

**Spaces of Commonality and Change: Re-constructing Ruins  
Amongst Cultural Values in Iznik, Turkey**

by

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Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kmaq'i,  
the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.  
We are all Treaty people.

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## **Abstract**

Material cultures of past and present societies are increasingly being threatened to lose their sense of place to commodification and dominant powers. Such forces of economy and politics in a globalized world are shaping everyday-life experience and the production of space. The resulting spaces reveal a fragmented social fabric for local inhabitants. However, in a differentiated lived space for production of culture, a sense of place needs to be observed and felt. Through recordings of those observations, experiences and interdisciplinary research in the town of Iznik in Turkey, this thesis seeks to link ruins as living active social agents through an architectural intervention. Architecture in an archeological site therefore does act as the in-between space to produce a collective sense of belonging by engaging in the processes of cultural production.

## **Acknowledgements**

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

Could World Heritage Sites support knowledge and material production through traces of their cultural past and present? How can spaces being preserved as cultural asset be active participants of culture within local lived experience? Through architectural intervention, can cultural heritage sites become living social spaces, able to reproduce and produce spaces that can inhabit changing needs and desires?

The next chapter will address how space has become commodified on the global scale by revealing an investigative view of social, political, and economic forces impacting agency, meaning and identity impacting the local. The different forces acting on current social space are investigated through multiple scales of mapping and experiential analysis.

Henri Lefebvre's production of space shows that space is informed through spatial practices embedded in everyday practice. Thus, a town destined as a UNESCO World Heritage Site affords a methodology of analysis of the ordinary lived experience to define culture as a process rather than an object of 'Cultural Heritage'.

The interdisciplinary methodology adopted in this thesis allows for analyzing spatial experience using sensorial recordings from site visits. This method interrupts the chronological narrative with accounts of lived experience and 'spatial stories' in Iznik, a small town situated in the Western Anatolian region of Turkey.

The Roman Theatre in Iznik, a cultural heritage site, reveals itself through the available information on its past spatial practice to perceive the site through continuity and change.

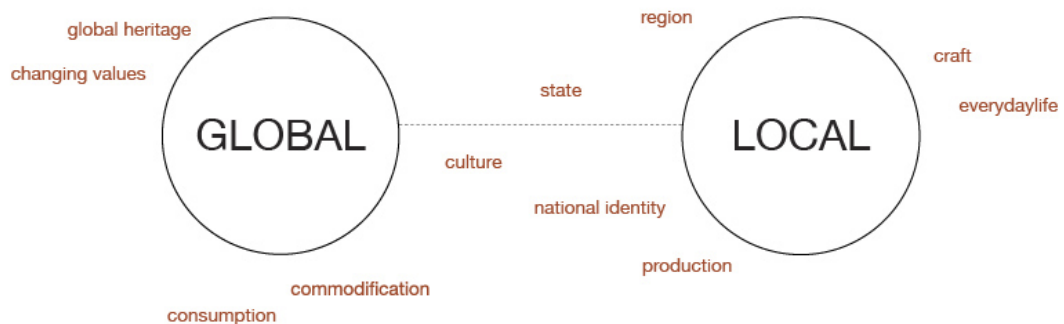
The speculated continuity or discontinuity of traditions becomes critical to understanding social space. Gathering historical analysis of a place as a representation in the form of a palimpsest emphasizes patterns embedded in spatial practice as the component to actively safeguard 'cultural assets' and thus safeguard a sense of place.

Therefore, this thesis, through a contextualized analysis, embraces the juxtaposition of spatial and social ties. The intervention of elements invites inhabitation by blurring lines between state-led boundaries to re-embed everyday life within the archeological site of the Iznik Roman Theatre.

## Chapter 2: Changing Cultural Values

Events occur with such speed and complexity that nothing remains certain. Large numbers live in a world where local economies and cultures are tightly bound into global ones, through which effects ripple with enormous velocity and consequence. (Corner 1999, 209)

In a global sense of culture, space is no longer maintained for a collective sense of ordinary experience but based on identity and commodity. As the result of a market-driven economy, commodities have led the built environment toward homogeneity of materials and modes of production (M. Goodman, D. Goodman, and Redclift 2010, 20). In terms of production of space, commodity as a thing occupies a location in space (Lefebvre 1991, 341). To think of space as a commodity is to think about it as a frozen object. As frozen, culture becomes valued symbolically to a particular society as it gains meaning by internal and external forces acting on it through time and space.



Space today is influenced by the globalization of places. Production and reproduction of things and spaces lead to a blurring of the sense of belonging to a site, thus changing the social space.

The effects of a globalized society have been found in literature of theorists, scholars, philosophers, architects, planners and sociologists since the 19th century. French philosopher, Henri Lefebvre speaks to commodification and fetishism of culture in terms of abstract space (Lefebvre 1996) - a space led by state centralization and integration on a global scale (Abel 1997, 198). To make evident the tensions and controversies embedded in global forces shaping our sense of the world, the “lifeless conservation areas”, “which have become for many western visitors, a disappointing and disturbing spectacle of cultural abdication” (Abel 1997, 195). Thus, a paradoxical construct of culture becomes part of the methodology to de-code places of ‘World Heritage’ (Abel 1997).

### **Paradox of World Heritage**

One cannot blame specific actors for critiquing the set of influences that have informed the self-contradictions of Cultural Heritage but rather interrogate the network of forces as a whole. As Harvey acknowledges that ‘heritage’ exists along the lines of commodification and commercialization - though it is much more complex (Harvey 2001). By unveiling the paradox of World Heritage in a context can get us to a situated analysis of forces acting in social space.

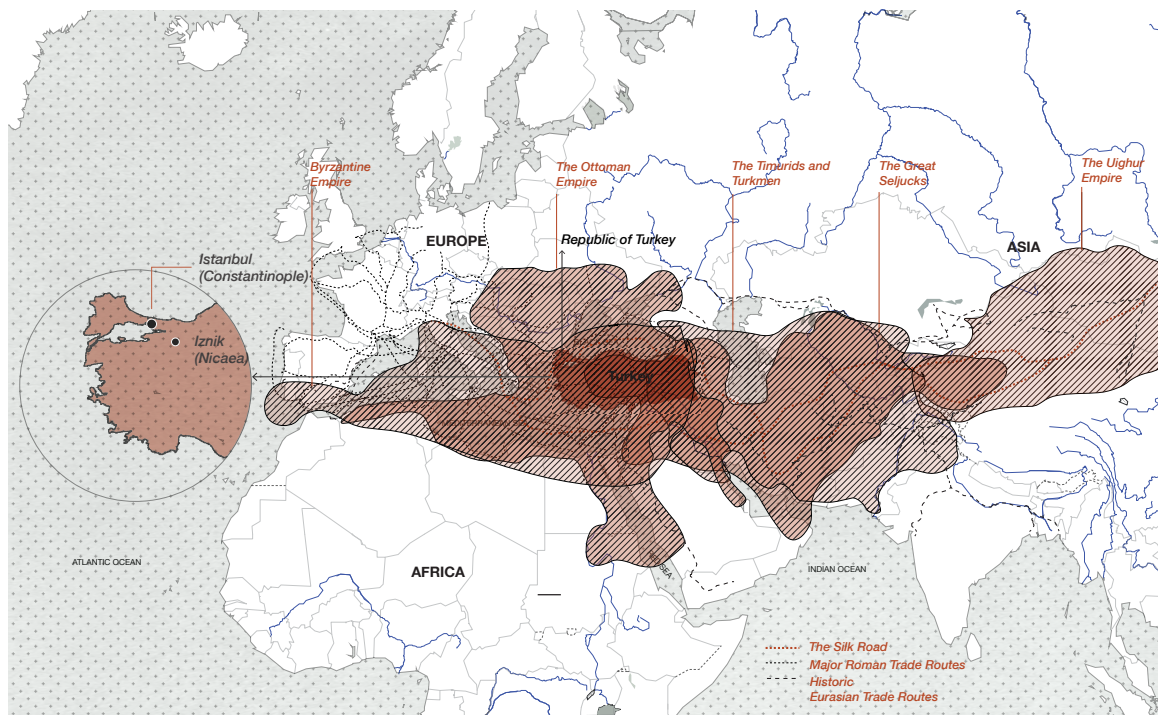
### **Unveiling State-led ‘Heritage’**

Turkey, nestled between Eastern and Western ideologies for centuries, has shaped over time through materials, rituals, practices, technologies, and beliefs. Managing existing networks in Turkey is fragmented by nationalistic ideals; thus, conducting such an analysis is complex with the current structure. Nevertheless, the town of Iznik, located south of Istanbul, reveals material evidence proving



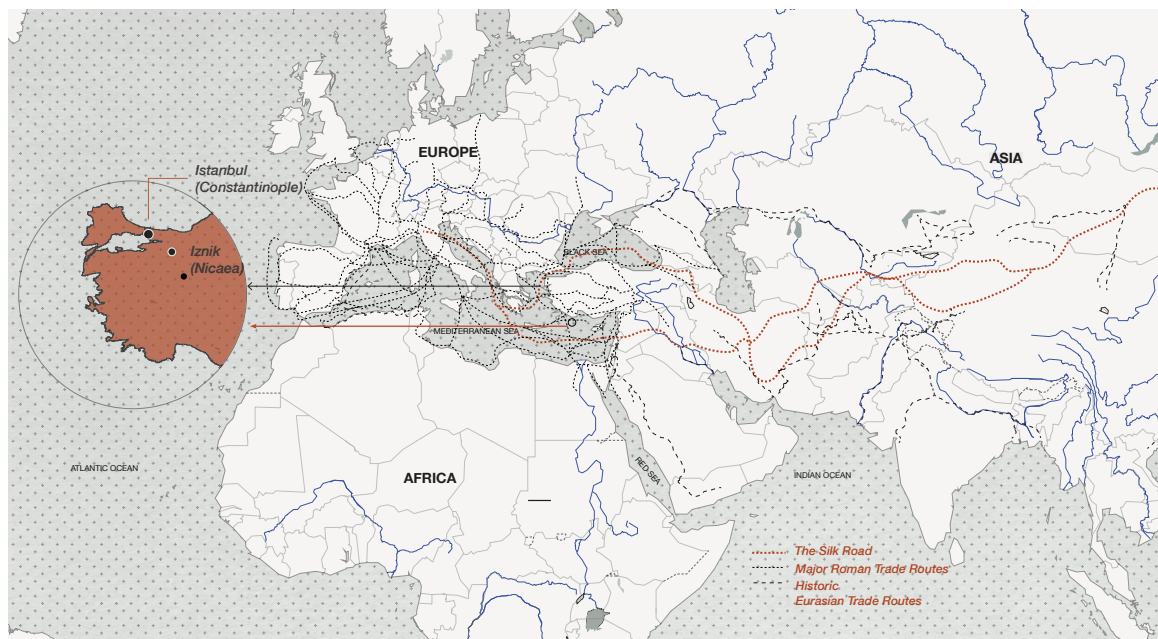
historically significant as a commercial and cultural centre for exchange, migration and cohabitation. Furthermore, modern-day geopolitical boundaries of Turkey, under the provincial government Bursa and Ministry of Culture and Tourism, form a case justifying the universal value of Iznik's past (UNESCO World Heritage 2014).

Atakuman hypothesizes that national identities are continuously re-configured in Turkey (Atakuman 2010). "The fact is that a state possesses no fixed self-identity; rather, its view of itself is ever shifting with the demands of the present" (Atakuman 2010, 107). Heritage values in Turkey's century-long search for an identity within the Western civilized world are left ambiguous (Atakuman 2010, 106). Rather than sequential chronology, implied by their traces and their records, changing toward non-linear forms of preservations in time and space allows a sense

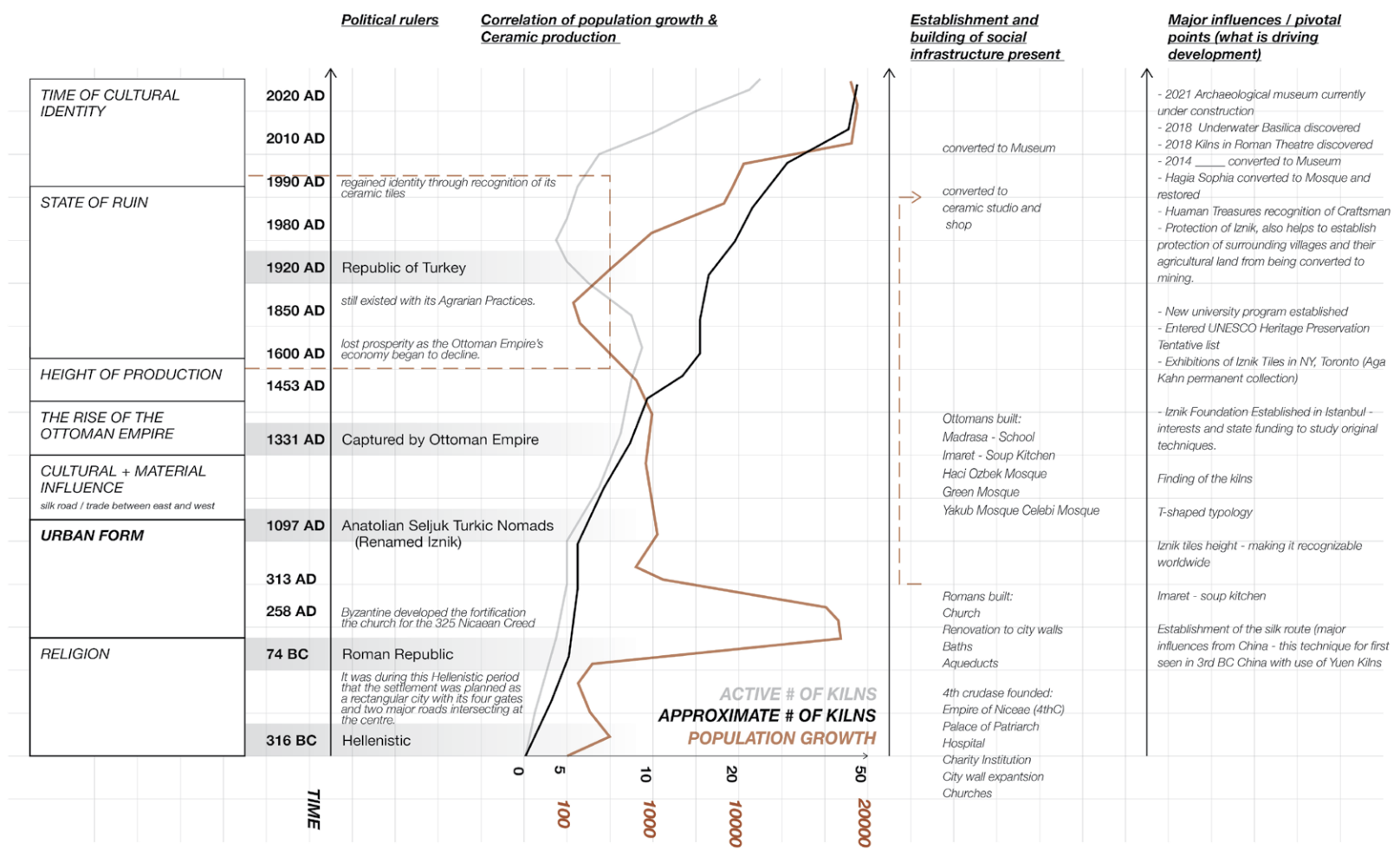


A map (Roxburg 2005, 16) of the extent of Turkic dominion situates the town of Iznik amongst social and spatial influences from different eras and at the crossroads of many routes and paths of power and exchange.

