

Álvaro Siza in Naples A Poetic Infrastructure for the City

Subway, Naples, Italy, Álvaro Siza, Urban Reorganization

/Abstract

Álvaro Siza's work, beginning in 2004 and not yet completed, in designing Naples' Municipio metro station represents a union of contemporary architecture and the city's historical, cultural and archaeological context. The subway station, in the very center of the city, stands out for its ability to transform a simple work of transport mobility into a work of urban art, as well as in the transformation of the historic center, linking the 1930s maritime station with the new square. Siza – together with Eduardo Souto de Moura with Tiago Figueiredo – uses local materials, creates bright and welcoming spaces that dialogue with the historic environment. A large void that eliminates urban disarticulations, and that – inspired by the paintings and ancient representations of this part of the city – is inspired by local traditions, incorporating elements of the Neapolitan archaeological heritage, without ever losing sight of the functionality of the infrastructure. Through the project, Siza manages to connect the past and the future, bringing out a new urban identity. His work contributes to improving urban quality and reducing the gap between different areas of the city, promoting new urban spaces. In this way, the Naples subway becomes a symbol of rebirth and innovation, albeit reflecting the praise do chaos that animates the city.

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Elisa Pegorin is Architect and PhD in "Architecture: Theory, Project, History". Graduated in Architecture cum laude at Università Luav di Venezia (2007), between 2005 and 2020 lived and worked in Portugal in several architectural offices. She studied Arabic at the Universidade Nova in Lisbon (2012-15), worked in Cairo (2010) and on independent research in Tunisia (2014). Since 2012 integrates the Centro de Estudos de Arquitectura e Urbanismo (Ceau-Faup). She had a research grant (2017-19) at Instituto Superior Tecnico of Lisbon (IST-UL) in a research project coordinated by Prof. Ana Tostões. In 2019 obtained a PhD in Architecture at the Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto (Faup) with the thesis *Arquitectura e Regime em Itália e Portugal. Obras Públicas no Fascismo e no Estado Novo (1928-1948)* oriented by Marco Mulazzani (Università degli Studi di Ferrara) and Madalena Pinto da Silva (Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto). In 2020-2023 was Research Fellow in the Department of Excellence Infrastruttura di Ricerca. Integral Design Environment (IR.IDE, Lab. Pride) and teaching assistant at Università Luav di Venezia. In 2024 was Research Fellow at the Dipartimento di Architettura, Università degli Studi di Ferrara (UniFe), and in 2024-25 won a Research Senior Fellowship about "Portuguese Culture" at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Lisbon). Actually (2025-26) is Research Fellow at the Dipartimento di Architettura, Università degli Studi di Ferrara. She has won awards (e.g. First Prize European 2010), participated in and organized international workshops; regularly writes articles and essays in books, proceedings and magazines as *Docomomo Journal*, *Ottogono*, *Abitare*, *Il Giornale dell'Architettura*, *Casabella*. Her main interests of research are the modern and contemporary history and theory of architecture in Italy, Portugal, and in the Arab countries.

At the centre of Álvaro Siza's thought there is always the city, whether it is designing an infrastructure, an architecture, or an object. Just think of interventions such as the Malagueira neighbourhood in Évora (1977-97), where the elevated system of infrastructure – the aqueduct – gives the large residential district the urban structure it needs. Or, in Lisbon, the strategic role assumed by the route of the metro and the Baixa-Chiado station in the project for the recovery and redevelopment of the historic quarter after the fire of August 25, 1988 – an intervention concluded in 2016 with the construction of the missing pedestrian path connecting Chiado and Largo do Carmo. And again, in Porto, the inclusion in the city of the Aliados and São Bento metro stations (2005-06, with Eduardo Souto de Moura), with the redesign and standardization of Avenida dos Aliados and Praça da Liberdade into a single large public space¹. Finally², in Naples³, the intervention of the Municipio Station of Line 1 of the subway, where the project of the underground station, a transit and interchange space, an access pivot to a new system of connection between the port and the city [Fig. 1–2]: is closely intertwined with the project for the redevelopment of the urban surface spaces of Piazza Municipio, between Palazzo San Giacomo, the Maschio Angioino (Castel Nuovo) and the twentieth-century Maritime Station [Fig. 3]: a system of crucial places for the city, rich in historical memories stratified over the centuries⁴.

The Naples metro project began in the seventies of the last century and entered a construction phase in the following decade. The opening of the first section of Line 1, between Piazza Vanvitelli and the Colli Aminei, dates to 1993, the project suffered setbacks and was marked by a lack of direction and vision. With the arrival of Giannegidio Silva (1941-2015)⁵ [Fig. 4] as president of the MN (Metropolitana di Napoli) in 1995, the construction of the metro experienced a new impulse and a peculiar characterization. In 1998, construction sites were opened for the sections of Line 1 that cross the city centre and, between 2001 and 2003, five new stations were inaugurated⁶. Silva's project envisages entrusting the construction of the individual stations to different architects, both Italian

1 General references (in chronological order) on Álvaro Siza about these projects: Peter Testa and José Quintão, *A arquitectura de Álvaro Siza* (Porto: Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, 1988); Pedro de Llano and Carlos Castanheira, eds., *Álvaro Siza: Works and Projects* (Milan: Electa, 1995); *Álvaro Siza* (Lisbon: Blau, 1998); Kenneth Frampton, ed., *Álvaro Siza: tutte le opere*, preface by Francesco Dal Co, texts by Álvaro Siza (Milan: Electa, 1999); Kenneth Frampton, *Álvaro Siza: obra completa* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2000); Nuno Grande and Carles Muro, eds., *Álvaro Siza: in/disciplina* (Porto: Fundação de Serralves, 2019); Fernando Márquez Cecilia, ed., *El Croquis: Álvaro Siza 2015–2022* (Madrid: El Croquis Editorial, 2022).

2 Another project completed by Siza in Naples is M.A.D.R.E. – Donnaregina Museum of Contemporary Art (2004–06, with Studio DAZ Architetti Associati).

3 Siza already knew the city of Naples well, because during the 1980s, he had been offered several projects for the city, including "Proposals for Caserta," Naples (competition 1983–84); "Urban plan for Pendino neighbourhood," Naples (competition 1986); "Urban Plan for Monterusciello and Campo Flegrei," Naples (competition 1986–87). See Michel Toussaint and Maria Melo, *Álvaro Siza: obra incompleta proyectos / Incomplete Work Projects* (Lisbon: A+A Books, 2024).

4 On the Municipio Station of the Naples Metro, see the main reference texts in the bibliography.

5 Francesco Minervini, "Giannegidio Silva: storia di un ingegnere," *Rassegna ANIAI*, no. 1–2 (2014): 76–95. In the same monographic issue of the journal, see also Álvaro Siza, "Omaggio a Giannegidio Silva," *Rassegna ANIAI*, no. 1–2 (2014): 16–19.

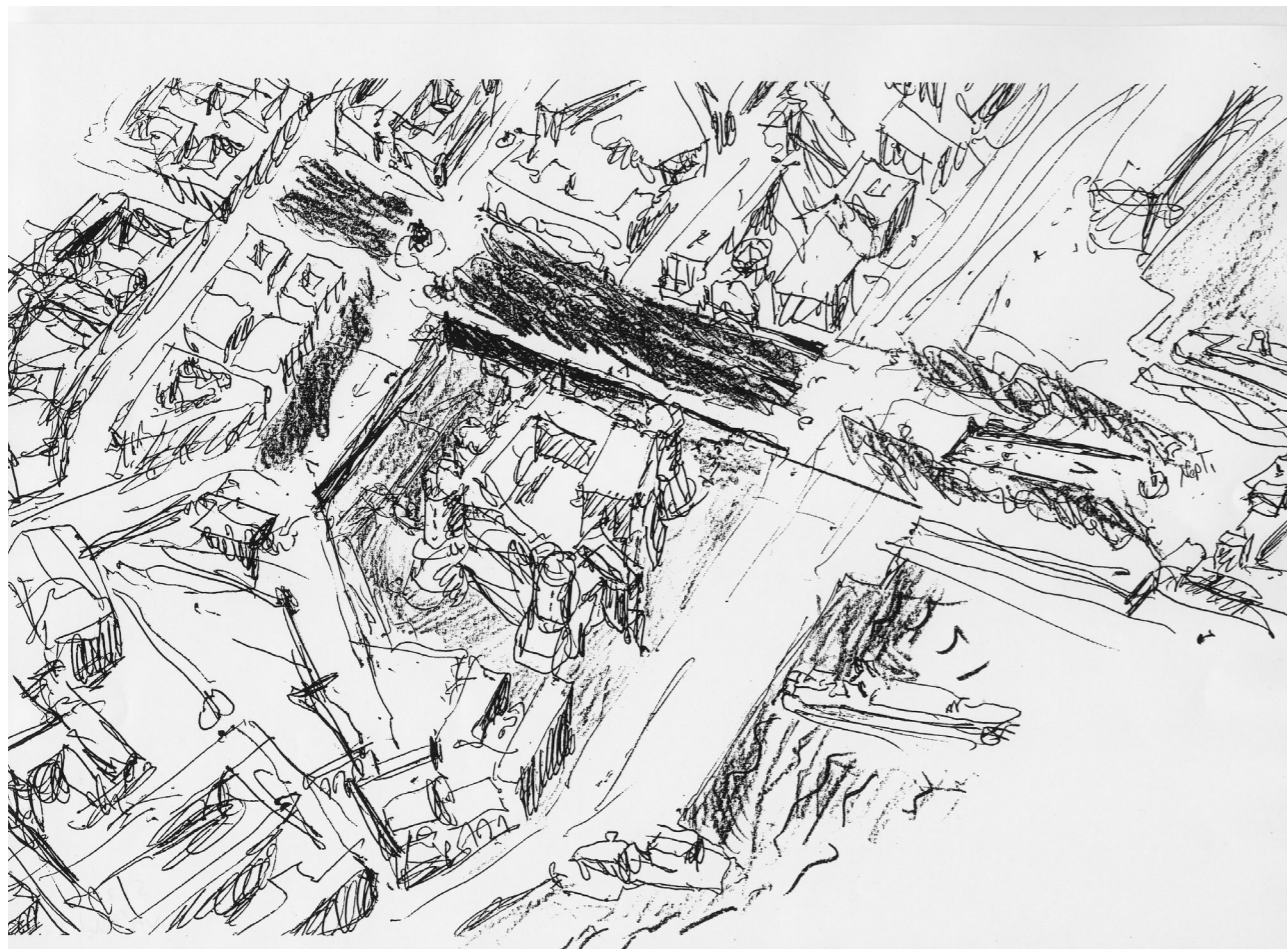
6 They are the Museo and Piazza Dante (Gae Aulenti) stations; Salvator Rosa and Materdei (Alessandro Mendini); Cilea, later renamed Quattro Giornate (Domenico Orlacchio). See Benedetto Gravagnuolo, "L'architettura delle stazioni," *Rassegna ANIAI*, no. 1–2 (2014): 52–55.



