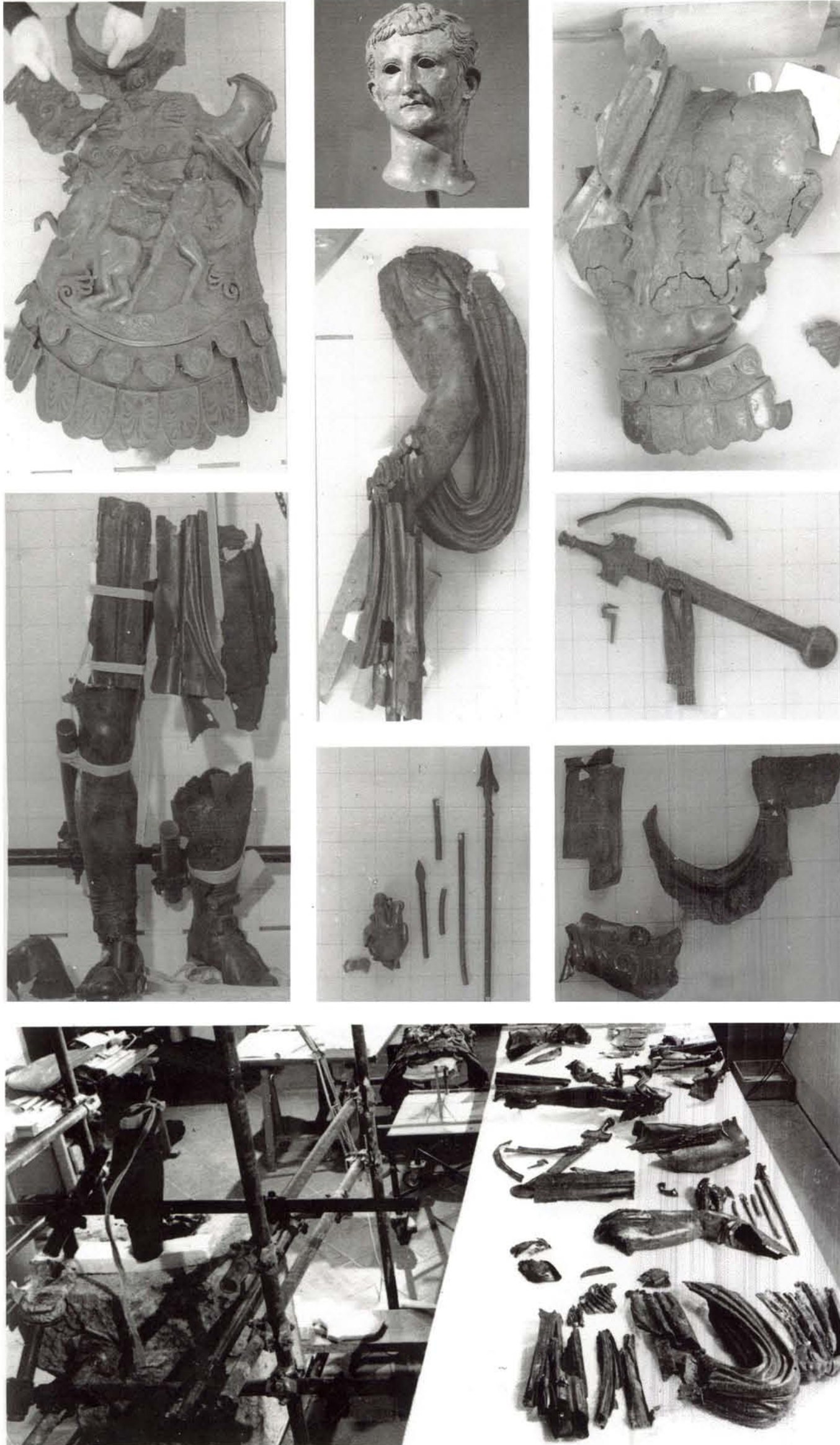


## Germanico

THE RECOMPOSITION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF THE MONUMENT



Drawing of fragments and recomposition of the monument in drawings, Project of Reconstruction, Work co-ordinator:  
Paolo Martellotti, Laura Musa, A. Marcello Mazzotta  
Monument Assembly:  
IL LABORATORIO srl - Rome



