Gardens in the Discalced Carmelite Order

Sequence of Atmospheres

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ABSTRACT

The garden, as a contained and controlled physical space, is a paradigmatic example of how artefact and landscape can meet, as a result of establishing a close connection between human beings and nature. This connection is taken to the extreme in the context of the Discalced Carmelite Order, in particular by the contemplative cloistered nuns who inhabit hermitage-like monasteries. Based on the exemplary case of the Convent of Saint Joseph in Avila — the first conventual foundation realised by Saint Teresa of Jesus in 1562 — the first chapter of this thesis aims to establish the importance of the garden in the rule of the Discalced Carmelite Order, in the architecture of its convents and in the daily life of its nuns. The second part of this study focuses on the perception of the gardens of this order, understood as a complex articulation of sensory elements. The third and last part explores a hypothesis of the evolution of the convent typology of this religious order, assuming the garden as a primary element in the definition of architectural space.

Keywords: Discalced Carmelite Order; Garden; Five Senses; Atmosphere

O jardim, enquanto espaço físico contido e controlado, é um exemplo paradigmático de como um artefacto e a paisagem se podem encontrar, resultado do estabelecimento de uma estreita ligação entre o ser humano e a natureza. Esta ligação é levada ao extremo no contexto da Ordem dos Carmelitas Descalços, em particular pelas monjas contemplativas de clausura monástica que habitam mosteiros de tipo eremítico. Tendo como base o caso exemplar do Convento de São José em Ávila — a primeira fundação conventual realizada por Santa Teresa de Jesus em 1562 —, o primeiro capítulo desta tese visa estabelecer a importância do jardim na regra da Ordem dos Carmelitas Descalços, na arquitectura dos seus conventos e na vida quotidiana das suas monjas. A segunda parte deste estudo centra-se na percepção dos jardins desta ordem, entendidos como articulação complexa de elementos sensoriais. A terceira e última parte explora uma hipótese de evolução tipológica dos conventos desta ordem religiosa, assumindo o jardim como elemento primordial na definição do espaço arquitectónico.

RESUMO

Palavras-chave: Ordem dos Carmelitas Descalços; Jardim; Cinco Sentidos; Atmosfera

INTRODUCTION

The Discalced Carmelite Order is part of the Catholic Mendicant Order. It is also rooted in the eremitic tradition. The merging of these two aspects convene a series of rules that compel monks and nuns to a life of poverty, absolute seclusion and dedication to prayer, while conciliating with a self-sufficient life. The origins of the Carmelite Order goes back to a religious place found in the mountainous area of North Israel, previously part of Palestine. As narrated in the Old Testament, Mount Carmel [Fig. 1] is the place where Prophet Elijah went to prove the existence of God to the people of Israel.[1] In Hebrew, *Carmel,* which originates from the word *Karmel,* means *garden* or *vineyards.*[2] As a consequence, this sacred place of birth of the Carmelite Order means *Garden or vineyards of God.*[3]

The date of creation of the Carmelite Order is still subject of debate. Writings place it after the third crusade in the 12th century, When pilgrims from Europe came to Mount Carmel following the example of Prophet Elijah. The hermits gained more stability with the creation of the *formula of life* — a set of rules written by Saint Albert Avogadro (1150–1214).

The approval of these rules by Pope Innocent IV (1195–1254) transformed the group into a Religious Order in 1247.[4] This Catholic Mendicant order was later reformed, in 1562, by Saint Teresa of Jesus (1515-1582) [Fig. 2] who, together with Saint John of the Cross, established in Ávila, Spain, the Discalced Carmelite Order.[5] Saint Teresa entered in 1535 the convent of the Incarnation in Ávila. Shortly after, she opted to focus on the practice of mental prayers. Unable to fulfil common religious functions due to an illness, she was dispensed from the convent and decided to take a step forward by founding in her native city a convent whose main goal would be to create a life of perfection through contemplation.[6]

[1] "now therefore send, and gather to me all israel to mount carmel, and four hundred fifty of the prophets of baal, and four hundred of the prophets of the asherah, who eat at jezebel's table." 1 reis 18. 19. sacred bible. old and new testament.

[2] Carmel m. plantain. [Prob. ult. <Carmelita. Semantic evol. is unclear.]
Carmelita a. & m. Carmelite. [ML.] Carmelites <Gk. Karmelites: an inhabitant of Carmel <Karmelos: Carmel <Heb. Karmel: (Mount) Carmel, lit. Garden, a coastal mountain range in Israel overlooking the Mediter. Sea.]; Carmelitano,na a. Belonging to the order of the Carmelites; carmen (1) m. Carmelite order.

Carmen (2) m. Verse, poem. [L. Carmen: song. See *kan-in App. Akin to Sp. cantar (1), E. Charm.). A. ROBERTS, Edwards — A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Spanish Language with Families of Words Based on Indo-European Roots. Volume I. Bloomington: XLIBRIS, 2014.

[3] TIKKANEN, Amy — "Mount Carmel. Mountain ridge, Israel" in Encyclopedia Britannica. New Work: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2007.v

[4] CARMELITE PROVINCIAL CENTRE — History of the Carmelite Order. Victoria.

[5-6] ZIMMERMAN, Benedict — "The Carmelite Order" in The Catholic Encyclopedia.



[Fig. 1] FRICKERS, Gordon — “Painting Mount Carmel”, “Gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel“: 1 Kings 18.19.



[Fig. 2] RUBENS, Pierre — “Saint Teresa d'Ávila”.

The reformed religious practice reestablished the fundamental aspects of Carmelite Order through a stronger connection to the garden.[7] In her autobiography, she puts it in the centre of the life of discalced carmelite nuns, while referring to her sisters as “gardeners”. The labour of taking care of the garden is a metaphor for the inner work of the monastics’ devotion to Lord: “The beginner must think of himself as of one setting one to make a garden in which the Lord is to take His delight, yet in soil most unfruitful and full of weeds. [...] We have now, by God's help, like good gardeners to make these plants grow, and to water them carefully, so that they may not perish, but may produce flowers which shall send forth great fragrance to give refreshment to this Lord of ours, so that He may often come into the garden to take His pleasure and to have His delight among this virtues”.[8] Saint Teresa of Ávila compares the process of learning how to love God with different means of taking care of a garden.

She iterates four degrees of prayer illustrated through the metaphor of four waters used to nourish the growing plants. The “gardeners” go through different states of religious practice/labour until they ultimately reach the maturity of their union with God.[9]

[7] “I was particularly attached to the prayer in the Garden, where I would go to keep Him company. I would think of the sweat and of the affliction He endured there. [...], I used to remain with Him there for as long as my thoughts permitted it.” A´VILA, Teresa — The Life Of Teresa Of Jesus. Translated & edited by E. Allison Peers, 1995, p. 66.

[8] A´VILA, Teresa — The Life Of Teresa Of Jesus. Translated & edited by E. Allison Peers, 1995, p. 73.

[9] “It seems to me that the garden can be watered in four ways: by taking the water from a well, which costs us great labour; or by a water-wheel and buckets, when the water is drawn by a windlass (I have sometimes drawn it in this way: it is less laborious than the other and gives more water); or by a stream or a brook, which waters the ground much better, for it saturates it more thoroughly and there is less need to water it often, so that the gardener's labour is much less; or by heavy rain, when the Lord waters it with no labour of ours, a way incomparably better than any of those which have been described.” A´VILA, Teresa — The Life Of Teresa Of Jesus. Translated & edited by E. Allison Peers, 1995, p. 73.

The rules of the Constitution of the Carmelite Order expressly indicate how monks and nuns should behave as a community[10], sharing the same purpose of devoting their lives to God, occupying their daily routine with prayers in silence and solitude, daily work and vows of poverty[11]: "An Atmosphere of silence and solitude is essential to our life of prayer."[12] As explained in the book of rules *Carmelite Constitutions:* "The silence of solitude which individuals and communities must cultivate makes us docile to the voice of the Holy Spirit. In all the houses of the Order there must therefore be an atmosphere of silence, recollection and solitude. This will enable a nun to engage more easily in personal prayer, and to make her study and other activities more fruitful."[13] These strict rules influence the design of the order's convents, as it obliges the use of physical borders (e.g. walls) not only between the convent and its surroundings, but also between different types of spaces within it. This architectural division helps restrict unwelcome distractions from the outside world while providing a sense of safety and isolation. This enables the creation of an ideal space where only the wanted and the meaningful take part.

The garden plays an important role in this system. The metaphysical space that Saint Teresa described in her autobiography becomes physical. Different types of gardens can answer to different degrees of silence and solitude[14]: cloister, prayer garden, recreational courtyard and private patio [Fig. 03].

[10] Hearing, praying and living the Word - in silence, in solitude and in community, especially in the form of lectio divina - Carmelites are led, day by day, to know and experience the mystery of Jesus Christ. FRASCATI PRIOR GENERAL AND HIS COUNCIL — Carmelite Constitutions, 1995. Rule 20, p. 8.

[11] "Mendicant Friars are members of those religious orders which, originally, by vow of poverty renounced all proprietorship not only individually but also (and in this differing from the monks) in common, relying for support on their own work and on the charity of the faithful." OLIGER, Livarius — "Mendicant Friars" in The Catholic Encyclopedia.

[12] CARMELITE MONASTERY OF BALTIMORE — "Silence and Solitude".

[13] FRASCATI PRIOR GENERAL AND HIS COUNCIL — Carmelite Constitutions, 1995. Rule 67, p. 24.

[14] "the Choir, the Ante-Choir or De Profundis, the Chapter room, the Cloisters, Dormitories, Refectory; the Staircases, Hermitages, and all the Passages." "On Silence". "Paper of Exactions of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of the Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel" taken from The Traditions of our Spanish Mothers and Foundresses. Archbishop's House, Octave of the Assumption B. V.M., 1898, p. 27.



[Fig. 3] GILSON, JEAN-PIERRE — “Les Carmélites de Compiègne”.

The Discalced Carmelite is a mendicant order, since carmelites live in poverty and are constrained of owning personal belongings. This leads architecture to a more modest expression, when compared to other orders. Richness in the Discalced Carmelite Order does not lay in material man-made objects, but is expressed through nature. That is, the intrinsic value in the Discalced Carmelite Order lies in natural elements that represent God's creation. Therefore, gardens are one of the most sacred spaces in the discalced carmelite convents.

As an extended response to the rule of poverty, the aim of discalced carmelite monastics is to be fully autonomous, as they choose to abdicate any donations.[15] Monks and nuns work in "offices" — producing their own habit[16], wooden religious objects and furniture —, in the kitchen — cooking for themselves —, in vivarium[17] — taking care of poultry and mules —, in gardens — cutting lawns and treating flowers and plants — and in hortus vegetabilis[18] — cultivating food for own consumption and for sale. Consequently, monks and nuns make special use of contained outdoor spaces.

Therefore, the garden is one of the most important components of the discalced carmelite convents. Their labour connects to a higher religious meaning as Saint Teresa describes: "What, then, as I say, will the gardener do here? He will be glad and take heart and consider it the greatest of favours to work in the garden of so great an Emperor; and, as he knows that he is pleasing Him by so working (and his purpose must be to please, not himself, but Him), let him render Him great praise for having placed such confidence in him, when He has seen that, without receiving any recompense, he is taking such great care of that which He had entrusted to him."[19] Therefore, the garden plays a fundamental role not only in the domestic life of the convent, but also in the sacred connection with God [Fig. 04].

[15] BAUER, Patricia [et al.] — "St. Teresa of Ávila". The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica.

[16] CARMELITE SISTERS OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF LOS ANGELES — "Receive the Holy Habit of Carmel".

[17] Vivarium — "an enclosure, container, or structure adapted or prepared for keeping animals under semi-natural conditions for observation or study or as pets; an aquarium or terrarium". Lexico.

[18] Hortus conclusus is a Latin term, meaning literally "enclosed garden". At their root, both of the words in hortus conclusus refer linguistically to enclosure. CLIFFORD, A. — "History of Garden Design".

[19] A´VILA, Teresa — The Life Of Teresa Of Jesus. Translated & edited by E. Allison Peers, 1995, p. 74.

One foundational rule in the Discalced Carmelite Order refers to communal life.[20] Carmelites meet in prayer, recreation, chapter, community gatherings and other mutual activities that bring them back together from silent prayers in solitude.[21] Many of these activities are exercised outdoors, particularly during recreational hours [Fig. 05]. Thus, gardens are essential to welcome these very important moments of the community.[22]

The rules of the Discalced Carmelites are fundamental in the design of the order's convents and express the important role of the Garden in its architecture. In this research, the goal is to demonstrate not only the importance of the Garden in the construction of monasteries of this order, but also to launch a hypothesis of typological evolution of this monastery, based on the essentiality of this concept.

[20] "The life we share as brothers is built on and held together by the love of Christ; so charity must be the supreme law of our community life." ZUBIETA, Fr P. of St Joseph — Rule Constitutions and Norms. Discalced Carmelites. English edition, Pentecost Sunday. Dubli´n, 1988. "Fraternal Sharing In The Community", rule 31, p. 27.

[21] "Communal life must tend towards deeper union, in mutual knowledge and love. FRASCATI PRIOR GENERAL AND HIS COUNCIL — Carmelite Constitutions, 1995. Rule 31, p. 13.

[22] In order to enable specific activities, they often become an extension of the communal interior spaces. The refectory, for example, is often accompanied by an outdoor space where monastics can eat.



[Fig. 4] RUMORE, Kori — “Nuns at the Carmelite Monastery at River and Central roads in Des Plaines”.



[Fig. 5] GILSON, Jean-Pierre — “Les Carmélites de Compiègne”.

"A person to whom I was talking, with some other sisters, asked me why we should not become Discalced nuns, for it would be quite possible to find a way of establishing a convent. I had had desires of this kind myself, so I began to discuss the matter with a companion. [...] One day, after Communion, the Lord gave me the most explicit command to work for this aim with all my might and made me wonderful promises: that the convent would not fail to be established; that great service would be done to Him in it; that it should be called Saint Joseph's; that Saint Joseph would watch over us at one door and Our Lady at the other; that Christ would go with us; and that the convent would be a star giving out the most brilliant light." and that, although the Rules of the religious Orders were mitigated, I was not to think He was very little served in them, for what would become of the world if it were not for religious?"[23]

[23] AVILA, Teresa — The Life Of Teresa Of Jesus. Translated & edited by E. Allison Peers, 1995, pp. 183-184.

THE GARDEN IN THE ORDER'S ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGY

The Convent of San José [Fig. 06], built by Saint Teresa of Ávila in the 16th century, is a fundamental support to understand the architecture of the order's convents and specially the role of the garden in the Discalced Carmelite Order typology. The convent of San José is known for being the first convent of Saint Teresa of Jesus.[24] On the formation of discalced carmelite, Saint Teresa said: "As a result I resolved to do the little that was in my power; that is, to follow the evangelical counsels [poverty, chastity, and obedience] as perfectly as I could and strive that these few persons who live here do the same."[25] The convent established for 13 nuns is located in the birthplace of Saint Teresa in the Spanish city of Ávila, outside the medieval walls [Fig. 07] that protected the city centre from the Roman invaders. The Saint came to occupy the house of her brother-in-law, Juan de Ovalle who was married to Doña Juana de Ahumada, sister of the Saint, in 1561. The house was located in the site where the convent of San José was built, after receiving approval from the headquarters of the Catholic church in Rome on february 7th of 1562.[26]

This convent is the first example of the discalced carmelite architecture, which is based on the idea of poverty. Discalced carmelite architecture excludes monumentality, expressive objects and an architect assigned for its design. The Saint oriented the construction of the convent with her builder masters. Part of the convent was first built in 1562, in the early years of the reformation from the Discalced Carmelite Order. Only after the death of Saint Teresa, the church was built by the Spanish Renacentist architect Francisco de Mora (1553–1610) in 1607.

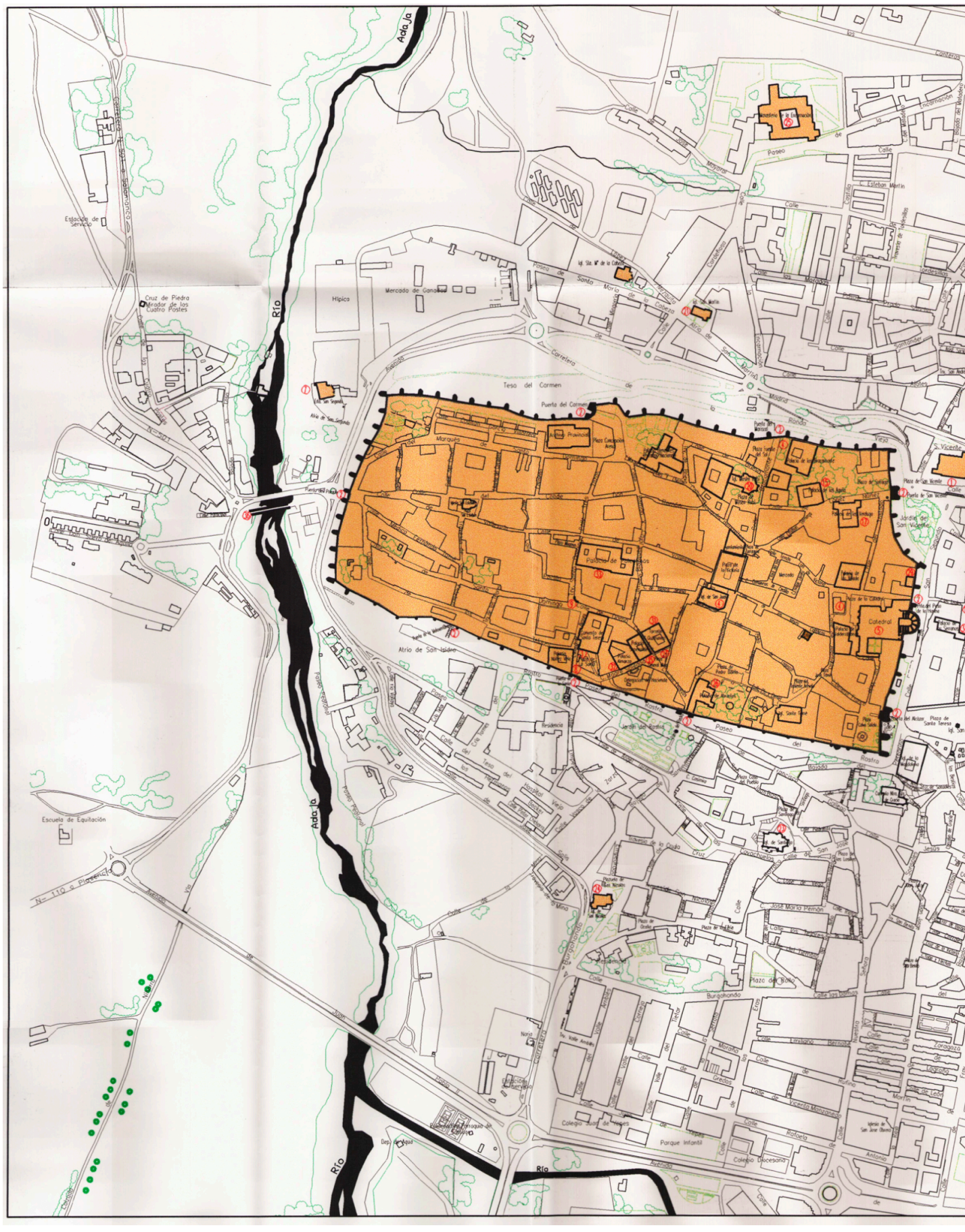
[24] UNESCO/NHK — "Old Town of Ávila with its Extra-Muros Churches".