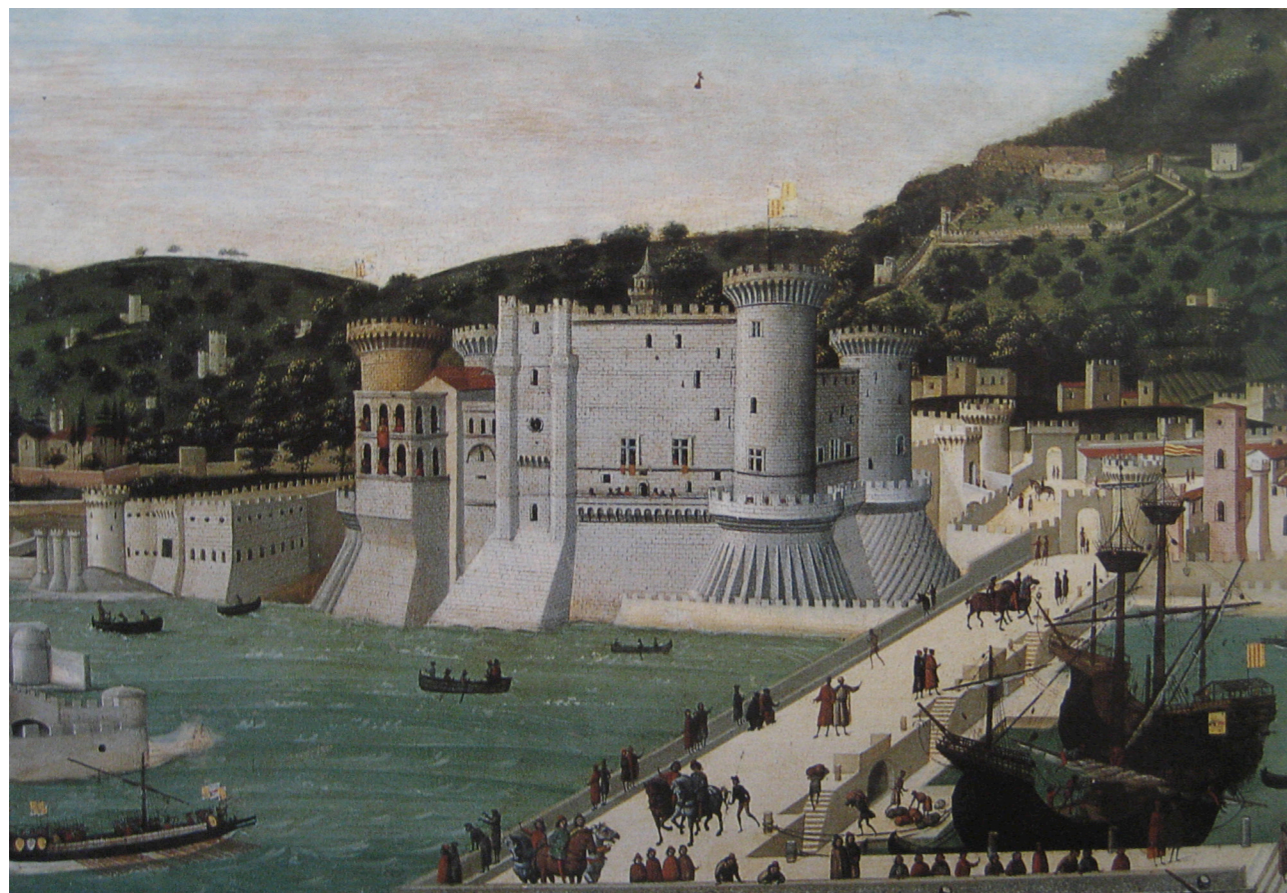
Fig. 1
Álvaro Siza, studies for the arrangements of Piazza Municipio (Álvaro Siza archive)

Fig. 2
Álvaro Siza, study for the piazza Municipio from Palazzo Municipio (Álvaro Siza archive)

Fig. 3
Tavola Strozzi, dated 1481-87 with the Aragonese and the port of Ischia (Museo Nazionale San Martino, Naples)



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and foreign, who are flanked by numerous artists – a program, the latter, known as *Le Stazioni dell'Arte* (Art Stations), developed by the critic Achille Bonito Oliva, consultant of the MN Company. The large and diversified team of personalities involved restores Silva's desire to qualify the infrastructure by creating a sort of "widespread museum" for visitors-travellers of all ages, social backgrounds and cultural levels – a "mandatory museum"⁷ in the words of Bonito Oliva – transforming the metro stations into places of contemporary art experience. For the Municipio Station, assigned to Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura [Fig. 5–6], was chosen the artist Michal Rovner⁸, author of an installation – *Passages (Naples) 2014* – created with the fresco technique and video projections [Fig. 7] which, despite occupying a forty-metre-long wall in the mezzanine [Fig. 8] of the station, offers itself as a decidedly discreet presence: not an "added decoration", but complementary to a "fabricated" work of art, in the words of Souto de Moura, from "Roman stones, Spanish walls and contemporary concrete"⁹. [Fig. 9]

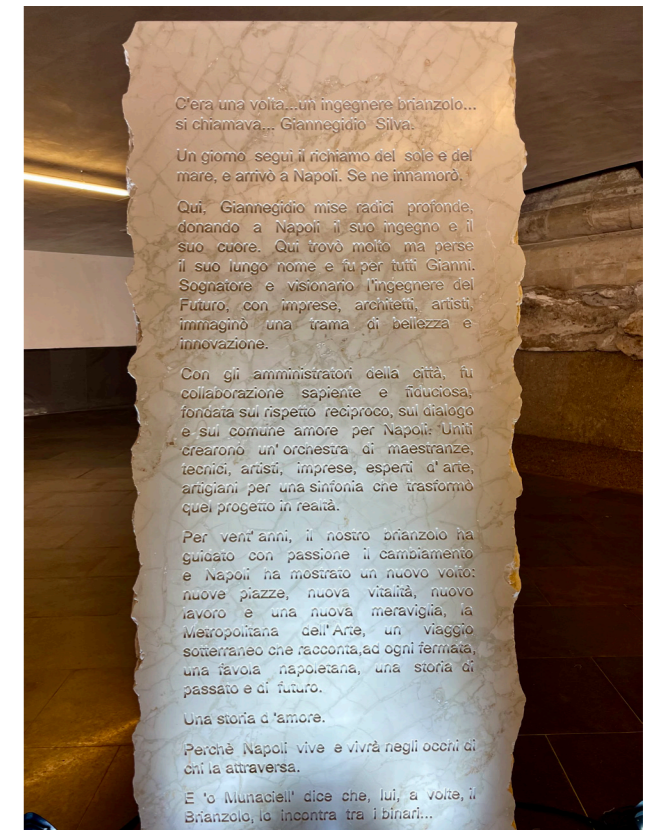
Called by the Naples Metro in 2003, Álvaro Siza involved Eduardo Souto de Moura in the task, engaged in a similar design experience for the Porto Metro¹⁰. [Fig. 10] The tried-and-tested partnership will later be joined by Tiago Figueiredo [Fig. 11], a long-time collaborator of Souto de Moura and present in the Metroporto project, while the local architect of support is Daniela Antonini - Studio DAZ. On the part of Metropolitana di Napoli, NME Napoli Metro Engineering works as consultants for the system project; Francesco Paolo Russo and Carmina Sanguiliano for the structural design. From the initial phase the Archaeological Superintendence of Naples, responsible for the excavations was Daniela Giampaola; since 2017, the research activities aimed at the design of the architectural and archaeological restoration of the uncovered areas have been entrusted to the CFR Consorzio Futuro in Ricerca and the