of continuity and multiplicity of meaning and value (Harvey 2001). It is essential to acknowledge the contention of Karl Marx that we see all things from the perspective of our social interest, and our view is therefore inevitably distorted (Prown 1983, 3). The national “Ministry of Culture and Tourism” of Turkey is guided by UNESCO’s criterion for qualification (UNESCO 2016a). The responsibility falls on them to outline their justifications for consideration and they manage this in the built environment within political boundaries. The state thus determines the fate of the built environment and extents and efforts toward their ‘cultural assets’. Due to its ‘assets’, what tangibly remains are now part of the case to become a UNESCO ‘World Cultural Heritage’ site (2014). Effects through preservation and regulation of the heritage sites become contested through spatial hierarchies and boundaries. Naturally, this leads to controversial networks largely to serve ‘the cultural tourist’ (Waterton and Watson 2015, 2).



A map of Turkey situates the town at the crossroads of ancient trade routes and a central location of the Byzantine Empire and Eastern Roman Empire. Still, today, Turkey’s political and geological boundaries situate it at a crossroads as an essential player in global trade (Roxburg 2005, 16).

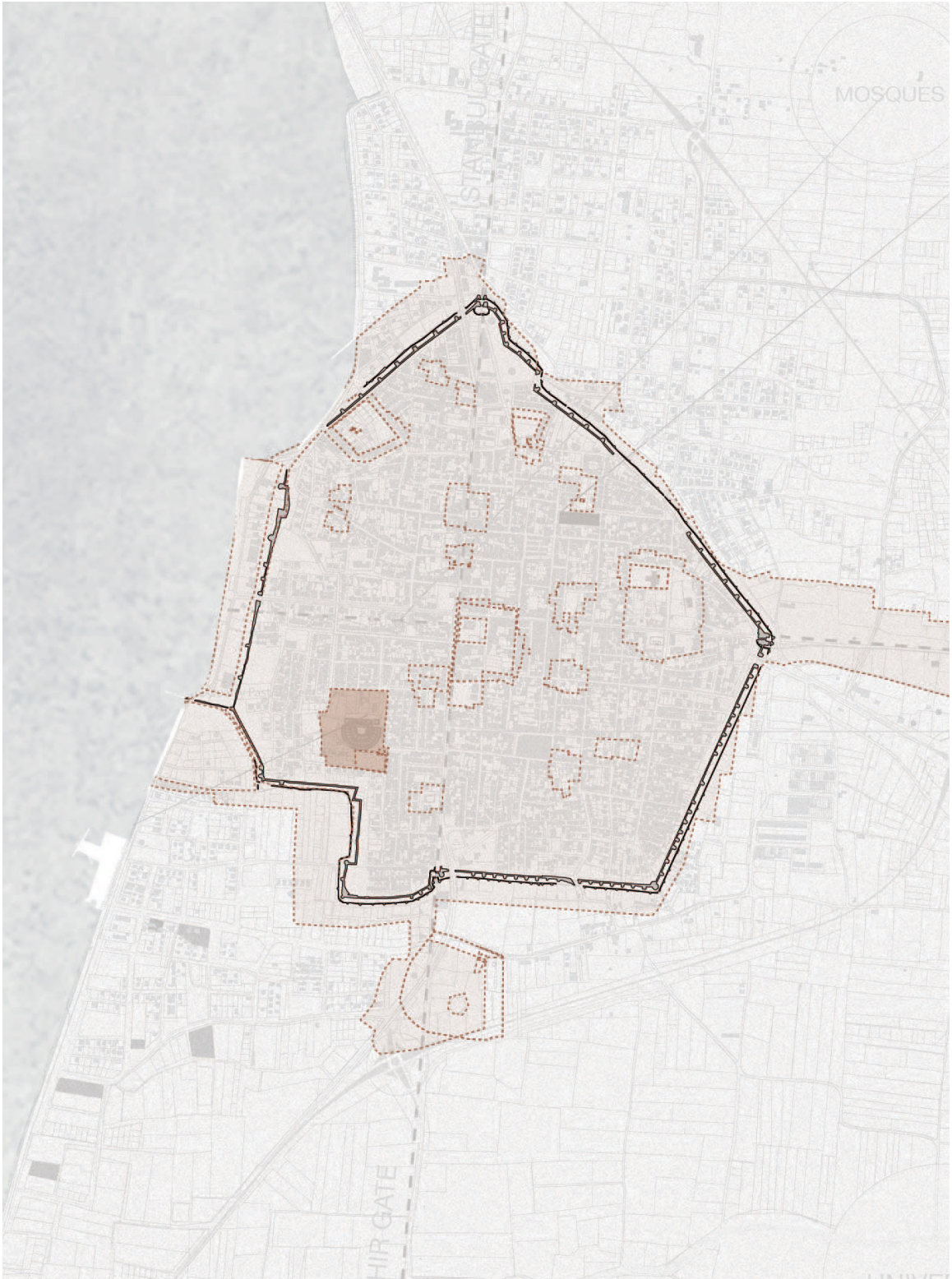


The timeline of Iznik, marking significant change milestones, provides cues for the existence of different societies in Iznik and their practices. Culture as a dynamic entity changes fast at times and repeats. The dynamic nature unveils the relation of change, growth and decay through physical evidence. Today, where culture becomes influenced by the market-driven forces of commodity, it becomes an abstract tool for shaping space as cultural identity, thus coding space through 'Heritage' (Lefebvre 1996, 124).

For the scope of this thesis, it is not easy to give justice to complexities of historical narrative in the western Anatolian region of Turkey; yet it is important to acknowledge impacts of change. Unfortunately in Turkey, hegemonic and homogeneous global forces driving Cultural Heritage Sites are destroying and replacing embodied knowledge of daily practices frozen by state-led re-constructions. During a UNESCO 'Future of the World Heritage Convention', "the emphasis on inscription as an end in itself" was identified as one of the weaknesses in the implementation of World Heritage ("Eighteenth Session Of The General Assembly Of States Parties To The Convention Concerning The Protection Of The World Cultural And Natural Heritage" 2011). Thus, seeking to 'safeguard' place as a "World Cultural Heritage" creates a site shaped by a mere representation and re-construction of 'culture' (Nora 1989, 9). This was referred to by Pierre Nora as the "eradication of memory by history – effect of a revelation" (Nora 1989, 9).

### **Spatial Continuity of Culture**

Alternatively, to critically challenge heritage, perception of the past must expand to highlight the space of living memories embedded within situated social networks to inform concrete space (Nora 1989, 8). The living memories that reside along the 'lived space' of everyday life (Lefebvre 1991) are revealed in traces of "object-oriented ontology" (Latour 2004). Although, as Lippard points out, a place is not global in the sense that it is for commodity, "its character and effect differ greatly over time from person to person and from community to community" (Lippard 1997, 7). In space, values attached are commonly shaped as a social construct through the present's political, economic and social concerns (Graham; Howard 2008, 5).



Preservation boundaries act as way of taking away social spaces. Greater level of restrictions are implicated on existing residents residing within the boundaries of conservation. For zones under highest protection, it is clear to see the losses of social space occurring at the heart of the community. The spatial and material boundaries become the force against the everyday social space.

ACCOUNT OF HISTORIC SOCIAL BUILDINGS AND THEIR CURRENT STATE

| ERA                     | ROMAN                                 |                           | LATE BYZANTINE                      |  |                           |  | OTTOMAN                                    |  |  |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Date Built              | Roman Empire                          | Laskarid Era (1204-1261)  | Laskarid Era (1204-1261)            | Laskarid Era (1204-1261)                       | Laskarid Era (1204-1261)  | Ottoman Era 1331-1500                      | Ottoman Era 1331-1500                      | Ottoman Era 1331-1500                          | Ottoman Era 1331-1500                          |
| Section                 |                                       |                           |                                     |  |                           |  |  |  |  |
| Plan                    | <br>85 m d.                           |                           | <br>18 x 12 m                       | <br>18 x 12 m                                  |                           |  |  |  |  |
| Intended use            | Theatre                               | Church                    | Church                              | Church (Christian) SACRED                      | Church (Christian) SACRED | Mosque (Islamic) SACRED                    | Soup Kitchen                               | Public Bath                                    | School   |
| Orientation             |                                       |                           |                                     |  |                           |  |  |  |  |
| Material                | GRANITE<br>MARBLE<br>WOOD<br>CONCRETE | BRICK<br>MORTAL<br>SPOLIA | BRICK<br>STONE<br>MORTAR<br>WOOD    | RE-USED<br>BRICKS<br>STONE<br>RUBBLE<br>MORTAR | SPOLIA<br>BRICK<br>MORTAR | GRANITE<br>MARBLE<br>GLAZED TILE<br>SPOLIA | GRANITE<br>MARBLE<br>GLAZED TILE<br>SPOLIA | GRANITE<br>MARBLE<br>SPOLIA<br>MORTAR<br>BRICK | GRANITE<br>MARBLE<br>SPOLIA<br>MORTAR<br>BRICK |
| Record of Current State |                                       |                           |                                     |  |                           |  |  |  |  |
| CURRENT USE             | ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE                   | RUIN                      | MOSQUE (CONVERTED FROM MUSEUM 2017) | RUIN   | RUIN                      | MOSQUE                                     | MUSEUM OF ISLAM                            | MUSEUM   | GIFT SHOPS<br>CAFE                             |

Ruins of buildings that have been reconstructed, and have now become museums or shops. Taking away the buildings' original social space, spaces have become more abstract spaces of consumption.



The building originates from the Ottoman Empire with the typology for a 'Medresse', the former soup kitchen. Today, it is the Museum of Islam. A fence gates the building; at night, for security, the building is gated and surrounded by lights and cameras. Public entrance during business hours costs a fee for both locals and tourists.

The town of Iznik, as a living place for three millennia, needs change towards continuity of spatial practice rather than continue being dictated by forces of commodity.

Findings of historical objects do not exist without social involvement, since the objects themselves are now continuously entangled in a state of changing their productions (Latour 2005). The interconnectedness of seemingly disconnected fields has a continuous impact 'intangible' to the naked eye. There are many things left unsaid due to culture being anything but simple, near and organized (Pierce 1964, 101). Shifting toward a social and situated relation to culture thus becomes an alternative to mere representative built environment of current sites of heritage in Turkey.

### **Culture as Social**

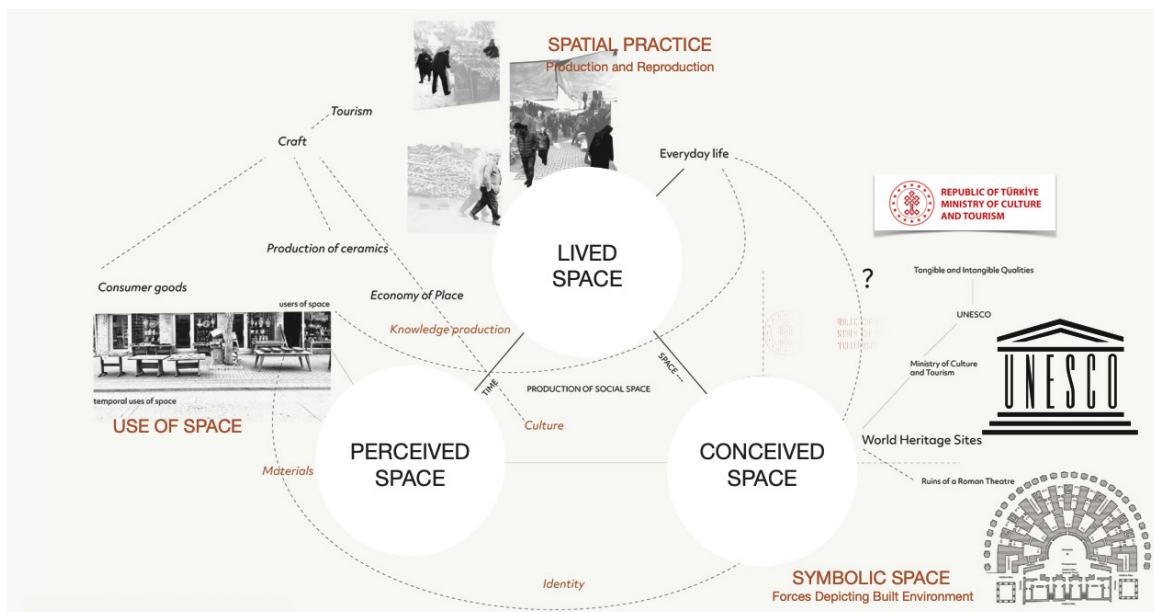
A cultural process can be conceptually defined as a sequence of actions participated in by an ongoing group of persons, who play a variety of roles in that sequence. Cultural processes include economic, religious, political and other kind of processes that are regulated at least in part by culture, here defined anthropologically as a system of categories and rules for manipulations of them that people use to transform their environment, to relate to one another, and to create meaning and beauty, among other things. (Seitel 2001, 4).