[25] MUNOZ, Br. Andrew Joseph — "The Teresian Reform Of Carmel: And The Birth Of The Discalced Carmelite Order".

[26] GONZÁLEZ, J. J. M. — "El convento de San José de Ávila (patronos y obras de arte)". Valladolid: Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología, 1979, pp. 349-376.



[Fig. 6] ESTEVES, Rafa — “Ávila - Convento de San José”.


Río
Río
Río


Ferrocarril Avila – Salamanca
Ermita del Resucitado
Fuente
Arsenio
Calle Feliv Rodriguez de la Fuente
Carros
Tornadizos
Avenida de la Inmaculada Concepción
Calle Burgos
Calle Virgen de Valvanera
Calle Virgen de Hontanar
Calle Virgen de Chilla
Calle Virgen de la Vega
Calle Virgen de la Soterraña
Calle Virgen de Sonsoles
Calle Virgen de Gracia
Calle Virgen de Covadonga
Calle Virgen de la Cabeza
Calle Virgen de la Antigua
Calle Virgen de la Vega
Calle Virgen de la Cruz de Tenerife
Calle Virgen de la Sierra
Calle Virgen de la Nueva
Calle Virgen de la Paloma
Calle Virgen de la Blanca
Calle Virgen de la Caridad
Calle Virgen de la Esperanza
Calle Virgen de la Salud
Calle Virgen de la Merced
Calle Virgen de la Asunción
Calle Virgen de la Victoria
Calle Virgen de la Guía
Calle Virgen de la Encarnación
Calle Virgen de la Misericordia
Calle Virgen de la Piedad
Calle Virgen de la Soledad
Calle Virgen de la Esperanza
Calle Virgen de la Alegría
Calle Virgen de la Fuensanta
Calle Virgen de la Cabeza
Calle Virgen de la Antigua
Calle Virgen de la Vega
Calle Virgen de la Cruz de Tenerife
Calle Virgen de la Sierra
Calle Virgen de la Nueva
Calle Virgen de la Paloma
Calle Virgen de la Blanca
Calle Virgen de la Caridad
Calle Virgen de la Esperanza
Calle Virgen de la Salud
Calle Virgen de la Merced
Calle Virgen de la Asunción
Calle Virgen de la Victoria
Calle Virgen de la Guía
Calle Virgen de la Encarnación
Calle Virgen de la Misericordia
Calle Virgen de la Piedad
Calle Virgen de la Soledad
Calle Virgen de la Esperanza
Calle Virgen de la Alegría
Calle Virgen de la Fuensanta
Plaza del San Andrés
Plaza de San Francisco
Plaza de Santa Ana
Plaza de Mosen Rubi
Plaza de Santa Teresa
Plaza de Italia
Plaza de Lisboa
Plaza de Portugal
Plaza de Colombia
Plaza de Cuba
Plaza de Brasil
Plaza de Argentina
Plaza de Chile
Plaza de Venezuela
Plaza de Mexico
Plaza de Canadá
Plaza de Estados Unidos
Plaza de Rusia
Plaza de Japón
Plaza de China
Plaza de India
Plaza de Australia
Plaza de Nueva Zelanda
Plaza de Sudáfrica
Plaza de Egipto
Plaza de Marruecos
Plaza de Túnez
Plaza de Argelia
Plaza de Libia
Plaza de Nigeria
Plaza de Kenia
Plaza de Etiopía
Plaza de Somalia
Plaza de Zaire
Plaza de Angola
Plaza de Mozambique
Plaza de Zimbabue
Plaza de Namibia
Plaza de Botsuana
Plaza de Lesoto
Plaza de Suazilandia
Plaza de Madagascar
Plaza de Mauricio
Plaza de Seychelles
Plaza de Comoras
Plaza de Yibuti
Plaza de Eritrea
Plaza de Sudán
Plaza de Chad
Plaza de Níger
Plaza de Malí
Plaza de Burkina Faso
Plaza de Costa de Marfil
Plaza de Ghana
Plaza de Togo
Plaza de Benín
Plaza de Guinea
Plaza de Sierra Leona
Plaza de Liberia
Plaza de Guinea Bissau
Plaza de Senegal
Plaza de Gambia
Plaza de Mauritania
Plaza de Argelia
Plaza de Libia
Plaza de Nigeria
Plaza de Kenia
Plaza de Etiopía
Plaza de Somalia
Plaza de Zaire
Plaza de Angola
Plaza de Mozambique
Plaza de Zimbabue
Plaza de Namibia
Plaza de Botsuana
Plaza de Lesoto
Plaza de Suazilandia
Plaza de Madagascar
Plaza de Mauricio
Plaza de Seychelles
Plaza de Comoras
Plaza de Yibuti
Plaza de Eritrea
Plaza de Sudán
Plaza de Chad
Plaza de Níger
Plaza de Malí
Plaza de Burkina Faso
Plaza de Costa de Marfil
Plaza de Ghana
Plaza de Togo
Plaza de Benín
Plaza de Guinea
Plaza de Sierra Leona
Plaza de Liberia
Plaza de Guinea Bissau
Plaza de Senegal
Plaza de Gambia
Plaza de Mauritania
Parque de San Antonio
Jardín del Regreso
Jardín de San Roque
Paseo de la Estación
Paseo de San Roque
Paseo de la Cuesta
Paseo de la Cuesta del Alcázar
Paseo de la Cuesta del Alcázar
Paseo de la Cuesta del Alcázar

The convent [Fig. 08] is composed of different spaces adopted to serve nuns' routines: cells, church, refectory, kitchen, chapter room, cloister, offices, chapel, nursery room, laundry room, common room and gardens. Outdoor spaces consist of a refectory and recreational courtyard, a prayer patio, a cloister, a vegetable garden and an animal garden. Each of these outdoor spaces provide a calm atmosphere, where nuns can fully dedicate themselves to necessary basic life needs or contemplation.

In the convent of San José, the ideology of an "architectural space that isolates within itself"[27] is clearly perceived as the convent is completely surrounded by a two story tall masonry wall that isolates all spaces built in it [Fig. 8, n. 01].

The layout of the convent is the result of multiple interventions. The first was directed by Saint Teresa herself, with a more "organic" system of detached volumes. Later, Francisco de Mora came with a planned design, featuring the connection of most buildings of the convent and facing or opening each of them to a garden, a cloister and courtyard.

In the convent of San José, cells are located all around the cloister [Fig. 8, n. 02], on the third floor — with the exception of the cell of the Superior Saint Teresa, which is located between the main garden and the Chapel Francisco Salcedo [Fig. 8, n. 03]. Cells are merely furnished, only containing necessary elements. As mentioned in the "Papers of Exactions", from The Traditions of our Spanish Mothers and Foundresses, "We are allowed to have the following things in our cell: A little stool, three engravings or prints, a plain wooden Cross, a Holy water stoup, a lamp, a broom, a duster, and the usual books, [...]"[28] [Fig. 09].

Cells are connected by long and dark corridors [Fig. 10], which not only connect cells, but also all major interior spaces of San José convent. In these hallways, nuns communicate in silence, simply looking and nodding heads one to another.

[27] ZUMTHOR, Peter —- Atmospheres: Architectural Environments. Surrounding Objects. 5th ed. Basel: Birkhauser, 2006. "Composing in space", p. 22.

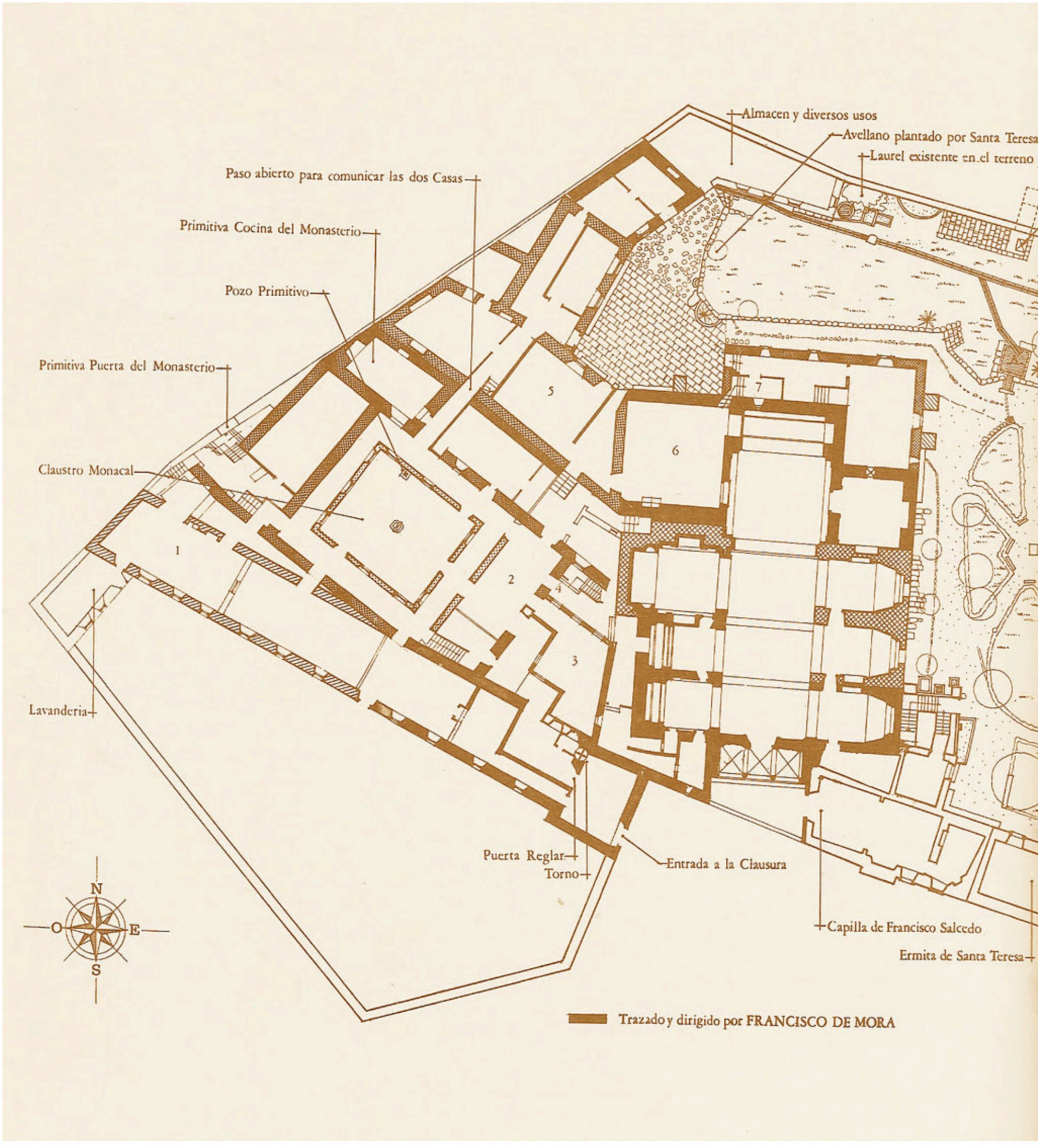
[28] "On The Cell". "Paper of Exactions of the Discalced Carmelite nuns of the Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel" taken from The Traditions of our Spanish Mothers and Foundresses. Archbishop's House, Octave of the Assumption B. V.M., 1898, p. 66.

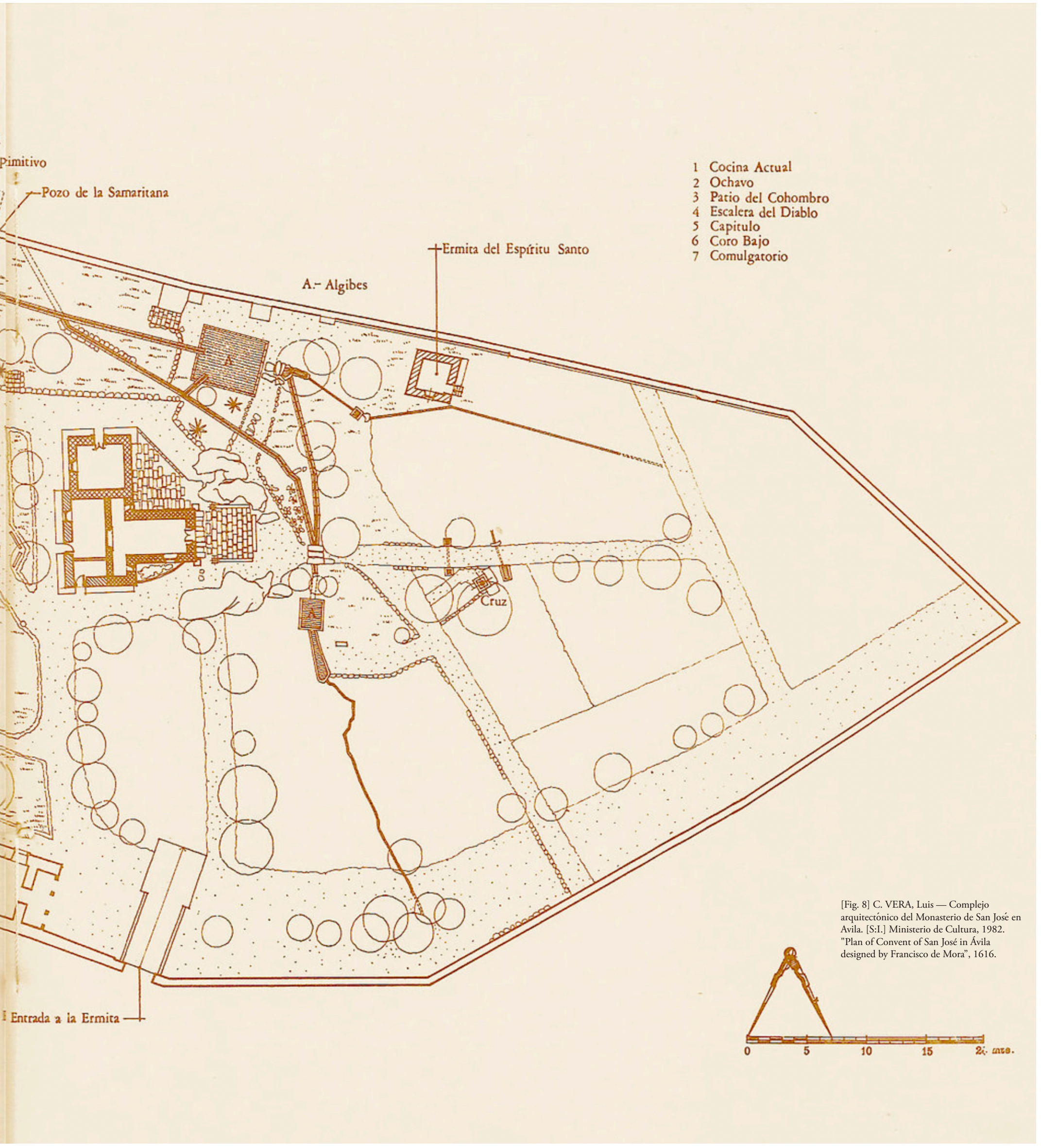
The church was designed by the Spanish architect Francisco de Mora in 1607 after the death of Saint Teresa of Jesus. It is one of the most important spaces in the planning of the discalced carmelite convents. It is where nuns gather to commemorate through prayers and daily conversion to the Gospel[29] [Fig. 11]. Located in its centre of the set [Fig. 8, n. 04], it has only one nave, covered with a vaulted ceiling, a dome over the transept and a more pretentious decoration that showcases a different image from the rest of the convent designed by the Saint. The unusual North to South positioning of the church is contrasted from the common East to West position. This would have been the only possible position, given the monastery's configuration and the need to articulate with pre-existences.

The chapel, oriented by Saint Teresa and named after the architect Francisco Mora, was the original church in the convent of San José and is now placed between the new church and the cell of Saint Teresa to the South side of the wall [Fig. 8, n. 05].[30]

[29] "In the Church we are called to be a sign of the radical demands of the Gospel, so that we can fulfil a prophetic mission in the world."ZUBIETA, Fr P. of St Joseph — Rule Constitutions and Norms. Discalced Carmelites. Dubli´n: Pentecost Sunday, 1988. Rule C-021, p. 18.

[30] The chapel has very few elements in it: eight benches, one pulpito, the superior's chair, two statues and one painting the wall just over the pulpito.


Almacen y diversos usos
Avellano plantado por Santa Teresa
Laurel existente en el terreno
Paso abierto para comunicar las dos Casas
Primitiva Cocina del Monasterio
Pozo Primitivo
Primitiva Puerta del Monasterio
Claustro Monacal
Lavanderia
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
Puerta Reglar
Torno
Entrada a la Clausura
Capilla de Francisco Salcedo
Ermita de Santa Teresa
N
O
E
S
Trazado y dirigido por FRANCISCO DE MORA



[Fig. 8] C. VERA, Luis — Complejo arquitectónico del Monasterio de San José en Avila. [S:I.] Ministerio de Cultura, 1982. "Plan of Convent of San José in Ávila designed by Francisco de Mora", 1616.



[Fig. 9] D'AGEN, Boyer — "Carmelite nun in her private cell", 1904.



[Fig. 10] GILSON, Jean-Pierre — “Les Carmélites de Compiègne”, (1976-1979).



[Fig. 11] GILSON, Jean-Pierre — “Les Carmélites de Compiègne”, (1976-1979).

But what is truly unique about this convent is that it consists in the first example of a garden typology in the reformed order and can serve as an illustration of the spiritual garden described by Saint Teresa in her writings. Here, gardens are designed in accordance to rules and common necessities of nuns, providing spaces for working activities, for a sustainable life and recreation and, furthermore, enhance and nourish nuns' connection to God. There are various types of gardens in the convent of San José.

The Patio del Cohombro [Fig. 12] is small and placed between the Ochavo and the Church. It integrates a few climbing plants around the walls and some shrubs formed in the shape of a square, surrounding a small water basin. This space serves as a prayer patio for the nuns [Fig. 13].