7 Achille Bonito Oliva, "Il museo obbligatorio," *Rassegna ANIAI*, no. 1–2 (2014): 10–11.

8 Roberto Collovà, "Le stazioni dell'arte," *Casabella*, no. 869 (2017): 24–25.

9 Regarding *Le Stazioni dell'Arte* of the Naples metro, characterized "by a certain post-modern tendency and anything but minimalist, but with a lot of color and a lot of decoration," Souto de Moura observes that "today, works of poor architecture are often made, in which you then must make a decoration, put colors. We – and Siza in particular – have always had a certain resistance. It should be the Roman stones, the bricks, the walls, the contemporary concrete columns, to manufacture the work of art." See "Storie: conversazione tra Álvaro Siza ed Eduardo Souto de Moura con Nicola Di Battista," *L'architetto*, no. 1 (2018): 41, 48. All the translations in English were done by the author.

10 Fatima Fernandes and Michele Cannatà, eds., *Eduardo Souto de Moura: a arquitectura do metro; obras e projectos na área metropolitana do Porto* (Porto: Civilização Editora, 2006). Marco Mulazzani, "Porto: la metropolitana," *Casabella*, no. 739–740 (2005–2006): 112–131 (with an interview by C. Tapparelli with Souto de Moura and a text by the architect).



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Fig. 4

Stele in honour for Giannegidio Silva (photo Elisa Pegorin, October 20, 2025)



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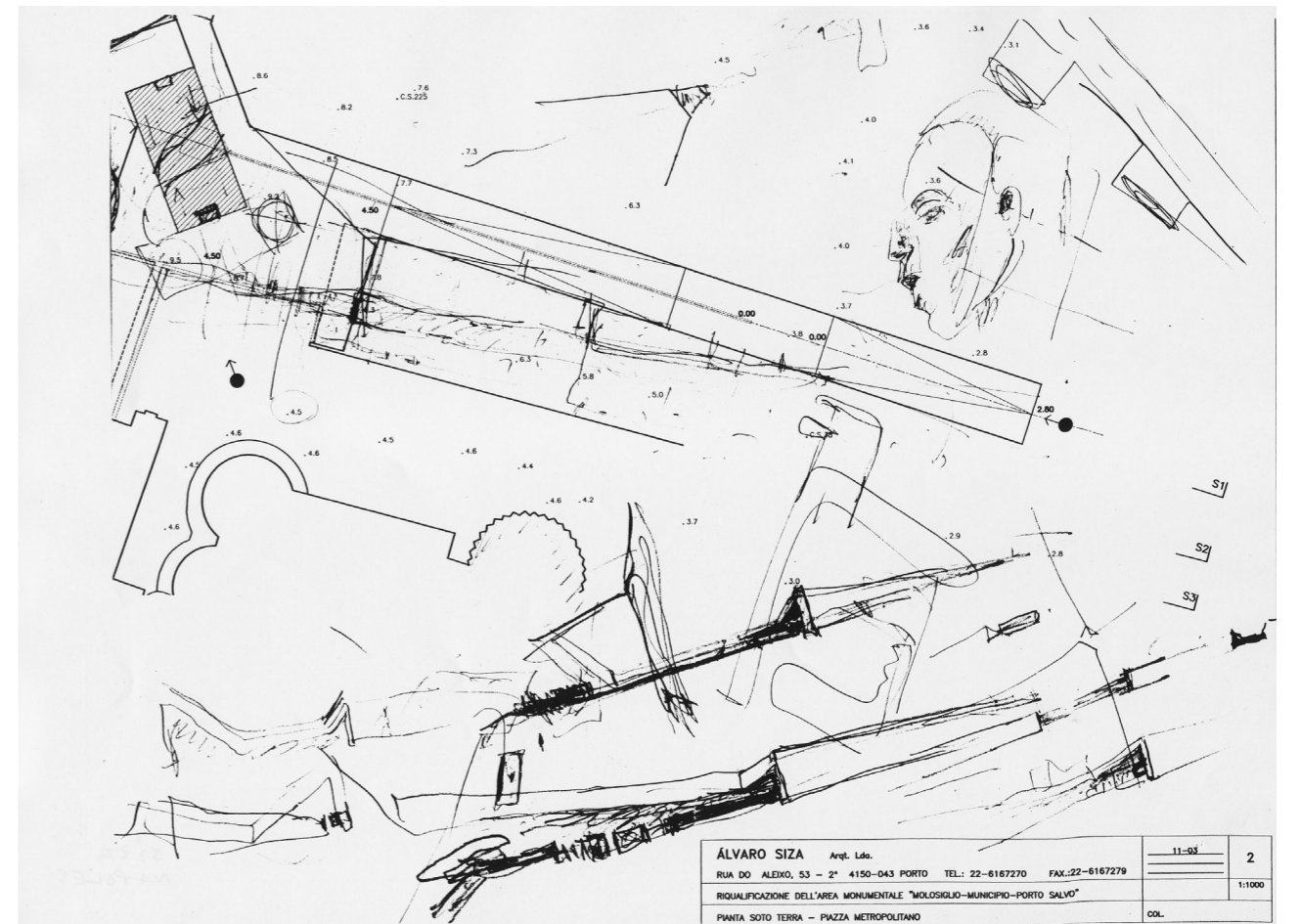
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Department of Architecture of the University of Ferrara with the coordination of Alessandro Ippoliti. At the time of the assignment to Siza and Souto de Moura of the Municipio Station, intended to serve Line 1 (passing) and Line 6 (terminal), the infrastructural framework is already defined, as regards the route of the tracks and the location of the lift shaft from the platforms, in a transport logic independent of the configuration of the surface spaces. On the other hand, the designers' conviction is that: the construction of the Metro is in fact the foundation of a profound urban transformation"; on the contrary, "the necessary excavations, the diversion of infrastructure networks, convenient access and other conditions oblige the definition of a new urban project"¹¹.

The first studies identify three synchronic and interdependent operations. The organisation of the first underground level of the station – the mezzanine atrium at an altitude of +2.50 metres – in continuity with the level of the moat of Castel Nuovo, chosen as the main access point to the Municipio Station; the construction of a connecting path underground between the mezzanine and the Maritime Station; the restoration and strengthening of the large sloping esplanade that extends from Palazzo San Giacomo (to the west) to the port (to the east).

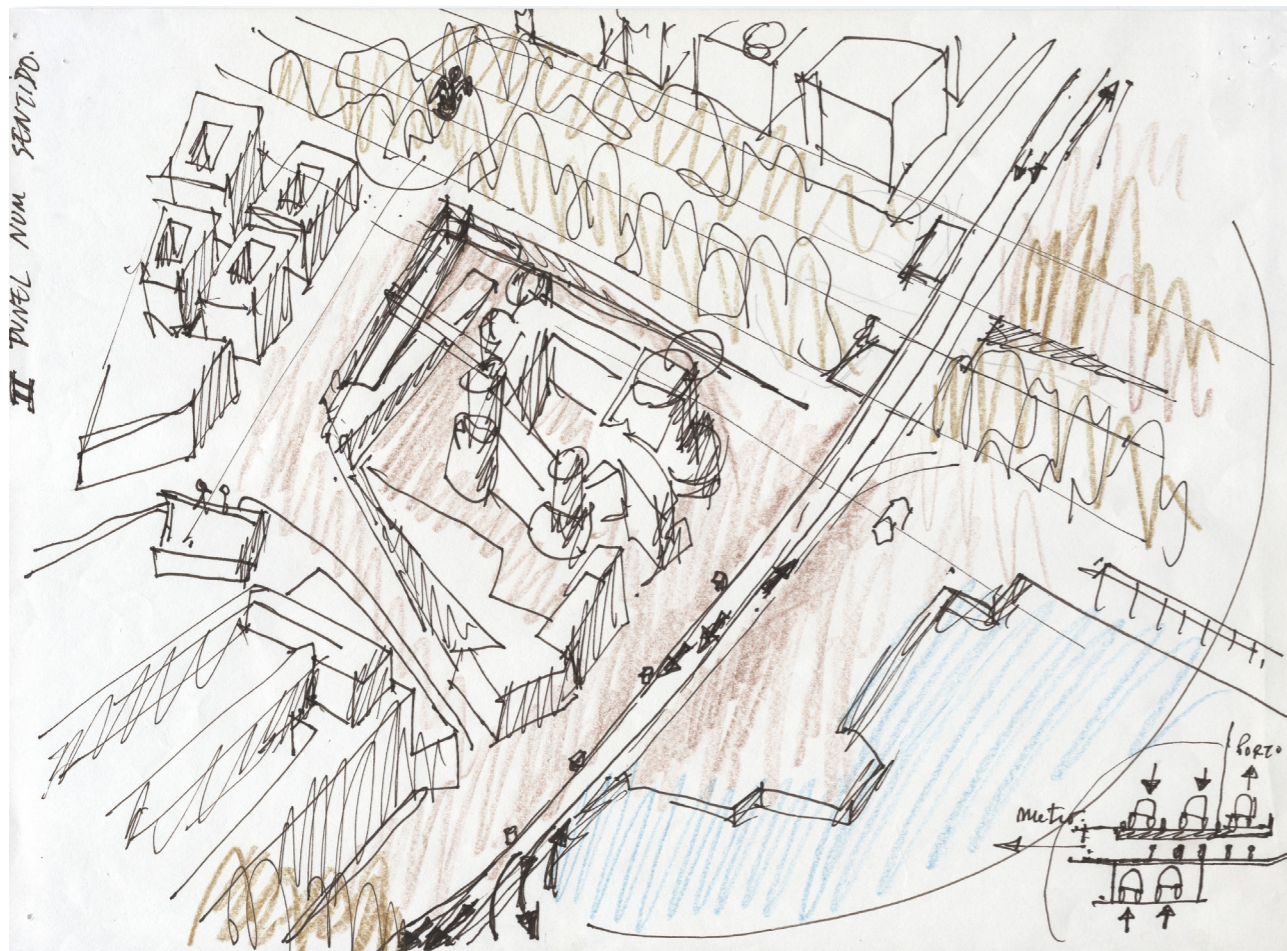
¹¹ This quote and the following one, from the project report, are in Roberto Collovà, "Napoli: una stazione per la metropolitana," *Casabella*, no. 869 (2017): 20–21.