The "safeguarding" of traditional cultures, is defined as "creating ethical, collegial" and equitable relationships between members of traditional cultures and outside persons possessing technical and intellectual resources such that the knowledge that informs both the processes of traditional cultures and those of outside persons are shared and advanced (Seitel 2001, 7). Efforts of conservation have included the protection of intangible qualities of traditional craftsmanship of 'Çini-making' inscribed on UNESCO's 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list' (UNESCO World

Heritage 2016b). These are the results of cultural practices reactivated by the unearthed techniques. The discovery of traces reproduces past cultural practices to gain economic, cultural, political and social opportunities in the present. The visible ‘tangible’ assets become perceived in everyday space, luring local craft and tourism activities (Lippard 1997). “Many scholars—and especially geographers—have sought to add to the scope and content of this work by exploring the ‘spatial lives’ of these commodities” (M. Goodman, D. Goodman, and Redclift 2010, 3). Though spaces in the built environment are intersections of a particular location and time represented in the form of a building, monuments and art – they become imbued with value and meaning.

### Culture as Spatial Practice

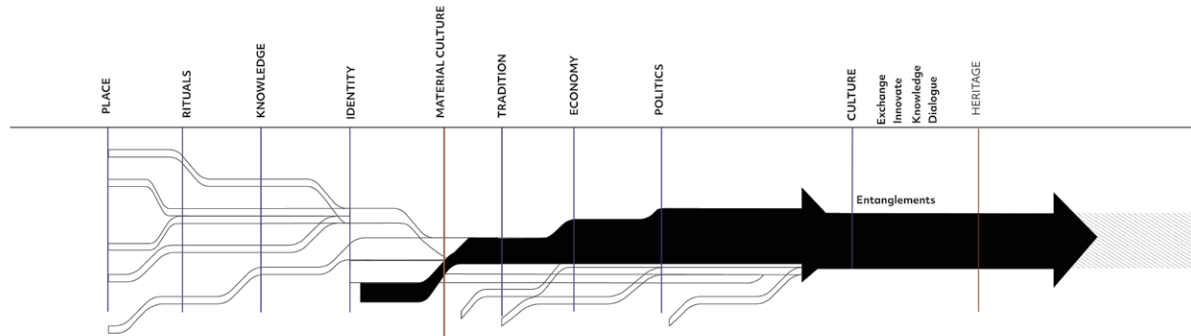
1. Spatial practice, which embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society’s relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of competence and a specific level of performance. (Lefebvre 1991, 33)



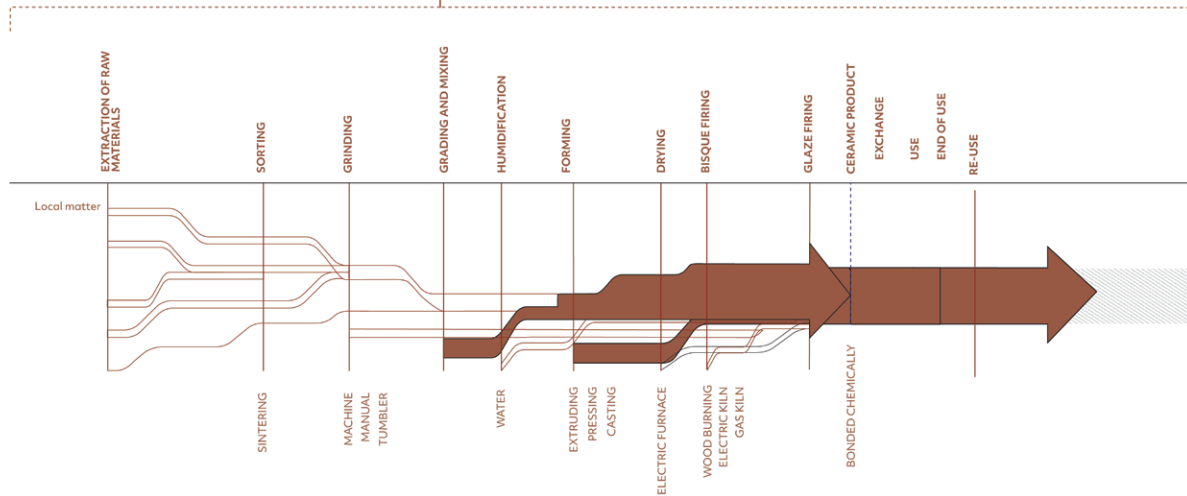
The production of space, applying Henri Lefebvre’s conceptual triad to decode the production of social space (Lefebvre 1991, 33)



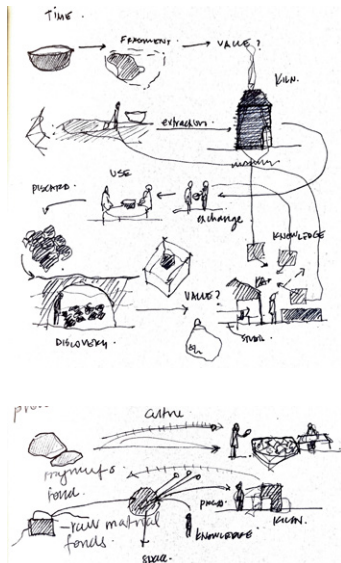
Production of Culture



Production of Ceramics



The cultural production of craft is also the social production of space. Their processes run parallel. I am reactivating the cultural method of cultural production. To exchange knowledge, material acts as a catalyst for new modes of cultural production in everyday life. (Duliere, Haysom and Westscott 2022)



Sketch representations of the relationships between materials and their connection to culture



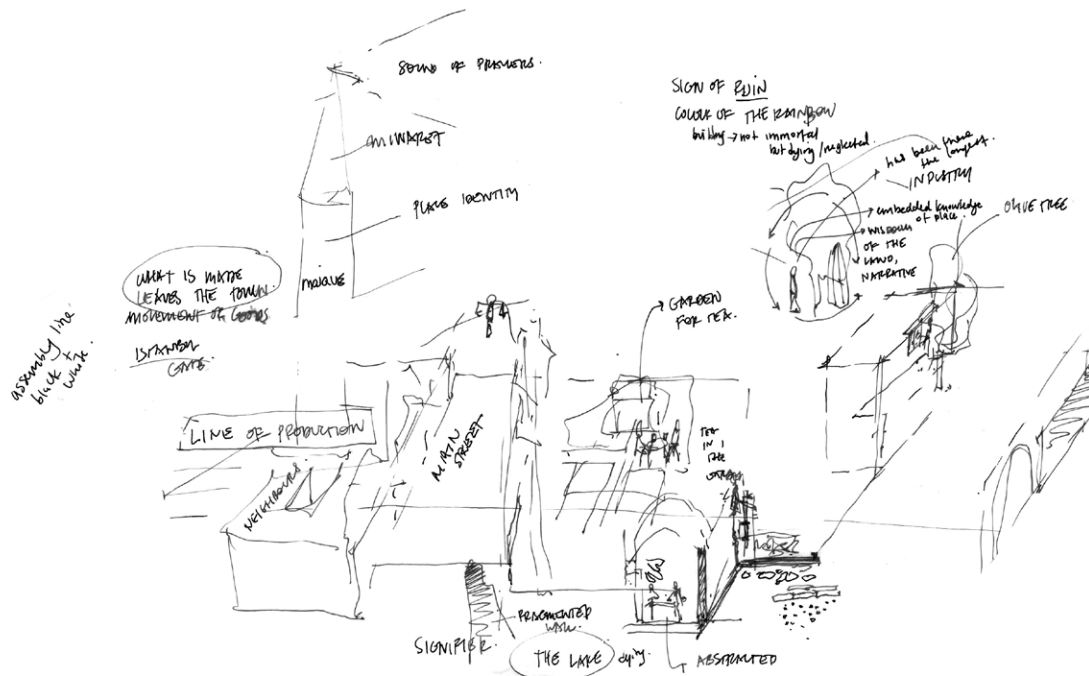
A local ceramicist's reproduction of a bowl made in the same technique as ceramic fragments that belong to the Byzantine Era

The question becomes, how do we define culture and how does it inform the spatial lives through the built environment? Raymond Williams, in *Keywords* defines the word “culture” as “one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language” (Williams 2014, 49). In all its early uses of the word, culture was a noun of the process: the tending of something, basically crops or animals. In the 16th century, the tending of natural growth was extended to a process of human development, and this changed to describe production of goods, the early stages of commodity.

In Iznik, this meant ceramics as the peaks of human development during the peak years of the Ottoman Empire, to be traded and displayed throughout the empire. The production of the town since 1331 as a production of this cultural product acted politically, “it veered between radicalism and reaction and very often, in the confusion of major social change, fused elements of both” as the objects still continue to be produced by local craftspeople (Williams Raymond 2014, 40). The medium of cultural transmission becomes a way of seeing the living practices in their context through production. As for serving the economy of exchange through tourism, the “Iznik tiles” continues to draw people to the town of Iznik and therefore became a way to analyze materiality and processes of making in this thesis. From the past to the present, the everyday inhabitants make material and spatial continuities visible. Thus, as Massey points to problematic identities, “the sense of place – is constructed out of an introverted, inward-looking history based on delving into the past for internalized origins” (Massey 1993, 65). Massey adds, another issue to the conception of place, the question of defining place becomes reduced to creating boundaries and drawing lines around it (Massey 1993, 65).

# Chapter 3: Everyday Actors of Past and Present

Iznik is losing its sense of place. It is difficult for local users to conceive of space today without the dictation of regulations and boundaries. Influenced by the global forces to safeguard 'heritage', a place is identified by historical account by anthropologists and archeologists and followed by the regulations and encroachment of land for practices of preservation. Thus, the notion of heritage acts as production of space dominated by 'absolute space' that is political and economic (Lefebvre 1991). The result is a fragmented social fabric.



Upon arriving into town on a bus, a quick sketch of my initial perceptions as I waited for a taxi captured preconceptions. Later perceiving this sketch, reflections led to a deeper intuitive trust of my initial senses. The initial sketch captures my initial perceptions as 'outsider'.

## Impacts on Lived Space



Without lived space, there is no sense of place. The cyclical rhythms of the town become integral to its identity. As patterns repeat, they begin to inform a localized sense of belonging.

In order to counteract the fragmented space of everyday, interdisciplinary methodology is used to analyze living patterns (Alexander 1977). The patterns reveal the site and region through active participation, giving value to lived space as active ingredient informing the built environment. The 'object' of a ruin thus aids in breaking down its rigid social ties and dissolves its notions of monumentality and state-defined forces to incorporate short-lived everyday interactions by associations to actors (Latour 2005, 66). Through sensorial accounts of lived experience as a cultural process, the observations reveal nuanced information that lie outside the scope of most formal documentation. The true sense of lived space can only be understood by including sensorial information. Daily observances of sketches and of



The tourists that visit Iznik are eager to buy souvenirs that resemble the place, the colourful tiles of Iznik. Here the tourist visits historical sites marked on his pamphlet from the hotel before making his way to a ceramicist studio recommended by his hotel. The tourist is mesmerized by the site of a Roman ruin through the barbed wire fence.

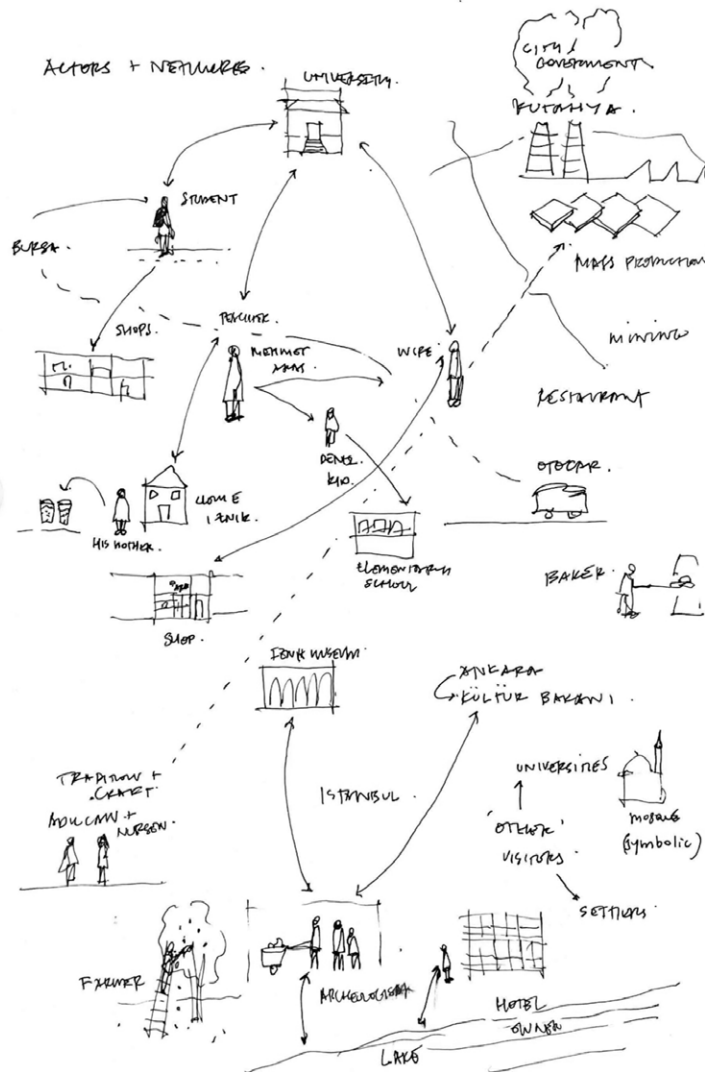


Student and instructor working on traditional motifs of ceramic tiles at Uludağ University as part of their curriculum.

