

**THE SURVEY OF THE ROMAN  
MONUMENTS OF AMMAN BY THE  
ITALIAN MISSION IN 1930**

Collected and Commented  
by  
A. Almagro  
Carlo Ceschi in memorium

**Introduction**

From 1927 to 1938, an Italian Archaeological Mission carried out excavations in Amman, under the direction first of Giacomo Guidi and later of Renato Bartoccini. Their works were centred basically around the excavation of various zones of the Citadel. Unfortunately, almost all their work remained unpublished, as only some advance notices were published by Bartoccini.<sup>1</sup>

In 1930 the architect Carlo Ceschi took part in the Mission and dedicated himself to the making of plans of the main monuments of Amman, as recounted by Bartoccini in one of his articles.<sup>2</sup> As most of the documentation collected and drafted by the Italian Mission, all the plans made by the architect Carlo Ceschi remained unpublished.

When the Spanish Archaeological Mission took charge of the excavation and restoration of the Umayyad Palace of the Amman Citadel, an immediate interest arose in consulting the data, photographs and plans the Italian Mission had collected when excavating a considerable part of the Palace. Bartoccini's brief publications had not enabled us to gain sufficiently detailed knowledge. Consulting this documentation was especially imperative owing to the fact that most of the structures of the Umayyad period excavated by the Italian Mission, owing to the time elapsed and various other circumstances, had been destroyed in large part. Reviewing the surveying Bartoccini might have done was

necessary in order to ascertain the structure of an important area of the Umayyad Palace.

For this reason, we began a long search for the documentation, attempting to ascertain where Renato Bartoccini had left the material on the missions directed by him. After numerous enquiries,<sup>3</sup> we were informed by Dr. Fiorella Bartoccini, daughter of the Director of the Italian Mission, that by a decision of the family, all the documents relating to the excavations carried out by him in Amman had been deposited in the Istituto di Storia Antica de la Facolta di Lettre de l'Università di Perugia (Institute of Ancient History of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Perugia).

With the authorization of the family and the kind collaboration of Professor Mauro Torelli, we were able to consult all the material left by Bartoccini and especially that relating to the excavations of the Citadel. Apart from the plans and photographs of the excavation which have been of priceless assistance for our study of the Umayyad Palace, we found, among the various documents, a complete series of the plans which Carlo Ceschi had drawn of the monuments of Amman according to Bartoccini. Although most of these plans had no direct bearing on our work, our attention was immediately drawn to the extraordinary quality and detail with which they had been drawn and which makes them still unsurpassed as docu-

---

<sup>1</sup> R. Bartoccini, Ricerche scoperte della Missione Italiana in Amman, *Bollettine dell Associazione Internazionale per gli studi Mediterranei*, a.I., 1930, num. p. 15-17.  
Scavi ad Amman della Missione Archeologica Italiana, a. III, 1932, num. 2, p. 16-23; a. IV, 1933-34, nums. 4-5, p. 10-15, 19-20.

<sup>2</sup> Bartoccini, 1932, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> This search would not have been possible without the valuable collaboration of Professor M. Almagro-Gorbea, Director of the Spanish School of History and Archaeology in Rome, who indefatigably tracked down these documents until finding their present resting place.

mentation. For this reason, and after obtaining the appropriate authorizations, we decided to prepare these plans for publication. With the enthusiastic support of Dr. Adnan Hadidi, Director of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, we prepared small scale reproductions of all the plans we found, except those of the area of the Palace which we consider to be of lesser interest, as the plans drawn by the Spanish Archaeological Mission are more precise, having been prepared using photogrammetry.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the documentation of the Italian Mission has helped us to complete our work relating to elements which have now disappeared.

The plans correspond to the following monuments: the temple of the South Zone of the Citadel, wholly excavated by Bartoccini;<sup>5</sup> the cistern situated at the North End of the Citadel, outside the walls of the Roman perimeter, also excavated by Bartoccini;<sup>6</sup> the Theatre; the *Odeon* and *Nyphaeum*. It must be borne in mind that some of these plans were drawn when the buildings were partly buried, so that some defects which may be observed in the drawings are attributable to this. For this reason, we shall briefly comment on each of the drawings in order to record the small divergences between the drawings and this site as it is today. In spite of these errors, the plans published here are believed to be the best documentation in existence of these monuments in Amman.

### Temple of the Citadel

This temple was partly visible earlier. There is a drawing of this by Butler<sup>7</sup> and a small diagram published by Conder.<sup>8</sup> As this temple was excavated by Bartoccini, the plans drawn by Ceschi record all the things appearing and are more complete.

— Figure 1 corresponds to the plan of the temple reconstructed based on the remains found. Although the temple was

reconstructed, *tetrastylum in antis*, the possibility exists that it may have been *hexastylum peripterum* and therefore have a row of columns surrounding the *cella* on the line of the perimeter *socle* which would correspond to the *podium* of the temple. This is suggested by F. Zayadine in the plan published by him.<sup>9</sup>

— Figure 2 records the front wall of the temple on the inside and outside as they were after the excavation.

— Figure 3 represents an internal lengthwise section of the temple and detail of the perimeter wall.

— Figure 4 corresponds to details of the base and capitals of the columns of the temple.

— Figure 5 is a study of the reconstruction and assembly of the blocks forming the *antae* of the temple.

— Figure 7 contains details of architraves and mouldings of the temple.

— Figure 6 contains details of the moulding of the *socle* and of another architectural element.

— Figure 8 shows the marks of the support planes of several shafts of columns and a drawing of a piece of the architrave of the temple with the Greek inscription of this.

— Figure 9 is a reconstruction of the front elevation of the temple. It is worth noting the resemblance of this reconstruction with that published by Butler<sup>10</sup> which contrasts with the great differences existing between the ground plans. A comment similar to that about Figure 1 is appropriate here, owing to the possibility that the temple may have been *hexastylum peripterum*.

### The Cistern at the North end of the Citadel

This cistern was excavated by Bartoccini<sup>11</sup> and is described by Conder.<sup>12</sup> Both relate it to a passage in Polybius narrating the capture of Philadelphia by

<sup>4</sup> A. Almagro, *The Photogrammetric Survey of the Citadel of Amman and Other Archaeological Sites in Jordan*, ADAJ, XXIV (1980) p. 111-119.

<sup>5</sup> Bartoccini, 1930, p. 16; 1932, p. 16-21.

<sup>6</sup> Bartoccini, 1933, p. 10-11.

<sup>7</sup> H. C. Butler, *Publication of the Princeton University Archaeological Expedition to Syria*, Div. II, Sect. A, Leiden, 1907, ill. 24.

<sup>8</sup> R. C. Conder, *The Survey of Eastern Palestine*, London, 1889 vol. I, The Adwan Country p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> F. Zayadine, *Amman-Philadelphia*, *Le Monde de la Bible*, no. 22, 1982, Fig. 21.

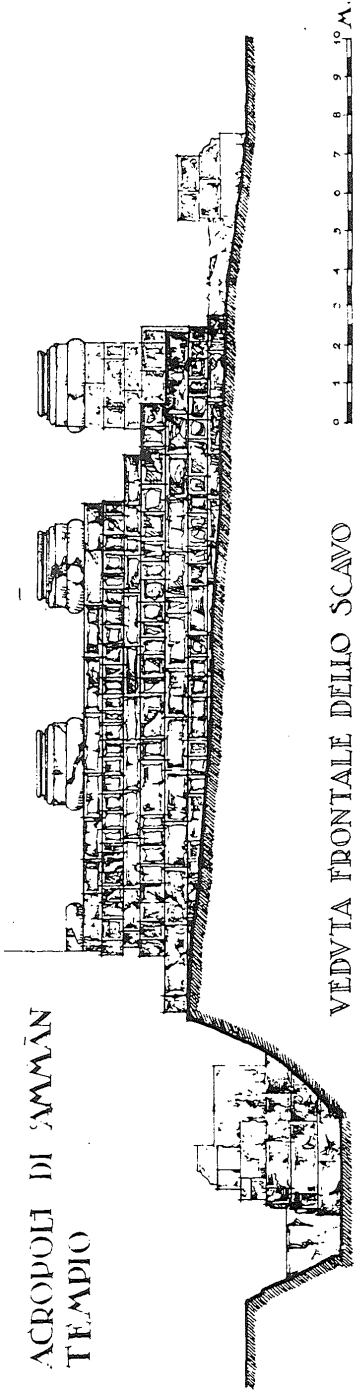
<sup>10</sup> Butler, 1907, ill. 24.

<sup>11</sup> Bartoccini, 1933, p. 10-11.

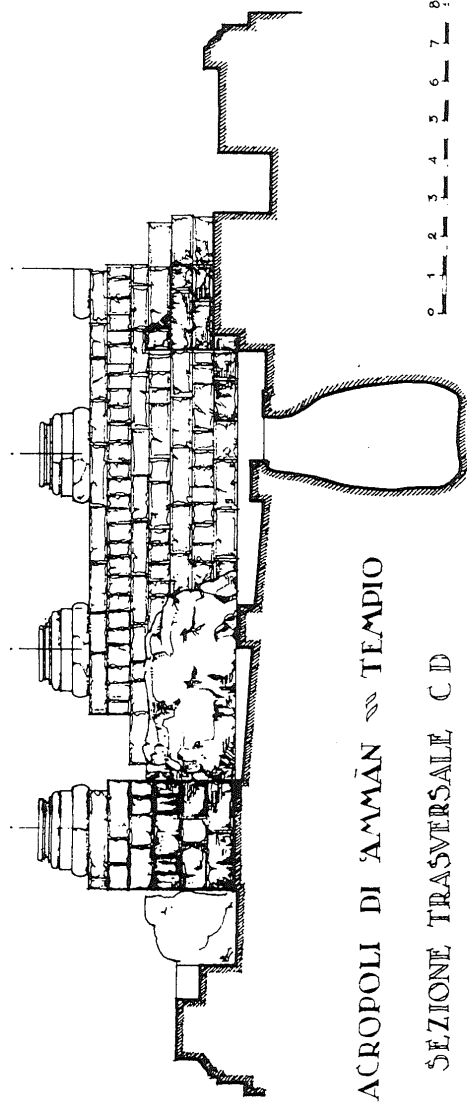
<sup>12</sup> Conder, 1889, p. 34.



