Gilles Deleuze was set out to develop a project constitutive if a contemporary versions of reality.

The decoration function of the contemporary art and architecture is not in the sense of "vulgarity" or "triviality" of the established stereotypes but as discreet folding back to a secondary function. A pulling back to a function that projects beyond the hypnotical ground of things. Another Aspect is the one of monumentality, put forward by Aldo Rossi, he employed this term "monument" to signal permanence. And because he was then still operating within a monistic conception of reality and a fixed definition of the city...

The notion of monument that the author wanted to put forward is bound up with the lingering, resonance of poetry after it has been heard with the recollection of architecture after it had been seen. The strength of the weakness, is that strength which art and architecture are capable of producing precisely when they "adopt a

The object and the Subject...or the "objective and the "subjective" are not different or opposing fields but constitute what he calls folds of a simple reality". For architecture **the notion of the fold** is pertinent in this context.

Reality emerges as a continuum in which the time of the subject and the time of external objects go round together on the same looped tape...
Objective and subjective only occurring only when this continuous reality folds over in a disruption of its own continuity.

In order to materialize reality and make it more tolerable, "weak architecture" is in search to decorate. The "decorative" by its inherent meaning is the : "in-essential" . It's that which presents itself not as a sub-stance but as an accident: a reading that is not attentive but distracted. **It offers itself to us as something that enhances and embellishes reality making it more tolerable without pressuring to impose itself to be central... "**

The unbuilt design for the Palace of the Soviets reveals the fragility of totalizing architectural narratives, where the attempt to fix ideology, time, and meaning into a singular monumental form remains suspended and unresolved.

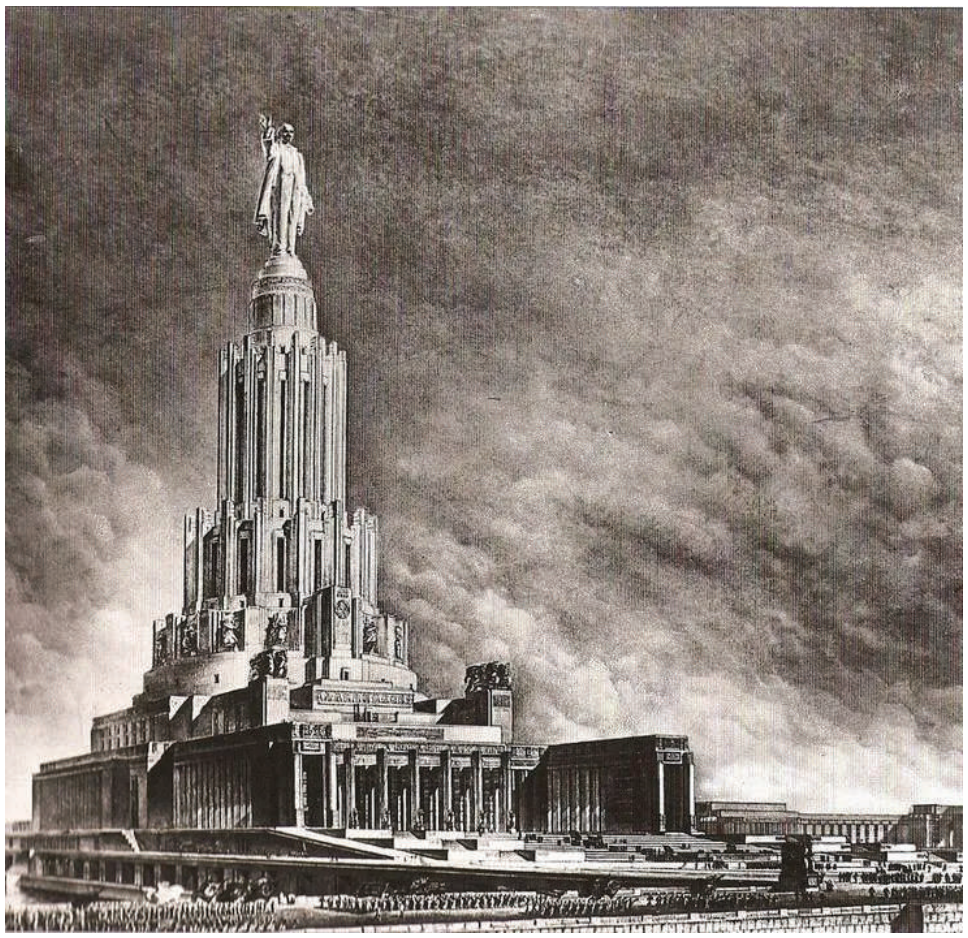


Fig. 70: Design for the Palace of the Soviets, variation by Boris Lofan, unbuilt, 1736. Image from The British Library Flickr Commons Photostream.

Part 4 . home as fragmented reality

Thoughts and Analysis of Solà-Morales, Ignasi de. "Weak Architecture."In Differences: Topographies of Contemporary Architecture, 57–72. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995.

Read through the lens of home, the theoretical framework of weak architecture articulated by Ignasi Solà-Morales profoundly unsettles modern assumptions of domestic space as stable, unified, and enduring. If modernity sought to define home as a fixed entity: grounded in permanence, continuity, and a coherent identity—weak architecture instead frames home as an open and contingent condition, continuously produced through lived experience. Drawing on Solà-Morales's understanding of reality as a superposition of heterogeneous layers rather than a closed system, home emerges not as a singular origin or completed object, but as an assemblage of overlapping memories, practices, and temporalities. Much like architectural form conceived through juxtaposition rather than hierarchy, the meaning of home is constructed through fragments that may converge, diverge, or remain unresolved, yet coexist within the same spatial and emotional field.

The archaeological dimension of weak architecture further implies that domestic space cannot be read linearly or cumulatively; it is instead shaped by sedimented histories and displaced narratives that resist total coherence. Time, in this context, ceases to be a continuous progression and becomes plural: composed of interruptions, returns, and simultaneous presences, transforming home into an event rather than a permanent state. **Through the notion of the fold, the boundary between subject and object dissolves, allowing home to be understood as a momentary alignment between the inhabitant and the spatial environment, fragile yet intensely meaningful**.

Even the decorative, reinterpreted by Solà-Morales as non-dominant and tangential, acquires relevance in domestic space: it is precisely through subtle gestures, residual traces, and peripheral elements that home becomes bearable, intimate, and lived. In this sense, the force of home lies not in monumentality or dominance, but in its weakness—its capacity to persist through vulnerability, incompleteness, and adaptability. Such a reconceptualization is especially critical in contexts marked by displacement and rupture, where home cannot be restored as a totality but must instead be continually reassembled through partial, temporal, and fragile acts of dwelling . (Solà-Morales, 1997).

This understanding of home finds a spatial counterpart in the notion of field conditions articulated by Stan Allen. Rather than conceiving architecture as a bounded object or unified form, field conditions operate through repetition, adjacency, and loose coordination, allowing space to remain open, extensible, and non-totalizing. Within such fields, domesticity does not arise from a singular architectural gesture but from the accumulation of localized interactions over time. Field logic thus reinforces the weakness of architecture by dissolving hierarchy and foregrounding use, proximity, and temporal occupation as the primary generators of meaning.

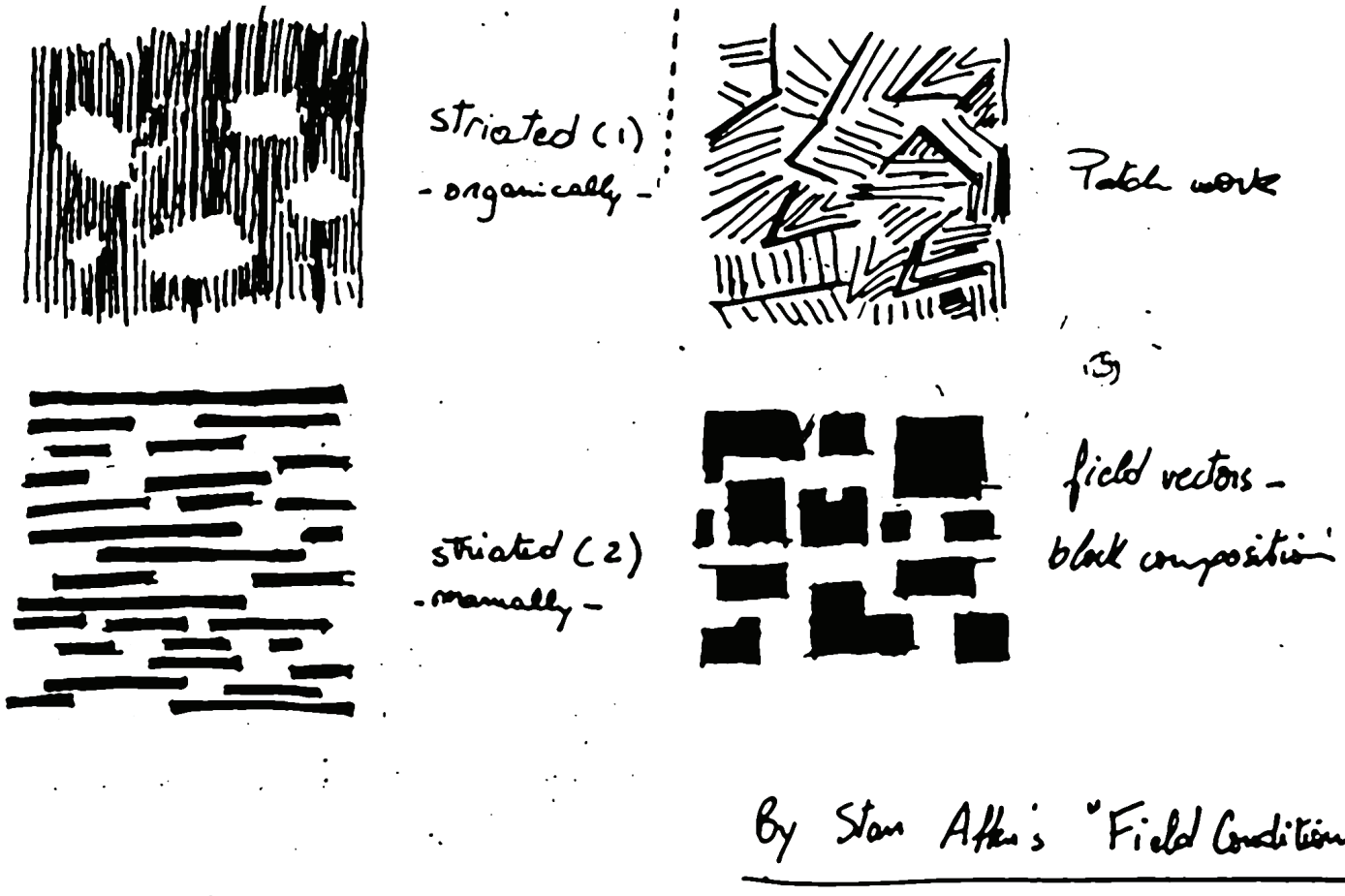


Fig. 71: Diagram of the field conditions proposed by Stan Allen. By author.

Mind Map of the architectural foundations and the methodology

building *“home”*

The result is a spacial system

A network of interventions that:

- Anchor collective memory in persistent elements

- Re-engage the agricultural and territorial ground

- Reveal historical and political traces

- Maintain porosity rather than imposing new divisions

- Allow identity to be reconstructed spatially over time

Rebuilding Khiam, therefore, becomes neither
nostalgic restoration nor neutral development.
It is the architectural convergence of permanence, material rootedness, trace, weakness, and confrontation into one operative framework.

Home is materialized not as enclosure,
but as structured continuity across a fractured landscape.

THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

VI. Historical and GeoPolitical Analysis

Surrounding context of Khiam, Lebanon

LEBANON

SYRIA

ISRAEL

WEST BANK

GAZA

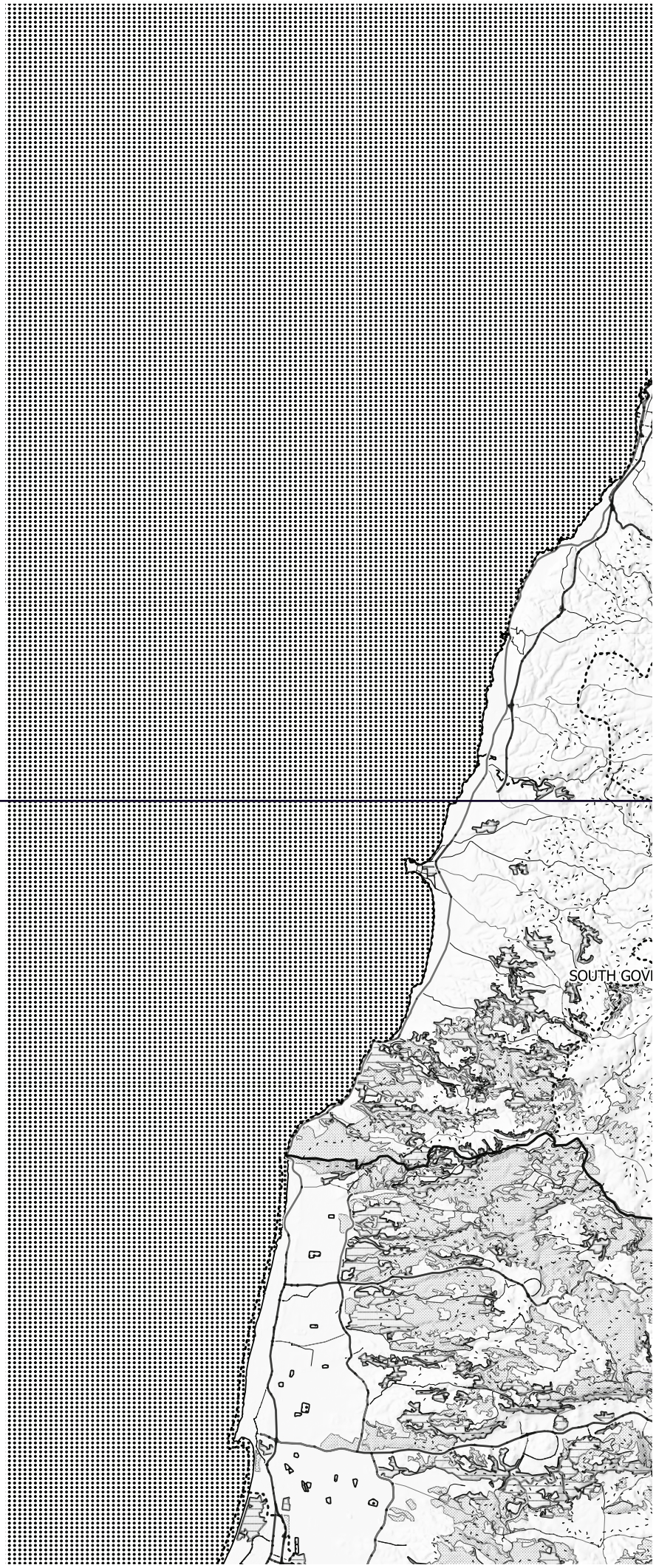
A- Localisation of Lebanon and the surrounding context

Part 1 . Regional Context

Khiam is located in southern Lebanon, within the Nabatieh Governorate, near the country's southern border. The town lies on elevated terrain overlooking the Hasbani River basin and forms part of a broader agricultural and rural landscape characterized by olive groves, terraces, and scattered settlements. Its position situates it within a transitional geography between cultivated land, natural topography, and militarized border infrastructure.

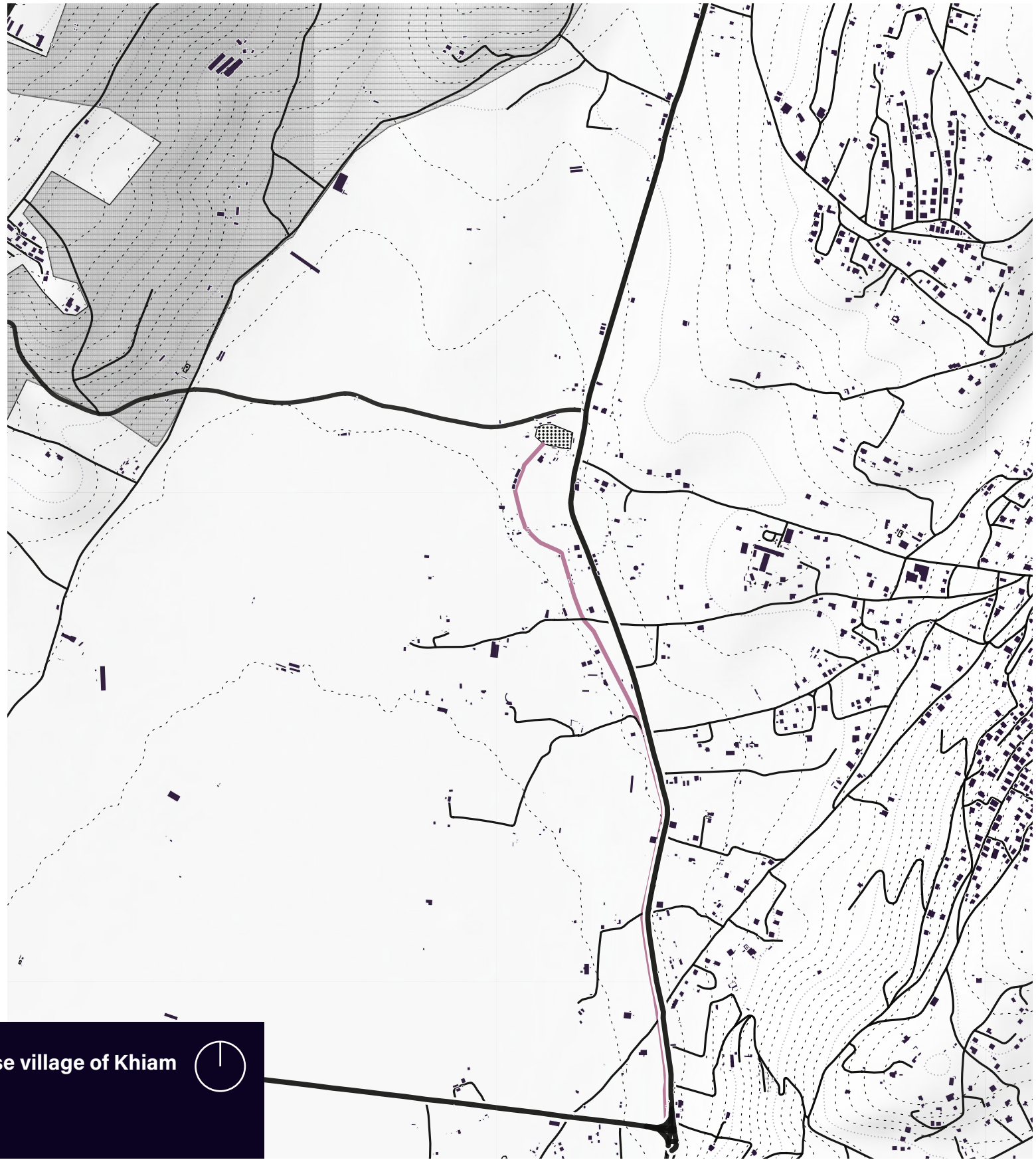
Regionally, Khiam is embedded in a historically contested territory shaped by shifting political boundaries, cross-border tensions, and cycles of displacement. At the same time, it remains deeply rooted in agricultural production and local community structures. The coexistence of fertile land, strategic border proximity, and infrastructural remnants creates a layered territorial condition in which landscape, memory, and geopolitics intersect. It is within this complex regional framework that the project is situated.

Khiam Village:
Case Study of the Thesis

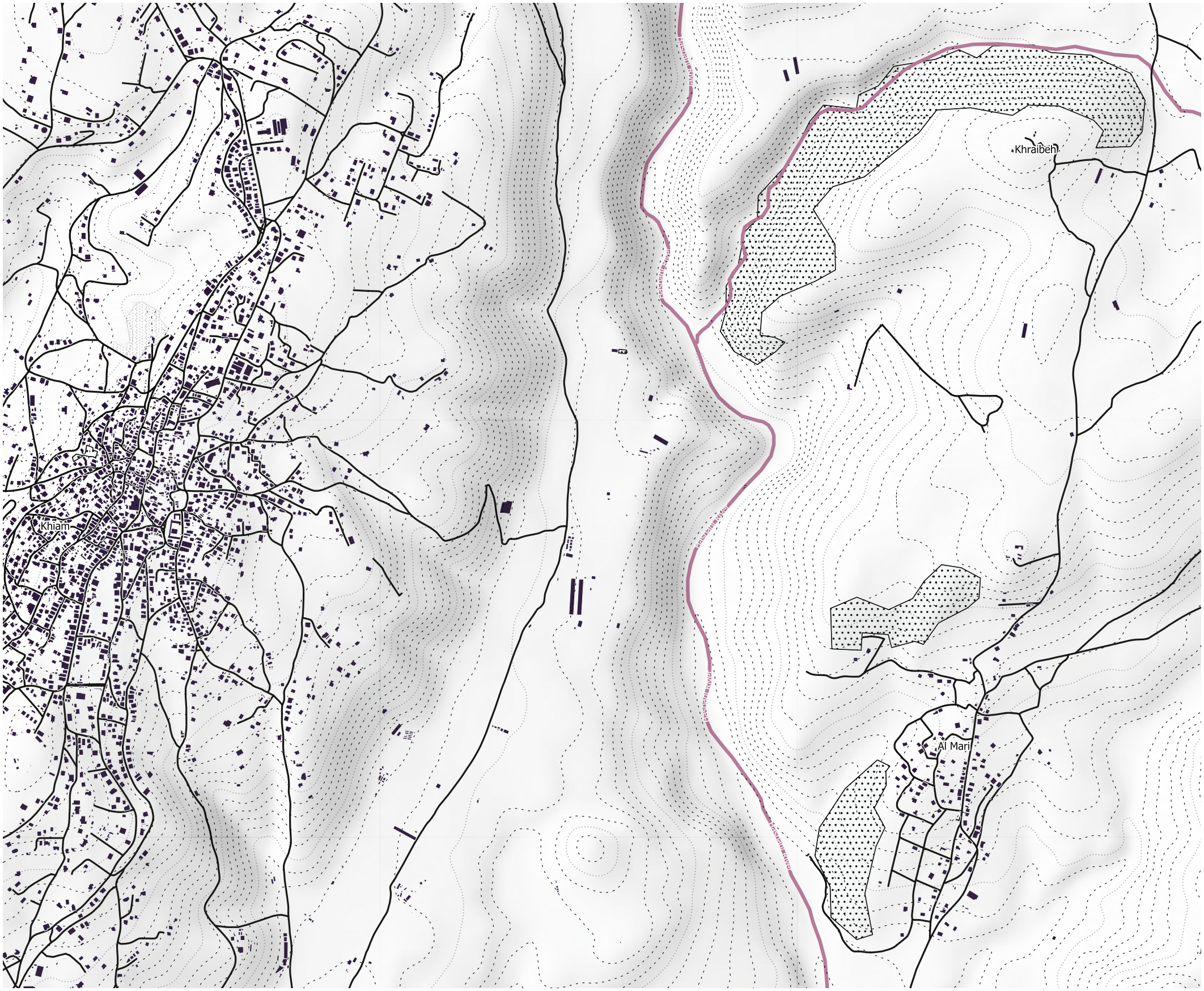


B- Regional Map of Khiam and surrounding context
Scale: 1/500000

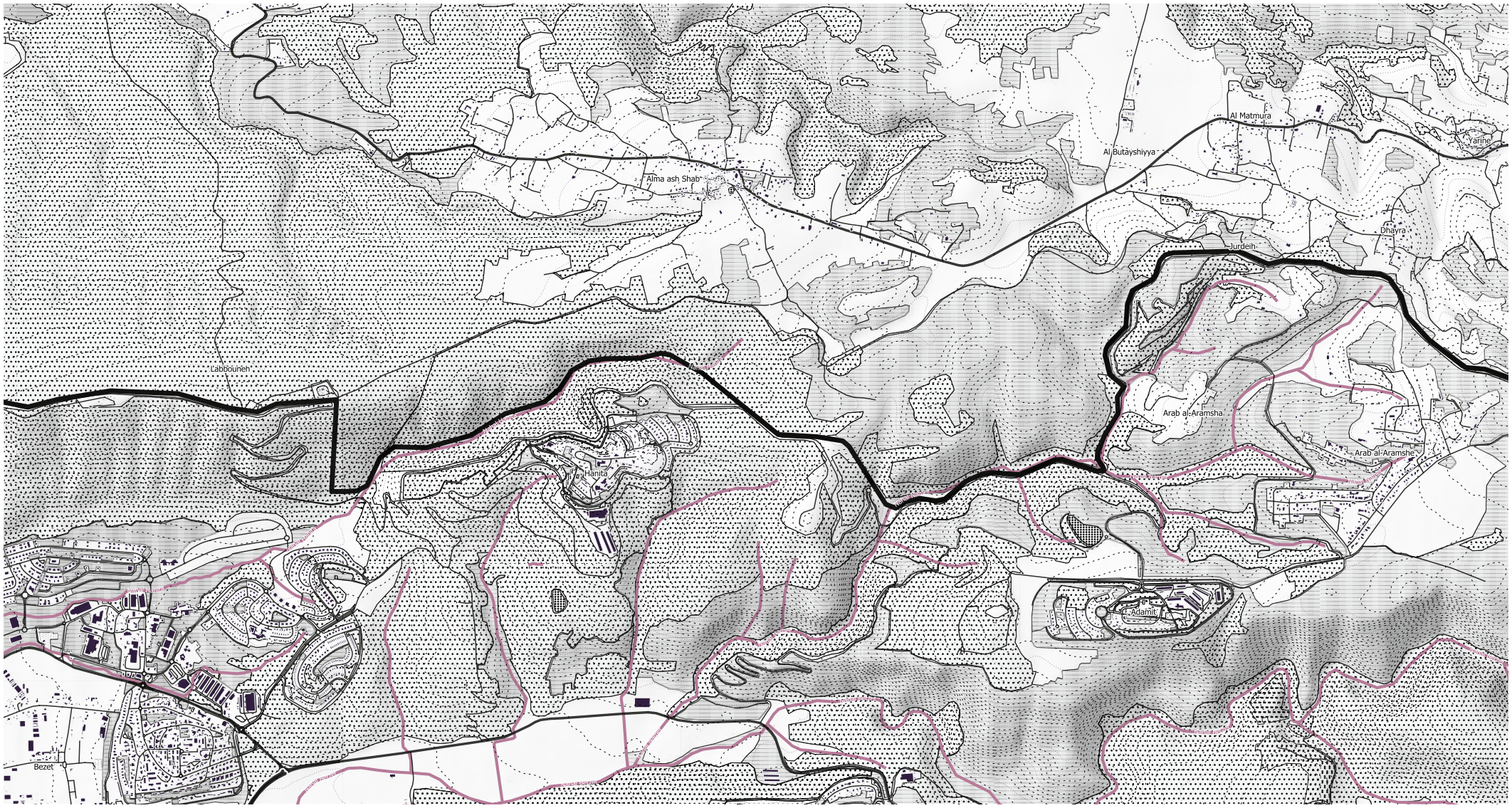
DAMASCUS GOVERNORATE
NABATIEH GOVERNORATE
ERNORATE
QUNEITRA GOVERNORATE
DARAA GOVERNORATE



C- Map of the Lebanese village of Khiam
Scale: 1/30000

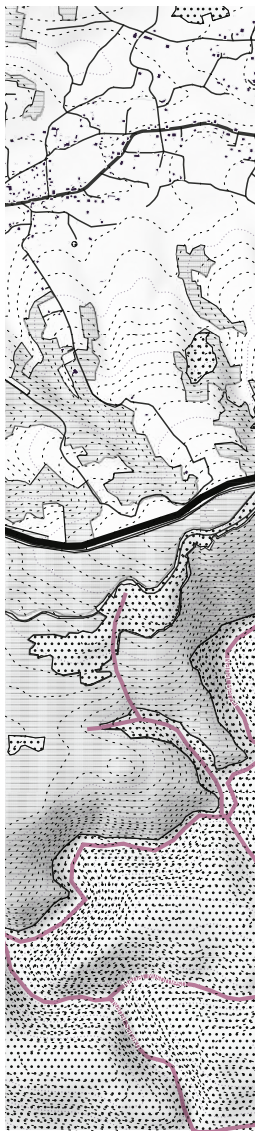

Khraibeh
Khiam
Al Mari

D- Map of the villages on the Lebanese-Israeli border
Scale: 1/30000



Part 1 . Regional Context

Morphological patterns of Southern Lebanese compared to Nothern Israeli Villages



Southern Lebanese villages: particularly in the Jabal Amel[7] region, are shaped directly by topography. The landscape is a system of elevated plateaus cut by wadis (seasonal valleys), which pushes settlement toward ridge lines and hilltops. Villages therefore appear as nucleated clusters on high ground, compact and defensive, avoiding flood-prone valley floors. (Lewis, 1953).

Their "spider-web" morphology comes from this logic: a dense core sits on the ridge, while paths and later roads radiate outward along contour lines toward agricultural terraces and neighboring villages. Terracing is fundamental : dry-stone retaining walls stabilize slopes and create cultivable platforms, effectively "building" the land before architecture expands onto it. Expansion typically follows existing terrace bands, producing organic, contour-driven growth rather than geometric planning. (Gharios, 2019).

Seasonal rainfall patterns and the need for water storage reinforced compact village cores, where communal cisterns and rainwater collection systems anchored both social and spatial life.

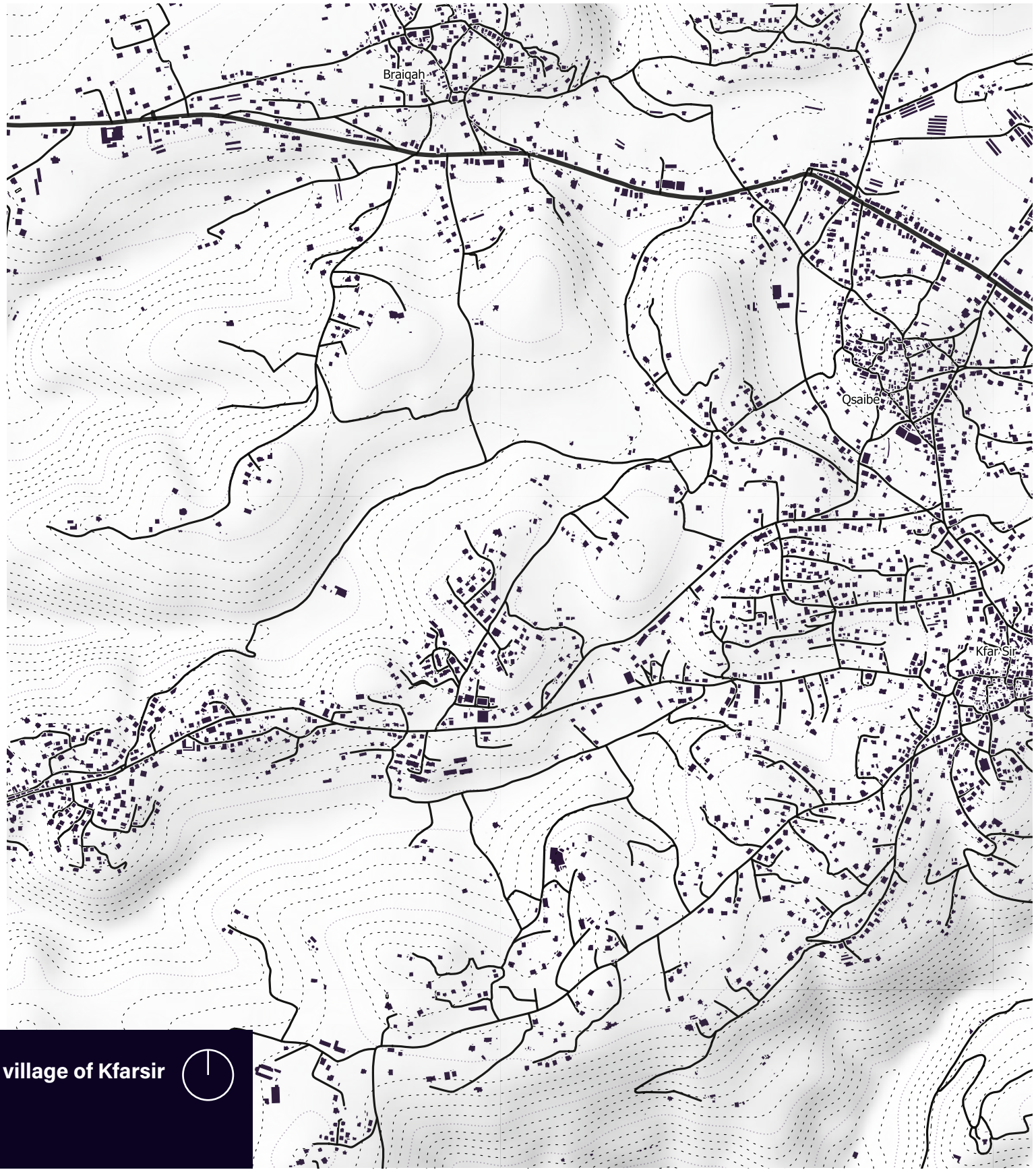
The Southern lebanese villages morphology thus emerges not as a bounded settlement but as a topographically driven web of ridge-based cores, terraced extensions, and connective paths, where architecture, agriculture, and landscape operate as one continuous spatial system rather than as isolated clusters.

7. Jabal Amel: The traditional name for the hilly region of southern Lebanon south of the Litani River, characterized by rural settlements, olive cultivation, and a distinct historical and cultural identity.

In comparison, many Israeli communities along the Lebanese border (Upper Galilee/Western Galilee) read as planned "plug-ins" rather than topography-grown fabrics. A big part of this is typology: the kibbutz and moshav were established through centralized settlement agencies with predefined spatial templates:
-clear zoning (residential core vs. agricultural land), legible street hierarchy, and a bounded edge that separates "inside" community space from surrounding productive landscapes (UNESCO, n.d.; Shach-Pinsly, 2023). Even when they sit on uneven terrain, their layout tends to preserve a recognizable geometry (often ring/perimeter roads with an ordered internal structure), because the settlement is conceived as a unit to be implanted, serviced, and expanded in planned phases (OECD, 2014; Shach-Pinsly, 2023).

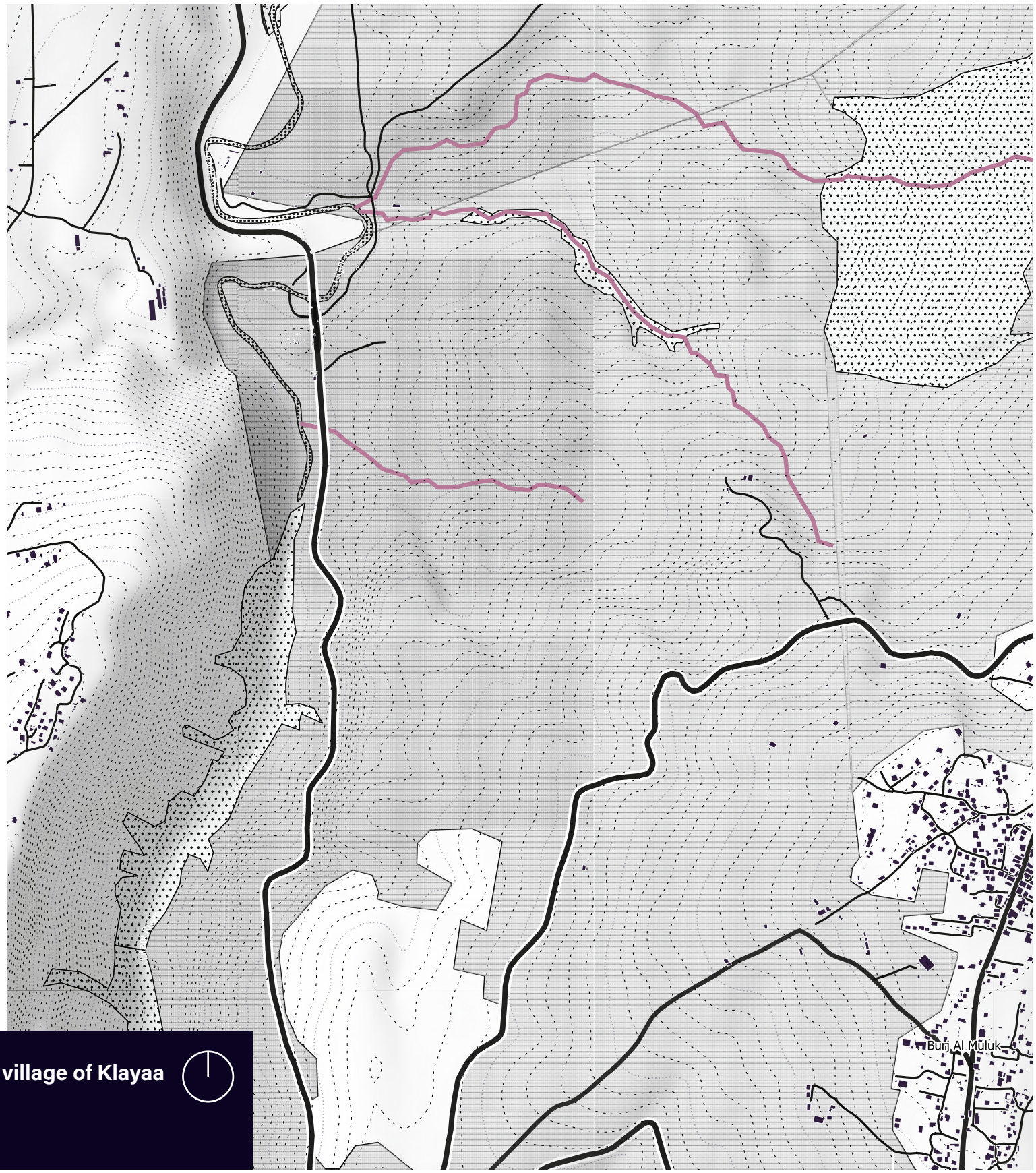
This formal clarity is intensified by the border condition. Historically, Zionist settlement on contested frontiers frequently carried a security and territorial function, producing compact, defensible, and quickly constructed forms Later northern border planning continued to embed "spatial defense" thinking into everyday settlement structure: clear edges, controlled access, and a morphology that reads as deliberate and administratively legible rather than incremental and terrace-led (Weizman, 2007).

In short: where many South Lebanese villages emerge from ridge/terrace/wadi adaptation, many Israeli villages are products of institutional planning + ideological settlement models + security rationalities, which is why they appear more defined, modular, and hierarchically organized in plan.

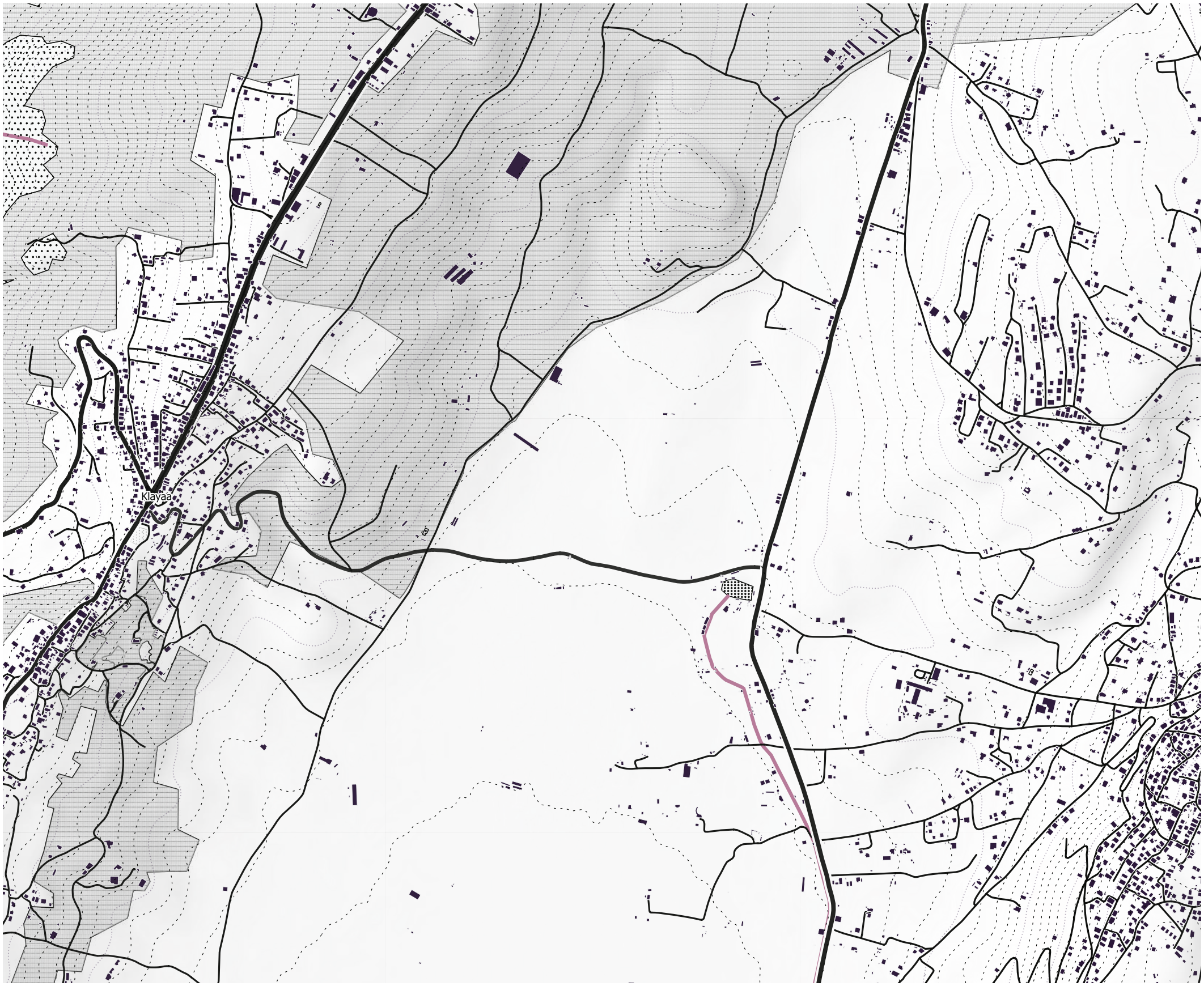


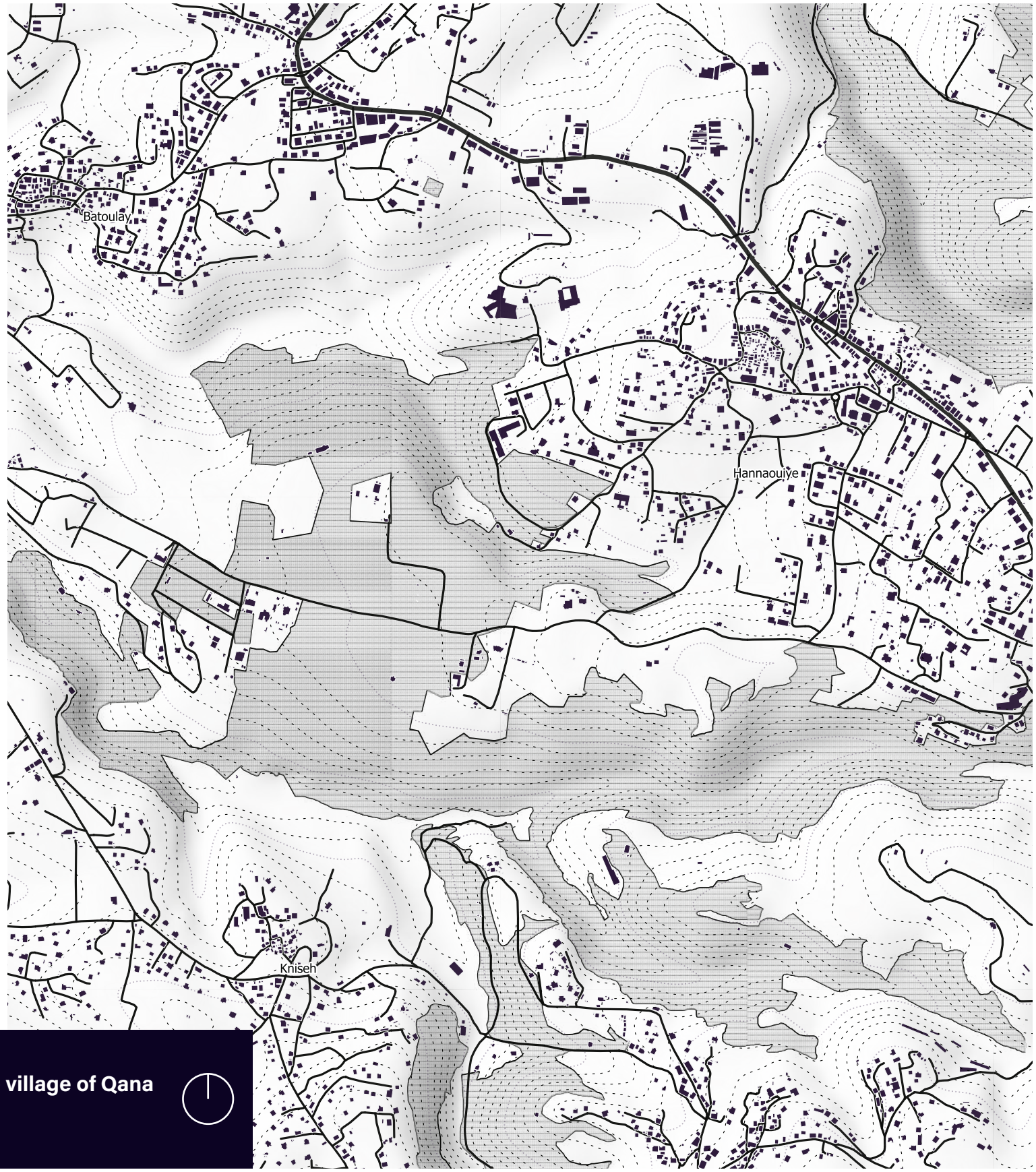
E- Map of the Lebanese village of Kfarsir
Scale: 1/30000

Qaaqaait El Jisr

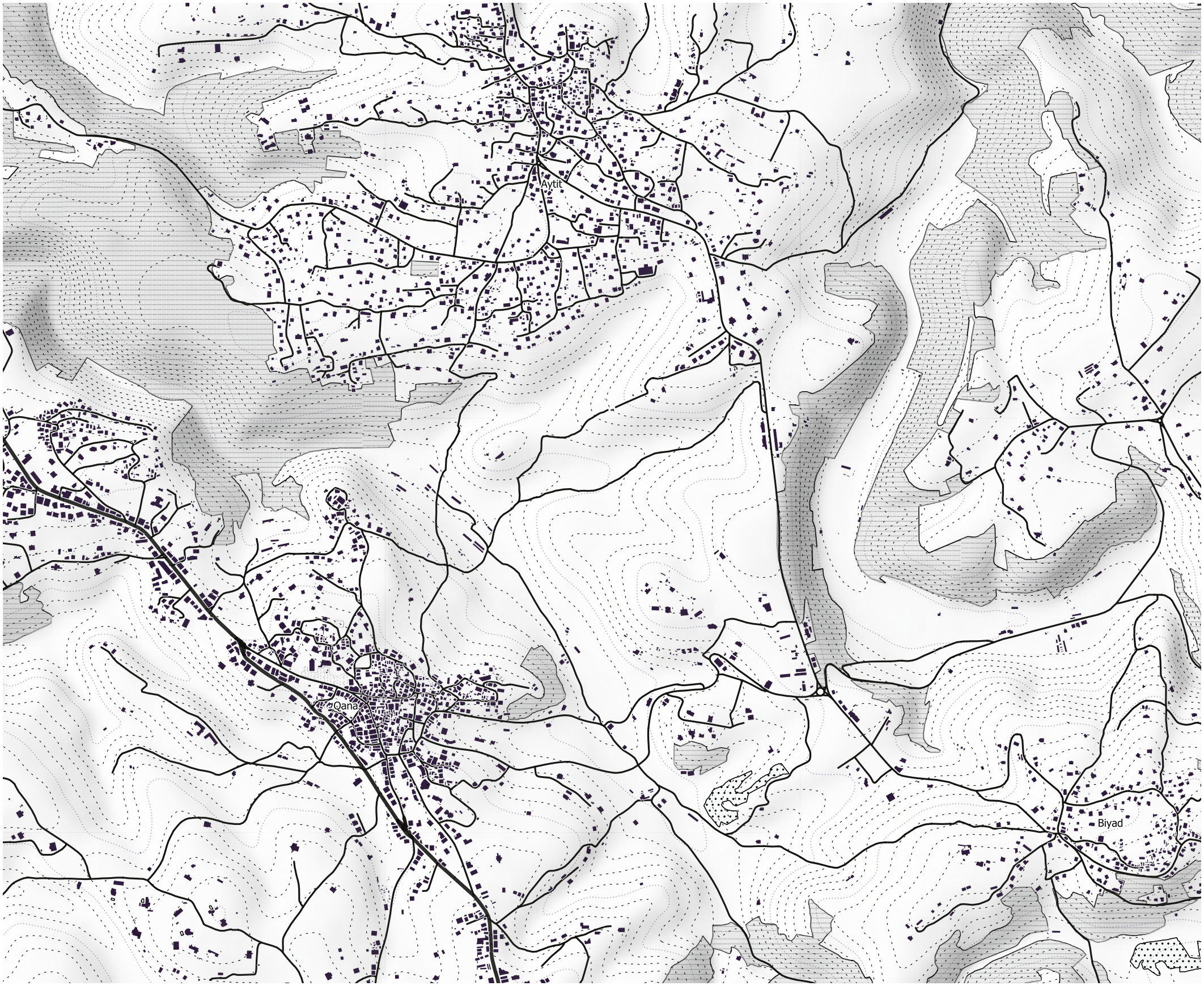


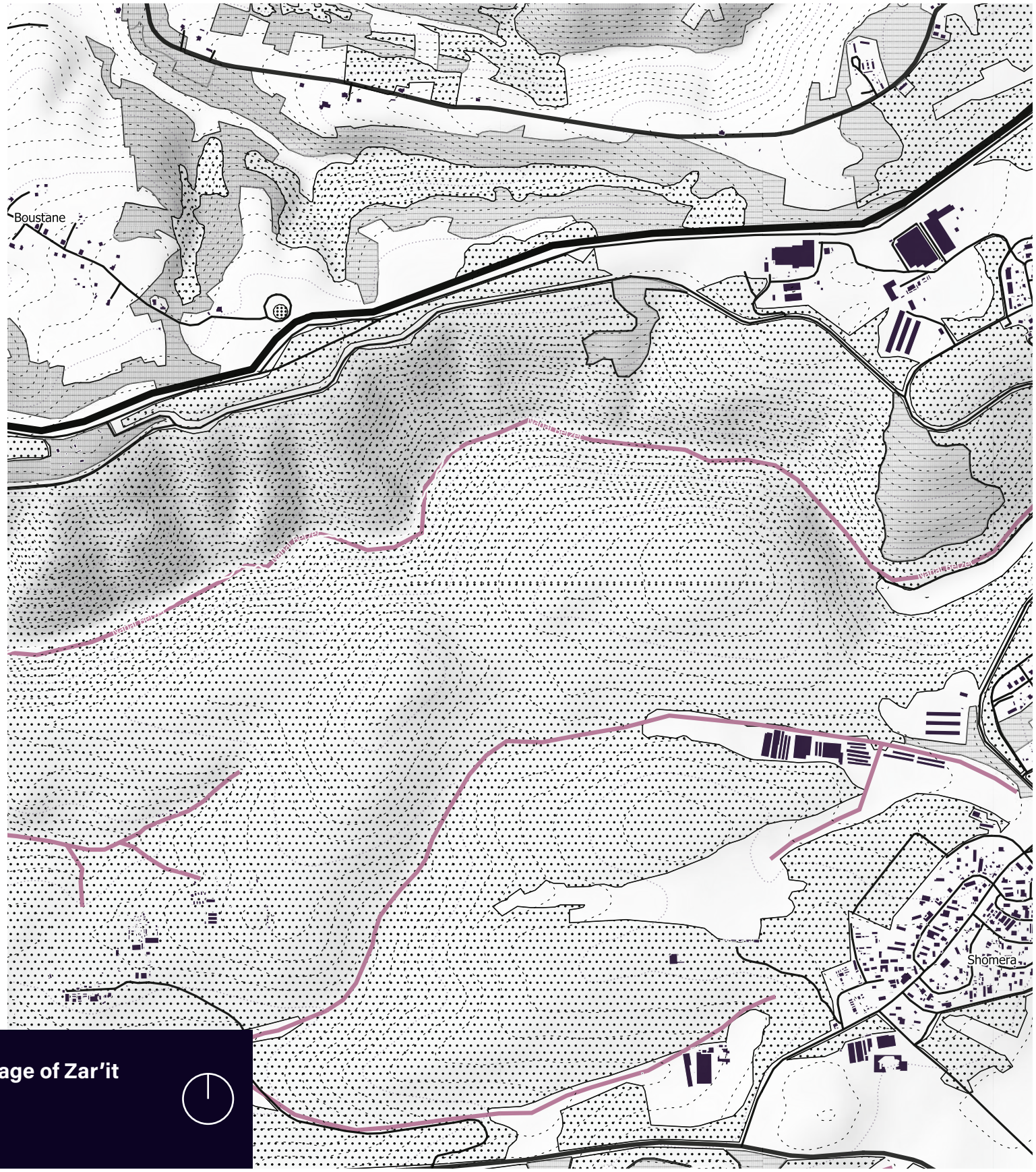
F- Map of the Lebanese village of Klayaa
Scale: 1/30000