The courtyard [Fig. 14] is placed next to the kitchen, the refectory and the laundry, in the South of the convent, and is used as a service garden, where nuns can dry clothes under the sun and collect aromatic and medicinal herbs, to use in the preparation of meals or medicine. This courtyard is used as a space to practice community activities during recreational hours.

The cloister [Fig. 15], located in the centre of the convent, is a conventional medieval cloister, surrounded by two storey stoas. It is paved with trachyte slabs and contains the wellhead at its centre [Fig. 16], "as a symbol of Christ and of the four rivers of Paradise."[31]

The main garden [Fig. 17] — the biggest space of the convent — is strongly characterised by natural elements — such as wild vegetation (composed by trees, flowers and lawns [Fig. 18]), water sources (such as the water reservatory [Fig. 19]) —, and some symbolic fabrics, like the eremit of Saint Teresa, the eremit of the Holy Spirit and the big cross of Jesus [Fig. 20].

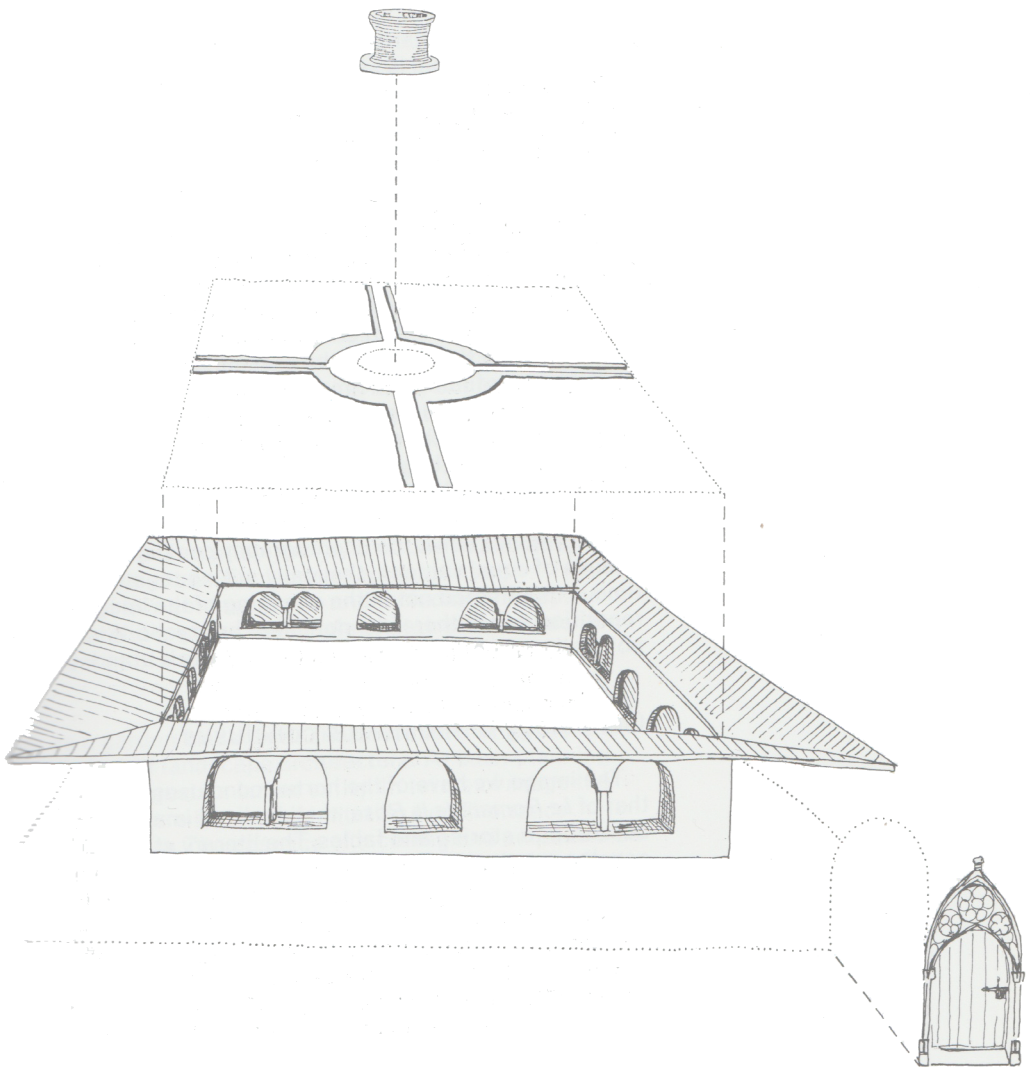
The poultry garden [Fig. 21], located in the East of the convert, after the vegetable garden, has the characteristics of a rural livestock space — with earthy ground and a few storage spaces for huts and animal coops [Fig. 22].

[31] FAVERO, Carlo and FAVERO, Giorgia — The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden. Cittadella: Biblos edition, 2015. "The Wellhead", p. 48.

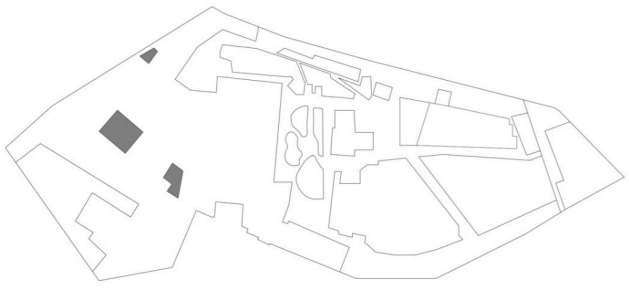
Finally, the vegetable garden [Fig. 23], used by nuns to cultivate food, follows a geometrical grid, dividing the space by species in respective cultivation beds.

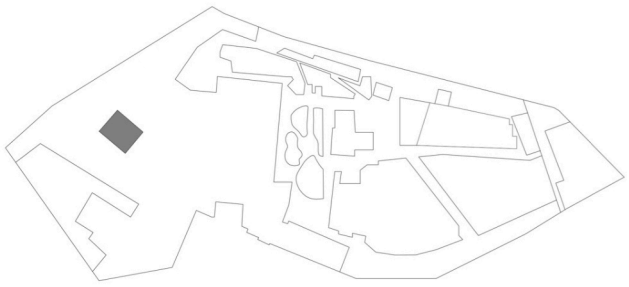
The gardens are not only autonomous instances in the convent, they also establish a direct connection to the interior spaces.

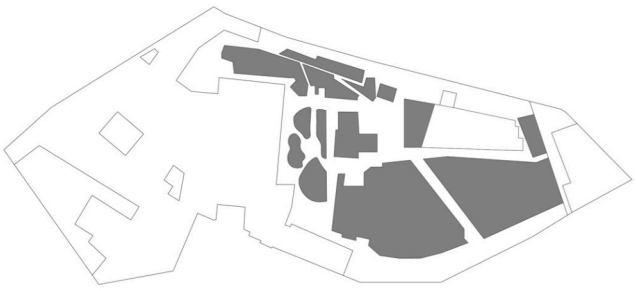
Each of these gardens contain specific natural and man-made elements that define and influence the discalced carmelite monastic everyday life. The articulation of the different elements varies from one space to another, providing a large spectrum of experiences.

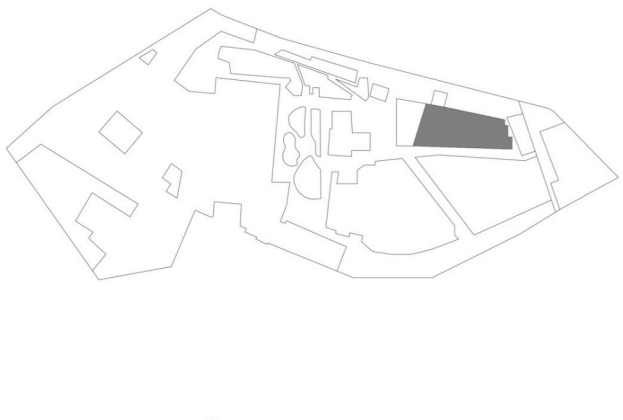


[Fig. 16] Drawings from the book: ABEN, Rob and WIT, Saskia — The Enclosed Garden: History and Development of the Hortus Conclusus and Its Reintroduction Into the Present-day Urban Landscape.

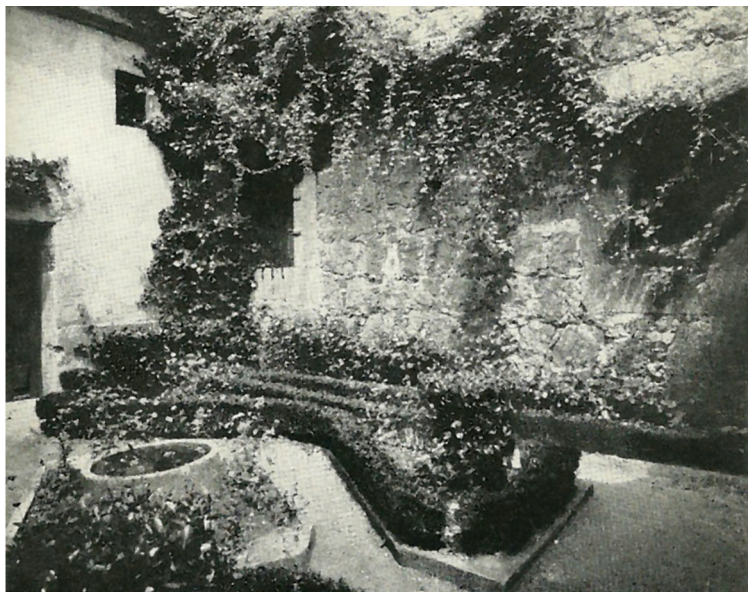


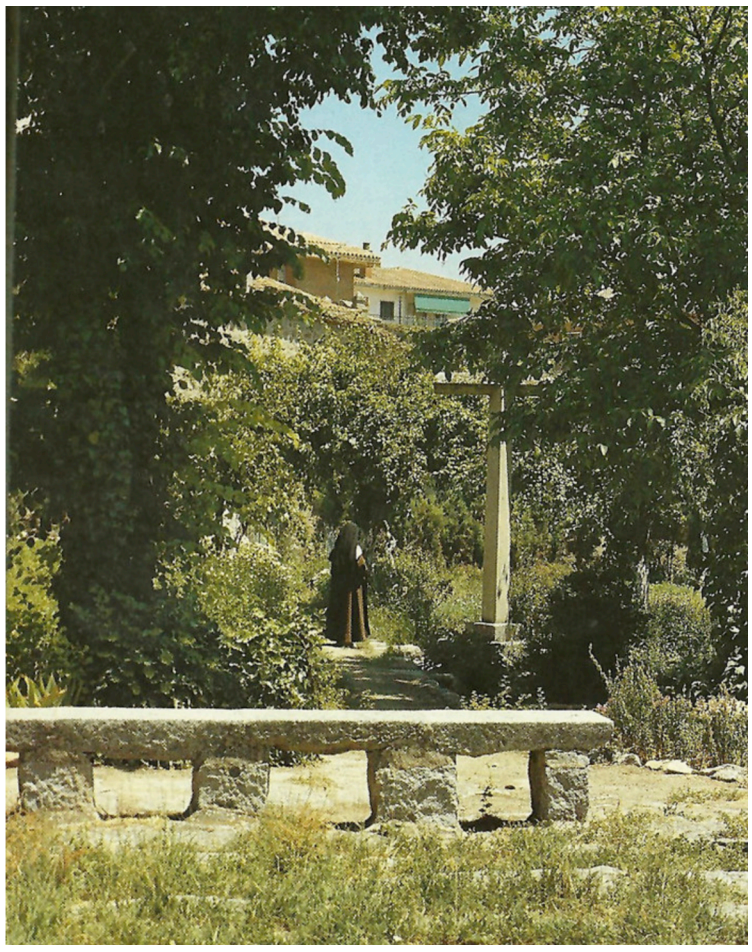




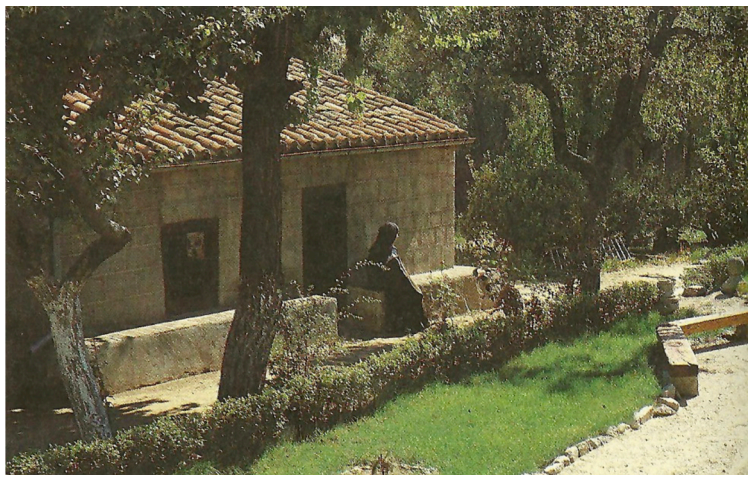


[Fig. 12/14 ; 15; 17; 21; 23] The different gardens in the Convent of San José. (drawing by the author)









[Fig. 13; 18; 19; 20; 22] JIMÉNEZ DUQUE, Baldomero — Convento De San José - Primera Fundación De Santa Teresa De Jesús, Ávila, 1982.

"A garden makes all our senses swim in pleasure, and that with infinite variety."[32]

[32] LAWSON, William — A New Orchard and Garden. 1618. "Ornaments", p. 126.

THE GARDEN AND THE FIVE SENSES

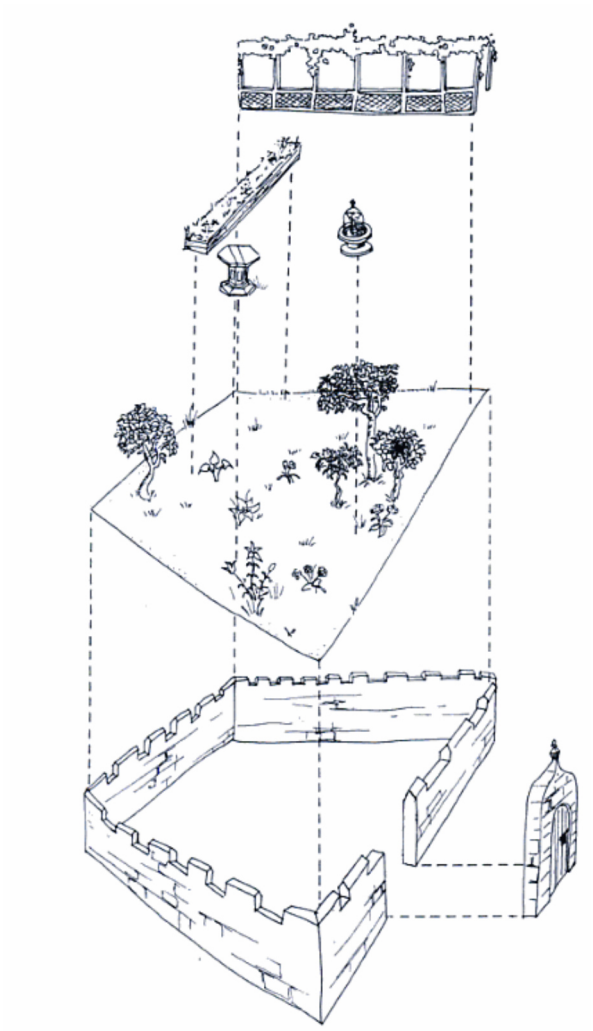
The garden is a space of sensorial revival. The human five basic senses are: sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing [Fig. 24]. These senses are means of interaction of the human body and fulfil human's stimulus through physical and chemical reactions.

In the context of the Discalced Carmelite Order, there is a layer of complexity added to the dialogue we carry with our surroundings — the aim to reach a perfect mental state, as Saint Teresa desired with the reformation of the order.[33] Here, senses are means of accessing divine encounter with God. Due to the particular importance of the garden in the monastics' life, a special attention is paid to how senses contribute to the meaningful design of the outdoor spaces in convents. By introducing both natural and man-made elements, such as plants, materials and colours and even furniture, a complex sensorial experience is created with the aim of enabling clarity and focus in prayer [Fig. 25].

[33] OLIGER, L. — "St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross". Mendicant Friars in The Catholic Encyclopedia.



[Fig. 24] HONEYMAN, Grace — “5 Senses”, Charcoal Drawing.



[Fig. 25] Drawings from the book: ABEN, Rob and WIT, Saskia — The Enclosed Garden: History and Development of the Hortus Conclusus and Its Reintroduction Into the Present-day Urban Landscape.

"How the Lord reveals himself: It is a light which never gives place to night, and, being always light, is disturbed by nothing."[34]

[34] AVILA, Teresa — The Life Of Teresa Of Jesus. Translated & edited by E. Allison Peers, 1995, p. 139.

SIGHT

[35] AVILA, Teresa — The Life Of Teresa Of Jesus. Translated & edited by E. Allison Peers, 1995, p. 88.

Visual perception of space is a fundamental factor that contributes to mental stimulation as it transmits, through the eyes, all images of the environment. It provides the feeling of calmness or agitation depending on what is present in the space. In the design of the discalced carmelite garden, the sense of sight plays an essential role in recognising the symbolic image of the garden of the Lord as described by Saint Teresa: “Let us now return to our garden, or orchard, and see how these trees begin to take new life before putting forth flowers and afterwards giving fruit, and the flowers -- carnations and so forth -- begin to give out their fragrance".[35]

The main means of stimulation are through materials and colours. In direct connection to the rules that the monastics lifes, the tall concrete walls that surround the convent provide the feeling of seclusion, while the arches and windows allow the perception of other nuns, giving a sense of community. Another key element in relation to this sense is the light, which can be natural or artificial. It is an agent that stimulates sight and makes things apparent.

In the gardens it is sometimes present through the sun or produced by other man-made means. Architecturally, natural light is controlled by the implantation of the convent in the site and, as well, with various other structural techniques, such as pergolas, nets with crawling plants or trees that create shadow and protect nuns from the harsh rays of sun and heat. These controlled systems can create a visual atmosphere of calmness [Fig. 26].

The image of the grid is sometimes taken into the design of the vegetable garden [Fig. 27]. An exemplary instance can be found in “The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden”[36] [Fig. 28]. The grid presents a very organised geometrical system. One might say that this meticulous system follows the ideology of the strict rules. This perception of an organised space gives a person a clearer state of mind and a structure of labour.