Fig. 5-6
Álvaro Siza, Souto de Moura on the construction site (Private archive)



ÁLVARO SIZA	Arq. Lda.	11-03	2
RUA DO ALEXO, 53 - 2º - 4150-043 PORTO	TEL.: 22-6167270 FAX: 22-6167279		11/1000
RIQUALIFICAZIONE DELL'AREA MONUMENTALE "MOLOSIGLIO-MUNICIPIO-PORTO SALVO"			
PIANTA SOTTO TERRA - PIAZZA METROPOLITANA		COL.	

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This visual continuum – say the architect Siza – dominated by the hill and the Castel Sant’Elmo, is the fundamental element in the geography of Naples. Maintaining it is the goal of this project¹².

Two plates from February and March 2004, densely annotated and drawn, show these actions. Around the rectangular well that contains the vertical connections with lines 1 and 6, the large underground room of the mezzanine [Fig. 12] branches out in different directions: to the south, towards the moat of the Castel Nuovo; to the west and north, to other points of ascent on the surface; to the east towards the port, with a sloping path that, under the very busy Via Acton, climbs with a slight ramp to the square in front of the Maritime Station. The underground path is perfectly aligned with the reservoir of Piazza Municipio and with the footprint on the ground of the equestrian monument to Vittorio Emanuele II, located at the height of Via Medina¹³. A double dotted line marks the longitudinal axis of this street-square, indicating a continuous skylight – called by the designers as the *fenda* (in Portuguese: a cut, a slit) [Fig. 13] – extended

12 Álvaro Siza and Tiago Figueiredo, interview by author, Atelier Siza, Porto, October 8, 2024.

13 The monument dedicated to Vittorio Emanuele II was inaugurated in 1897. In 2010 it was removed and moved to Piazza Bovio (formerly Piazza Borsa).

Fig. 7

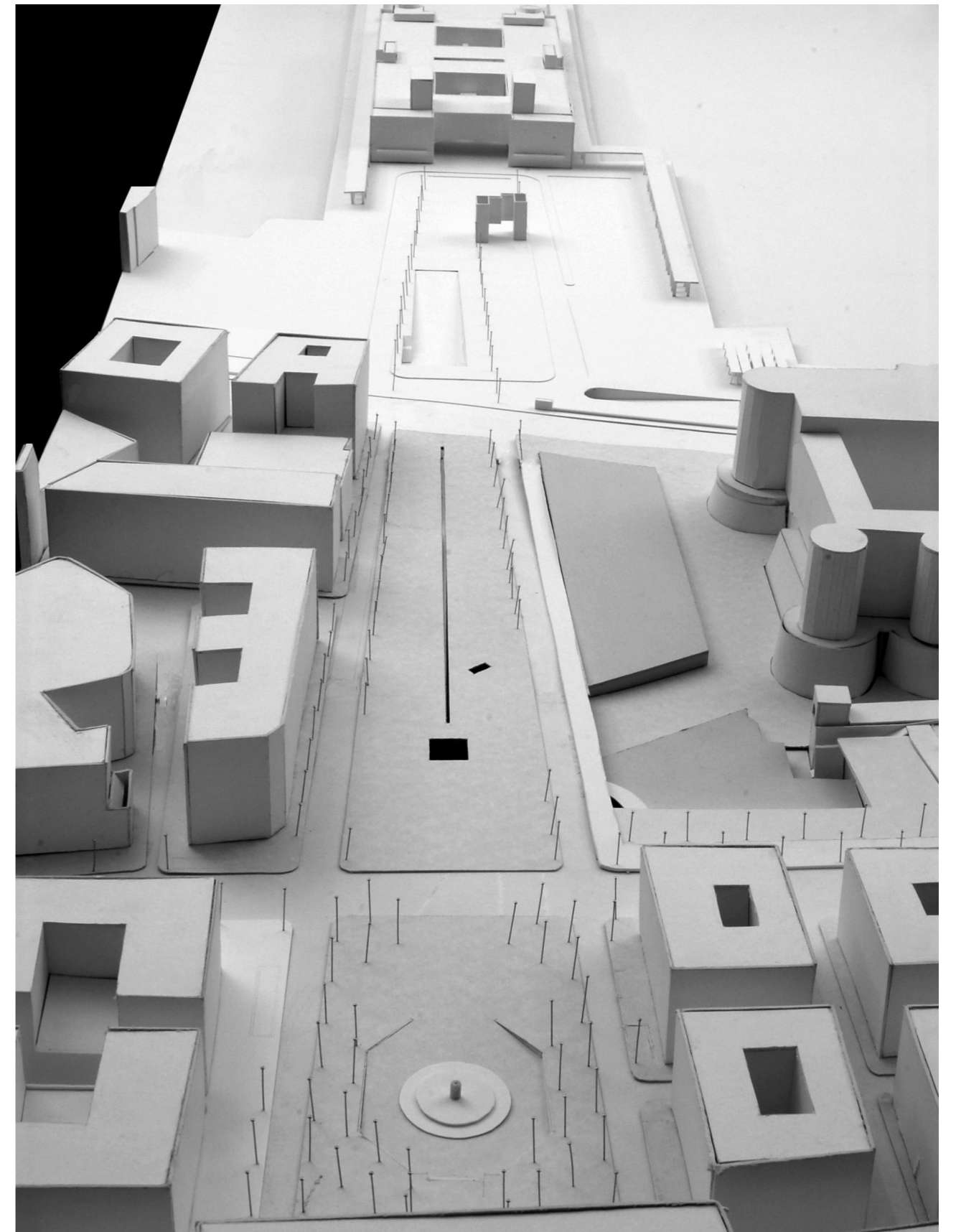
Installation on the wall of the artist Michel Rovner, 2016 (Álvaro Siza archive)

Fig. 8

Álvaro Siza, study for the mezzanine station of the subway (Álvaro Siza archive)