Klayaa



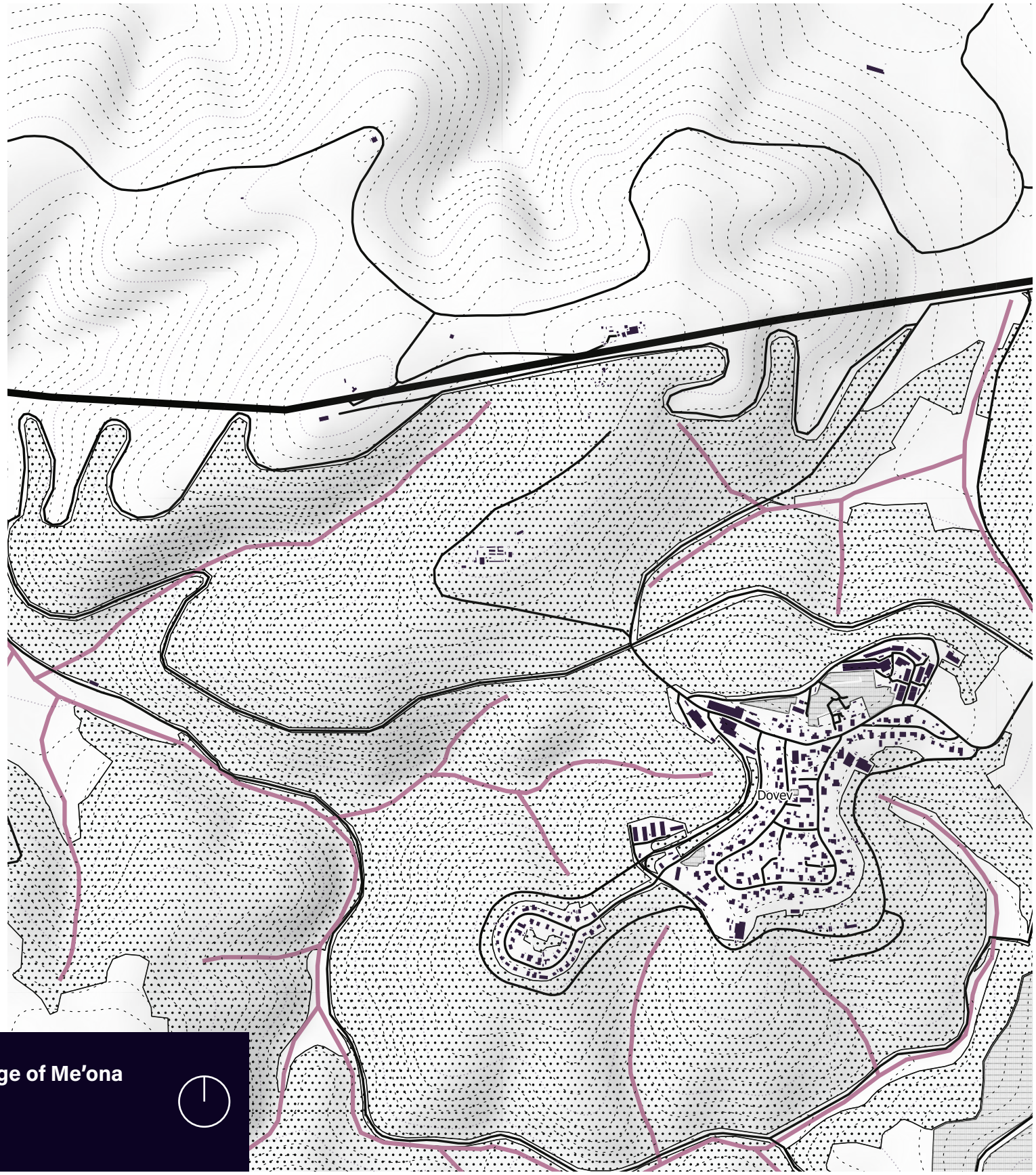
G- Map of the Lebanese village of Qana
Scale: 1/30000


Aytit
Qana
Biyad



H- Map of the Israeli village of Zar’it and Shomera
Scale: 1/30000

Zarit
Shetula

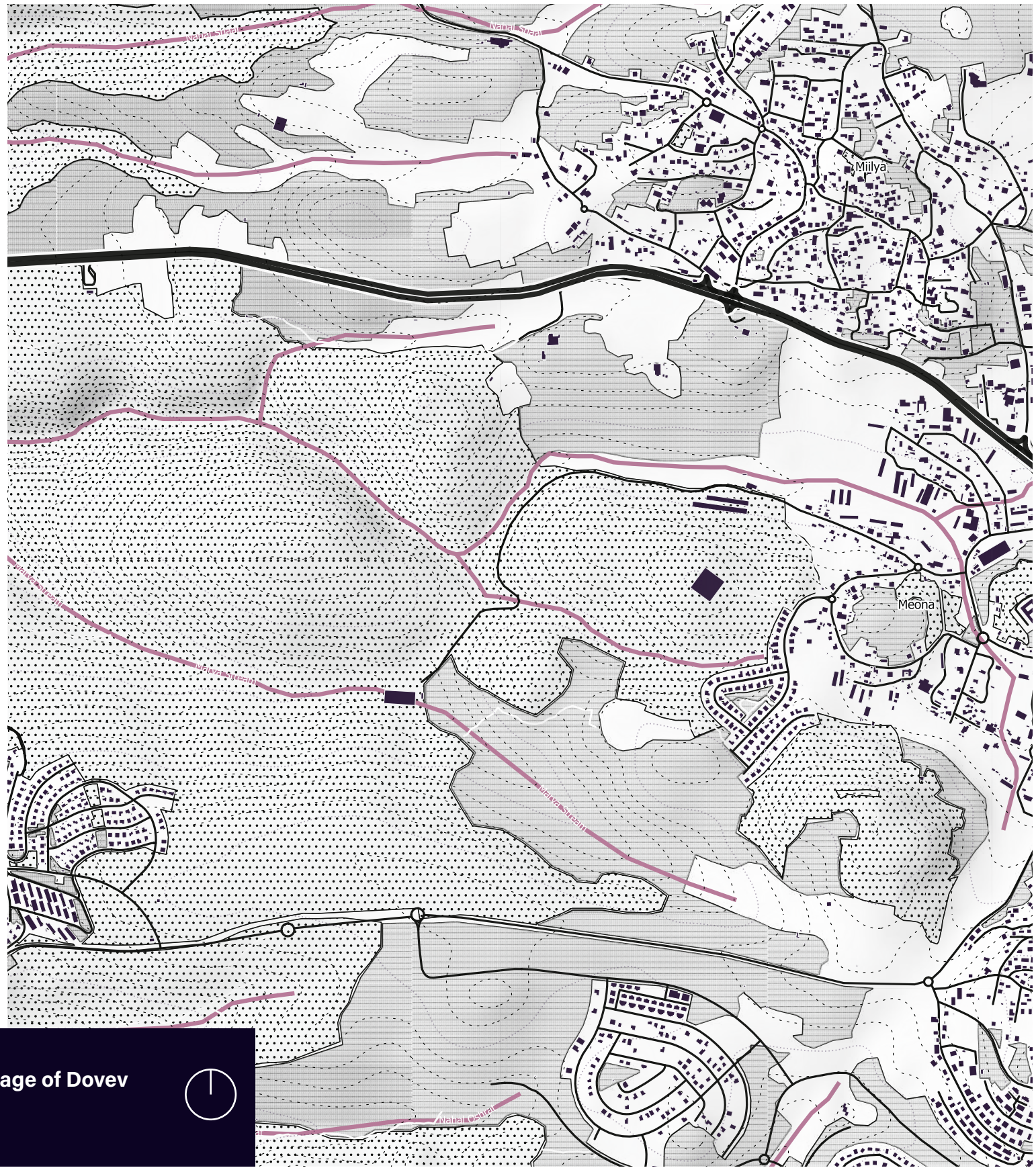


I- Map of the Israeli village of Me'ona
Scale: 1/30000

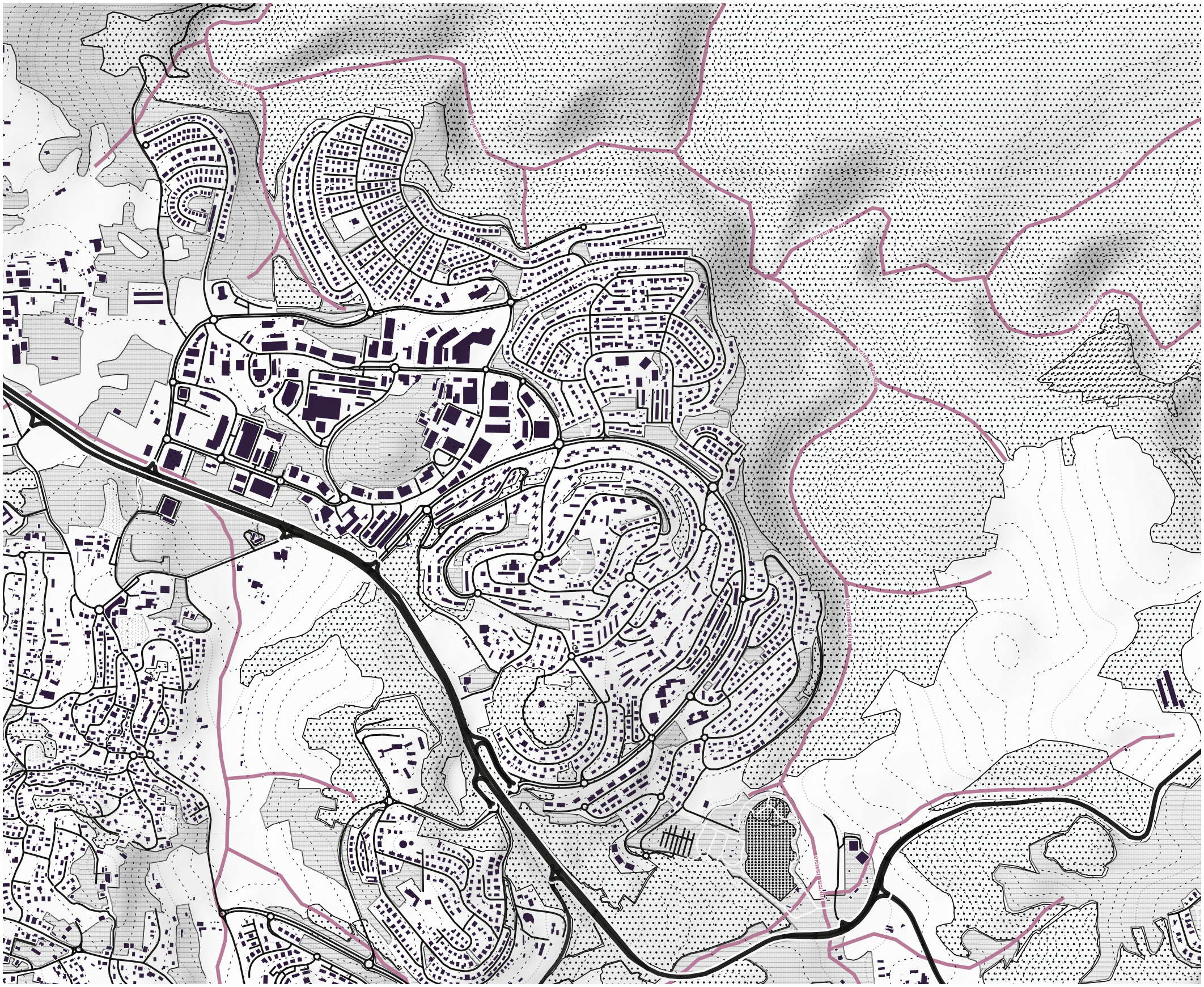
Baram

J- Map of the Israeli village of Goren
Scale: 1/30000

Grannot HaGalil
Goren



K- Map of the Israeli village of Dovev
Scale: 1/30000



Part 2 . Colonial Interference and Border-Making

Western Strategies in the Levant

Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, the Levant was carved up by European powers under the Sykes-Picot Agreement[8] (1916) and formalized through the League of Nations mandates. France took control of modern-day Lebanon and Syria, while Britain governed Palestine and Transjordan. This period marked a significant reordering of the region, imposing artificial borders that disregarded historical, ethnic, and cultural continuities. In southern Lebanon, the town of Khiam found itself on the edge of these newly drawn borders, transforming it into a zone of heightened military and strategic importance.

During the French Mandate (1920–1943), French authorities constructed infrastructure to consolidate control, **including a military airstrip in Khiam**, likely built in the 1920s–30s. This airstrip became a critical feature for surveillance and troop movement, symbolizing the colonial state's imprint on the landscape. These interventions not only reshaped the territory but also set the stage for future border conflicts, displacement, and contested sovereignties that continue to shape the region today.

The deliberate fracturing of territories and the division of previously continuous regions emerged as a strategic instrument employed by governing authorities worldwide to facilitate control and administrative manageability. By fragmenting space, power structures reduced the fluidity of movement, exchange, and interaction between neighboring cultures, thereby weakening transregional solidarities and shared identities. This spatial reconfiguration fostered the production of bounded national identities, embedding notions of nationalism and patriotism within newly defined territorial limits.

Such processes did not merely reorganize political borders but actively reshaped social consciousness, transforming identity from a lived, relational condition into a territorialized and regulated construct. In this sense, partition functioned as both a political and spatial technology of power, one that continues to influence how belonging, loyalty, and collective memory are inscribed into the landscape.

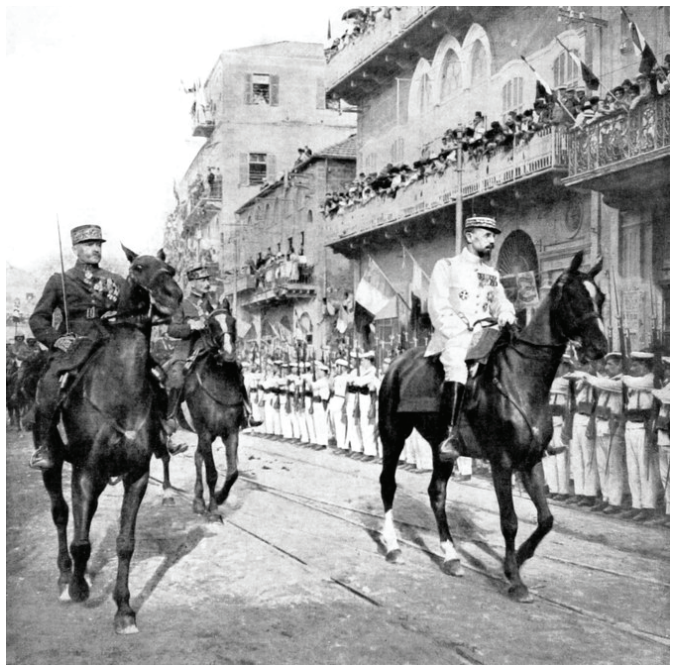


Fig. 72: In Beirut, General Gouraud, accompanied by General Goybet, passes before a double row of infantrymen (1920). Unknown author.

8. Sykes–Picot Agreement (1916): A secret agreement between Britain and France, with the assent of Russia, to divide Ottoman Arab territories in the Middle East into spheres of influence following World War I, laying the groundwork for the modern borders of several states in the region.

Fig. 73: The Old City in Jerusalem in the early 1900s. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress.

The year **1948** marks a pivotal moment in Levantine history. As Western Media frames this year as the fulfillment of a centuries-long dream to establish a homeland for jewish people, realized in the creation of the State of Israel. For the Palestinians, it was the Nakba (translates to "the catastrophe" in arabic), a mass displacement of over 700,000 people, that fled to neighboring countries including Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

This project following the rise of Zionism[9], which is an movement that was found by an athiest man in Zwitzerland This outcome was shaped by earlier colonial decisions, particularly those made during and after World War I, when the Ottoman Empire collapsed. In 1920, the British Mandate for Palestine was established by the League of Nations. This mandate privileged Zionist institutions, allowing a quasi-state infrastructure to grow under British oversight, while denying Palestinians similar political autonomy or recognition. (Dowty, 1998)

Between 1920 and 1948, both Zionist and Palestinian nationalisms emerged in competition over the same land. Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe, driven by antisemitism and pogroms, intensified tensions. Previously, the region had been an Ottoman province inhabited by Muslims, Christians, and native Sephardic Jews living side by side. The mandate transformed the region into a contested geopolitical entity, and by 1948, the Jewish and Arab populations were redefined as Israelis and Palestinians, locked in an unresolved conflict that continues to this day.

9. Zionism: A modern Jewish nationalist movement that emerged in the late 19th century advocating for Jewish self-determination through the establishment of a Jewish-majority state in historic Palestine..

Part 2 . Colonial Interference and Border-Making

Western Strategies in the Levant

Zionism developed within the broader context of European nationalism and was structured around the idea of creating a state centered on one national-ethnic group:
a model that some scholars describe as ethnonational or ethnocratic. *Yiftachel (2006).* The founder of modern political Zionism was Theodor Herzl, who argued that antisemitism in Europe could only be resolved through Jewish political sovereignty. *Herzl (1896).*

In 1896, he published Der Judenstaat, outlining this vision. The movement was formally organized at the First Zionist Congress held in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897, where the Basel Program declared the aim of establishing a "home for the Jewish people in Palestine secured under public law." *Laqueur (2003).*

It is important to note that the State of Israel, established in 1948, defines itself as a Jewish state. While it grants citizenship to non-Jewish minorities (including Muslims, Christians, and Druze), certain laws : such as the Law of Return, give automatic immigration rights to Jews worldwide, meaning that access to nationality is structured differently depending on Jewish identity. *Dowty (1998)*. Critics argue that this creates a system privileging one ethno-religious group, while supporters contend that it is a necessary framework for Jewish self-determination after centuries of persecution. Although Palestine remained the central objective of Zionism, other locations such as Argentina, the Sinai Peninsula (El-Arish Plan), and British East Africa (the Uganda Proposal) were briefly proposed but ultimately rejected.

Modern history shows that displacement and colonisation are not anomalies but recurring instruments of power. Palestine must be understood within this broader architecture of control. Empires have long reorganised territories to secure strategic advantage, resources, and demographic dominance. Under France in North and West Africa, colonial governance institutionalised extraction economies that transferred wealth outward while restructuring local societies around dependency (Fanon, 1961; Rodney, 1972).
In the case of the United States, settler expansion combined the transatlantic slave trade with Indigenous displacement, producing what scholars describe as settler colonialism : a system premised on replacement rather than mere exploitation (Wolfe, 2006).

In the 20th and 21st centuries, domination has often shifted form rather than disappeared. In Cuba and Venezuela, economic sanctions and political interventions have shaped internal trajectories (Chomsky, 1993; Grandin, 2006). In Sudan and Libya, coups[10] and foreign interventions reconfigured sovereignty (Prashad, 2022). Here, control operates through financial leverage, currency hierarchies, sanctions regimes, and regime destabilisation: what some political economists frame as neo-colonial governance (Nkrumah, 1965).

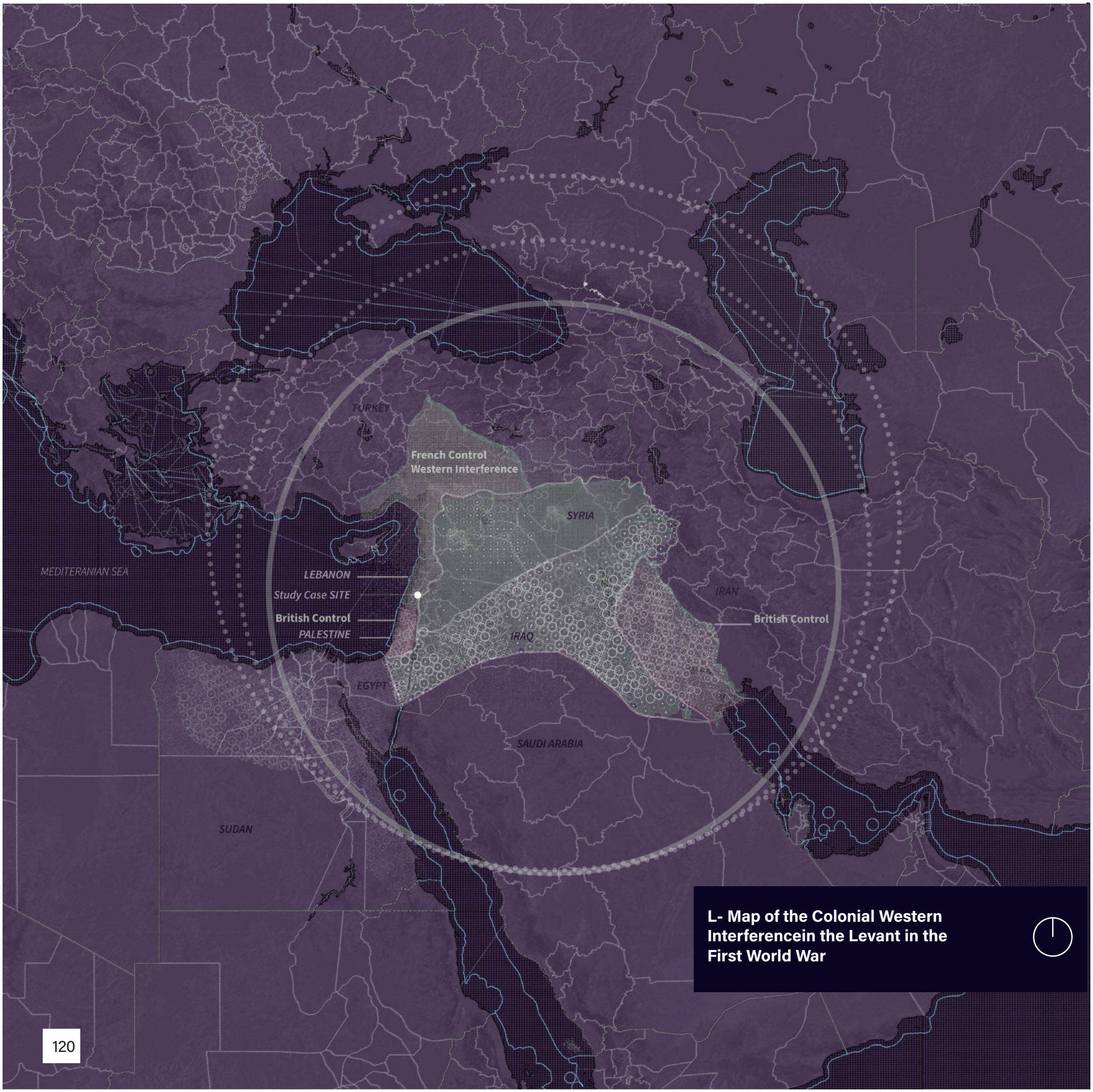
What distinguishes Palestine in contemporary discourse is not that it is the only site shaped by colonial logics, but that it represents one of the most recent and unresolved territorial restructurings to emerge from the post–First World War order. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the mandate system institutionalised by European powers redrew the Levant under imperial supervision, embedding external authority into the formation of modern political geography (Fromkin, 1989; Khalidi, 2020). Unlike earlier colonial formations that have formally ended or transitioned into post-colonial states, the Palestinian question remains structurally unsettled.

Another defining feature is temporality and visibility. Previous colonial campaigns unfolded through newspapers, delayed photography, and state-controlled archives. Today, violence in Gaza and the West Bank circulates in real time through digital media, collapsing distance between event and witness. Conflict is no longer mediated solely by governments or historians; it is livestreamed, archived, and algorithmically amplified. This immediacy produces a different political consciousness: one in which occupation, bombardment, displacement, and resistance are not historical chapters but continuous, visible processes.

In that sense, Palestine occupies a singular position in global awareness: **it is a conflict rooted in early 20th-century imperial restructuring, yet unfolding within 21st-century technological hyper-visibility. It is both a legacy of the First World War order and a live geopolitical reality mediated through smartphones.**

10. coup is a sudden, illegal, and often violent overthrow or alteration of an existing government, typically carried out by a small group, usually elements of the military or political elites to seize state power without following legal or popular mechanisms of change. It usually involves a rapid transfer of power rather than broad social transformation.

Fig. 74: Palestine, published by H.H. Hardesty, Chicago and Toledo, 1881. Source: Hardesty (1881).



L- Map of the Colonial Western Interferencein the Levant in the First World War

World War I solidified a global polarity in which emerging or colonized territories, lacking industrialized military power, were rendered incapable of self-determination and forced to submit to geopolitical arrangements imposed by Western powers. As the Ottoman Empire collapsed, Britain and France formalized this imbalance through the **Sykes–Picot Agreement**, a clandestine accord that pre-allocated the Arab provinces of the Levant into European spheres of control irrespective of indigenous social, cultural, or territorial continuities. The agreement divided the region into zones of direct and indirect rule, granting France authority over present-day Syria and Lebanon, and Britain control over Iraq while assigning Palestine an internationalized status, effectively transforming lived land into an abstract political surface.

This partition directly contradicted British wartime promises of Arab independence and is therefore widely understood as a foundational act of political betrayal. In Palestine, this logic was later reinforced through **the Balfour Declaration**[11], and culminated after World War II in the establishment of Israel, framed simultaneously as a humanitarian response to the persecution of Jewish people in Europe and as the fulfillment of biblical and ancestral prophecy. Within this narrative, the displacement and violence inflicted upon the indigenous Palestinian population were normalized as necessary sacrifices in service of historical redemption. Yet the ethical rupture lies not only in the justification of mass displacement, but in the cyclical manner by which Western powers sought to redeem their own histories of antisemitic violence: having long marginalized and terrorized Jewish communities—by reterritorializing another people's homeland. The resulting state was embedded within a hostile regional context, sustained through enduring Western: particularly American military and political support, without which its security would be structurally untenable.

These events are not merely historical facts but spatial operations: borders drawn in distant rooms became material realities through mandates, zoning laws, infrastructures, demolitions, settlements and recontested boundaries. Thus, the region's built environment bears the imprint of a world order in which one vision of "home" was constructed through the systematic erasure of another, embedding violence, precarity, and contested belonging into space itself.

As a continuation of this trajectory, the political rupture of **1967** marked a decisive escalation in both territorial control and spatial violence. During **the Six-Day War**, Israel launched a preemptive military campaign against neighboring Arab states: Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, resulting in the **occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula**. Politically, this moment transformed Israel from a state seeking security within contested borders into an occupying power governing large Palestinian populations without citizenship or sovereignty. The war redefined the conflict from one of state formation to one of prolonged occupation, embedding asymmetrical power relations into law, governance, and everyday life. Despite international condemnation articulated in **UN Security Council Resolution 242**, which called for withdrawal from occupied territories in exchange for peace, the occupation persisted, becoming normalized through military administration and later civilian settlement. Architecturally and spatially, 1967 inaugurated a regime of control that operates through checkpoints, segregated road networks, settlement blocs, surveillance infrastructures, and differentiated legal systems: mechanisms that fragment land and time, regulate movement, and reconfigure domestic and urban space into instruments of domination. In this sense, the legacy of 1967 is not only geopolitical but material: *it marks the moment when occupation became a permanent condition inscribed into the landscape itself.*

11.. Balfour Declaration (1917): A public statement issued by the British government expressing support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, while stipulating that nothing should prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities.

Sattelite picture of Khiam Village in 1962
Scale: 1/40000

Part 3 . Military functions of Khiam

Under constant change

From the early twentieth century onward, Khiam has been repeatedly appropriated for military purposes, each phase reinforcing its role as a strategic landscape of control. Beginning in the 1920s under the French Mandate for Syria and the Lebanon, the area was militarized through the construction of barracks and an airstrip used for reconnaissance and territorial surveillance, marking Khiam as a site to be observed and dominated from above. In later decades, particularly during the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon (1980s–2000), Khiam fell under the control of the Israel Defense Forces and was administered locally by the South Lebanon Army, transforming the town into a military node defined by checkpoints, restricted mobility, and constant surveillance.

During this period, former colonial military structures were repurposed into the Khiam Detention Center, where architecture itself became an instrument of confinement and violence. Even after the end of the occupation, the site remained militarily charged, as the prison-turned-memorial was later targeted and destroyed, revealing how Khiam's landscape has continuously been shaped—and reshaped—by successive regimes of militarization rather than allowed to return to a purely civilian condition.

Fig. 75 : Aerial View of Khiam in 1962, data retrieved from the Municipality of Khiam (2025).

In this map that dates from **1962**, accessed in the archives of the municipality of khiam, the urban fabric consisted of less constructions, and it showed the proximity of the village to the military airship deployed during the french mandate.

Strategic Location and Border Influence: Khiam's proximity to the Israeli border placed it in a zone of heightened military and political sensitivity, the presence of informal or organic growth patterns may indicate adaptation to security concerns, with clustered housing for protection. The urbanised area is located on the top of the hill to ensure better visibility for military purposes and preventative protection.

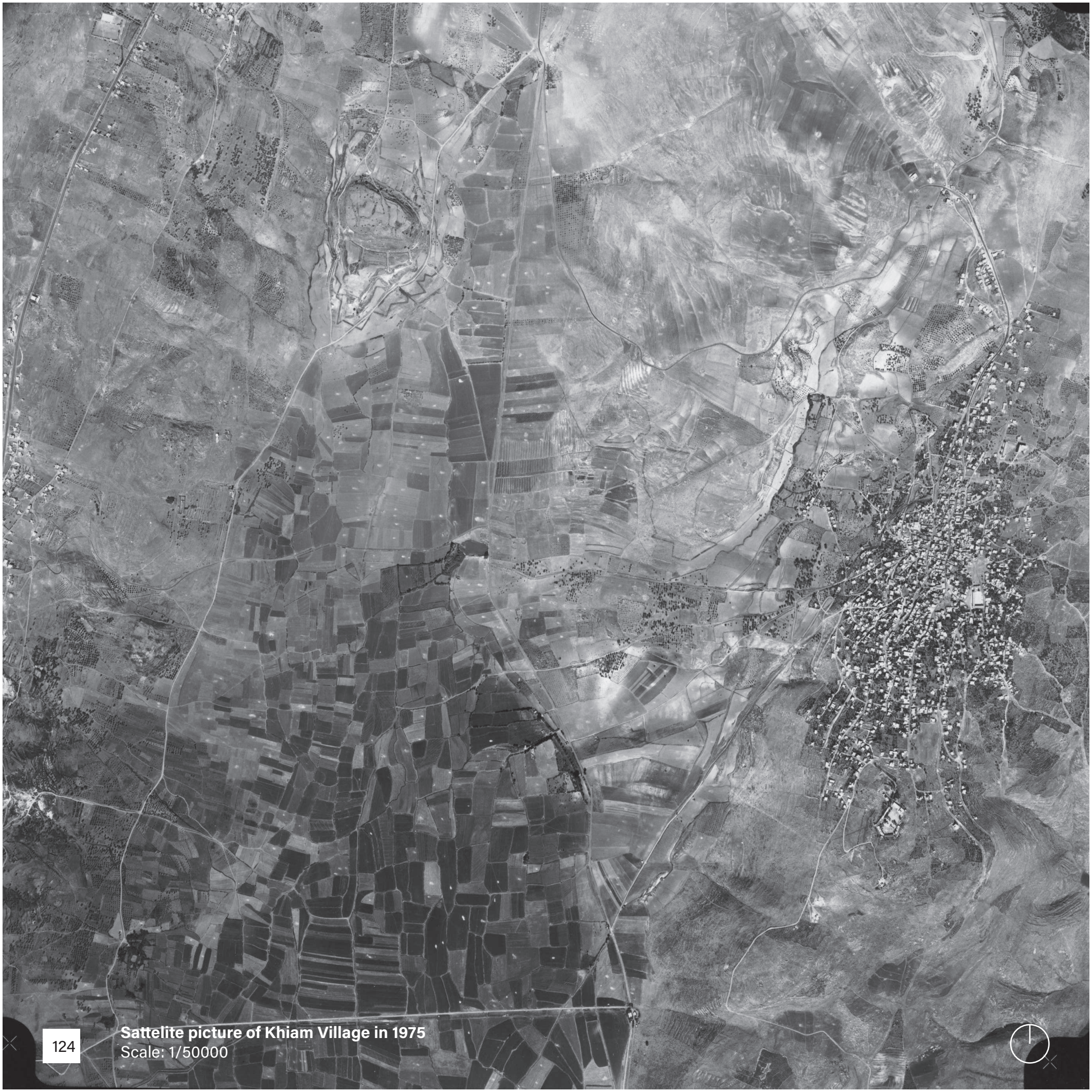
Urban Morphology and Settlement Patterns: Road networks indicate how the village was connected to larger urban centers such as Marjayoun or Nabatieh, reflecting regional trade and mobility constraints. Agricultural lands, particularly terraces or irrigation systems, would be crucial in shaping the settlement, as Khiam historically relied on farming and livestock.

Key military-related sites in Khiam:

- Khiam Detention Center, *originally constructed as a military barracks during the **French Mandate** for Syria and the Lebanon (1930s)*
-Military airstrip, *developed during the **French Mandate** period for reconnaissance and territorial surveillance (1920s–1930s)*
-Repurposed of the detention facility, *under the control of the **SLA forces**[12] **(backed by Israel)** between the late 1980s and 2000*
-Khiam as a strategic base for ***Hezbollah***[13]'s military forces

12. The SLA was a Lebanese militia that functioned with military, financial, and logistical backing from Israel, which maintained a security zone in South Lebanon during 1980s and 2000s.

13. Hezbollah is a Lebanese - Iranian political and militant organization founded in the early 1980s during the Lebanese Civil War and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.



Sattelite picture of Khiam Village in 1975
Scale: 1/50000

Part 3 . Military functions of Khiam

Under constant change

By **1975**, Khiam had shifted from a predominantly rural settlement toward a denser and more complex urban morphology. Compared to the 1962 map, the village expanded outward through new housing clusters and increased building density, reflecting demographic growth and early displacement dynamics linked to the onset of the Lebanese Civil War. Agricultural land surrounding the historic core was gradually reduced, suggesting adaptation to urban pressures as well as emerging security constraints. The road network also became more structured, indicating a transition from informal rural paths toward routes capable of supporting increased circulation, state intervention, and military logistics.

This morphological transformation was closely tied to evolving military and political conditions. Strategic modifications to roads and access points likely facilitated movement and control, while informal expansions responded to rural-to-urban migration driven by regional instability. Signs of security-oriented planning:such as potential checkpoints, fortified compounds, or barrack-like structures—began to appear, preparing the spatial ground for later occupation. These changes marked an early shift in Khiam's socio-spatial fabric, increasing its vulnerability to external strategic control and territorial contestation.

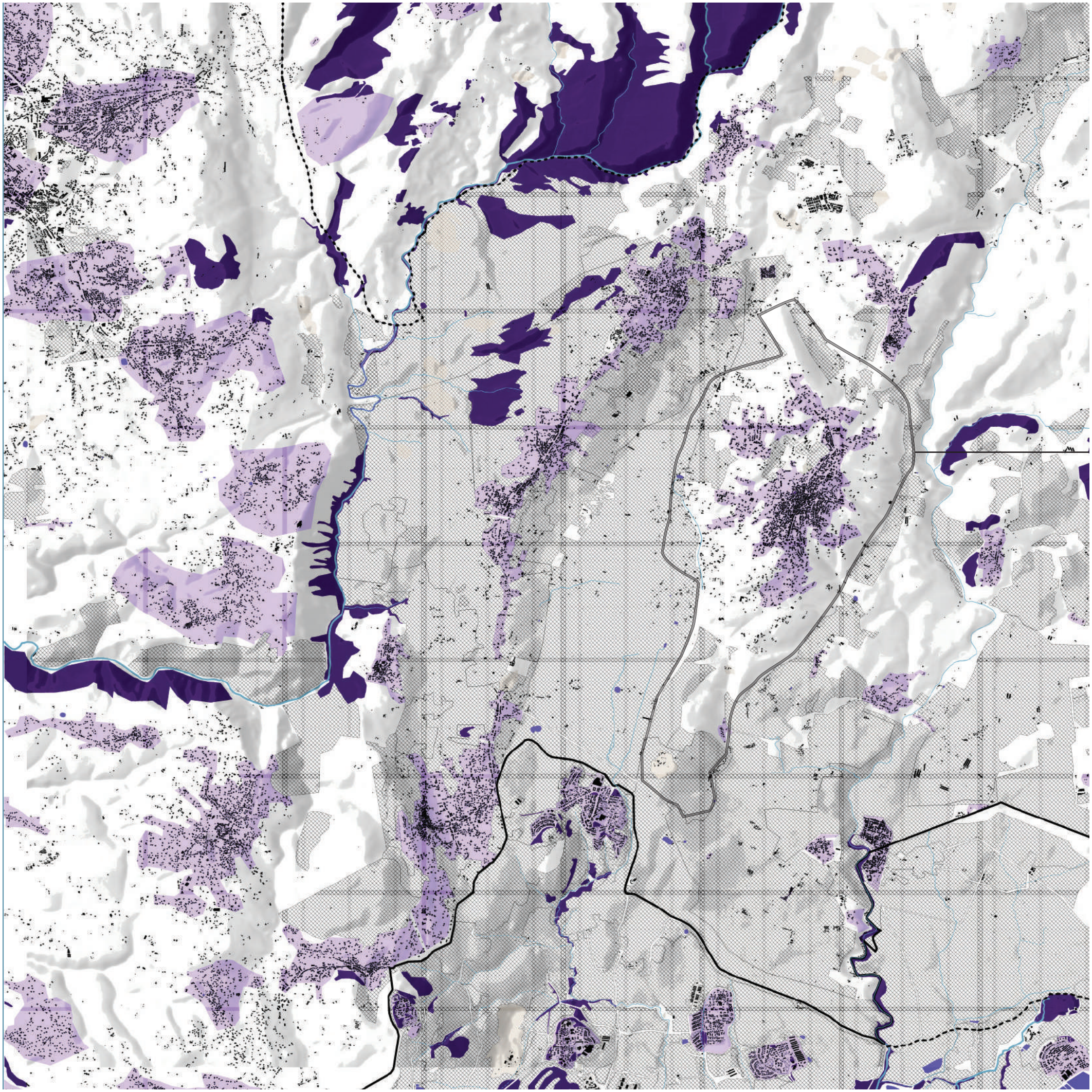
Fig. 76 : Aerial View of Khiam in 1975, data retrieved from the Municipality of Khiam (2025).

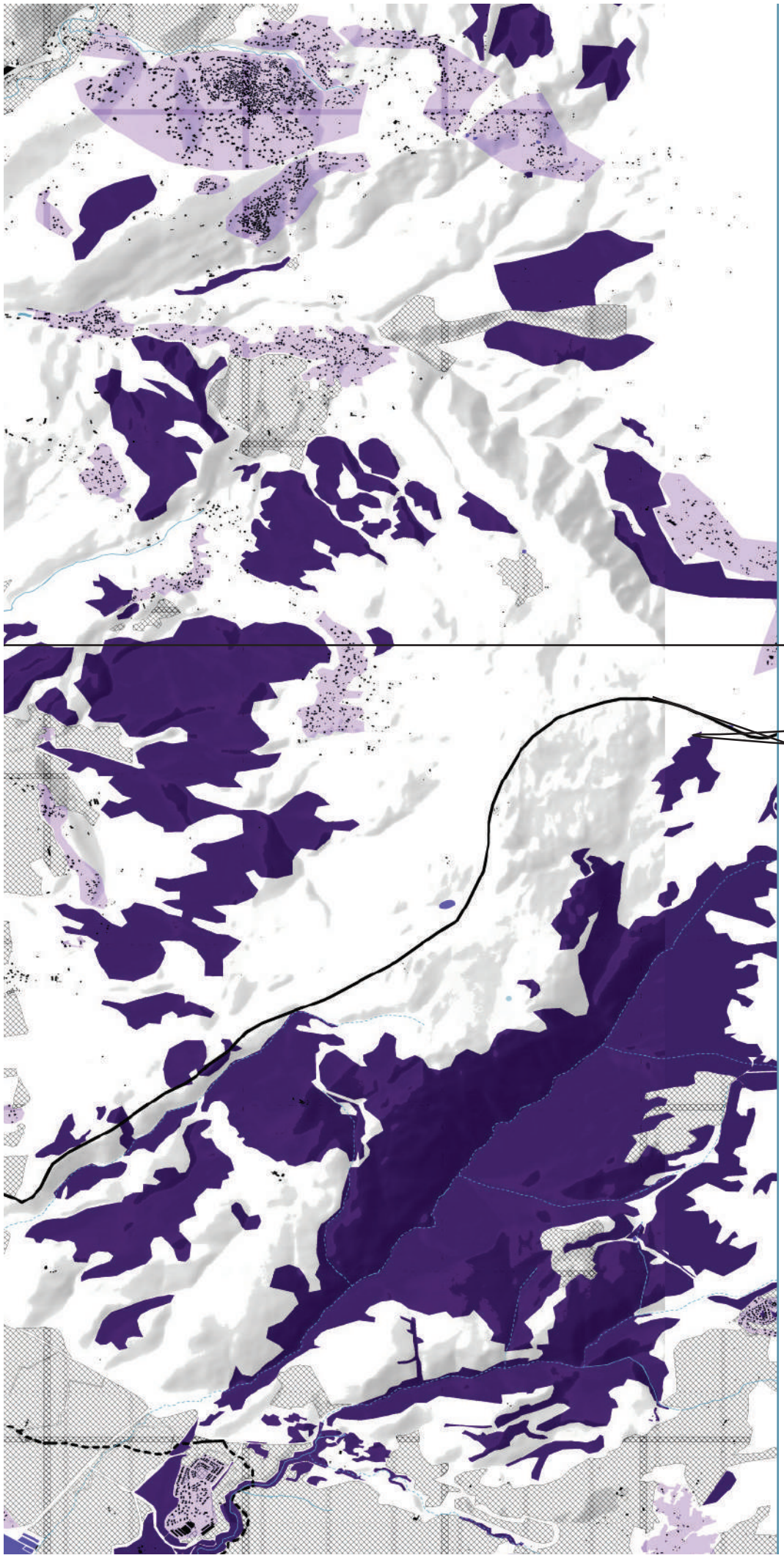
At the same time, Khiam's morphology continued to reflect strong topographical adaptation. The alignment of buildings and pathways followed the hilly terrain, optimizing accessibility, water drainage, and solar exposure along east–west orientations. The elevated position of the town also carried defensive significance, offering visual control over surrounding landscapes and reinforcing its strategic role near the southern border. Together, these environmental and political factors set the stage for potential threat to the residents of Khiam due to its proximity to the confrontation points with the IDF[14].

Recent investigations by Amnesty International[15] document the severe impact of ongoing military operations on civilian life in southern Lebanon between October 2024 and January 2025. Thousands of homes, agricultural lands, and communal spaces were damaged or destroyed across border villages, leaving large areas uninhabitable and forcing prolonged displacement. Entire villages were emptied, with residents unable to return except to visit cemeteries or assess the remains of their properties. The destruction of houses, farmland, and long-established olive groves disrupted not only shelter but also livelihoods and intergenerational ties to the land, deepening a sense of loss and uncertainty. For many inhabitants, home has become a fragile and temporary condition, shaped by repeated evacuation, fear of return, and the absence of stable prospects for rebuilding everyday life.

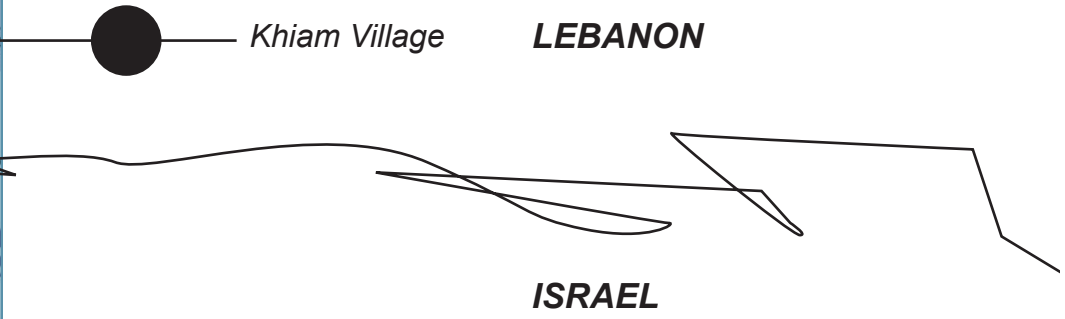
14. IDF (Israel Defense Forces): The unified military forces of the State of Israel, established in 1948, comprising the army, air force, and navy.

15. Amnesty International: A global non-governmental organization founded in 1961 that documents and campaigns against human rights violations worldwide.



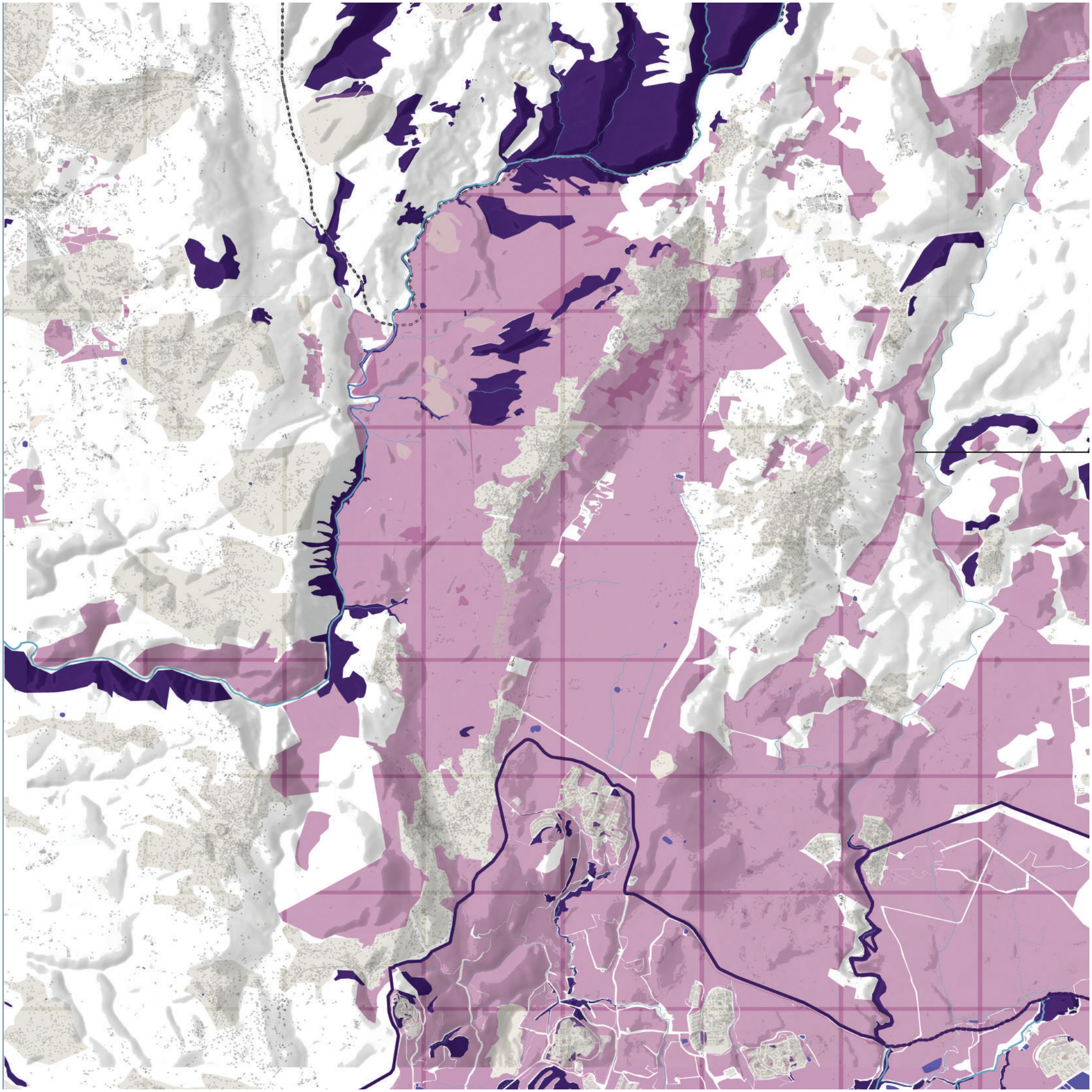


Urbanized land in Lebanon occupies only a small fraction of the national territory, and this pattern is particularly evident in the southern region, where built-up areas are minor compared to agricultural and natural land covers. National land-use analyses estimate that urban and built-up areas account for a limited percentage of total land cover in Lebanon, dwarfing the spatial extent of village cores relative to surrounding landscapes (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2004; FAO, 2025). In southern Lebanon, settlements are typically compact and ridge-bound, reinforcing the idea that urban space constitutes a small territorial portion within a predominantly rural context.