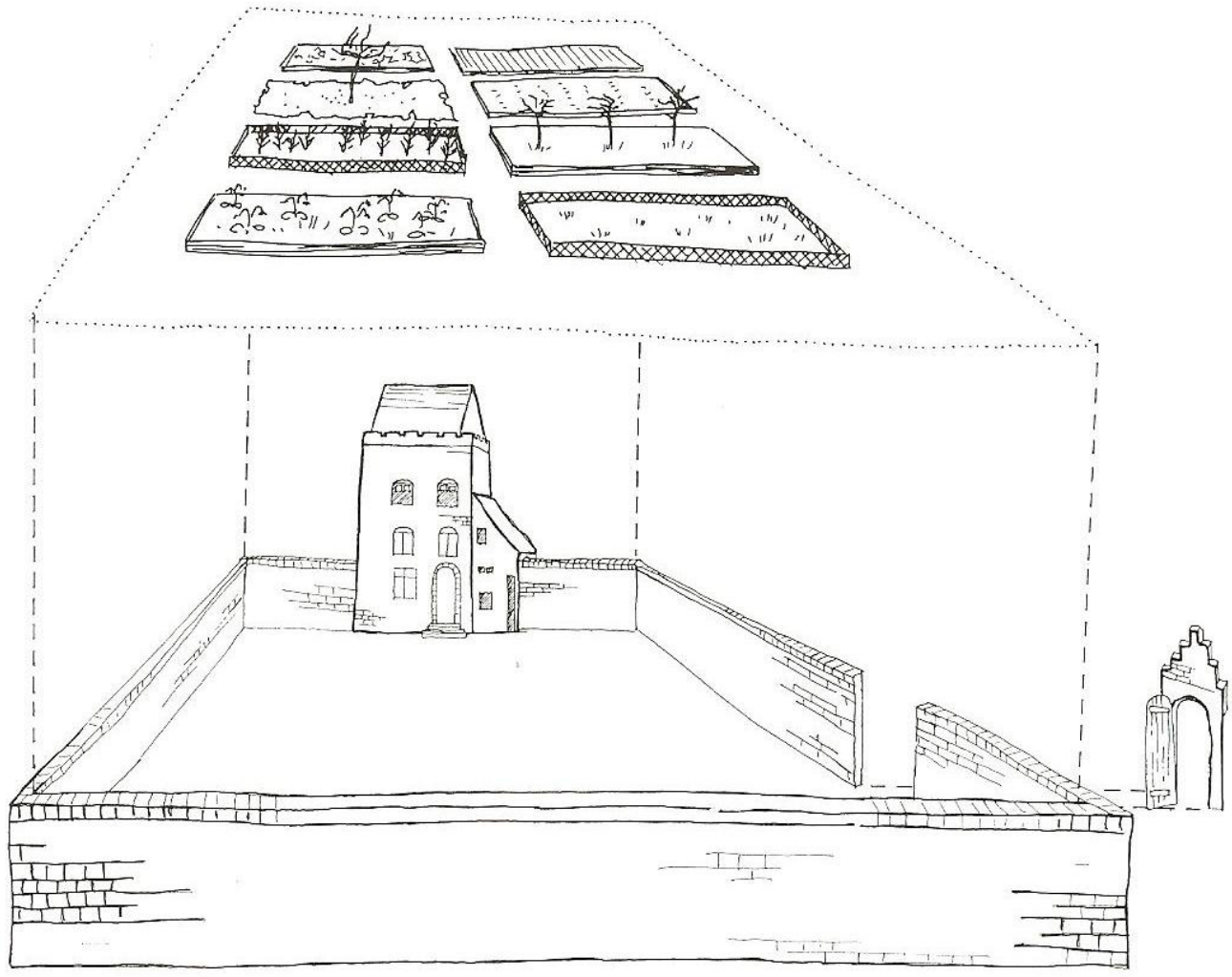
Colours are an intrinsic part of the gardens' image. The green colour of the leafs or grass, the vibrant colours of flowers and the wood furniture contribute to a general feeling of joy and peacefulness.

When using materials, the rule of poverty must be reminded, as the discalced carmelite monastics use very few elements and materials in the gardens and, thus, create very simple spaces, mostly filled with vegetation, water repositories, few statues and fountains. In the Convent of San José, the use of local stone is very visible in the tall walls, the exterior furniture, sculptures and in the pavement of the cloister, patio and kitchen courtyard. This material of cold appearance, together with the vibrant colour of the carefully chosen and placed vegetation, elevates the green element to a stimulus of higher intensity.

[36] FAVERO, Carlo and FAVERO, Giorgia — The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden. Cittadella: Biblos edition, 2015.



[Fig. 26] GILSON, Jean-Pierre — “Les Carmélites de Compiègne”, (1976-1979).



[Fig. 27] Drawings from the book: ABEN, Rob and WIT, Saskia — The Enclosed Garden: History and Development of the Hortus Conclusus and Its Reintroduction Into the Present-day Urban Landscape.



[Fig. 28] CONSORZIO VINI VENEZIA E ORDINE DEI FRATI CARMELITANI SCALZI DELLA PROVINCIA VENETA — “Il Giardino Mistico”, 2020.

"God touches their hearts and gives them a little light and love [...]"[37]

[37] AVILA, Teresa — The Life Of Teresa Of Jesus. Translated & edited by E. Allison Peers, 1995, p. 230.

TOUCH

When speaking of materials one cannot exclude the sense of touch. As part of the sensory nervous system, the sense of touch gives the human body the perception of feelings such as: pressure, heat, cold and pain, when in contact with certain surfaces. In the publication "The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden"[38], touch is presented as a fundamental means of receiving information: "The different materials employed mean that one uses not only one's eyes but also one's sense of touch – one's whole body – to perceive space."[39] Furthermore, it can also be seen as a factor that contributes to a person's mental state and decision making.[40] In the garden, these sensations can be felt through hard or soft textures of the materials, and also through their temperature (e.g. warmth of the wood). The topic of temperature can be taken even further, when allowing a fresh breeze or heat of the sun to pass through the space of the garden.

The Discalced Carmelite Order, as the name reveals, is a religious congregation where monks and nuns walk barefoot or, as in the more recent days, with sandals.[41] This rule is very special when it comes to the design and choice of the material for the pavement in discalced carmelite gardens. The softness and thermal absorption of the materials are essential to provide comfort to the monastics. Very soft materials such as sand, earth or grass give a smooth and fresh feeling to the monastics when walking barefoot [Fig. 29]. Sometimes, during recreational hours, or even during prayer in solitude, monks and nuns lay over the lawn as it is a soft, humid and refreshing surface [Fig. 30].

[38] FAVERO, Carlo and FAVERO, Giorgia — The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden. Cittadella: Biblos Edizioni, 2015.

[39] FAVERO, Carlo and FAVERO, Giorgia — The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden. Cittadella: Biblos Edizioni, 2015. "The Garden of The Five Senses", p. 55.

[41] MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY. "The Role of PIEZO2 in Human Mechanosensation". Massachusetts: The New England Journal of Medicine, 2016. Accessed November 30, 2021.

[42] BIHL, M. — "Order of Friars Minor" in The Catholic Encyclopedia. "Second period (1517-1897) The Discalced". New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909.

The vegetation integrated in the garden is a very important conduit for the air temperature as it can cool down the solar heat in very warm locations, as it is the case of the convent of San José located in the dry area of central Spain. Therefore, the integration of a garden with a dense amount of trees is common between the convents of the order.

Another natural element that is also a great contributor to the air temperature, is the water. It can be used in various instances such as a fountain, well, water pond or even a water reservoir. [Fig. 31]

It makes it clearer now that the temperature and the texture of surfaces are fundamental factors for the human stimulation through touch and to better perceive the environment around them.[42]

Interestingly, when talking about the sense of touch in the Discalced Carmelite Order we can go as far as elaborating on the absolute absence of it. One unique moment when this is possible is during a rapture — divine transporting that can lead to physical levitation. Saint Teresa describes having experienced such a supreme level of connection to God: "when I have felt that the Lord was going to enrapture me [...] I have lain on the ground and the sisters have come and held me down, but none the less the rapture has been observed. I besought the Lord earnestly not to grant me any more favours which had visible and exterior signs; for I was exhausted by having to endure such worries and after all (I said) His Majesty could grant me that favour without its becoming known".[43]

[43] "When we built the Swiss Pavilion for the Hanover World Fair. And when it was hot outside the pavilion was as cool as a forest, and when it was cool the pavilion was warmer than it was outside, although it was open to the air. It is well-known that materials more or less extract warmth from our bodies." ZUMTHOR, Peter — Atmospheres: Architectural Environments. Surrounding Objects. 5th ed. Basel: Birkhauser, 2006. "The Temperature of a Space", p. 33.



[Fig. 29] D'AGEN, Boyer — "Carmelite nuns barefoot", 1904.



[Fig. 30] GUILLEMOT, Roger — “Les carmélites au jardin”.



[Fig. 31] LORENZETTI, Pietro — “Predella panel: Hermits at the Fountain of Elijah”. Siena: Pinacoteca Nazionale, (1328-1329).

“when God talks in this way to the soul, there is no such remedy: I have to listen

[...]”[44]

[44] AVILA, Teresa — The Life Of Teresa Of Jesus. Translated & edited by E. Allison Peers, 1995, p. 139.

HEARING

The hearing sense is a system of frequencies from physical movements, resonating back sounds to the brain through the ear channels of living beings. This allows a closer connection with the world in motion around us:

"St. John of the Cross points out that the divine music can best be heard in solitude and silence. The sonorous music is not a physical sound that vibrates the eardrum but something transcending the senses. Physical solitude and silence remove the distracting noises that prevent us from hearing on deeper levels."[45]

Taking its foundations from the rules of silence and solitude, the discalced carmelite convent is a place of seclusion that provides a life of silence. This is made possible by the creation of a strong border with tall walls that prevent the polluted noise from the outside.[46] Besides this architectural element, the chosen location also plays a role in isolating the convents from unwanted sounds. In hortus conclusus, these are essential methods to create a controlled atmosphere of peace, in which monastics can best lead the religious practice.

In the discalced carmelite gardens, there are different perceptions of sound that encourage various religious activities. The echo of an empty space prevails in the prayer garden, as it reflects back to the nuns the sounds of their own prayers [Fig. 32]. This garden is mostly empty, without the existence of any vegetation, water or other elements that could take the focus during the act of prayer. It is important to remind that the sense of hearing is often used in religious context as a symbol for the divine gift of understanding and connecting to God. About this, Saint Teresa wrote: "God makes the understanding attentive, even against its will, so that it understands what is said to it, for the soul now seems to have other ears with which it hears and He makes it listen and prevents it from becoming distracted. It is like a person with good hearing, who is forbidden to stop his ears when people near him are talking in a loud voice: even if he were unwilling to hear them, he could not help doing so."[47]

[45] CUMMINGS, Charles.

[46] "The inability to stay quiet is one of the conspicuous failings of mankind." BAGEHOT, Walter. 1870.

[47] AVILA, Teresa — The Life Of Teresa Of Jesus. Translated & edited by E. Allison Peers, 1995, p. 150.

Materials used in space can alter significantly the vibrations of the human voice and the way they receive it back. It is fundamental when designing the prayer garden to understand how the materials reflect the sound of the monastics' voices and the ones that will not distract them from contemplation, but will only deepen their focus.[48]

During manual labour, the monastics focus on the sound of the animals in the poultry garden, in the sound of the shovel hitting the earthy ground from the vegetable garden or the cutting sound when gardening the flower beds. These are all sounds that protect the monks and nuns from irrelevant thoughts that might take away the focus from their devotion to God.

The garden could also be thought as a place where sounds of nature or sounds created by God can be perceived; where it is possible to hear the wind blowing leafs of trees, birds chanting or insects chirping, the sound of water falling during a rainy day or simply water running from a fountain or water pond [Fig. 33].

As Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997) said: "We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature-trees, flowers, grass-grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence… We need silence to be able to touch souls." This gives a solid support to the reasoning behind the rule of silence and solitude in seclusion from the outside world. The garden is a place of silence and contact with nature, where the nuns can hear sounds that calm and help them practice mental prayers.

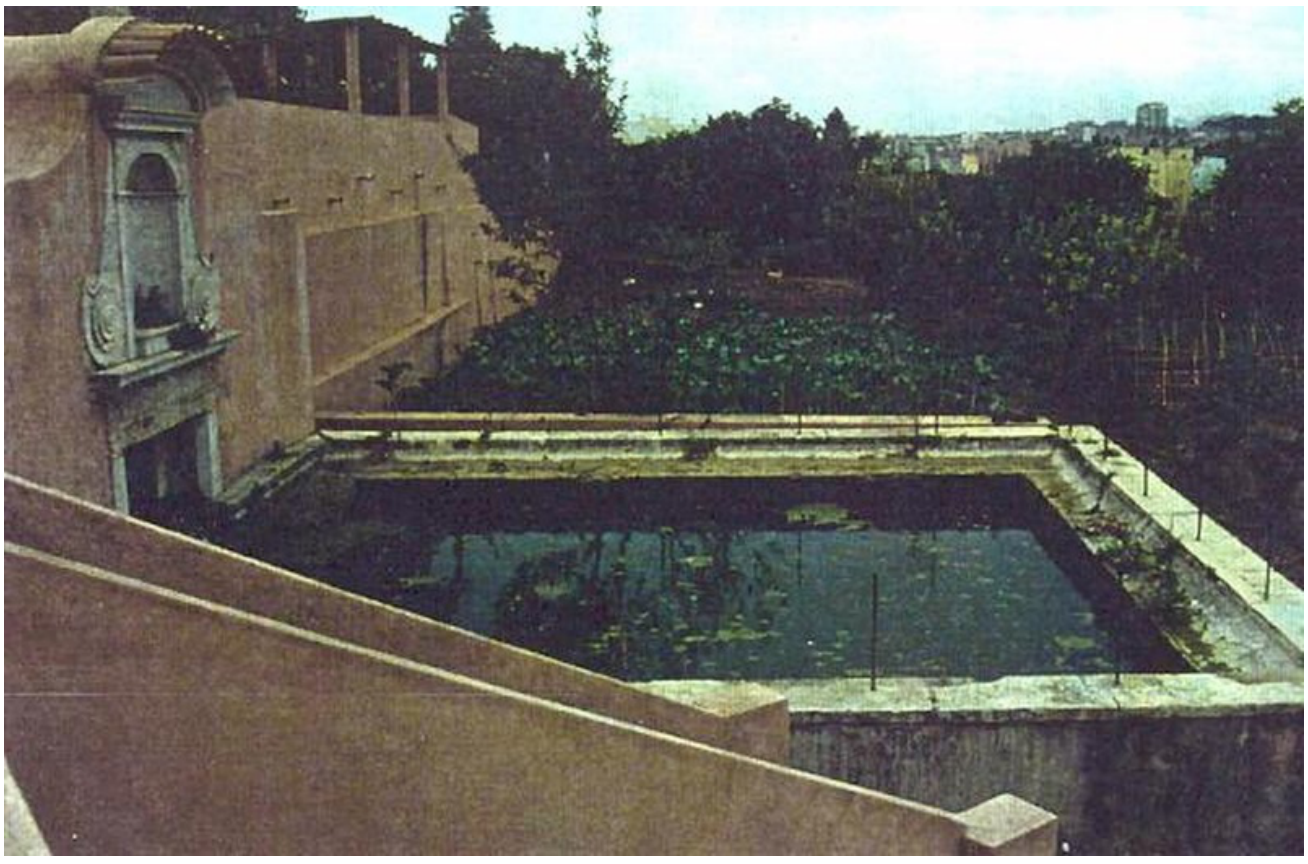
Nevertheless, on Sundays, the thrilling sound of the monastics chanting the gospel or prayers together during the daily mass resonates in the interior corridors all the way to the exterior gardens.[49] This is one of the few moments where the space of the convent is filled with the vibration of sound.

[48] "The Sound of a Space. Listen! Interiors are like large instruments, collecting sound, amplifying it, transmitting it elsewhere. That has to do with the shape peculiar to each room and with surfaces of the materials they contain, and the way those materials have been applied." ZUMTHOR, Peter — Atmospheres: Architectural Environments. Surrounding Objects. 5th ed. Basel: Birkhauser, 2006, p. 29.

[49] ZUBIETA, Fr P. of St Joseph — Rule Constitutions and Norms. Discalced Carmelites. Dublin: Pentecost Sunday, 1988. "Communion With God" (N-021 and N-022), p. 58.



[Fig. 32] Tall wall in Marrakesh. Taken:
December 3, 2018. (image by the author)



[Fig. 33] MECO, José — “Convento de Santa Teresa de Jesus de Carnide”, 1984.

"We have now, by God's help, like good gardeners, to make these plants grow, and to water them carefully, so that they may not perish, but may produce flowers which shall send forth great fragrance to give refreshment to this Lord of ours, so that He may often come into the garden to take His pleasure and have His delight among these virtues."[50]

[50] AVILA, Teresa — The Life Of Teresa Of Jesus. Translated & edited by E. Allison Peers, 1995, p. 73.

SMELL

The scents of blooming flowers, of water falling on a rainy day, of freshly baked bread in the oven or even the smell of freshly cut grass are just some of the smells in the discalced carmelite gardens that stimulates the monastics' minds and helps them to focus on prayers and thoughts of love for God. The sense of smell allows the nuns to distinguish the different odours in the environment around them. The book "*The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden*"[51] gives an important insight into the importance of this sense: "the sense of smell is continually stimulated by the refined odours of flowers and aromatic plants, but also by the heavier, earthier smell of the compost."[52] Furthermore, as Stephen Lacey, author of the book Scent in Your Garden said: "Of all the ingredients we employ in the creation of a garden, scent is probably the most potent and the least understood. Its effects can be either direct and immediate, drowning our senses in a surge of sugary vapor, or they can be subtle and delayed, slowly wafting into our consciousness, stirring our emotions and coloring our thoughts."[53] Therefore, a careful selection of the vegetation in the gardens is made based on the mental and physical effect that the smell of each plant, flower or tree emanates. [Fig. 34]

Saint Teresa often refers to fragrance as the means of bringing together the people in adoration of God: "And the more love and humility grow in the soul, the greater is the fragrance yielded by these flowers of the virtues for the benefit both of the soul itself and of others."[54]

There are five plants in the discalced carmelite gardens that generate a very strong perfume and help meditation and stimulation of the mind. These are the lavender plant, peppermint, roses, lonicera caprifolium and the lemon balm.

The smell of Lavender (Lavandula angustifolia) can be an antidepressant, it helps with sleeping problems and restlessness. When extracting the oil of the plant, it can also be used as medicine for digestive issues.

The Peppermint (Mentha piperita) [Fig. 35] is one of the oldest herbs used for the production of medicine and culinary. It realises a very fresh and strong smell, it is also the main source in the production of Menthol.

51 FAVERO, Carlo and FAVERO, Giorgia — The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden. Cittadella: Biblos Edizioni, 2015.

52 FAVERO, Carlo and FAVERO, Giorgia — The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden. Cittadella: Biblos Edizioni, 2015. "The Garden of the Five Senses", p. 55.