Fig. 9

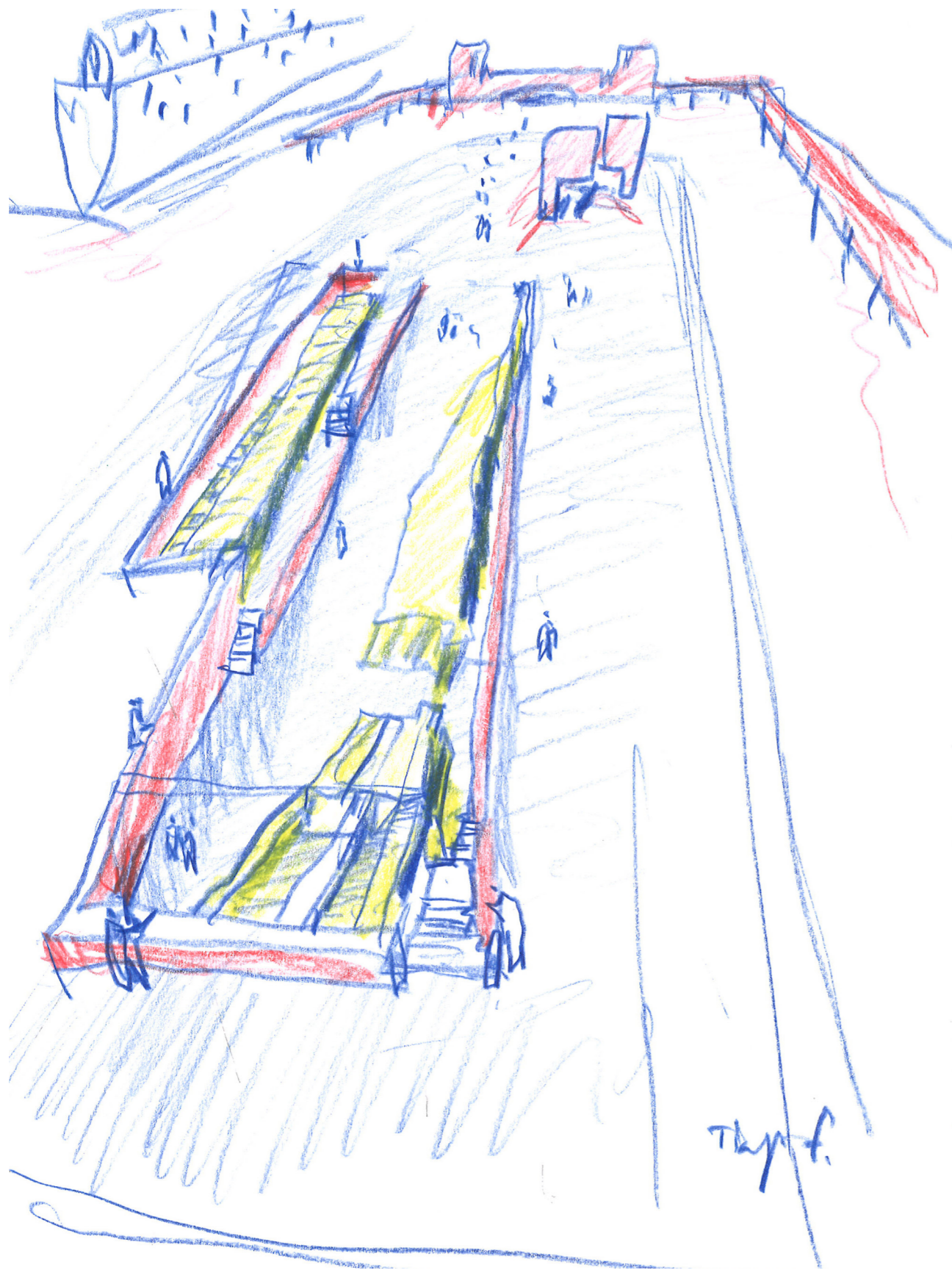
Fig. 09 Souto de Moura, study of Piazza Municipio and the circulation of Via Acton (Álvaro Siza archive)



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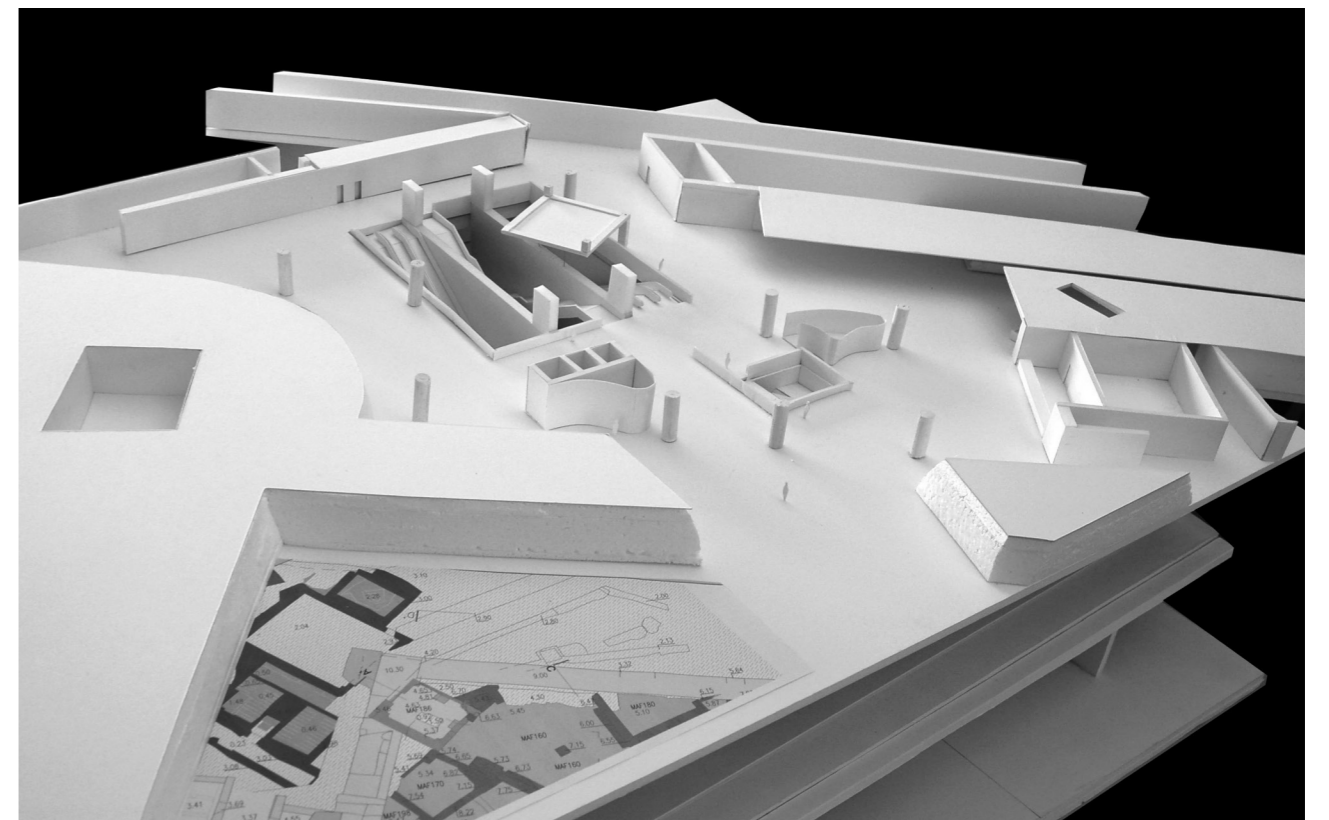
Fig. 10

Model of the project (Álvaro Siza archive)



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Fig. 11
Tiago Figueiredo, study for the transition from pedestrian to the tunnel to the maritime station after the archaeological vestiges, 2015 (Tiago Figueiredo)



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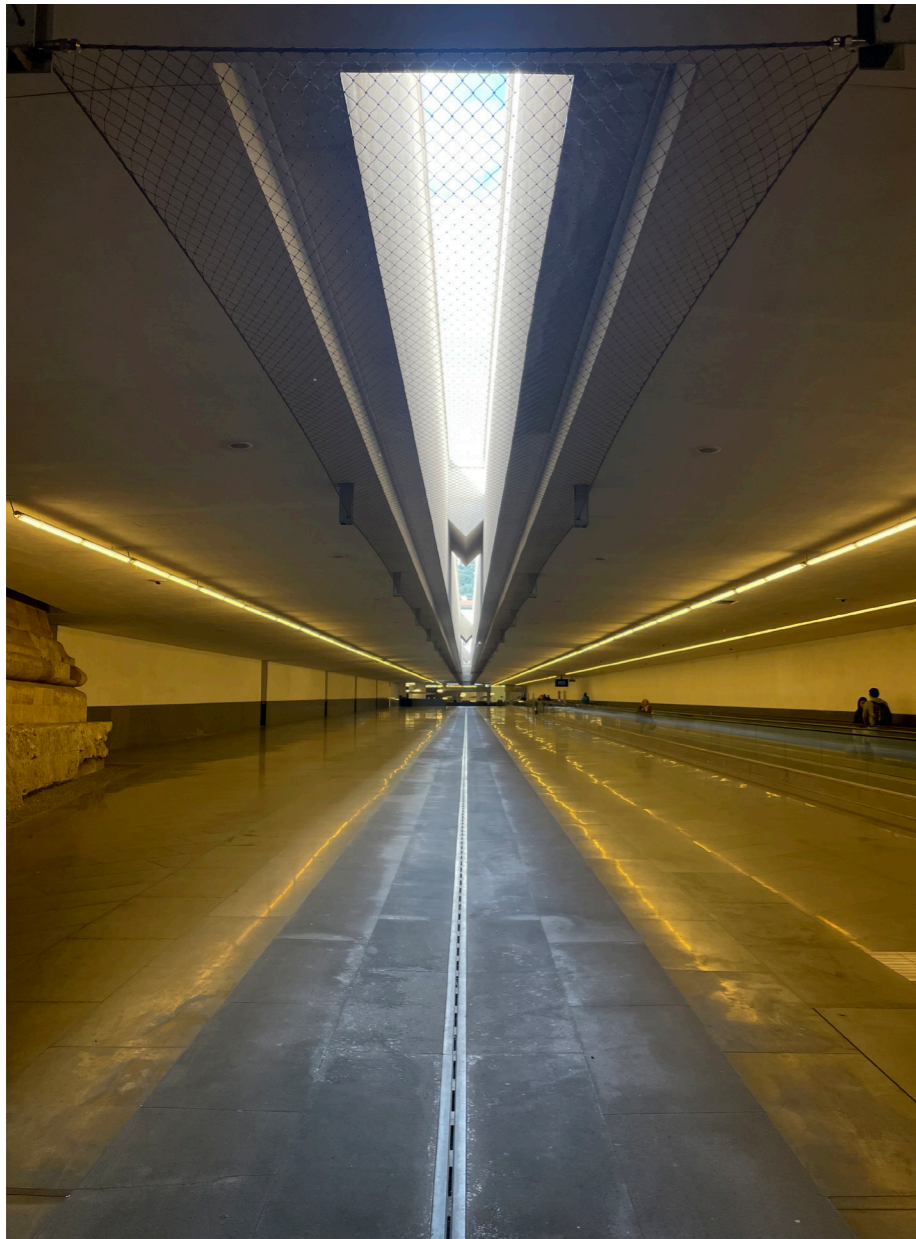
between the beginning of the Via Acton underpass and the rectangular well in the centre of the mezzanine, on the vertical of which the square geometry of a fountain is outlined. [Fig. 14] The layout given to the mezzanine atrium of the station corresponds to the first studies of the arrangement of the surface space, with rows of trees on the sides of Piazza Municipio, from Palazzo San Giacomo to Via Acton, the monument to Vittorio Emenuale II, the square fountain and the long thin slit of the skylight, coinciding with the historic visual axis between the port and Castel Sant'Elmo. [Figg. 15–16–17]