ACROPOLI DI AMMÂN  
TEMPIO



VEDUTA FRONTALE DELLO SCAVO

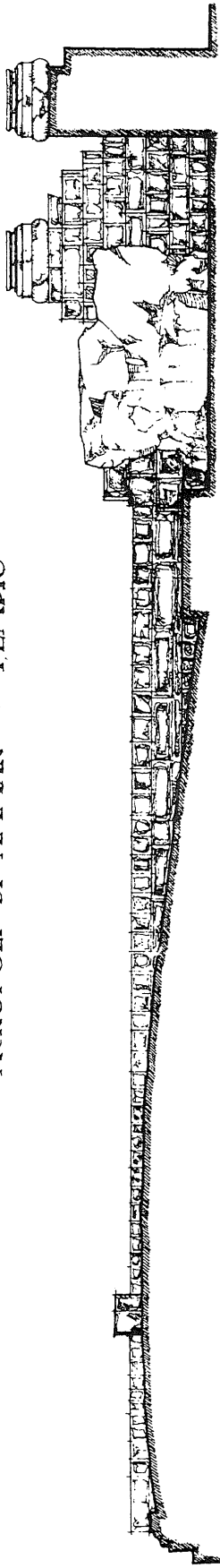


ACROPOLI DI AMMÂN ∞ TEMPIO

SEZIONE TRASVERSALE C D

Fig. 2

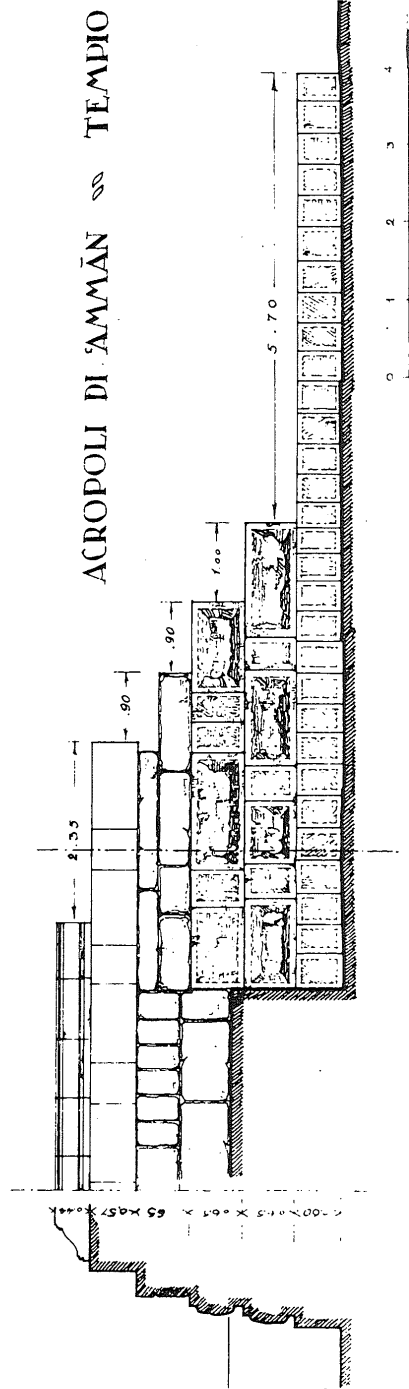
ACROPOLI DI 'AMMĀN ∞ TEMPIO



SEZIONE LONGITUDINALE A B

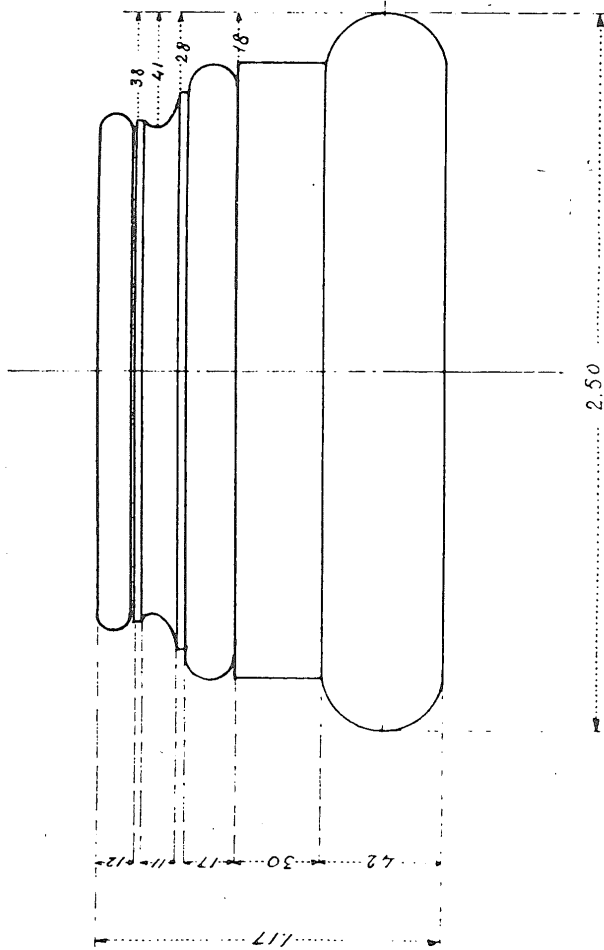
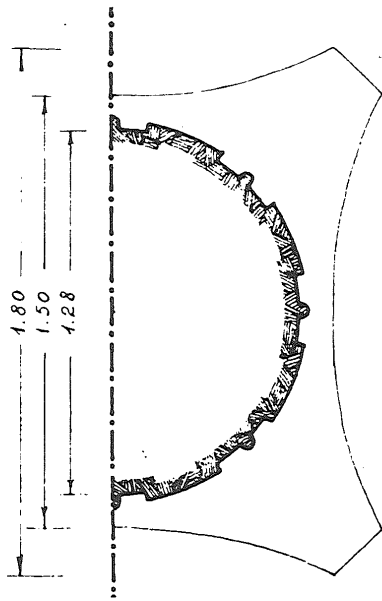
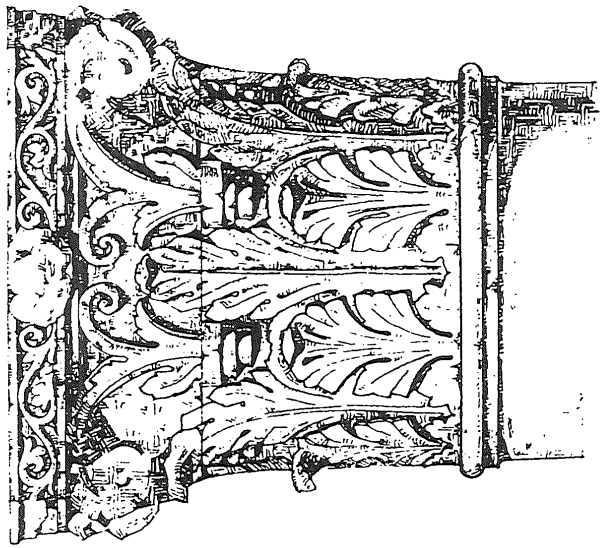


ACROPOLI DI 'AMMĀN ∞ TEMPIO



PARTICOLARE DEL MURO PERIMETRALE NELL' ANGOLO NORD EST

Fig. 3.

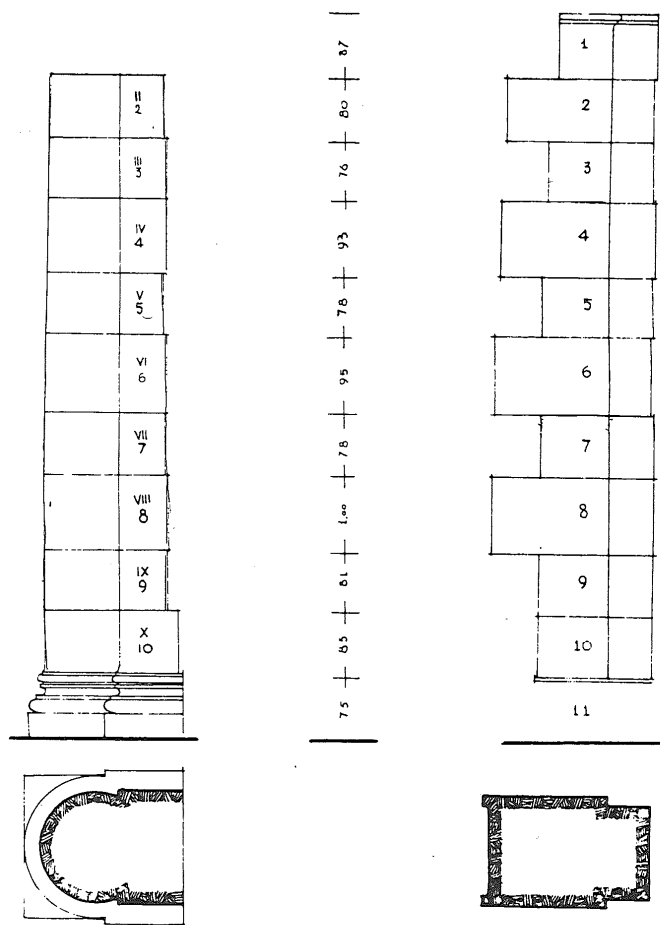


CAPITELLO DEL TEMPPIO

BASE DELLE COLONNE

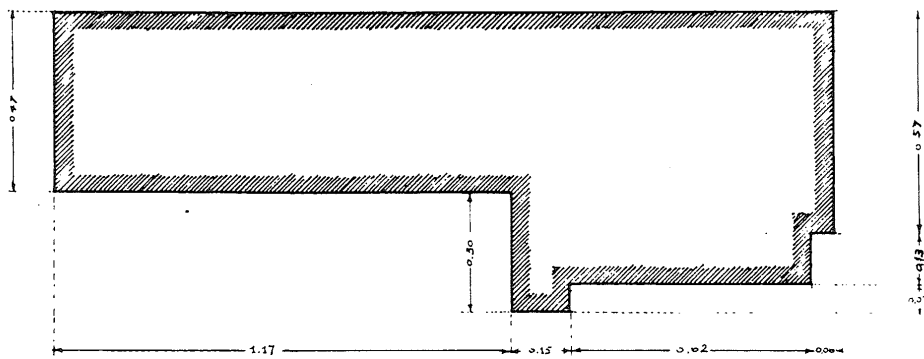
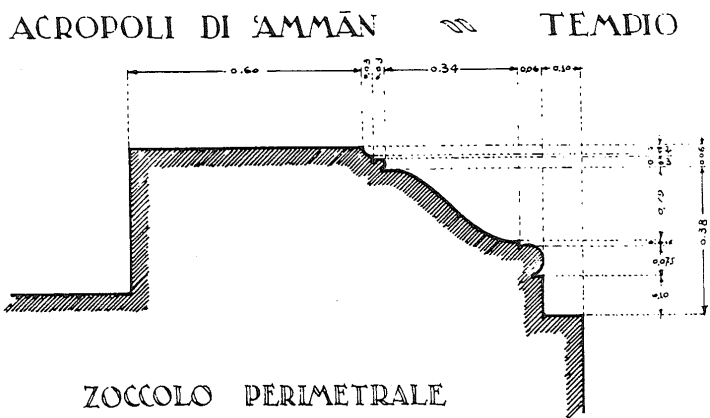
Fig. 4