'rhythmanalysis' reveal the non-linear and non-chronological correlations that entangle people and things across time and place (Lefebvre 2004, Latour 2005). This study of place becomes a practical leverage toward understanding of everyday subjective and objective qualities.

### A Sense of Place Through Actors

Latour's account of a more expansive definition of the social aids in including objects as part of the network of 'social'



Understanding the complexity of internationality between actors in the town, this diagrammatic illustration revealed the linking of social, economic, and political forces part of making place.



The map and images represent human activity and physical conditions in the modern-day region of Iznik, Turkey. This representation, inspired by Patrick Geddes's theory and his expression of a valley section (Macdonald 2020, 218) depicts different geological forms that makes up the valley and the roads that connect social and economic means in the region. (Iznik Belediyesi 2022)

forces (Latour 2005). 'Actor Network Theory' is not definitive or particular, but rather names movement, displacement, transformation, a moment in translations (Latour 2005, 65). The 'social' is not any specific program or function but the multiplicity created from the set of relationships in motion. The 'social' space allows the observer to explore new combinations and paths, later forming new network connections (Latour 2005). Within the notion of the everyday, the networks inform alternative ways within existing pathways to link to tradition and history (Lippard 1997; Glassie 1995). Returning to Pierre Nora's "Lieux de Mémoire" applies living rituals with personal memory, known or unknown histories (Nora 1989). Inherent in the local is the concept of place seen from both conceived and lived space (Lefebvre 1991).

### **Entanglements of Lived Space**

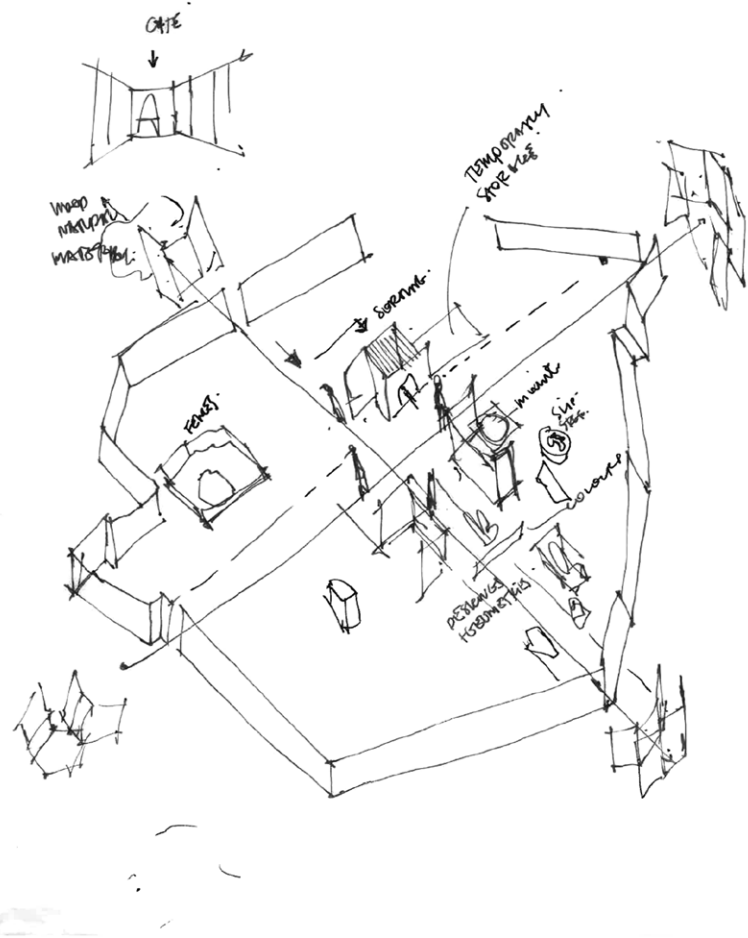
A place owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time there - to the sights, sounds and indeed smells that constitute its specific ambiance. The living cues the sense of knowing its 'past present' and thus gaining active knowledge formed through the material practices, tangibly contingent. This depends on the kinds of activities in which its inhabitants engage. (Ingold 1993, 155)



A street in Iznik is lined with ceramists and makers working at night in their ateliers

Iznik has grown from a village size population of 300 inhabitants to 20,122 inhabitants in the city centre and 19,202 inhabitants in 40 peripheral villages throughout the valley between 1925 to 2020 (Belediyesi 2022). The entanglements and complexity of place is difficult to categorize and describe objectively. As Lefebvre suggests, an analysis concerned with "the whole of practico-social activities entangled in a complex space ensures to an extent the reproduction of relations of production (that is, social relations)" (Lefebvre 1996, 185). Place, filled with multiple layers of history and simultaneous events in an everyday

context, shows ruin and its succession as an opportunity. In the built environment, the ruins as stages and horizons (Potteiger and Purinton 1998, 10); can present a continuity through memory, and space can become intertwined through cross-temporal spatial experiences (Potteiger and Purinton 1998, 7). Accounts of observation can challenge the hierarchy given to historical events versus those critical events in the memory of the inhabitants of Iznik.



A conceptual sketch of the city walls illustrates the city as a series of thresholds that the residents and visitors inhabit and thus inform social spaces. The boundaries and elements influence the interactions between the actors. The four city gates mark the four main arteries of the street establishing the grid of the city.





The highlighted plots of land along the lake mark the commercial zoning for hospitality. Currently most buildings on these lots include hotels and restaurants geared toward hosting tourists. (Izنيك 2022)



As boundaries have become less defined and no longer serve a function, the city has begun to sprawl toward new boundaries - the newly constructed highways connecting the city to the greater roadways. (IzNIK 2022)

## Sensory Recordings

In order to assess the multi-sensory qualities of the urban space as it is experienced, the methodology developed by Lucas and Romice (2010) was utilized to map and record personal sensory accounts through observation made during a visit in January 2022. This method “puts these more open, subjective theories of environmental perception into practice by embedding them in a set of inscriptive practices, allowing them to become part of the design process” (Lucas and Romice 2010, 263).



A photo in the archives show the juxtaposition of a historic building and an act of entertaining in front by people. (Izник Fotoğrafları - Izник Photos 1961)

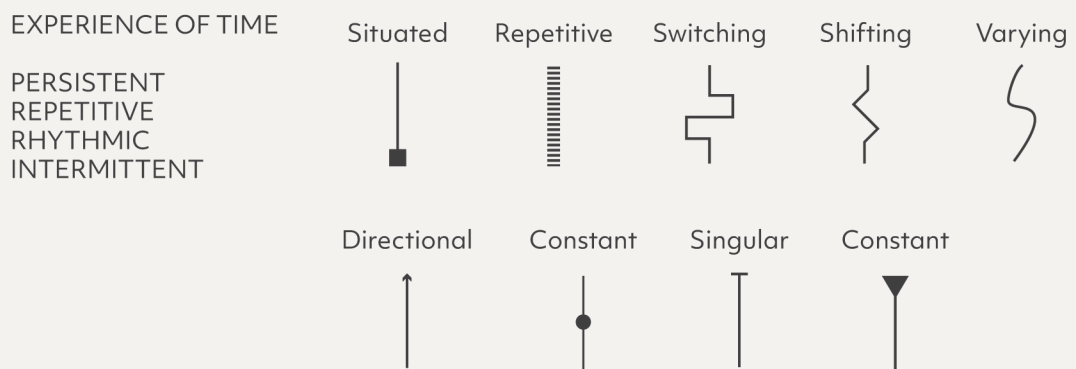
Tim Ingold’s concept of ‘taskspace’ highlights the array of activities or ‘tasks’ which are the constitutive acts of dwelling (Ingold 1993, 157). The meanings of the tasks of different actors both within the town and outside exist in a complex web of interrelated networks. The narratives of characters



The ceramicist’s studio is nestled half a storey below the main street, where noise is dampened. The walls, lined with reproductions of ceramics from different eras, give the space a layered sense of nostalgia. In the studio, the smell of the wood burning fireplace and distant noise from the street create a unique sense of place.

Descriptor Chart for Sensory Notation

| VISUAL               | AURAL                   | TACTILE             | KINETIC            | THERMAL                | CHEMICAL          |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Dark<br>Bright       | High Pitch<br>Low Pitch | Static<br>Mobile    | Strong<br>Light    | Hot<br>Cold            | Weak<br>Intense   |
| Saturated<br>Neutral | Quite<br>Loud           | Rough<br>Smooth     | Free<br>Bound      | Dry<br>Wet             | Stagnant<br>Fresh |
| Perspectival<br>Flat | Clear<br>Reverberant    | Light<br>Heavy      | Indirect<br>Direct | Natural<br>Artificial  | Musky<br>Putrid   |
| Intimate<br>Vast     | Natural<br>Artificial   | Porous<br>Resistant | Level<br>Graded    | Dry<br>Wet             | Floral<br>Fruit   |
| Solid<br>Void        | Vocal<br>Non-vocal      | Hard<br>Soft        | Sustained<br>Quick | Radiant<br>Convective  | Spice<br>Resin    |
| Detailed<br>Blank    | Attack<br>Decay         | Warm<br>Cold        | Crowded<br>Empty   | Constant<br>Responsive | Meaty<br>Oily     |



Developed by Lucas and Romice, "Descriptor chart for Sensory Notation for the description of sensory experience urban space" (2010)

## Ceramic Production Facility

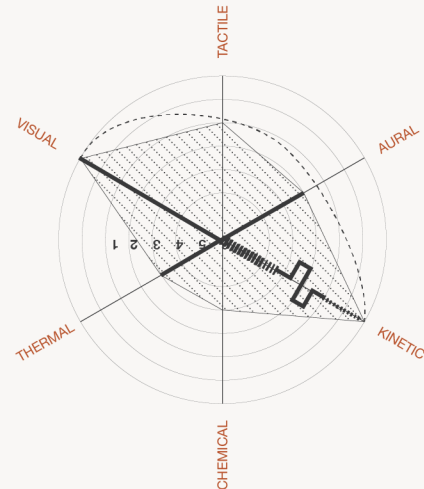
DATE: January 8th  
TIME: 3 pm  
PLACE: Iznik Vakfi

Arriving in the afternoon during work hours it was visible to see everyone in a routine of their workday. The areas of machines were minimally occupied, yet they had a visible pattern. They are used periodically by skilled workers, typically men in trades attire. The busy areas were the painting room, this is where most time is spent and was all female laborers.

The space is separated with bright light. There are individual work station and a communal table at the centre to bring together a large tableau of tile work.



**VISUAL** - detailed  
**AURAL** - high pitch, vocal, attack  
**TACTILE** - Porous  
**KINETIC** - level, sustained  
**THERMAL** - natural, cold, wet, constant



Sensory diagram through observances of daily activities using the template developed by Lucas and Romice (2010).

introduced in this thesis – the ceramicist, the archeologist and the tourist – provide a sense of their interconnections and the influences upon one another, marked by direct and indirect forces acting upon them.

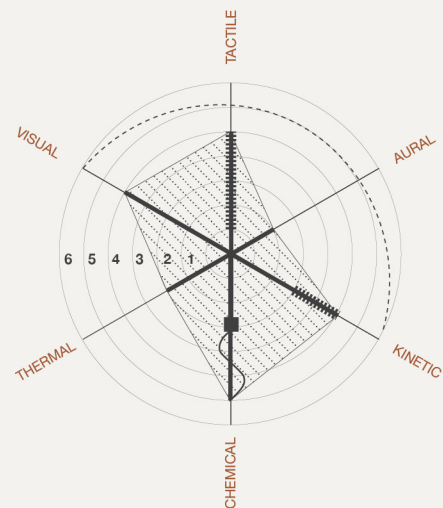
Social spaces are not easy to define in the town. However, in my interactions, observations marked spatial practice of lived experience as – the home, a place of work, the kitchen at work, the school, the café – these were where people regularly gathered. Such spaces marked the temporality of

## Wednesday Farmers Market

DATE: December 18th, 2021  
TIME: 1 PM  
PLACE: Iznik Kapali Pazar Yeri

A boy with his sign is selling fresh farm eggs. The eggs vary in size and colour. The young boy explains they are fresh from his village in Elmali. Directly across, two women sell headscarves of many patterns hanging from their stand. They stay warm by drinking tea from a make-shift wood burning stove by their feet. The smoke spreads across creating a haze in with the afternoon sun. The goods are vibrant in colours, they are mostly stacked in an organized manner. Rows of vendors mostly sell vegetables, vegetables typical for winter. Meanwhile at the end there is some fruits and it is fragrant. The abundance for the market is mesmerizing. Shoppers know one another, there is a constant sound of chatter, and periodical sound of vendors yelling out.

**VISUAL** - vast, intimate  
**AURAL** - high pitch, vocal  
**TACTILE** - hard, porous  
**KINETIC** - crowded, bound  
**THERMAL** - convective, responsive  
**CHEMICAL** - Intense, fruit, spice, fresh



Sensory recording of a day spent at the weekly farmers market within the town walls where locals and people from nearby towns gather and participate in exchange of goods. Within early hours of the morning, the streets transformed and the buildings expanded with temporary structures. Tables from vendors trucks were quickly assembled and crates became chairs.

the urban fabric, where in-between spaces came about as social spaces.

As this chapter has explained, sensory information is necessary to give meaning to layers of information about the place and its people's inhabitation across time. This way of understanding informs the methodology for studying the living experience of Iznik.