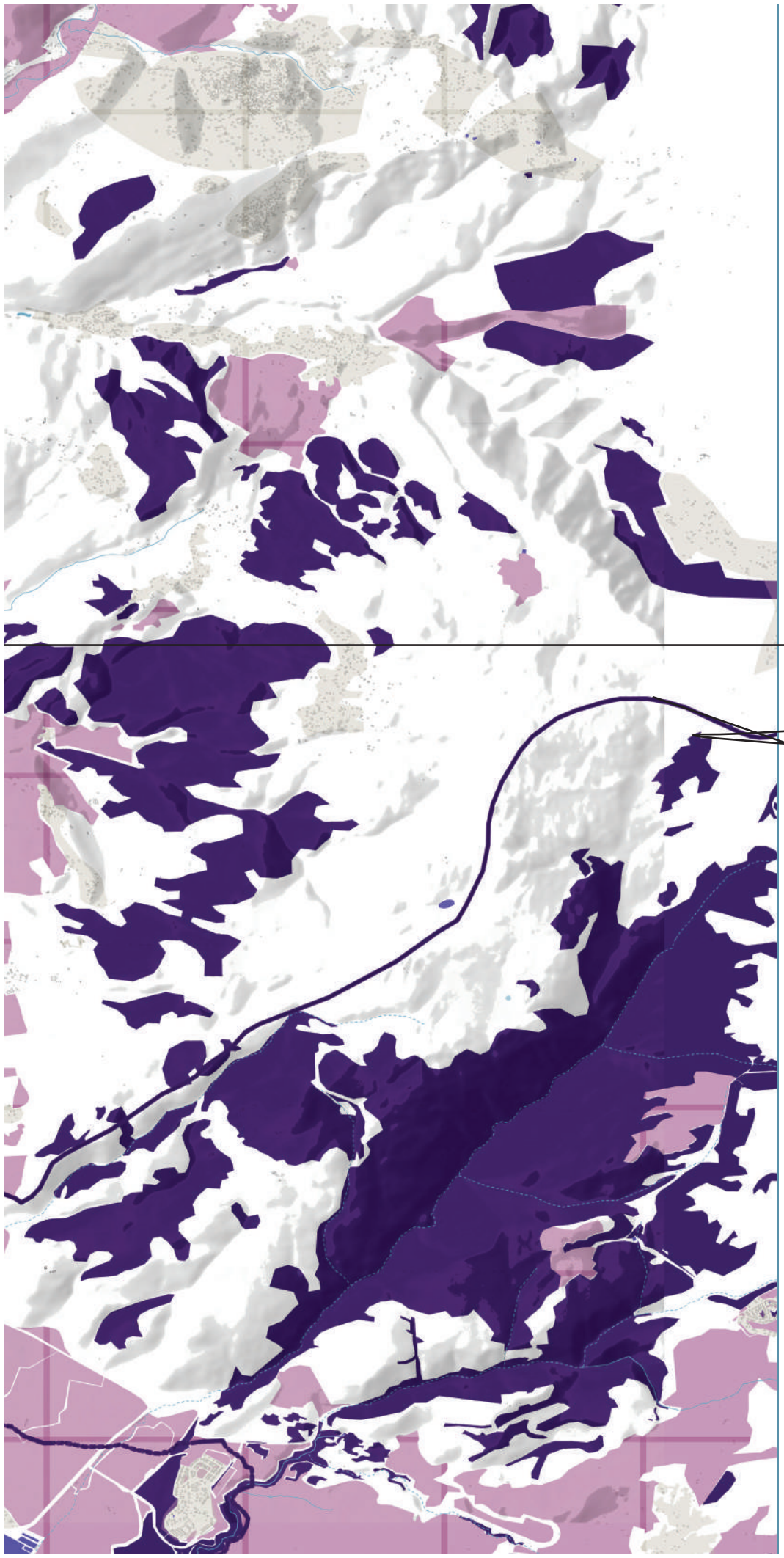


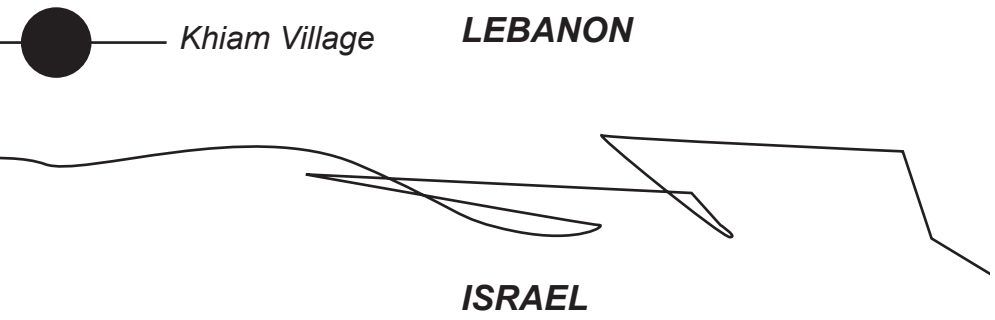
M- Khiam's Map of Topography and Urbanised Areas
Scale: 1/40000

Border between Lebanon and Israel
Rivers
Forests and Greenery
Urbanised Areas



The southern Lebanese landscape is structured by its topography and long-standing agricultural practices, with hills and slopes shaped through dry-stone terraces that create cultivable platforms and stabilize the terrain for perennial crops. Studies of Lebanon's rural landscapes underscore the persistence of terrace systems as defining spatial features of hilly regions (Corrieri et al., 2022). Olive cultivation, figs, and other tree crops form the backbone of local agricultural production, embedding settlements within an interconnected agricultural matrix rather than isolated urban clusters.

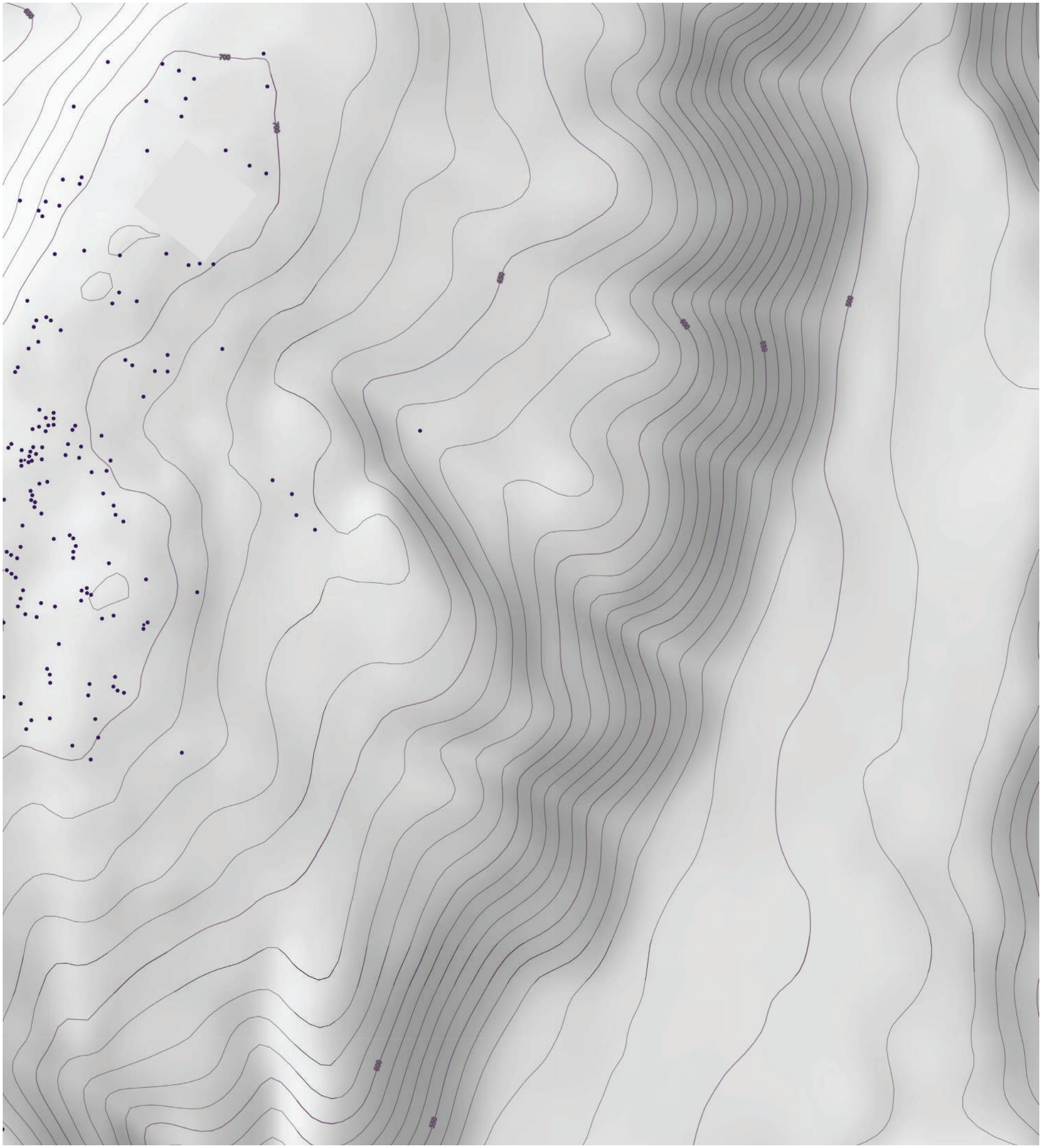




N- Khiam's Map of Land Usage and Unbuilt Areas
Scale: 1/40000

- *Lebanon and Israel's Borders*
- *Rivers*
- *Forests and Greenery*
- *Agricultural Fields*
- *Urbanised Areas*

O- Map of the bombs dropped on Khiam in 2024
Scale: 1/20000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Part 4 . Photographic Reportage
Khiam, Lebanon 2025

The following section presents a photographic reportage from my field visits to Khiam, South Lebanon, conducted in February 2025 and August 2025. The images document the condition of the village following the recent escalation of conflict, recording the extent of destruction within the built fabric and surrounding landscape. They capture damaged and collapsed structures, altered infrastructure, and the visible interruption of everyday spatial life. Taken across two separate moments, the photographs allow for observation of both immediate aftermath and subsequent changes on site. They function as direct spatial documentation, providing material evidence of transformation and loss within the village.

All the following pictures are taken by the author in Khiam, Lebanon during the months of February 2025, and March 2025. The site visits were restricted due to security problems that The photographic documentation of Khiam was conducted during two site visits only, due to prevailing security conditions, including ongoing aerial surveillance and the broader risk of indiscriminate targeting, which limited prolonged presence on site. Additionally, many residents were absent at the time of research: having fled or being engaged in rebuilding their homes, thereby: restricting the possibility of conducting extended interviews.

2 Km from Khiam, Lebanon.
The Way to Khiam Village.

Residential Buildings

School in Khiam, Lebanon targeted during the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in 2024...

The walls that "persisted", to be kept, and reimagined.

The view from the Hill of Khiam Village, Lebanon

Mosque to be rebuilt

On the way to Khiam, 5 Km away

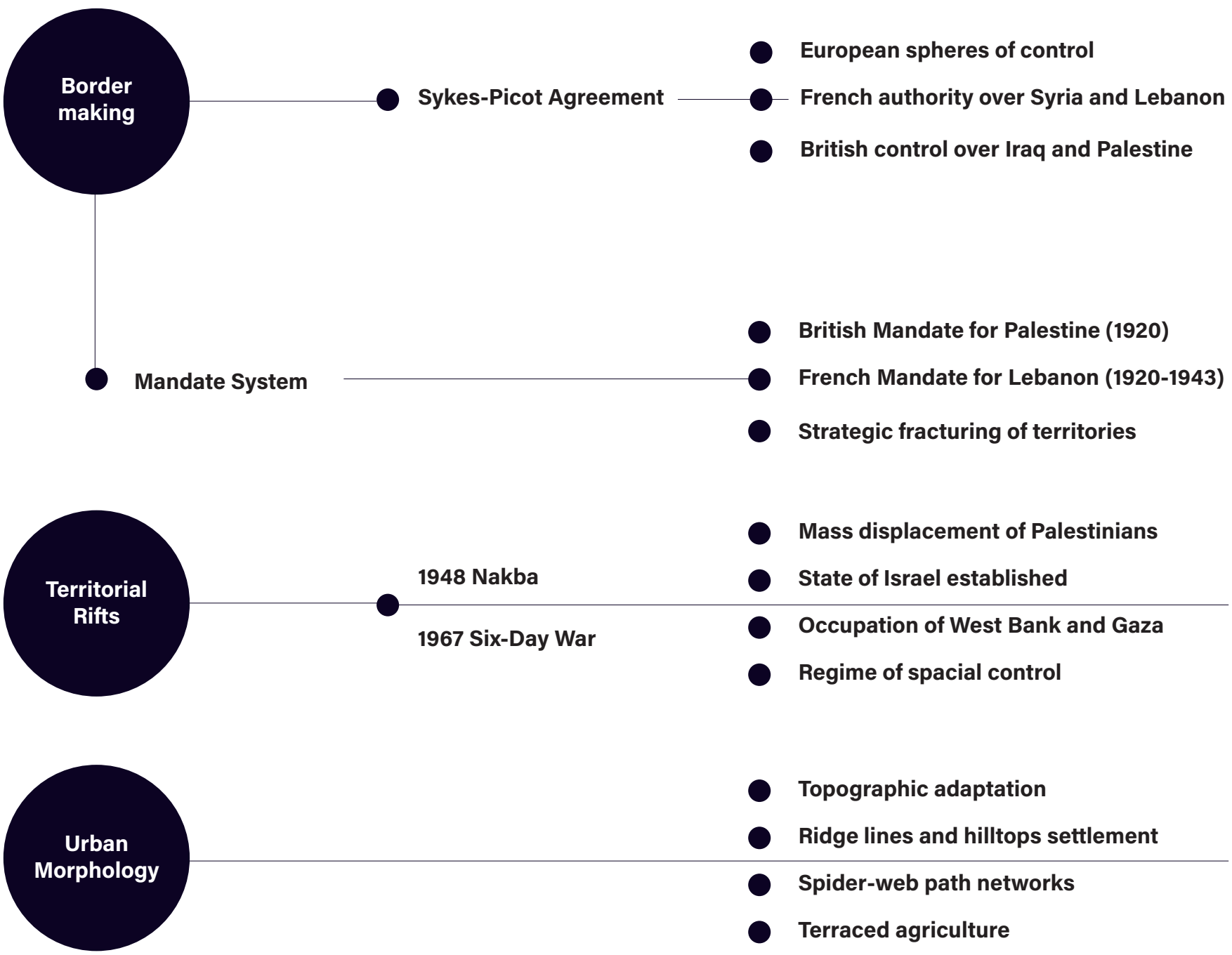
Rubble and Debris... to be sorted, keeping the reusable elements as material evidence of the continuity of the reality

2 Km away from Khiam
On the way...

Fragments of the Built Enviroment

Domestic Interior in ruin

Mind Map of the Historical and Political Analysis of Khiam

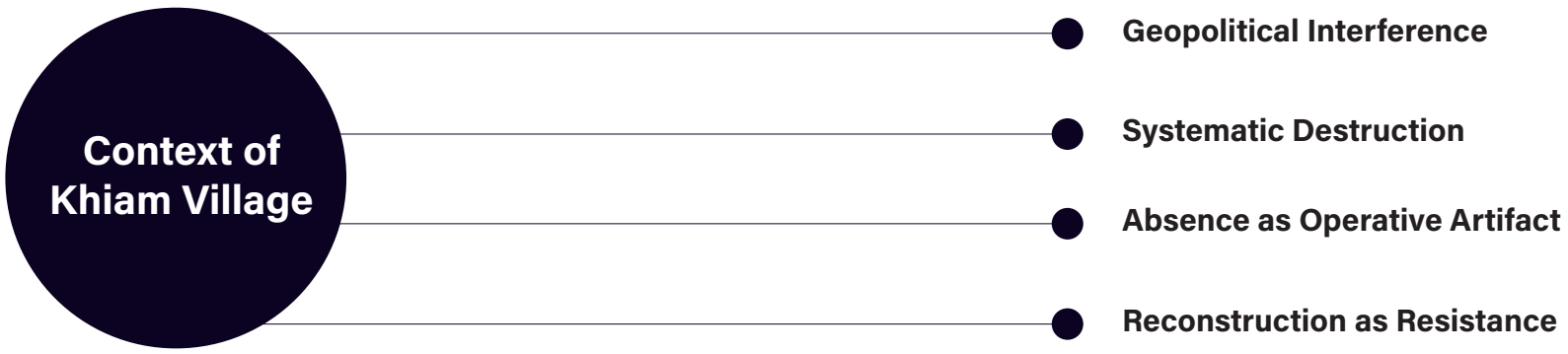


Context as Architectural Premise

The Lebanese context reveals a territory shaped by two opposing forces: a long-standing
morphological continuity rooted in agriculture and topography, and repeated geopolitical interventions that fragment, erase, and reconfigure it. In southern Lebanon, urban space remains
minimal within a broader cultivated landscape, yet this continuity has been repeatedly disrupted by systematic destruction and imposed borders.

In Khiam, absence is not void but structure. Ruins, interruptions, and fractured domestic spaces operate as spatial artifacts that redefine the territory. Context therefore becomes operative:
destruction produces trace; fragmentation produces condition.

This chapter establishes the ground upon which the architectural methodology emerges. If Rossi speaks of memory, Frampton of material rootedness, Eisenman of trace, Solà-Morales of weak intervention, and Woods of confrontation, then Khiam is the site where these positions converge. **Reconstruction here cannot erase rupture nor monumentalize it; it must work within it.**



Case Study for **Mosque**
Carlo Scarpa | The Brion Cemetery and Sanctuary,
San Vito d'Altivole, Italy, 1978

Case Study for **Mosque, Underground construction**
EAA - Emre Arolat Architecture | Sancaklar Mosque,
Büyükçekmece, Istanbul, Turkey, 2012

Case Study for **Memory, Underground construction**
Francesco Venezia | "Architettura nel sottosuolo" exhibition in
Naples, Italy, 1991

Case Study for **Memory, Underground construction**
Hans Hollein | Guggenheim Museum, Salzburg, Austria,
1990.

Case Study for **Library**
Kashef Chowdhury / URBANA | Friendship Centre, Gaibandha, Bangladesh, 2011

Case Study for **Library**
Library in the Earth / Hiroshi Nakamura & NAP, Kisarazu Japan,
2022

VII. CASE STUDIES

Case Study for **Mosque**

Carlo Scarpa | The Brion Cemetery and Sanctuary,
San Vito d'Altivole, Italy, 1978

The Brion Cemetery and Sanctuary (San Vito d'Altivole, Italy, 1968–1978), designed by Carlo Scarpa, transcends its programmatic function as a burial site to become a poetic meditation on memory, space, and the layering of time. Though conceived as a cemetery, the project offers far-reaching lessons on how architecture can engage with loss, trauma, and the reconstruction of meaning. In the context of Khiam—where key public infrastructures such as mosques, a school, and a library were damaged or destroyed—Scarpa's work provides a model for designing with spatial sensitivity. His approach, rooted in craft, narrative, and the integration of landscape, suggests how built form can act as a vessel for communal healing and remembrance, even in programs not explicitly memorial. Rebuilding in Khiam, therefore, need not solely restore function, but also reweave memory into place through a thoughtful architectural language.

Through his drawings, one perceives the layers of thought, the multiplicity of approaches and perspectives that shape his spatial imagination. Scarpa composes with color, materiality, pattern, and craftsmanship, constructing a design language that is at once precise and poetic. The experience he proposes engages the viewer as an active participant rather than a passive observer. In the smallest details, he recreates essence—attention becomes intention. The circular door within the mausoleum, for example, signals the importance of presence, of being awake and receptive. Ornament here is uncanny yet familiar, reinterpreted in new expressive ways. The visitor is immersed in a reality that cannot be understood through projection alone; it must be experienced to be grasped.

Perhaps to create an architecture that speaks of memory, one must be removed from the patterns already known—to enter a new reality, a new visual experience that allows one to confront the loss of a "past reality" that can no longer be recognized. In this sense, the absence of replication becomes a gateway to a new form of life. Functions of columns, walls, doors, and streets are reinterpreted, inviting the viewer to see and move differently, to notice the smallest of thresholds—the doorstep, the transition. Time stands still, and the novelty of the experience takes time to settle, gradually transforming from unfamiliar space into lived place.

For people to feel the buildup of memory and the passage of time, materials and spatial conditions must offer a sense of liberty—a capacity to age, to receive light, to host different social rhythms, and to adapt to change. Architecture, in this way, bears the responsibility not only to provide shelter but to breathe, to allow air and time to move through it.

Fig. 77- 78 -79 :Brion Tomb, Venice, by Carlo Scarpa, 1968–1978. Photographs by Fernanda Barbara.

Eisenman's architecture resists the idea of space as innocent. By foregrounding process, displacement, and non-alignment, his work insists that architecture always participates in the production of social and political order. In this sense, architecture becomes a mechanism that reveals rather than conceals its own operations.The theoretical position advanced by Peter Eisenman: that architecture is not a passive container of life but an active producer of reality; finds a spatial counterpart in Carlo Scarpa's Brion Cemetery. (Eisenman, 1984)

Rather than commemorating memory through symbolic form, the project constructs a precise spatial sequence in which movement, vision, and pause are deliberately orchestrated. Walls do not enclose but interrupt; water does not purify but separate; thresholds multiply rather than resolve entry. In this way, the cemetery does not represent mourning but produces its conditions. The architectural experience is intentionally fragmented. Visitors are denied a single, totalizing perspective, and instead encounter memory through disjunction, repetition, and delay. This spatial strategy aligns with Eisenman's insistence that architecture operates as a critical apparatus—one that exposes how meaning, memory, and subjectivity are constructed rather than given. Scarpa's intervention demonstrates how architecture can engage memory politically, not by stabilizing identity, but by refusing closure and comfort.

Fig. 80 :Brion Tomb, Venice, by Carlo Scarpa, 1968–1978. Photograph by Leslie Williamson.

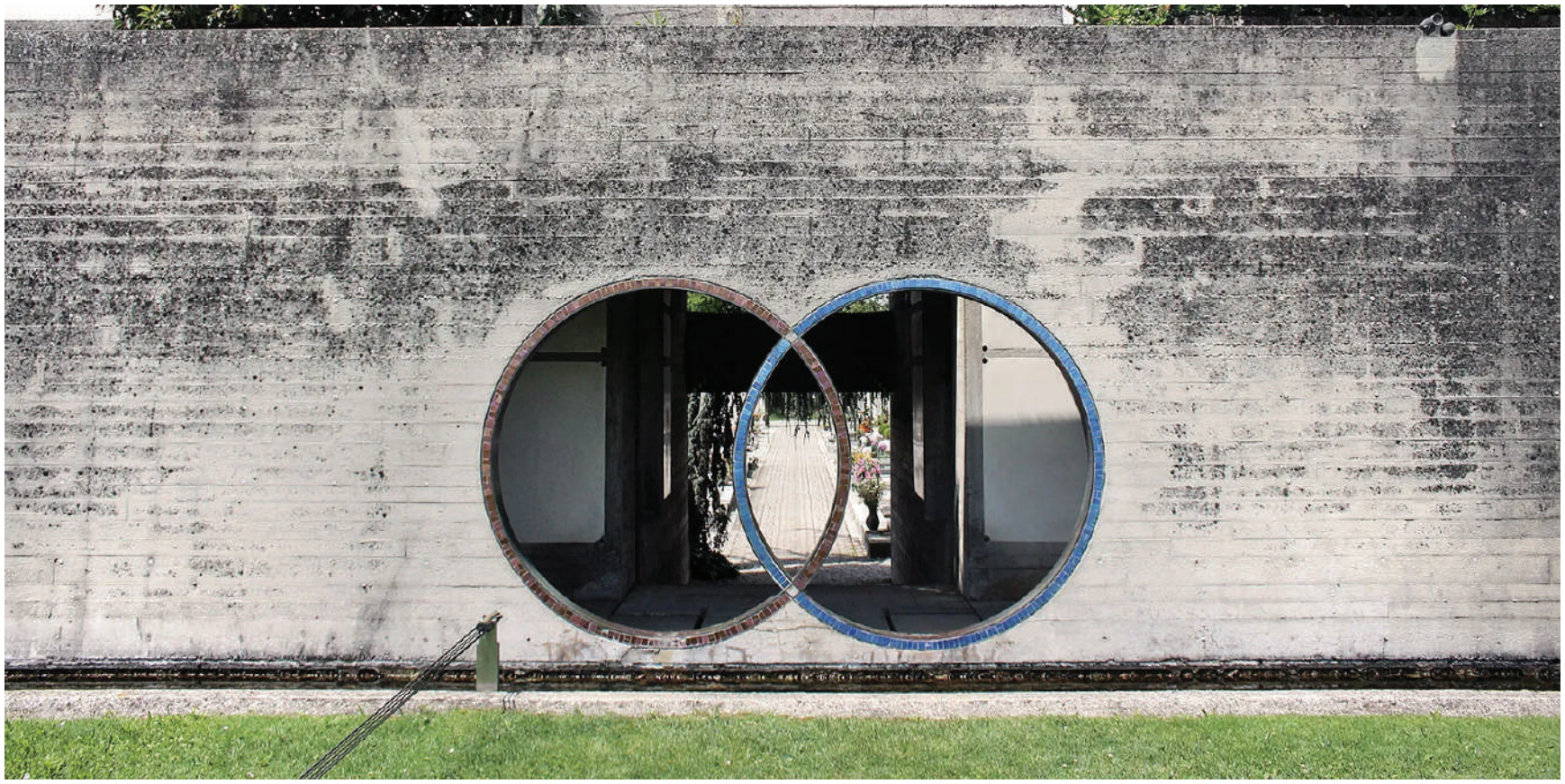
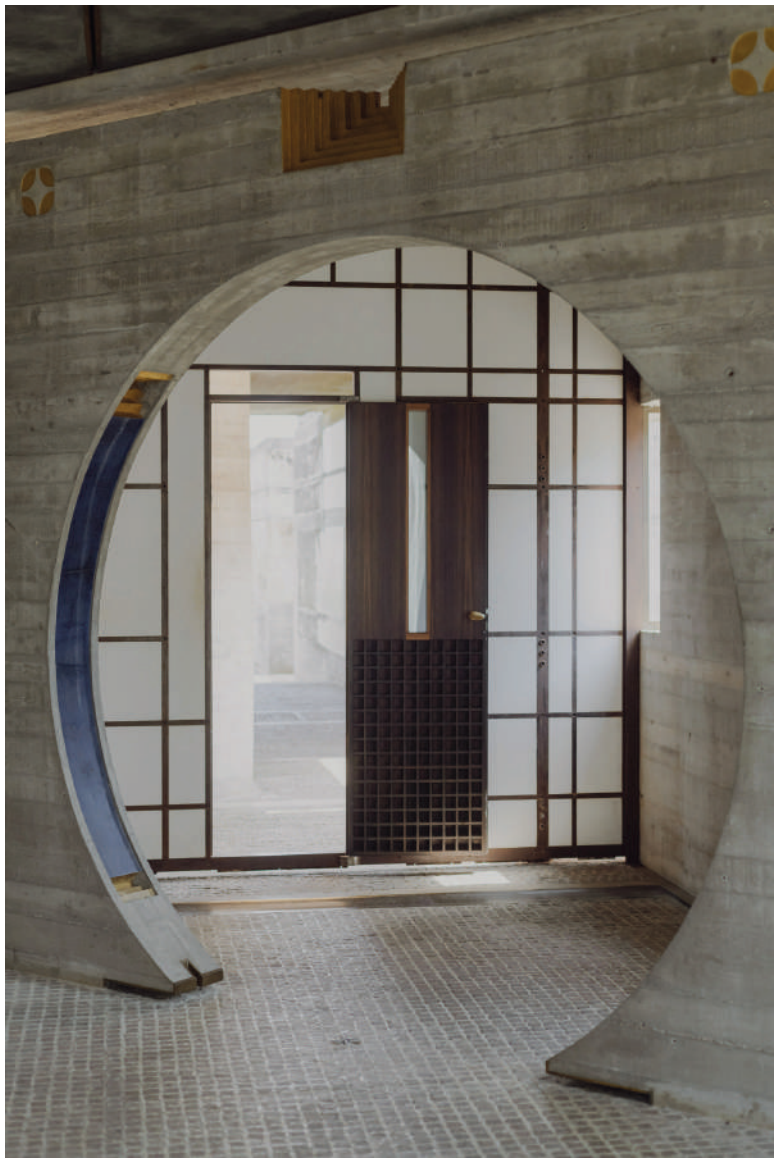


Fig. 81- 83 -85 :Brion Tomb, Venice, by Carlo Scarpa, 1968–1978. Photographs by Fernanda Barbara.

Fig. 82 - 84 :Brion Tomb, Venice, by Carlo Scarpa, 1968–1978. Photograph by Leslie Williamson.



Case Study for **Mosque, Underground construction**
EAA - Emre Arolat Architecture | Sancaklar Mosque,
Büyükçekmece, Istanbul, Turkey, 2012

The Sancaklar Mosque in Istanbul is selected as a case study due to its strong spatial and conceptual resonance with the conditions of the project site. Located within a prairie landscape and embedded into a sloping hill, the mosque withdraws from the surrounding suburban fabric and busy highway, creating a spatial and symbolic separation between the external world and the realm of contemplation. This gesture of descent—moving down through the landscape rather than rising above it—transforms the act of entering into a gradual detachment from chaos toward stillness.

The architecture is largely concealed beneath the terrain. A thin reinforced concrete canopy becomes the only visible architectural marker from the outside, while the main prayer space remains embedded within the earth. This strategy allows the building to merge with topography rather than dominate it, reinforcing a continuity between natural and constructed form. The path from the upper courtyard through the park, descending between stone walls and landscape, choreographs a transition that is both physical and psychological.

Materiality plays a central role in this integration. Natural stone elements follow the slope of the land, while the precise concrete canopy introduces a controlled, tectonic counterpoint. The project operates through a deliberate tension between the man-made and the natural, not as opposition but as dialogue. This relationship is further intensified within the interior: the cave-like prayer hall, defined by textured stone and restrained geometry, creates a dramatic and introspective atmosphere. Slits and fractures along the Qiblah wall filter daylight into the space, emphasizing directionality while maintaining abstraction and minimal symbolism.

As a reference, Sancaklar Mosque demonstrates how architecture can engage landscape as structure, symbol, and spatial generator. Its embedded form, material restraint, and integration of plan with topography offer a relevant precedent for approaching a hill-based site where natural terrain and architectural intervention must operate as one continuous system.

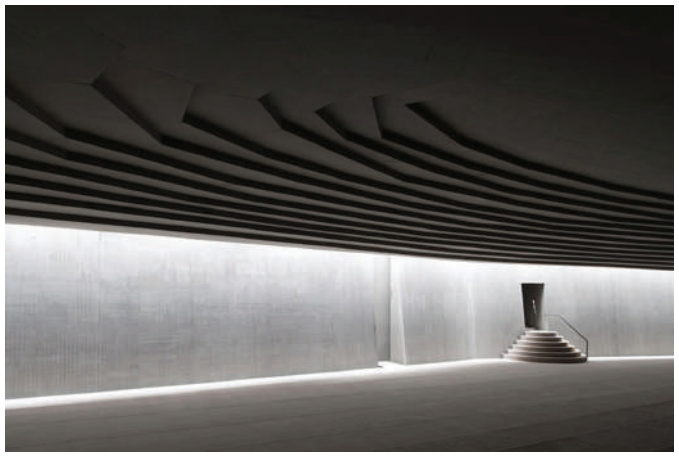


Fig. 86-87-88: Picturesof the award-winning Sancaklar Mosque, designed by Turkish architect Emre Arolat. Photographs by Thomas Mayer.

Stone, water, and controlled natural light operate as primary architectural elements. The material palette remains restrained and tectonically grounded, while the descent into the prayer hall choreographs a gradual transition from exterior landscape to interior contemplation. Light is filtered and directional; water introduces subtle acoustic and atmospheric qualities. The result is not an imposed icon, but a spatial condition in which the natural and the constructed dissolve into one another.

Its linear insertion into the slope produces a silent architecture — one that withdraws from visual dominance and instead intensifies sensory experience. The building does not compete with the land; it excavates and reveals it. In this sense, the mosque exemplifies an architecture of embedding rather than imposition, aligning with a methodology that seeks continuity between ground, material, and human presence.

Fig. 89: A view of the award-winning Sancaklar Mosque, designed by Turkish architect Emre Arolat. Photograph Cemal Emden.

Case Study for **Mosque, Underground construction**
EAA - Emre Arolat Architecture | Sancaklar Mosque,
Büyükçekmece, Istanbul, Turkey, 2012

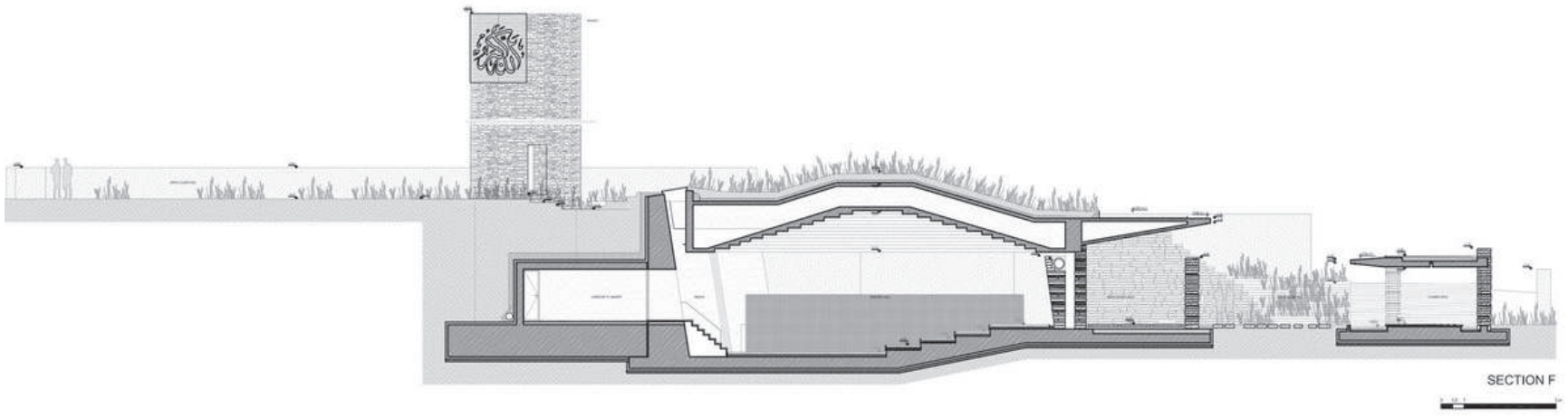


Fig. 90: A Section of the Sancaklar Mosque, designed by Turkish architect Emre Arolat.
Via ArchDaily.

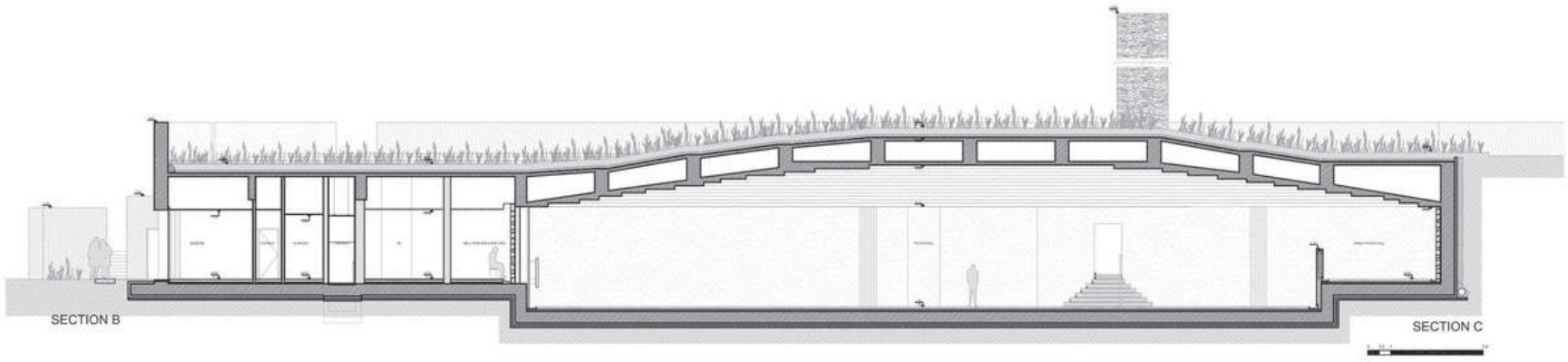


Fig. 91: A Section of the Sancaklar Mosque, designed by Turkish architect Emre Arolat.
Via ArchDaily.

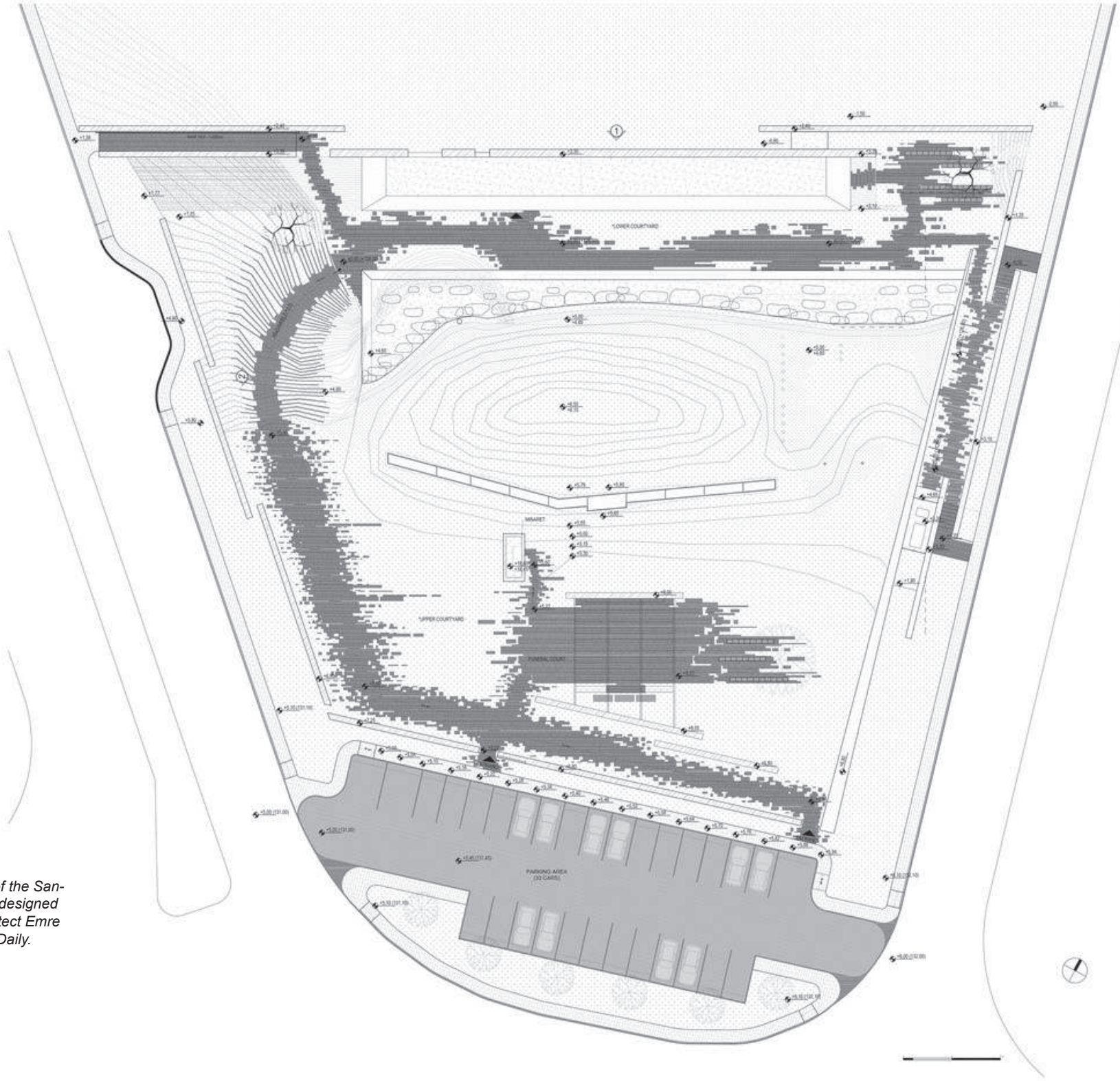


Fig. 92: A plan of the Sancaklar Mosque, designed by Turkish architect Emre Arolat. Via ArchDaily.

Case Study for **Memory, Underground construction**

Francesco Venezia | "Architettura nel sottosuolo" exhibition in Naples, Italy, 1991

Francesco Venezia, often described as an "esteta della memoria", situates his architecture at the intersection of time, ground, and ruin. In his writings and projects, architecture is not conceived as an autonomous object but as a temporal incision in a pre-existing continuum of matter and history. Time, for Venezia, is not a neutral background; it is a design material. Maddaluno shows how he explicitly distinguishes between Kronos (time as physical duration), Aion (time as memory and projective imagination) and Kairos (the "opportune moment" when action and time coincide), and argues that Venezia's buildings inhabit this third dimension: they are conceived as "opportune" interventions, arriving at the precise moment when a place is ready to be re-read and transformed.

Central to this approach is his critique of how modern archaeology has separated ruins from everyday life. Venezia notes that ruins have become the object of a "jealously protected reserve," removed from the cycle of living architecture and confined to a purely documentary role. (Venezia, 1985)

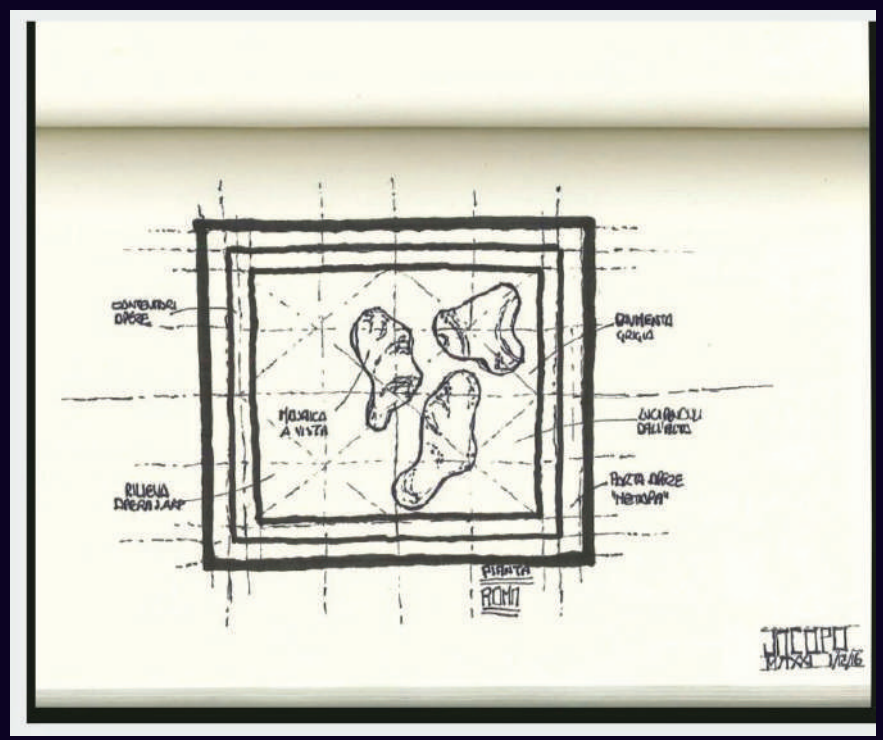


Fig. 93: Jean Arp" installation, Francesco Venezia, explanatory sketch, Jacopo Di Criscio.

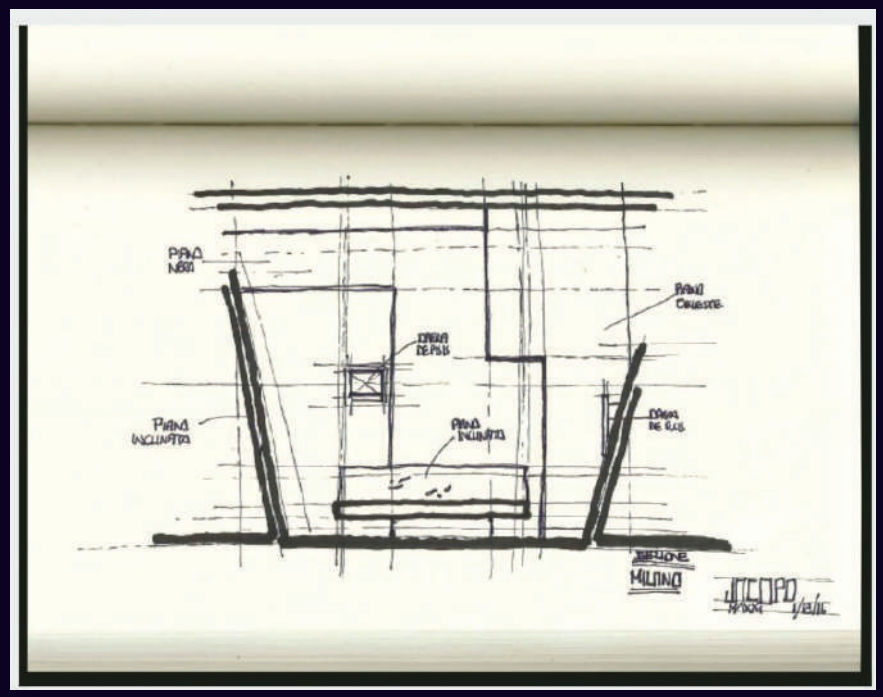


Fig. 94: Exhibition "Myth and Nature. From Pompeii to Magna Graecia," by Francesco Venezia, explanatory sketch, Jacopo Di Criscio.

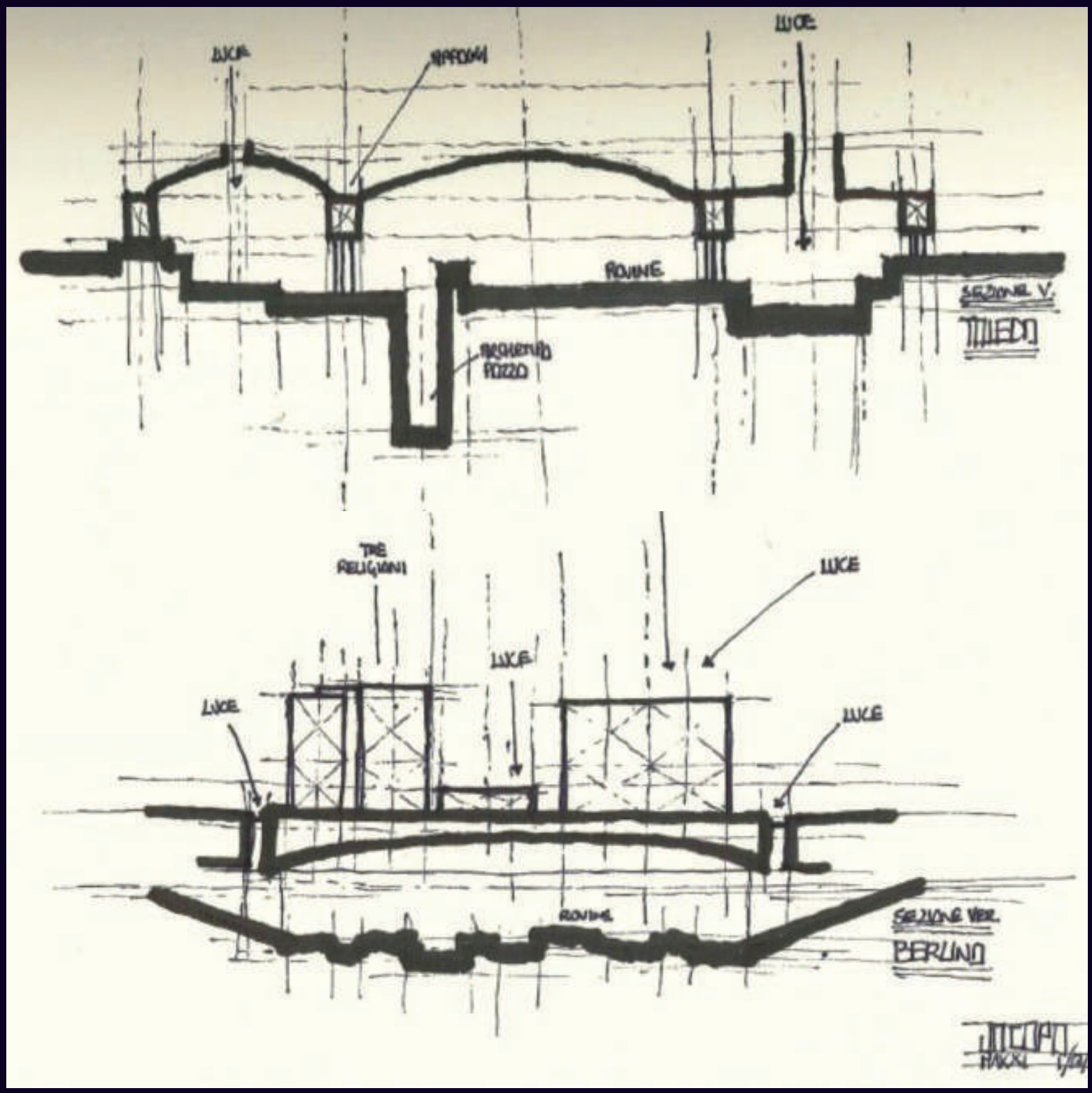


Fig. 95: Toledo Museum of Historical Stratigraphy Project and Multi-religious Building Project in Berlin, Francesco Venezia, explanatory sketch, Jacopo Di Criscio.

Case Study for **Memory, Underground construction**
Hans Hollein | Guggenheim Museum, Salzburg, Austria, 1990.

Hans Hollein and the UndergroundRealm: Alles ist Architektur.

Hans Hollein's work has long challenged traditional boundaries of architecture. His 1990 Guggenheim Museum in Salzburg exemplifies his provocative idea that "Alles ist Architektur" (everything is architecture). For Hollein, architecture is not limited to conventional forms or visible structures; it encompasses any space that shapes human experience, perception, and behavior. This philosophy radically expands the field of architectural inquiry to include not only above-ground buildings but also subterranean environments, ephemeral spaces, and overlooked margins of the built world.

This idea resonates deeply with the spatial and political conditions in Khiam, a small village in southern Lebanon, situated on the border with Israel. Here, physical reality is intertwined with uncertainty and constant threat. Daily life is constrained by surveillance, restricted movement, and the absence of full sovereignty. In such circumstances, the underground is not merely a refuge from environmental or climatic conditions, but a critical layer of lived reality; a domain in which inhabitants can exercise a degree of freedom and agency denied above ground. Tunnels and subterranean networks in Khiam operate as both protection and projection: they reflect the uncertainty and fear that pervade the village while simultaneously offering spaces for strategic, private, and collective life. Hollein's Guggenheim Salzburg serves as an instructive precedent for this line of thinking. While the project is located above ground, it incorporates spatial sequences, thresholds, and intimate enclosures that manipulate perception and light in ways akin to subterranean spaces. The museum's use of voids, hidden connections, and layered circulation demonstrates how architecture can create immersive, almost "invisible" experiences within physical constraints. It affirms the idea that underground or enclosed spaces are not secondary or less architectural; they are fully valid arenas for design, experience, and human activity.

