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THE LIGHT IN MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR COMMUNICATING THE MEANING OF ANCIENT REMAINS

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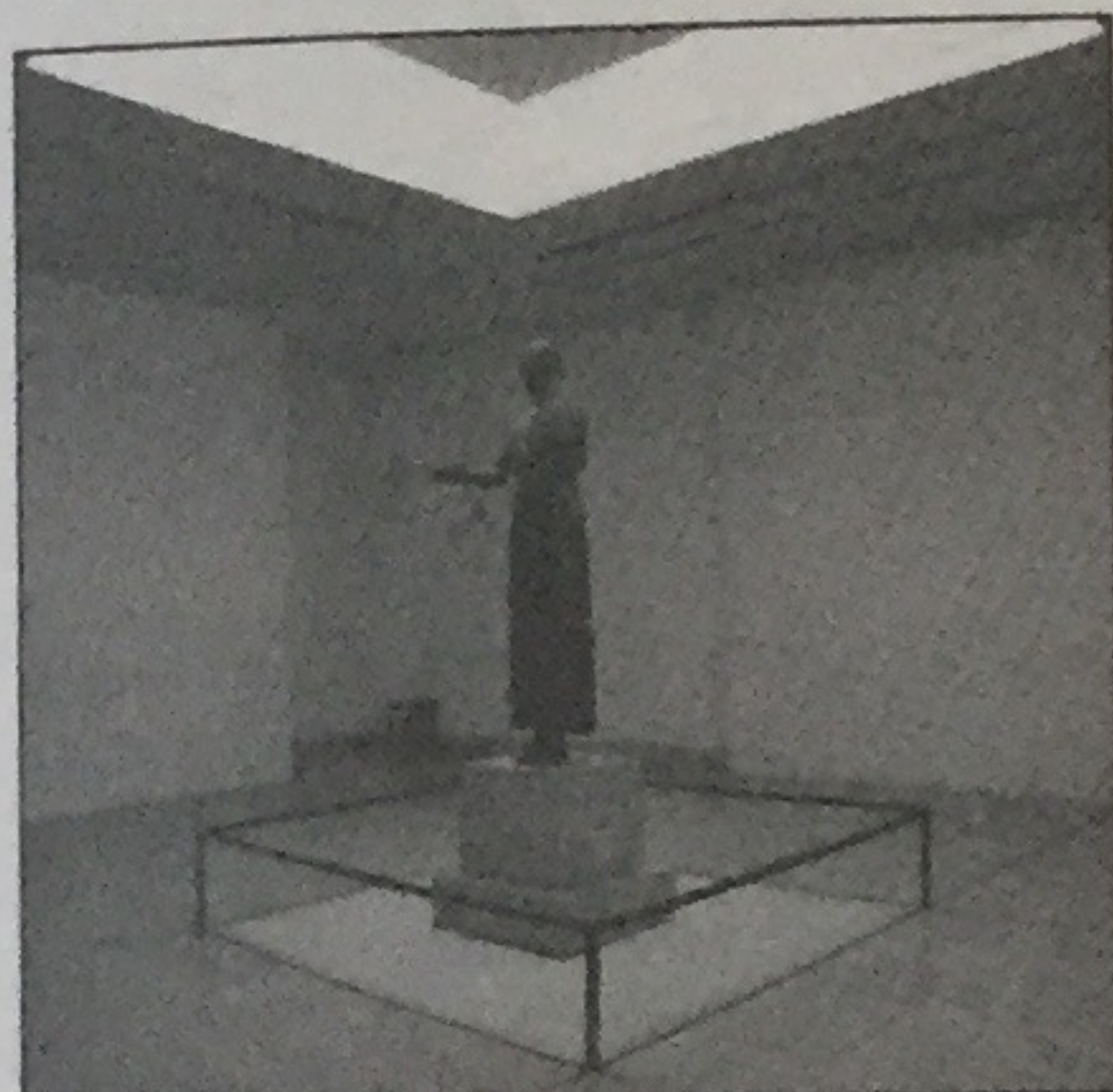
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In this paper, based on research made by the Authors in the Mediterranean area, it's highlighted how the use of light in museums can effectively contribute to a better knowledge of the past, giving citizens the opportunity to rediscover their identity and tourists to understand local history and archaeology.

In general, through proper design of lighting, all museum visitors have the possibility of enjoying more deeply the historical and archaeological heritage, not only for the aesthetic values that light normally has, but also and most importantly for its educational potential. In fact, it has been discovered, through a multidisciplinary methodological approach, that light can be used as a "parameter of spatial definition", which modifies the perception of space through optical and perceptual phenomena. In this sense, light has the same characteristics of a real building material.

A paradigmatic example is the hall that houses *The Charioteer* in the Archaeological Museum of Delphi. This hall was specially designed by the architect Alexandros N. Tombazis to exhibit this famous ancient bronze sculpture. Particular attention is given to visual comfort, achieved by the combined use of natural and artificial light.



Archaeological Museum of Delphi: The Charioteer.

In recent years, a careful use of light has become very common: light is an effective tool for its light consistency, for its lack of invasiveness, for its extraordinary effectiveness in creating a fascinating background and in communicating many different parameters of interpretation.