## The bronze statue "GERMANICO"

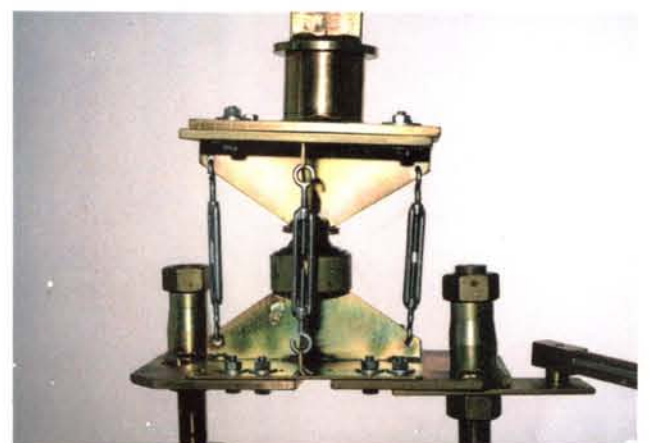
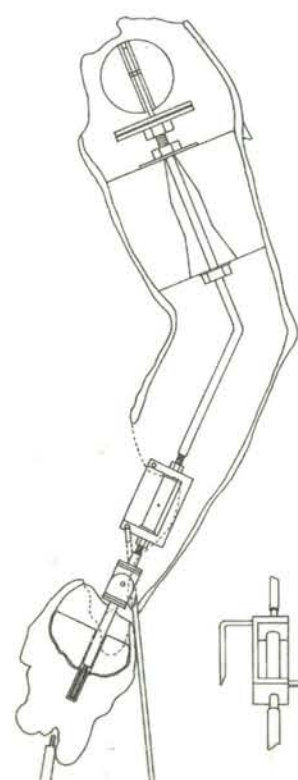
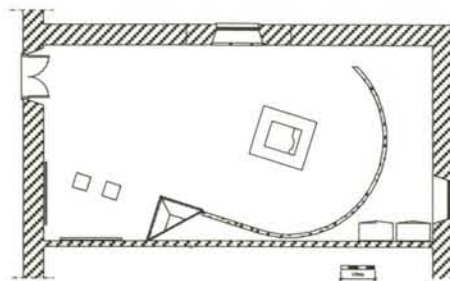