On most mornings, Adilcan, the local ceramicist, starts the day at the cafe, gossiping about what is happening in the town over tea; the local vendor sells fresh fruit picked this morning in his nearby village “Elmali”. Throughout most of the day, the ceramicist works with his wife. He has regular visits by peers and tourists.

## Chapter 4: Material Culture of the Ruin Through Time

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the ontology of space, which allows a non-linear perception of spaces both in the past and present. The ruins of a Roman Theatre in Iznik as a spatial object reveals a past social space unfolded through traces of materials influenced by events across time. In this context, “architectural production and the presentation of objects, things, testimonies, and forms exist in multiple relations to both the event and the space in which it occurred or is constructed” (Tan 2015, 205).

Inquiring about the ‘surfaces’ of the ruin situated in lived space reveals ‘spatial stories’ – a contextualized and layered recording of site information (Certeau 2001). This transversal method aims to give things an active rather



In January 2022 the archeologists explained their recent task of removing a brick wall that dated from the Byzantine Empire. The decision to remove the bricks was approved by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The archeologists brought me to the removed materials, sorted behind the ruins of the theatre. Adjacent to the bricks I observed a pile of ceramic fragments. They were not mentioned, but based on similar ceramics in the region they date to the 11th/12th century, likely tied to use of the ruins of the churches found on site.



than passive presence in (re)imagining social space in contemporary sense of architectural form as an assemblage of the processes of production (Tan 2015, 200).

## Ruins as Participants in the Urban Fabric

Objects show how history is instead a rather loosely woven net that sometimes retains – but often is unable to ‘catch’ concepts, people, events, and explanations. Material artifacts with their multifarious meanings, their innate opaqueness and their difficult heuristic nature reminds us that history is always producing but has still a great deal more to do before covering all the corners of human experience. (Riello 2009, 43)

Tracing the past through material culture allows for a deep understanding of entanglements of people and materials that have shaped the current built environment. The Roman Theatre in Iznik was re-utilized for its structure and material, and continues in the present day to be occupied by practices of archeology and preservation.

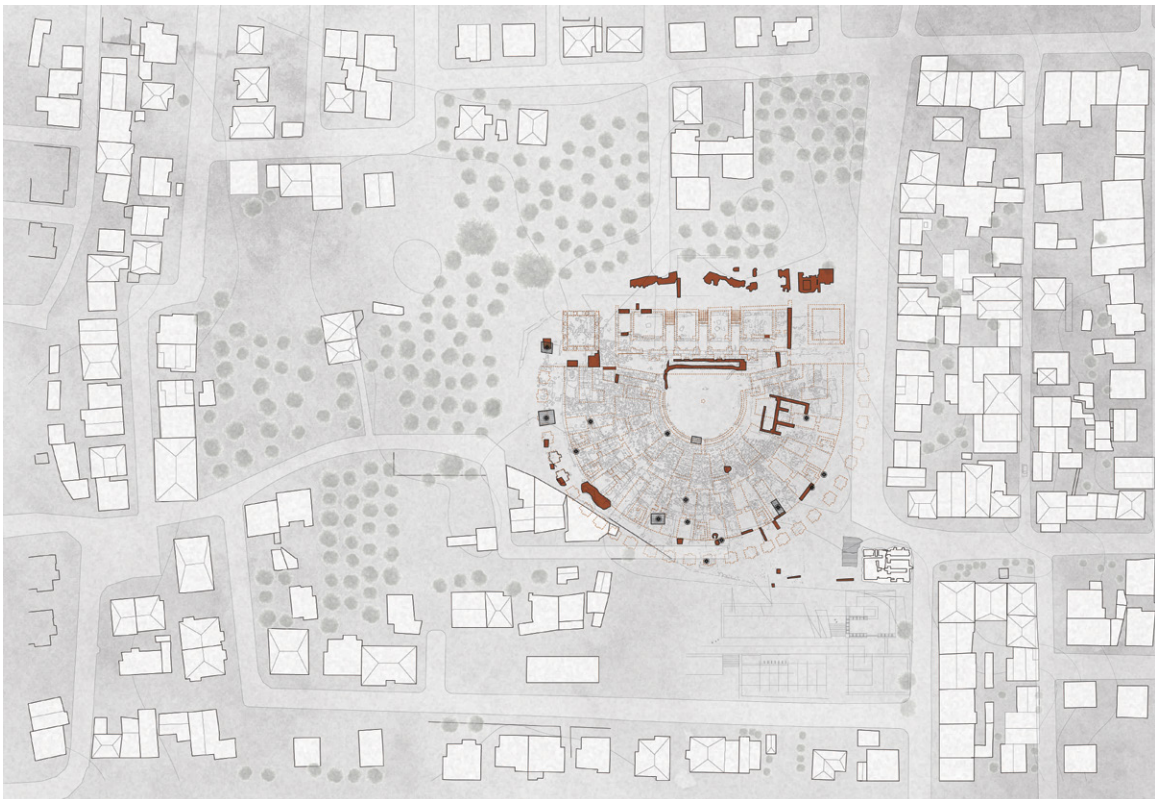
The emerging material culture field recognizes such a reconstituted relationship between the multiplicity of objective and subjective qualities and will help supplement the site analysis.



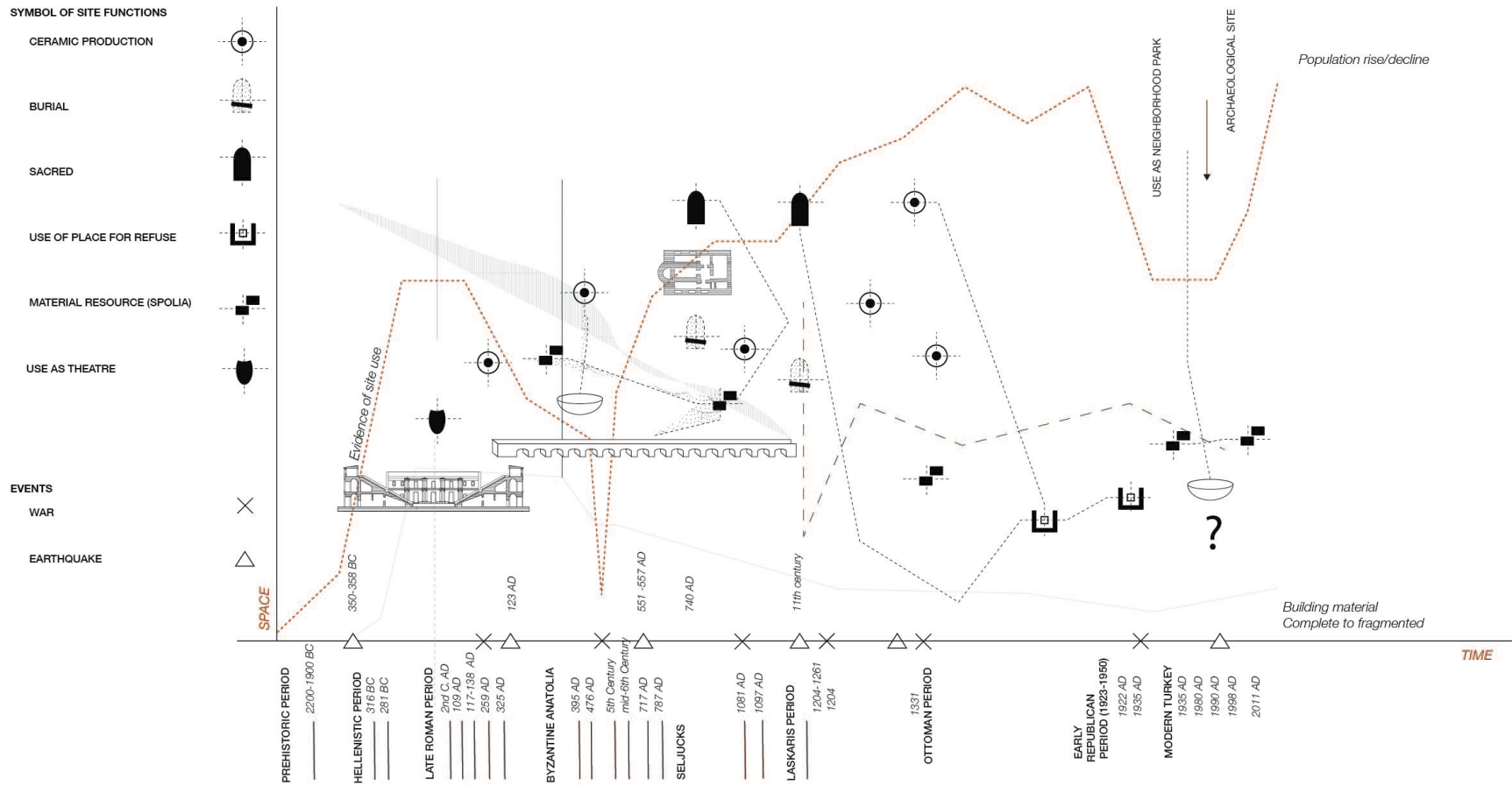
The site Roman Theatre in Iznik is situated within the historic city walls. The site visible from the main avenue becomes a point of intrigue for visitors and is an active part of the urban fabric.

## A Situated Analysis of Space and Time

Objects, no matter how valuable they might be, tend to flow quickly into oblivion (Latour 2005, 80). This chapter explains tradition as rooted/situated (Ingold 2005), resuming material objects as matter reassembled by human and non-human actors to form a collective (Latour 2006, 247). Thus, “their mode of actions is no longer visibly connected to the social ties,” making objects only maintain their connection in the moments that are ‘lived experience’ (Lefebvre 1991, Latour 2005). By making objects talk in their surroundings through the situated analysis of material objects in Iznik, the objects regain agency as mediators in social space. Fragments of objects studied through their association with social ties render common a cultural object. As Underwood describes in the reuses of ancient Roman cities, “The city was a



The site of the ruins, situated amongst residential streets, is currently bound by a fence, which contains fragments from different eras.



The Roman Theatre in Iznik had different uses throughout its history. The relationships of the different uses were non-linear, as spaces and materials were re-located. This illustration shows the non-linear nature of place and things in relation to time and events.

dynamically changing space, where space and buildings were used and reused as citizens required” (Underwood 2019, 196). Can we as designers help them regain value for re-use?

This chapter examines material culture as active investigation rather than passive, observing the effects and events of both things and theories. Hodder took this through a contextual focus, working from the ‘present past’ (Hodder 2012). Hicks balances the objective and the subjectivist approach through a shift in thinking about objects from categorical thinking to relational thinking (Hicks 2010, 62). From Hicks’ point, material culture identifies my initial discomfort with spaces seen as static, normative and prescribed. Therefore, to aid in asking better questions of the space, objects are mapped ontologically as dynamic and non-linear. The dynamic mapping of socio-cultural layers left on the site by different uses over time helps to understand the cultural meanings embedded in the site beyond what can be read in the tangible fragments.



The labourer works in a quarry nearby. He uses power tools to extract what is left of the ancient traces and of the granite. According to the archeologists, the quarry is believed to be where Romans also extracted granite to build the Roman theatres, aqueducts, and bridges in Iznik.

Byzantine Brick Walls  
Evidence of Inhabitations on Site of the Roman Ruins



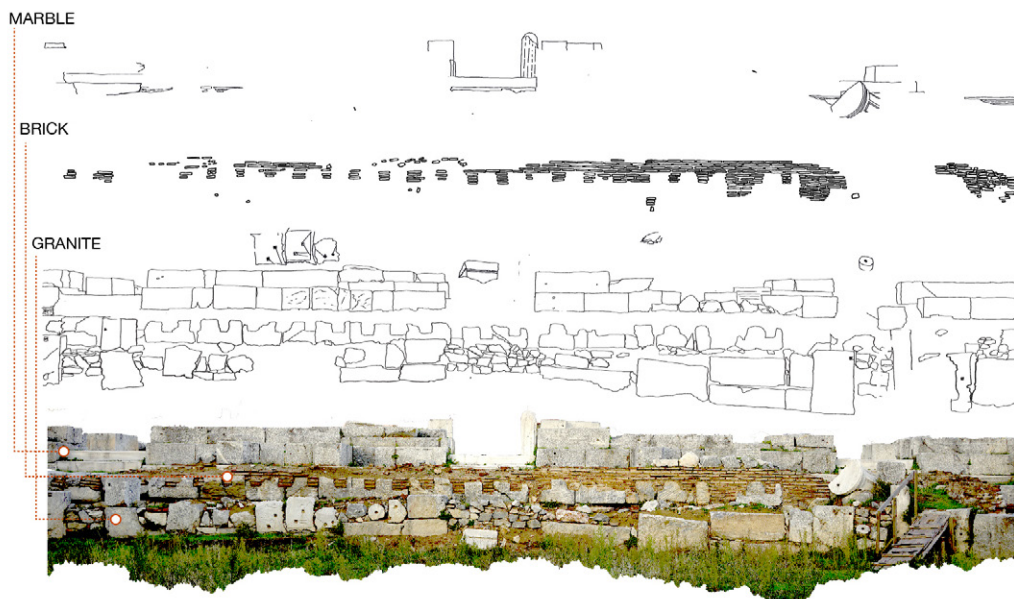
During a visit to the archeological site of the Roman Theatre in Iznik, guided by the archeologist, I was shown all the remaining brick walls discovered surrounding excavations indicating the continuity of site. It is believed that the Theatre gained a new architectural identity during the Byzantine time.