In Khiam, this framework allows us to consider tunnels as architectural objects in their own right; spaces shaped by both necessity and imagination. They are sites where collective memory, individual anxiety, and strategic survival converge. **By applying Hollein's philosophy, the design approach shifts from treating underground spaces as purely functional or defensive, toward recognizing them as experiential, socially significant, and spatially potent environments.** The tunnels become conduits for memory, protection, and psychological stability, reflecting the lived realities of a community negotiating its own sovereignty under constant external pressures.

Under this light, tunnels are not wartime infrastructure but as architectural instruments, mediators of experience, carriers of collective aspiration, and containers of social, cultural, and emotional life. In this sense, the subterranean realm embodies the paradox of architecture in a conflict zone: it is simultaneously hidden, protective, and profoundly expressive, capable of channeling both the fear and resilience of those who inhabit it.

Fig. 96: : Guggenheim Museum, Salzburg, Austria, 1990. Photograph by Atelier Hans Hollein / Sina Baniahmad.

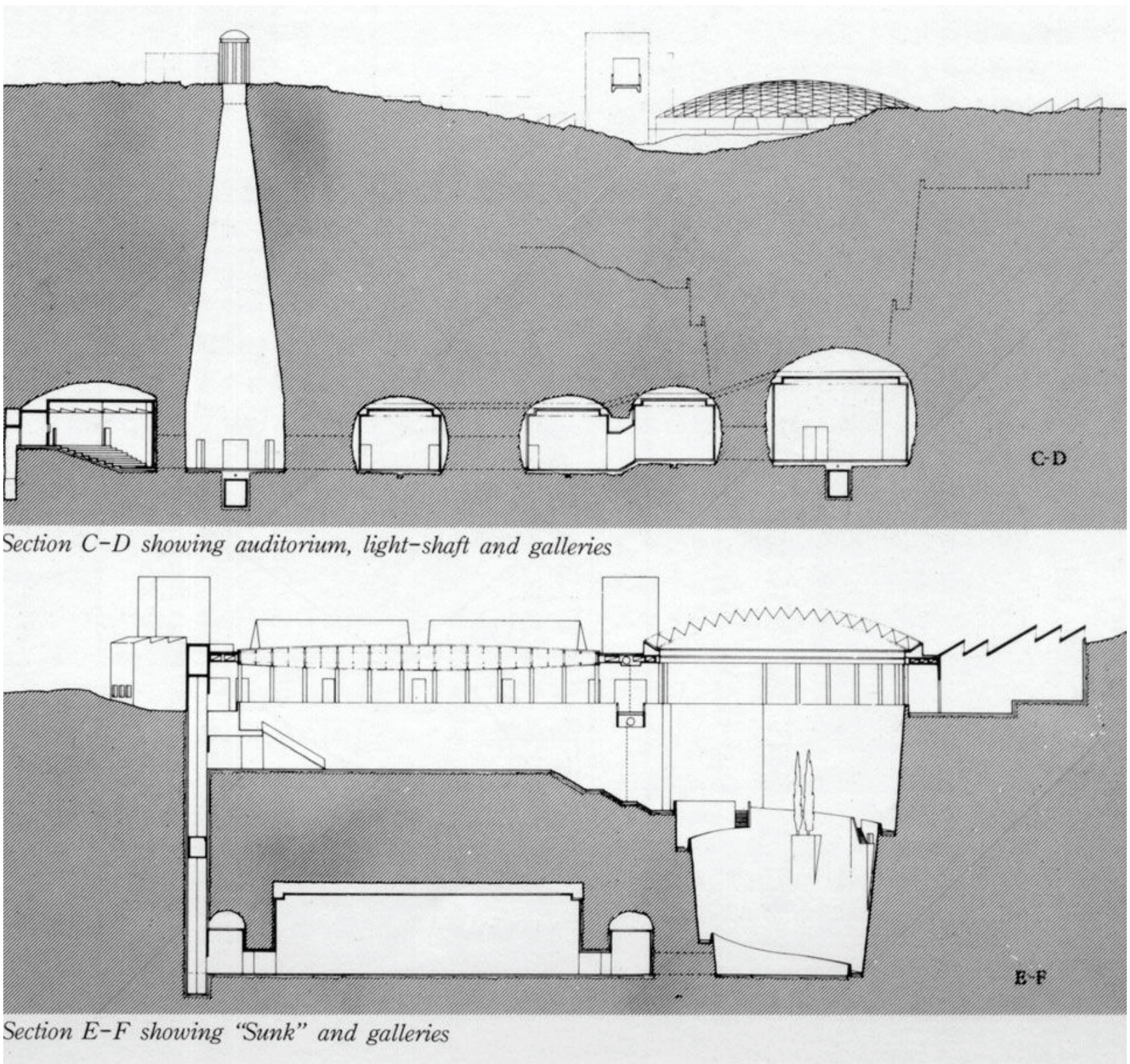


Fig. 97: Original sections of the project. Credits for Hans Hollein / Sina Baniahmad.

Case Study for **Library**
Kashef Chowdhury / URBANA | Friendship Centre, Gaibandha, Bangladesh, 2011

The Friendship Centre by Kashef Chowdhury / URBANA presents a refined exploration of architecture as both landscape and structure. Pushed partially underground, the project establishes a unique continuity between built form and terrain: its earth-covered roofs align seamlessly with the surrounding roads, creating a visual horizon that blurs the distinction between architecture and ground. From the pedestrian's perspective, the centre almost disappears, offering only subtle hints of its presence.

At level –1, a series of patios and sunken courtyards articulate the complex. These voids act as spatial anchors, structuring circulation while introducing air, light, and nature into the subterranean condition. Each courtyard establishes a distinct scale and atmosphere, producing a spectrum of spatial intimacy — from open communal courts to smaller, contemplative recesses. This careful gradation of space transforms the descent underground into an architectural narrative, where movement is punctuated by episodes of encounter, light, and shadow.

The project's plan reveals its most sophisticated dimension. Spread across the site as a constellation of box-like volumes, the centre incorporates a layered program: classrooms, prayer spaces, temporary residences, and service areas. Rather than collapsing these into a single mass, the plan carefully disperses them, embedding a rhythm of solids and voids. Between these volumes lie buffer zones — expanses of negative space that serve both practical and conceptual roles. Functionally, they provide ventilation, circulation, and separation; conceptually, they create zones of emptiness that hold the architecture together. This emptiness is not residual but generative, accommodating shifting uses, different rhythms of occupation, and diverse spatial readings of the whole.

Materiality further reinforces this monastic and grounded atmosphere. The complex is built primarily of local handmade bricks, with reinforced concrete used only for structural support and occasional finishes of timber and stone. The restraint of the palette heightens the role of form, shadow, and void, while the continuous brickwork recalls both ancient precedents and timeless constructional logics.

What emerges is an architecture that is at once complex and minimal. The complexity lies in the programmatic network of pavilions, voids, and circulation routes; the minimality lies in the material and spatial expression, where each element is reduced to its essence. The result is a project that demonstrates how architecture can achieve profound depth through subtraction, con-

Fig. 98- 99- 100 : Views of the Project. Photograph by Rajesh Vora. Courtesy of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

Case Study for **Library**

Library in the Earth / Hiroshi Nakamura & NAP, Kisarazu Japan, 2022

Fig. 101: Library in the Earth / Hiroshi Nakamura & NAP. Source: Koji Fujii / TOREAL, via ArchDaily).

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Fig. 102: Interior of the Library in the Earth / Hiroshi Nakamura & NAP. Source: Koji Fujii / TOREAL, via ArchDaily).

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Fig. 103: Interior of the Library in the Earth / Hiroshi Nakamura & NAP. Source: Koji Fujii / TOREAL, via ArchDaily).

Case Study for **Library**
Library in the Earth / Hiroshi Nakamura & NAP, Kisarazu Japan, 2022

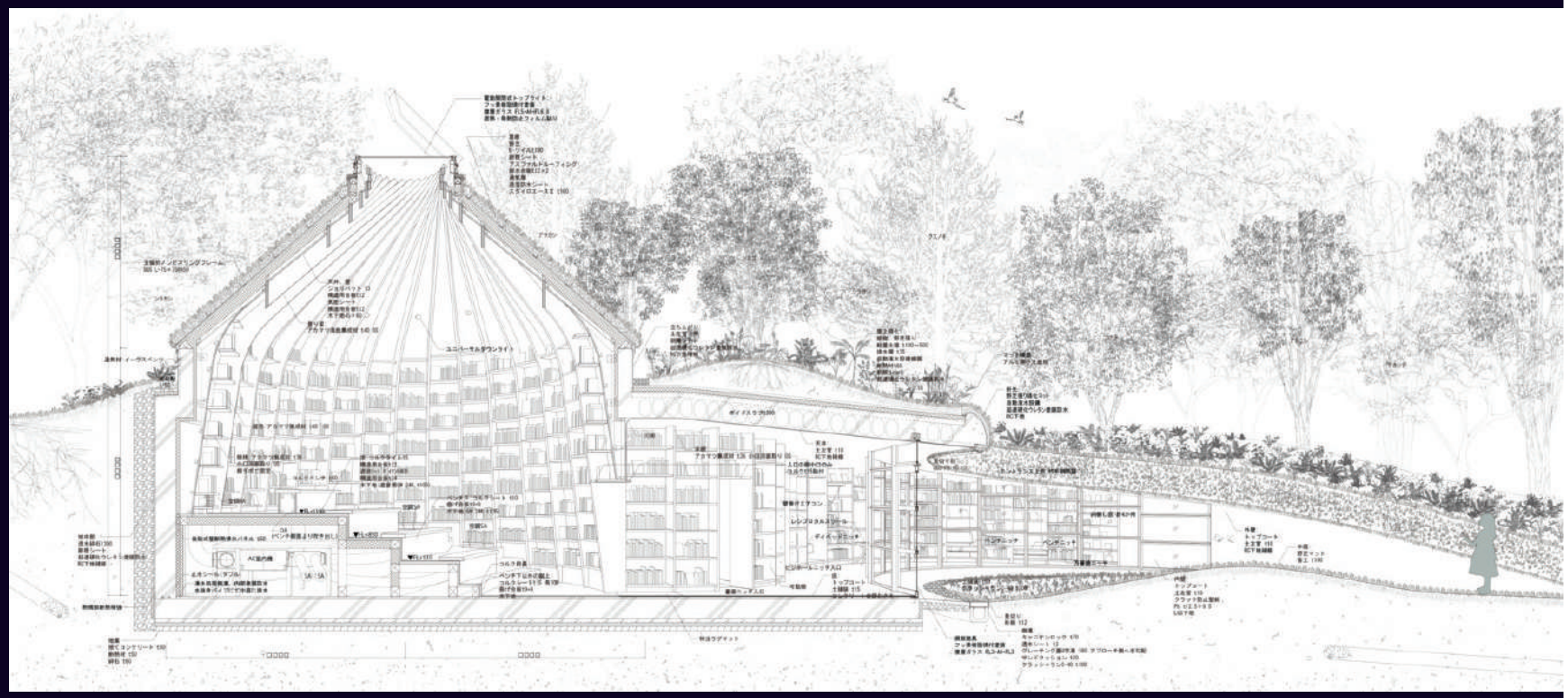


Fig. 106: Section of the Library in the Earth / Hiroshi Nakamura & NAP ©Hiroshi Nakamura, via ArchDaily).

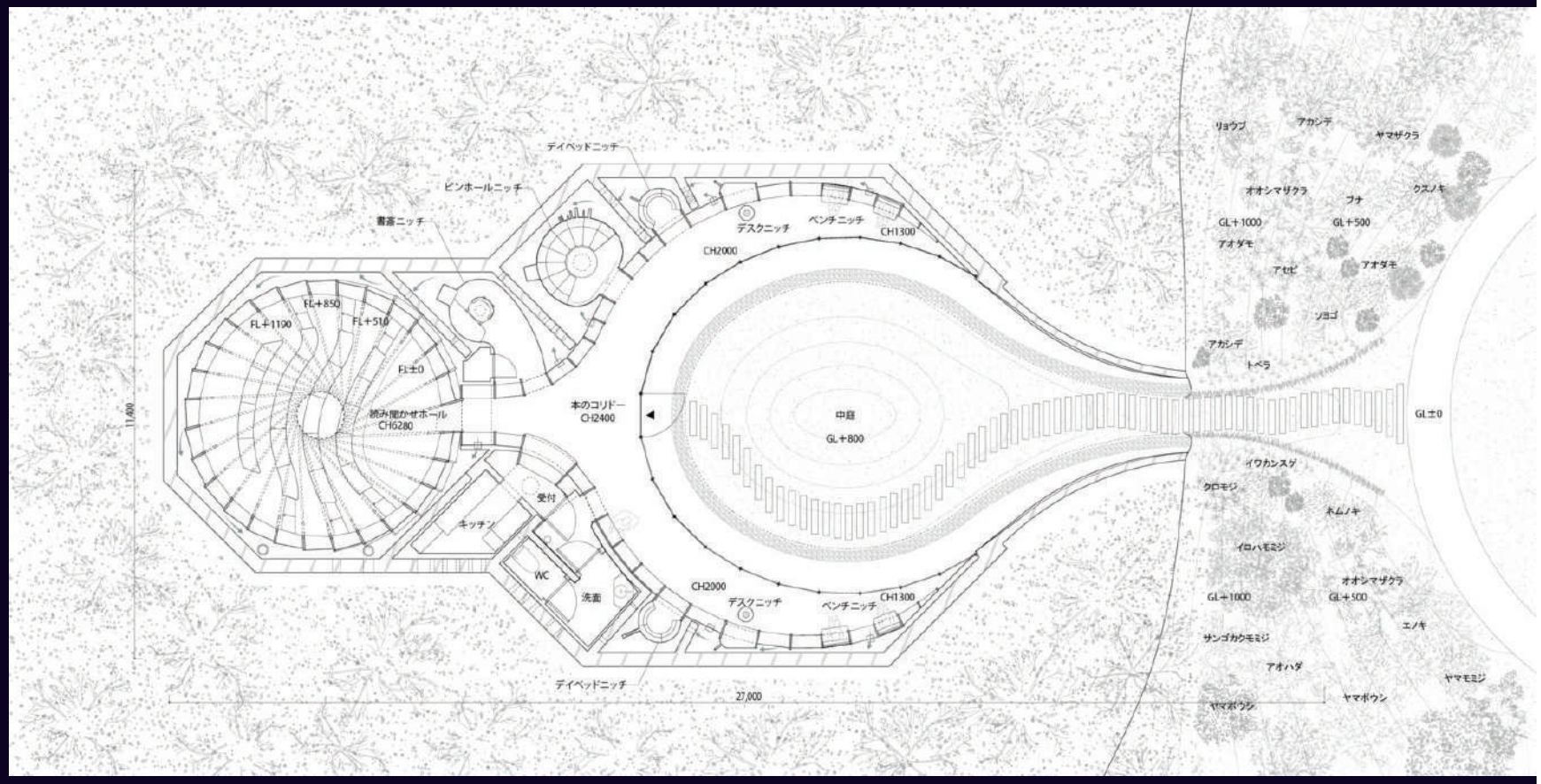
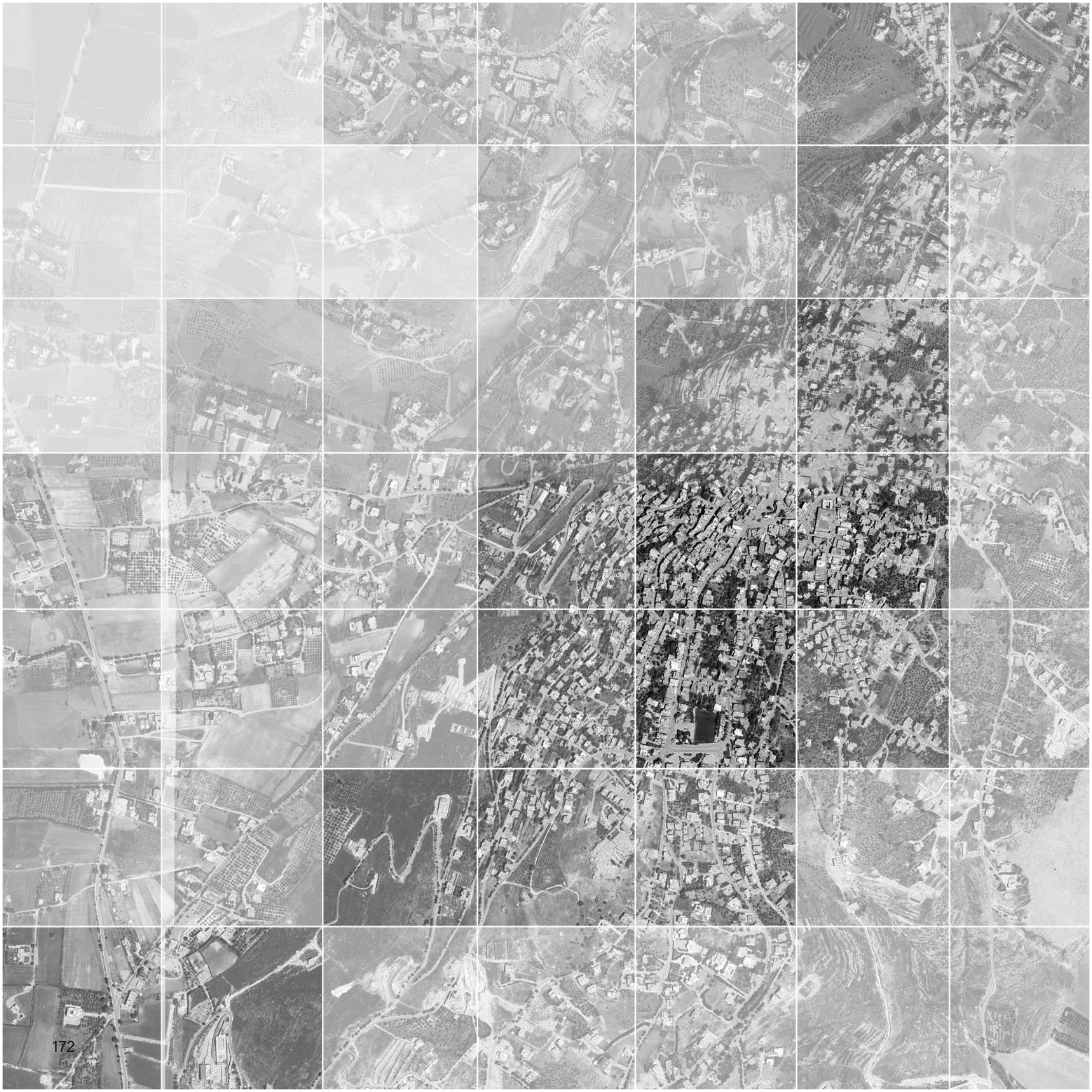
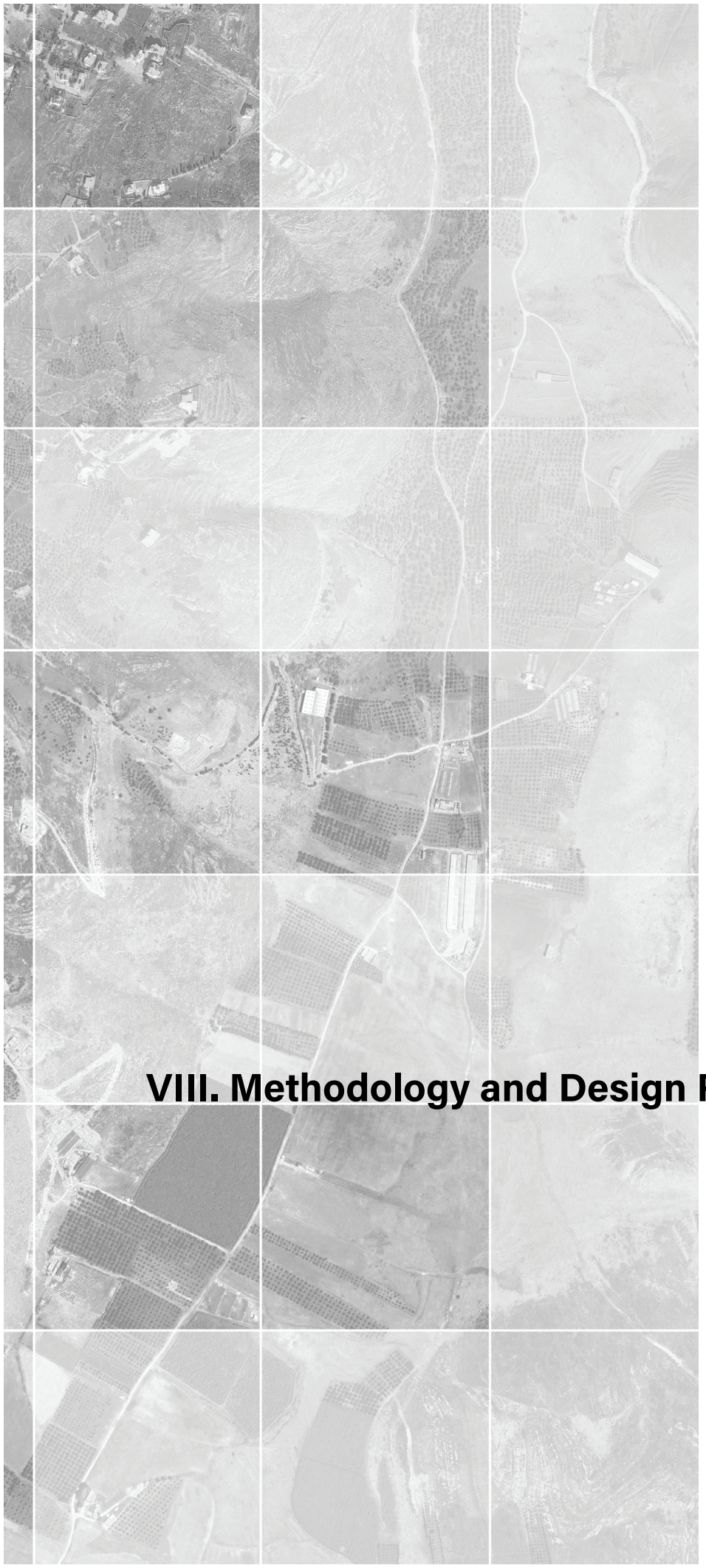


Fig 104- 105: Night pictures of the Library in the Earth / Hiroshi Nakamura & NAP © Koji Fujii / TOREAL, via Arch-Daily).

Fig. 107: Plan of the Library in the Earth / Hiroshi Nakamura & NAP © Hiroshi Nakamura, via ArchDaily).





VIII. Methodology and Design Proposal

This geopolitical map illustrates the spatial dynamics of the ongoing Lebanese–Israeli conflict, situating Lebanon within its broader regional and historical context. It highlights urbanized areas across Lebanon, Syria, and Israel, primary transportation networks, river systems, and the evolution of political borders following the 1948 armistice and the 1967 war. Areas affected by evacuation orders issued in March of 2026 and zones impacted by conflict are emphasized, revealing the scale of territorial vulnerability and civilian displacement.

The map identifies Khiam as a focal case study within South Lebanon, positioned near the international border and within a heavily affected evacuation zone. Its proximity to contested territories, including the Shebaa Farms and the Golan Heights, underscores its strategic geopolitical significance.

Through layered cartographic information, the map frames South Lebanon as a landscape where political boundaries, military pressures, and civilian life continuously interact.

I - Geopolitical map of the Current Lebanese-Israeli War (Panel 1_by Author)

Geopolitical map of the current Lebanese - Israeli War

(Since 1948 - March 2026)

Scale: 1 / 300 000

I

Legend

- Urbanized Areas of Lebanon, Syria and Israel
- Evacuation Orders by Israel in March 2026
- Primary Arterial Road
- Areas Acquired following the 6 Day War in 1967
- Borders following 1948 | Creation of Israel
- New Borders following the 6 Day War in 1967
- Main Streets
- Secondary Important street connections
- Rivers

Beirut faced 6 large-scale bombardment

1. 1978 - Operation Litani
2. 1982 - Siege and invasion
3. 1993 - Operation Accountability
4. 1996 - Operation Grapes of Wrath
5. 2006 - Lebanon
6. 2023-2026 Escalation

Main Evacuation Road
| Lack of Connectivity roads
| High Traffic during evacuations

Number of displaced people in March 2026
from south Lebanon and Affected Areas in Beirut

670, 000 - 1, 000, 000
Lebanese civilians

EVACUATION ORDERS OF IN **BEIRUT** on March 2026

EVACUATION ORDERS OF **160 CITIES AND VILLAGES** on March 2026

20 % of the Area of Lebanon

Case Study : **Khiam Village**

Invasion of South Lebanon in 1978

Lebanese - Israeli Border defined in 1949 in armistice

New Adimistrative borders following the 6 Day war in 1967

LEBANON

SYRIA

ISRAEL

Shebaa Farms from Leb

Golan Heights from Syria

20 Km

This map documents the spatial footprint of destruction in South Lebanon during the immediate war **aftermath between 20 September and 14 October 2024**, presenting a territorial reading of damage intensity across the southern governorates. Using graduated circular markers, it quantifies buildings destroyed per settlement cluster, with darker and larger symbols indicating higher concentrations of damage. The distribution reveals a dense belt of destruction along the southern frontier adjacent to Israel, with clusters intensifying near contested border zones and major transportation corridors.

Topographic shading emphasizes how patterns of destruction align with valley systems, road networks, and settlement concentrations. The map situates affected towns within their infrastructural framework by showing primary and secondary roads.

Supplementary statistical insets summarize the broader conflict context, reporting combined attack counts and casualty figures while contrasting Israeli and Hezbollah strike totals, thereby linking localized spatial damage to the wider scale of military exchanges.

The cartography ultimately conveys a geography of concentrated border violence, where settlement vulnerability increases with proximity to contested frontiers and strategic corridors.

II - War AfterMath
(Panel 2_by Author)

War AfterMath

(Between September 20th 2024 - October 14th 2024)

Scale: 1 / 150 000

Legend Buildings Destroyed:

- 50 or more
- 30 to 39
- 20 to 29
- 10 to 19
- 1 to 9

- Borders following 1948 | Creation of Israel
- Disputed Borders After the 6 Day War in 1967
- Main Streets
- Secondary Streets

The Circle covers aproximatively **2. 66 Km²**

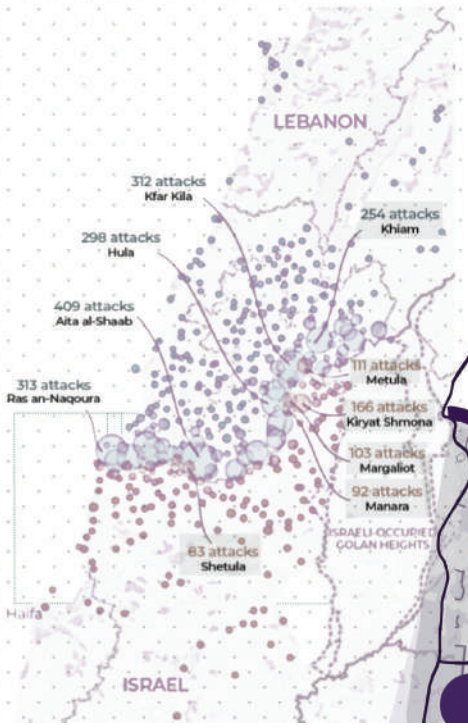
Case Study: **Khiam Village**

10,214 Combined attacks **784** Combined deaths

8,313 Israeli attacks **752** Lebanese deaths

1,901 Hezbollah attacks **33** Israeli deaths

(Between October 7th 2023 - September 20th 2024)



EVACUATION ORDERS OF **160 CITIES AND VILLAGES** on March 2026

Sidon/Sayda

Tyre/Sour

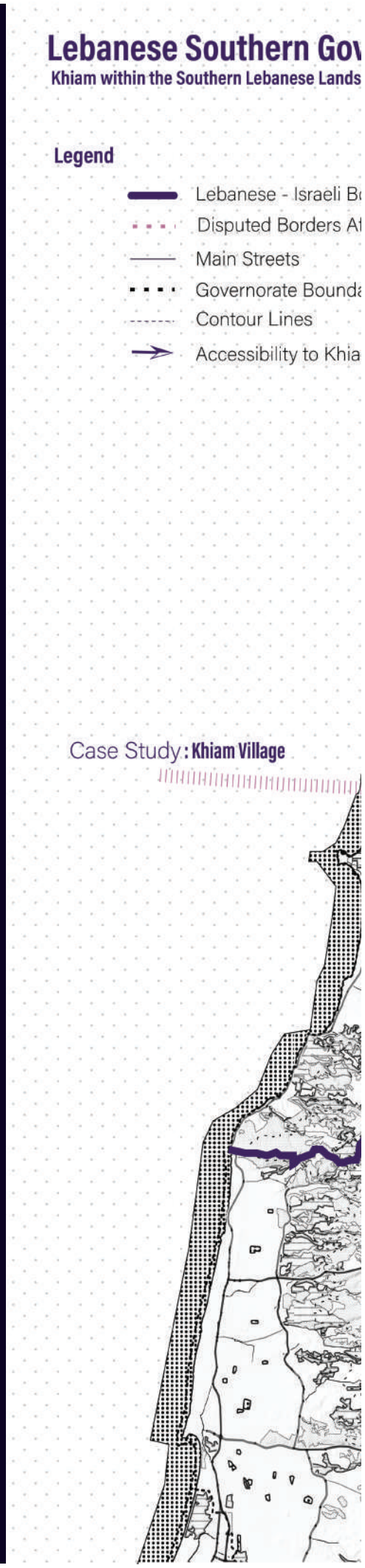
LEBANON

Golan Heights

ISRAEL

10 Km

The town of Khiam is situated in the Marjayoun District of South Lebanon, Nabatiyeh Governorate, approximately **5 km north of the international border with Israel** and at an elevation of about **720 m above sea level**, placing it directly within a contested frontier zone at the southern edge of the Lebanese state. From Khiam, **the Mediterranean coastline lies roughly 90–100 km to the west–southwest**, defining the nearest major maritime access relative to the town's inland highland position. **The city of Damascus, Syria's capital, is** approximately **190–200 km to the east–northeast**, situating Khiam within a wider Levantine corridor that historically connects South Lebanon with the Syrian interior. These distances highlight the town's location at the intersection of national borders, highland terrain, and long-distance regional axes.



III- Lebanese South Governorates (Panel 3_by Author)

vernates

cape

order

fter 1967

ary

m

DAMASCUS GOVERNORATE

NABATIEH GOVERNORATE

SOUTH GOVERNORATE

QUNEITRA GOVERNORATE

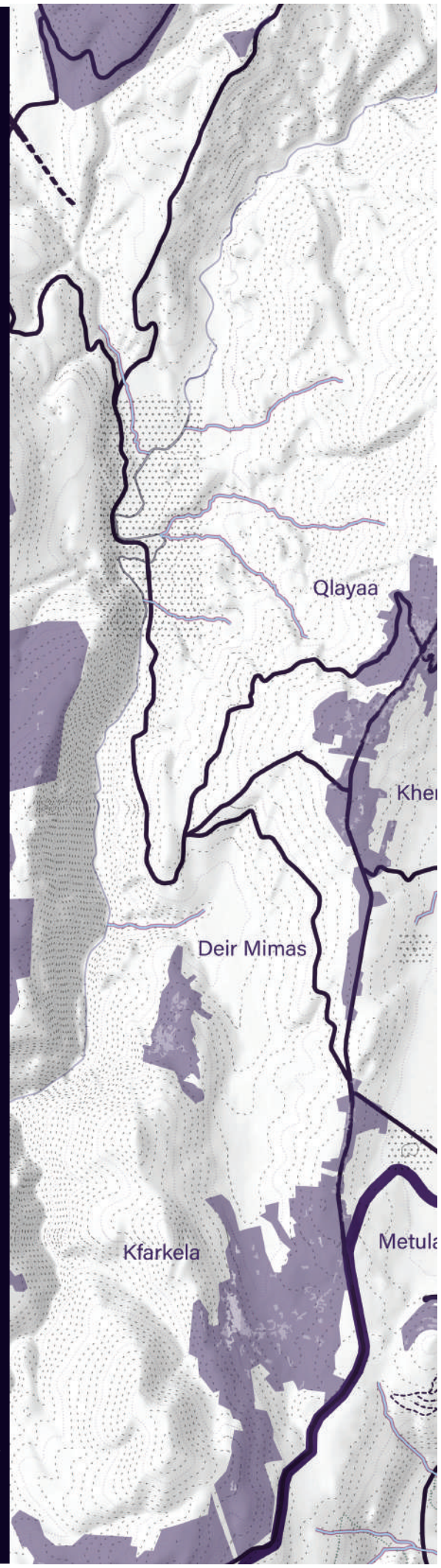
DARAA GOVERNORATE

50 Km

This map situates Khiam within the mountainous landscape of South Lebanon, highlighting how terrain, infrastructure, and geopolitics shape its territorial significance. Contour lines and elevation markers show a rugged topography ranging from valley floors to high ridgelines, with Khiam positioned on an elevated plateau that overlooks surrounding settlements and transit corridors. Urban areas cluster along accessible slopes and valley edges, reflecting the influence of terrain on settlement distribution.

Road networks and river systems structure regional connectivity, illustrating how movement converges toward Khiam through a hierarchy of main and secondary routes. The town lies approximately 10 km from the Lebanese –Israeli border, emphasizing its location within a sensitive frontier zone shaped by surveillance, defense, and historical conflict. Nearby towns, including Marjayoun and Metula, reinforce Khiam's position within a dense cross-border territorial system.

By layering topography, accessibility, and political boundaries, the map presents Khiam as a strategically elevated inland node where landscape morphology directly influences mobility, visibility, and territorial control.



IV - Territorial Context
Khiam within the southern Lebanese borders (Panel 4_by Author)

Territorial Context

Khiam within the Southern Lebanese Landscape

Khiam lies in the eastern sector of South Lebanon, within the Marjayoun district, overlooking the Hula Valley to the south. The town occupies a strategic elevated terrain between: **Mount Hermon's western foothills** and the **fertile plains descending toward Palestine**. This position historically allowed control over agricultural lands, water resources, and regional circulation routes **linking inland Lebanon to the southern borderlands**.

Case Study : **Khiam Village**

Blat
800m
Dibbine
Rachaya Al Foukar
Marjaayoun
780m
600m
Ebel El Saqi
505m
800m
Rachaya Al Foukar
1000m
800m
Kfarhamam
650m
730m
485m
390m
Mari
1000m
rbeh
520m
Halta
530m
Ain Arab
600m
10 Km to Border
Lebanese - Israeli Border
Wazzani
5 Km

Population of Khiam Village

28, 580
Registered Population

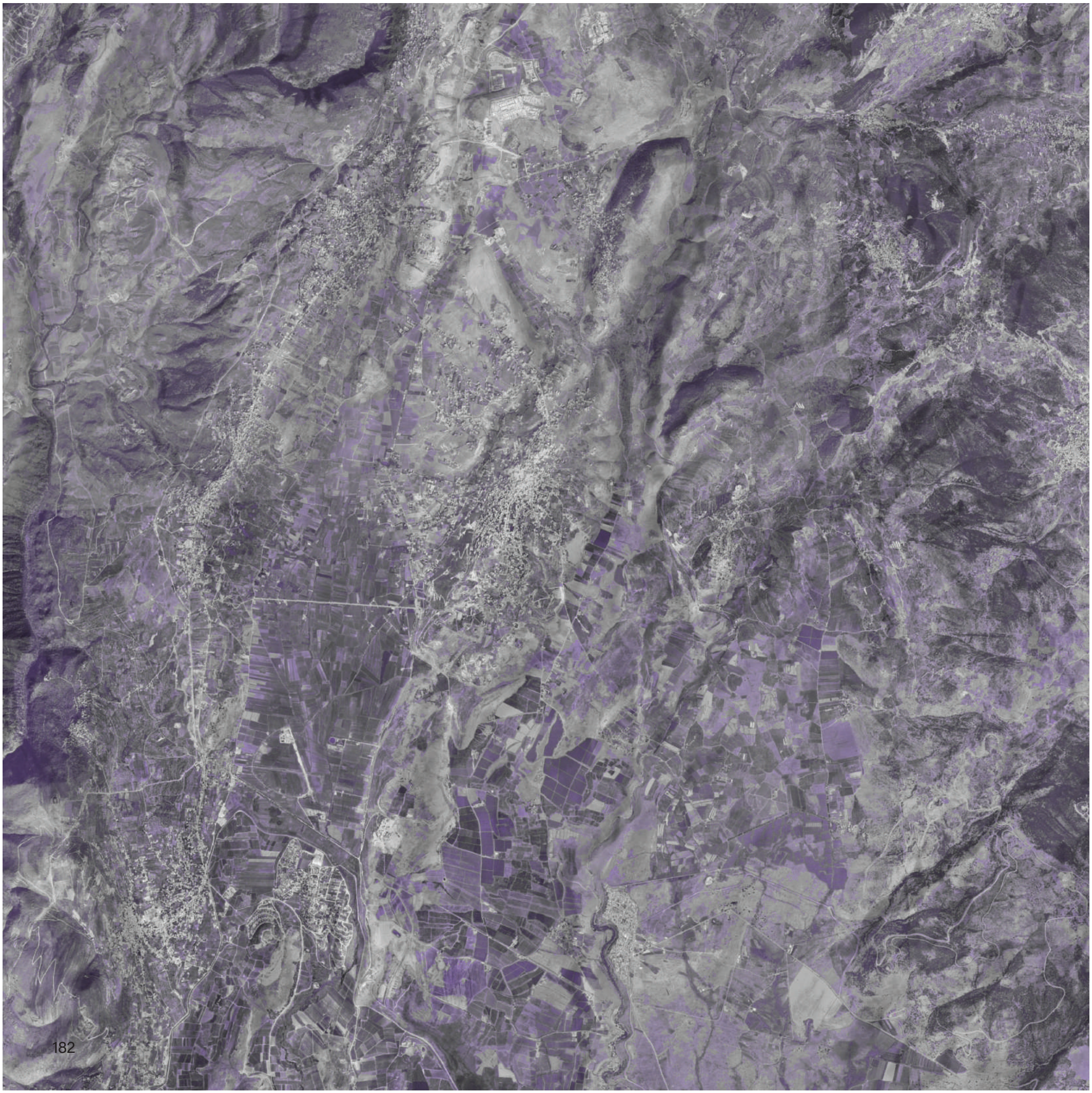
9000
Residents

Military AirPort
(by French Forces in 1920s)

Legend

- Urbanized Areas
- Lebanese - Israeli Border
- Main Streets
- Secondary Streets
- Contour Lines
- Rivers
- Accessibility to Khiam

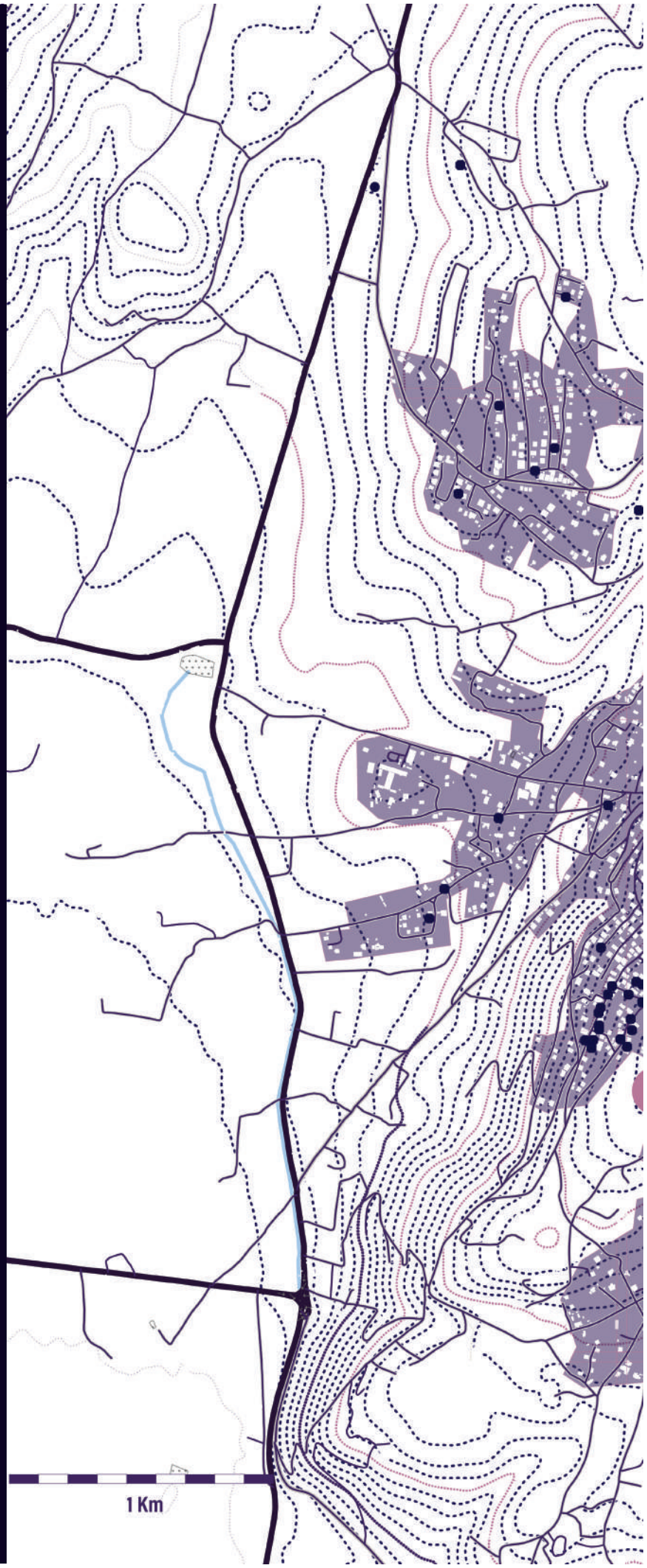
Scale: 1 / 30 000



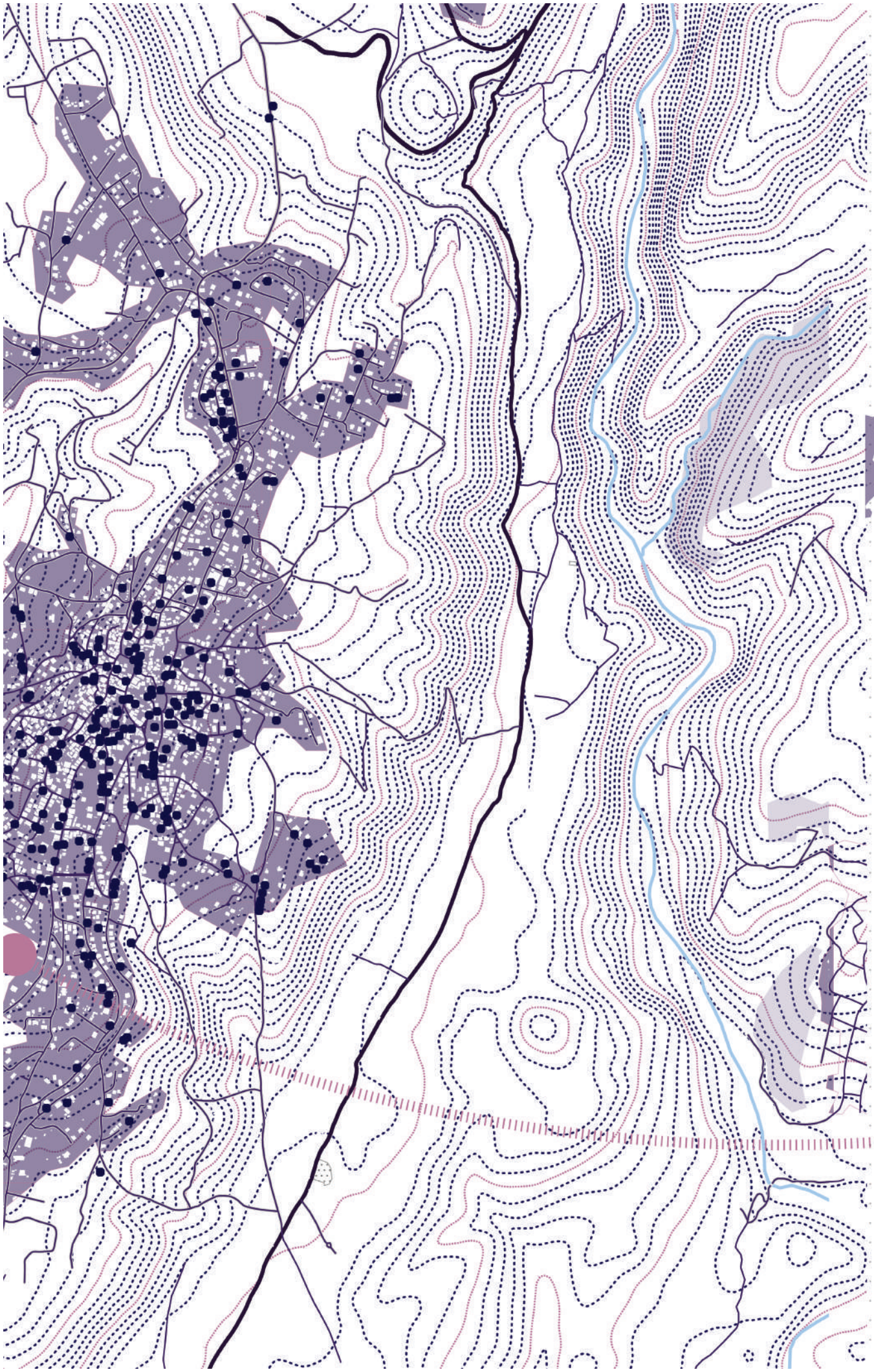
This map documents the spatial impact of aerial bombardment on Khiam by plotting recorded strike locations across the town's territory. The distribution of impact points illustrates the extent to which residential zones, service networks, and circulation routes were affected. Quantitative overlays indicate that approximately 50% of the urban fabric, 60% of buildings, and 80% of infrastructure systems sustained severe damage or destruction, demonstrating the scale of physical alteration within the settlement.

Khiam's municipal territory extends over roughly 24 km, while its urbanized footprint covers approximately 3–4 km, concentrating most residential and service functions within a compact built area. Demographic data further contextualize these changes by comparing population figures before and after the 2024 conflict period. Prior to the events, the town accommodated an estimated 28,500 registered inhabitants. By early 2025, the number of active residents had decreased to approximately 9,000, reflecting significant displacement and reduced occupancy levels.

Through the combination of spatial impact mapping, destruction ratios, and demographic comparison, the map presents a measurable assessment of how the town's built environment and population distribution have changed over time.



V - Urban Fabric and War Damage Map
(Panel 5_by Author)

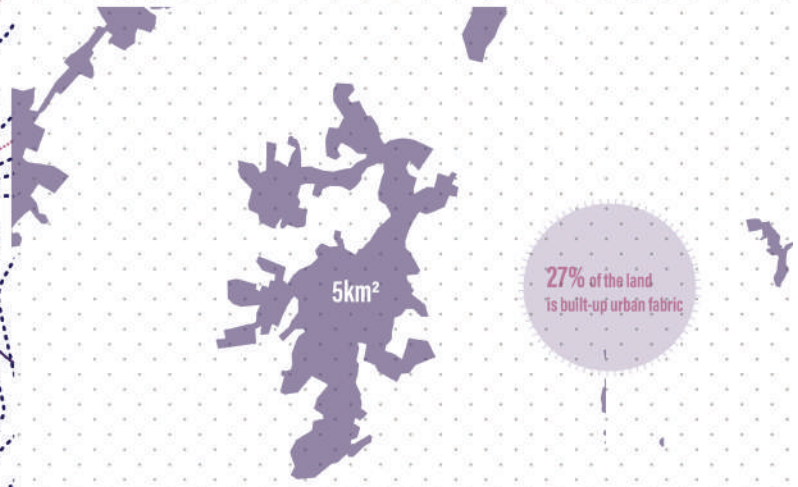


Urban Fabric and War Damage Map

Khiam Village as Study Case

Before Oct 2023: **~18,000 residents**
2023–2024 war: **town largely emptied**
2025 return: **~900 families came back**
2026 escalation: **new evacuation**

Population Changes
Pre- Oct 2023 - March 2026



800
Buildings Damaged or Destroyed

50%
Urban fabric affected

80%
Infrastructure Destroyed

War Aftermath
Oct 2023 - Dec 2024

The Khiam Detention Center

1. **Original construction (French Mandate)** — 1933 | an army barracks and observation post
2. **Lebanese Army use** — 1943–1978 | Military Base.
3. **Israeli occupation & militia control** — 1978–2000 | converted into a detention center and eventually a prison
4. **Hezbollah and Residents of Khiam** — After 2000 | turned into a museum/memorial for former prisoners

Legend

- Urbanized Areas
- Main Streets
- Secondary Streets
- Contour Lines
- Rivers
- Bombs dropped
  Between Oct 2023 - Dec 2024

Scale: 1 / 10 000

V I- Spatial Layers of Memory
(Panel 6_by Author)

1

Urban Artifacts

In Khiam, absence itself becomes an urban artifact — a spatial residue that testifies to interrupted continuity and collective trauma.

Rubble and Debris as Urban Artifacts

2

Weak Architecture

Khiam embodies an architecture of weakness where fragmentation produces adaptability, enabling spaces and materials to be reused and reinterpreted across changing political and social conditions.

Damaged Walls to be Reused

3

Architecture of Resistance

Architecture does not replace destruction; it negotiates with it. Memory anchors space, fragmentation enables adaptation, and new layers of life emerge through building within ruins rather than erasing them.

View from the Hilltop of Khiam

500 m

The town of Khiam is situated in the Marjayoun District of South Lebanon, Nabatiyeh Governorate, approximately **5 km north of the international border with Israel** and at an elevation of about **720 m above sea level**, placing it directly within a contested frontier zone at the southern edge of the Lebanese state. From Khiam, **the Mediterranean coastline lies roughly 90–100 km to the west–southwest**, defining the nearest major maritime access relative to the town's inland highland position. **The city of Damascus, Syria's capital, is approximately 190–200 km to the east–northeast**, situating Khiam within a wider Levantine corridor that historically connects South Lebanon with the Syrian interior. These distances highlight the town's location at the intersection of national borders, highland terrain, and long-distance regional axes.

In recent conflicts, the proximity of Khiam to the border has translated into humanitarian impacts and evacuation directives. Military forces have issued evacuation warnings for large areas of southern Lebanon extending north of border towns, including Khiam, as part of broader displacement orders covering territory south of the Litani River: a major geographic demarcation in the region, which spans tens of kilometres inland.