ACROPOLI DI AMMĀN      TEMPIO



MEZZA COLONNA E CONTROPILASTRO  
DISPOSIZIONE DEI FLOCCHI RINVENUTI NELLO SCAVO

Fig. 5

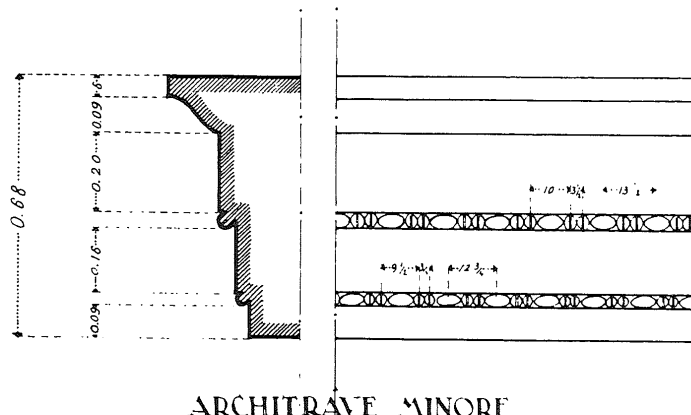


FRAMMENTO ARCHITETTONICO

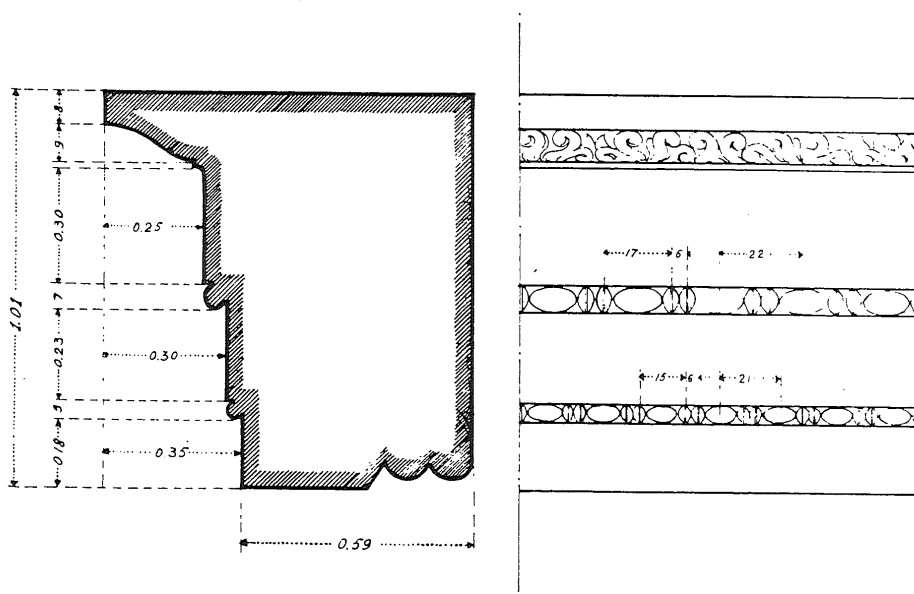
Fig. 6



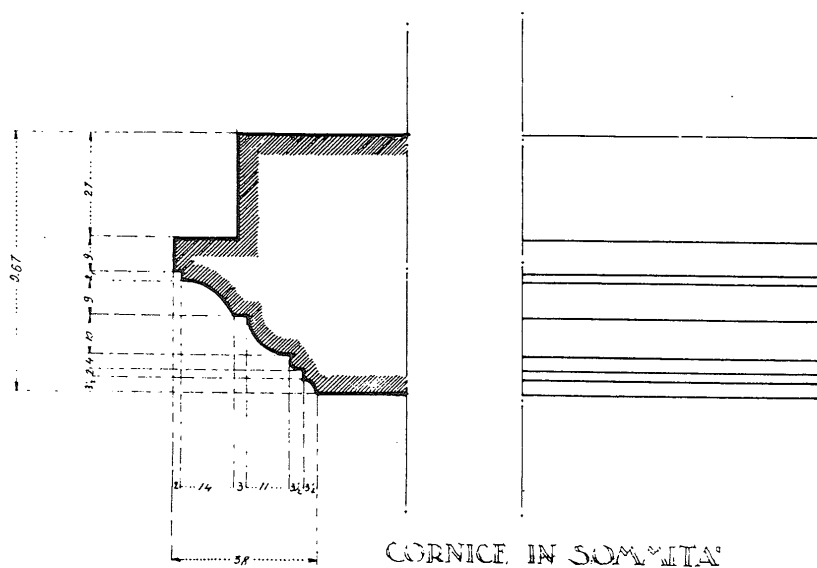
ACROPOLI DI AMMAN ~~~~~ TEMPIO



ARCHITRAVE MINORE



ARCHITRAVE DEL PRONAO



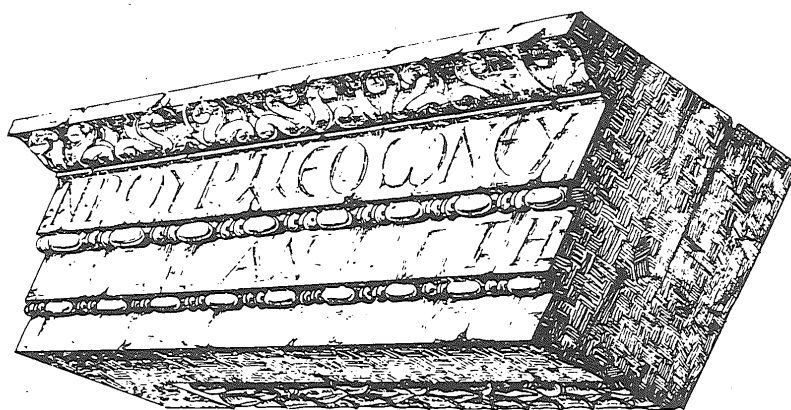
CORNICE IN SOMMITA'

Fig. 7

ACROPOLI DI AMMÂN TEMPIO

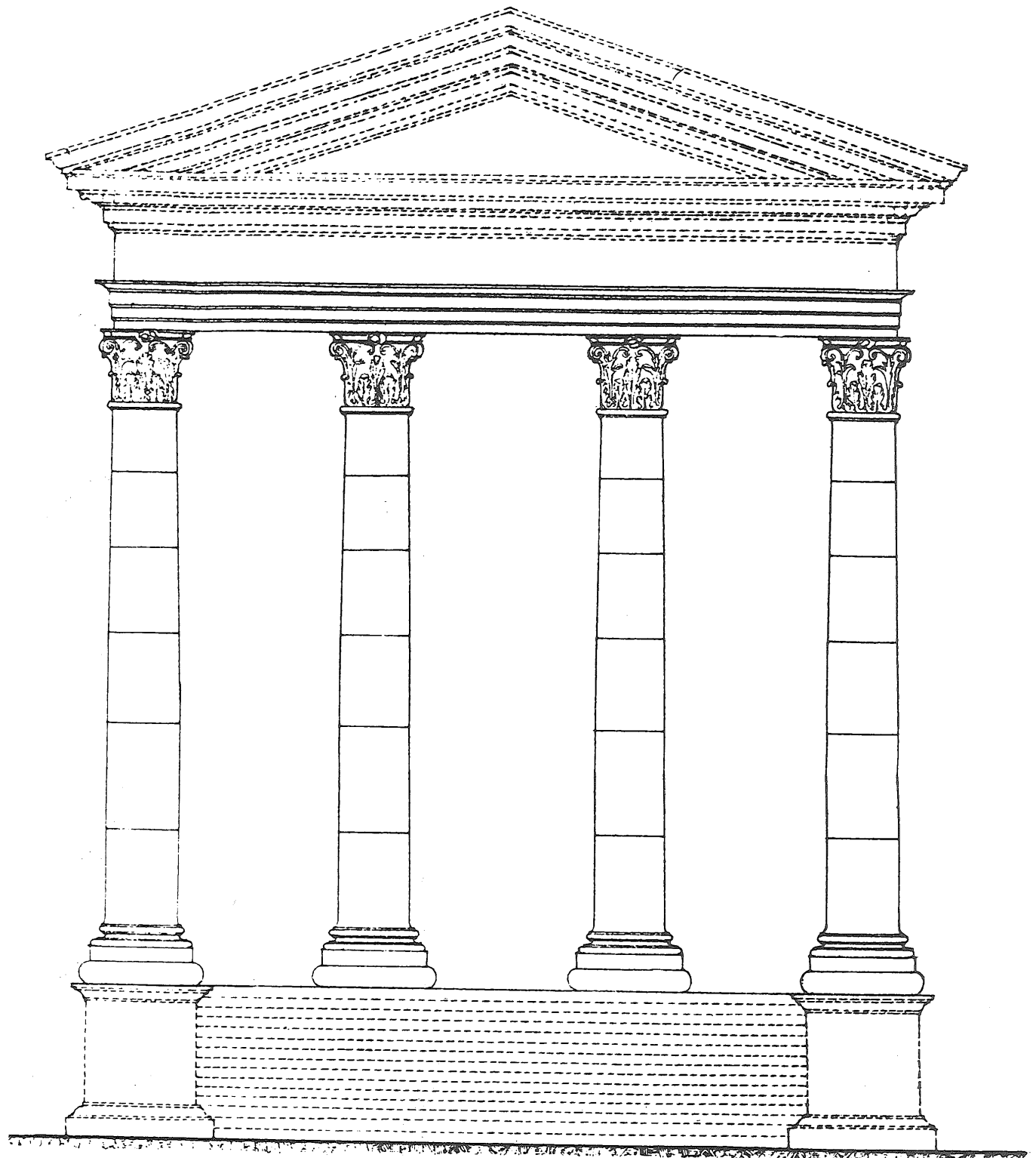


NOMI E INDICAZIONI VARIE INCISI SUI PIANI DI POSA  
DEI TAMBURI DI COLONNA



ARCHITRAVE DEL PRONAO

Fig. 8



RIPRISTINO IN ELEVAZIONE



Fig. 9

Antioch the Great.

— Figure 10 contains the plan and two sections of the cistern and the passage leading to it.

### The Theatre

The theatre has changed noticeably since Ceschi drew it, as it has been fully excavated and was restored in 1970. The most remarkable differences between the drawings and the reality are in the area of the stage, orchestra and ends of the *cavea*. Ceschi drew the areas, which at that time were not visible, and these do not accord with reality.

— Figure 11 corresponds to the ground plan of the theatre with the system of accesses to the *vomitoriae*. Both the stage and the area of the *parascaenia* have errors mainly because the drawing does not show the direct exit from the access galleries of the *praecintio*, separating the *media* from the *summa cavea*.

— Figure 12 is the ground plan of the theatre with the *cavea*. Besides being incomplete and with errors in the stage, the first stand of the *imma cavea* and the three stands of the *principia* of the orchestra are missing. Undoubtedly Ceschi could not see the *cavea* next to the *aditus maximus* shown, nor the double stairway leading from the orchestra to the first stand underneath the central tribune. Neither the *pulpitum* nor the *proscenium* are shown.

The ground plan published by Butler<sup>13</sup> has almost the same errors to which one must add the incorrect representation of the small *nymphaeum* crowning the monument. The plan published by Hadidi<sup>14</sup> is doubtless taken from this and apart from the fact that it shows the *pulpitum* and some other detail, it still has similar errors. Although it does not have much detail, a more correct plan of the theatre is that given in the general plan of the Citadel and centre of Amman made by the Spanish Archaeological Mission,<sup>15</sup> (Figure 28).

— Figure 13 is the section of the theatre along its axis. It presents the same

errors we noted in the ground plan, especially at the beginning of the *cavea* and the *pulpitum*.

— Figure 14 is a section of the theatre along the *aditi maximi* with a view of the *cavea*. The same comment may be made as the foregoing figures, and in particular it should be noted that the stair drawn between the galleries giving access to the *vomitoriae* of the first and second *praecintio* does not exist, as the upper gallery has a direct exit outside via a stairway parallel to the *aditus maximus*, and the lower gallery opens out into the latter.

— Figure 15 is a detail of the *vomitoria* of the second *praecintio* and the upper portio of the theatre. Which is apparently correct.

— Figure 16 is an axonometric view of the front *vomitoria*. One should note the discrepancy between the present state of the theatre in the finish of the *balteus* and the stairway leading from the *praecintio* to the first stand of the *summa cavea* which Ceschi draws stepped, as Butler had done, whereas at present and after the restoration of the theatre, the *balteus* cuts straight into the *vomitoria* and coinciding with the start of the stairway.

— Figure 17 presents the details of the beginning of the *imma* and *media cavea*. The latter is completely correct, whereas in the first the lower part with the podium separating the *cavea* from the orchestra is missing.