Today, LED technology is widely found in lighting design for the enhancement of archaeological remains because of its satisfactory colour rendering, its elevated performance in saving energy and in reducing pollution, in full compliance with the standards set for the conservation of ruins.

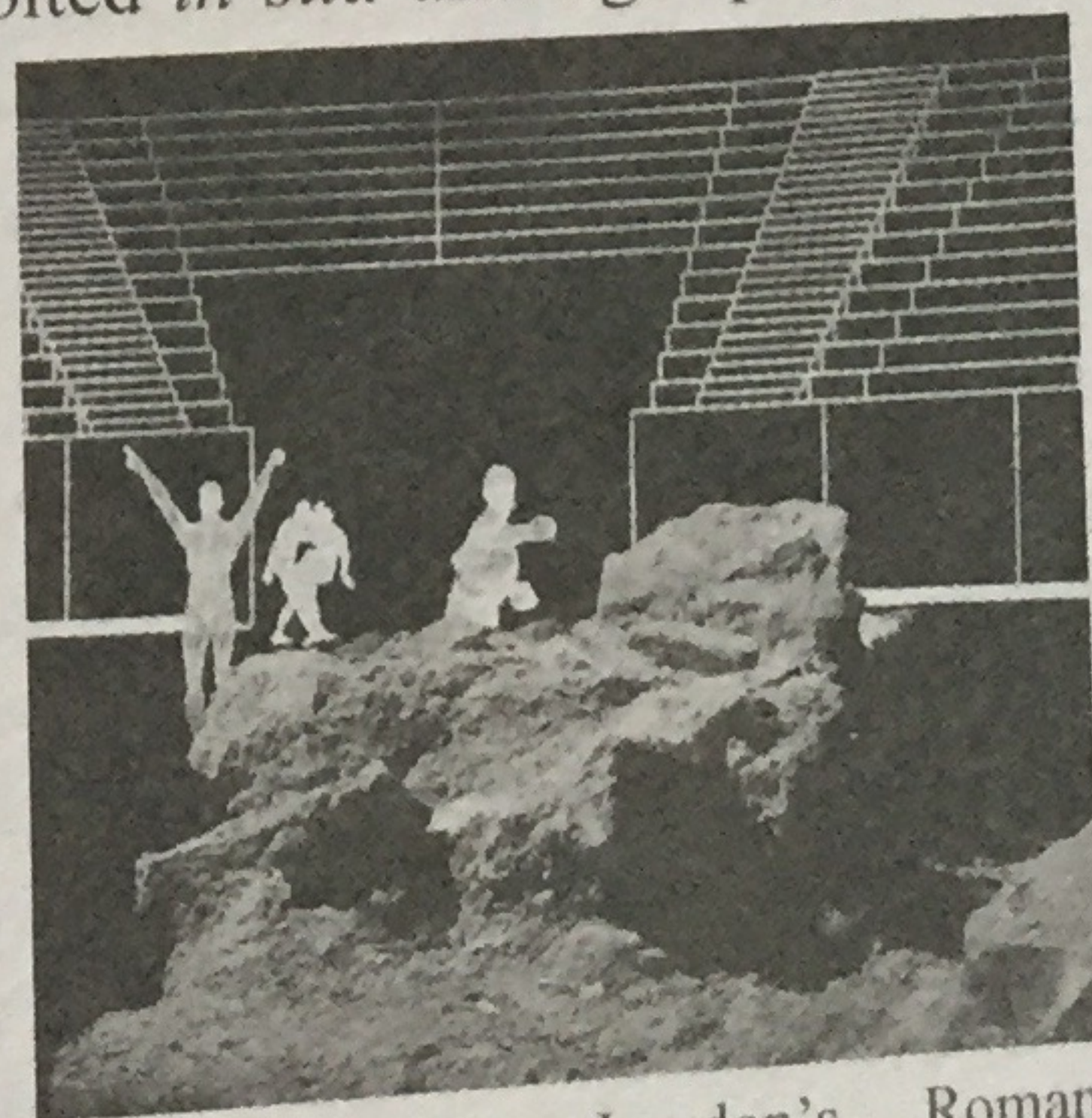
Moreover, ensuring visual comfort, light can be used to trace a path to knowledge of heritage. Indeed, starting from an archaeological fragment, through the use of light it's possible to recall times, historical

layers, locations and functions sedimented in the collective imagination. In *London's Roman Amphitheatre* the ruins of the structure have been preserved and exhibited *in situ* and light projections reconstruct the environment of the arena.

If it is true that we should know and practice all kinds of possibilities offered by the contemporary lighting market with a precise knowledge of their performance and results, we are aware that not only is it important to *make light* in a more or less artistic way, but it is also very important to *communicate history*, making our heritage accessible to all.

For example, in the so-called *archaeological crypts*, light is often coloured and manipulated in many different ways, also through interactive consoles, and has become an essential tool to communicate the meaning of past evidence. In the *Crypt of Plaça del Rei* in Barcelona, architect Josep Llinas mediates the understanding of the archaeological ruins through manipulation of brightness, contrast and colour variations.

Actually, we should conceive museum for a wide range of visitors, seeking an innovative use of lighting and trying to find a common language that may lead to an effective understanding of past remains.



Light in the London's Roman Amphitheatre.

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