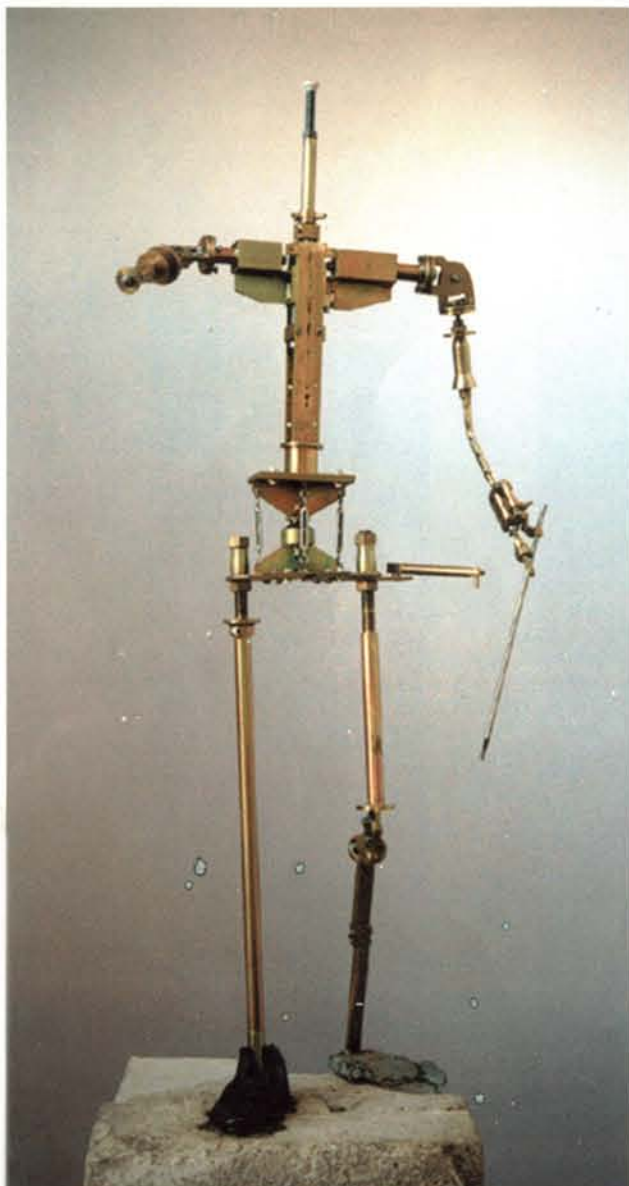
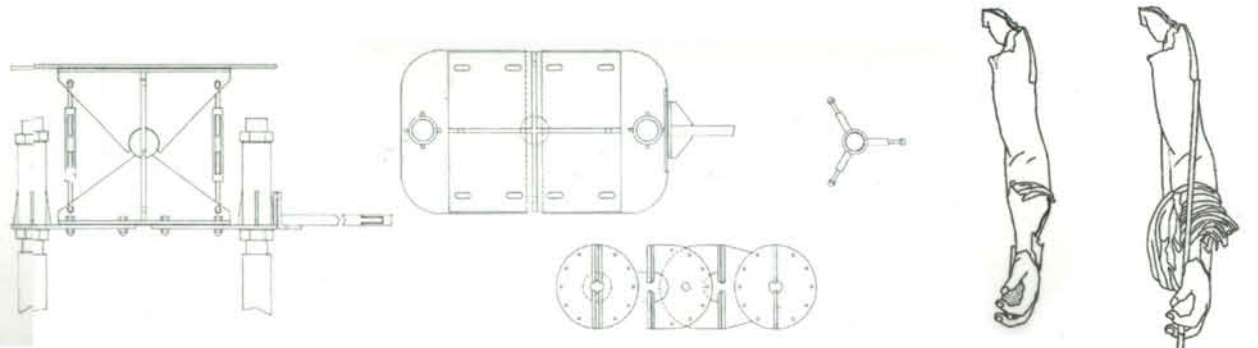
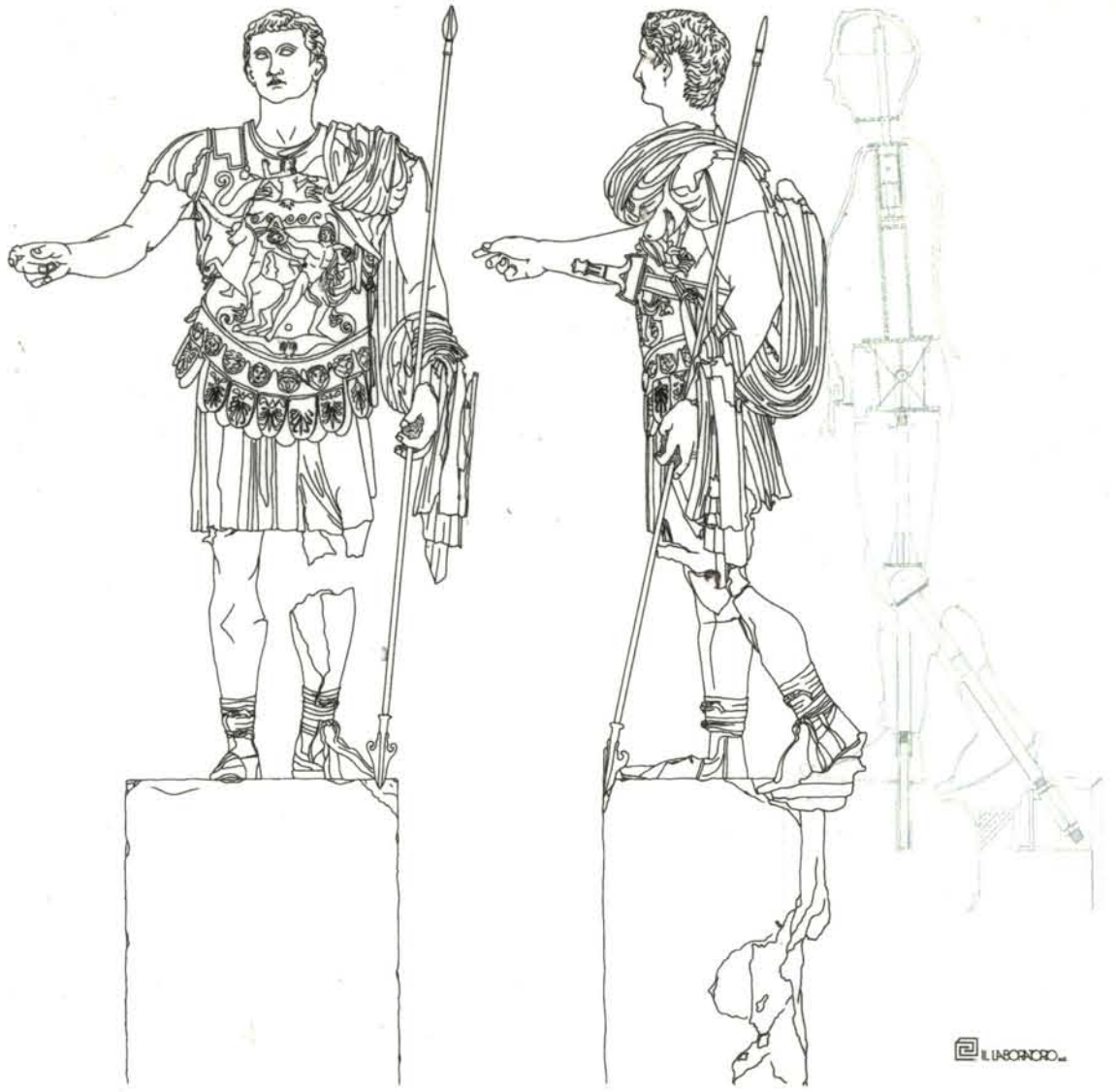
### THE DISCOVERY.