— Figure 18 contains several details of mouldings. The fragment of architrave shown must correspond to the portico of the forum, as it is smaller than those now in the *postscaenium*.

— Figure 19 is an inside view of the *aditus maximus* showing the stepping of the vaults.

— Figure 20 is a detail of the small *nymphaeum* at the top of the theatre. The door frame is not shown on the ground plan.

— Figure 21 contains details of the niches and the pilasters of the small *nymphaeum*. They are generally correct,

<sup>13</sup> Butler, 1907, Plate IV.

<sup>14</sup> A. Hadidi, The Excavation of the Roman Forum at Amman (Philadelphia) 1964-67, *ADAJ*, XIX

(1974) fig. 8.

<sup>15</sup> Almagro, 1980, fig. 1.

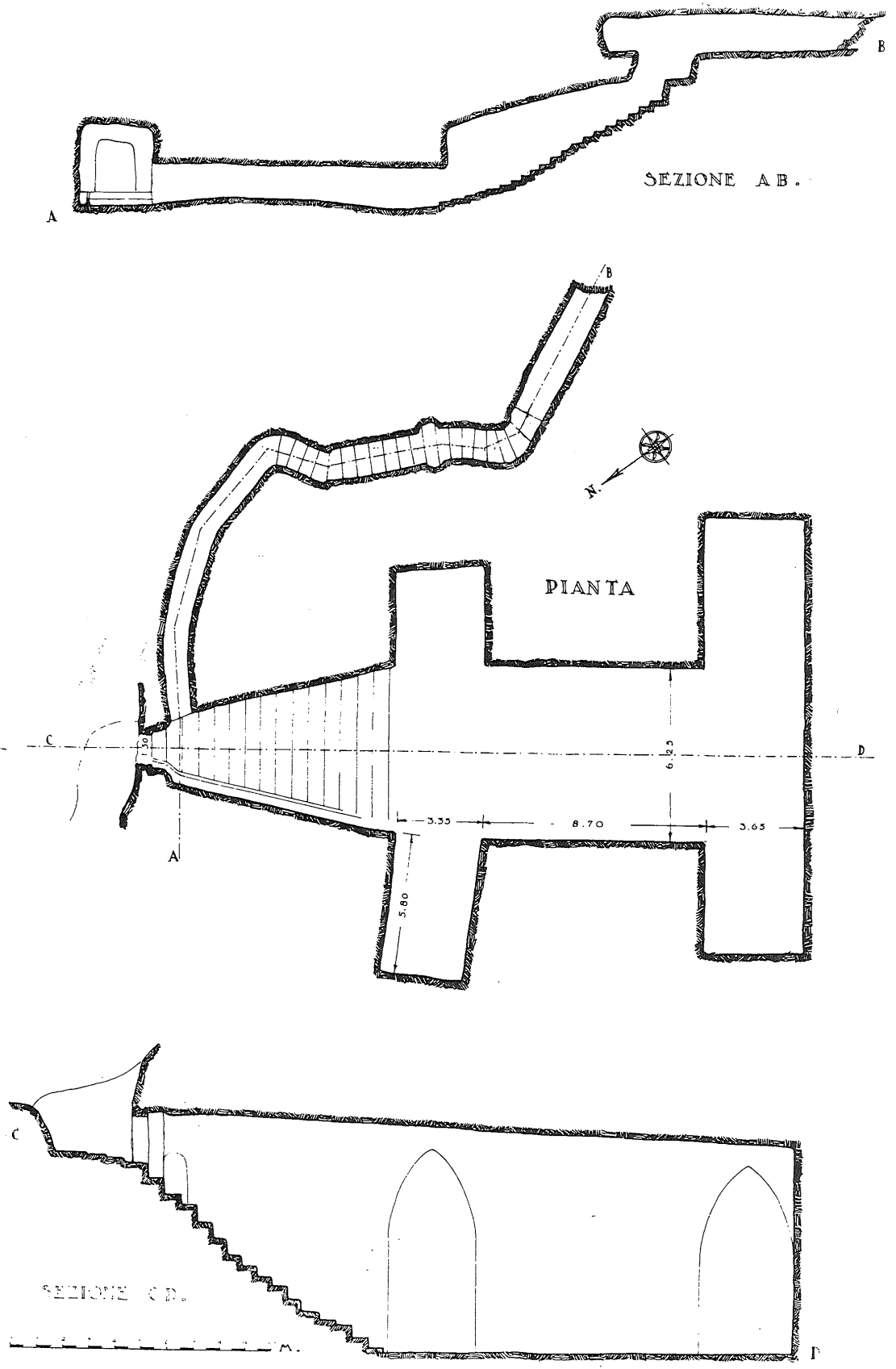


Fig. 10

# DISPOSIZIONE DEGLI ACCESSI AI VARI PIANI

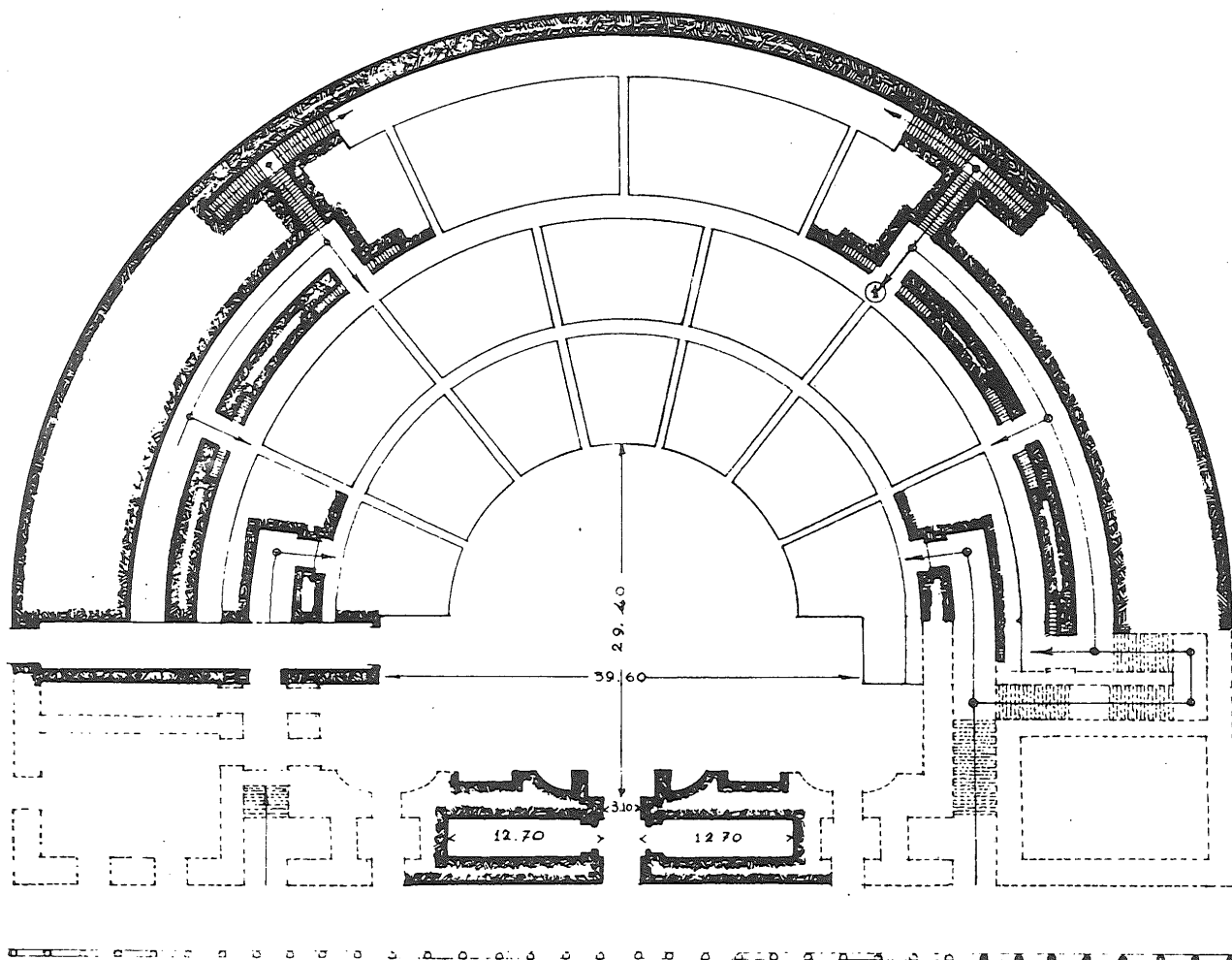
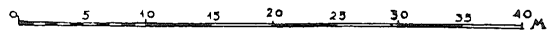


Fig. 11

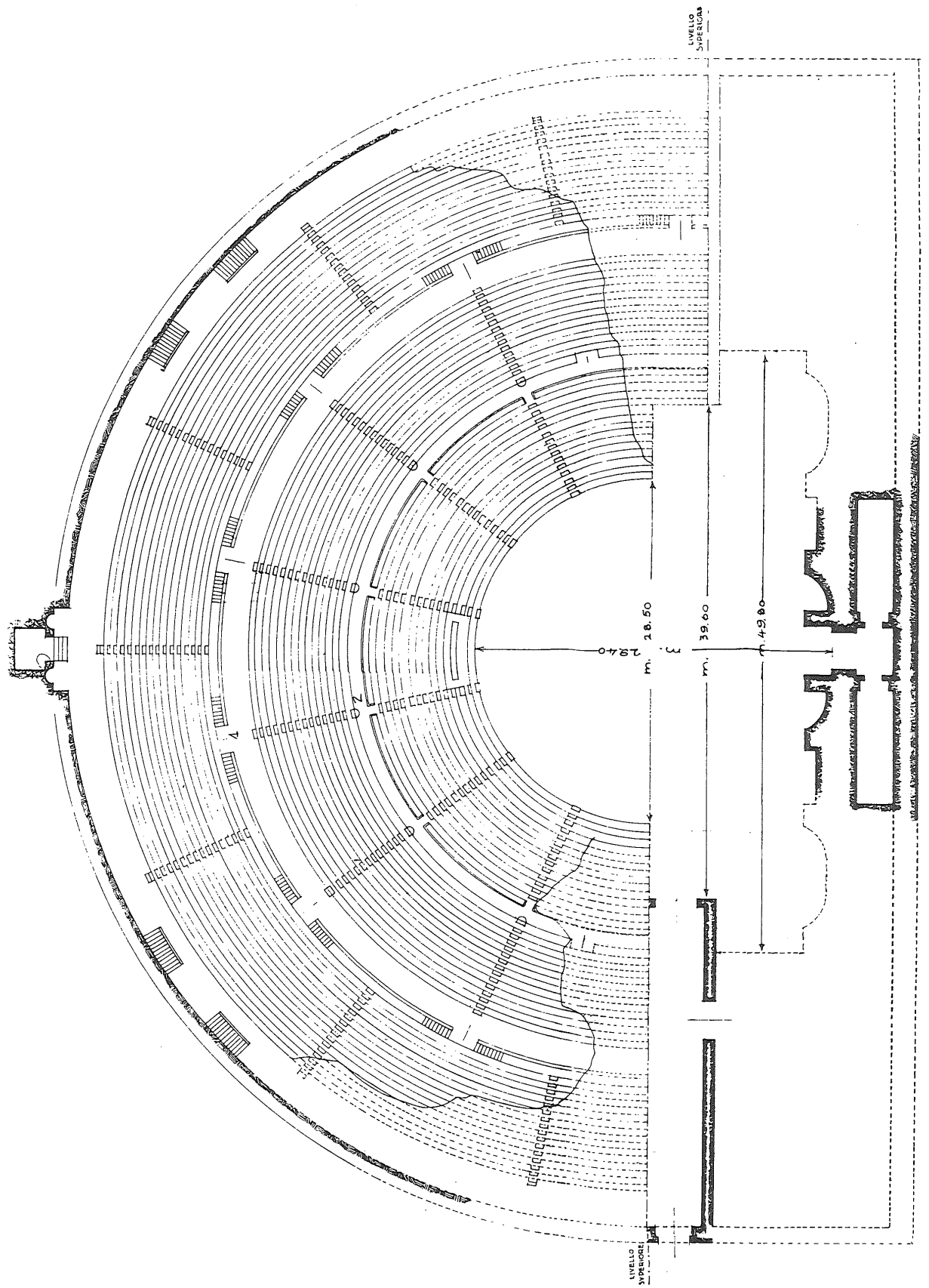


Fig. 12.