Among the documents that testify to the historical sequence of transformations that have taken place since the fifteenth century, safeguarding the "visual continuum" that characterizes and qualifies the urban space, of certain importance for Siza and Souto de Moura's project is a view by Antonio Joli [Fig. 18], from the mid-eighteenth century, from the Molo Grande towards the Basilica of San Giacomo degli Spagnoli¹⁴ and Castel Sant'Elmo.

In addition to restoring the continuity of the ground level that rises progressively up to the church, whose façade appears framed by two rows of trees, the painting shows the seventeenth-century fountain of Neptune in the foreground. A series of photographic views of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries illustrates the configuration subsequently assumed by this space, with discontinuous "islands" of gardens that dot Piazza Municipio up to the pier, the presence

14 The sixteenth-century Basilica was incorporated in the early twenties of the nineteenth century in the palace of the Ministries of the Bourbon government, the current Palazzo San Giacomo.

Fig. 12
Model of the mezzanine of the subway (Álvaro Siza archive)



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at the height of Via Medina of the monument to Vittorio Emanuele II, the disappearance of the fountain of Neptune, moved in 1898 to Piazza della Borsa, and the appearance after 1936 of a new “backdrop”, slightly off-axis, consisting of the Maritime Station¹⁵.

One of Siza’s first study sketches for the arrangement of the surface area shows his intention to preserve the equestrian monument in its position and bring the fountain of Neptune, recomposed in Via Medina in 2001, back to the square towards the port¹⁶, to provide the large spatial basin with two intermedi-

15 The Maritime Station was built between 1933 and 1936, following a competition won by Cesare Bazzani. See Aurelio De Rose, *I palazzi di Napoli* (Rome: Newton & Compton, 2001).

16 The fountain of Neptune (1600–1601), originally near the Arsenale, has been moved several times, before and after its eighteenth-century location in Via del Molo. In 1898 it was mounted in Piazza della Borsa; in 2000 it was removed for the works of the metro and reassembled in 2001 in Via Medina. In 2014–15 it was dismantled again and rebuilt in Piazza Municipio.



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ate visual goals and articulate with the fountain the passage between the exit ramp from the mezzanine of the station and the Piazzale della Marittima.

This hypothesis was abandoned following the decision of the Municipality to remove the monument to Vittorio Emanuele II and the request to Siza, in 2010, to study an appropriate arrangement of the fountain of Neptune in Piazza Municipio (completed in 2015). However, the architect still needs to recompose the misalignment introduced by the Maritime Station in the “visual continuum” between the port and Castel Sant’Elmo. Thus, was born the idea of a new fountain, the Porta del Mare [Fig. 19], a sculpture-architecture essential for its role as an axial connection between the twentieth century building of the Maritime Station, the geometry and spaces of the new surface arrangement and the historic visual axis between the port and Castel Sant’Elmo¹⁷.

The fundamental elements described so far of the proposal developed between 2004 and 2006 remain in the continuation of the design process. The large rectangular shaft (25x30 metres) is “filled” with escalators and stone stairs that descend from the mezzanine to Line 1 (platform at -20 metres) and Line 6 (connecting branch at -4.71 metres; platform at -10.26 metres). [Fig. 20] The two paths at different speeds are put in visual relationship by an oculus with an

Fig. 13

Fenda (“taglio”) in the tunnel leading from the subway to the port (photo Elisa Pegorin, 2025)

Fig. 14

Aerial view of the surface intervention (courtesy photo of Alessandra Chemollo, 2018)

Fig. 15

Siteplan of the ground-level drawing (Álvaro Siza archive)

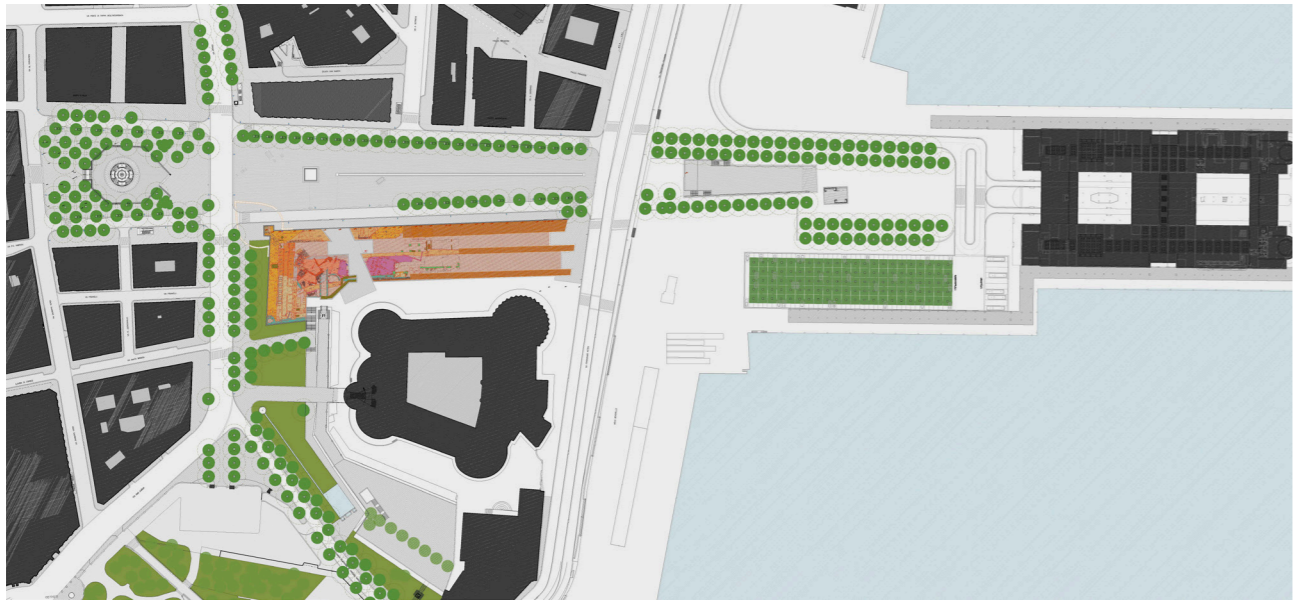
Fig. 16

Plan of the mezzanine (Álvaro Siza archive)

Fig. 17

Longitudinal section from Palazzo S. Giacomo to the Maritime station (Álvaro Siza archive)

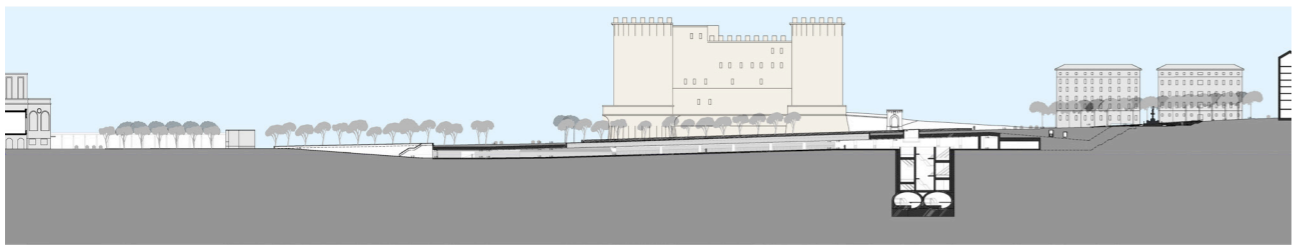
17 Elisa Pegorin, “La porta marittima di Napoli,” *Abitare la Terra*, no. 65 (2024): 47. Álvaro Siza and Tiago Figueiredo, interview by author, Atelier Siza, Porto, October 8, 2024.