In August of 1963, following excavations for the construction of a windmill, using mechanical apparatus - in Amelia, just outside the ancient city walls, along via Ortana (which probably formed a stretch of via Amerina) not far from the city gate "Romana", there came to light numerous fragments from a bronze statue of proportions larger than life, yet resembling an independent figure soon to be identified as Germanico Cesare - Prince of the Giulio-Claudia family.

The statue constructed in various parts, fused separately and then assembled, rested upon a base of limestone found only partially intact, yet still had attached to it a bronze fragment of the right foot. Along with the statue were also discovered a column capital with trophies; ships bows - probably allusive to a victorious sail of Augusto and an altar. The base of the statue is without epigraphic text as this was probably inscribed on the base cladding, which unfortunately was not conserved. Recently there has been hypothesis that the "campus" was founded in the flat area i.e. the area used for games and public spectacles. Given the manner in which the relics were discovered, it is difficult to reconstruct and understand the life of the statue without knowing the original placing or whereabouts of the fragments, nor of the base.

### RECOMPOSITION AND RECONSTRUCTION

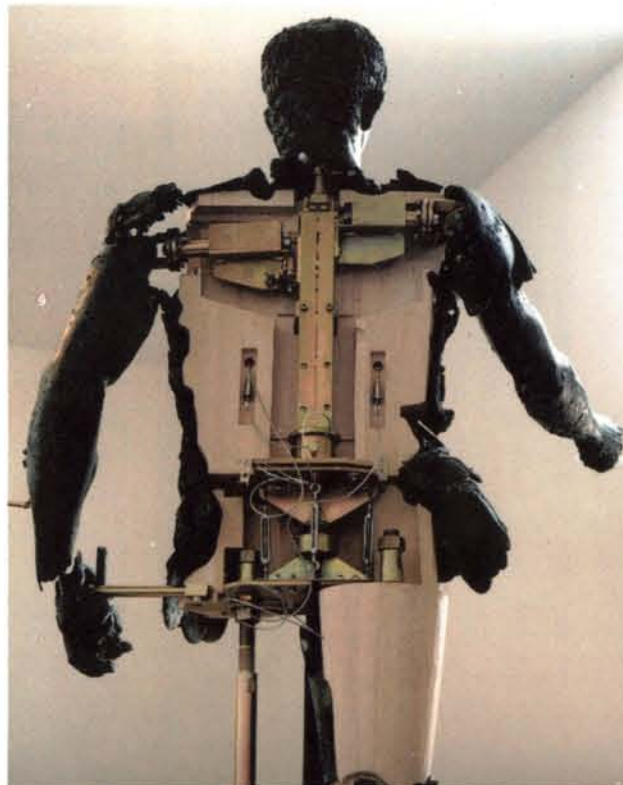
In contrast to the majority of bronzes that we come across, this monument had not experienced any previous interven-