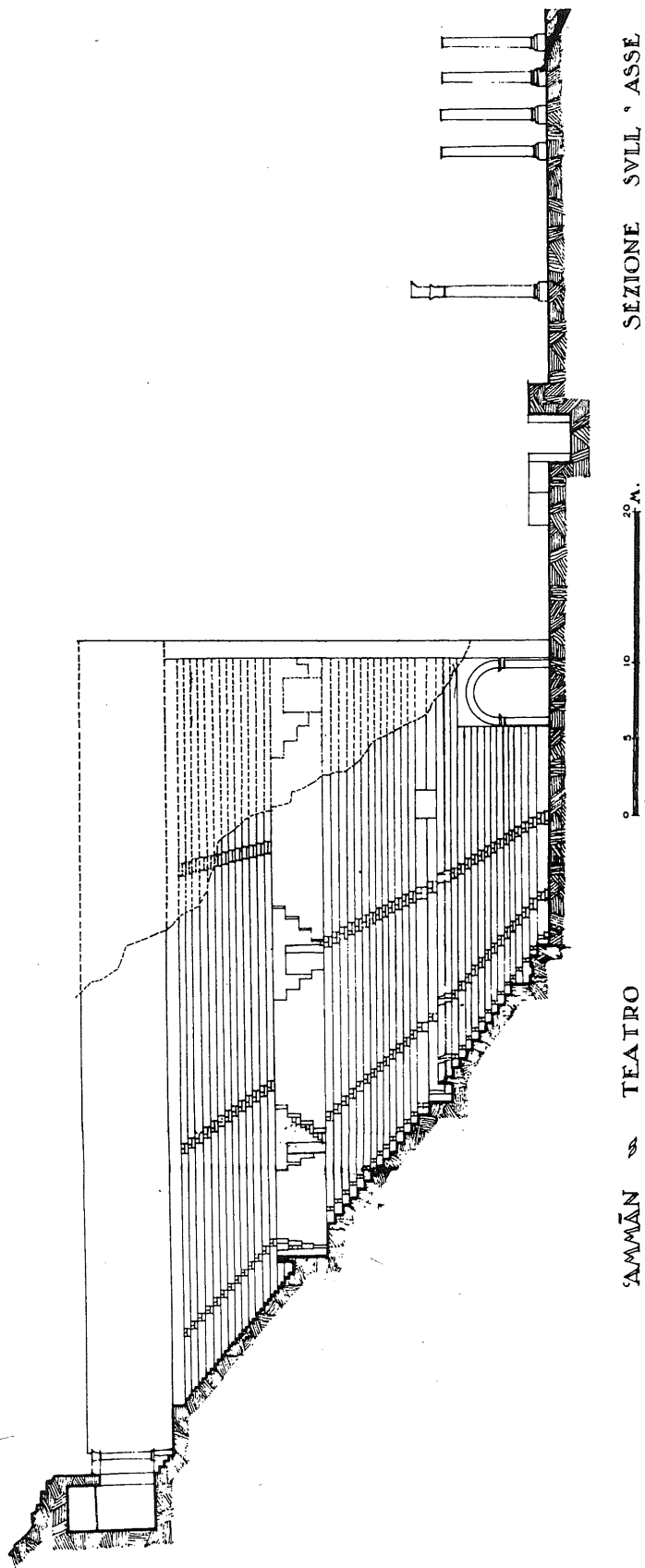
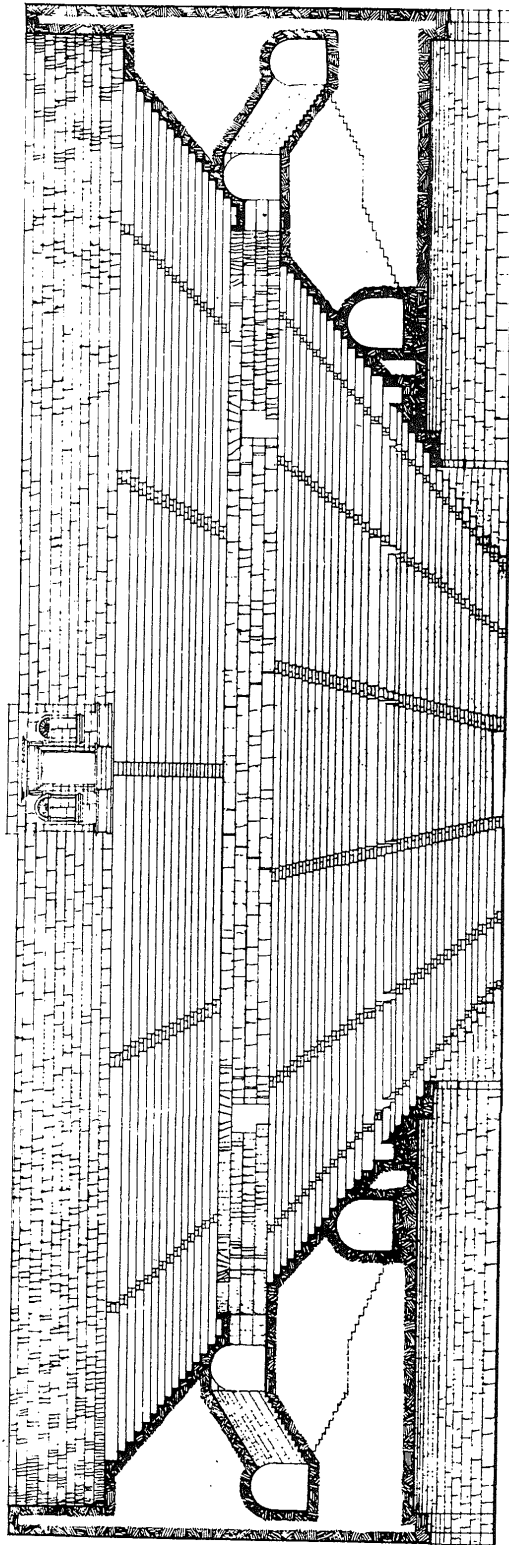


Fig. 13



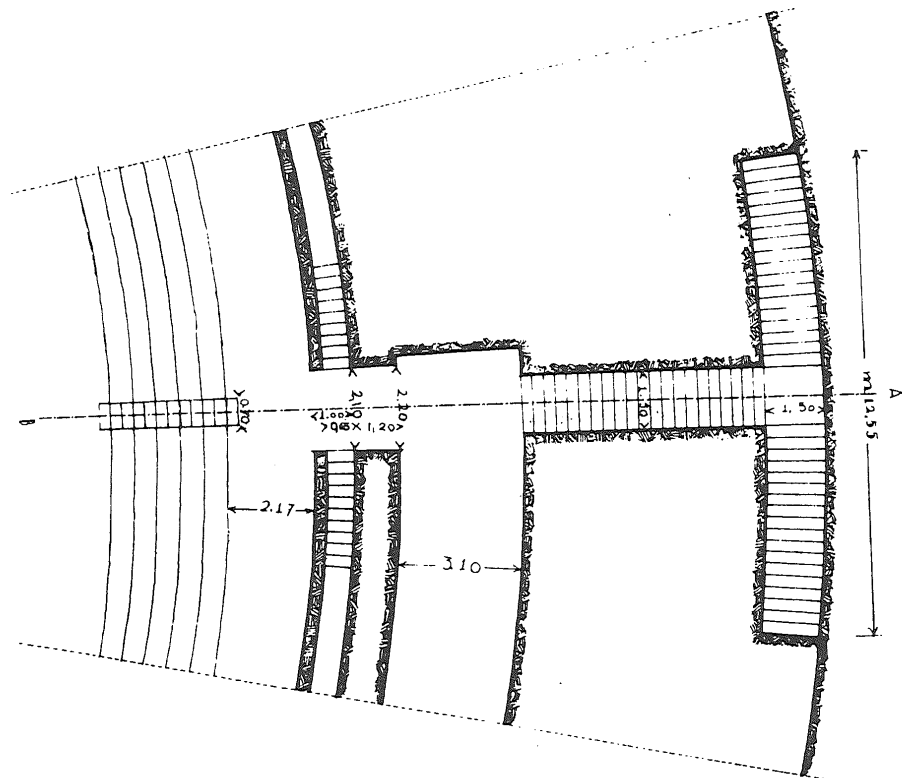


AMMAN 8 TEATRO



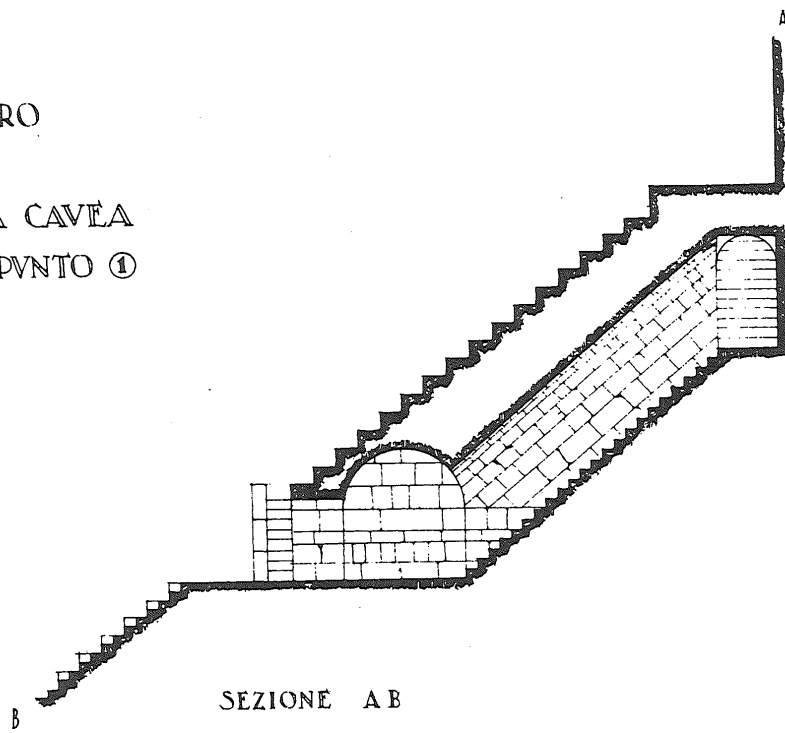
Fig. 14

SEZIONE SVL FRONTE.