53 LACEY, Stephen — Scent in Your Garden. California: Green Way Research, 1991.

54 AVILA, Teresa — The Life Of Teresa Of Jesus. Translated & edited by E. Allison Peers, 1995, p. 122.

The Lemon balm (Melissa officinalis) [Fig. 36] has a similar smell as mint and lemon combined. It is well known in the order, mostly in the "The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden"[55] where it is used in the production of the Carmelite water.

These plants are a fundamental part of the garden's atmosphere and experience.

[55] FAVERO, Carlo and FAVERO, Giorgia — The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden. Cittadella: Biblos Edizioni, 2015.



Latin name: Lavandula
Common name: Lavender
Color: Violet
Family: Lamiaceae
Specie origin: Europe
Height: 0.50 meters (Plant)
Medicinal plant



Latin name: Mentha
Common name: Mint / Peppermint
Color: Pink
Family: Lamiaceae
Specie origin: Europe
Height: 2.00 meters (Plant)

[Fig. 34 ;35] STEPHENSON, John and M. CHURCHILL, James — Medical Botany. London : Printed for J. Churchill, 1834-1836.



Latin name: Angelica archangelica
Common name: Norwegian angelica
Color: Variable
Family: Apiaceae
Specie origin: Europe
Height: 2.50 meters (Plant)
Medicinal plant



Latin name: Rosa gallica
Common name: rose of Provins
Color: Pink
Family: Rosaceae
Specie origin: Europe
Height: 0.90–1.50 meters (Flower)

[Fig. 36 ;37] STEPHENSON, John and M. CHURCHILL, James — Medical Botany. London : Printed for J. Churchill, 1834-1836.

"The Lord has granted me to taste of Himself [...]"[56]

[56] AVILA, Teresa — The Life Of Teresa Of Jesus. Translated & edited by E. Allison Peers, 1995, p. 74.

TASTE

As previously learned the perception of textures of a surface, the temperature of the environment around or even the sensation of pain and pleasure can be felt by the sense of touch. These same feelings can equally be felt through the sense of taste also.

Taste is a fundamental sense that can be felt when putting something in contact with the tongue. This gustatory system makes it possible to distinguish flavours such as sweetness, saltiness, sourness, bitterness and savouriness of food. This sense takes part of every monastics' life, especially through the type of food that they cultivate and eat. According to the book of rules written by Saint Albert, the Carmelite monastics are too fast and abstain from meat everyday, besides on the Wednesday of Lenten Embertide and on Sundays when neither fast nor abstinence must be obliged.[57] Therefore, the discalced carmelite monastics follow a diet mainly plant based. They cultivate a variety of legumes such as carrots, potatoes, lettuce and a very large amount of aromatic and medicinal herbs [Figg. 37-38].

The diversity of such plants is very important, as mentioned in the publication "The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden"[58]: "the varieties of plants mean that one learns to recognise different tastes; one is stimulated to try them".[59]

Nuns also plant fruits such as passion fruit, walnut trees, apple trees, kiwi, woodland berries and pomegranate [Figg. 39-40]. The food that they produce not only has a pleasant flavour, but also gives a physical and spiritual effect. For example, the pomegranate is a fruit that reacts as an anti-inflammatory medicine, helps with blood pressure, it prevents arthritis, alzheimer, stress and more.[60] In the discalced carmelite garden, the pomegranate tree also has a symbolic meaning. According to "The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden"[61], it is "vital energy, an expression of the abundance of life. It embodies fecundity, ardent love, humility, charity and the union of all the children of the Church. In short, it is the Tree of Life, identified with Christ, who sacrificed Himself for man and was then resurrected to life"[62] [Fig. 41].

[57] Carmelite Constitutions. Frascati: Prior General and his Council, 1995. Rules 40 and 55, pp. 16, 20.

[58] FAVERO, Carlo and FAVERO, Giorgia — The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden. Cittadella: Biblos Edizioni, 2015.

[59] Favero, Carlo. and Favero, Giorgia — The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden. Cittadella: Biblos Edizioni, 2015. "The Garden of the Five Senses", p. 55.

[60] ZARFESHANY, Aida, ASGARY, Sedigheh and HAGHJOO, Shaghayegh — "Potent health effects of pomegranate". Volume 3. Isfahan: Isfahan Cardiovascular Research Institute, 2014.

[61] FAVERO, Carlo and FAVERO, Giorgia — The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden. Cittadella: Biblos Edizioni, 2015.

[62] FAVERO, Carlo and FAVERO, Giorgia — The Discalced Carmelites in Venice. The Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth and the Monastery Garden. Cittadella: Biblos Edizioni, 2015. "The Garden of the Five Senses", p. 55.

The Medicinal and aromatic herbs placed in most gardens are very important to the monastics as they can be used in the food they cook, providing more flavour. Some plants release perfumes that can be felt around all the courtyards and gardens and some can even cure illnesses. Herbs such as garlic, chamomile, feverfew, gingko leaf and ginger [Figg. 42-43] can be transformed into remedies to cure fever, flu, anxiety, fatigue and other sintomes. Thyme, rosemary, and coriander [Figg. 44-45] are herbs with a very strong taste that can be used as condiments that give more taste to the food contributing to the pleasure of eating. Furthermore, we can connect the physical delight of food to its symbolic meaning, joy that God sends through our devotion and prayer: "These foods are very pleasant and wholesome; and, if the palate is accustomed to their taste, they provide great sustenance for the life of the soul, and bring it many other benefits."[63]

Nuns also cultivate vineyards and lemon balm from which they produce wines and the famous Carmelite Water made of lemon balm and other herbs and spices. As seen in the convent of San José, nuns take care of poultry, collecting the eggs of the chickens and milk the cows for their own use [Figg. 46-47]. The cultivation of wheat is also very important for the production of the communion bread that the monastics make to sell to the Catholic Church.

The sense of taste with no doubt stimulates great pleasure to the monastics' life and plays a significant role in the way they organise the garden, while also making them a self-sufficient community.

[63] AVILA, Teresa — The Life Of Teresa Of Jesus. Translated & edited by E. Allison Peers, 1995, p. 83.



Latin name: Capsicum
Common name: chili pepper
Color: Variable
Family: Solanaceae
Specie origin: South America
Height: 1.30–2.00 meters (Plant)
Vegetable plant



Latin name: Allium sativum
Common name: Garlic
Color: Variable
Family: Amaryllidaceae
Specie origin: Central Asia
Height: 1.00 meters (Plant)
Medicinal plant



Latin name: Olea europaea
Common name: olive
Color: Variable
Family: Oleaceae
Specie origin: Mediterranean region
Height: 8.00–15.00 meters (Tree)
Fruit Tree



Latin name: Petroselinum
Common name: Parsley
Color: White
Family: Apiaceae
Specie origin: Europe
Height: 0.80 meters (Plant)
Medicinal plant



Latin name: Thymus vulgaris
Common name: Thyme
Color: Pink
Family: Lamiaceae
Specie origin: Europe
Height: 0.30 meters (Plant)
Medicinal plant



Latin name: Coriandrum
Common name: Coriander
Color: White
Family: Apiaceae
Specie origin: Europe
Height: 0.50 meters (Plant)
Medicinal plant



Latin name: Prunus persica
Common name: peach
Color: orange
Family: Rosaceae
Specie origin: Persia
Height: 3.00–4.00 meters (tree)
Fruit plant



Latin name: Vitis vinifera
Common name: grape
Color: Variable
Family: Vitaceae
Specie origin: Central Europre
Height: 12.00–15.00 meters (vyneard)
Fruit plant



Latin name: Punica granatum
Common name: pomegranate
Color: Red
Family: Lythraceae
Specie origin: Mediterranean region
Height: 5.00–10.00 meters (tree)
Fruit Tree



Latin name: Gallus gallus domesticus
Common name: Chicken
Color: Variable
Family: Phasianidae
Specie origin: Ásia
Height: 0.70 meters (Animal)



Latin name: Bos primigenius taurus
Common name: Cattle
Color: Variable
Family: Bovidae
Specie origin:
Height: 0.70 meters (Animal)

[Fig. 38 ;39 ;40 ;41 ;42 ;43 ;44 ;45 ;46 ;47]
STEPHENSON, John and M.
CHURCHILL, James — Medical Botany.
London : Printed for J. Churchill,
1834-1836.

“Aqui, com mais suave compostura.

Menos contradição, mais clara vista,

Verei o criador na criatura.”

“Os olhos meus dali dependurados.

Pergunto ó Mar, às plantas, os penedos,

Como, quando, por quem foram criados.”[64]

[Fig. 48]

[64] AGOSTINHO, Frei — Elegia II (Estando na Arrábida). Researched in REVISTA AICL.



[Fig. 48] EDIÇÃO DA FOTOGRAFIA MONTE ESTORIL — Portinho da Arrábida. Início do século XX.

HYPOTHESIS FOR THE EVOLUTION OF THE DISCALCED CARMELITE CONVENTS TYPOLOGY

450 years after the foundation of the Discalced Carmelite Order by Saint Teresa of Ávila, the order had grown tremendously. New convents are being built or going through a process of renovation to accommodate new monks and nuns.[65] Despite the four and half centuries, rules and habits of the discalced carmelite's have not changed. Life in seclusion from the outside world is still one of the principal rules followed, and monks' and nuns' habits still depend very much on gardens, which have evolved over the centuries.

From this fundamental space, a hypothesis of typological evolution of discalced carmelite convents is launched, assuming the garden as a primordial element in the definition of the architectural space. For this, it is taken as a starting point the design of a convent for twelve nuns in Serra da Arrábida, in Setúbal.

Serra da Arrábida, a mountainous natural park in the peninsula of Setúbal, acts as a green coastal border wall in between the city of Setúbal and the Atlantic ocean. This mediterranean mountain range is a landmark with a rich flora and fauna. Its ecosystem provides great natural resources for the creation of self-sufficient buildings, a fundamental factor in the decision to place a convent of the Discalced Carlmelite Order. One of the main qualities in Serra da Arrábida is the steep terrain, with a magnificent view to the bright blue ocean. The inclined terrain also creates waterways on rainy days. Its fertile soil has great properties for agricultural production. Serra da Arrábida is completely covered by vegetation that varies from small and wild bushes to big trees.

[65] "Elemento Chi Siamo Order". CASA GENERALIZIA DEI CARMELITANI SCALZI. Roma.

GRID

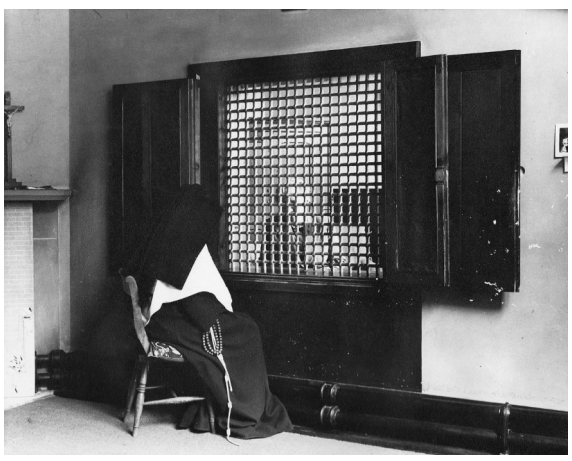
The Grid is "a pattern or structure made from horizontal and vertical lines crossing each other to form squares".[66] With a very strict and clear geometry, the grid constitutes a commonly used methodology to create separation through metal bars in the windows and doors of all religious spaces of the discalced carmelite convents [Fig. 49] as, for example, in the church, separating nuns from outside guests [Fig. 50]. The grid provides enclosure and safeguards the silence and solitude of the nuns, as well as providing the possibility of communication between them and family members in the "visit room" [Fig. 51], keeping a physical separation between them. Furthermore, the grid is also perceived in the design of gardens as in the case of the San José convent. On a larger scale, this system can be used as an ordering tool, offering a coherent succession of spaces with the same dimensionality. As a result, this methodology can be useful in the design of new discalced carmelite convents [Figg. 53-54].

[66] CAMBRIDGE BUSINESS ENGLISH DICTIONARY — "Grid definition".



[Fig. 49] WORTHPOINT, INC — “19 Thc Antique Religious Oil Painting, Nun Behind Convent Window Bars W/ Crucifix”.





[Fig. 50] GILSON, Jean-Pierre — “Les Carmélites de Compiègne”, (1976-1979).

[Fig. 51] D'AGEN, Boyer — "Carmelite nuns”, 1904.



[Fig. 53] KLEE, Paul — “Redgreen and Violet-Yellow Rhythms”, 1920. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada.



[Fig. 54] SWANENBURGH, Willem — "Le jardin botanique de Leyde".

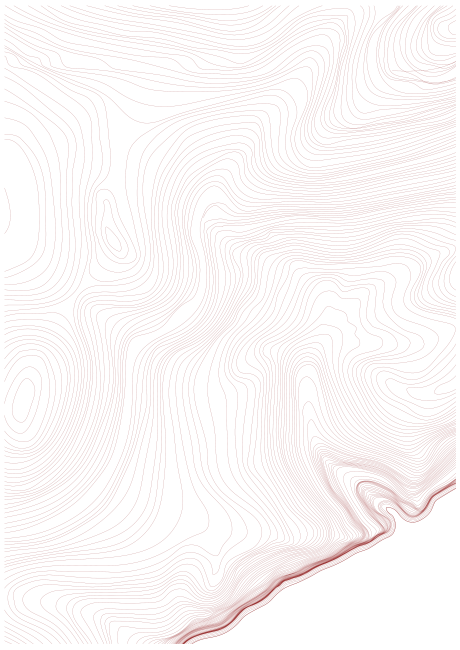
CONVENT

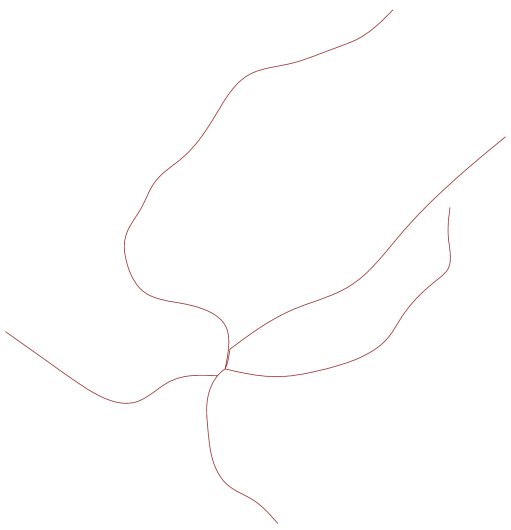
Following the eremitic tradition of the Discalced Carmelite Order, the master plan for the convent introduces a sequence of moments, creating three distinguished volumes. These volumes establish a strong dialogue with the vast vegetation of Serra da Arrábida. The tall trees not only protect from warm weather, but also give a first sensation of separation from the outside world.[67] The connection between buildings follows an unique path that guides one through the different landscapes generating guided perspectives. Another fundamental aspect taken in consideration when implementing the set, is the waterways that can be used for consumption and nourishment of the gardens [Fig. 55-56].

The three elements that compose the convent are the chapel, the "house of the nuns" and the vegetable garden. In the design of each of these spaces, the garden occupies a primordial role. Its importance and omnipresence is the underlying reason in the development of the project.

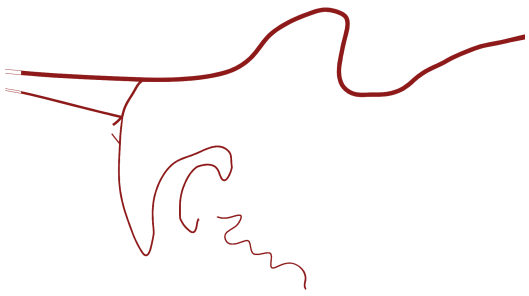
One quality shared in all elements is the use of a complex — but yet clear — grid system, with spaces of 4x4 metres, increasing its size whenever needed. A sense of unlimited extension of spaces is perceived by the creation of unfinished tall walls that can be extended more and more, if desired. This methodology of a grid structure takes as reference the small scale of the grid of the metal bars of windows and doors found in the discalced carmelite Convents and scaling it to the bigger size of a building. This system can be presented with a repetition of tall walls, large beams and pillars in the three volumes [Fig. 57].

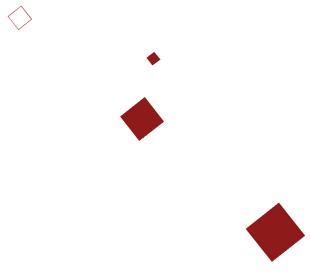
[67] "Mas aqui a doçura do clima deixa que os arbustos tomem o porte das árvores, elevando-se a 6 e 8 metros de altura. [...] Os troncos de alguns adernos atingem meio metro de diâmetro e os medronheiros tomam formas gigantescas. Reina um silêncio profundo e uma luz amortecida. Na camada de húmus, abrigados pela sombra da folhagem, medram alguns fetos. Tudo isto evoca a ideia de floresta virgem, sob clima mais rico de calor e humidade em outras zonas ou em épocas mais remotas da histórica do globo." RIBEIRO, Orlando — Excursão à Arrábida. [S. l.], 6 Finisterra, 3 1968.