## The Roman Theatre



The vomitorium at the ruins of the Roman Theatre in Iznik

Based on evidence found during excavations, the Roman Empire in Iznik served both a political and social role in the everyday-life. The Roman Theater was built from local granite a few kilometres outside the historic town walls of Iznik starting in 2nd century BC. In the quarry the markings from tools used can still be seen today. The theater must have been used as a quarry for the first time after the Gothic invasion of 258 AD, with the theatrical activities in the city coming to an end due to the famine and economic crisis (Nihal 2022). In this period, the city, was defined as “Ghost City” (Nihal 2022). Hundreds of cut stones belonging to the theater were used in the foundations of many monumental buildings built in Nicaea after the 7th century AD, especially in the foundations of Hagia Sophia, Koimesis church, Mahmut Çelebi mosque, Yakup Çelebi lodge, and Nilüfer Hatun Medresse (Nihal 2022).



The spoliated section of the Roman Theatre was recently unearthed. A representation of the added material and reconfiguration of materials shows re-inhabitation of the space by subsequent societies.

## The Church

Aside from the ruins of the theatre, the fact that many late-period closure walls were added to the theater give the impression that they were built to make it difficult to enter and exit the orchestra (Nihal 2022). This shows that a different architectural identity was attempted, with new additions to the original architecture. Considering the Virgin Mary and

### Ruins of a Roman Theatre

DATE: December 12th, 2021

TIME: 9:30 AM

PLACE: Archeological Site of a Ruin

The scale of the site and the frost on the wood platform that I navigate through bring attention to the tactile qualities. The ruins are a vast space, scale, and materials transported to a different time. The archaeologist guides me with reasonable caution as she notes the dangers of moving through some unstable structures. I watch every step as the surfaces are slippery from the morning frost. She point out the Roman Methods of joining stones. Speaking of the act of making place contrasts against the emptiness of the site.



**VISUAL** - flat, vast, detailed

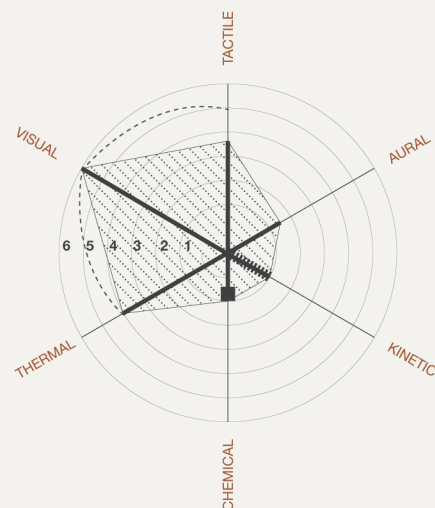
**AURAL** - reverberant, decay

**TACTILE** - hard, cold, static

**KINETIC** - level, sustained

**THERMAL** - natural, responsive

**CHEMICAL** - fresh, musky



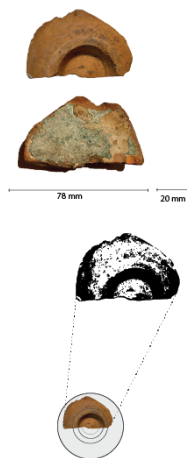
Sensory recording of visiting the archeological site, using a method developed by Lucas and Romice (2018). “What if surfaces are the real sites for the generation of meaning? Then by mining them, excavating them, or clearing them away, we might in fact, be destroying precisely what we seek to find, and that lies under our very noses, convinced as we are that the truth can never be on the surface but somewhere deeper down” (Ingold 2018, 137).



A photo from the archeological site reveals how excavations reveal the Roman layer in juxtaposition with the surrounding residential streets – marked by a boundary edge between the location of 'heritage' and the residential street.



The Church on the corner is believed to be for burial. The Church is believed to be built here because many bodies were buried within the cavities of the Roman Theatre. The building materials of the church are believed to be re-used bricks and rubble spoliated from the Roman Theatre.



Archeologists unearth fragments on site dating back to the late Byzantine Era. The fragments are believed to belong to rituals held on top of the Roman Theatre.

Jesus fresco found by archeologists in the orchestra, it strengthens the theory that the ruins were appropriated for religious use (Nihal 2022).

### The Kilns

In the Roman Theatre, several kilns were uncovered during excavations. They hold ceramic fragments from





Archeologists unearth a ceramic kiln along the wall of the Roman Theatre in Iznik (Anadolu Agency 2021)

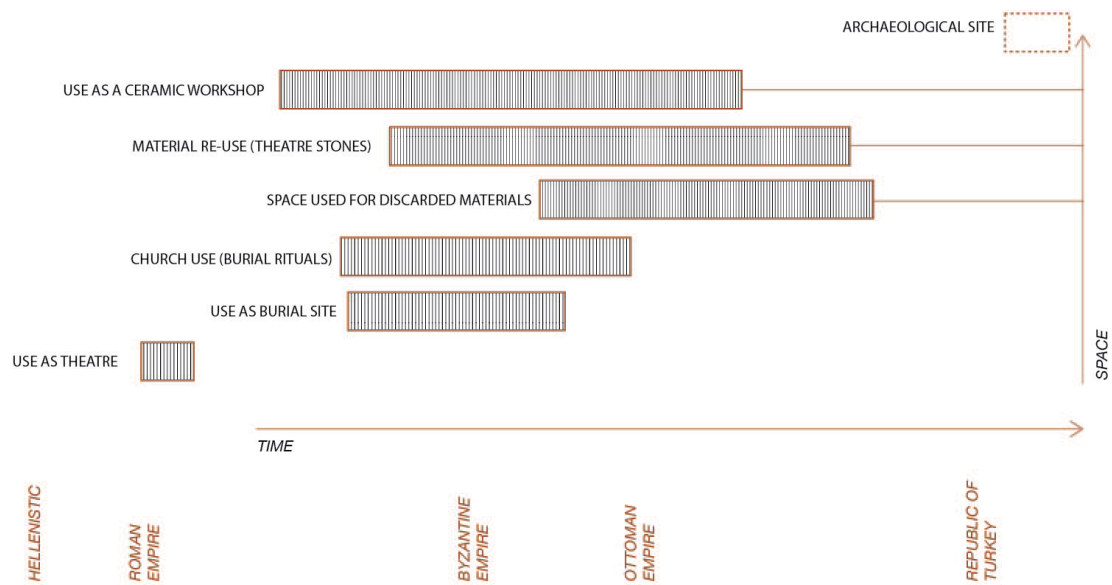
different periods. Visible from walking around the theatre, there are several kilns covered by a canopy. They are believed to have been used during the Ottoman Empire to produce ceramic tiles and utilitarian pieces for the empire (Nihal 2022). Ceramic fragments make it possible to see how earlier settlements repurposed a place for productive and civic purposes. Because of the objects' late discovery, the fragments can now be linked to current historical knowledge and deepen the analysis by correlating related visual information. From the 9th to 12th century, the Near East used similar styles, pigments and colours, assisting in making connections to material culture that remains alive in the region. The complexity between the object and subject revealed in qualitative analysis suggests a broader shared context between people and culture.

### **The Archeological Site**

As an archeological site, the ruin is perceived as frozen in time, as a Theatre rather than a layered place of multiple uses over time. In the current archeological practices of removing fragments from the site, there is a clear distinction between materials studied, archived, and discarded in an

attempt to isolate a single moment in time. The archeologists, to understand the theatre, strip away rubble from multiple civilizations that later occupied the site.

Ruins possess an agency through their atmospheric qualities. Unlike Gobel's romanticizing of ruins, the thesis creates a counter argument. As seen in the methods of reading the site, the ruins are appreciated as productive and performative space. The design methods stem from this understanding of place in order to return agency back to the ruin and activate it as a place for future inhabitation and consequent cultural modes of production (Corner 2014, 9).

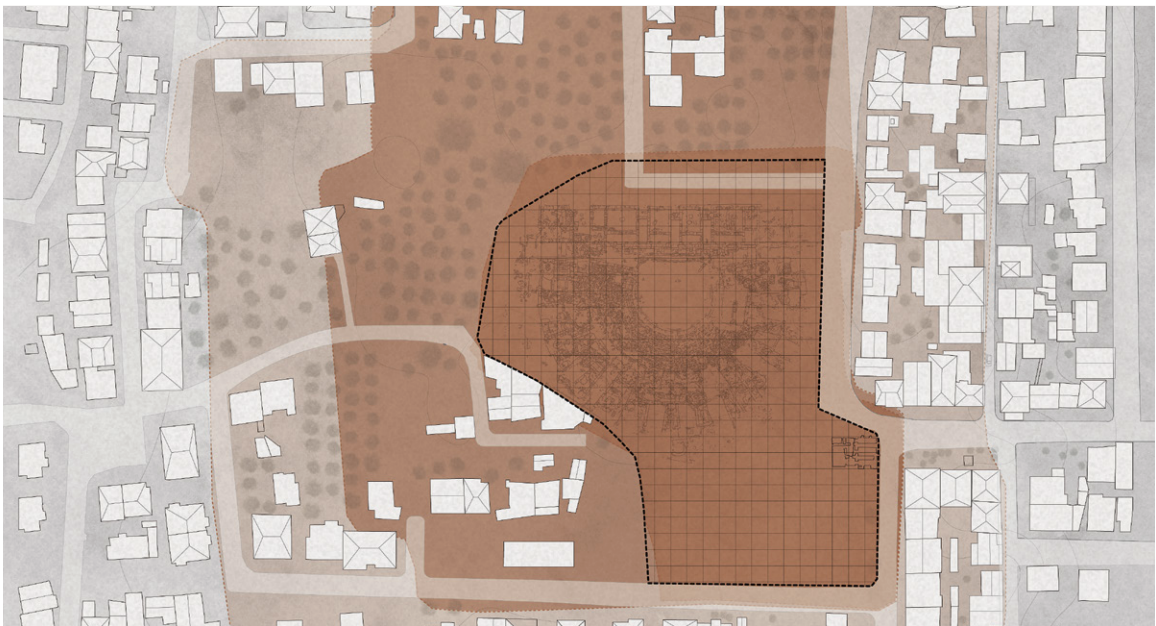


The site served many events and societies. The timeline of the site begins for archeologists from its time as a Roman Theatre, thus the Roman Time becomes the baseline for its excavation. (Nihal 2022)

## Chapter 5: Shaping Ruins as Active Participants through Design

By taking 'production' in its widest sense (the production of oeuvres and of social relations) there has been in history the production of cities as there has been production of knowledge, culture, works of art and civilization, and there has been of course, production of material goods and practico-material objects. These modalities of production cannot be disjointed unless one has the right to confuse them by reducing differences. The city was and remains object, but not in the way of particular, pliable and instrumental object. (Lefebvre 1996, 102)

The interdisciplinary methodology deployed in this thesis aims to activate the site through spatial stories embedded in the archeological site. The site, currently bound for 'cultural heritage' through observation of its rhythms and patterns, can also become productive social spaces for its participants (Lefebvre 1991; Lefebvre 2004; Alexander 1977). Participants at the archeological site in Iznik are informed by the interdisciplinary analysis of the human and

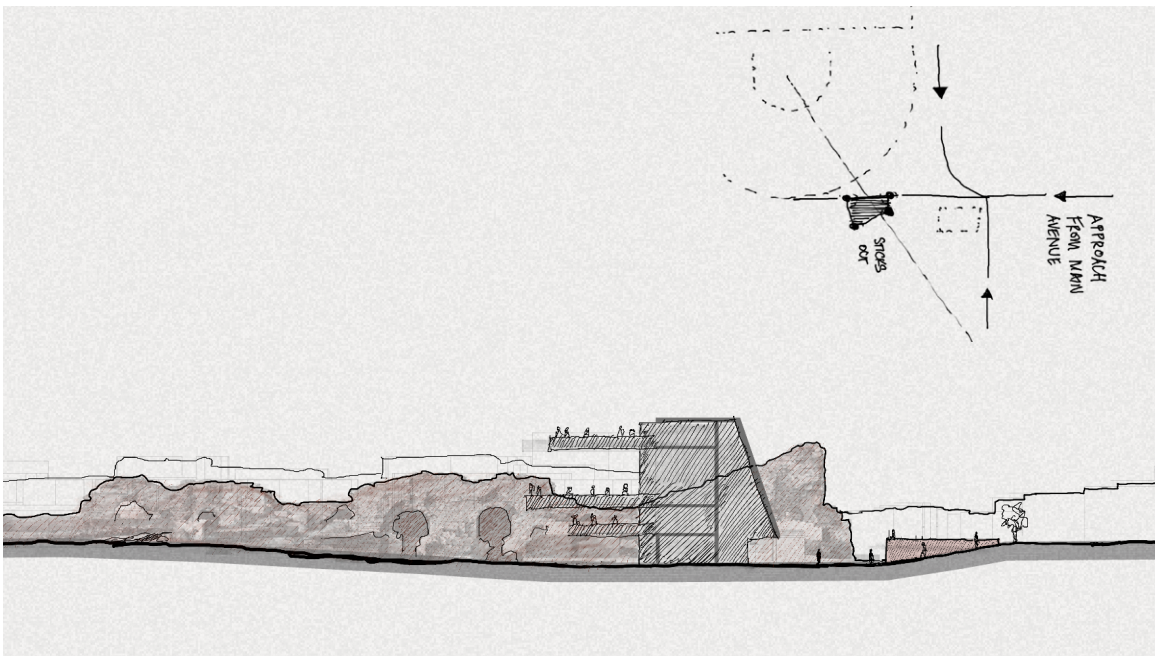


During a visit to the archeological site of the Roman Theatre in Iznik, guided by the archeologist, I was shown the remaining brick walls discovered surrounding excavations, indicating the continuous of functionality of site by subsequent societies through materials or structural affordance.

non-human actors involved. The actors inform space of 'cultural heritage' for use value in both global and national perspective. "Can we learn from the tradition of building and making and apply it in a new way?" (Fernandez 2005, 34). In order to anchor knowledge and dialogue, the site is reinhabited through the objects discarded and new spaces are created within its existing patterns. Together, the elements of walls and paths inform a built environment that interrogates the site between past things and everyday life. The temporality of human and non-human agents engages actively between objects in space and social practices embedded in their culture (Latour 2005).