VII - Placelessness in Khiam Village
(Panel 7_by Author)

Placelessness in Khiam Village

Google Earth Image updated half the satellite image/footage
Last update: January 2026

The Existing: Khiam Before October 7th 2023

Place emerges where built form supports lived experience and shared memory.

Bomb Traces: Khiam After December 2024

interruption of routines
fragmentation of spatial memory
loss of familiar reference points

The Empty Plot of Memory

The disappearance of built form produces a condition of placelessness, where the erasure of spatial structure destabilizes identity while leaving a memory-saturated ground

Scale: 1 / 2 000

Legend: Bombs dropped
Between Oct 2023 - Dec 2024

Part 1 . Methodology
Weakness, Resistance, and Memory in Post-Conflict Architecture

1. INTERVENTION
(Ethical Position)

Ignasi de Solà-Morales
Lebbeus Woods

A. Weak Architecture (Solà-Morales)
| - Juxtaposition
| - Superimposition
| - Folding realities
| - Refusal to dominate
| - Multiplicity of time

B. Resistance Architecture (Woods)
| - Architecture is political
| - No neutral reconstruction
| - Rupture remains visible
| - Grafting onto ruins
| - Differentiation, not repair

2. URBAN STRUCTURE
(Village as Memory)

Aldo Rossi

|---- A. City as Collective Artifact
| - Repository of history
| - Memory embedded in form
|
|---- B. Urban Artifacts
| - Buildings
| - Streets
| - Districts
| - In Khiam →ABSENCE as artifact

|---- C. Monuments / Primary Elements
| - Mosque
| - School
| - Municipality
| - Permanence through memory
|
|---- D. Core vs Periphery
- Core: dense, coherent, memory-bound
- Periphery: flexible, evolving dwellings

3. MATERIALITY
(Tectonic Grounding)

Kenneth Frampton

Tectonic Expression
| - Tectonic Expression
| - Resistance to Universalization
| - Topographical Responsiveness
| - Critical Regionalism
| - Environmental Mediation

1. INTERVENTION
(Ethical Position)

Ignasi de Solà-Morales
Lebbeus Woods

Weakness <----------> Resistance
(allow plurality) (insist on legibility of rupture)

2. URBAN STRUCTURE
(Village as Memory)

Aldo Rossi

Urban arctifacts as the abscence and the traces of the destroyed built fabric

3. MATERIALITY
(Tectonic Grounding)

Kenneth Frampton

A tectonic discipline that grounds intervention in territory, climate, and material reality

Part 1 . Methodology
Khiam following the Israeli-Hezbollah's conflict in November 2024.

P- Khiam Assestment Post 2024 Conflicts
Scale:1/2000

Streets
Remaining Buildings
Damaged Buildings
Destroyed Buildings
Bombs Dropped by the IDF
Important Public Facilities

Q- Khiam's Key facilities and Public Areas
Scale: 1/2000

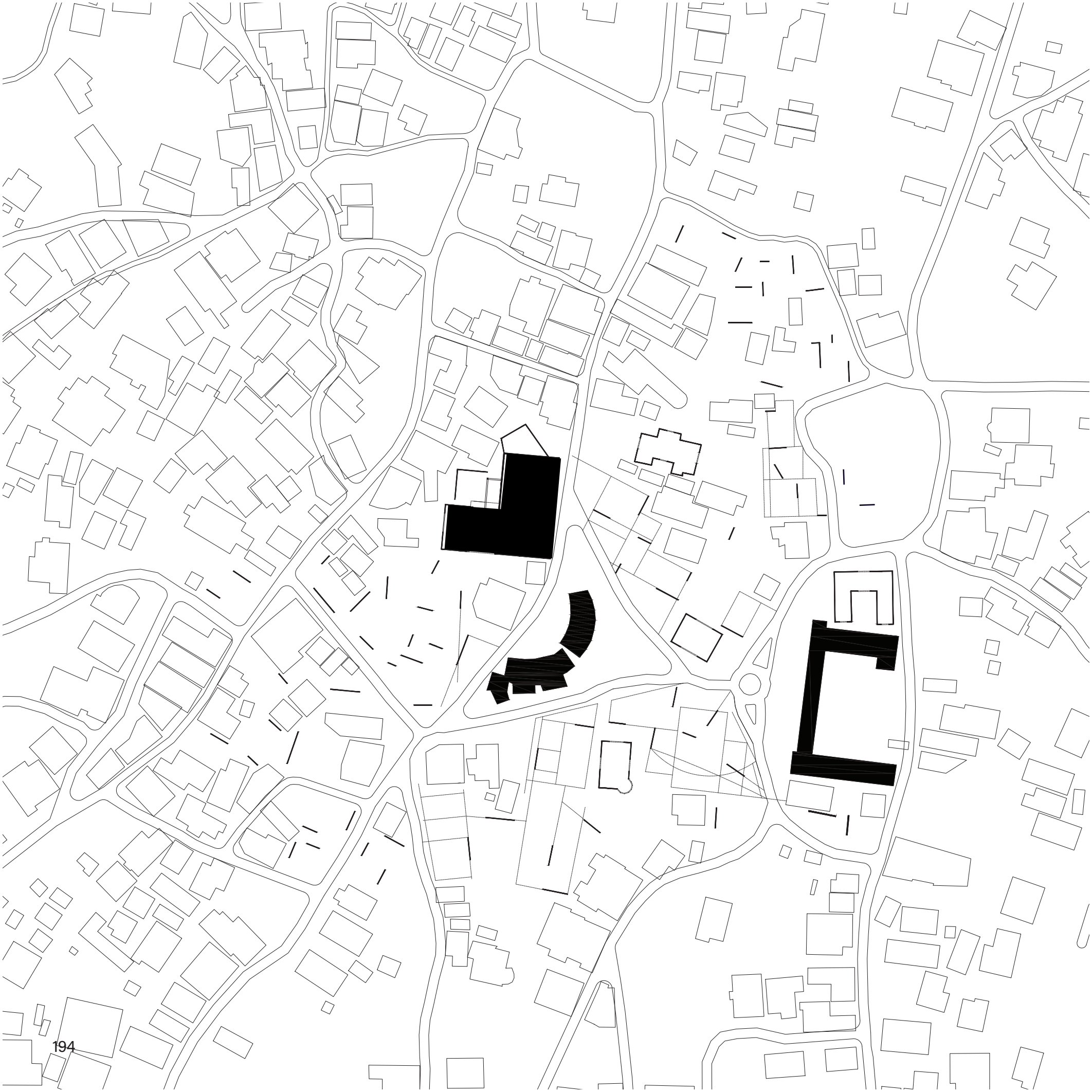
Streets
Remaining Buildings
Damaged Buildings
Destroyed Buildings
Public Outdoor Area
Key Public Buildings
to Intervene:
Mosque, Library, Club

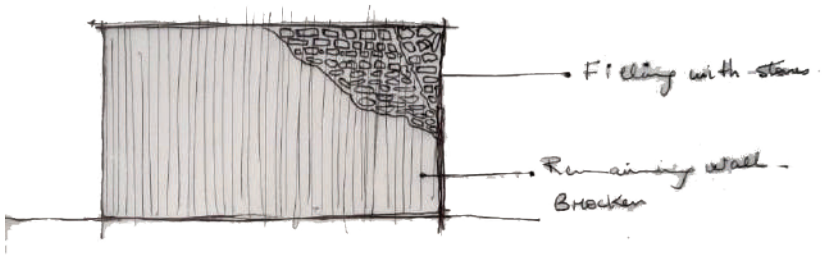
R- Khiam's damaged plots and buildings
Scale: 1/2000
The Plots and semi-destroyed buildings

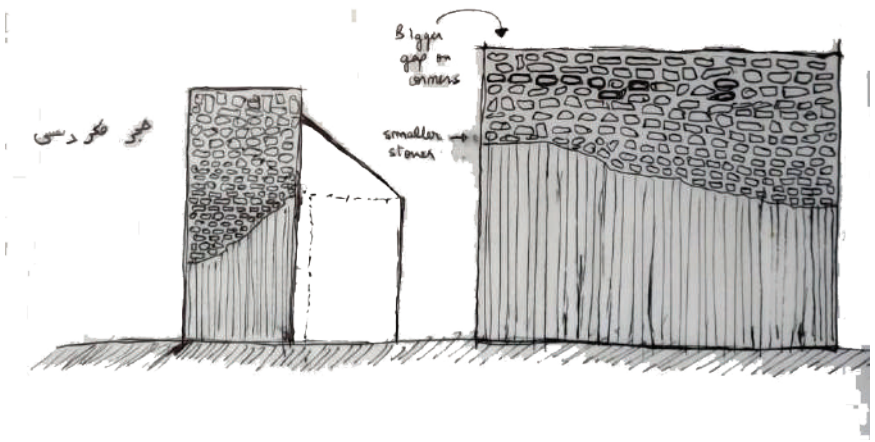
Streets
Remaining Buildings
Damaged Buildings
Plots to be re-built and re-imagined

S- Khiam's emptiness
Scale: 1/2000
The destroyed built fabric

Streets
Remaining Buildings







Sketches for the concept of re-usage of destroyed walls

T- Khiam's Masterplan Post-Conflict
Scale: 1/1000

Streets
Remaining Buildings
Buildings to replace

Part 2. Methodology through the different lenses.

1| Domestic Level: Memory Through Retention

At the domestic level, reconstruction engages directly with memory through material strategy. Standing walls that survived destruction are preserved and filled with stone, clearly differentiated from new construction. This creates a readable stratification between past and present, allowing memory to remain embedded within the rebuilt fabric. New residential units share a unified material language, consistent roof access through stairs, and articulated balconies, establishing visual coherence across the village. This repetition is not aesthetic uniformity but a deliberate formation of collective identityproducing a unified architectural front that reinforces belonging while remaining rooted in the traces of what endured.

This map dissects the layered aftermath of war in Khiam by distinguishing between standing buildings, destroyed structures, and those severely affected and in need of intensive repair. The built fabric is read not only as a binary of standing or fallen, but as a gradient of vulnerability and resilience.

This is an abstract reality of the Khiam, as the information to which walls can be kept standing is not available uptodate of March 2026.
It is evidently clear on the other hand, following the two visits conducted in 2025, that there are walls that can be preserved, and reused as a way to ensure continuity of visibility of war, legibility and physical presence of the memory. Solid lines represent buildings that remain structurally intact—witnesses of survival—while dotted outlines trace the ghosts of those erased, marking their footprints in the memory of the town.

The walls are kept as witness of the material world to the reality of the village of Khiam.

Fig. 109 - 110 -111: Diagrams and images to clarify concept idea , by author via Ai.

1| Domestic Level: Memory Through Retention

The standing walls that remain will ensure continuity with the old grid while acting as visible evidence of the destruction inflicted on Lebanese villages during the 2024–2025 Israeli strikes.
The debris will be reused to refill the retaining walls needed for the underground project and to shape the urban furniture of Khiam: streets, benches, stairs, and public elements. The material of destruction becomes part of the reconstruction itself.

Sorting Sites or Hubs:
Recyclable Materials : concrete, stone and steel

Concrete and rubble: Crushed for use in road base or new underground construction.

Steel and metals: Melted down and reused.

Wood: Recycled for furniture or construction, though it often has limited reuse due to damage or contamination.

Fig. 112: Picture of Destroyed house in Khiam Village Lebanon. 2025, by author.

Typologies of the buildings of Khiam

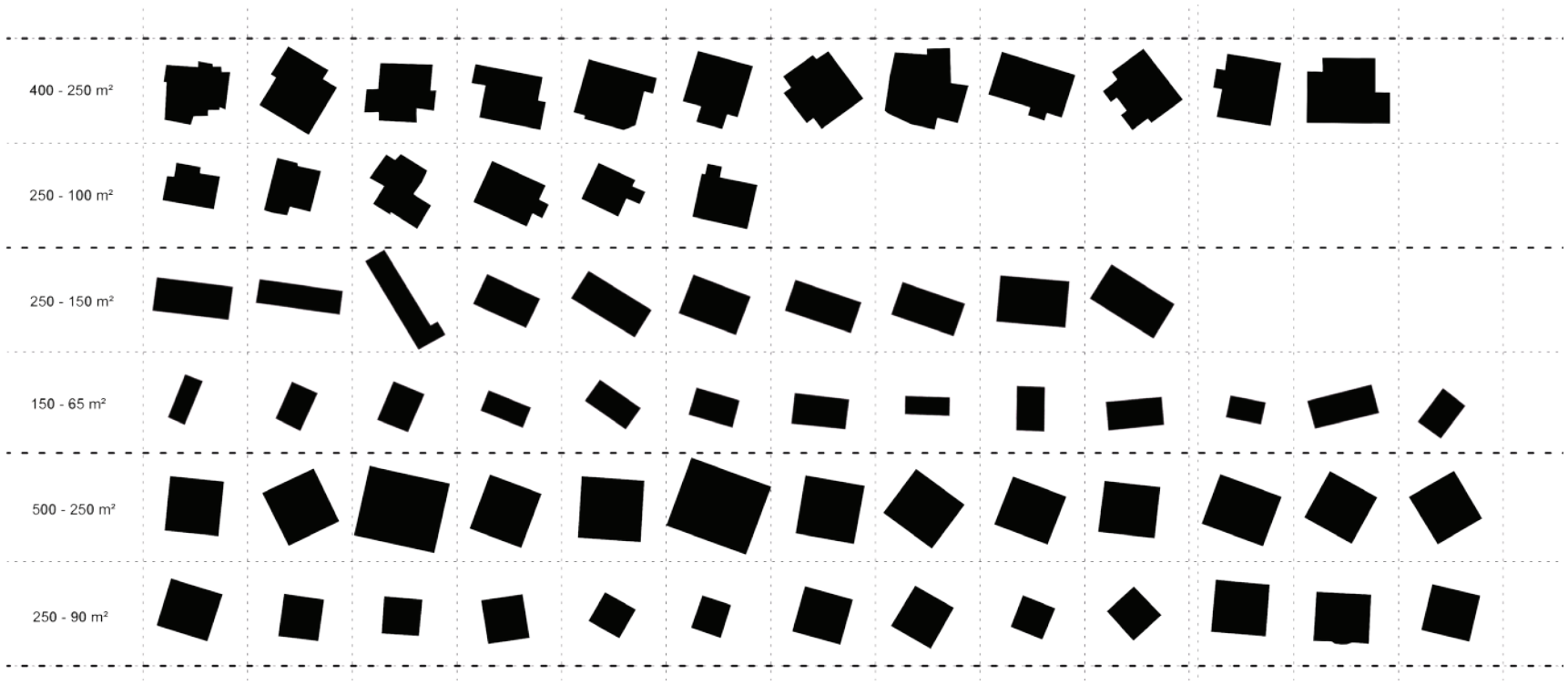


Fig. 113:
Typologies of the Residential Buildings of khiam, by author.

Proposed typologies for the rebuilding of the residential fabric of Khiam

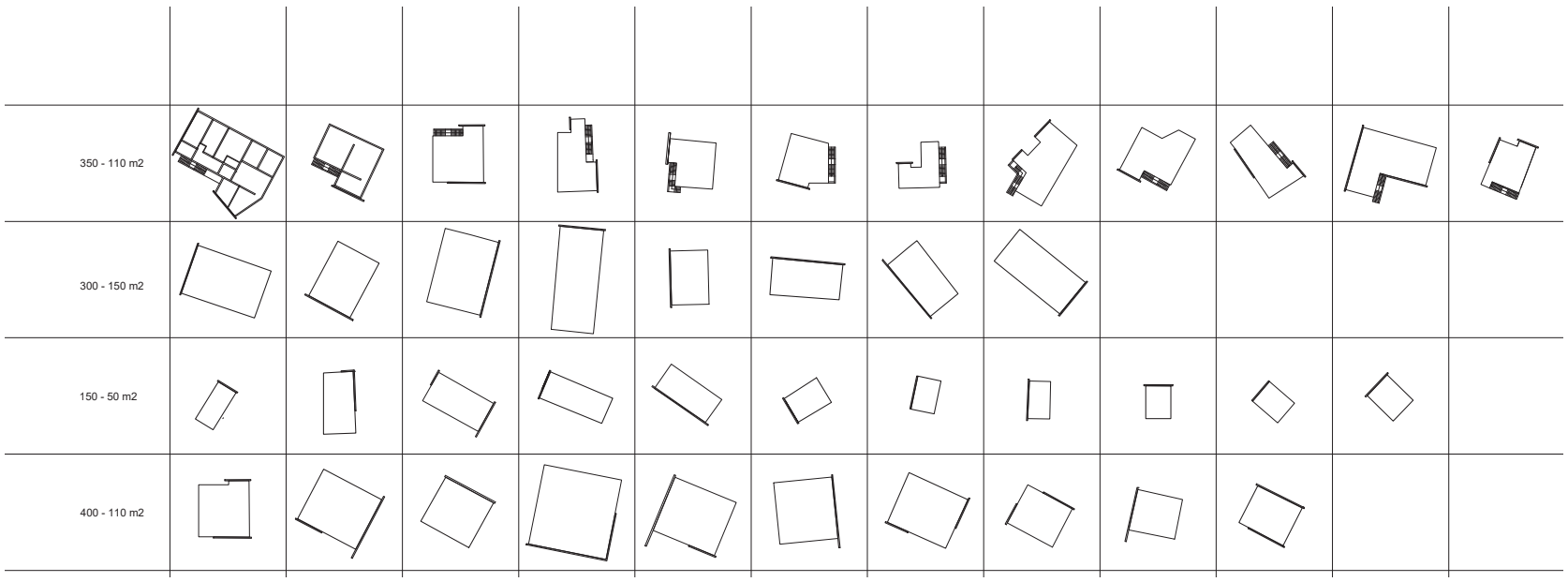


Fig. 114:
Typologies of the Proposed Buildings of khiam, by author.

The buildings are mainly of concrete, stones and openings for windows and balconies

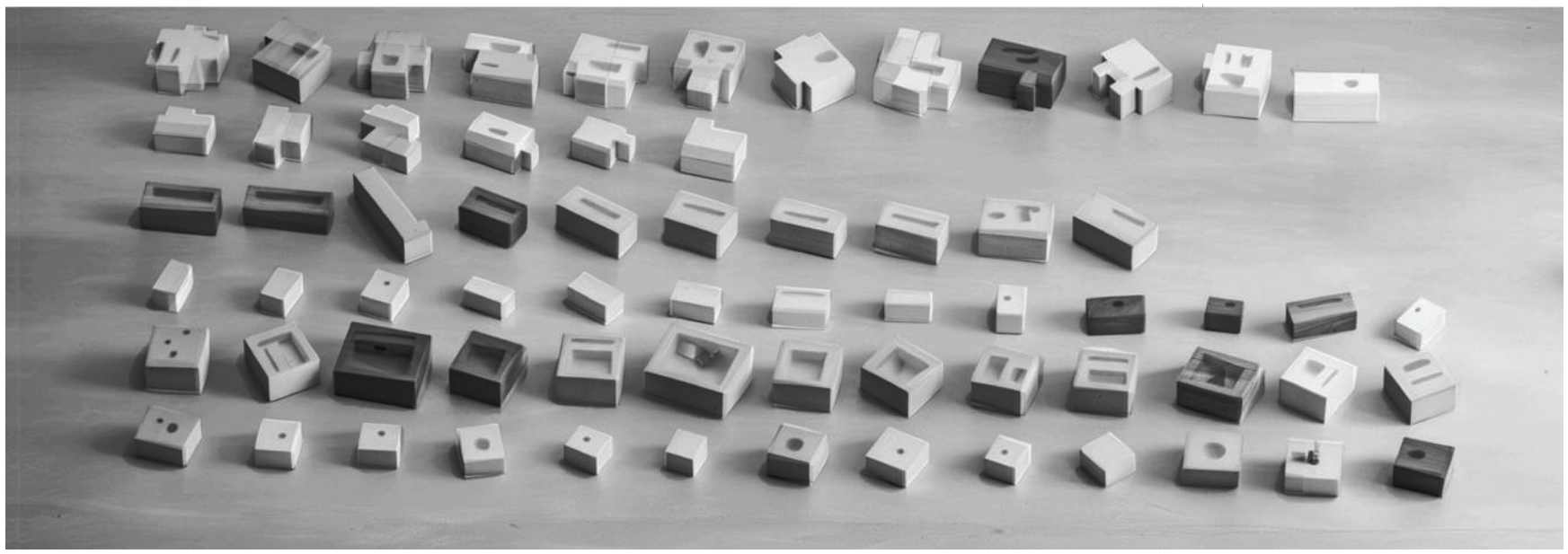


Fig. 115: Typologies of the Residential Buildings of khiam 3D, by author.

The walls are in “reflief”, clearly seperated from the new built, filled with stones when damaged. The walls of semi-stones, the stairs to the rooftop and a unified materiality is what differentiates the new fabric from the old.

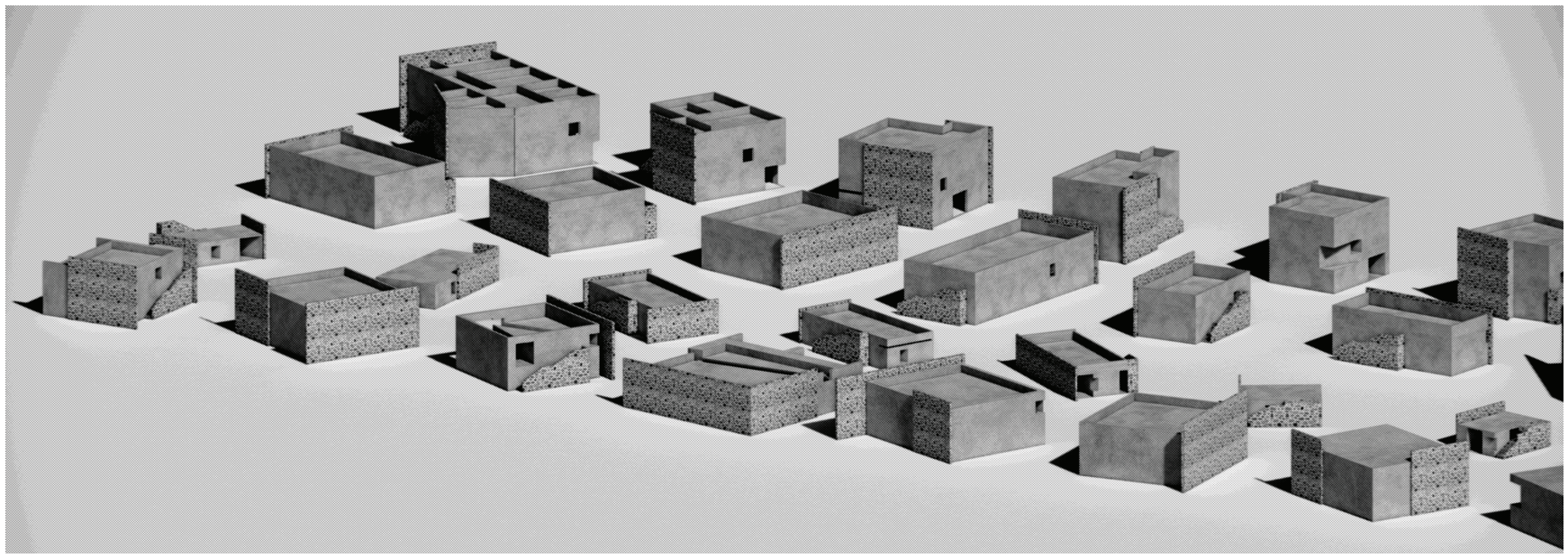


Fig. 116: Typologies of the Proposed Buildings of khiam, by author.

2| Subterranean Level: Urban voids as Counter-Geography

At the subterranean level, the proposal introduces a network of tunnels connecting different parts of Khiam. This underground layer creates an alternative spatial experience, both for residents and for visitors from outside South Lebanon and Lebanon. The descent produces a deliberate separation from the exposed surface condition, generating a phenomenological rupture from the "upper world." The underground becomes a space of controlled movement, introspection, and symbolic protection: an architectural construction of safety, spirituality, and an experiential sense of sovereignty. Rather than denying vulnerability, it proposes a counter-topography in which space itself mediates protection and perception.

In the context of Khiam, the proposal to introduce an underground tunnel as the principal threshold into the mosque is not merely a circulation strategy; it is a deliberate architectural act that challenges the dominant narratives and connotations associated with subterranean space in Lebanon and Palestine. Across the region, tunnels have historically emerged as products of crisis — improvised infrastructures of protection, survival, or resistance. Their functions have evolved over time: from shelters during bombardment, to clandestine routes for mobility, to defensive or logistical systems shaped by political necessity. As such, the tunnel in the Levantine imagination is often burdened with associations of secrecy, danger, marginality, and the "underclass." It is typically perceived as a space of dimness, uncertainty, and precarity — a byproduct of conflict rather than a deliberate architectural or civic space.

However, this project intentionally reverses that logic. Instead of treating the underground as a place of hiding or deprivation, the tunnel in Khiam is reconceptualized as a conveyor of truth: a spatial device that reveals rather than conceals the lived reality of the residents. This reframing aligns with theoretical discussions around critical regionalism and phenomenological architecture, in which the material and topographic conditions of a site become tools for grounding collective memory and producing spatial authenticity (Frampton, 1983).

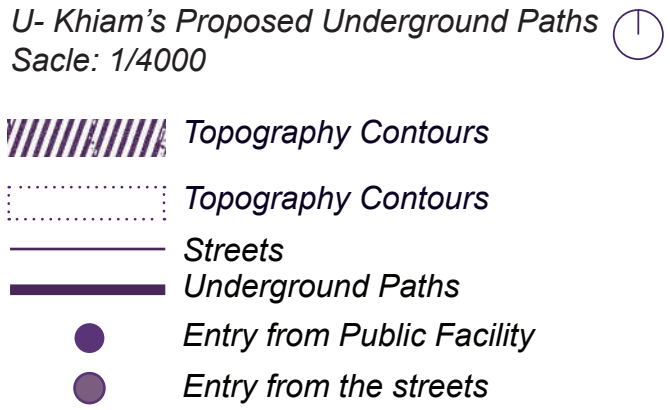
Norberg-Schulz argues that architecture makes dwelling possible by concretizing the relationship between earth and sky, enabling orientation and identification within a place. In this framework, descent toward the ground intensifies the individual's existential anchoring, strengthening the sense of belonging to the earth as the primary element of dwelling. Norberg-Schulz, 1980).

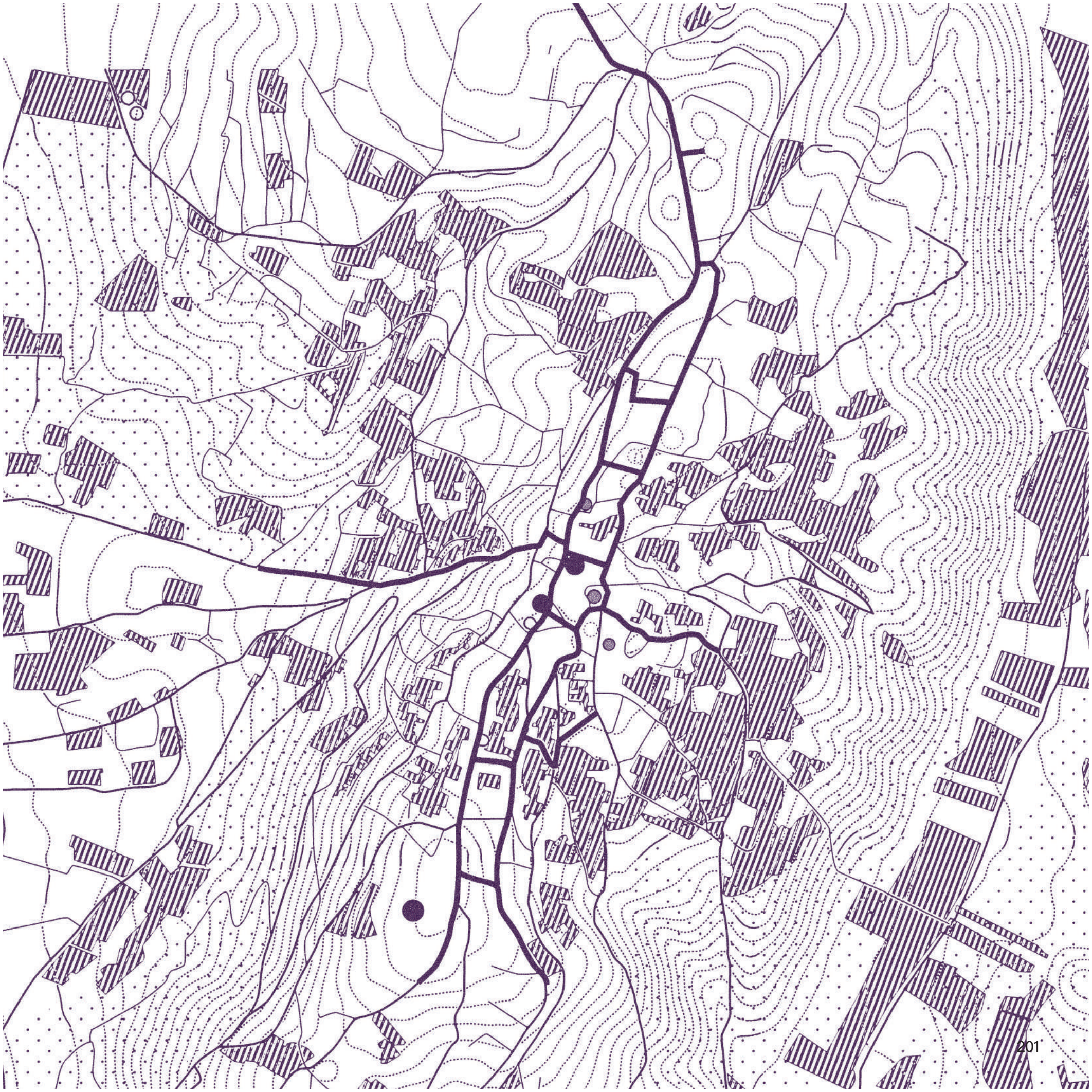
In regions where war has already collapsed the conventional hierarchy of space — where the surface is no longer a guarantee of safety, prosperity, or stability — the underground can become a counterintuitive locus of psychological and social equilibrium. from the dystopian conditions of violence, destruction, and geopolitical fragility that define everyday life in Southern Lebanon.

The deeper one moves into the ground, the further one travels from the dystopian conditions of violence, destruction, and geopolitical fragility that define everyday life in Southern Lebanon. The earth itself, traditionally associated with burial, concealment, or poverty, becomes instead a medium of purification, insulation, and continuity.

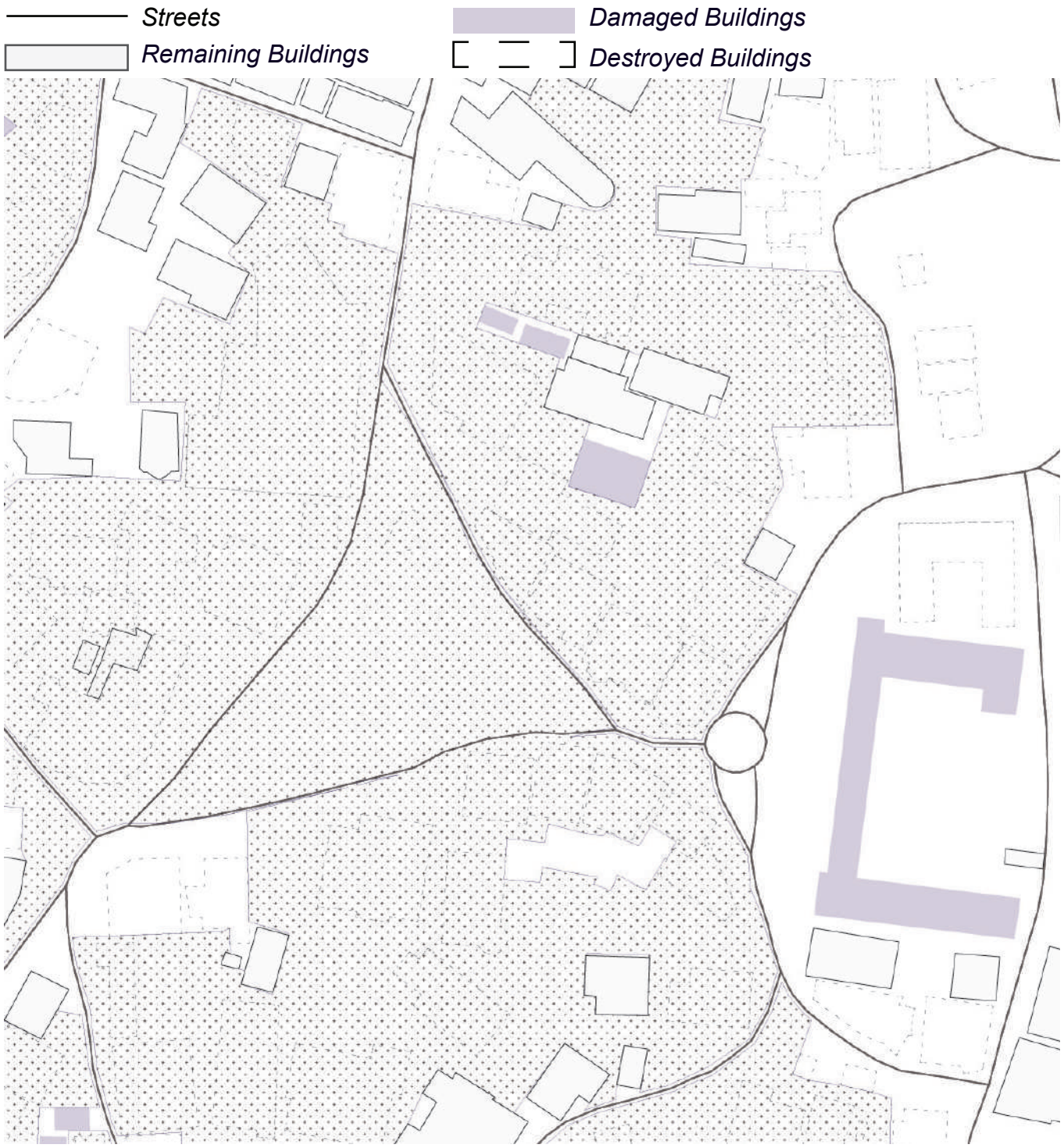
From this perspective, the descent through the tunnel is not a retreat; it is a reorientation. It proposes that security, dignity, and even independence can be rediscovered not through elevation, monumentality, or exposure, but through a calibrated engagement with depth, darkness, and material authenticity.

U- Khiam's Proposed Underground Paths
Sacle: 1/4000

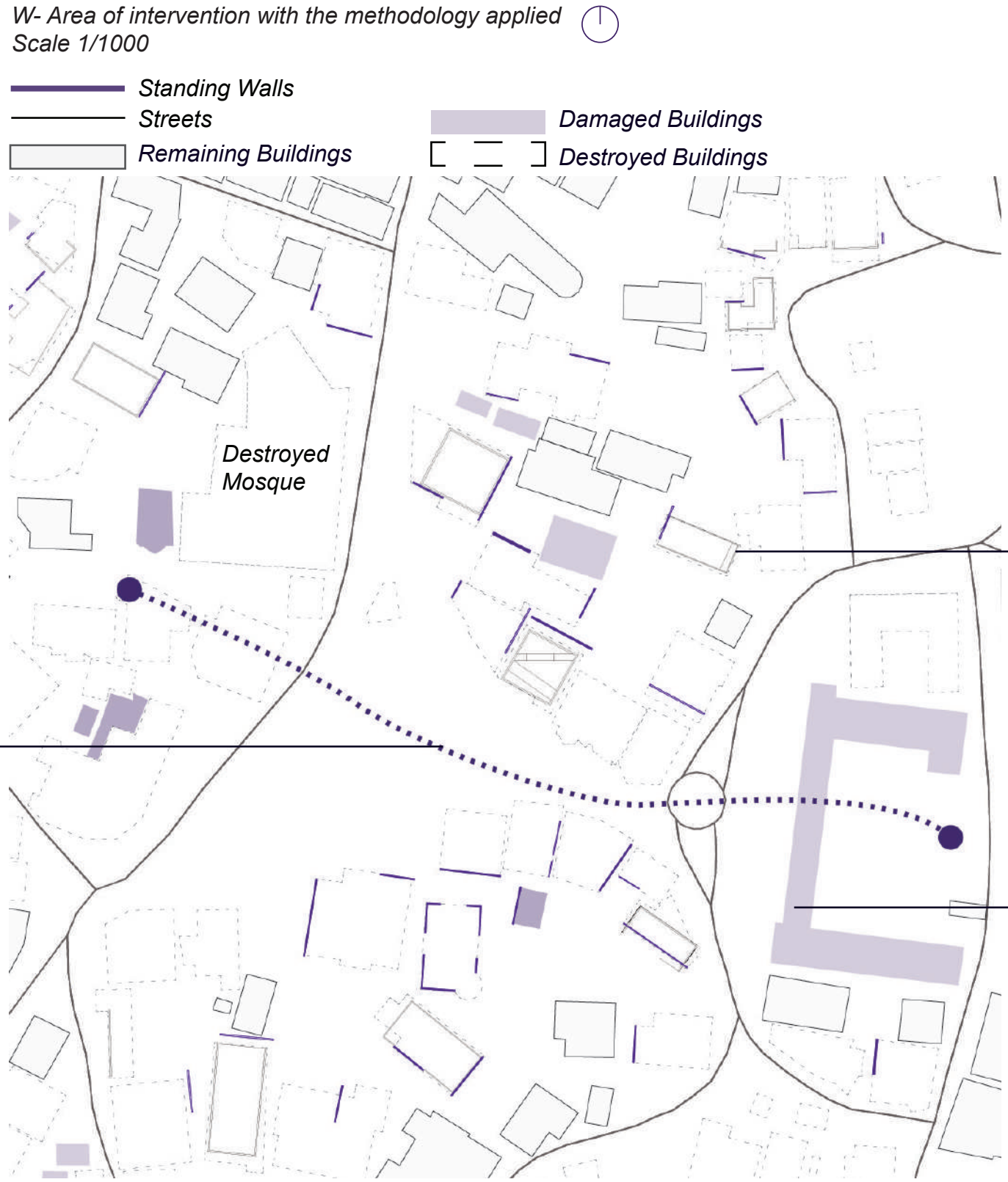




V- Area of intervention after the erasure of the destroyed and the damaged built.
Scale 1/1000



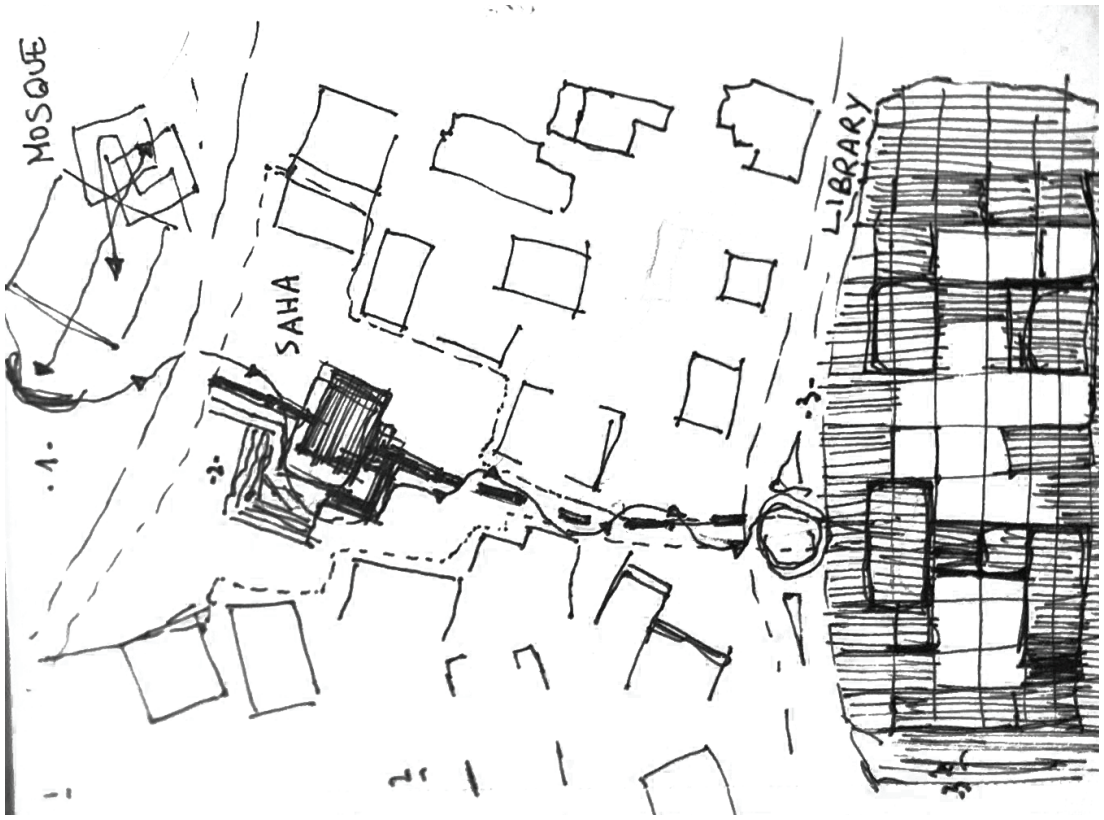
W- Area of intervention with the methodology applied
Scale 1/1000

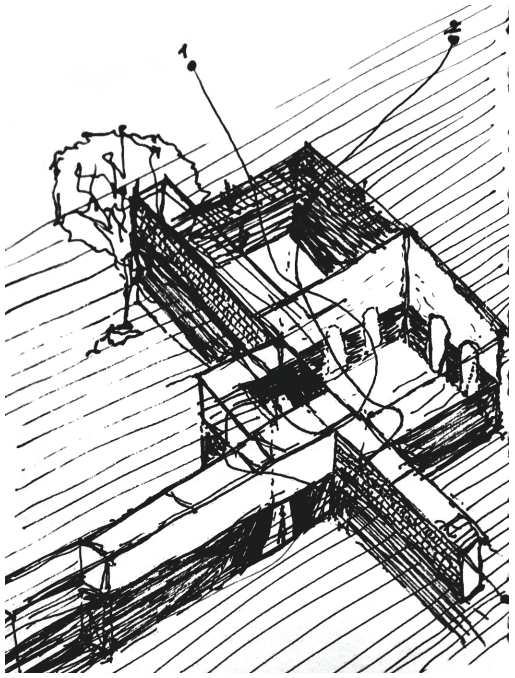


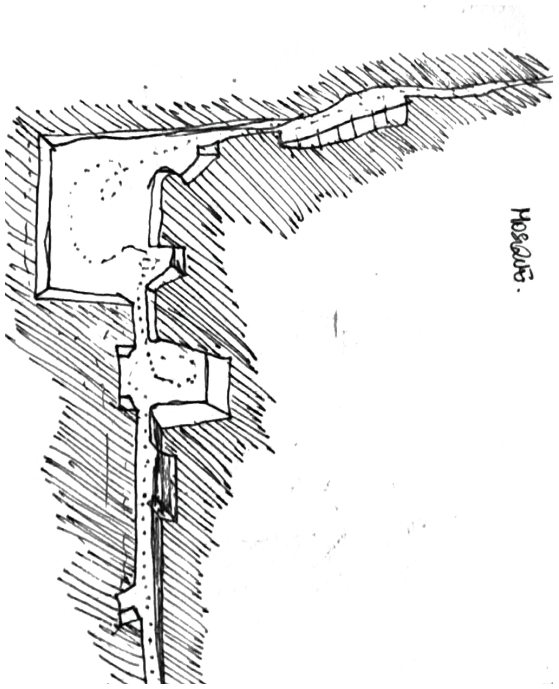
2| Subterranean Level: Urban voids as Counter-Geography

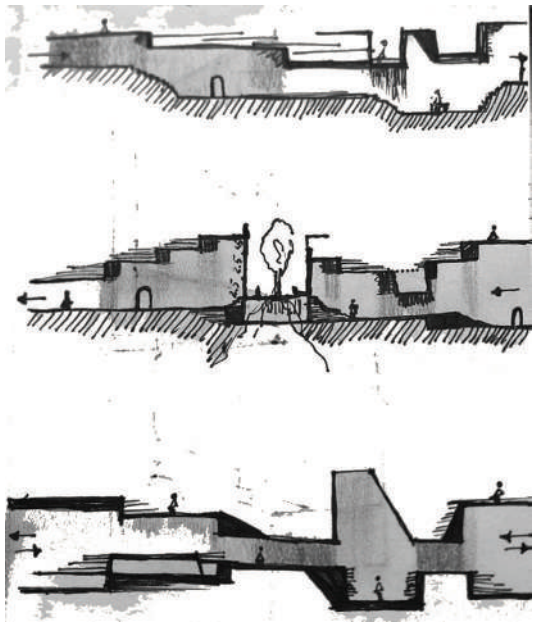
X- Underground path connecting the Mosque and the Library linking the two topographical levels
Scale 1/1000

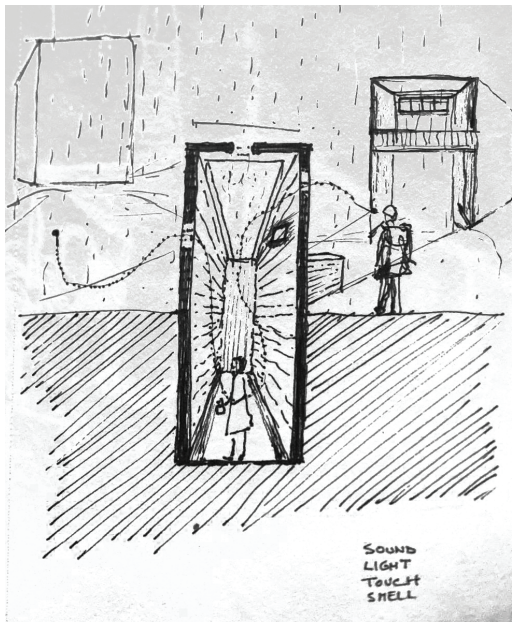
Fig. 117 - 118 -119 - 120 - 121 -122: Sketches for conception of the Underground Paths , by author.