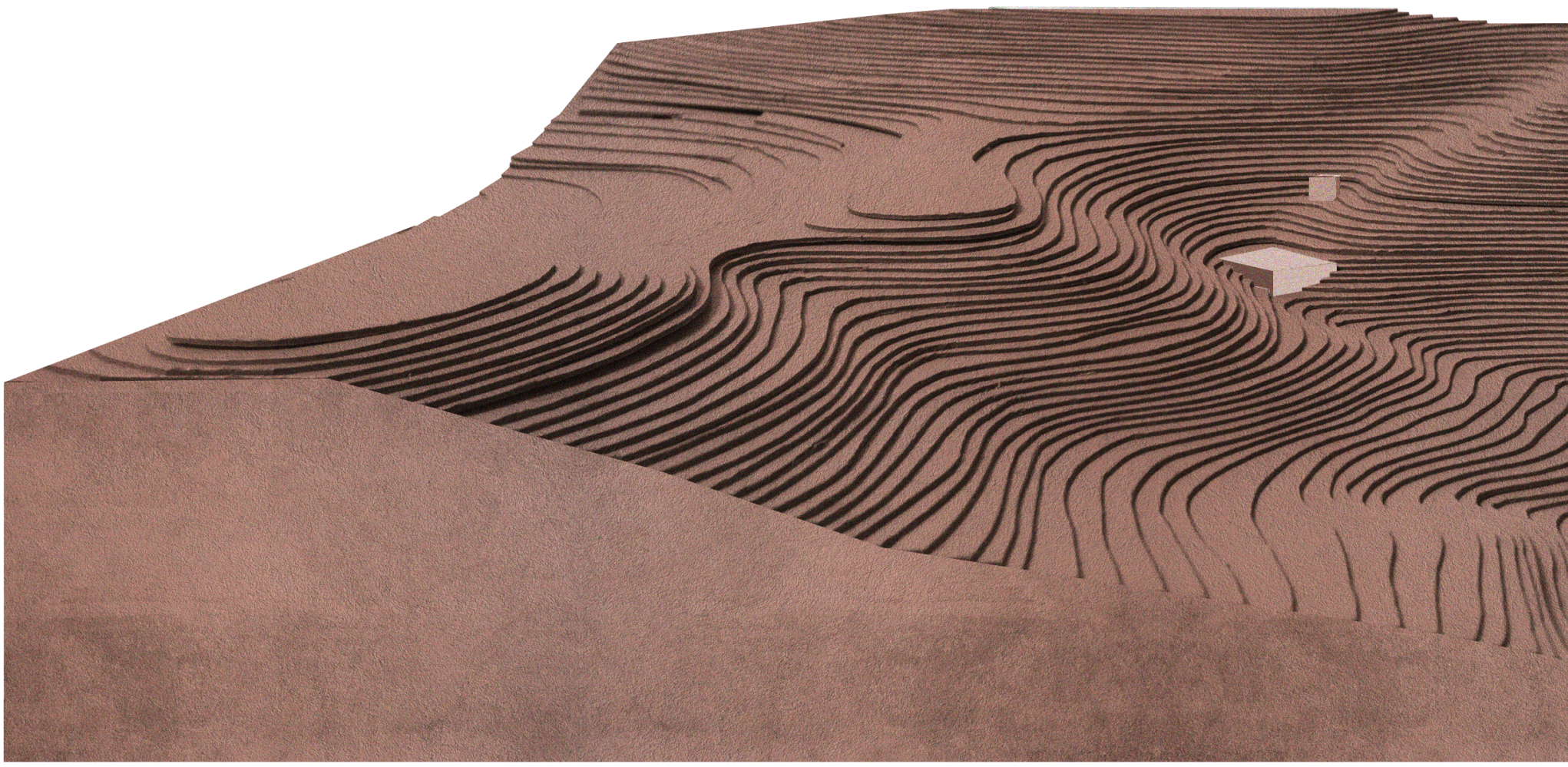


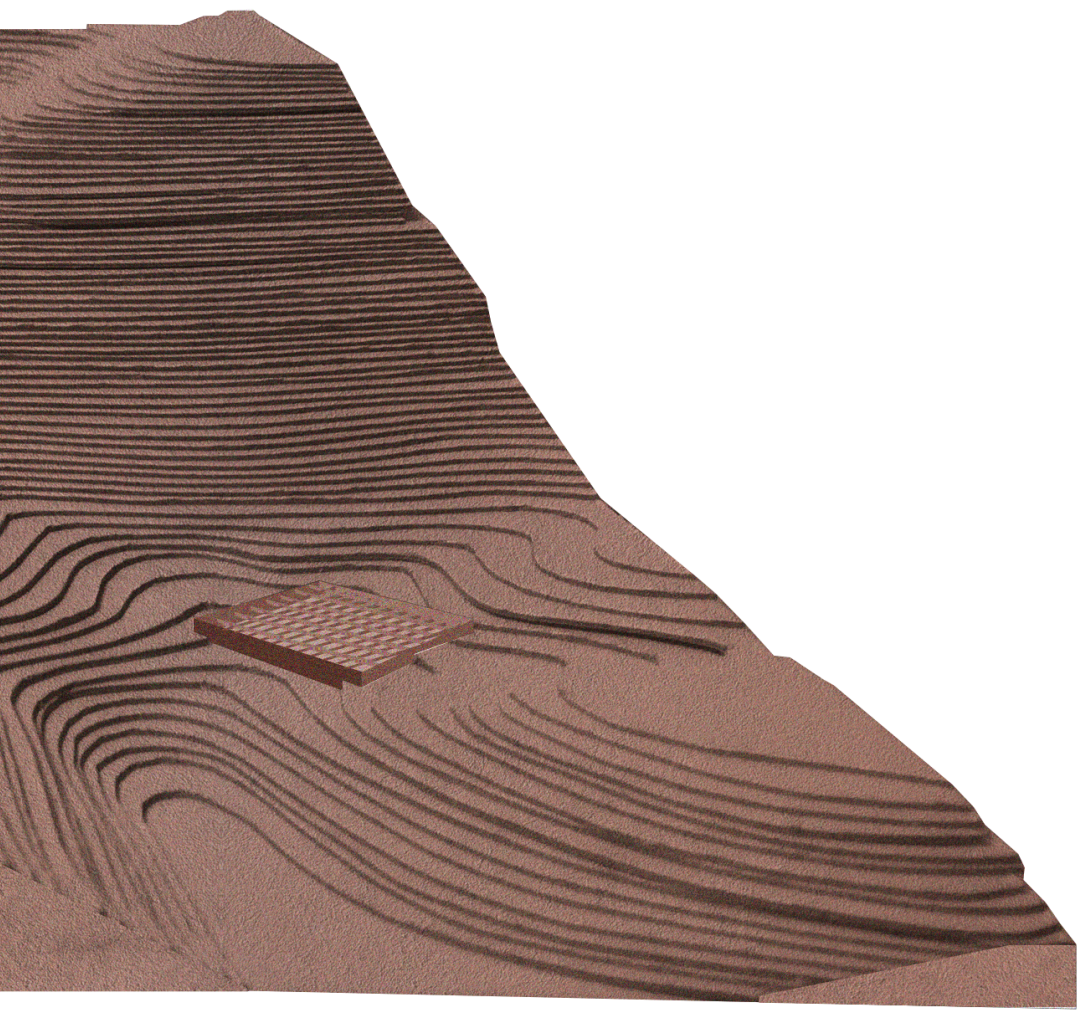






Natural and man-made elements





Territorial model

Scale 1:2000

Masterplan

Scale 1:2000

CHAPEL

The first building along the path is the chapel. The small scale of the chapel acts as a breathing space from the long walk along the forest and responds to its unique function of an individual contemplation place [Figg. 58-59].

Chapel
Scale 1:200

FOUR NON PRODUCTIVE GARDENS

The second element of the convent is the place that features all the main functions of the nuns' daily routines. Responding to their needs, four gardens become core factors in the layout of the program. Surrounded by interior spaces, they are extensions of the inside with their own special atmosphere.

The main garden of the convent is split, creating a public space for rare occasions of receiving outside guests and a reserved private one for daily life.

The first half of the building integrates two main gardens. The first is a cloister that corresponds to the main entrance of the building and guest access to the church. With few elements, the cloister integrates a gallery, a water mirror and a big tree, in which its leafs grow around a wooden grid that completely isolates the convent from the outside world; this wooden structure also acts as a shading system.

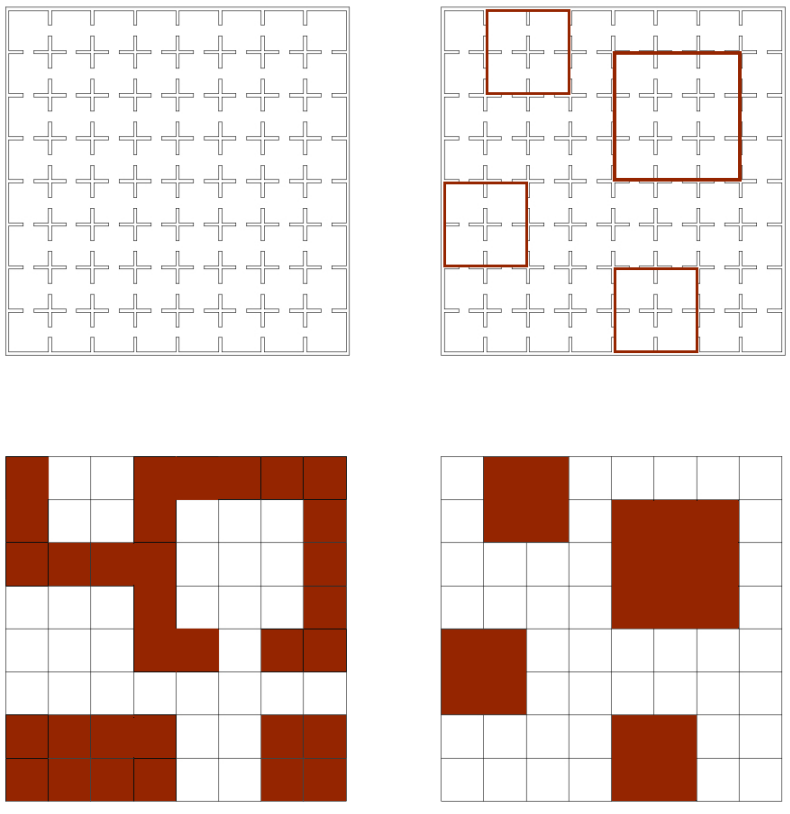
The second garden corresponds to the program of the refectory and kitchen. Providing a seamless relation with the inside space of the refectory, gardens incorporate a wood oven; the possibility to bring a table outside to eat and special selection of medicinal herbs that can be used in the preparation of the nuns' meals.

Creating moments of tension between the more public and complete private space of the convent, a curved wall creates an exceptional moment by breaking the strict grid system. This unique moment compresses nuns into a narrow and dark passage before arriving at the next bright and open garden. As a result, it brings nuns to the next and third garden — a garden where sounds of water and birds, smell of aromatic herbs and elements reflect a community and reading space. Around it, there's the library and the common room, where nuns gather during recreational hours.

The last main gardens and the most important, are the ones that accommodate 12 private cells for the nuns. Each cell is designed with its own private patios allowing nuns to be in contact with nature in the open air and stay in solitude from the others. A praying pátio is also thought to be placed next to the cells.

The atmosphere of the convent is strongly pronounced by the implementation of the red colour in all the interior and exterior facade, the red colour reacts as a complementary of green perceived in the abundant vegetation inside and