### **Spaces of Perceptions: The Tower**

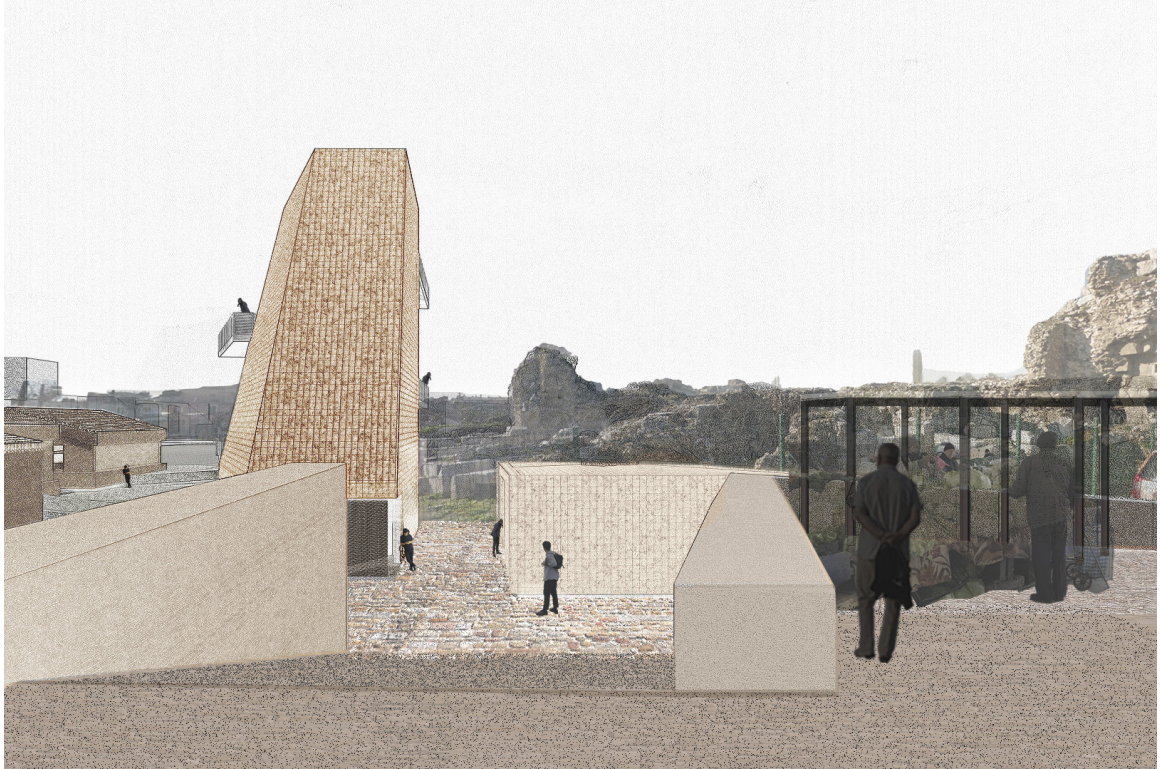
The first moment of intervention is perceived from the main intersecting street, the north-south axis marked by the city gates and the Roman grid. The tower is higher than the



The Tower entrance is below the street level today. The entry is two metres below the baseline of Roman ruins. Its towering height above the ruins visually connects the main avenue to the site by drawing public interest.



The tower corresponds to the height of the ruins. It is the highest point to be perceived on site.



The tower invites the visitor's curiosity by acting as a spatial marker. It achieves this through its convex form ornamented with handmade tiles that play with the sun's changing presence.



The views of the town, the valley, and the new social spaces offer new perceptions from the top of the tower. Such new perceptions allow changing uses of space to be visible throughout time and space. For example, speculating based on observations, the visitor perceives a winter's day - a haze of smoke from the chimneys and the sound of morning prayer fills the atmosphere.

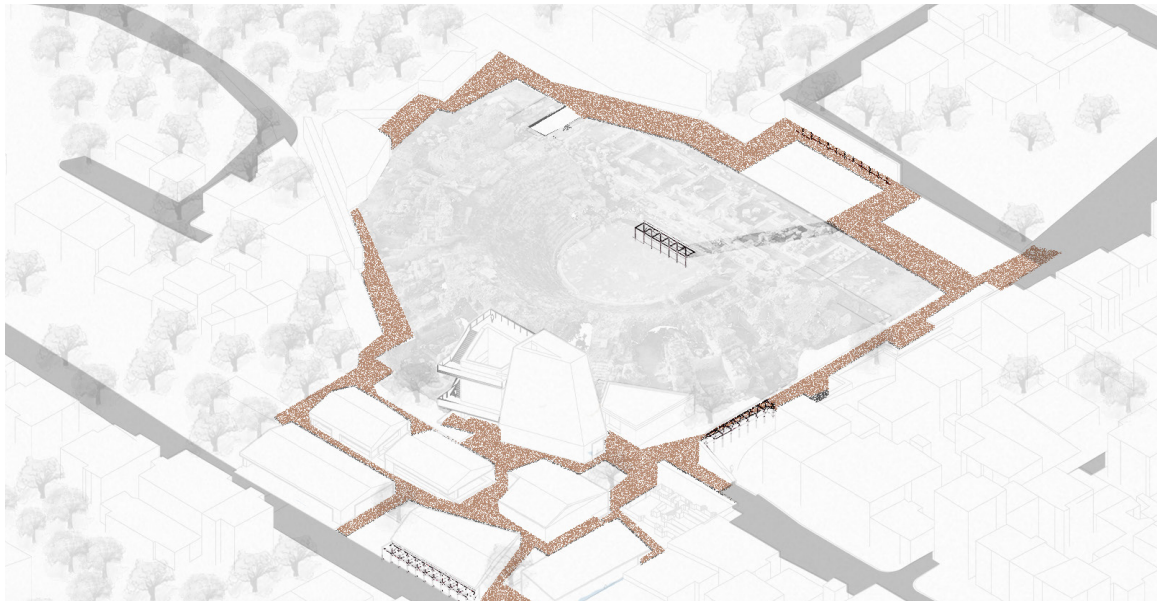
ruins of the theatre, is taller than the surrounding areas, and becomes easy to mark in the landscape.

Viewed from the street, the tower is visible at the centre, characterized by a handmade glistening tile façade with a texture reflecting the morning sun. It invites the visitor and becomes a new spatial marker for the town inhabitants, a way-finding tool. The tower on-site allows the visitor to see the town from within the ruins and the activities taking place in the town.

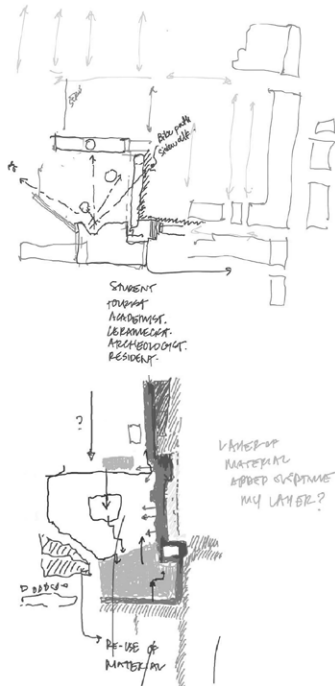
### **Spaces of Connection: The Paths and Walls**

If no trace is produced, they offer no information to the observer and will have no visible effect on other agents. They remain silent and are no longer actors: they remain literally unaccountable (Latour 2005, 79).

Walls and paths construct the design as elemental components. By separating the uses of space into parts, the spaces invite occupation of locals, visitors, and the objects, just as the ruins have done for subsequent societies



The continuity of site in modern day is anchored by the use of discarded ceramic fragments in the form of bricks and broken vessels from the late Byzantine Era to pave public paths. The paths highlighted illustrate the reused fragments and reconnect current day streets to the archeological site.



Strategies for integrating ruins back into the urban fabric.

(Deplazes and Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zurich Departement Architektur 2018, 294).

Paths created by the reuse of discarded brick fragments from the archeological site lead to activities of production. This experience invites new agency from discarded materials. The paths are the in-between spaces that link everything. The site absorbs a new identity by integrating ruins as part of the urban fabric and accepting new functions.

Hertzberger speaks to architects' preconceived need to produce complete buildings. He argues for cultural value through space that is designed to allow transformation and continuity. "We should regard sustainability in a cultural sense as a kind of structure that enables change and one of whose essential components is, in fact change" (Hertzberger 2015, 226). Taking Hertzberger's point, the site strategy considers future trajectories of movement to re-connect the site to the existing urban fabric.



The walls between the residential street and ruins invites new forms of inhabitation across time.



The new mass foundation walls with a thickness of eight hundred millimetres are made of stabilized rammed earth. This allows them to be inhabited and transformed by the affordance of its thickness. The foundations walls throughout the site at times, reach seat height, especially, between different buildings. Between buildings there are openings that allow views between spaces. The space when it is inhabited creates a blurred space between inside and outside and across vary functions. The walls are utilized as a tool to activate ‘the social’ and inform an architecture that bridges together the social and material production of space. The experience of material and activities expands the visitors’ preconceived notions of cultural heritage sites.

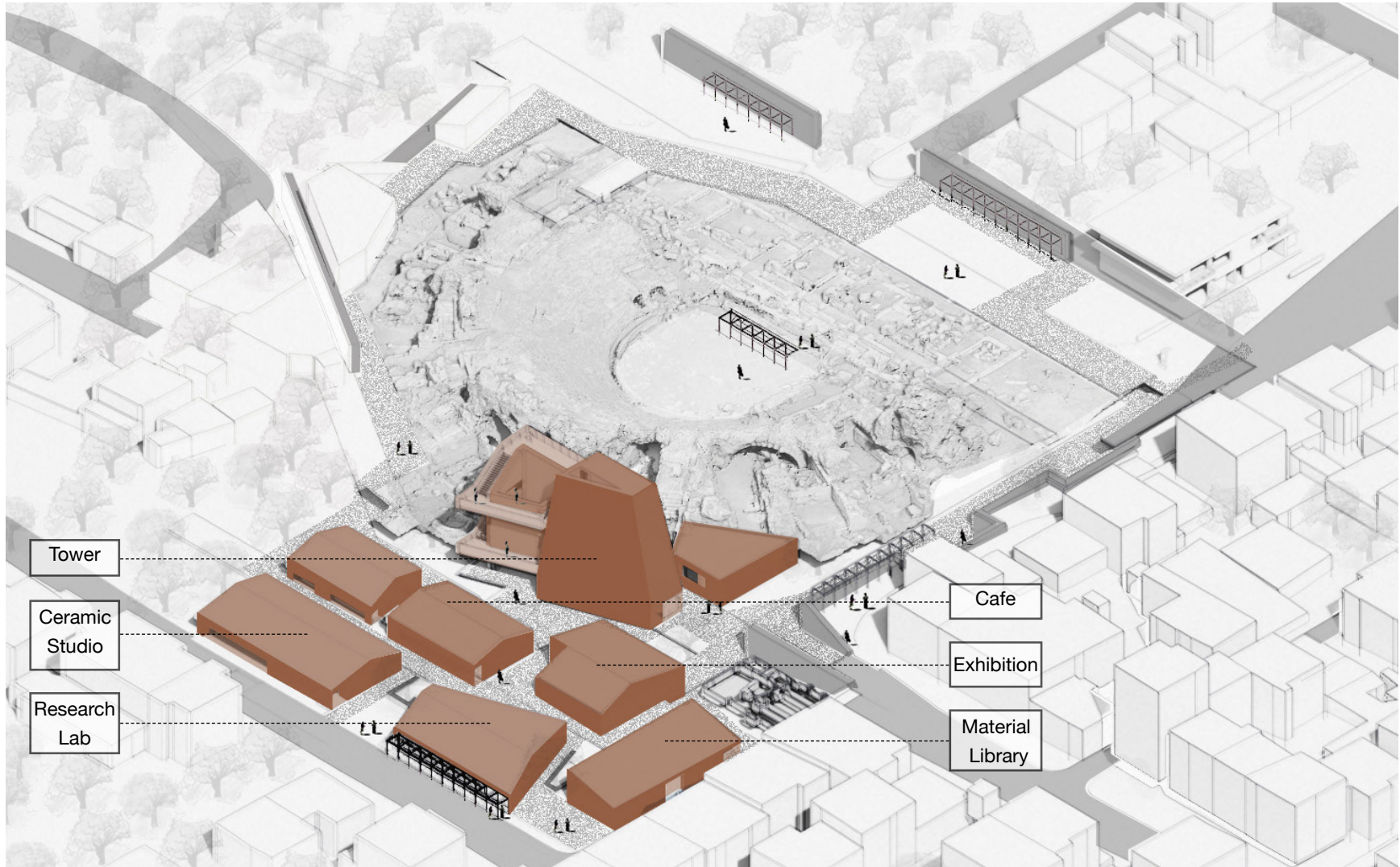


Tile produced by hand at NSCAD University's using local clay and techniques from Iznik. These tile became an integral part of informing the spatial and social qualities of production and as an object inhabiting space.