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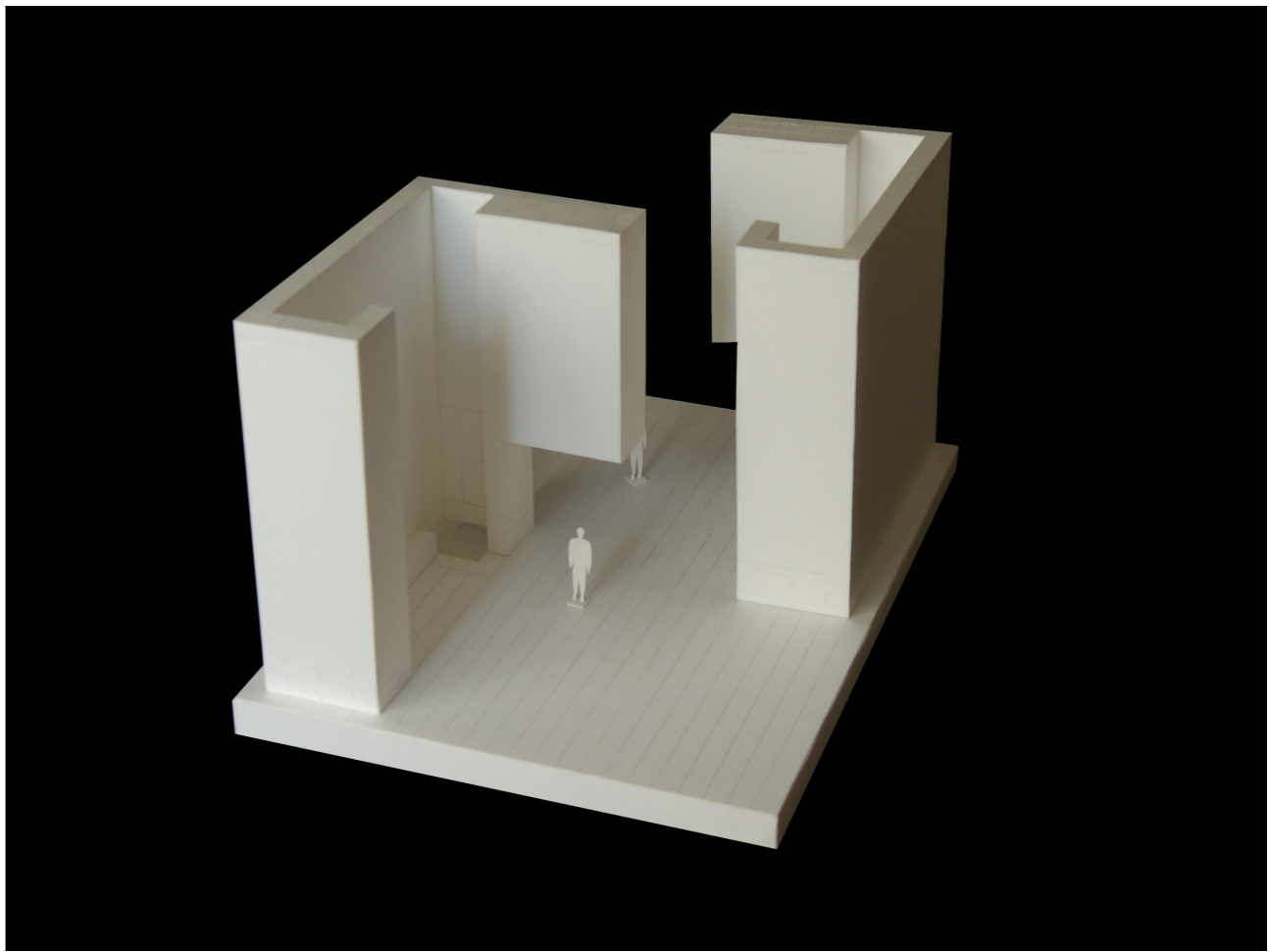
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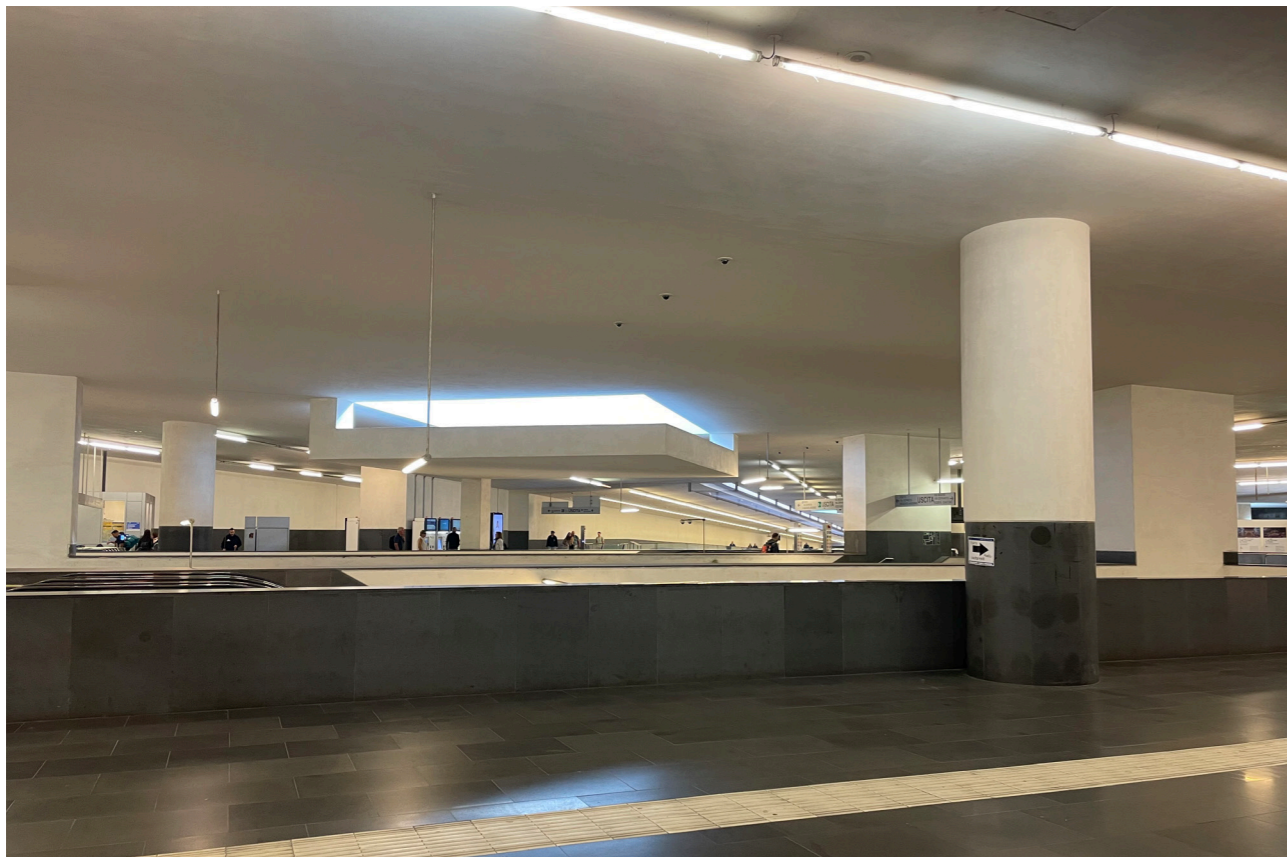
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“Aaltian” shape – which, however, Siza says in an interview¹⁸ is inspired by Le Corbusier – [Fig. 21] while the horizontal passages between the ramps are configured as real rooms, new spaces of a contemporary “underground Naples”. Essential spaces, in the design of the artifacts and in the elementary choice of surface finishing materials, white plaster and black lava stone – a chromatic relationship, even if not a concertation of materials, deeply rooted in the history of the city¹⁹. The desire to keep the well in communication with the outside, abandoning the initial idea of an opening that would have allowed air, light, and rain to penetrate the subsoil, is finally resolved by filtering the access of natural light in the mezzanine. Above the well, an opaque square-shaped skylight measuring 10 x 10 metres away from the roof – an inverted table, a solution often adopted by Siza in museum spaces – spreads a diaphanous luminosity into the mezzanine, through the bottom of the basin placed on the surface on the axis of Piazza Municipio and the *fenda*.