tions of restoration or been used in any other context - which is obviously of great importance for Iconographic studies. However the quantity and quality of these fragments seemed to propose problems in terms of assembly, be them technical or scientific. In order to reconstruct the monument in its whole, it was necessary above all to know exactly the position of every single fragment found. (An earlier restoration had already recomposed hundreds of fragments into around 60 principle pieces.) However the loss of material, the quantity and miniscule size of the fragments and above all their deformation, would not allow for the reassembly of the original form using the traditional methods of joining bronze pieces together. Today, due to aging over time, the bronze will be very crumbly and possible to break without any deformation, originally it was impossible to break up the bronze without any such deforming. Every mistake, even to the last millimetre, in the act of piecing together two fragments can produce distortion within the whole, whilst positioning the pieces together - hence producing centimetres of error. In following such distortions could lead inevitably to a breach of the original composition and iconographic study. On the other hand, the techniques that generally characterize the working of bronze sculptures and in particular that of fusing indirectly (cuts of wax; welding; bridges of reinforcement; dovetail joints; covering patches etc ) reduces the bronze into a state similar to that of a palinsesto, and therefore a thorough philological investigation can make sure of certain data. For this reason, it was decided to proceed with a recomposition of the monument using a series of drawings that could keep account of all the available information on the bronze. On the basis of this information a drawing was produced - using a manual technique, in the positions presumed correct for the casting. For the fragments badly deformed a hypothetical drawing of their original configuration was made. The method of recomposition using drawings was based on definite information - that of the unmistakable positioning of the feet on the travertine base; the rest was gained from careful assembly, in which the Iconographic and stylistic credibility came from following of technical information certain to be reliable. As an example the studio developed a method for identifying the precise position of the left arm. On the shoulder the sculptor had allowed for five different merges to take place, that is, the arm was welded with the fore valve of the armourplate, the rear valve, the cape, and the sleeve of the tunic. Of the five merges, fortunately only the rear part of the armourplate had immediately lost any material. The study and measurements of the numerous points of contact allowed, in spite of deformation, the possibility to work out exactly the position of the left arm. The technical data was then compared to the stylistic data eg. the muscle formation of the arm or the position of the Nike under the oster, and also with the Iconographic studio.

Once the drawings of the recomposition of the monument were completed, the project for the reconstruction of the monument was begun. In this phase it was suggested to take away the two lower parts of the legs - the old tendons in leaded iron and instead replace these with a new supporting structure, therefore avoiding an external structure to the bronze fragments that would have been unfaithful to the formal structure of the monument. In dealing with the detail of reconstruction, we realised that the extent of the deformation and the amount of fragmentation involved would not permit for a static structure. Infact only a structure capable of moving in any direction, that could mediate between the physical and geometrical impossibilities of a deformed fragment could be Iconographically correct. In many cases the exact position for the display of the fragment, becomes only apparent whilst mounting, and is usually derived from the equilibrium of more than one piece. A strong structure of aluminium FE410, zinc and chrome coated was then designed allowing for 6 "omnicinetic" joints( feet - knees - left shoulder and wrist, pelvis and right shoulder), numerous joints, rotating hinges, more than 20 joints of varying lengths, as well as expansion joints in steel and controforms in araldite for the anchoring of the left hand and arm plus the right arm. Onto the metallic structure was attached a ligneous structure that has the double purpose of bringing together the monument as a whole, by filling in any volumi-



nous gaps or aiding areas that are visibly badly deformed and also at the same time forming a support structure for the bronze fragments. Some of the bronze fragments appeared to be very badly damaged or at least unable to be mounted onto the new structure. At the same time these pieces seemed necessary for the stylistic and Iconographic completion of the monument. A casting was then created in resin and using various configurations of settings, a copy was finally made keeping as close as possible to the original form.

The technique was a success, not only for an improved museum presentation but a deeper understanding and knowledge regarding the original proportions of the exhibit.

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Design Director of preparative work:  
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