MOSQUE
SAHA
LIBRARY








SOUND
LIGHT
TOUCH
SMELL

2| Subterranean Level: Urban voids as Counter-Geography

Render of the proposed project withouit the Remaining Built

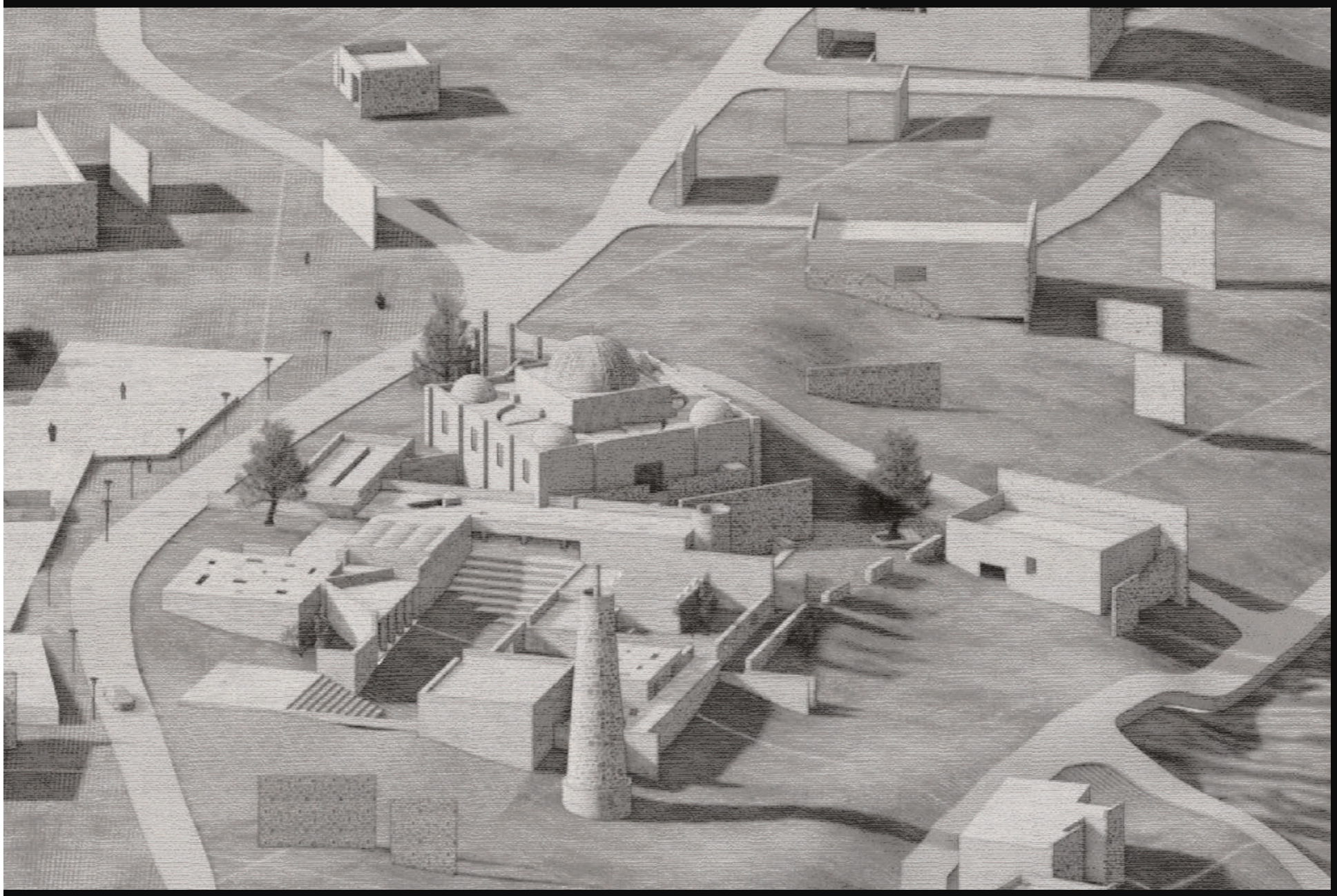
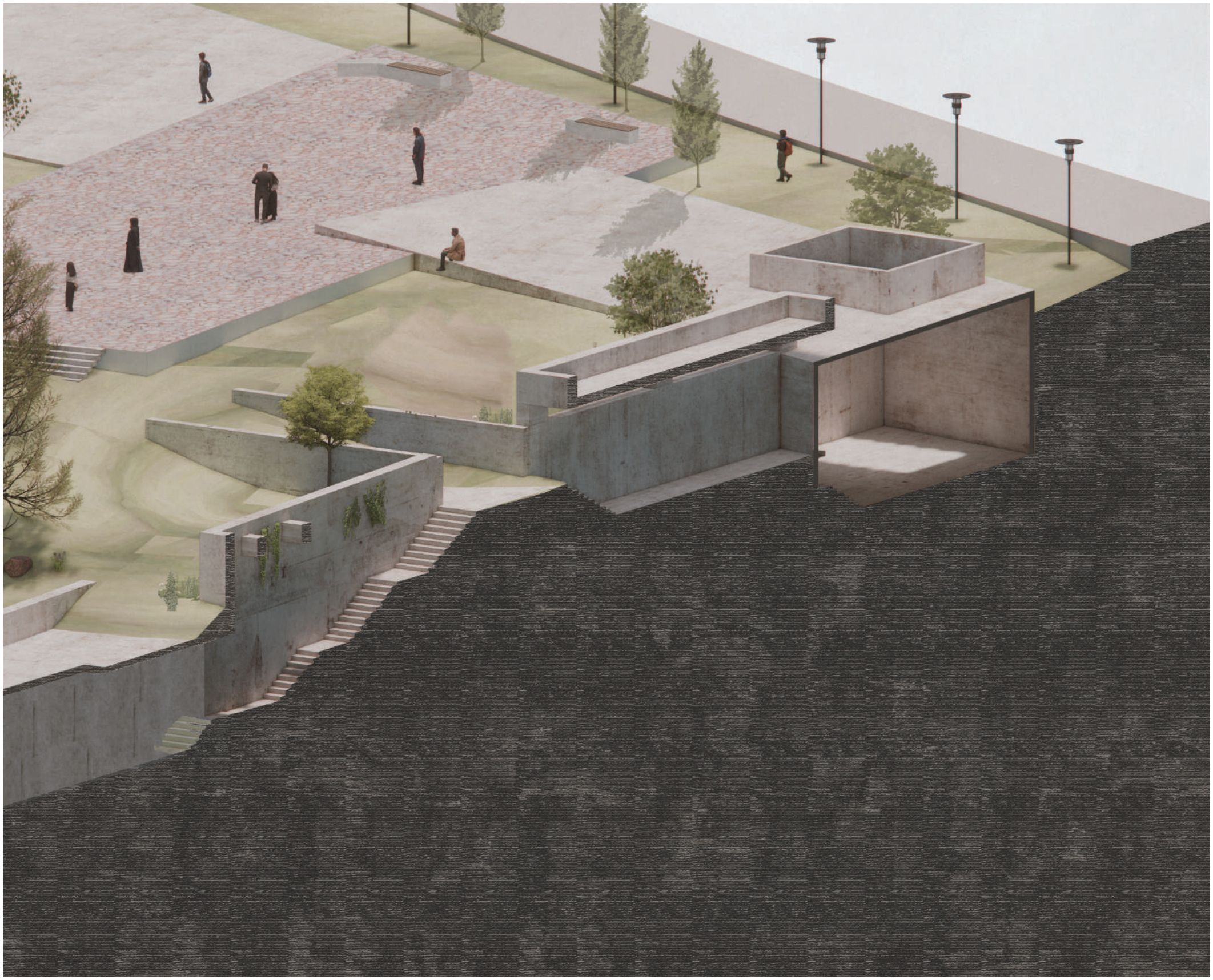
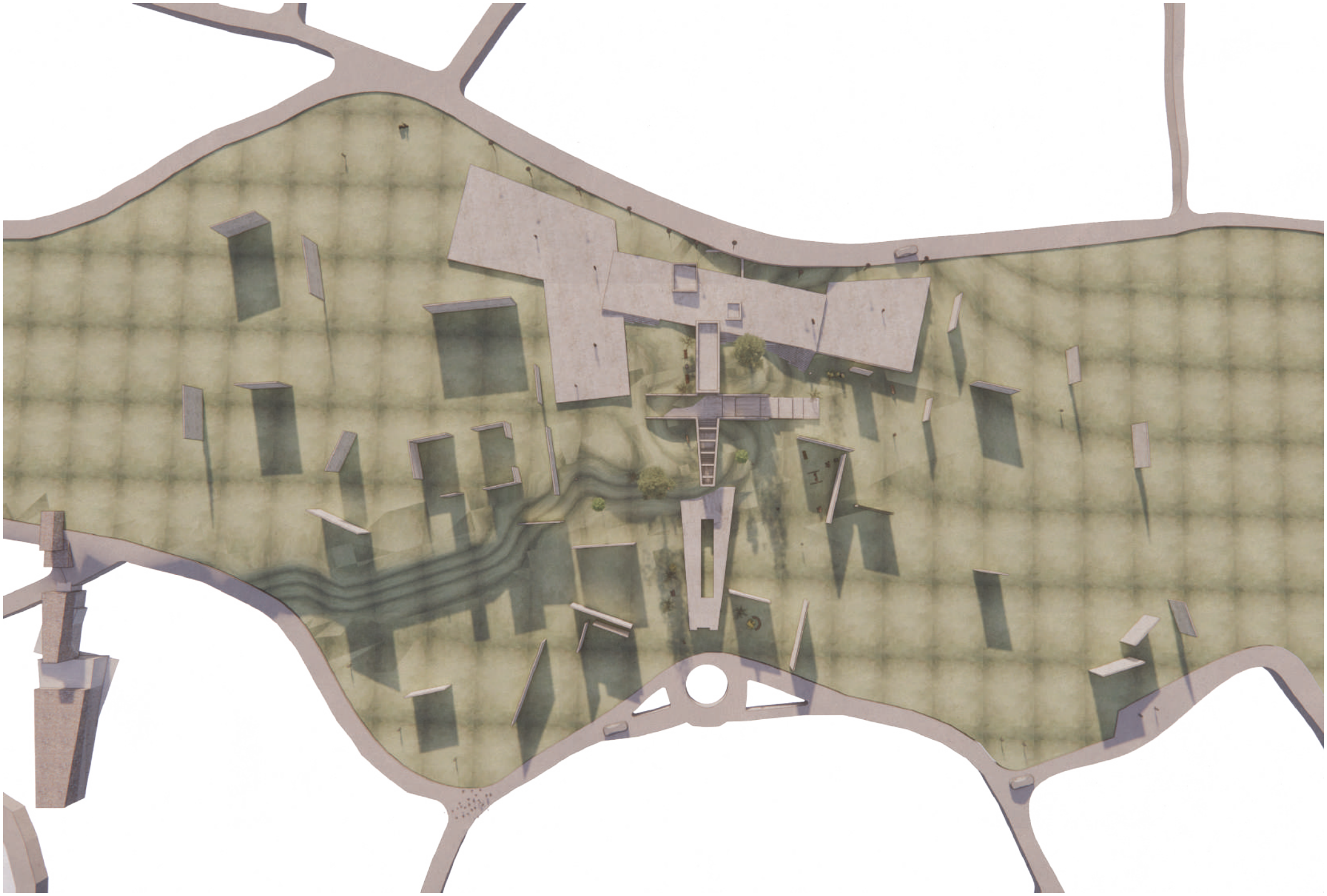


Fig. 124

Section of the Underground path connecting the Mosque and the Library
Scale 1/500

Fig. 125





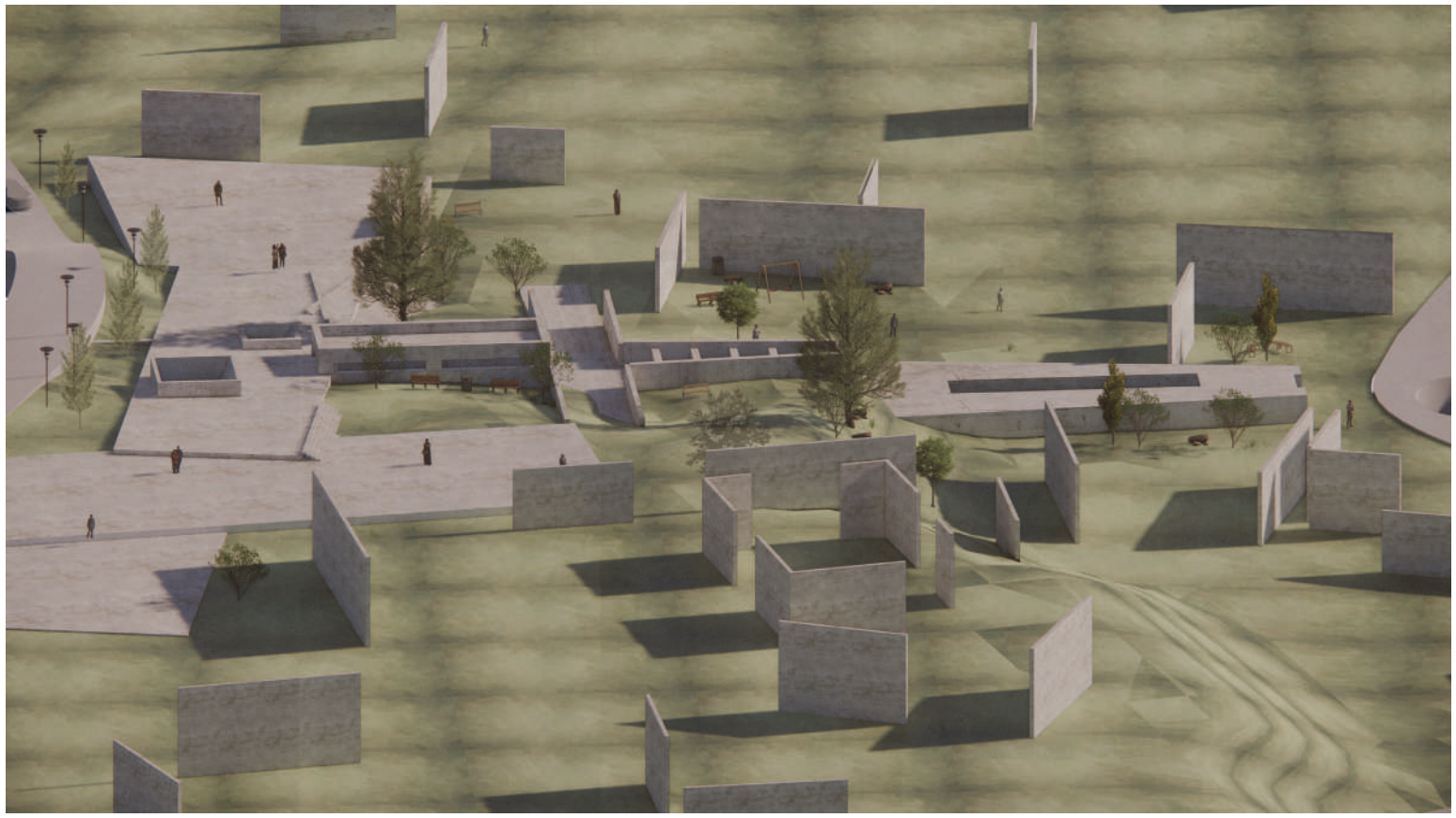


Fig. 126 *Plan Rendered of the Underground path connecting the Mosque and the Library*

Fig. 127 *Render of the “Piazza” - and the Underground Path*

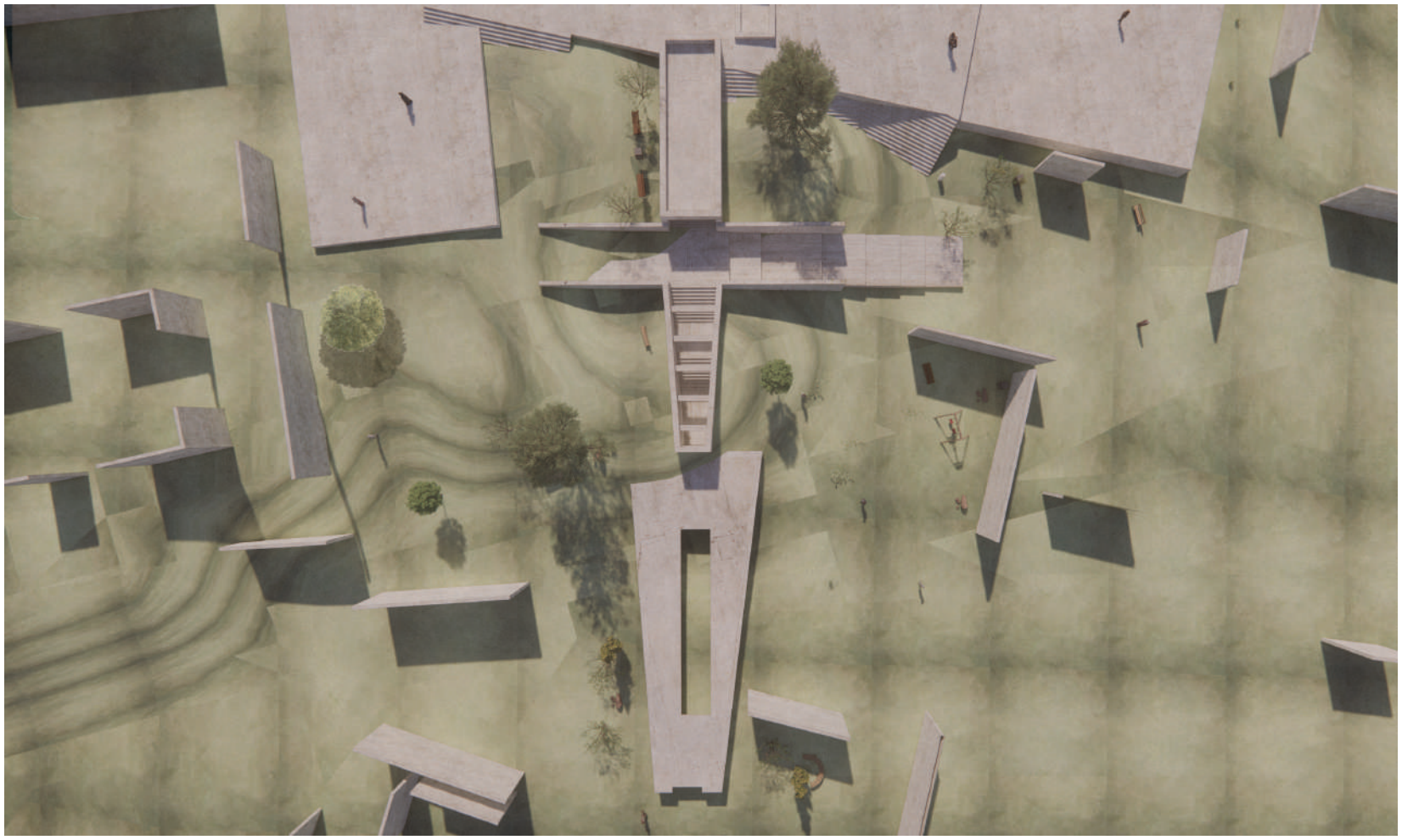
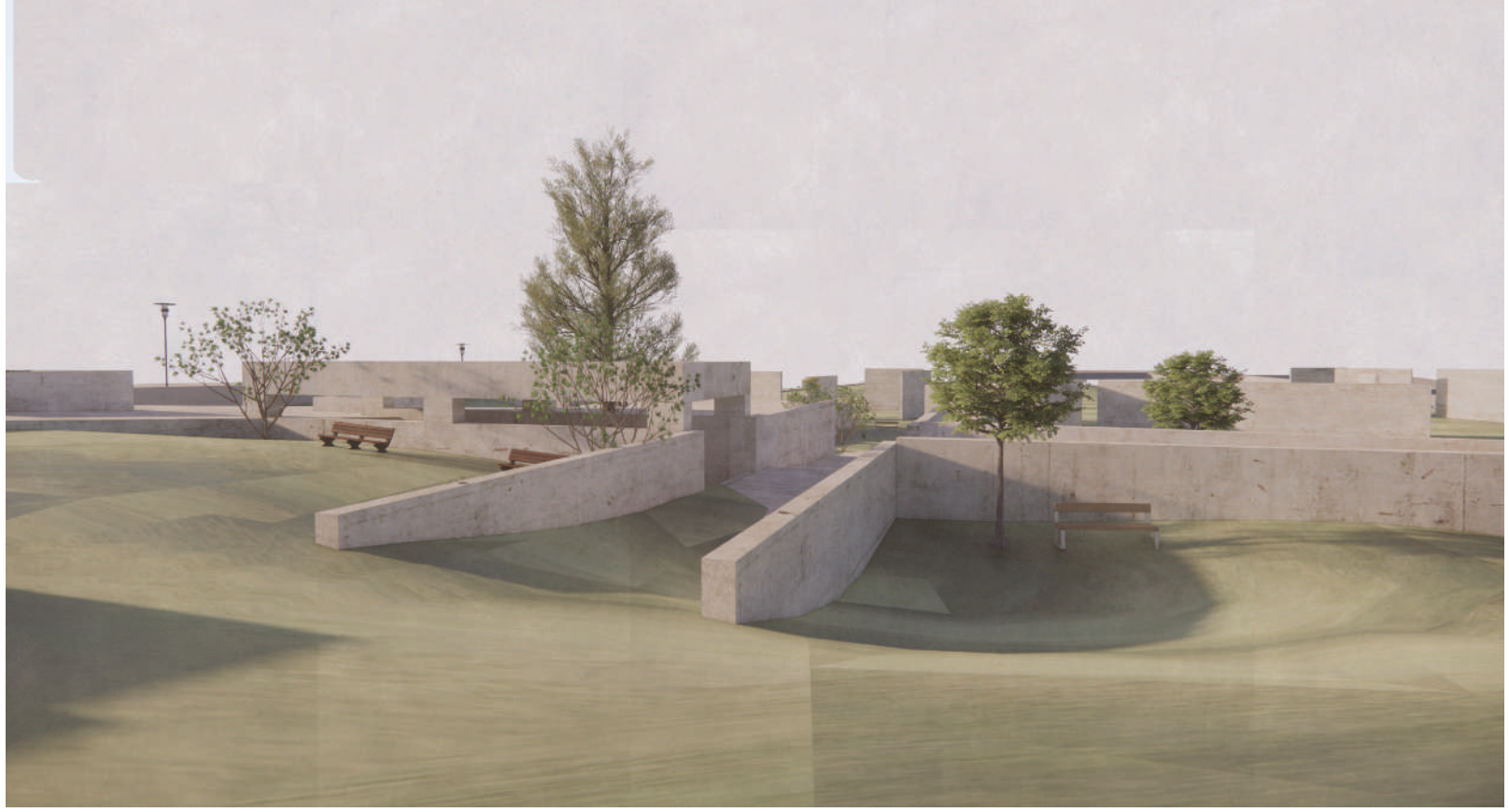


Fig. 128 *Plan Rendered of the Underground path*

Fig. 129 *Render of the “Piazza” - and the Undeground Path*

The topography meeting the tunnel in plan Fig. 130



The topography meeting the tunnel's terracement Fig. 131

3| Public establishments: Reconstruction as a story teller

At the civic–symbolic level, the reconstruction of the mosque and the rehabilitation of the library function as acts of cultural continuity. These buildings are not treated as isolated architectural objects but as collective anchors within the village fabric. The mosque reinstates ritual, spirituality, and communal gathering, while the library restores intellectual and cultural presence. Their reconstruction becomes a temporal act: re-establishing institutions that structure shared identity. Architecture here operates as a stabilizing framework for collective life. The project will present a proposal for the Mosque

The mosque is conceived as a decentralized space of gathering rather than a singular monumental object. In Arabic, the word “Al-jame3” derives from the root meaning “to gather” or “to assemble,” emphasizing its social and communal role beyond the purely ritual function. The project interprets the mosque as a collective ground :a place of meeting embedded within the urban fabric. It is designed as a semi-subterranean structure, creating a subtle disconnection from the outer world through descent, while remaining open to light and air. Natural light is drawn primarily from the fifth façade: the roof - reinforcing a vertical relationship to the sky. The roof itself becomes a public landscape, forming accessible gathering areas at its entrance and within the heart of the project. With five entry points distributed across the site, the mosque dissolves hierarchy and invites approach from multiple directions, strengthening its role as an assembling space within the city.

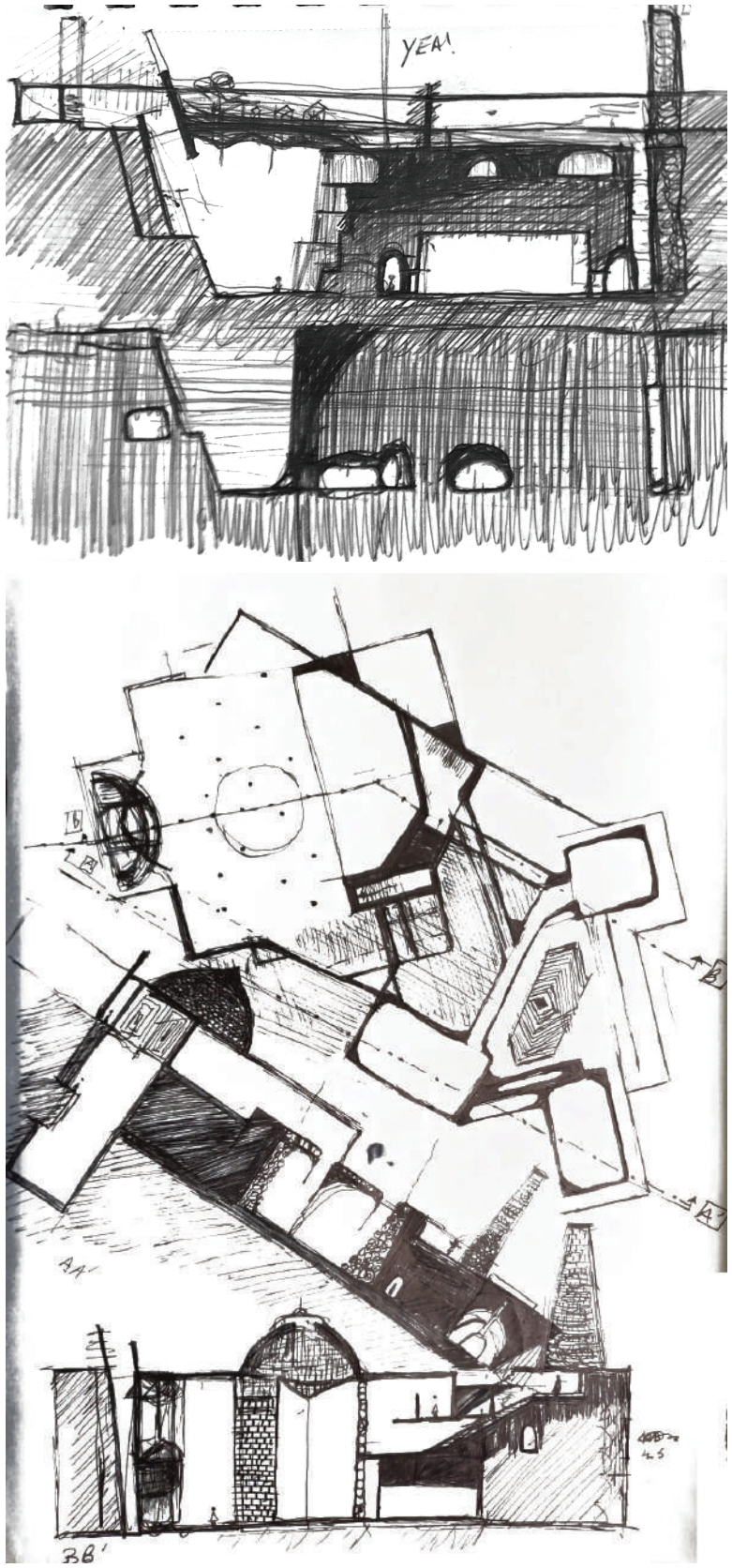
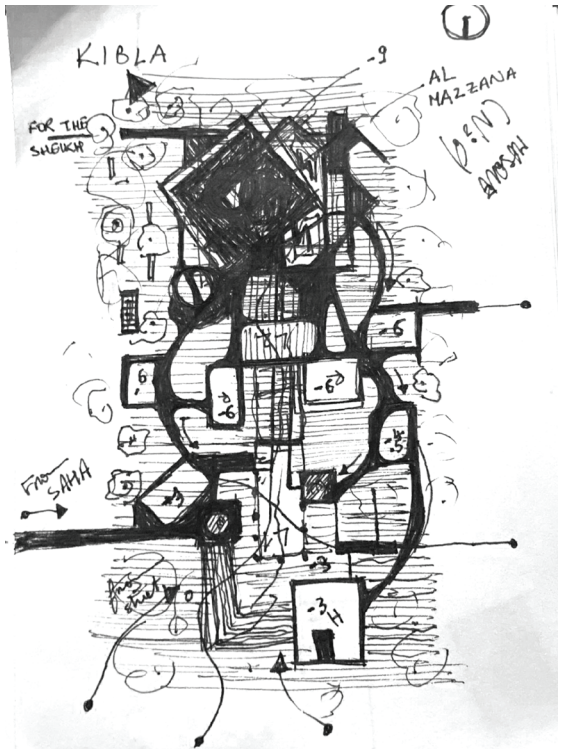
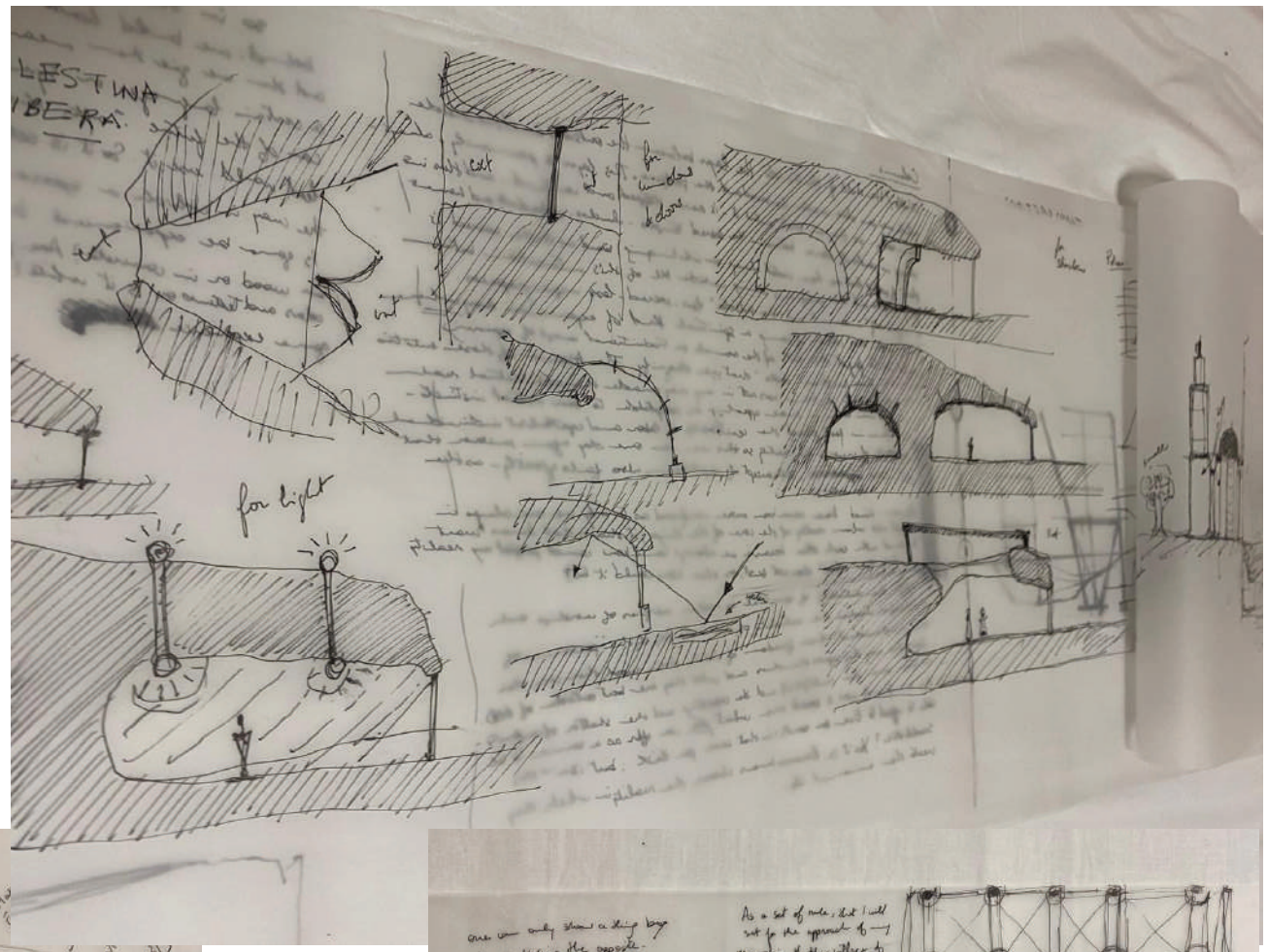
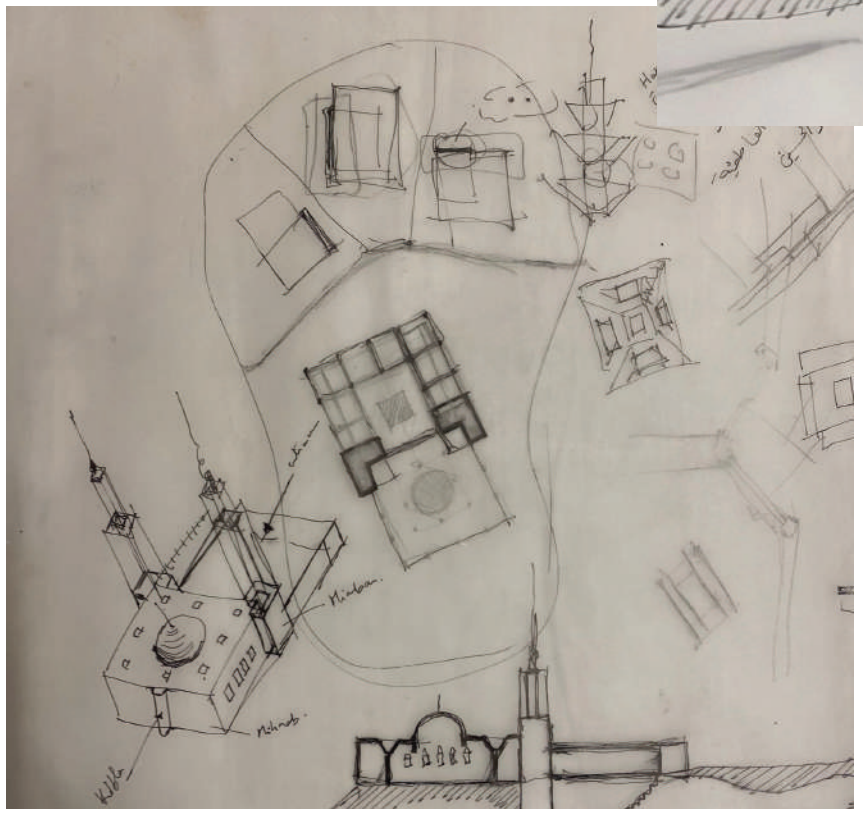
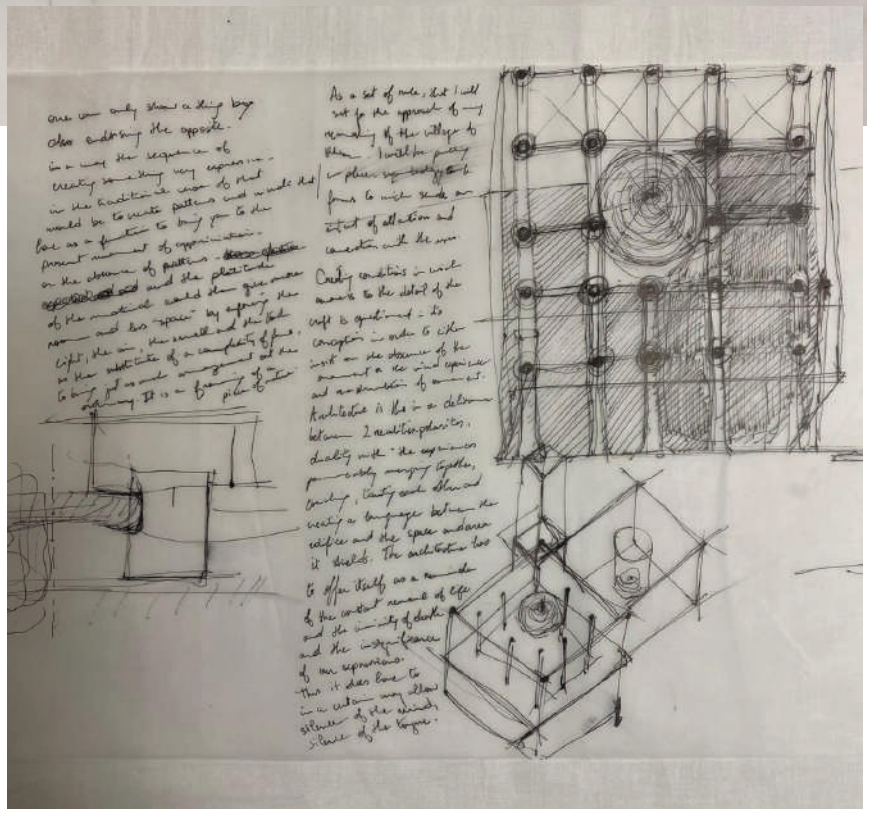


Fig. 132 - 133 -134 - 135 - 136 -137: Sketches for conception of the Mosque, by author.


KIBLA
AL MAZZANA
FOR THE SHEIKH
FROM SAHA


for light


Mihrab.
Minbar.
Kibla



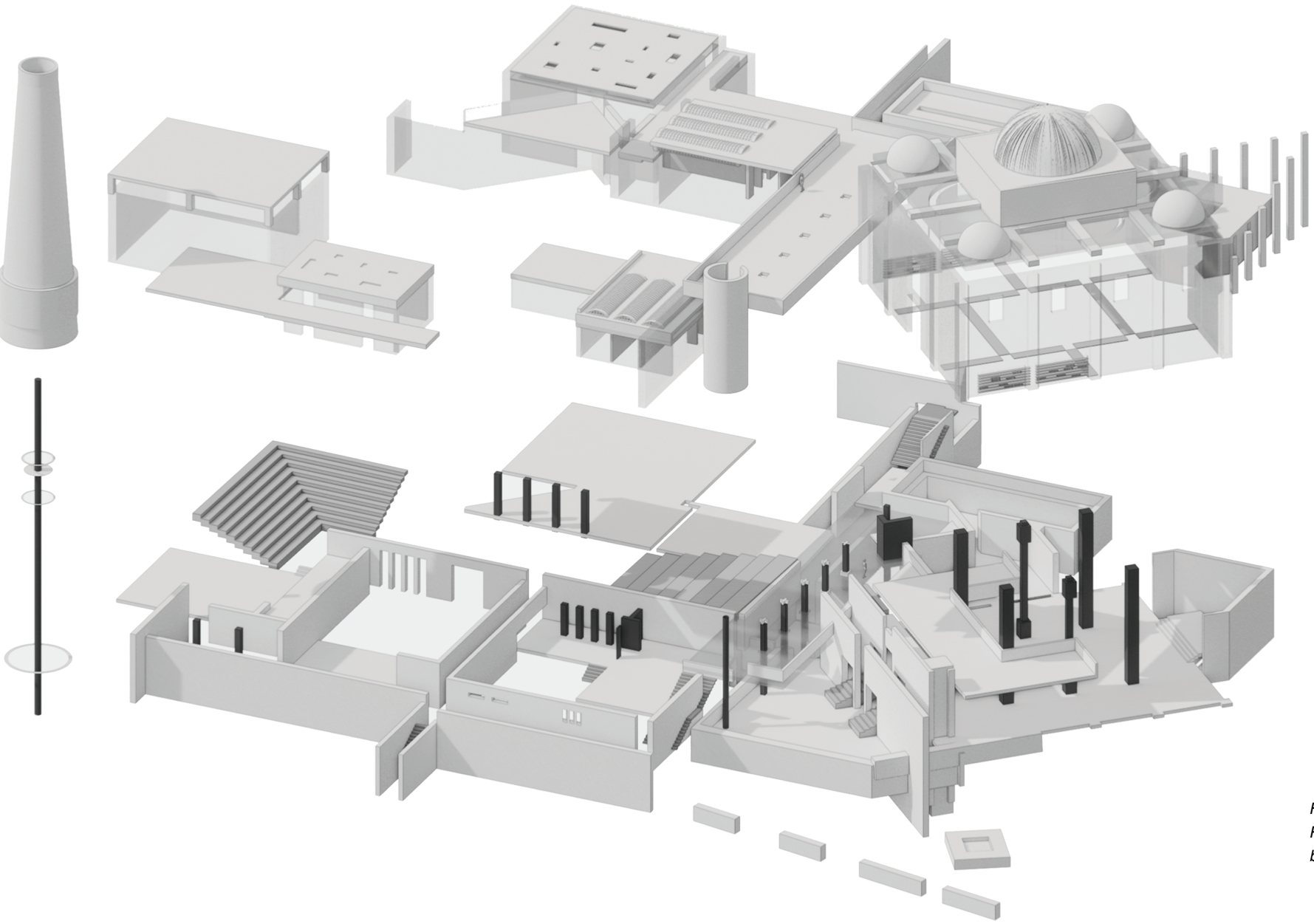
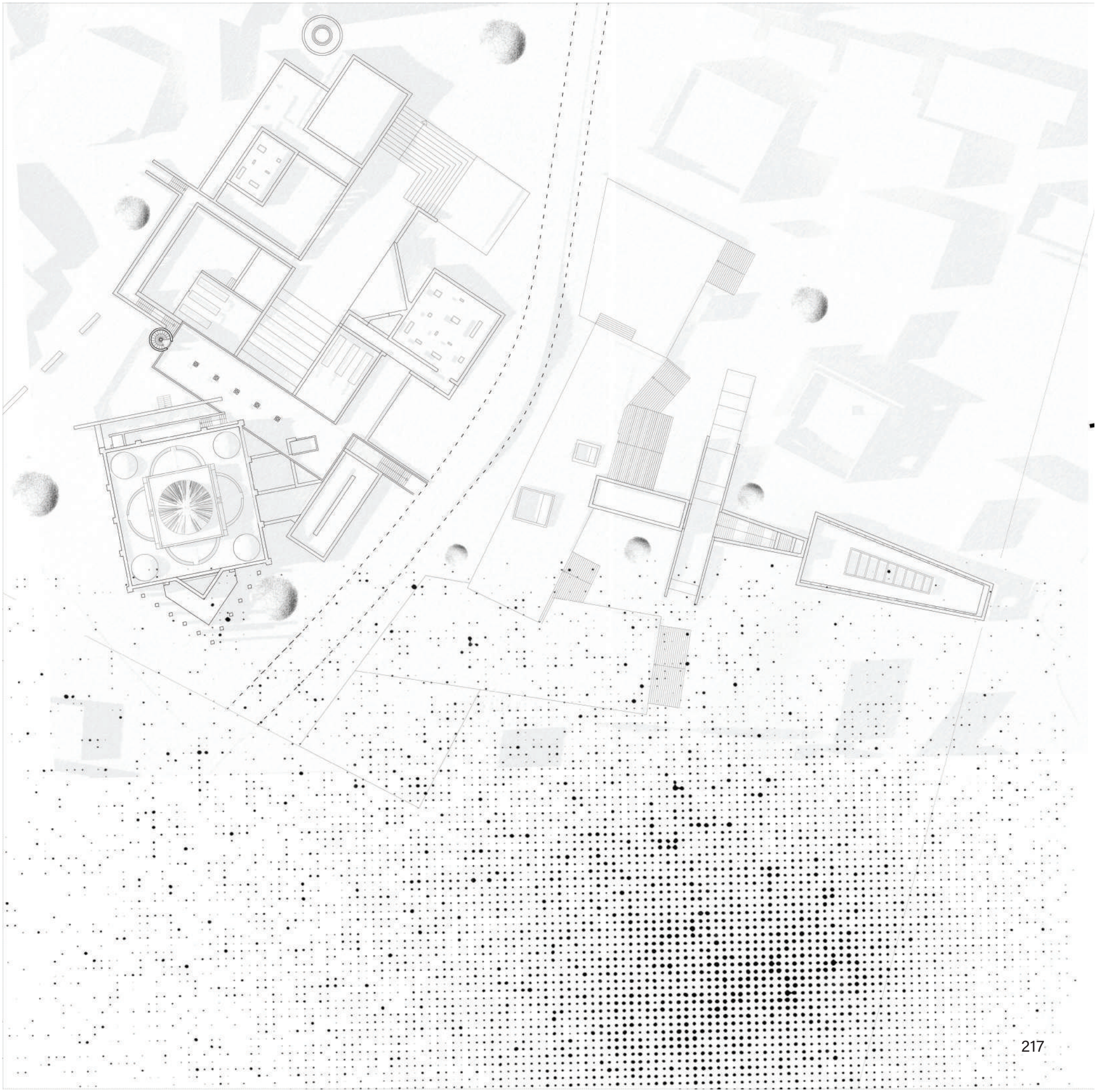


Fig. 138: Digram for the Interior Experience of the Mosque, by author.

Fig. 139: Model-like Render of the Project, by author.



Y- Different Accessibility Points for the Mosque
Scale: 1/800

Functions of the Mosque

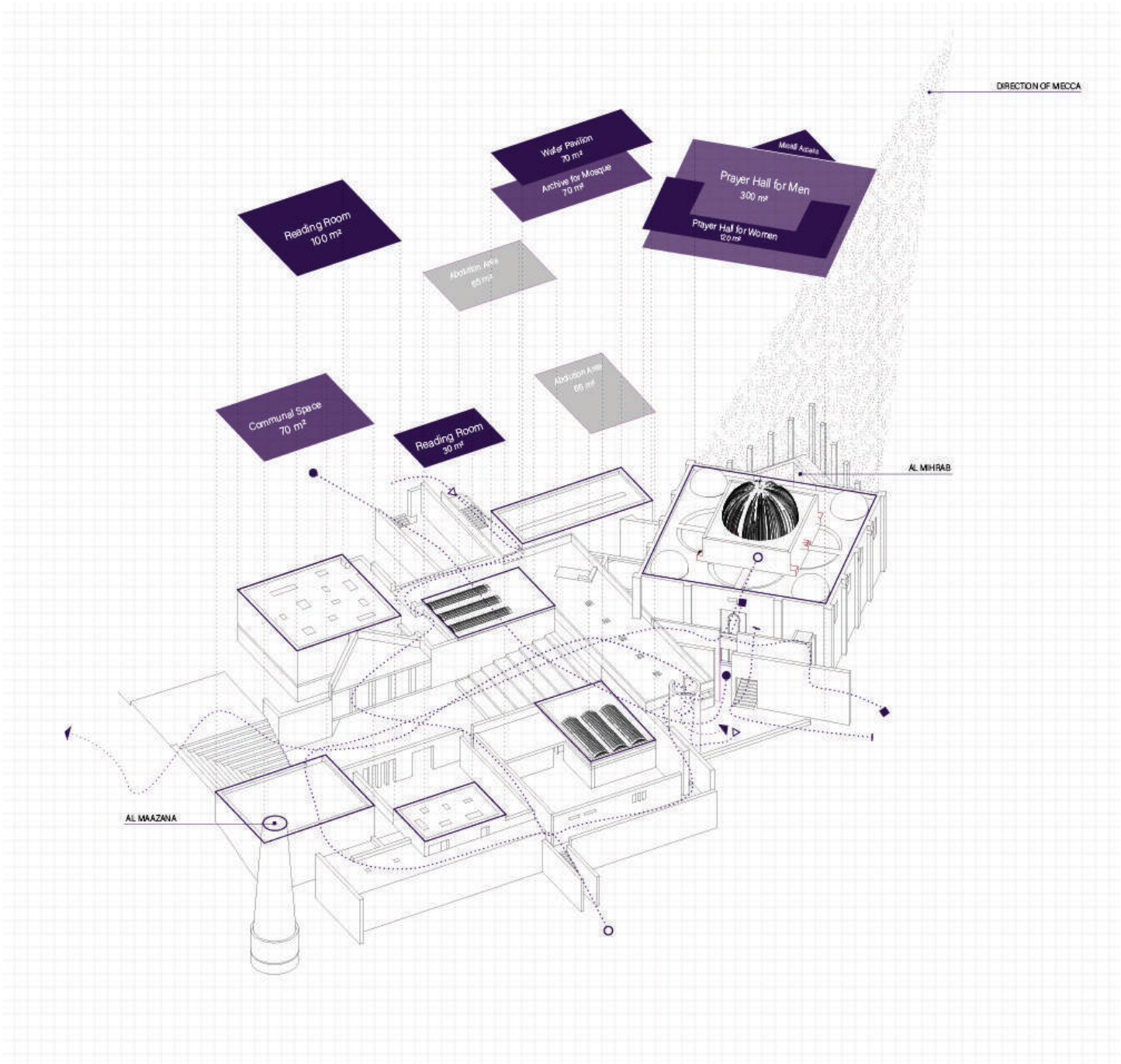
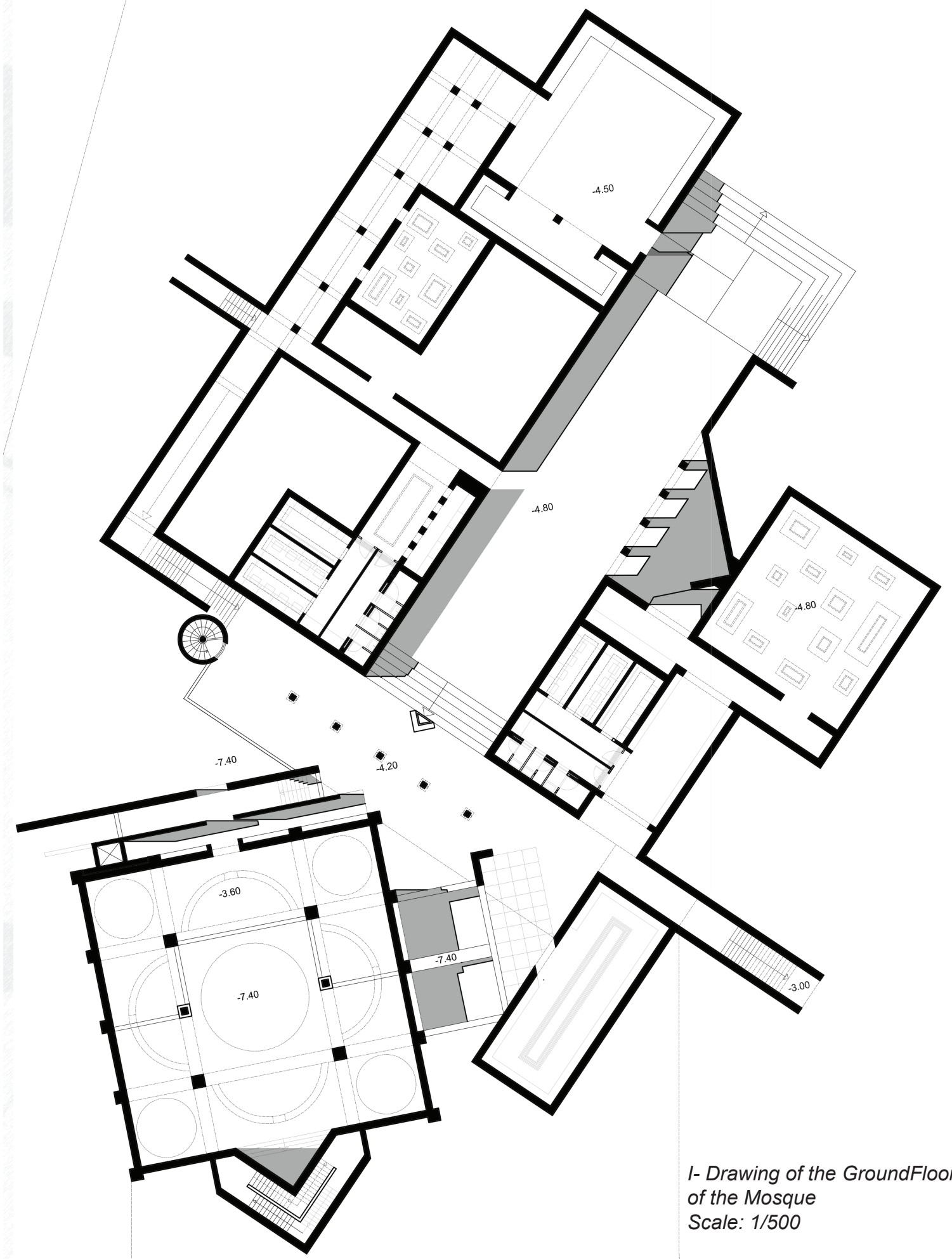
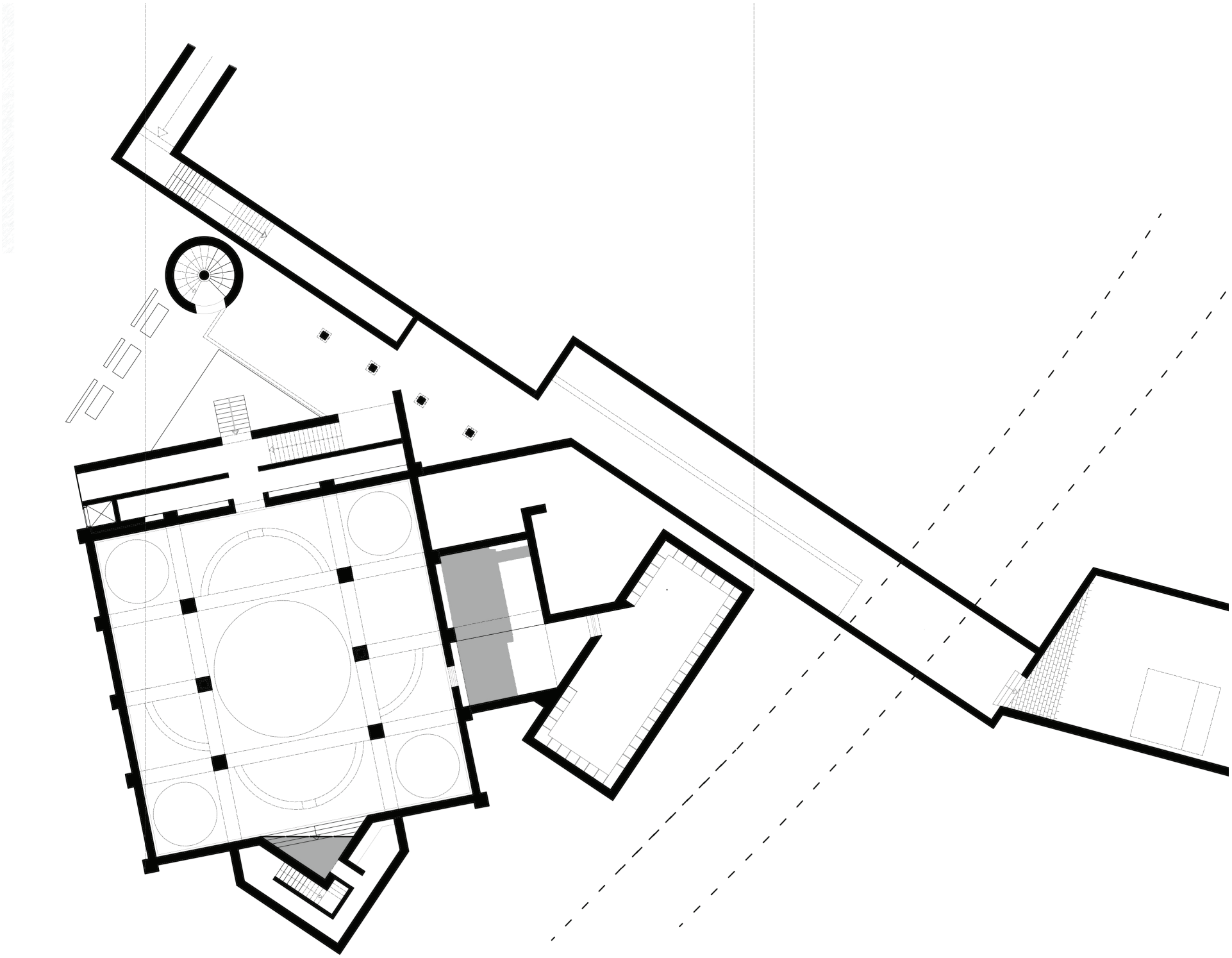


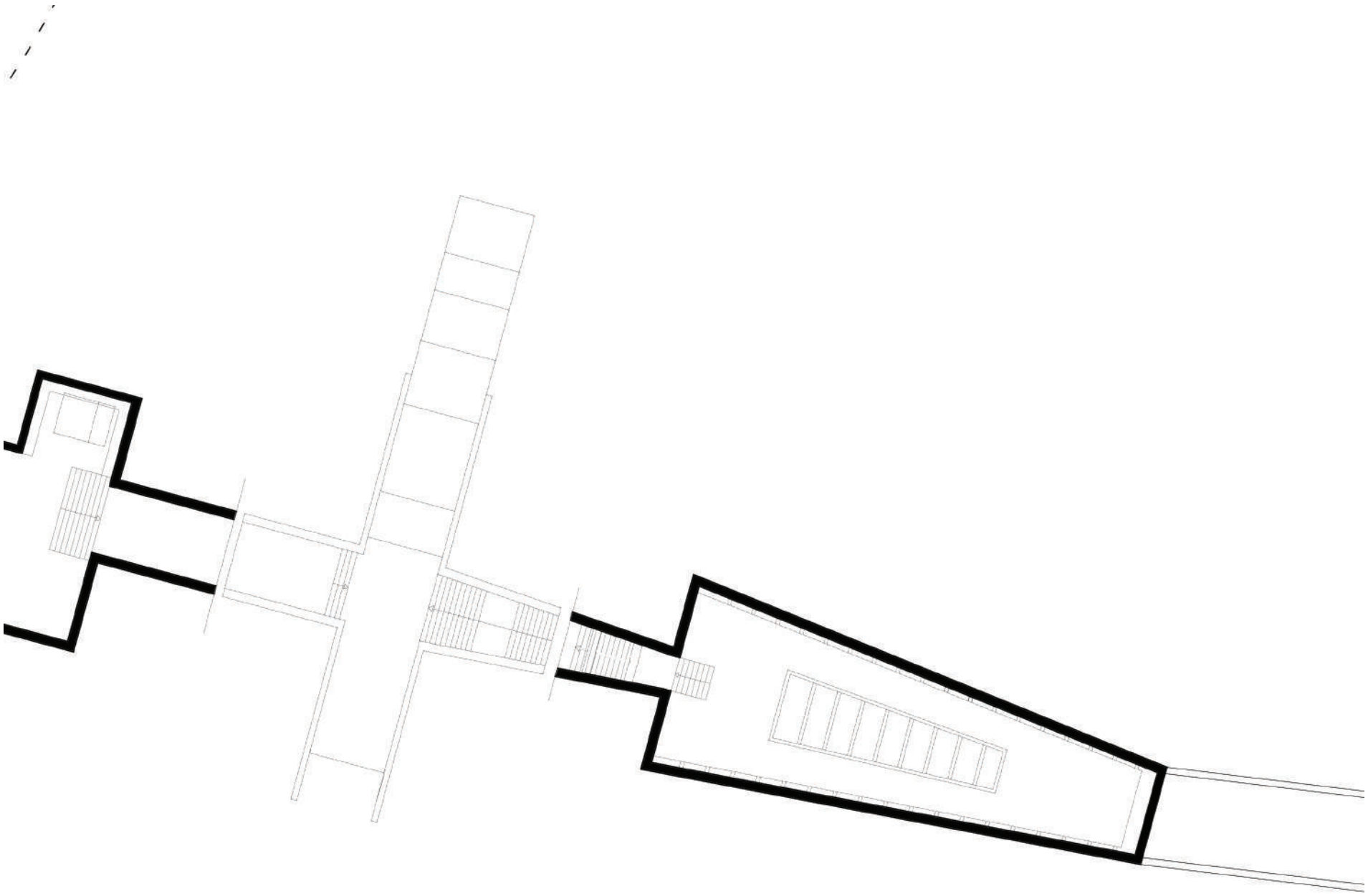
Fig. 140: Digram for functions of the Mosque, by author.