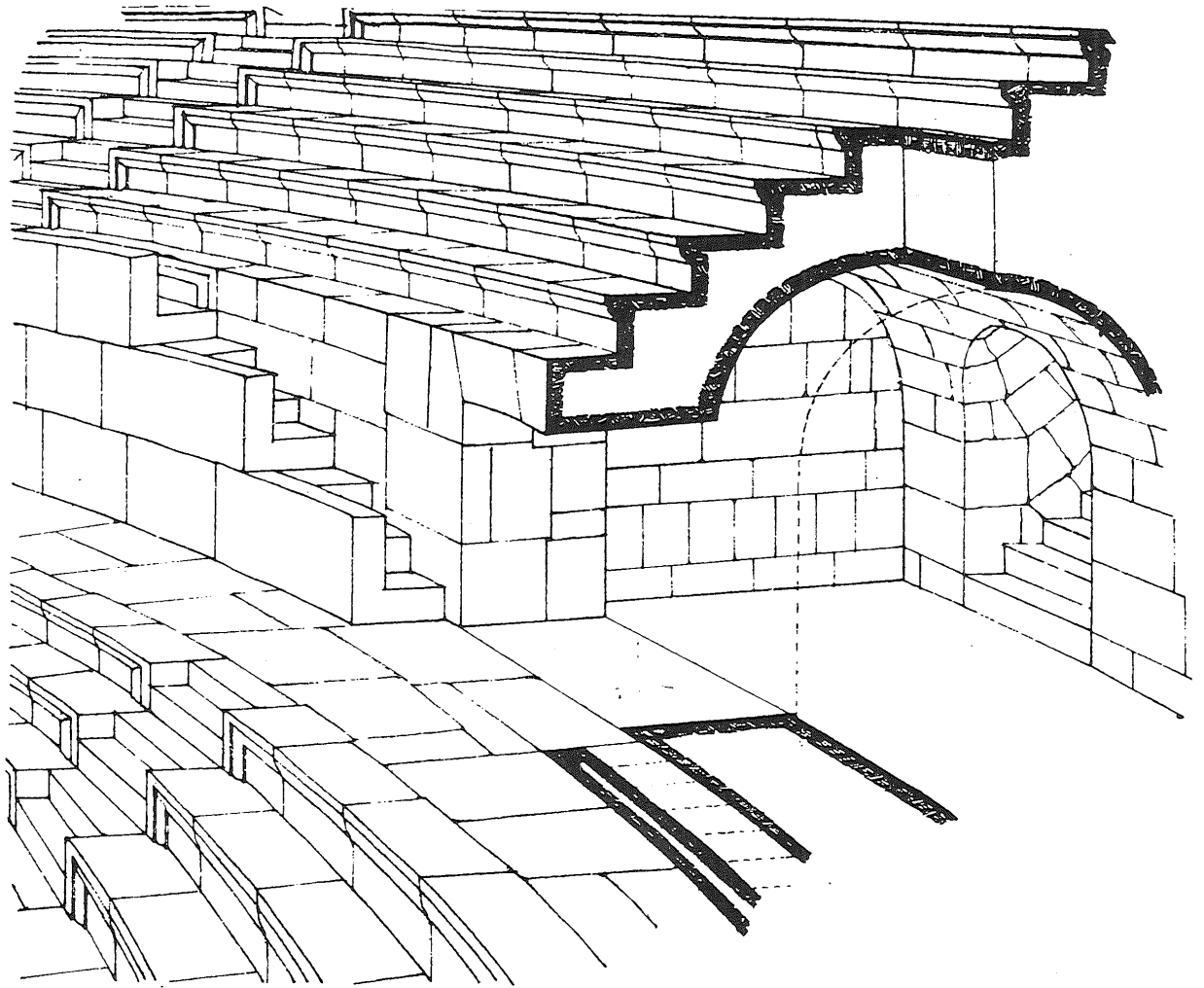
AMMAN TEATRO

PARTICOLARE DELLA CAVEA  
E DEGLI ACCESSI NEL PUNTO ①



SEZIONE A B

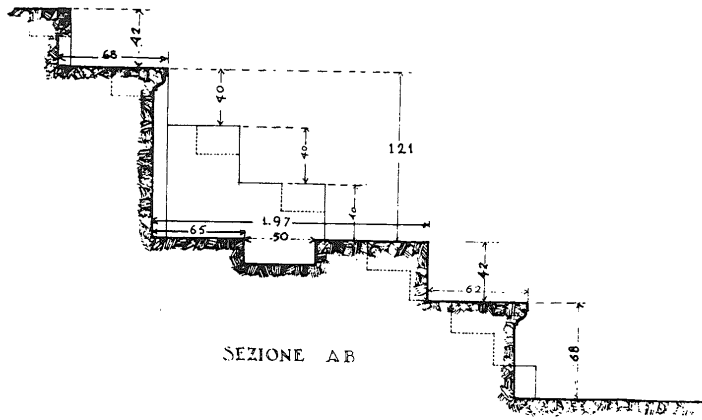
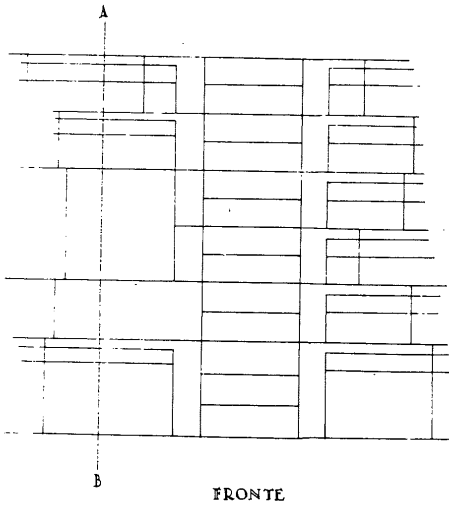
Fig. 15



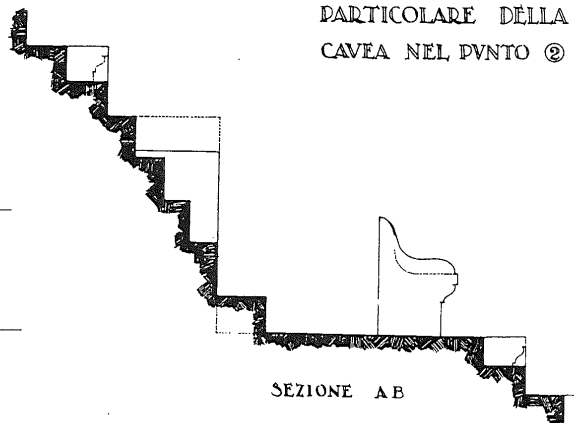
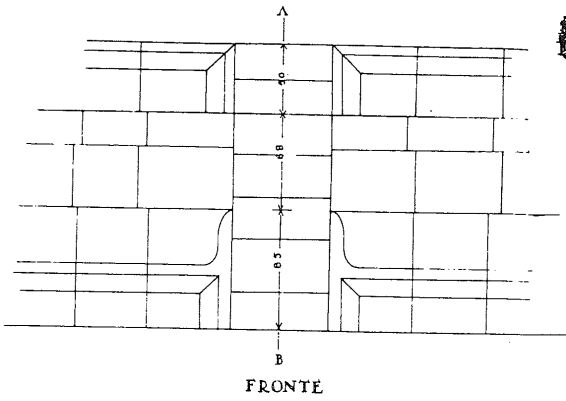
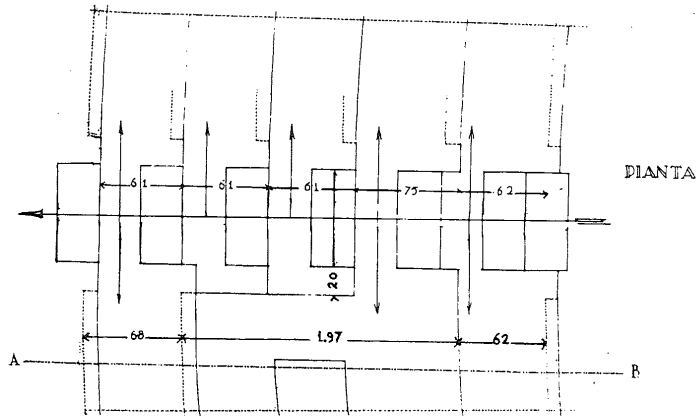
VEDUTA ASSONOMETRICA DELLA GALLERIA  
E DELL' ACCESSO ALLA CAVEA NEL DVNTO ①

Fig. 16

AMMANO TEATRO



PARTICOLARE DELLA  
CAVEA NEL PVNTO ③



PARTICOLARE DELLA  
CAVEA NEL PVNTO ②

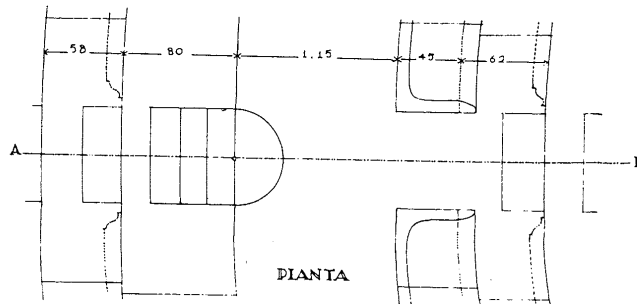
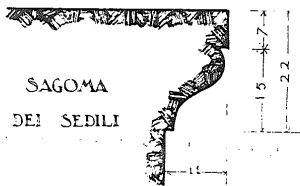
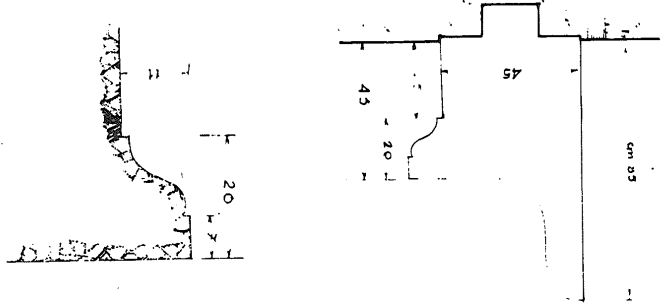