outside the convent [Fi



Main building grid strategy



Main building model

Scale 1:100





Main building model

Scale 1:100



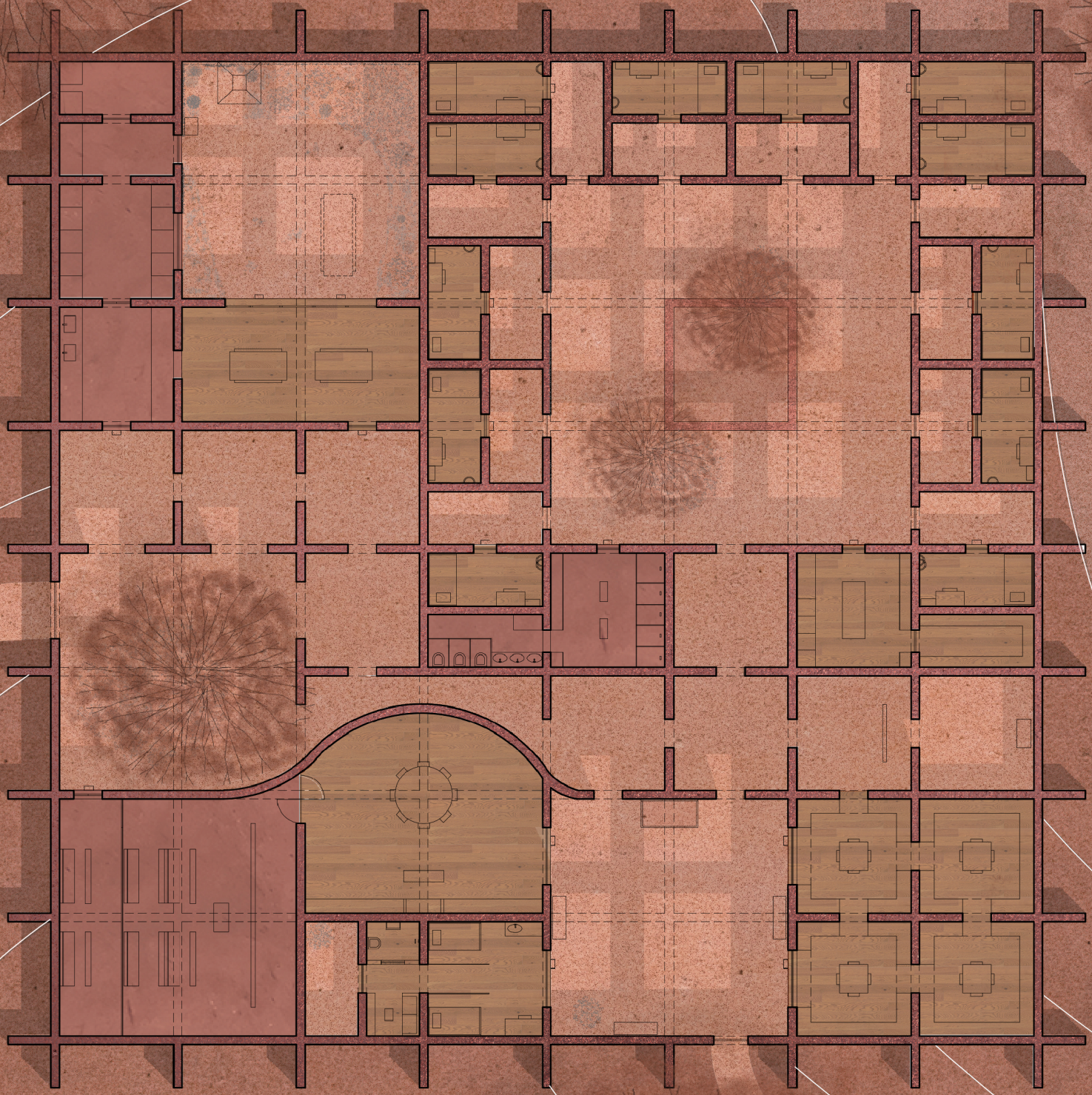
Main building model

Scale 1:100

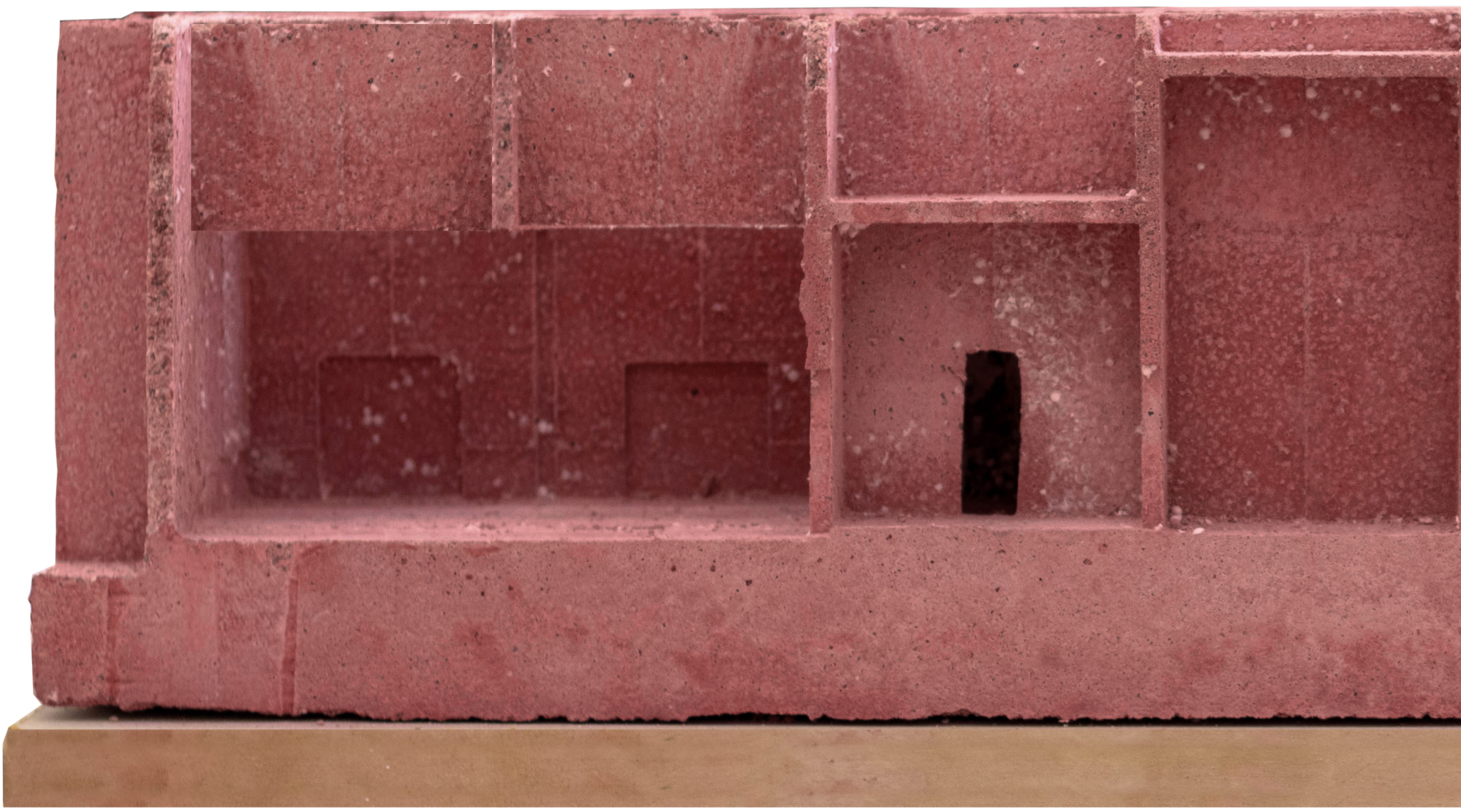


Roof plan

Scale 1:200

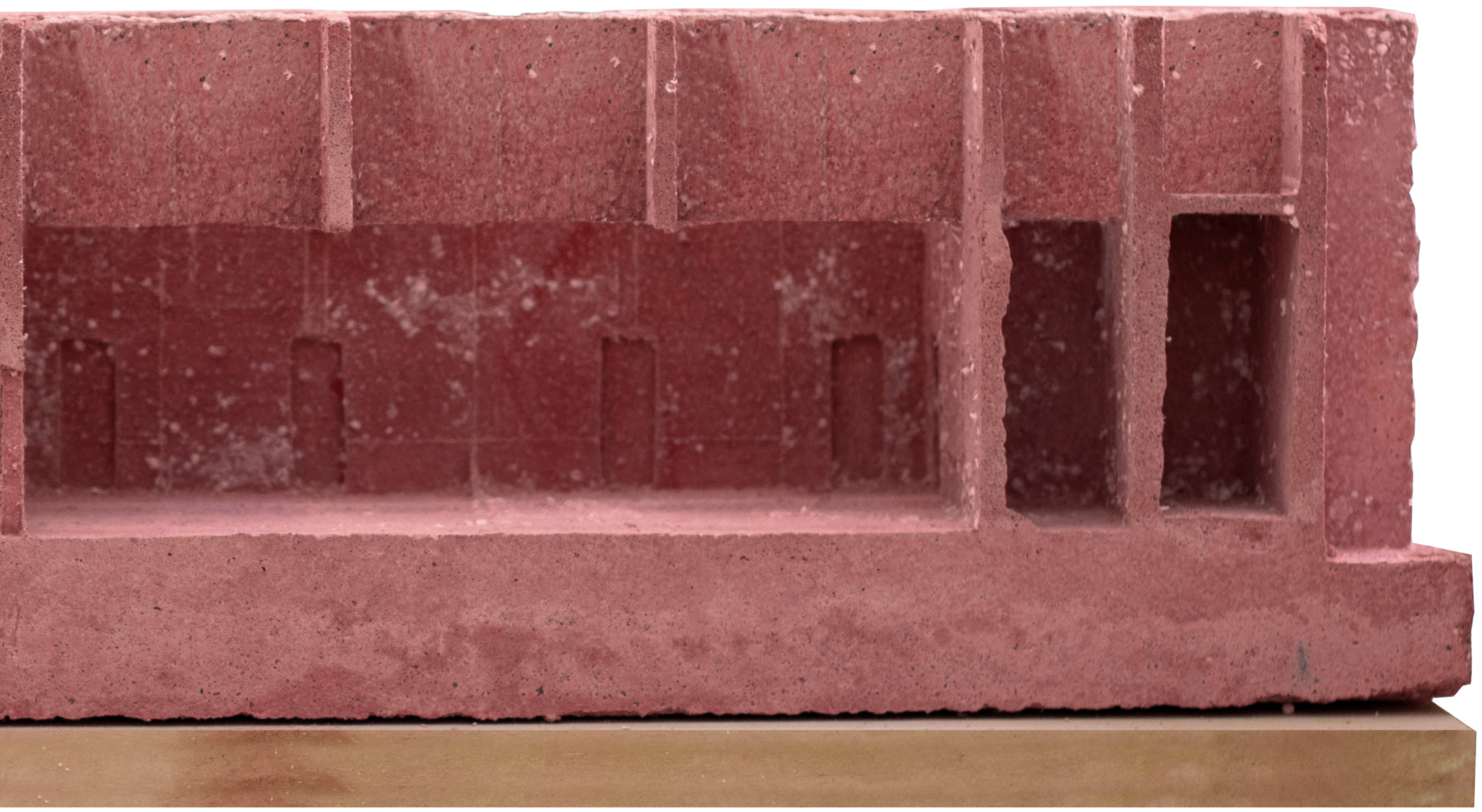


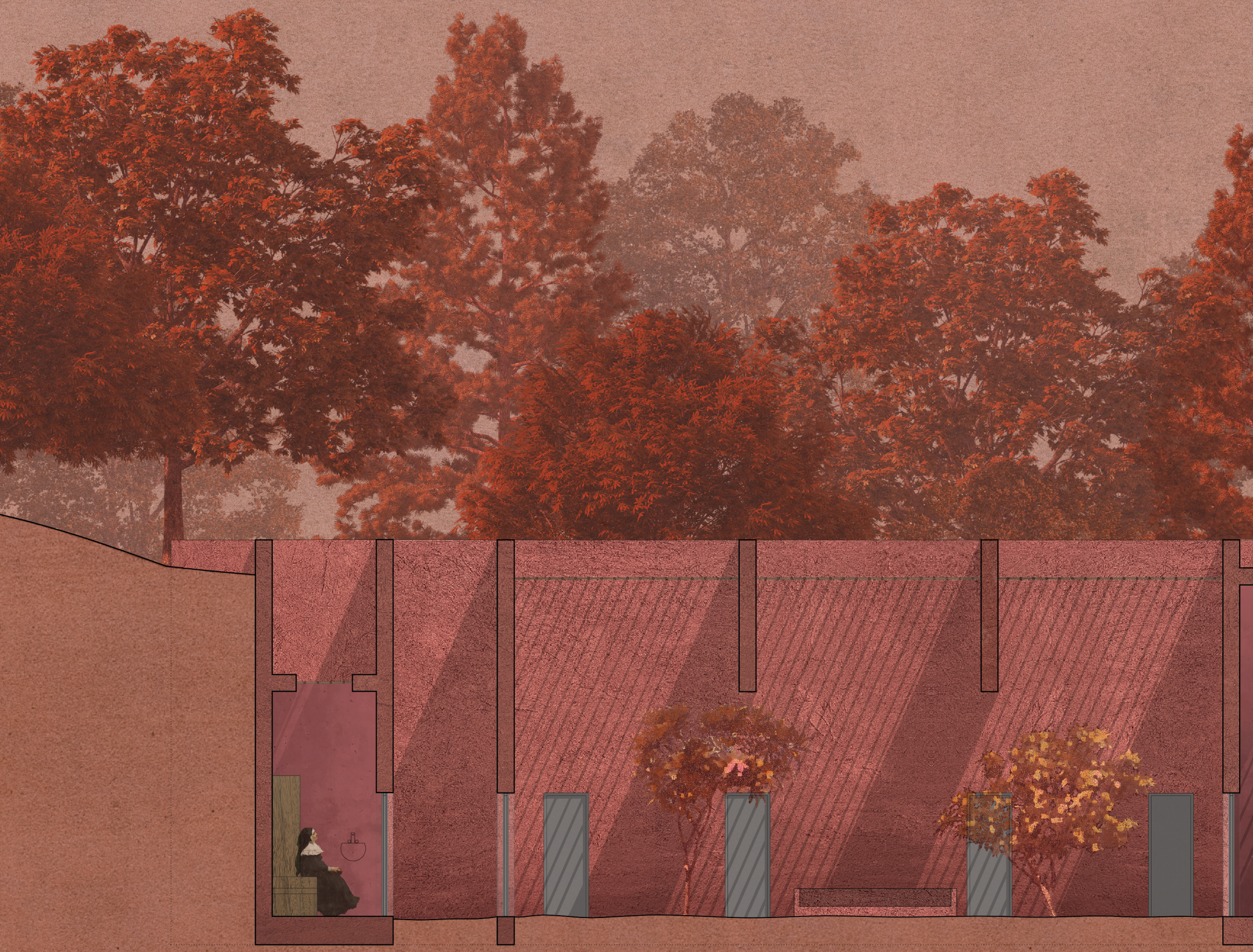
Floor plan
Scale 1:200



Section model

Scale 1:50

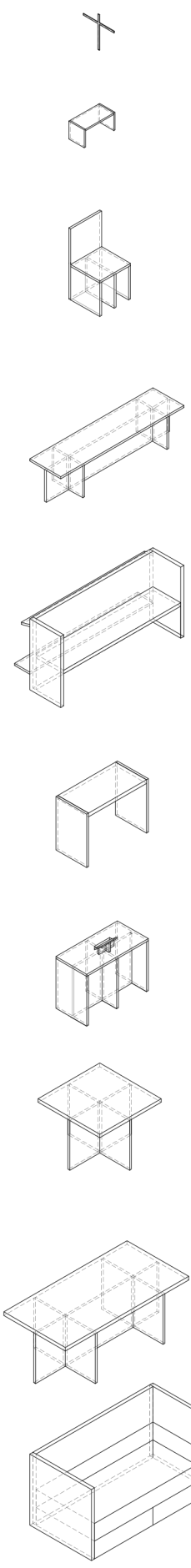


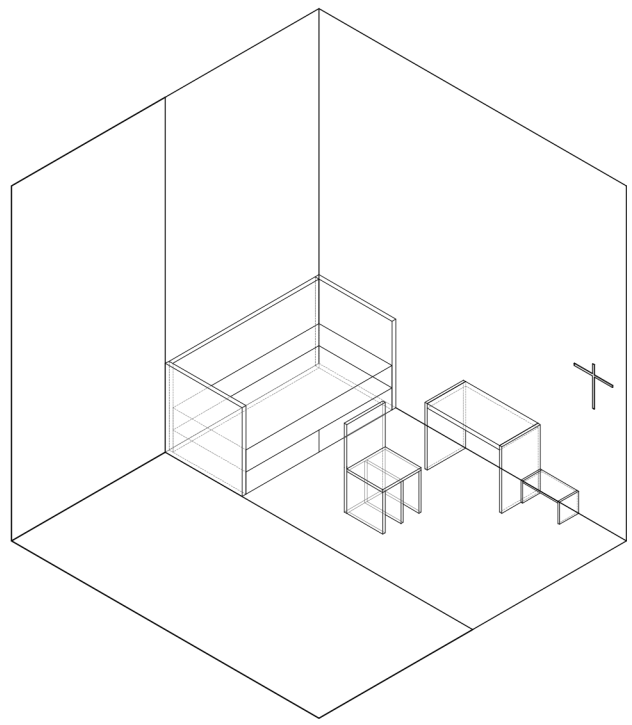


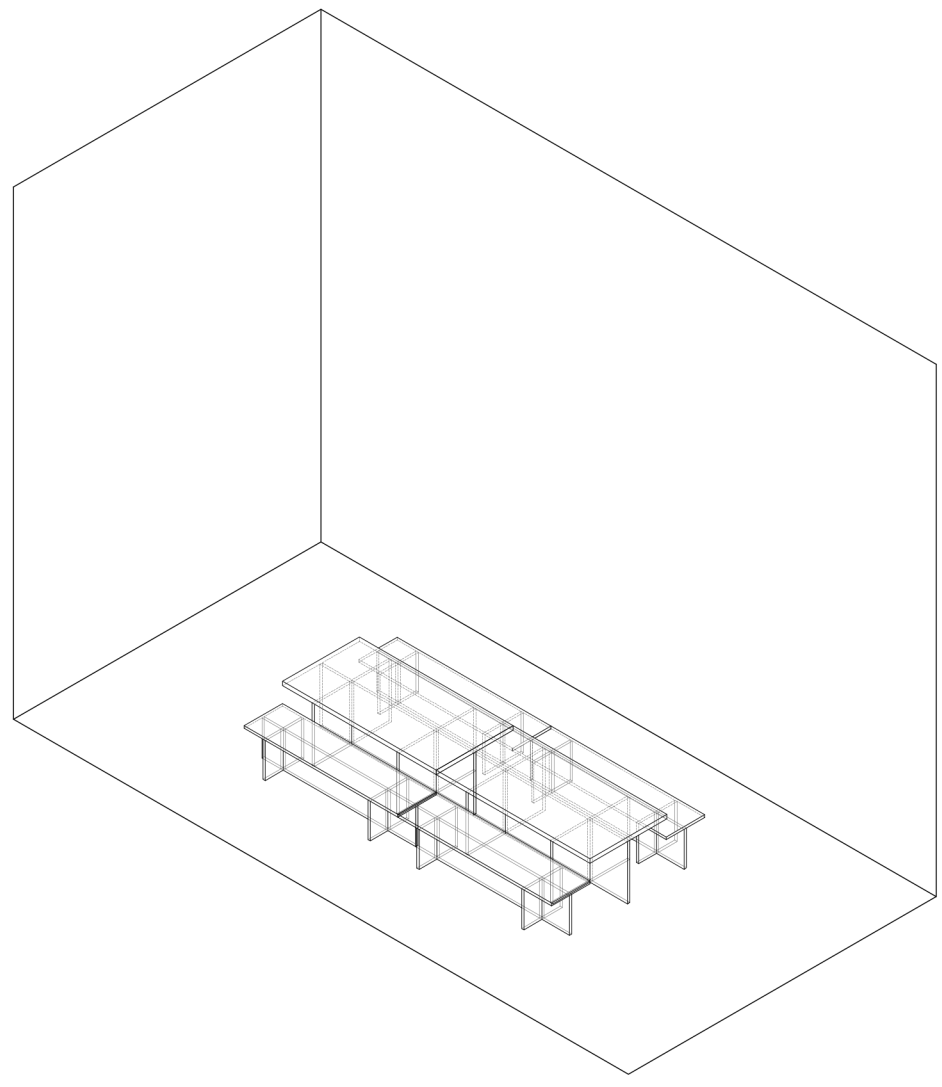
Section

Scale 1:50

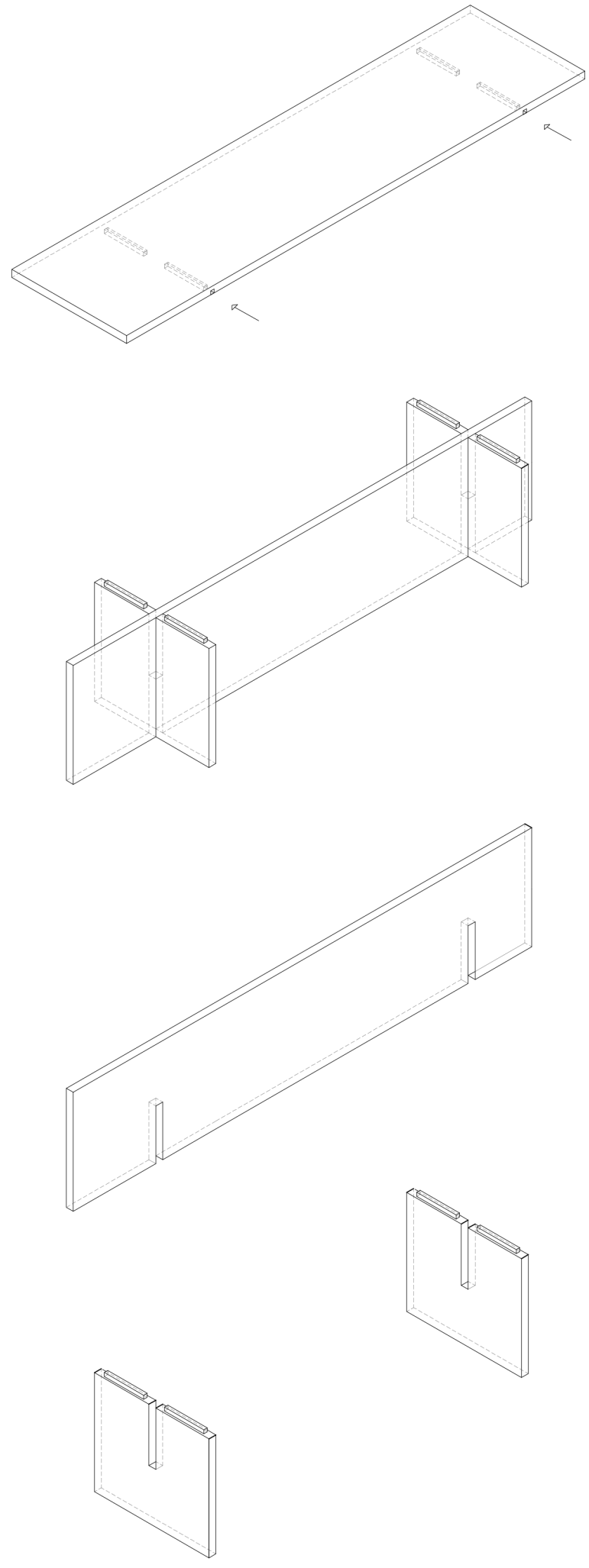




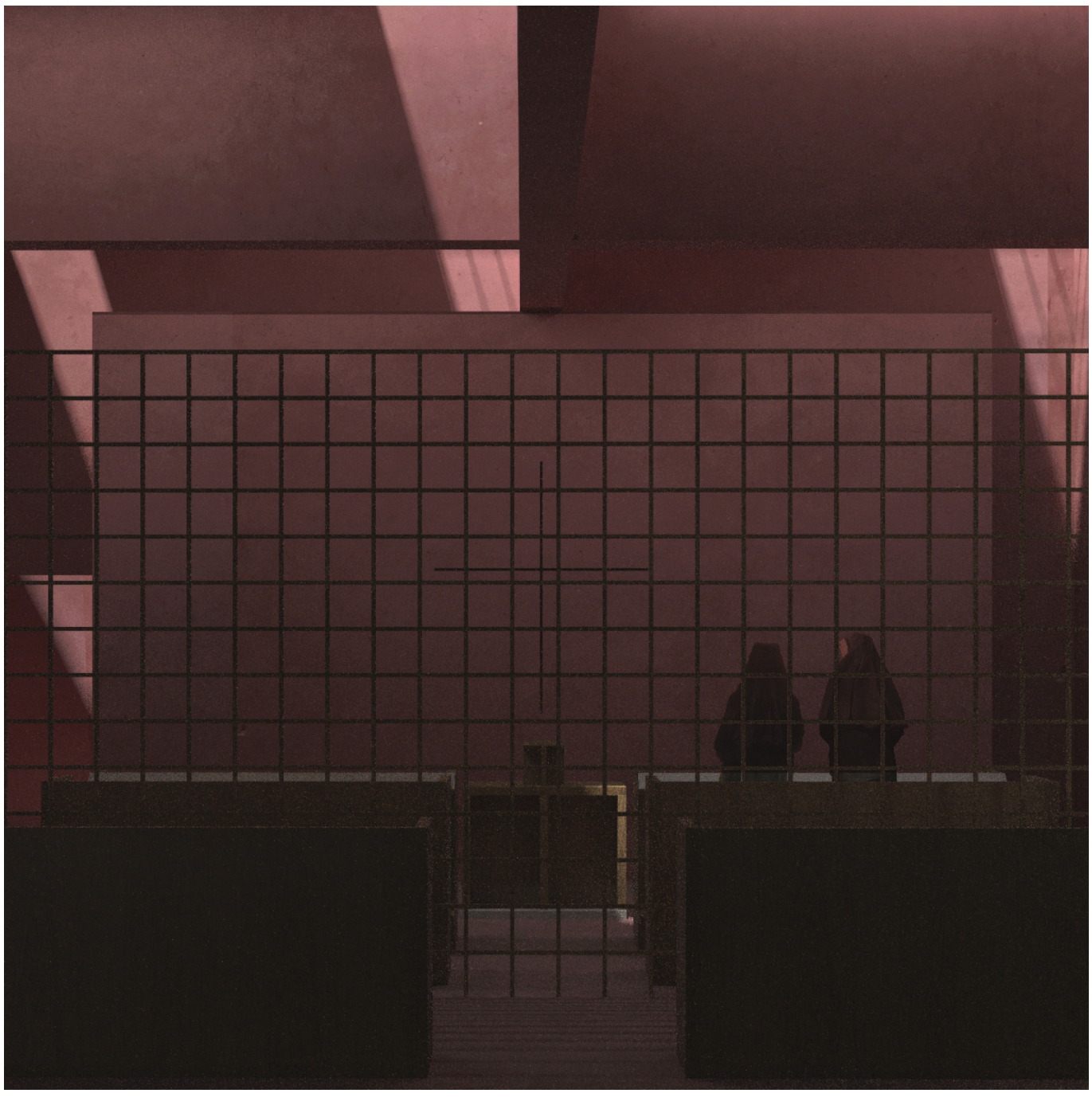




Modular furniture



Assembly system



Church



Refectory



Exterior covered corridor



Prayer patio



Library



Main garden

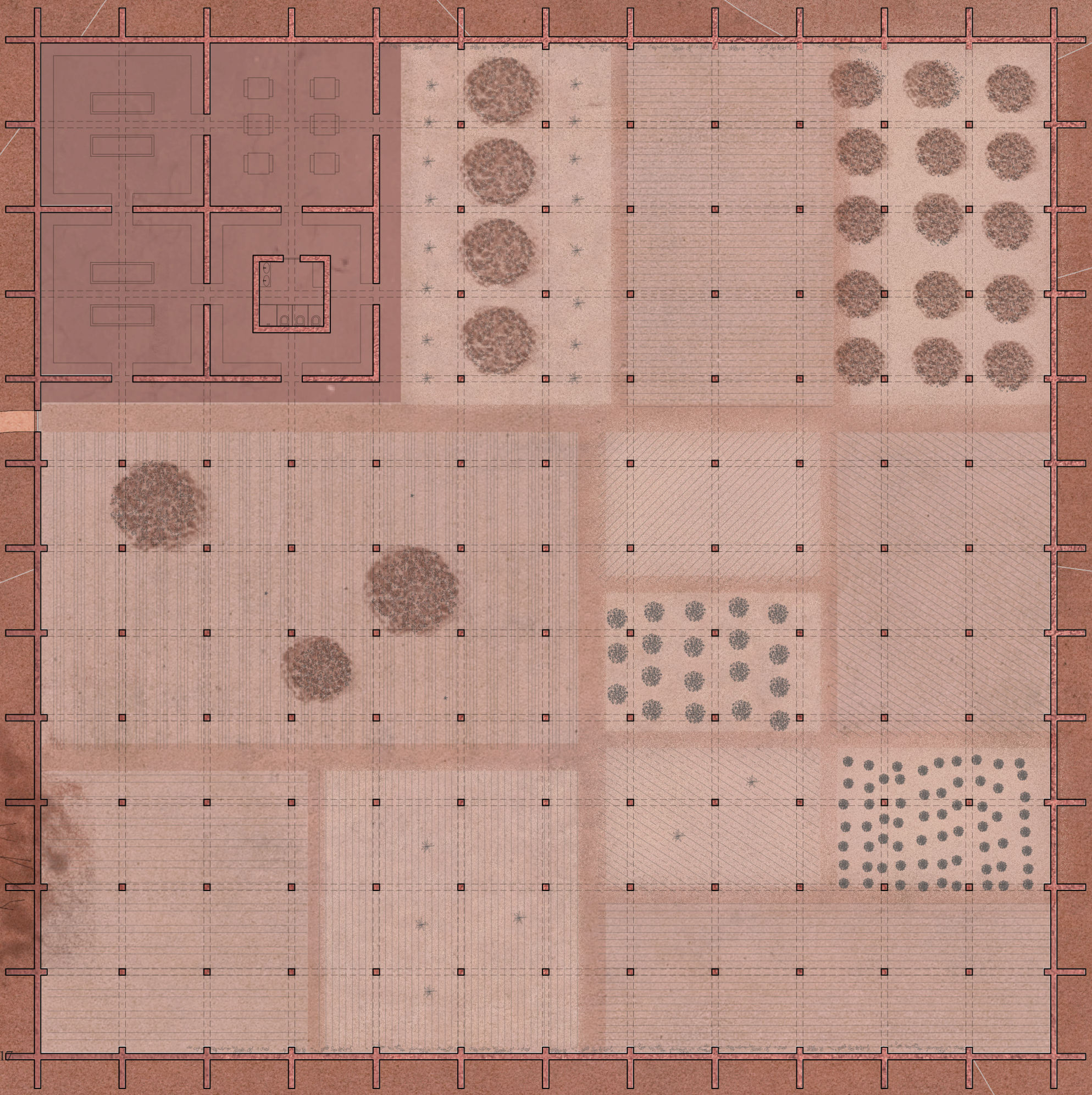
THE PRODUCTIVE GARDEN

Extending the grid system the third and last object is the vegetable garden, designed with an open grid, filled with a succession of pillars and beams that provides more flexibility to divide each flower bed and separate the cultivation between the different vegetables — aromatic and medicinal herbs, fruit trees and even the creation of a poultry. As support, a covered space is integrated in the vegetable garden to be used as wash and storage space as well as the work spaces for the creation of their own habits [Figg. 76-80].

This project intended to develop all the key points previously explored throughout this thesis. It aspired to imagine a religious space that respects the fundamental rules of the order and habits of those who practice the religion. The greater wish of this exercise was to bring the theme of the gardens (the architectural element that gives the monks and nuns proximity with God through nature) in the Discalced Carmelite Order. Resulting from this investigation, different atmospheres were possibly imagined to fulfil the monastic spiritual and physical senses. The ultimate result is the combination of qualities found in the historic order and the adaptation of them to new and contemporary qualities.



Forrest of columns



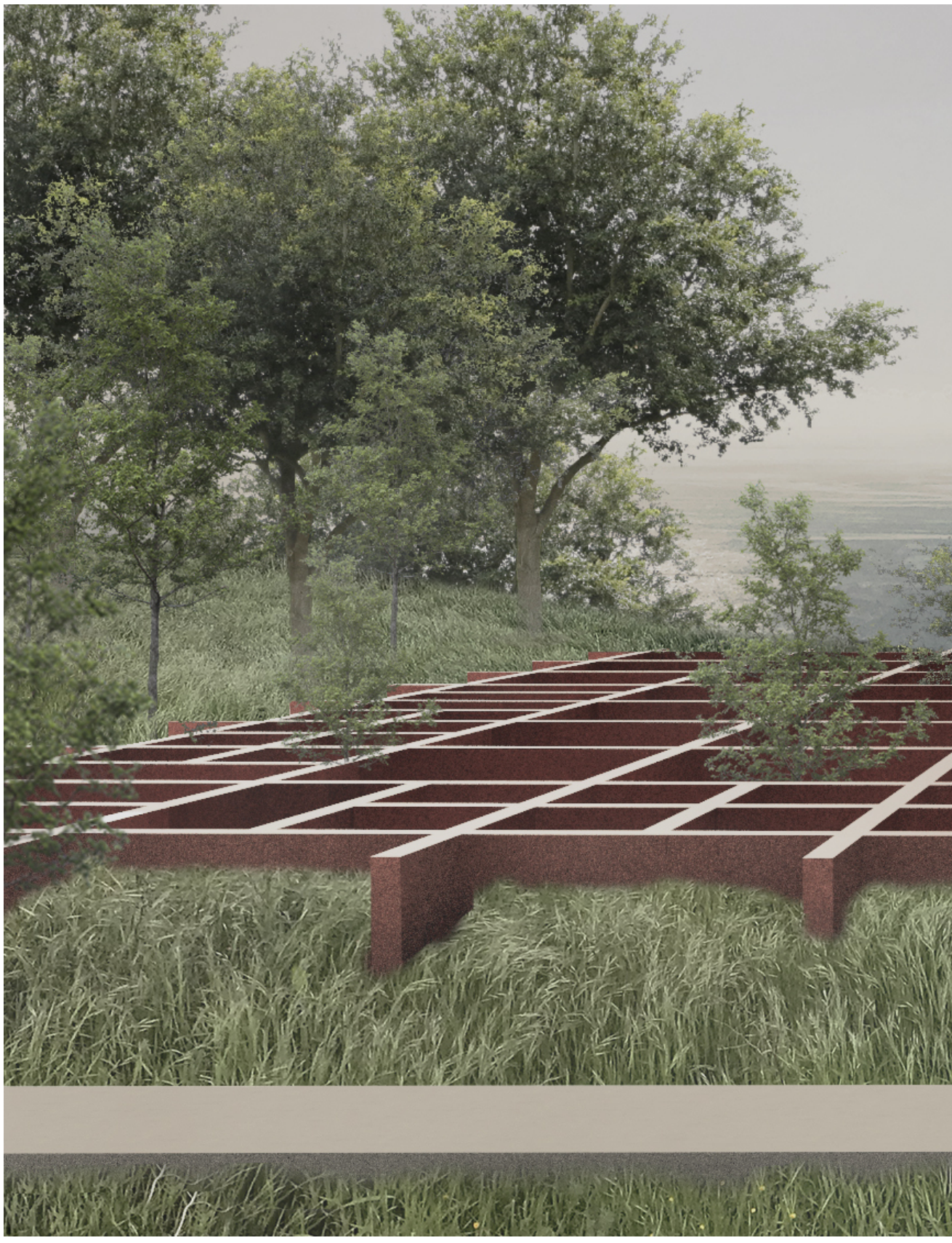
Garden plan

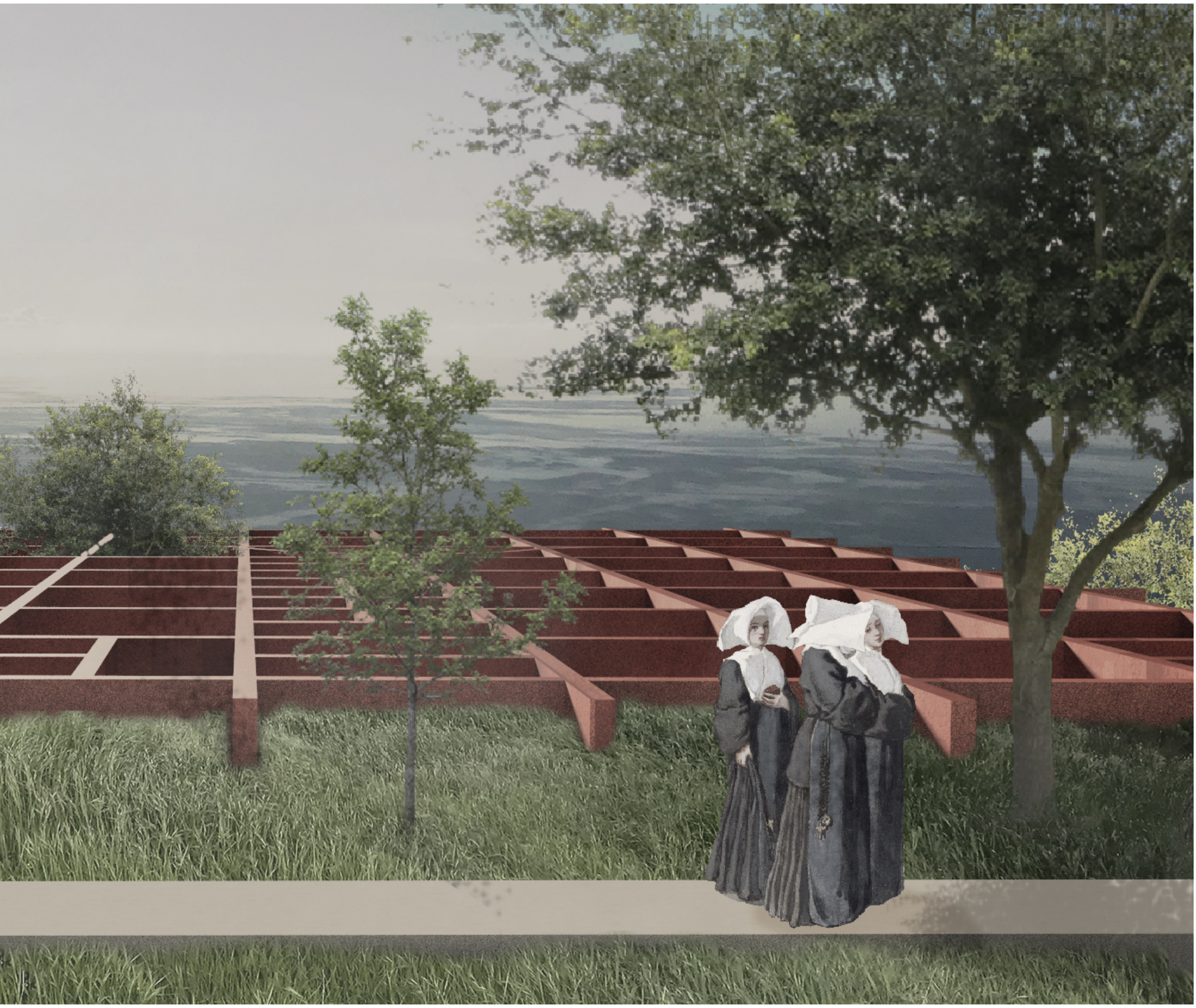
Scale 1:200



Productive garden

thank you
obrigado
merci
mulțumesc
dank je wel
danke





Main building

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LIST OF FIGURES

[Fig. 1] FRICKERS, Gordon — “Painting Mount Carmel”, “Gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel“: 1 Kings 18.19. Israel Collection. The Landscape Art of Gordon Frickers.

[Fig. 2] RUBENS, Pierre — “Saint Teresa d'Ávila”. Lausanne: Salle 101 (sous-sol), Bvd de Grancy 29, 1615.

[Fig. 3; 5; 10; 26; 50] GILSON, JEAN-PIERRE — “Les Carmélites de Compiègne”, (1976-1979).

[Fig. 4] RUMORE, Kori — “Nuns at the Carmelite Monastery at River and Central roads in Des Plaines”. Photo from Chicago Tribune archive: Historical Photo/TNS, 1963.

[Fig. 6] ESTEVES, Rafa — “Ávila - Convento de San José”. Uploaded November 14, 2018.

[Fig. 7] UNESCO — “Old Town of Avila with its Extra-Muros Churches. Map showing the boundary of the property as modified in 2007”.

[Fig. 8] C. VERA, Luis — Complejo arquitecto´nico del Monasterio de San Jose´ en Avila. [S:I.] Ministerio de Cultura, 1982. "Plan of Convent of San José in Ávila designed by Francisco de Mora”, 1616.

[Fig. 12; 14 ; 15; 17; 21; 23] The different gardens in the Convent of San José. (drawing by the author)

[Fig. 9; 11; 17; 29] D'AGEN, Boyer — "Carmelite nuns”, 1904. Found in Hulton Archive/Getty Images (References: martyn21/hdc/edw/34/04; 97k/20/huty/6990/04; martyn21/hdc/edw/34/02; martyn21/hdc/edw/34/07).

[Fig. 13; 18; 19; 20; 22] JIMÉNEZ DUQUE, Baldomero — Convento De San José - Primera Fundación De Santa Teresa De Jesús, Ávila, 1982.

[Fig. 16; 27] Drawings from the book: ABEN, Rob and WIT, Saskia — The Enclosed Garden: History and Development of the Hortus Conclusus and Its Reintroduction Into the Present-day Urban Landscape. 18th ed. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1999.