Z- Plan for Mosque and Connection to the Library
Scale: 1/1000

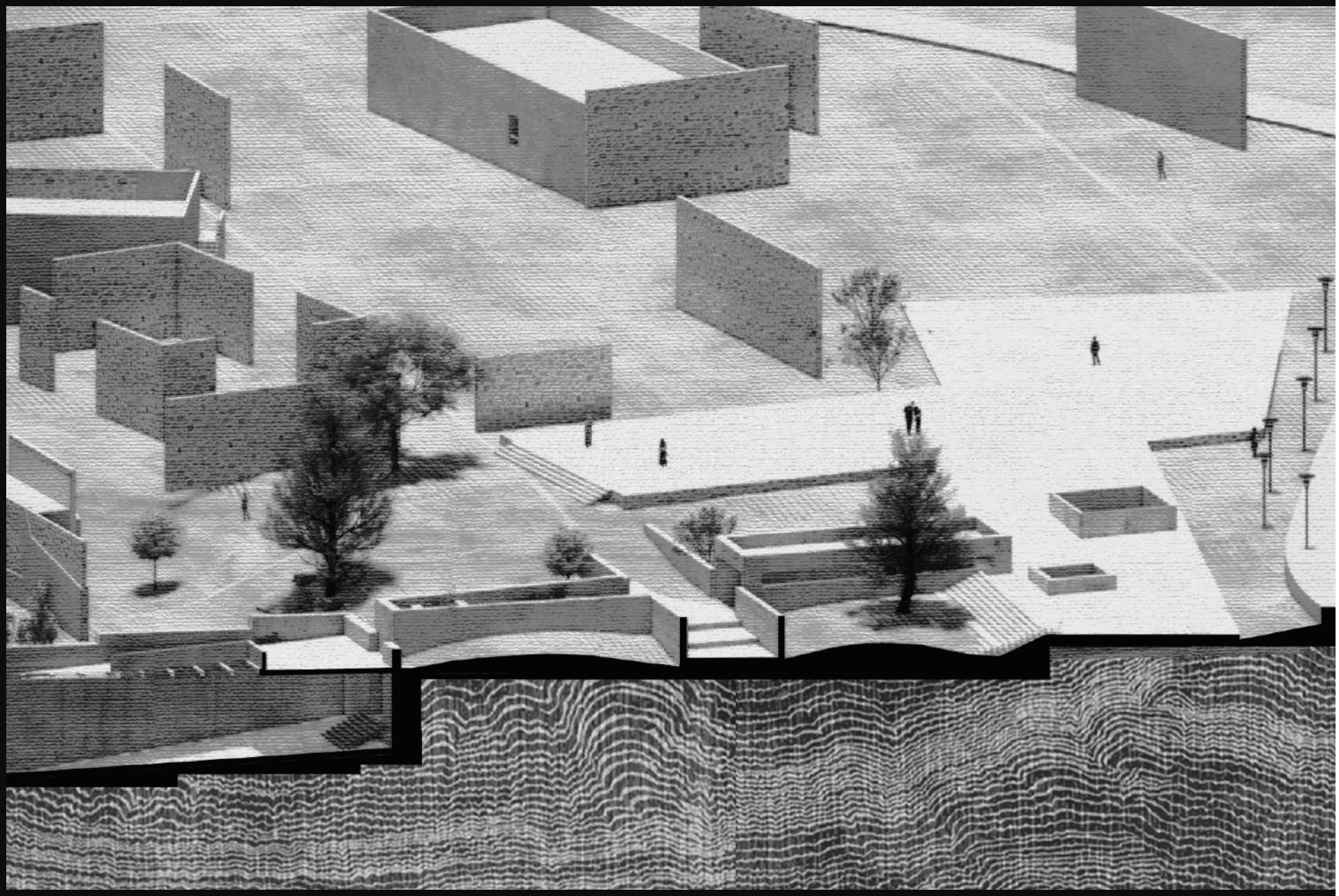


I- Drawing of the GroundFloor Plan of the Mosque
Scale: 1/500





II- Drawing of the Underground Plan of the Mosque
Scale: 1/500



III- Drawing of the urban section in the Mosque
Scale 1/1000

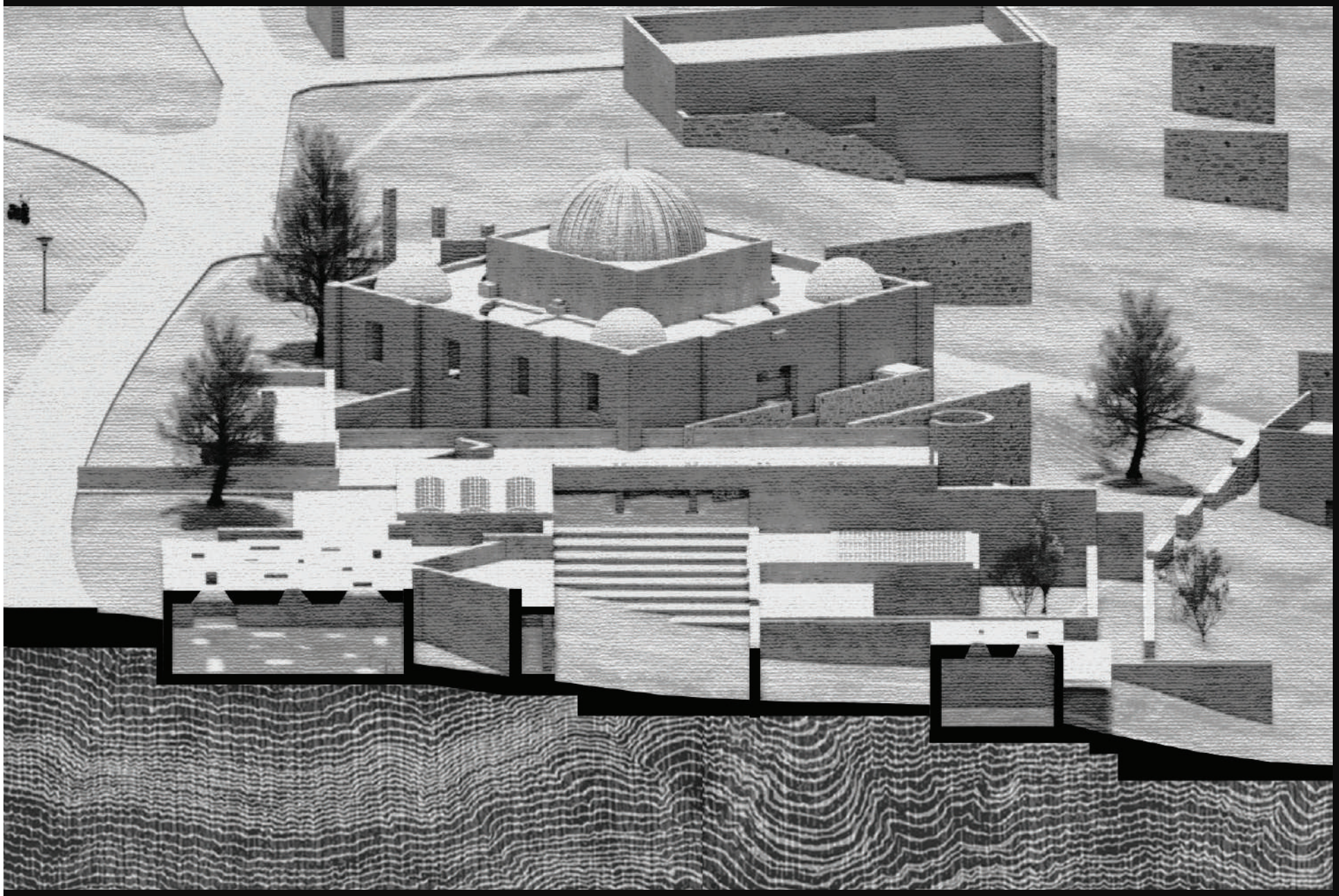
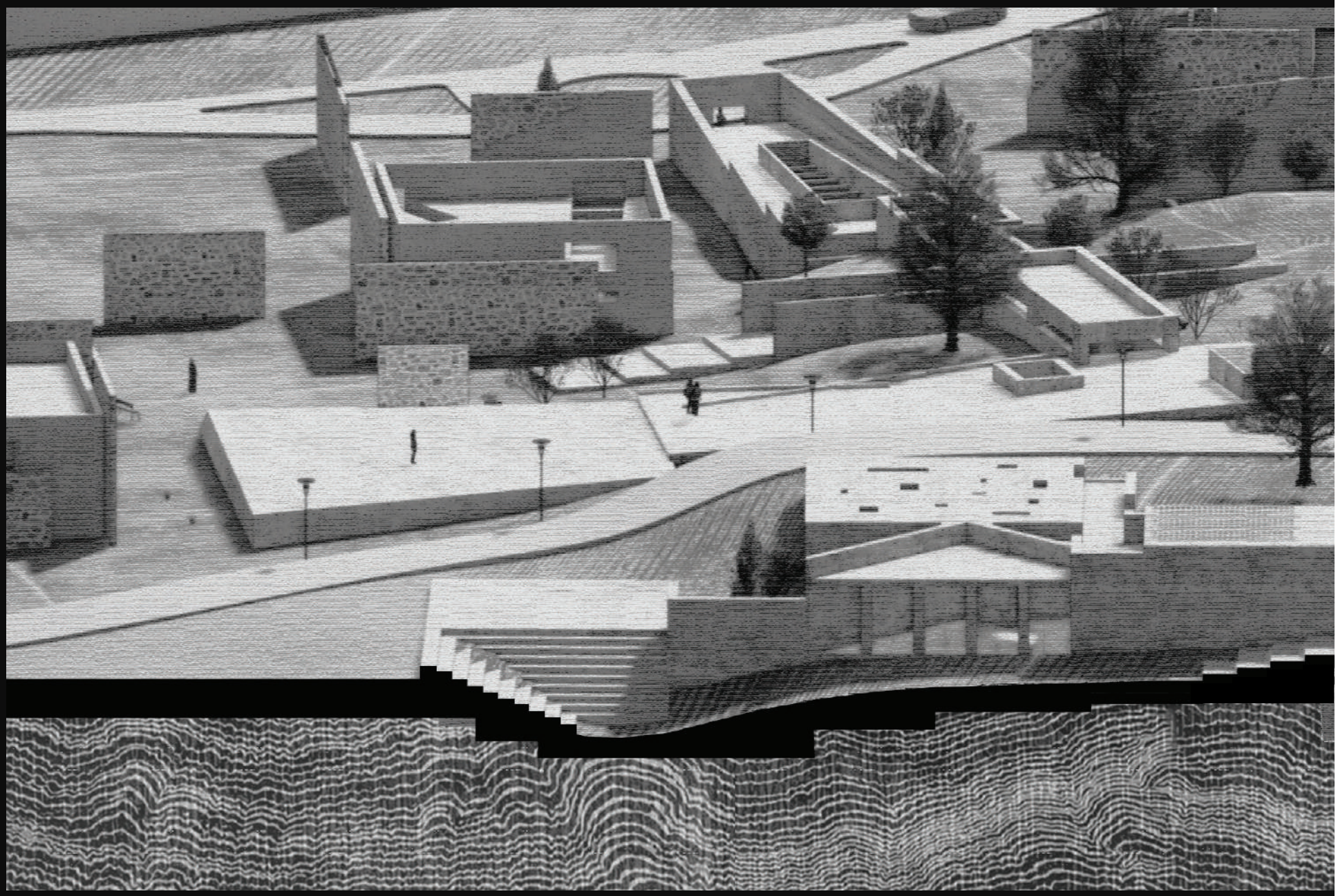


Fig. 139



IV- Drawing of the urban section in the Mosque
Scale 1/1000

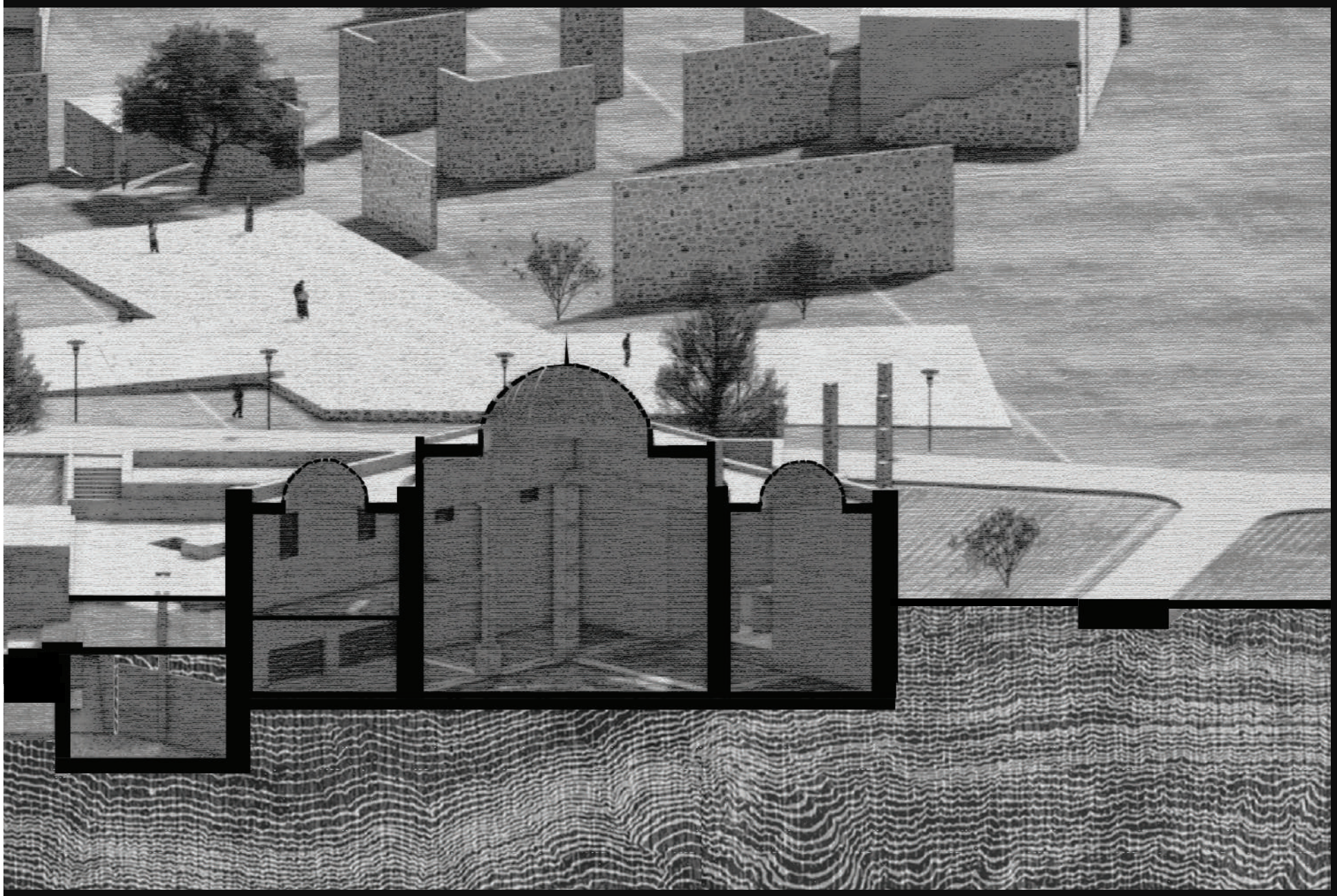
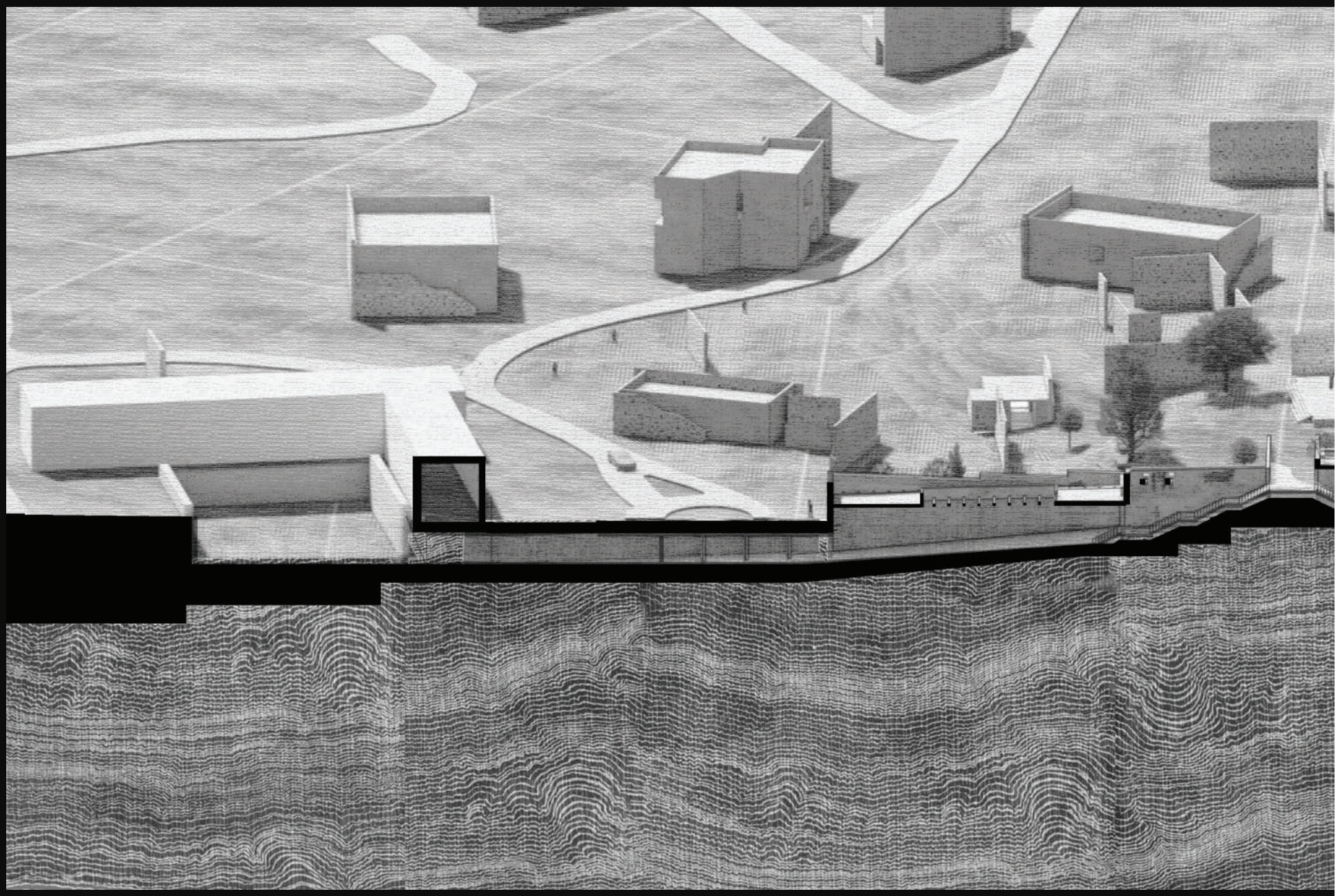


Fig. 140

2| Subterranean Level: Urban voids as Counter-Geography



V- Drawing of the urban section in the Mosque - Undeground Path - Library
Scale 1/2000

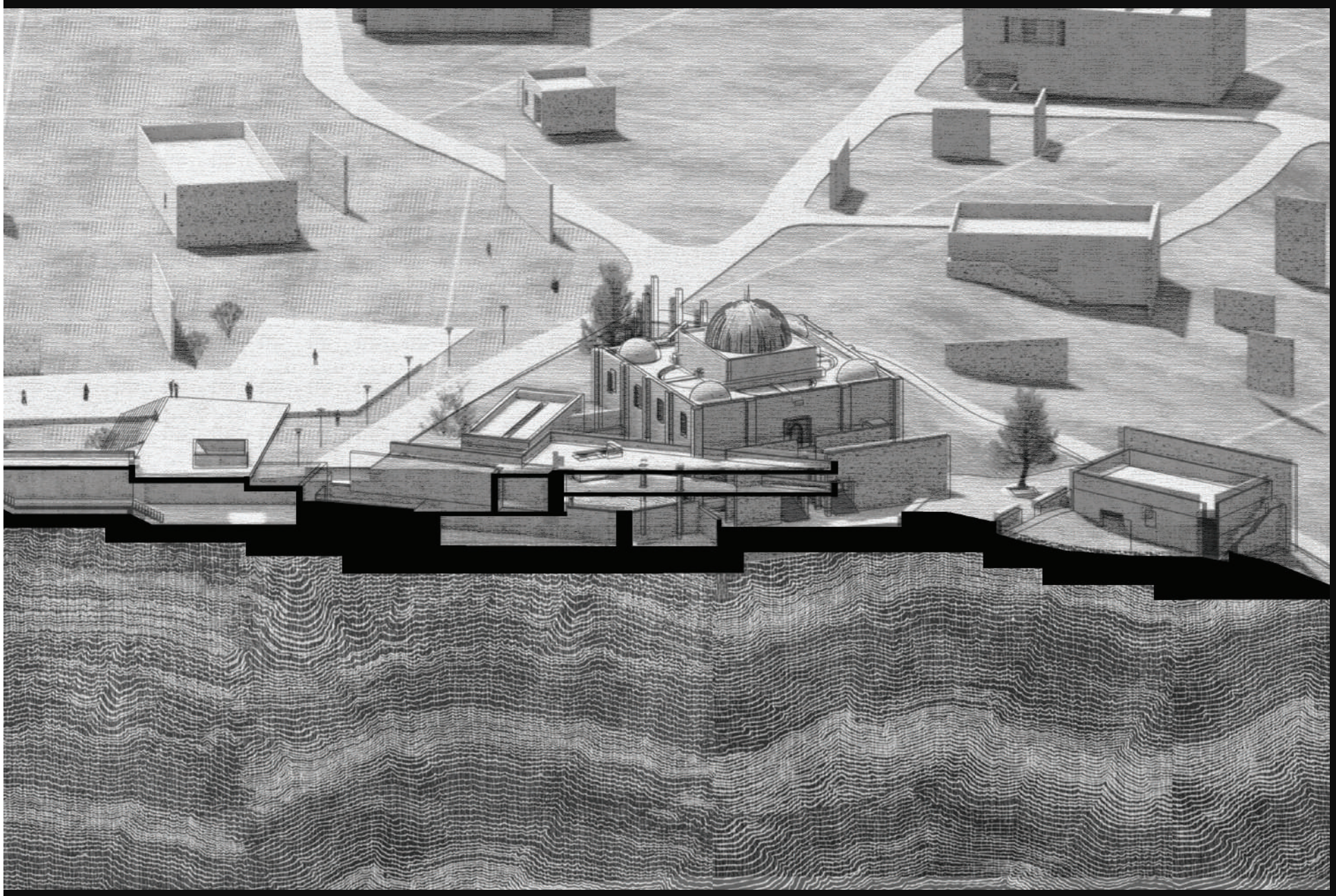


Fig. 123

Fig. 141: Mosque's Interior Plan for Materiality and light, by author.

Fig. 142: Mosque's Render as a 3D Model showing the materiality, by author.

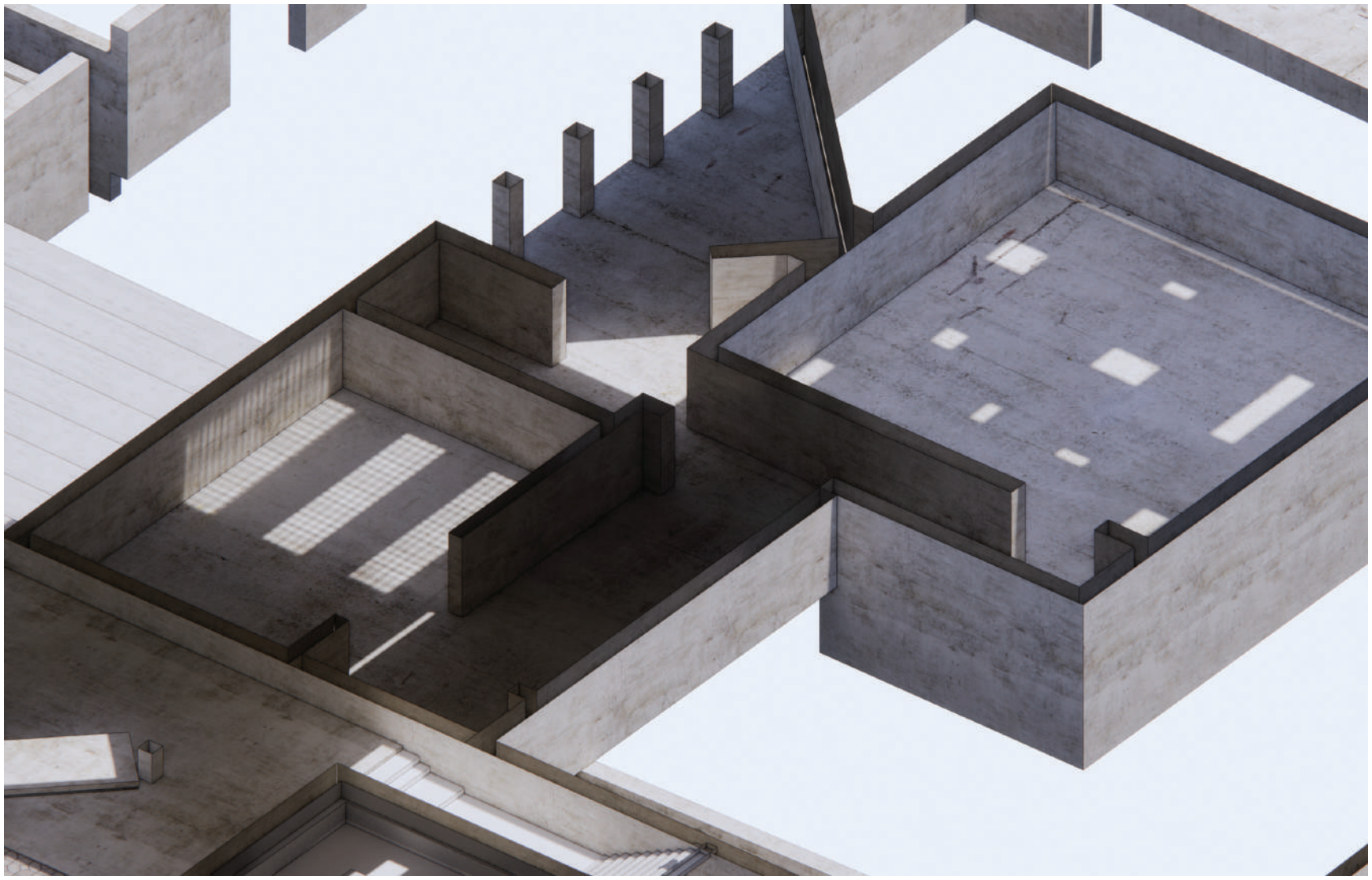
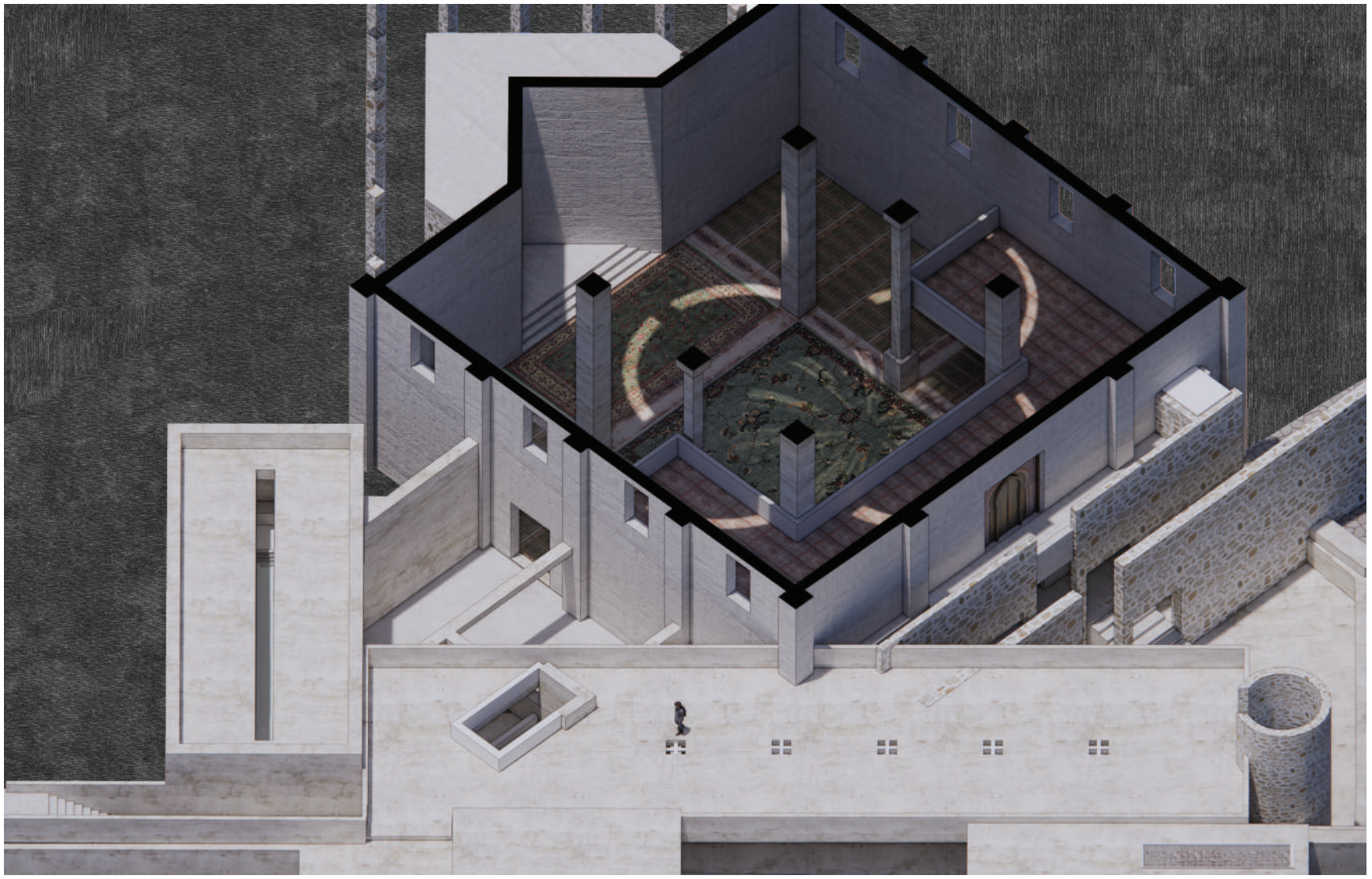


Fig. 145: Interior of the Reading room of the Mosque, by author.

Fig. 146: Interior of the Women's Prayer Hall of the Mosque, by author.

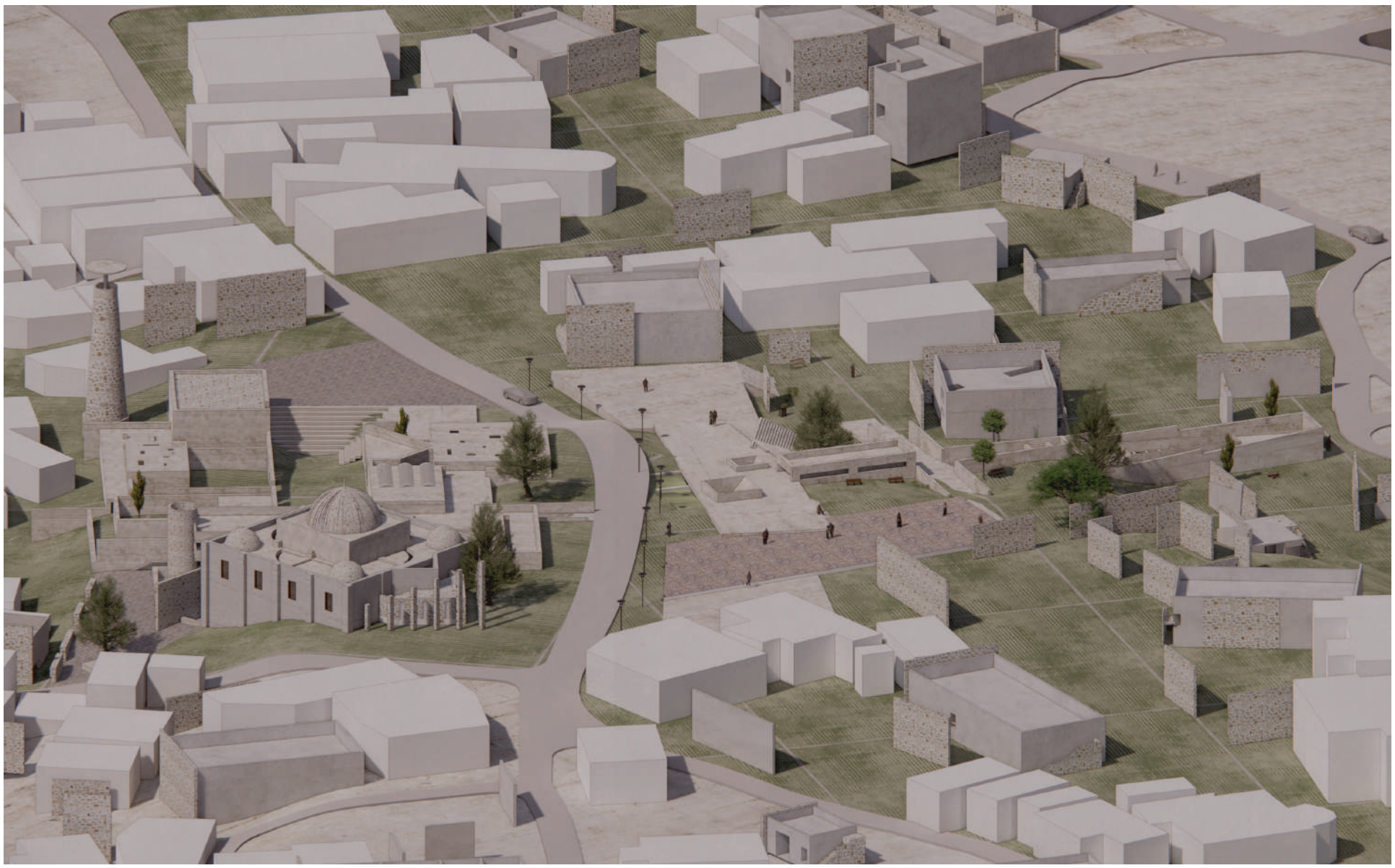


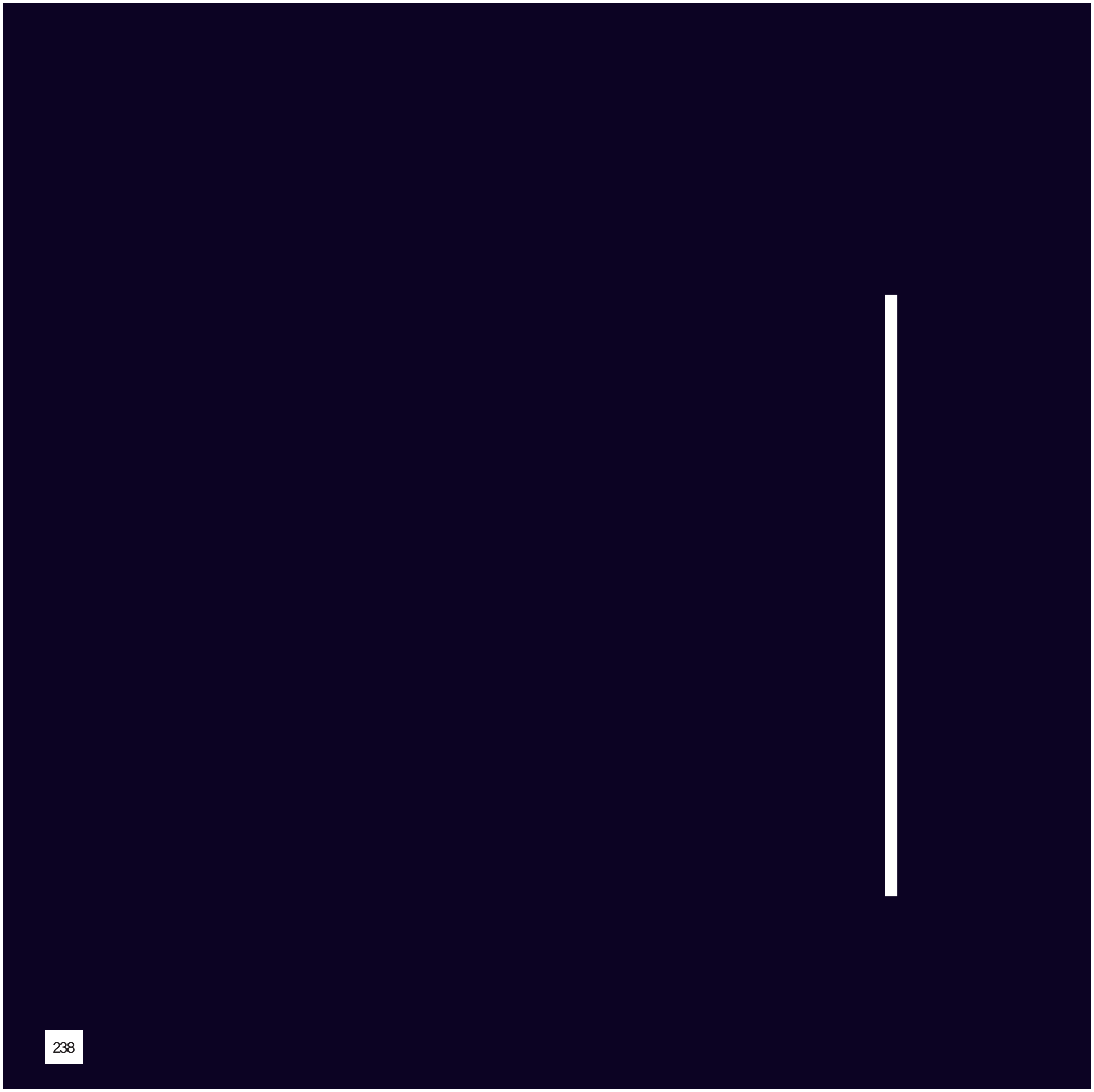
Render of the Area of Intervention: Center of Khiam

Fig. 147

Render of the Area of Intervention: Center of Khiam

Fig. 148





IX. Conclusions

Conclusions

Conclusion: Architecture as the Mediator Between Rupture and Continuity

This thesis has traced the concept of home across multiple registers: cognitive, agricultural, philosophical, geopolitical, and architectural, arriving not at a fixed definition but at a operational understanding. Home is neither a stable object nor an infinitely fluid condition, but a negotiated field where memory, materiality, and political reality converge. The research demonstrates that in contexts marked by repeated destruction: Exemplified by Khiam, Lebanon, architecture cannot content itself with reconstruction as restoration, nor surrender to fragmentation as inevitability. Instead, architecture must operate as a mediator between rupture and continuity.

The Architectural Problem of the Unresolved

What emerges from this investigation is that the most profound challenge for architecture in post-conflict territories is not the technical problem of rebuilding, but the conceptual problem of temporality. Destruction produces a tear in the fabric of time: the past becomes inaccessible, the present is suspended, and the future appears illegible. Conventional reconstruction models, whether nostalgic replication or modernist tabula rasa: fail because they attempt to either deny the tear or exploit it. Neither approach addresses what this thesis identifies as the core architectural task: making rupture habitable without making it disappear.

The village of Khiam, examined through historical analysis, morphological study, and photographic documentation, reveals that destruction itself produces a new spatial condition. Ruins are not simply absence; they are presence in negative. Empty plots where schools and mosques once stood are not voids but artifacts of violence. The walls that remain standing: scored, fractured, exposed; are not debris but witnesses. An architecture of belonging in such a context must begin from the premise that these traces are not obstacles to be cleared but materials to be worked with.

The Toolbox as Theoretical Contribution

The methodological contribution of this thesis lies in the development of an architectural toolbox that translates theoretical positions into operative design criteria. Rather than proposing a single master plan or formal solution, the research assembles a layered framework.

At the urban scale, Aldo Rossi's concept of the urban artifact is reinterpreted through absence: the destroyed buildings of Khiam function as primary elements not through their physical presence but through their memory. The urban structure is reconceived as a field of traces, where what is missing structures what can be built.

At the material scale, the tectonic grounding derived from Frampton and the sensory phenomenology of Pallasmaa converge in a strategy of differentiated continuity. Surviving walls are retained and filled with local stone, creating a legible stratification between what endured and what is newly constructed. Debris is not removed but reprocessed: crushed for aggregate, sorted for reuse; transforming the material of destruction into the substance of reconstruction.

At the experiential scale, the underground network proposed for Khiam reverses the conventional meaning of subterranean space in the Levant. Tunnels, typically associated with hiding, smuggling, or military infrastructure, are reconceptualized as conduits of truth: spatial devices that reveal rather than conceal the lived reality of residents. The descent becomes a phenomenological separation from the exposed surface: a movement away from surveillance, vulnerability, and the dystopian conditions of occupation, toward a space of controlled movement, introspection, and symbolic sovereignty.

At the symbolic scale, the reconstruction of the mosque as a semi-subterranean gathering space reinterprets the very meaning of collective assembly. By drawing light from the roof rather than walls, by distributing entry points across five thresholds rather than a single monumental gate, the project dissolves hierarchy and emphasizes the mosque's etymological root: a place of gathering.

Architecture as Political Testimony

This research has demonstrated that in territories like southern Lebanon, architecture cannot pretend to neutrality. The thesis argues that architecture's responsibility is not to resolve conflict through form, but to register it: to make visible the structures of violence that have shaped the land, while simultaneously creating conditions for collective life to reconstitute itself.

Central to this understanding is the theoretical position of Peter Eisenman, who fundamentally reorients the question of architectural meaning. For Eisenman, architecture is not a representation of something external to itself. Rather, architecture is a structure that produces meaning. It does not illustrate pre-existing narratives; it generates new ones through its internal logics, displacements, and spatial operations. This di stinction is critical for post-conflict reco nstruction: if architecture merely represents loss, it risks aestheticizing trauma or reducing memory to illustration. But if architecture produces meaning through its own spatial language, it can create conditions in which memory, identity, and belonging are actively constructed rather than passively depicted. Eisenman's insistence on architecture's autonomy from representation liberates the project from the burden of symbolism.

Lebbeus Woods' insistence that reconstruction must not normalize destruction finds its methodological counterpart in Ignasi de Solà-Morales' conception of weak architecture: a practice that refuses dominance, accepts fragility, and operates through juxtaposition rather than synthesis. Together, these positions frame architecture as a practice of critical exposure: revealing what power seeks to conceal, marking what violence attempts to erase.

The Transferable Framework

While grounded in the specific conditions of Khiam: its topography, its agricultural terraces, its layered history of French Mandate infrastructure, Israeli occupation, and contemporary warfare, the methodological framework developed in this thesis is designed to remain transferable. The combination of analytical lenses (historical, political, morphological), mapping criteria (damage assessment, memory valuation, material trace), and design operations (retention, grafting, differentiation, underground insertion) constitutes a toolkit applicable to other contexts marked by displacement and structural violence: Palestine, Syria, Sudan, and beyond.

What transfers is not a formal language but an attitude: the recognition that reconstruction must resist erasure without falling into nostalgic reproduction; that rupture must remain legible without paralyzing collective life; that architecture operates not as a solution to political conflict but as a spatial practice within it.

The Paradox of Belonging

Ultimately, this thesis returns to its opening question: Isn't everyone, in some way, searching for home? The answer, after this investigation, is both yes and no. Yes, in that the desire for continuity, memory, and belonging appears as a persistent human need across cultures and histories. Home is not found but produced: constructed through material practice, social relation, and political negotiation.

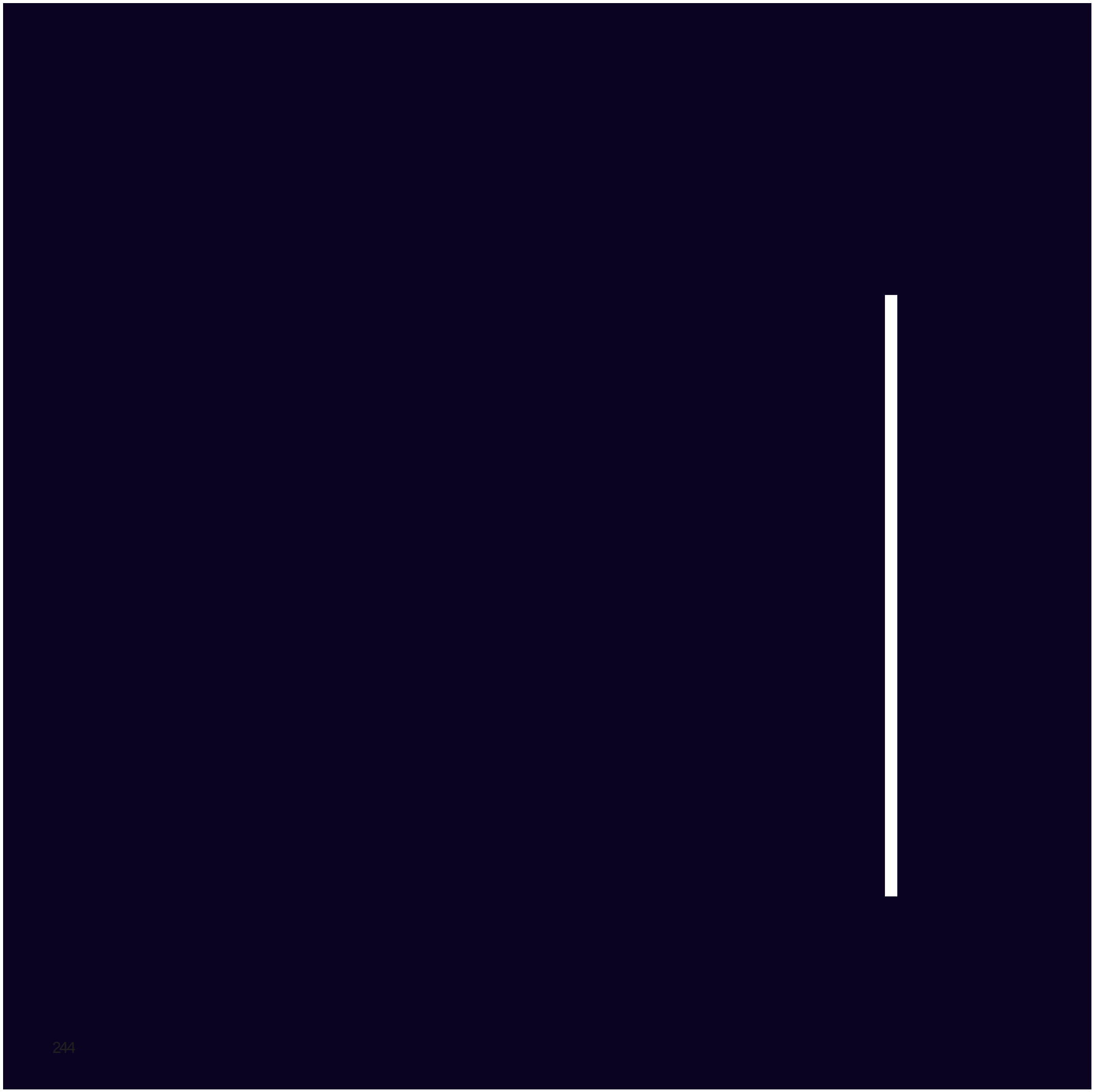
The paradox at the heart of this research is that home becomes most visible when it is lost. Displacement reveals what settlement obscures: that belonging is not a state but an activity; not a place but a practice. Architecture's role, then, is not to provide home as a finished object, but to create the spatial conditions within which the practice of home can continue even when walls collapse, even when land is occupied.