Fig. 17

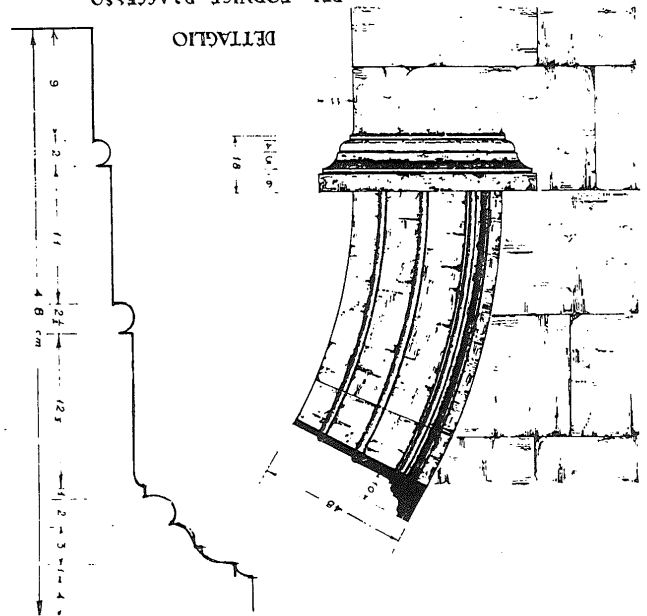
Fig. 18

SEDILE NEL TEATRO



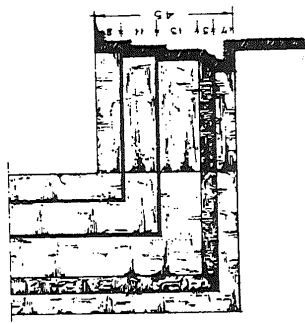
ALL' ORCHESTRA

DEL FORNICE D' ACCESSO

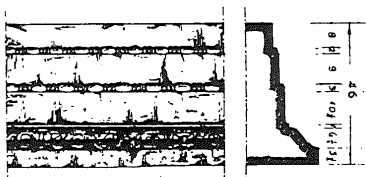


DEL PICCOLO NINFEO

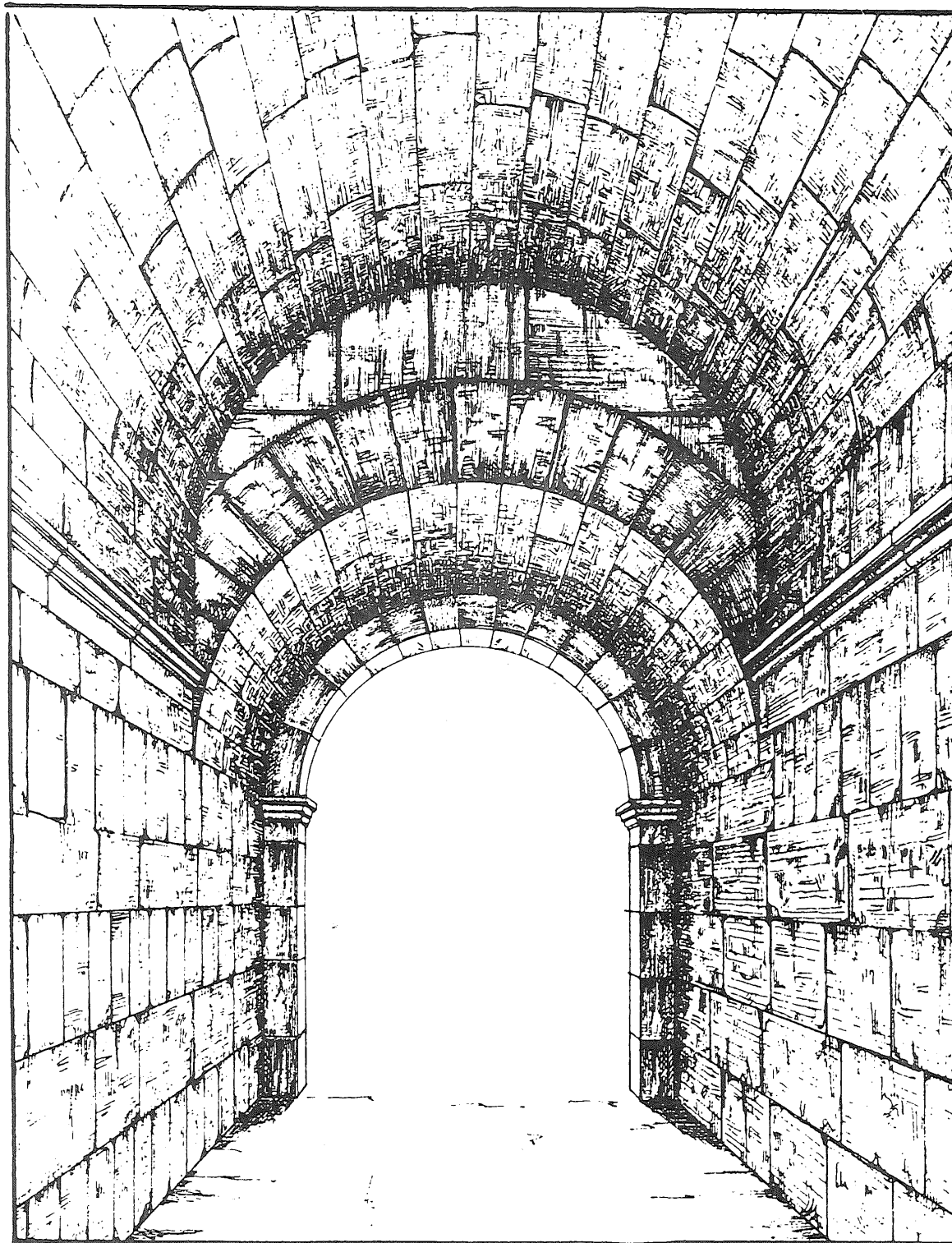
DETTAGLIO DELLA PORTA



FRAMMENTO D' ARCHITRAVE

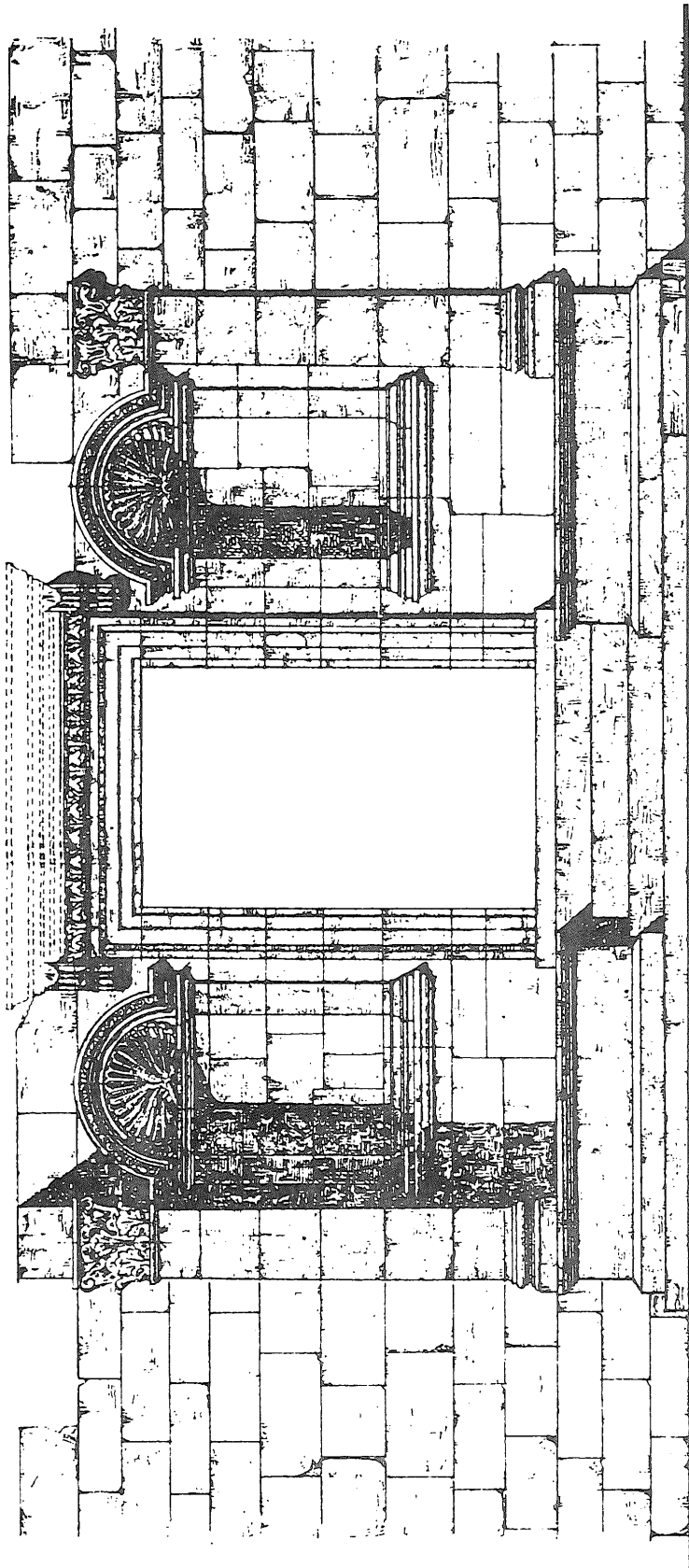


AMMĀN  TEATRO

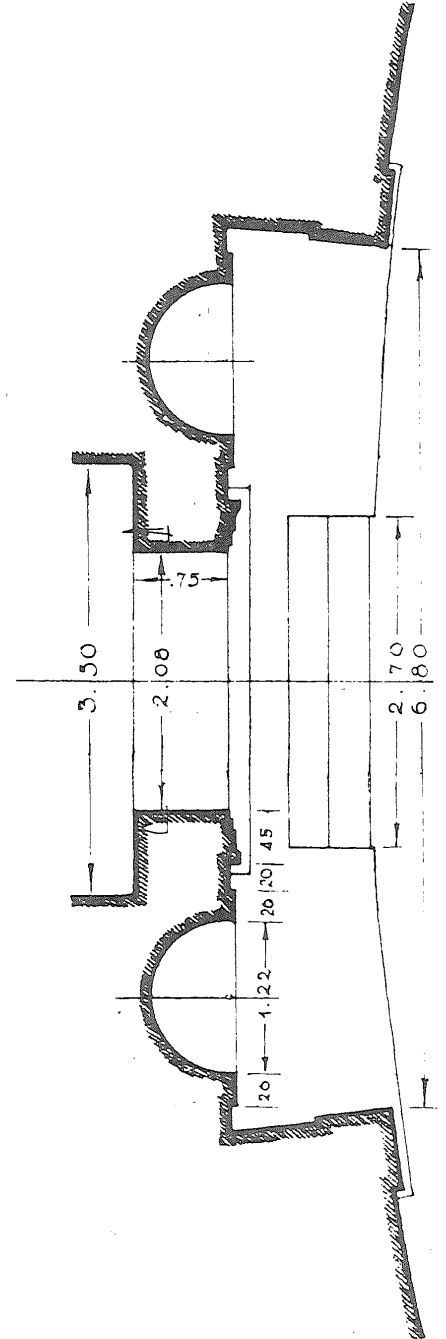


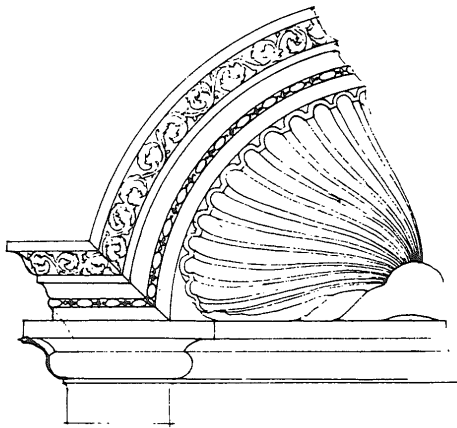
DISPOSIZIONE DEI CONCI NEL PASSAGGIO  
ORIENTALE ALL' ORCHESTRA

Fig. 19

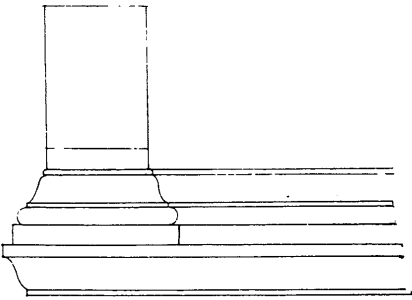
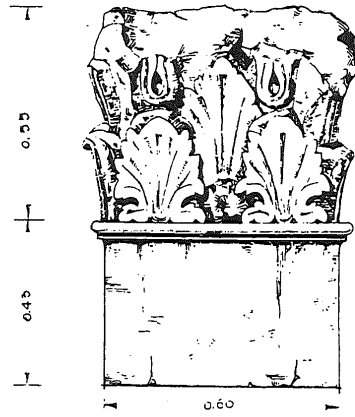


PICCOLO NINFEO IN SOMMITA'

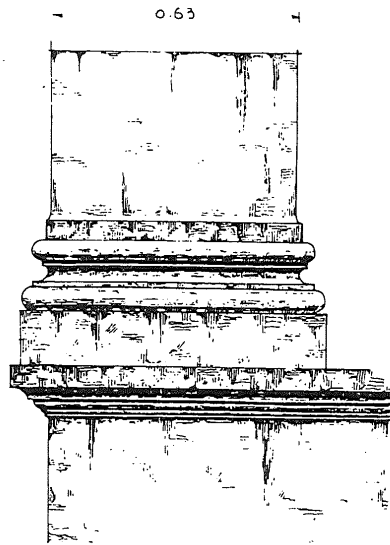
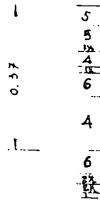




DETTAGLIO  
DEL PICCOLO NINFEO



AMMÂN - TEATRO



DETTAGLIO DEL PICCOLO NINFEO

Fig. 21



except the capital of the small pilaster of the niche which was drawn with a *torus* and a *cavetto* when actually it has a *gula*.