[Fig. 24] HONEYMAN, Grace — “5 Senses”, Charcoal Drawing. Harriton High School's Art Department.

[Fig. 25] “Component parts of the hortus ludi: stone walls and a gate, flowery mead, fruit trees, fountain and a stone table, turfed sead and berceau.” Drawing from the book: ABEN, Rob and WIT, Saskia — The Enclosed Garden: History and Development of the Hortus Conclusus and Its Reintroduction Into the Present-day Urban Landscape. 18th ed. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1999.

[Fig. 28] CONSORZIO VINI VENEZIA E ORDINE DEI FRATI CARMELITANI SCALZI DELLA PROVINCIA VENETA — “Il Giardino Mistico”, 2020.

[Fig. 30] GUILLEMOT, Roger — “Les carmélites au jardin”. Louise-Marie de France (fille de Louis XV), Peinture de Guillot, d’époque, 1737–1787. Exposed at Saint-Denis: Museum of Art and History.

[Fig. 31] LORENZETTI, Pietro — “Predella panel: Hermits at the Fountain of Elijah”. Siena: Pinacoteca Nazionale, (1328-1329).

[Fig. 32] Tall wall in Marrakesh. Taken: December 3, 2018. (image by the author)

[Fig. 33] MECO, José — “Convento de Santa Teresa de Jesus de Carnide”, 1984. Photo taken from DGPC on August 13, 2021.

[Fig. 34 ;35 ;36 ;37 ;38 ;39 ;40 ;41 ;42 ;43 ;44 ;45 ;46 ;47] STEPHENSON, John and M. CHURCHILL, James — Medical Botany. London : Printed for J. Churchill, 1834-1836.

[Fig. 48] EDIÇÃO DA FOTOGRAFIA MONTE ESTORIL — Portinho da Arrábida. Início do século XX.

[Fig. 49] WORTHPOINT, INC — “19 Thc Antique Religious Oil Painting, Nun Behind Convent Window Bars W/ Crucifix”.

[Fig. 51] M. MANGION, Carmen — Catholic nuns and sisters in a secular age. Britain 1945-90. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019.

[Fig. 53] KLEE, Paul — “Redgreen and Violet-Yellow Rhythms”, 1920. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada.

[Fig. 54] SWANENBURGH, Willem — “Le jardin botanique de Leyde”. Leyden: Gravure, dans Jan Jansz. Orlers, Beschrijvinge der stad Leyden, 1610. Exposed at Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

[Fig. 55] Project proposal. Serra da Arrábida, plan, 1:2000. (drawing by the author)

[Fig. 56] Project proposal. Masterplan, location of interventions. model, 1:500. (drawing by the author)

[Fig. 57] Project proposal. Study, Elements of interventions. plans, 1:2000. (drawing by the author)

[Fig. 58] Project proposal. Masterplan, location of interventions. plan, 1:2000. (drawing by the author)

[Fig. 59] Project proposal. The Gate. plan, 1:100. (drawing by the author)

[Fig. 60] Project proposal. The Gate. section, 1:50. (drawing by the author)

[Fig. 61] Project proposal. The Heart. image. (image by the author)

[Fig. 62]Project proposal. The Heart. image. (image by the author)

[Fig. 63] Project proposal. The Heart. image. (image by the author)

[Fig. 64] Project proposal. The Heart. image. (image by the author)

[Fig. 65] Project proposal. The Heart. image. (image by the author)

[Fig. 66] Project proposal. The Heart. image. (image by the author)

[Fig. 67] Project proposal. The Heart. image. (image by the author)

[Fig. 68] Project proposal. The Heart. image. (image by the author)

[Fig. 69] Project proposal. The Heart. image. (image by the author)

[Fig. 70] Project proposal. The Heart. diagrams. (drawing by the author)

[Fig. 71] Project proposal. The Heart. model, 1:50. (image by the author)

[Fig. 72] Project proposal. The Heart. model, 1:50. (image by the author)

[Fig. 73] Project proposal. The Heart. plan, 1:100. (drawing by the author)

[Fig. 74] Project proposal. The Heart. section, 1:50. (drawing by the author)

[Fig. 75] Project proposal. The Heart. image. (image by the author)

[Fig. 76] Project proposal. The Hortus. diagram. (drawing by the author)

[Fig. 77] Project proposal. The Hortus. plan, 1:100. (drawing by the author)

[Fig. 78] Project proposal. The Hortus. section, 1:100. (drawing by the author)

[Fig. 79] Project proposal. The Hortus. image. (image by the author)

[Fig. 80] Project proposal. The Hortus. image. (image by the author)