In Khiam, this means designing with the understanding that the village will likely be destroyed again. The architecture of belonging, under such conditions, cannot be an architecture of permanence in the classical sense. It must be an architecture of persistence: forms that can be rebuilt, materials that can be reclaimed, spaces that can be reoccupied. It must embed memory not in monumental fixity but in repeatable gestures.

The Responsibility of the Architect

This thesis concludes by affirming that architects working in conflict territories bear a responsibility that extends beyond technical competence or aesthetic innovation. They become custodians of continuity—not in the sense of preserving a static past, but in the sense of enabling the thread of collective life to be picked up again after rupture. This requires a form of attention that is both historical and projective: reading the traces of what was, while opening space for what might become.

Fig. 149



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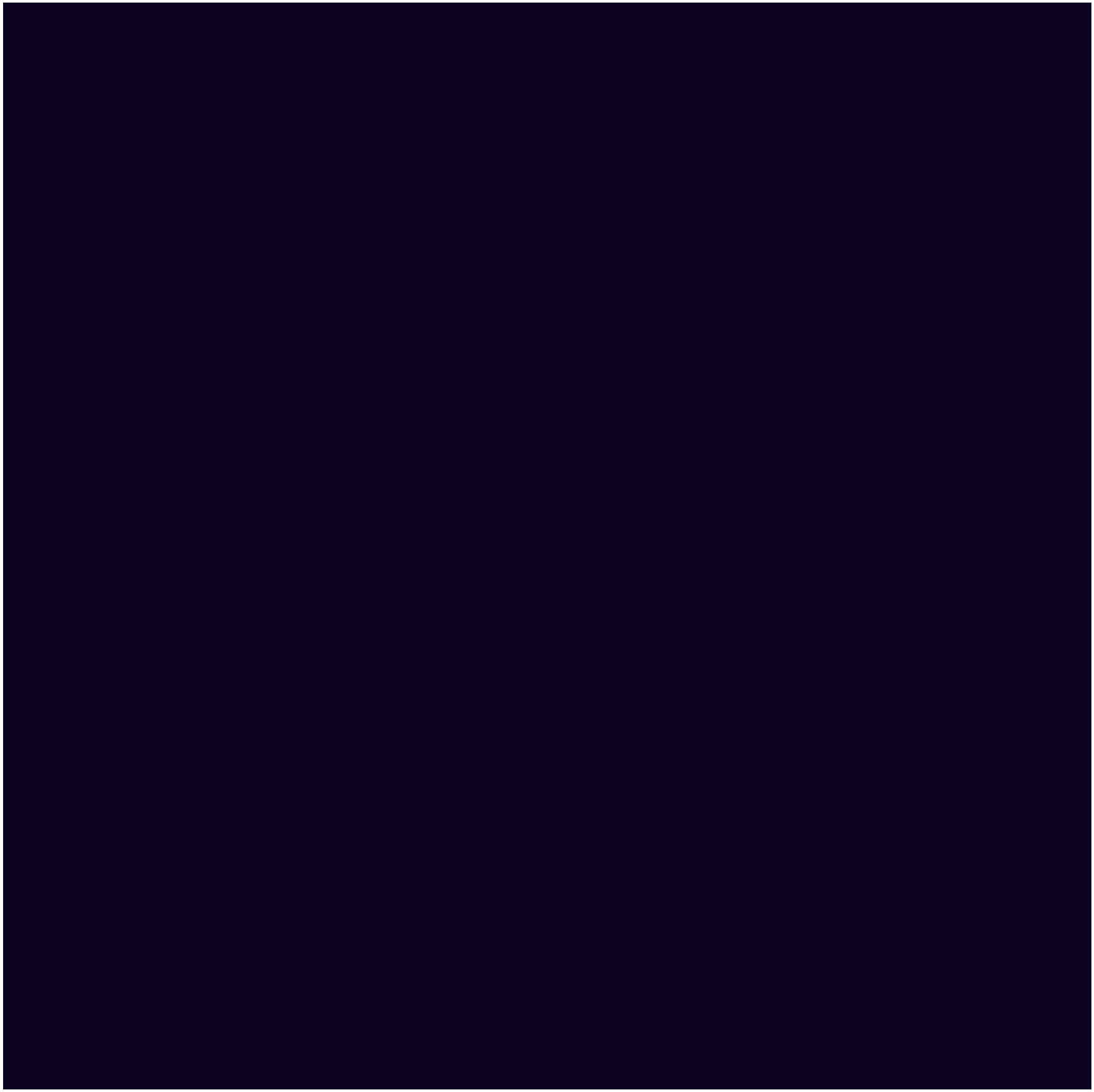


Geopolitical map of the current Lebanese - Israeli War

(Since 1948 - March 2026)

Scale: 1 / 300 000

Legend

- Urbanized Areas of Lebanon, Syria and Israel
- Evacuation Orders by Israel in March 2026
- Primary Arterial Road
- Areas Acquired following the 6 Day War in 1967
- Borders following 1948 | Creation of Israel
- New Borders following the 6 Day War in 1967
- Main Streets
- Secondary Important street connections
- Rivers

Beirut faced 6 large-scale bombardment

1. 1978 - Operation Litani
2. 1982 - Siege and invasion
3. 1993 - Operation Accountability
4. 1996 - Operation Grapes of Wrath
5. 2006 - Lebanon
6. 2023-2026 Escalation

EVACUATION ORDERS OF IN **BEIRUT** on March 2026

LEBANON

Main Evacuation Road
| Lack of Connectivity roads
| High Traffic during evacuations

EVACUATION ORDERS OF **160 CITIES AND VILLAGES** on March 2026

20 % of the Area of Lebanon

Number of displaced people in March 2026
from south Lebanon and Affected Areas in Beirut

670, 000 - 1, 000, 000
Lebanese civilians

Case Study : **Khiam Village**

Invasion of South Lebanon in 1978

Shebaa Farms from Leb

Lebanese - Israeli Border defined in 1949 in armistice

New Adimistrative borders following the 6 Day war in 1967

Golan Heights from Syria

SYRIA

ISRAEL

20 Km

Lebanese Southern Governates

Khiam within the Southern Lebanese Landscape

I

Legend

- Lebanese - Israeli Border
- Disputed Borders After 1967
- Main Streets
- Governorate Boundary
- Contour Lines
- Accessibility to Khiam

Case Study : **Khiam Village**

NABATIEH GOVERNORATE

SOUTH GOVERNORATE

DAMASCUS GOVERNORATE

QUNEITRA GOVERNORATE

DARAA GOVERNORATE

50 Km

Urban Fabric and War Damage Map

Khiam Village as Study Case

Before Oct 2023: **~18,000 residents**
2023–2024 war: **town largely emptied**
2025 return: **~900 families came back**
2026 escalation: **new evacuation**

Population Changes
Pre- Oct 2023 - March 2026

800
Buildings Damaged or Destroyed
50%
Urban fabric affected
80%
Infrastructure Destroyed

War Aftermath
Oct 2023 - Dec 2024

The Khiam Detention Center

1. **Original construction (French Mandate)** — 1933 | an army barracks and observation post
2. **Lebanese Army use** — 1943–1978 | Military Base.
3. **Israeli occupation & militia control** — 1978–2000 | converted into a detention center and eventually a prison
4. **Hezbollah and Residents of Khiam** — After 2000 | turned into a museum/memorial for former prisoners

Legend

- Urbanized Areas
- Main Streets
- Secondary Streets
- Contour Lines
- Rivers
- Bombs dropped
  Between Oct 2023 - Dec 2024

Scale: 1 / 10 000

1 Km

War AfterMath

(Between September 20th 2024 - October 14th 2024)

Scale: 1 / 150 000

Legend Buildings Destroyed:

- 50 or more
- 30 to 39
- 20 to 29
- 10 to 19
- 1 to 9

- Borders following 1948 | Creation of Israel
- Disputed Borders After the 6 Day War in 1967
- Main Streets
- Secondary Streets

The Circle covers aproximatively **2. 66 Km²**

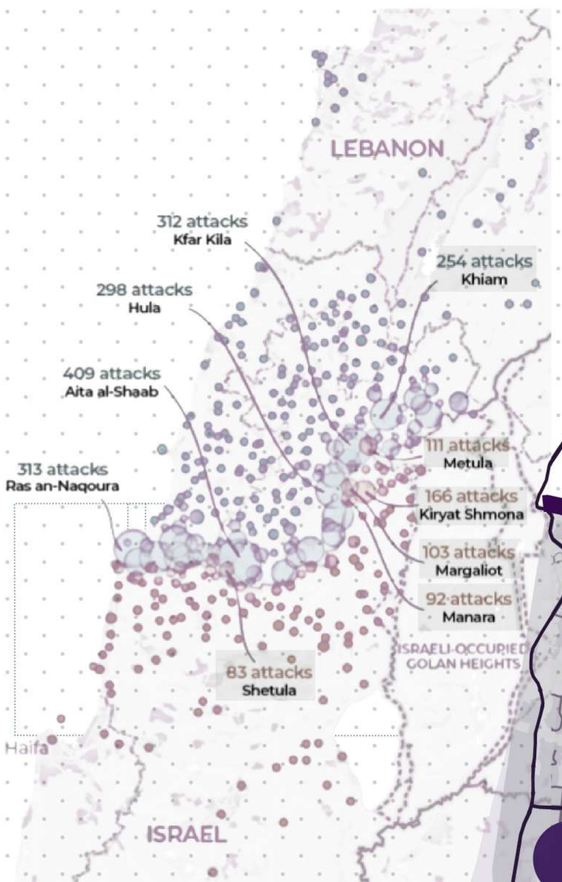
Case Study : **Khiam Village**

10,214 Combined attacks **784** Combined deaths

8,313 Israeli attacks **752** Lebanese deaths

1,901 Hezbollah attacks **33** Israeli deaths

(Between October 7th 2023 - September 20th 2024)



LEBANON

Sidon/Sayda

EVACUATION ORDERS OF 160 CITIES AND VILLAGES on March 2026

Tyre/Sour

Golan Heights

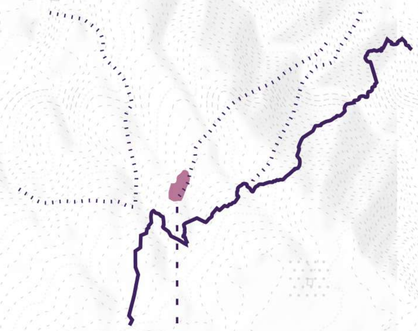
ISRAEL

10 Km

Territorial Context

Khiam within the Southern Lebanese Landscape

Khiam lies in the eastern sector of South Lebanon, within the Marjayoun district, overlooking the Hula Valley to the south. The town occupies a strategic elevated terrain between: **Mount Hermon's western foothills** and the **fertile plains descending toward Palestine**. This position historically allowed control over agricultural lands, water resources, and regional circulation routes **linking inland Lebanon to the southern borderlands**.



Case Study : **Khiam Village**

Blat
800m
Dibbine
Marjaayoun
780m
600m
Ebel El Saqi
505m
Rachaya Al Foukar
800m
Rachaya Al Foukar
1000m
800m
Kfarhamam
Qlayaa
650m
730m
390m
485m
Mari
1000m
Kherbeh
520m
Halta
530m
Deir Mimas
Ain Arab
600m
10 Km to Border
Lebanese - Israeli Border
Kfarkela
Metula
Wazzani
5 Km

Population of Khiam Village

28, 580
Registered Population

9000
Residents

Military AirPort
(by French Forces in 1920s)

Legend

- Urbanized Areas
- Lebanese - Israeli Border
- Main Streets
- Secondary Streets
- Contour Lines
- Rivers
- Accessibility to Khiam

Scale: 1 / 30,000

Placelessness in Khiam Village

Google Earth Image updated half the satellite image/footage
Last update: January 2026

The Existing: Khiam Before October 7th 2023

Place emerges where built form supports lived experience and shared memory.

Bomb Traces: Khiam After December 2024

Interruption of routines, fragmentation of spatial memory, loss of familiar reference points.

The Empty Plot of Memory

The disappearance of built form produces a condition of placelessness, where the erasure of spatial structure destabilizes identity while leaving a memory-saturated ground.

Scale: 1 / 2 000

Legend:

Bombs dropped
Between Oct 2023 - Dec 2024

Spatial Layers of Memory and Resistance

Mapping Civic Anchors, Structural Fragility

Legend

- Educational Facilities
- Religious and Sacred places
- Health facilities
- Human-made Greenery
- Main central Streets
- Streets

1 In Khiam, absence itself becomes an urban artifact — a spatial residue that testifies to interrupted continuity and collective trauma.

Urban Artifacts

Rubble and Debris as Urban Artifacts

2 Khiam embodies an architecture of weakness where fragmentation produces adaptability, enabling spaces and materials to be reused and reinterpreted across changing political and social conditions.

Weak Architecture

Damaged Walls to be Reused

3 Architecture does not replace destruction; it negotiates with it. Memory anchors space, fragmentation enables adaptation, and new layers of life emerge through building within ruins rather than erasing them.

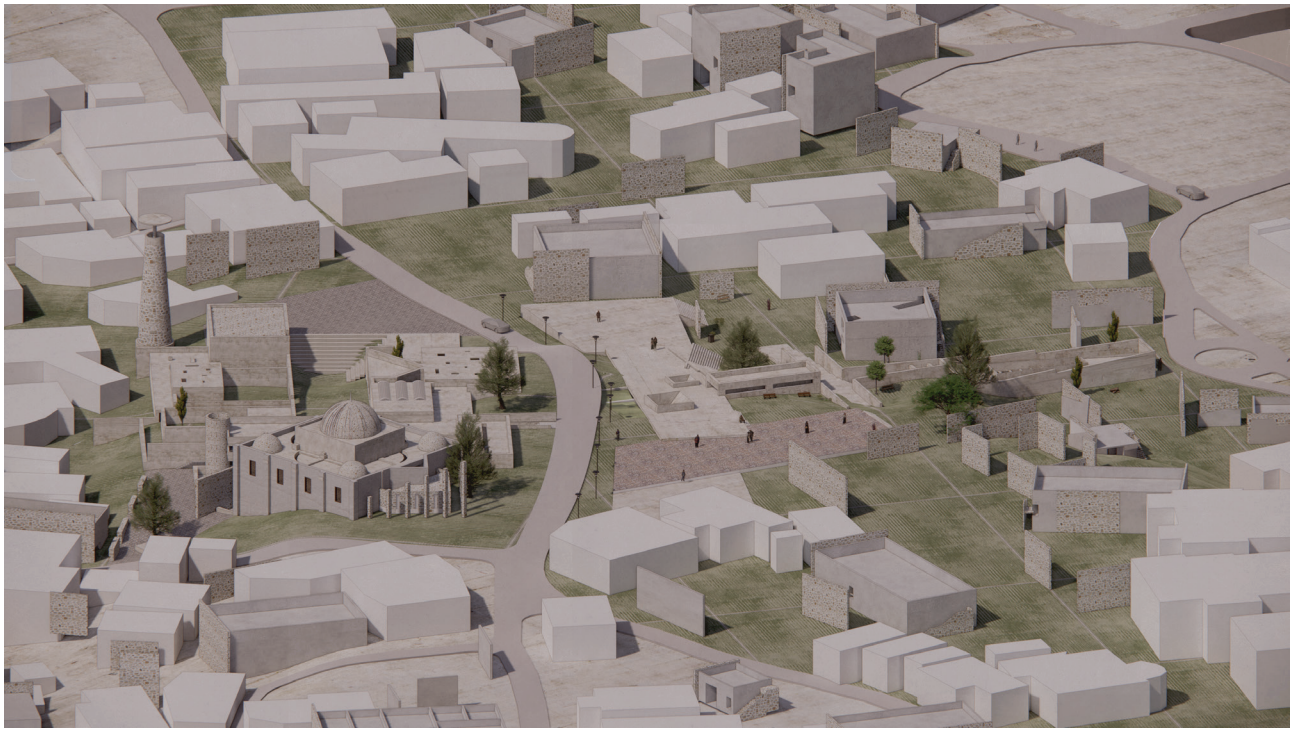
Architecture of Resistance

View from the Hilltop of Khiam

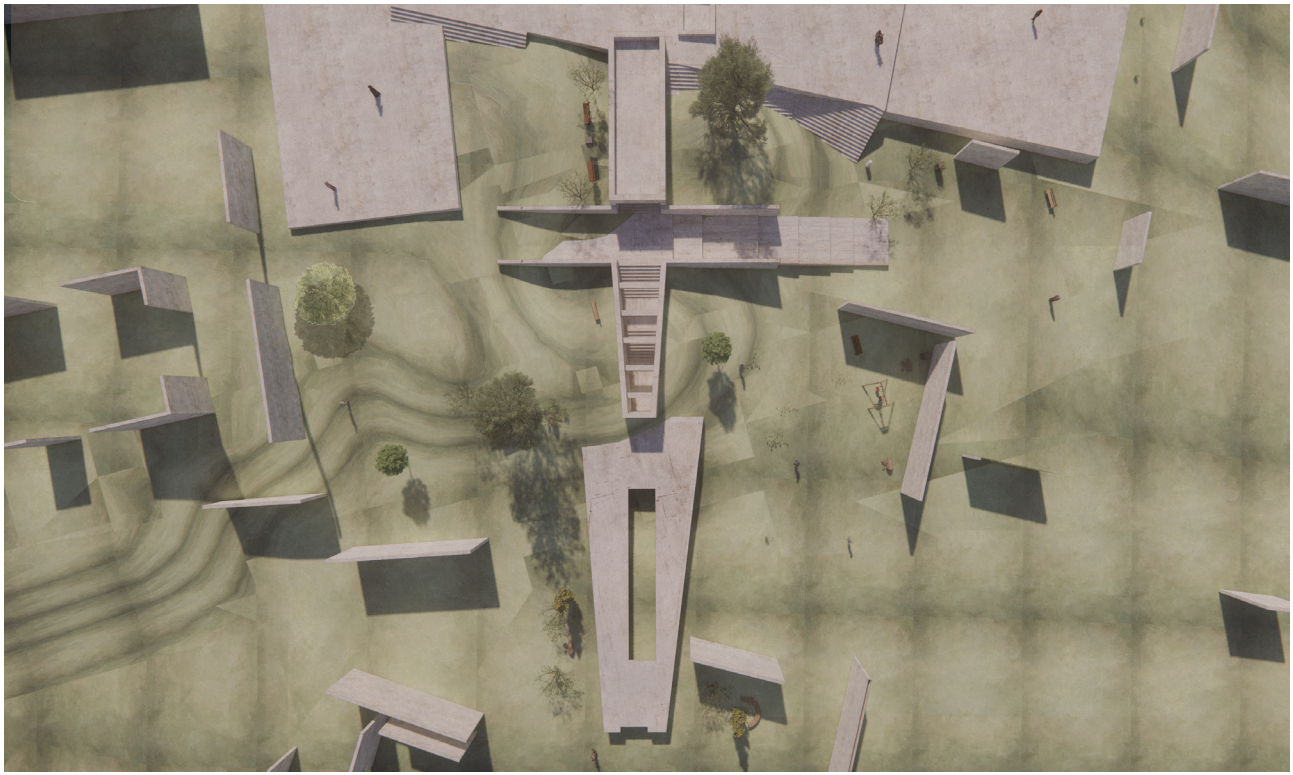
500 m

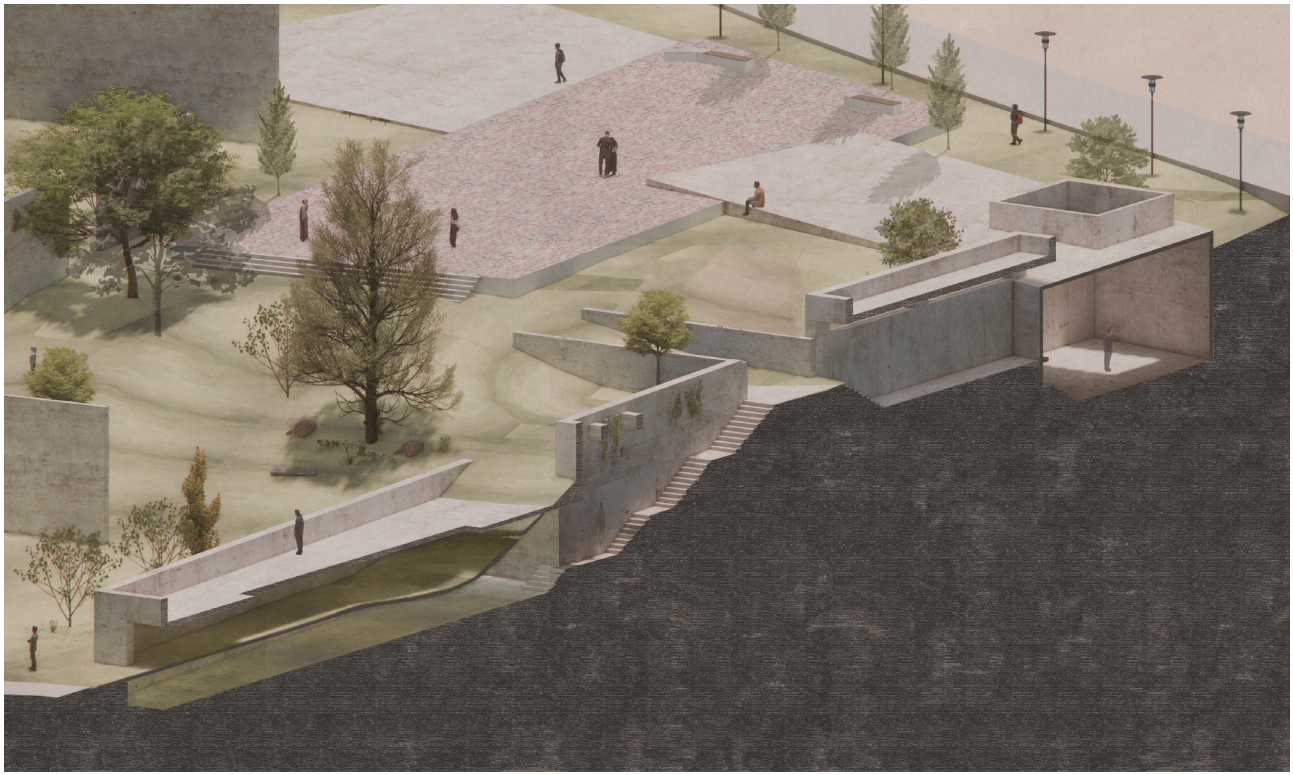
Imagining Khiam, South Lebanon

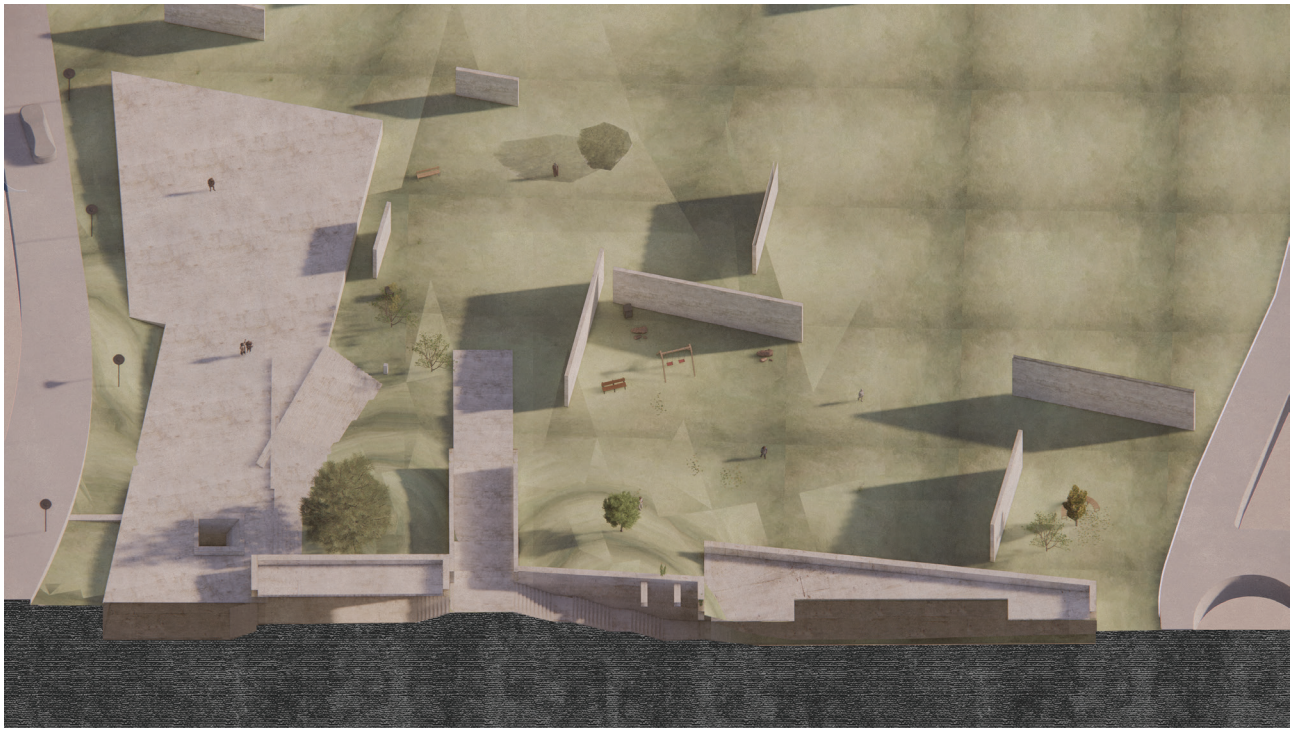
Intervention on Neighborhood in Khiam

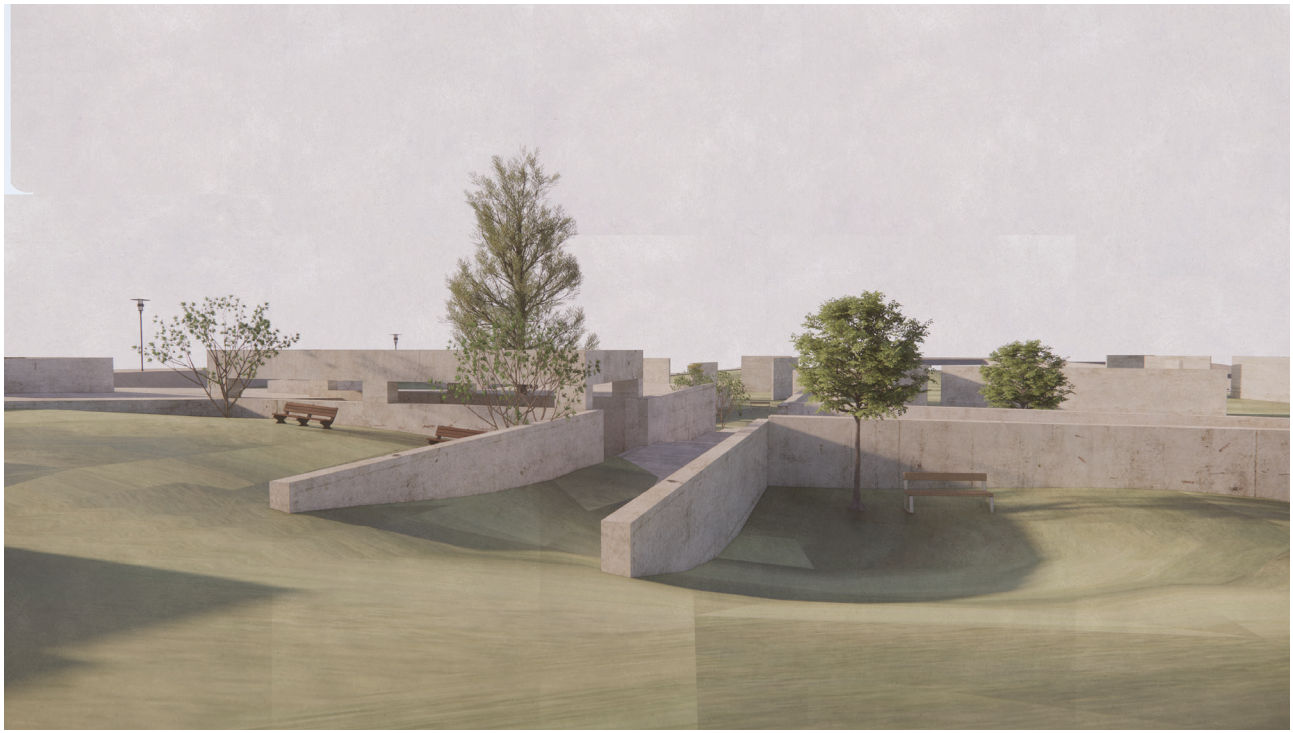


Underground Paths - Visualization

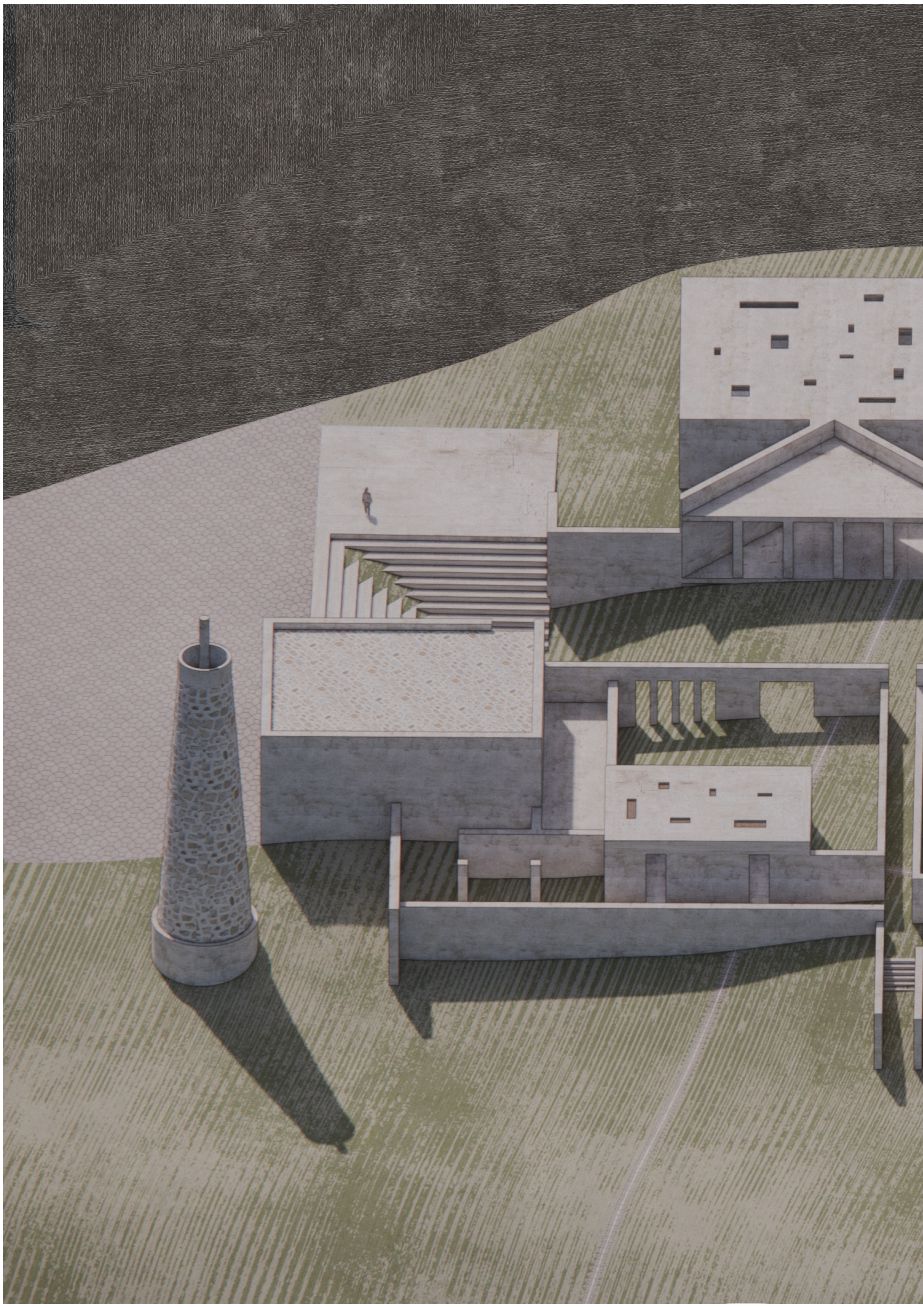


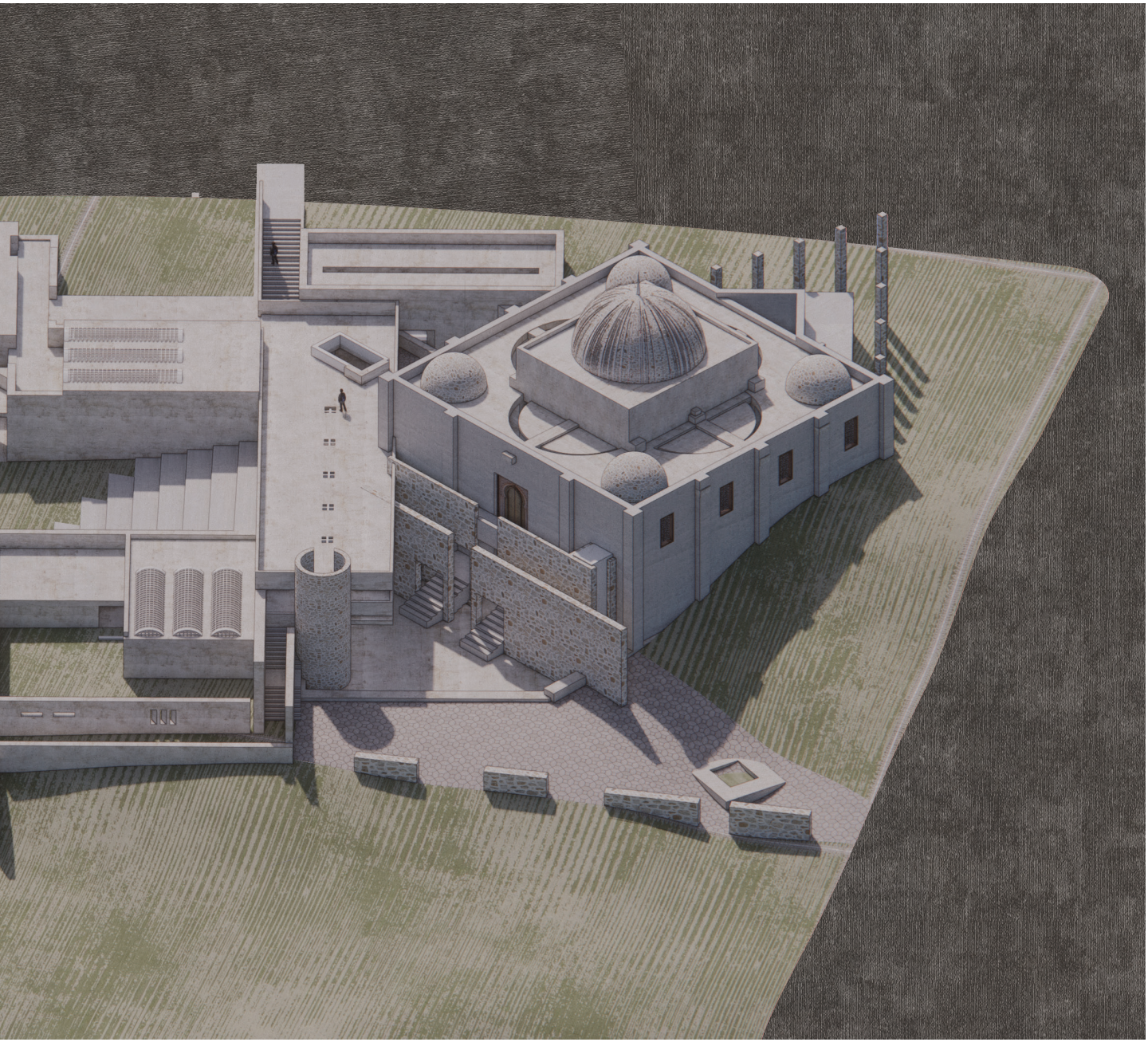


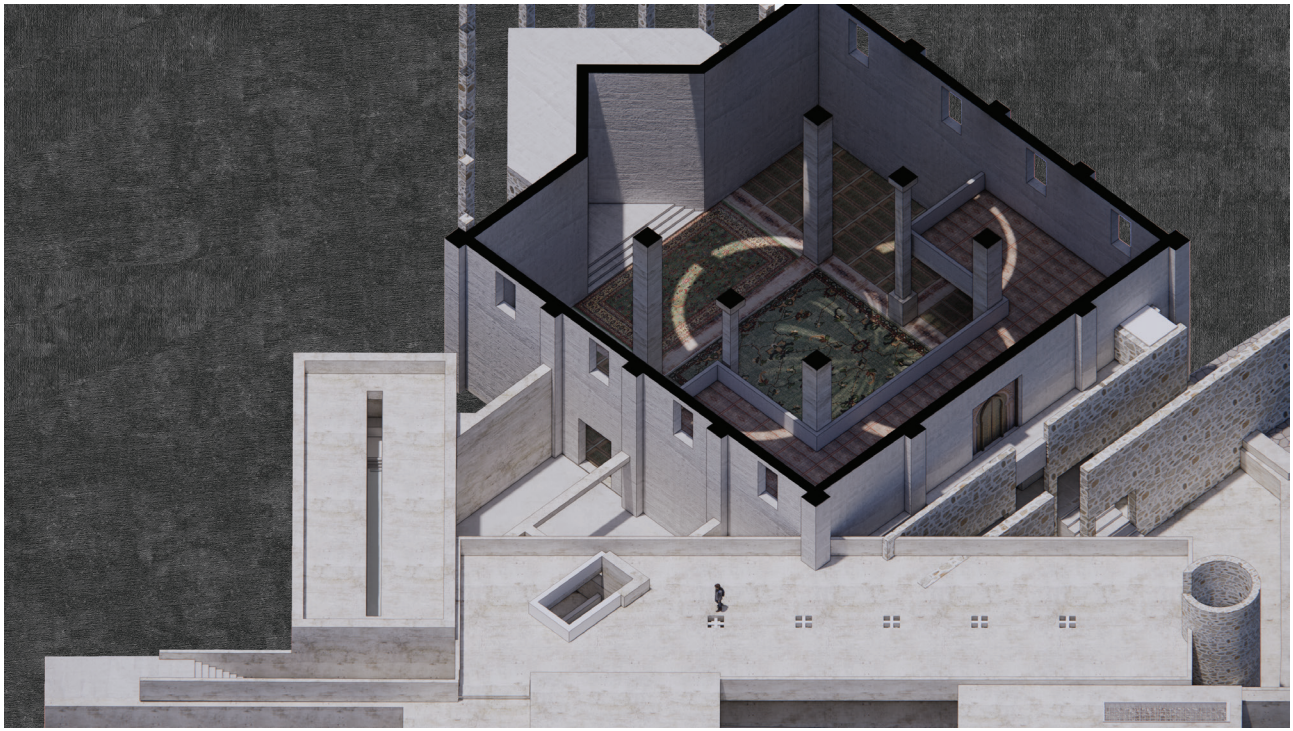


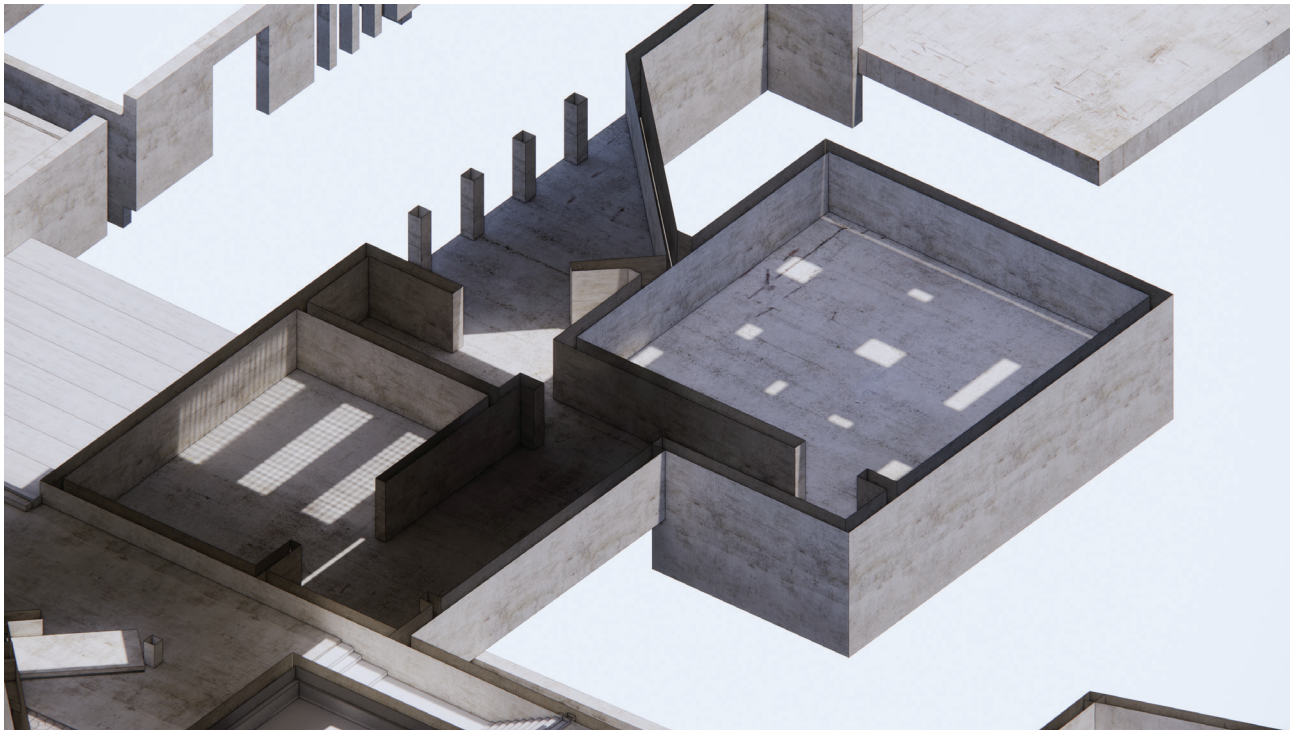


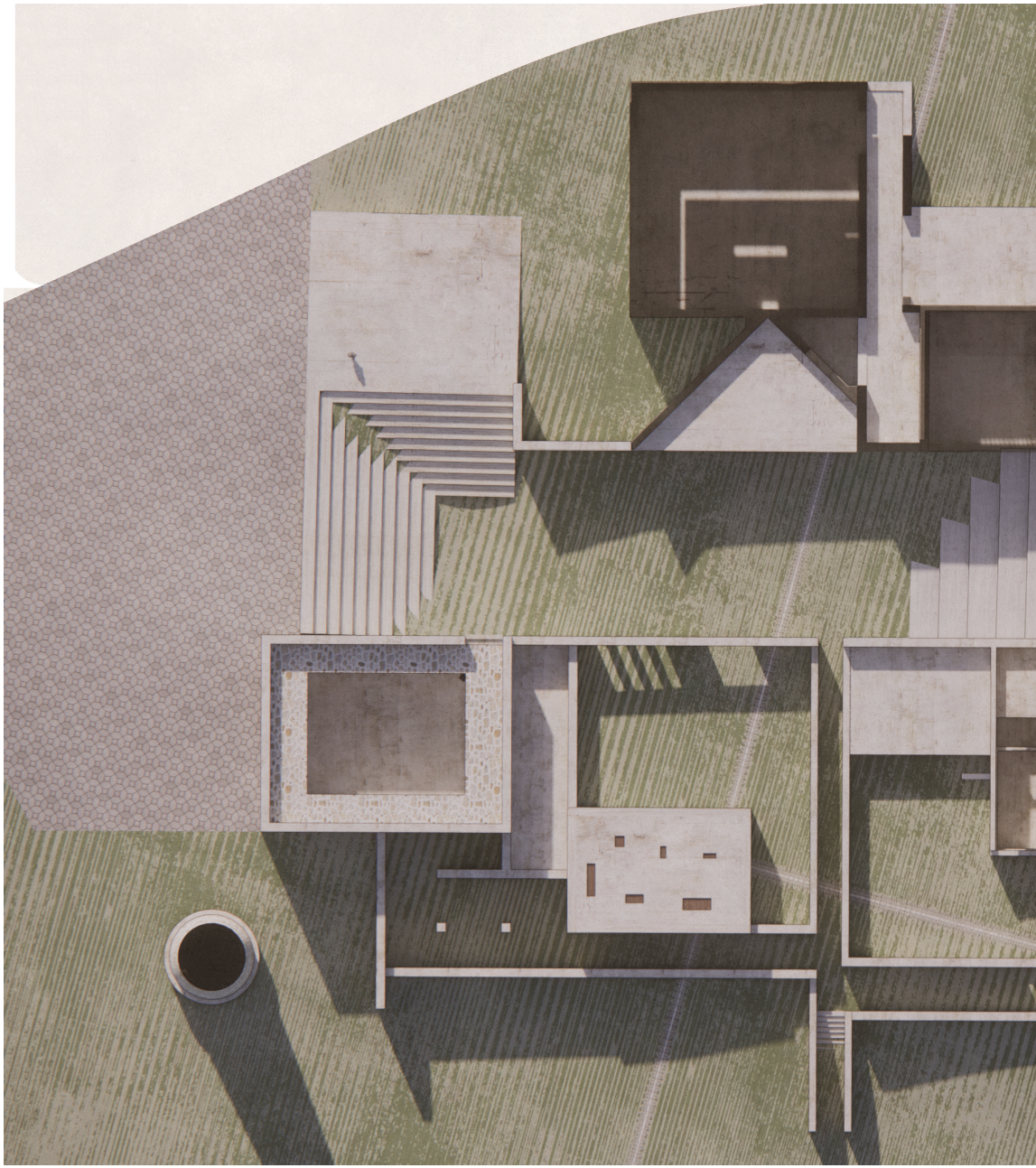
Mosque -
As Civic Anchor

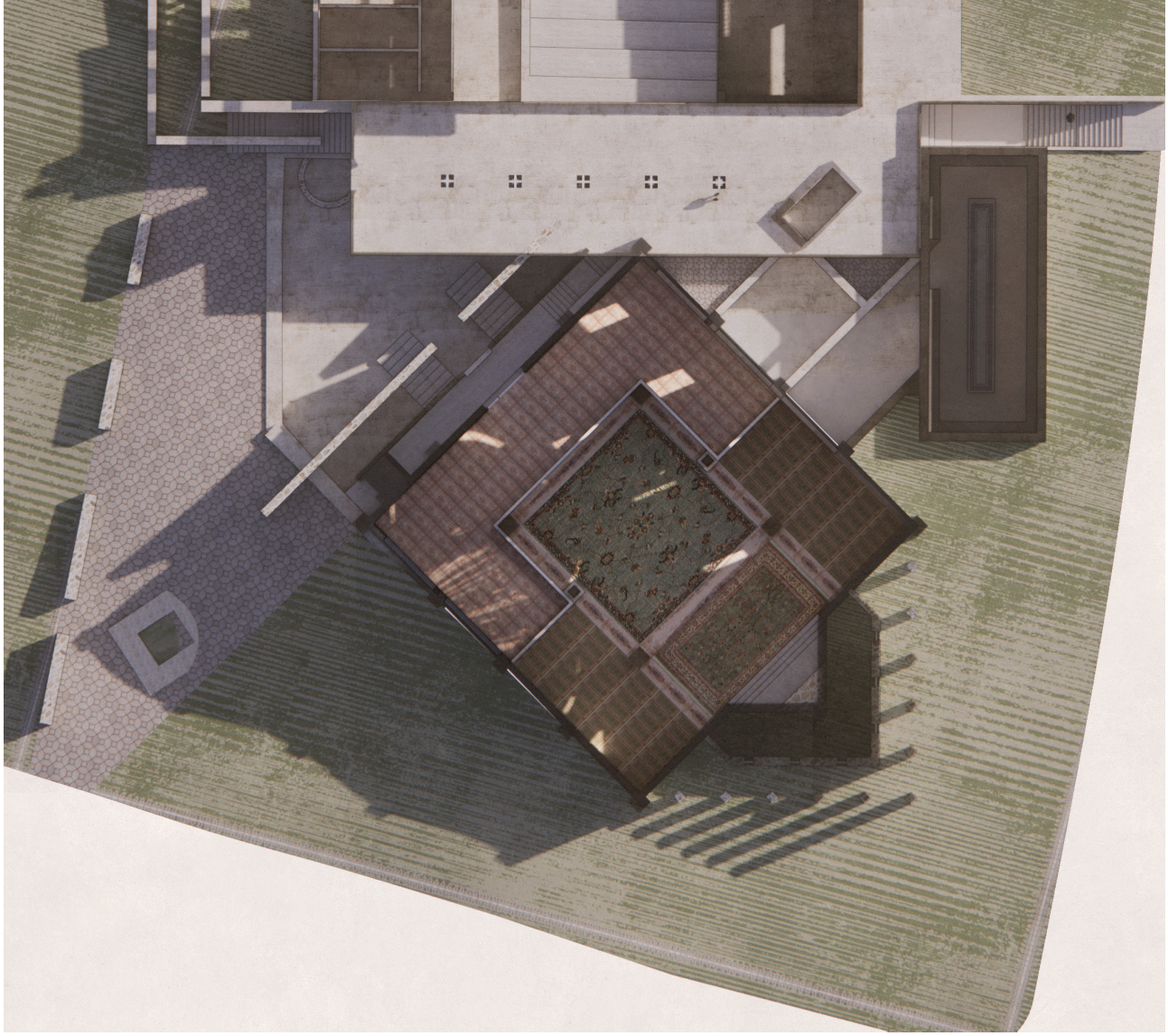












Aftermath of Khiam

Post December 2024 War

The way to Khiam - 3km Away

The View from Khiam

عید میلاد مریم
ویدیو

Leaving Khiam