18 Roberto Collovà, “Napoli: una stazione per la metropolitana,” *Casabella*, no. 869 (2017): 22. About the opening of the oculus, in a conversation with the author of this paper, Siza states that “basically, it was a matter of creating this feverish spirit that is Naples, those who go up look at those who go down”; as for the shape: “it had to be a circle. It has to do with Le Corbusier, I have this image of Le Corbusier. But every architect works with reference to the world of architecture that he knows [...]. Often these influences do not arise voluntarily but are things that are found in the subconscious [...]. The subconscious is a good friend.” Álvaro Siza and Tiago Figueiredo, interview by author, Atelier Siza, Porto, October 8, 2024.

19 In the conversation with the author, Tiago Figueiredo recalls how the initial choice of material for underground constructions was brick – “a brick of Roman dimensions.” The needs of technological equipment (ventilation, etc.) would probably have led to the adoption of prefabricated brick walls, which could not be controlled by the architects. Hence the decision to resort to plaster and volcanic stone (although not the piperno of Naples, but the lava stone of Etna), also following a visit to the city made by Siza with Francesco Venezia. Álvaro Siza and Tiago Figueiredo, interview by author, Atelier Siza, Porto, October 8, 2024.



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Fig. 18
Antonio Joli, view of Naples from the Port, mid-18th century (Private archive)

Fig. 19
Model of Porta Marittima (Álvaro Siza archive)

Fig. 20
View of the interior (photo Elisa Pegorin, 2025)

Fig. 21
Drawing of Álvaro Siza of the oculus, in the day of the opening of the station, 2015 (Álvaro Siza archive)

As the construction site of the subway progressed, the architectural project evolved, continuously enriching itself in the confrontation with the numerous “quality obstacles” it encountered, namely the continuous, important discoveries of archaeological remains belonging to different eras – Greek, Roman, late medieval, Angevin, viceregal – emerged from the excavations of the Castel Nuovo moat, from those of the route of Line 6 and, subsequently, of the ascent of the underground road to the port. Starting from 2003, during the excavations for the construction of the station, Roman ships (I-III century AD) were found; the excavations of the moat bring to light the foot of mighty fortifications – the Bastione Vicereale, the tower of the pier and the tower of the Incoronata – and a room of the Angevin era with fragments of frescoes, identified as part of the Palazzo Del Balzo. The excavations of the route of Line 6 intercept the remains of two overlapping ports, from the Hellenistic and Roman periods, as well as thousands of artifacts related to these activities. The need, or rather the desire to find an adequate location of the archaeological remains in the general design (in line with what was pursued in the arrangement of the surface spaces), [Fig. 22], has continuously questioned what is envisaged by the project, making it a sort of open work and forcing Siza and Souto de Moura to a continuous exercise of discretion²⁰, or to choices on the direction to be taken to harmonize the project with the extraordinary schedule of the place. Agreement means deep respect for the vestiges found, but also determination to use archaeology as the material of the project – for example, the Viceregal bastion as a “support” for the roof of the mezzanine of the station²¹. [Fig. 23] It also means the desire to return to the city, “in an unprotected form”, part of the extraordinary heritage that emerged during the course of the work – a suggestion that has a lot to do with the “principle of continuity that informs the entire project”²².

The progression of the archaeological finds discovered during the excavations is clearly shown by the comparison between some plans of the overall arrangement at the mezzanine level.

October 2004 and May 2006 – with the suggestive hypothesis of creating an underground room for Roman ships; June 2010, with the tower of the Incoronata, the Viceregal bastion and the tower of the pier entirely brought to light. The Viceregal bastion is “perforated” at the main access to the station

20 Francesco Dal Co, “La duplicità del tempo,” *Casabella*, no. 869 (2017): 16–17.

21 Souto de Moura declares, “We use archaeology not as a field of investigation, not as a material for scientific contemplation, but as a useful material for our projects. A stone wall is not there only to be photographed and to place a legend next to it with the words “ancient Roman wall” or “Spanish”; for us, this wall serves to support the ceiling of the entire station. A relationship with history operational, rather than contemplative.” See “Storie: conversazione tra Álvaro Siza ed Eduardo Souto de Moura con Nicola Di Battista,” *L'architetto*, no. 1 (2018): 42. Siza's thought is identical; for him, the Naples project was a “succession of adventures, discoveries, and the fundamental desire not to destroy the archaeological remains, but to maintain them [...] involving them in the project. For example, the surface of Piazza Municipio rests on the very strong city walls. Ruin is not only something that serves as a contemplation of history but is part of the project.” Álvaro Siza and Tiago Figueiredo, interview by author, Atelier Siza, Porto, October 8, 2024.

22 Antonio Esposito and Giovanni Leoni, “La stazione Municipio della metropolitana di Napoli: rifondare l'immagine e la materia della città,” *U+D Urbanform and Design*, no. 20 (2023): 112. The principle of “historical continuity” (obviously not in a figurative sense) that inspires the project is continuously recalled by Siza and Souto de Moura.



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from the moat and taken – “although only in the tectonic figure”²³ – as a supporting element of the southern edge of the reinforced concrete roof of the mezzanine. Along the north side of the Viceregal bastion up to the tower of the pier, parallel to the pedestrian gallery connecting the mezzanine and the Marittima, there is a covered space, initially designed as a “museum” and then as an information centre for welcoming visitors; on the south side of the bastion, towards the moat of Castel Nuovo, the archaeological park extends. The remains of the Greek and Roman ports, punctually listed by the Sovrintendenza (Architectural Superintendency), were dismantled to allow the construction of the convoy tunnels and the Line 6 station, and then refitted on artificial platforms²⁴.

The last important archaeological emergence is that of the walls of the ancient port, from the Angioino-Aragonese and Bourbon ages, in the area in front of the Maritime station. A further variant of the project, in 2017, involved the ramp of the pedestrian connection to the station, with the redesign of the square on the port and the Porta del Mare. It is not possible, here, to delve into the impressive structural (and plant) project of the subsoil, the various phases of which, visible

23 Roberto Collovà, “Napoli: una stazione per la metropolitana,” *Casabella*, no. 869 (2017): 21. The consolidation of the viceregal bastion takes place through the construction of a reinforced concrete wall. The roof slab of the station rests punctually on groups of micropiles.

24 See Marco Mulazzani, “Siza e Souto de Moura: il progetto e il cantiere,” *Casabella*, no. 869 (2017): 34–36.

Fig. 22

View of the archaeological remains at the subway exit towards the maritime (photo Elisa Pegorin, 2025)



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until 2017, are documented by thousands of photographs of the construction site. The close integration between the structural organism, the architectural space and the interventions in the archaeological area are however evident, in particular with regard to the roof of the mezzanine of the station and the pedestrian street, which form the artificial surface plane of Piazza Municipio between Via Medina and Via Acton. The roof of the tunnel consists of a lightened reinforced concrete plate structure, configured with two symmetrical overhangs of 9.5 metres spaced by a central slot 1 metre wide – the aforementioned *fenda*, through which it is possible to see Castel Sant’Elmo at the top of the hill.

The determination with which Siza pursued the construction of this sort of hypogeum *miradouro* (belvedere) that puts the underground city and the surface city in visual and physical relationship, brings us back to the beginning of these notes, to the fundamental element in the geography of Naples identified

in the “visual continuum” between the port and Castel Sant’Elmo. The visual axis founding the place comes true in the (immaterial) trace of the *fenda*, which guides the gaze to the surface from the portal of Palazzo San Giacomo, through the fountain of Neptune and the long spatial basin of the square, up to the port, detecting an offset with the façade of the Maritime Station. From this gap, we have said, arises the need for the Porta del Mare, a sort of bifocal device connecting the Marittima, the geometry, the spaces of the new arrangement and the historic visual axis between the port and Castel Sant’Elmo. The fountain appears represented in the project for the first time in 2010; its size and position did not yet fully correct the divergence of the two axes. In 2012 the fountain was specified in plan and height and was inserted in the wooden maquette of the entire area: from this moment on, it accompanied the general project in its evolution, changing in relation to the archaeological discoveries of the ancient port, the requests of the Sovrintendenza and the municipal administration that led, in 2021, to the suppression of the water basin due to alleged maintenance difficulties.

The latest changes, in 2022, are the result of an accurate general study of the surrounding urban environment, seeking the best possible relationship of the Porta Marittima with the archaeological remains, the ramp, the station and the new project of the Molo Beverello. It is evident that the Porta del Mare, assiduously cared for over ten years and awaiting construction, is not an ornamental object for Siza, of which the project can do less. On the contrary, by revealing and correcting the distortions introduced into the site by the twentieth century building of the Marittima, the new non-monumental testimonial legitimizes the contemporary project, inserting it according to a principle of continuity in the historical sequence of transformations that took place in the place, finally returned to its dimension as a public space, the heritage of the community.

As Siza says:

Naples is not just what you see, in glory or in degradation. But you can almost feel, under your feet, the breath of an invisible or hardly visible world, which has been coming for centuries, building the city of today²⁵.

Fig. 23
Torre dell’Incoronata inside the station (photo Elisa Pegorin, 2025)

25 Álvaro Siza, “Nápoles,” in *01 Textos por Álvaro Siza*, ed. Carlos Campos Morais (Porto: Civilização Editora, 2009), 309.

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