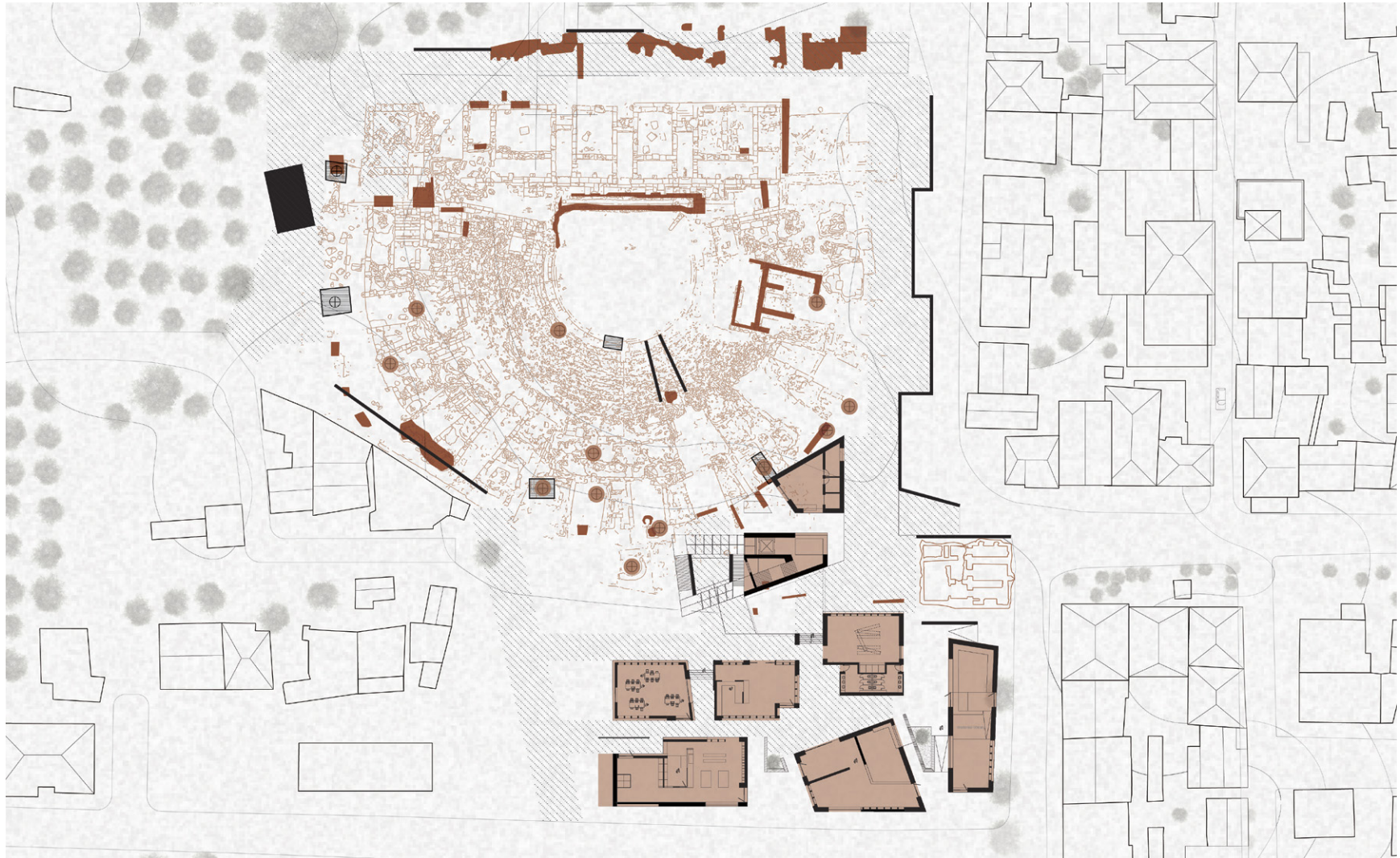
This walls are meant to imply a sense of permanence and temporality and speak to a way of practicing architecture aimed towards the community, thinking of future maintenance and the transformation of space toward new identities (Billington 1983, 269). Hertzberger describes this when he says, “Architecture is not a stumbling block, but the engine of a dynamic process” (Hertzberger 2015, 224).

### **Spaces of Production**

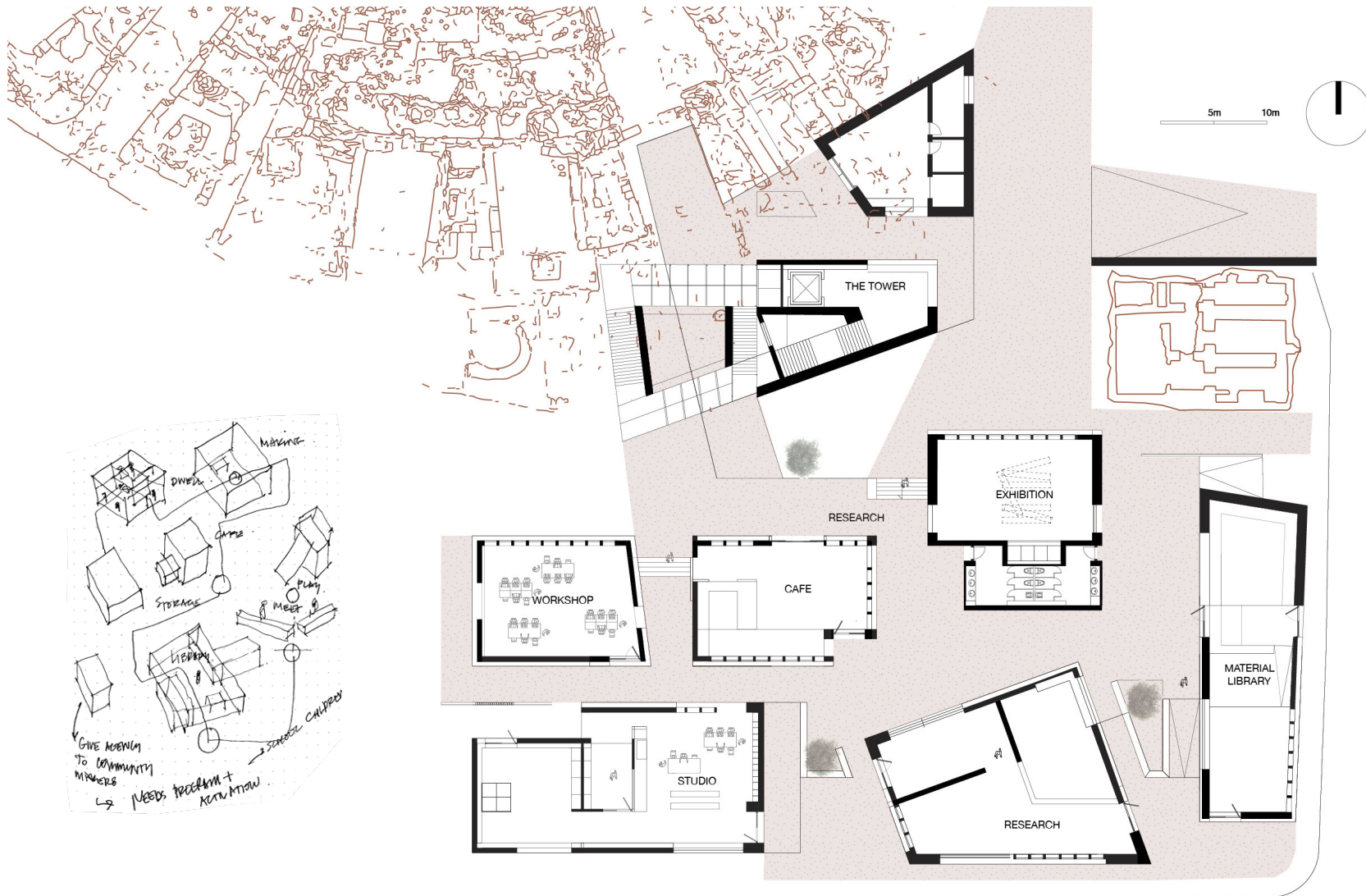
To meet new challenges of a loss in belonging architecture must engage with the past as situated and transitory. In the design, spaces of cultural production are created by vary programs dispersed amongst in-between spaces. This allow entanglements to occur between spaces over time. New anticipated patterns of engagement between actors then can result in spaces conceived by the local users. Such space as a bonding agent not only produce dwelling but articulate a sense of commonality in-between.



The space between the buildings creates a threshold space for circulation, while the foundation of the walls allows opportunities for adaptation and creates space to dwell in-between.



The site strategy situates the buildings by redefining boundaries and creating programmatic elements in response to the urban and social fabric. Elements are the artifacts identified with civilization after the Roman Era.



The design plan illustrates the new spatial functions of the site. The highlighted paths through their relationship with buildings inform new spaces for participants to inhabit.

## The Studio and Workshop

The studio represents the dynamic space that is transformed, adapted by the ceramicist. The space is a tertiary space: as private, public and semi-public. The tile screens allow for shade and privacy while giving visitors a chance to feel the tiles. This can be achieved by making enclosures that accommodate varying activities and can transform by means of its structure and inhabitable walls. In the studio the entrances from the street are near entrances to the research lab, allowing the users to exchange information and dialogue. Their activities can spill out into nearby spaces allowing objects to become visible and invite curiosity.



Rendering of the ceramic studio shows the ceramicist working with fragments to learn for her current practice. Meanwhile, the professor near the thick wall of shelving thinks about the reorganization of things for the students working today with the researchers next door.

## The Material Library

In the material library, both the archeologists and the ceramicist are able to both use this space for storage. The storage cabinets are categorically kept and access to the storage spaces can be regulated by the user. The building is open to the public, allowing movement through and discovery of activities taking place. If new clay deposits are explored in the region, the ceramicist in the community can inquire and see the outcomes. This allows for expanding of knowledge in the craft community. In order to understand materials in their essence, the material library functions to make the elements visible, while flowing through the space creates a new imagined sense of exhibiting objects. This encourages engagement with new material use and encourage production to not fall into use of available material economy (Fernandez 2005, 35). Thus allowing makers of space to regain agency over “the material flows of their time”, therefore materials made visible can inspire new uses and intersection between past and future knowledge (Fernandez 2005, 35).



Centraal Beheer office building, Apeldoorn (Hertzberger 2015, 142)

## The Cafe

Gathering in cafes is a part of the Turkish culture. Tea is served throughout the day, it expands the social life of the site to the rest of the community. This social space situated across the tower is an open space, a shared cafe that allows the visitors to stay on the site and observe the activities and conversations taking place throughout the day. The cafe is a space that is also used to hold meetings, and for neighbours to gather. The paths that cross allow views from the cafe to inform the activities of the site while engaging with the different actors.



The participants of the site use the space differently while the organization and the buildings' positive spaces allow for dialogue in between. By creating enclosed spaces outside they become interstitial spaces.

## The Exhibition

The exhibition space is for the community to use. The space undulates past the other buildings, creating a relationship with the tower and ruins of the church. The space invites use by archeologists working in the material library and research space. Over time, the open space allows for materials to be displayed together, curated through dialogues between the participants of the site. Herman Hertzberger refers to this temporality of space as polyvalence (2015). "Generally, polyvalence stands for a quality that offers a helping hand and even challenges people to make their surroundings a place to feel at home in, each in their own way" (2015, 224). The space for exhibition can change and take on new functions as needs change. The hope of creating a space in-between material and social space is to engage materials found on site to be displayed alongside new materials tested in the spaces of production.



The space between the buildings creates a threshold space for circulation, while the foundation of the walls allows opportunities for adaptation and creates space to dwell in-between.



## The Research Lab

The research lab is situated between the material library and the studio. From within the space, the ruins and paths are visible. The interior activities happening on the site and the materials passing through are connected through their analysis afforded by the research lab. The enclosed space houses a small laboratory to run tests on fragments collected from sites. The research space is adjacent to two courtyard spaces to allow students to work outside and to have conversations with the visitors and share on-going studies of the site and region.

## Social Spaces In-Between

Building transcends physical and functional requirements by fusing with a place, by gathering the meaning of a situation. Architecture does not so much intrude on a landscape as it serves to explain it. Illumination of a site is not a simplistic replication of its 'context'; to reveal an aspect of place may not confirm its 'appearance.' Hence the habitual ways of seeing may well be interrupted. (Holl 1991, 9)



Examples of "positive outdoor space" (Alexander 1977, 519-520)

In-between spaces are the embodiment of the pathways that are made of the spolia from site. According to Christopher Alexander, in 'A Pattern Languages', positive outdoor spaces are created by partly enclosed spaces in which their areas seem bounded (Alexander 1977, 521). The sense of enclosure is afforded by the concave shapes, similar to the vernacular organization in nearby villages. They create spaces with a sense of enclosure and thus invite habitation – as opposed to spaces which are "negative spaces" which are leftover spaces which will generally be unused (Alexander 1977, 519). These spaces are marked by benches and olive trees, giving a sense of commonality and belonging. The nature of the in-between space creates a connection between interior and exterior space and the surrounding of the site. The actors navigate between the mass walls,

enclosed by undulating roofs covered by terracotta bricks— part of the vernacular language of the surrounding residential area. The screen tile walls are a product of the studio and workshop – they show the materiality of handmade tiles. The tiles play with the incidence of the sun, creating different reflections and revealing colours of local pigments and clay. As Pelin Tan highlights, “the quality offers a helping hand and even challenges people to make their surroundings a place to feel at home in, each in their own way” (2015, 224).



The space between the research lab and the ceramicist's studio situates a space to dwell under the comfort of a local olive tree. The space anchors social activities and fosters dialogue between the actors and surrounding buildings.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis investigates the social and cultural foundations of architecture. A layered study of the Iznik Roman Theatre allows this site of ruin to be re-envisioned as a space of opportunity for continual cultural production, rather than being frozen in time as a universal asset of Heritage.

The continuity of practices becomes critical to sustaining the social production of space through material culture. The active production networks analyzed through sensory accounts reveal the living patterns existing in lived space. These integral rhythms are reactivated in the site and recover a sense of collective identity that is lost today. Spaces of 'Cultural Heritage' as defined today then have the potential to critically approach materials, aesthetics, and morphologies to present the practical social life to reimagine social space in short-term. As a result, the design anticipates cycles of future changes through architecture as a living social and cultural entity.

Through a design methodology of gathering historical analysis of a place through its material culture, this thesis emphasizes the social act of space as the critical component to actively maintain historical 'cultural assets'. The intervention of spatial and social elements invites new inhabitation - blurring lines between state-defined boundaries to re-embed everyday life within the archeological site of the Iznik Roman Theatre. The functions of the buildings proposed by the architecture represent opportunities to inhabit as needs change for the unforeseeable future.

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