### The Odeon

This monument must also have been buried deeply when Ceschi saw it, as almost all the defects in the drawings may be attributed to the bottom of the building not being visible. It is interesting to note that the part of the façade preserved has not suffered any noticeable change since 1930, whereas Ceschi drew all that had disappeared since 1900, surely based on the photograph published by Butler.<sup>16</sup> In this connection it should be noted that in 1868 the west wall of the south *parascaenium* was preserved to a much greater height, as can be seen in the photograph published by Conder.<sup>17</sup>

— Figure 22 is the plan of the *Odeon*. Here five access doors from the *post-scaenium* to the *procaenium* are shown when actually there were only three. Also missing are the access doors to the rooms at the end of the *postscaenium* and the many door openings Ceschi could not see. The *pulpitum*, discovered after inner cleaning of the building,<sup>18</sup> is not shown. The orchestra, which has an ultrasemi-circular ground plan is not shown thus; and, the central *vomitoria* shown leading to the orchestra actually led to the lower *cavea*.

— Figure 23 is the section along the axis of the *Odeon*. It presents similar errors to the plan. Neither the *pulpitum* nor the base of the *frons scaenae*, visible today, are shown, and the level of the orchestra is incorrect.

— Figure 24 is the elevation of the facade of the *Odeon* facing the *forum*. This shows, as we have said earlier, the state in which Ceschi saw it and when photographed by Butler.

In spite of these inaccuracies, the survey may be considered to be more exact than that by Butler<sup>19</sup> which is the same plan

published by Hadidi.<sup>20</sup>

### The Nymphaeum

It is difficult to judge the accuracy of these plans, as the monument is at present completely taken over by modern buildings making the checking of the drawings totally impossible. The only element of comparison is the survey published by Butler<sup>21</sup> with which the plan coincides in almost everything. Only a few details seem to demonstrate that the plans of Ceschi are rather more faithful than those of Butler. At any rate, a comparison of both drawings enables us to verify the destruction suffered by the monument between 1900 and 1930 affecting fundamentally the top of the apse or central *hexedra* which Ceschi draws in dotted lines.

— Figure 25 is the ground plan of the *Nymphaeum* at the level of the foundations and sewerage into the river.

— Figure 26 is the plan of the *Nymphaeum* at the level of the *portico*.

Figure 27 presents the elevation of the *Nymphaeum* at its monumental part.

The fact that we have laid special emphasis on the errors or defects observable in all these plans should be no reason for a less than positive judgement of all the work carried out by the architect Carlo Ceschi in 1930. In general I have already said that almost all these defects are due to the fact that the monuments were at that time still unexcavated. In spite of this, I believe them to be an important contribution to the study of the Roman monuments in Amman, surpassing in quality those already published. May this critical study then serve as a warning to those who may wish to use these plans as a possible starting basis for a definitive planimetric survey of these buildings.

For my part, I only wish to contribute to public knowledge this important documentation, unfortunately unpublished until now. And, at the same time pay my

<sup>16</sup> Butler, 1907, ill. 35.

<sup>17</sup> Conder, 1889, opposite p. 40.

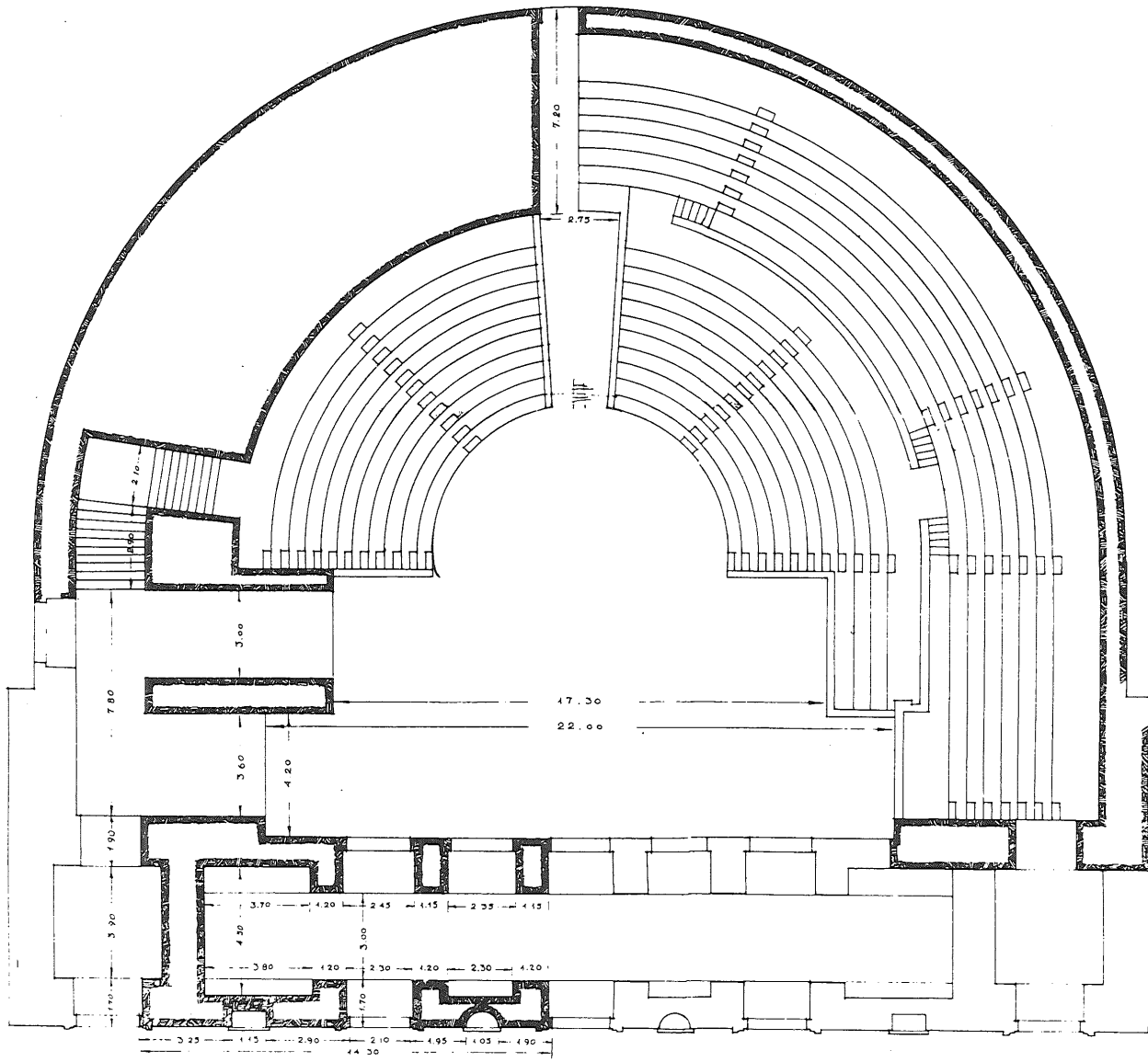
<sup>18</sup> Hadidi, 1974, p. 89.

<sup>19</sup> Butler, 1907, ill. 34.

<sup>20</sup> Hadidi, 1974, Fig. 9. A new plan of the Odeon,

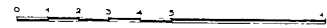
prepared by J. Rougetet, has been recently published by F. Zayadine, *ZDPV*, 99 (1983) Fig. 1, p. 185.

<sup>21</sup> Butler, 1907, ill. 38.



L'ODEON

Fig. 22



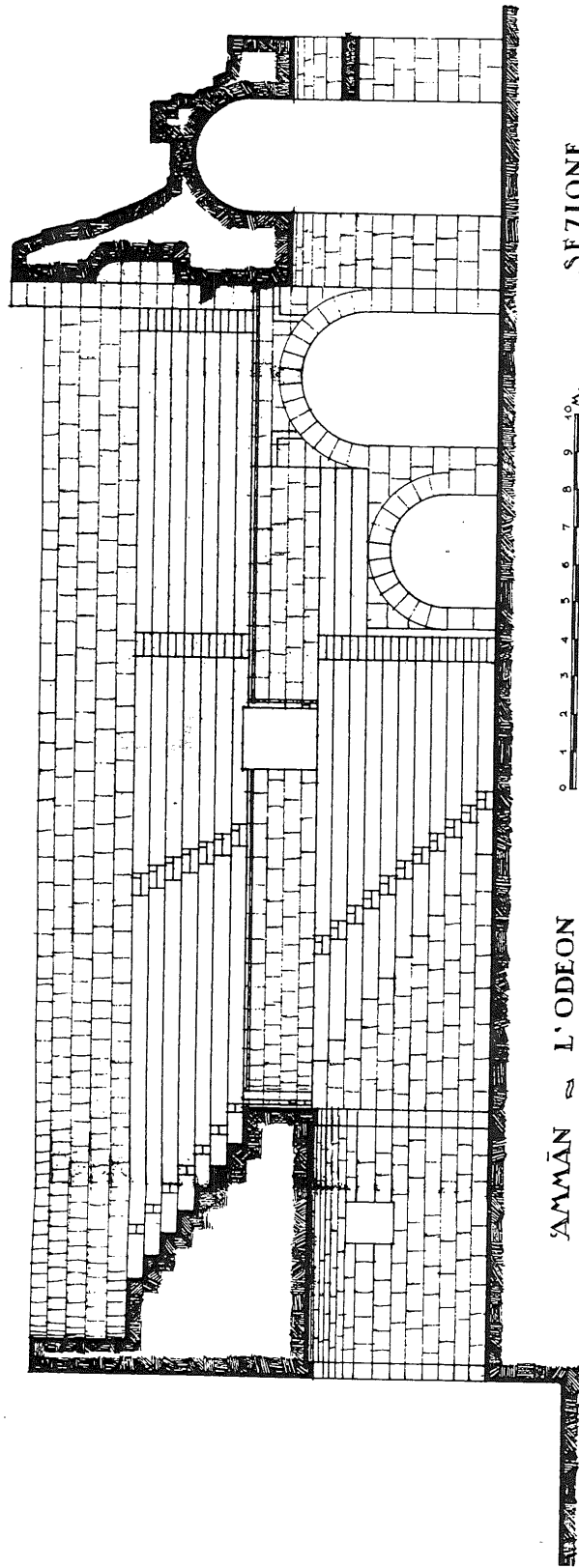
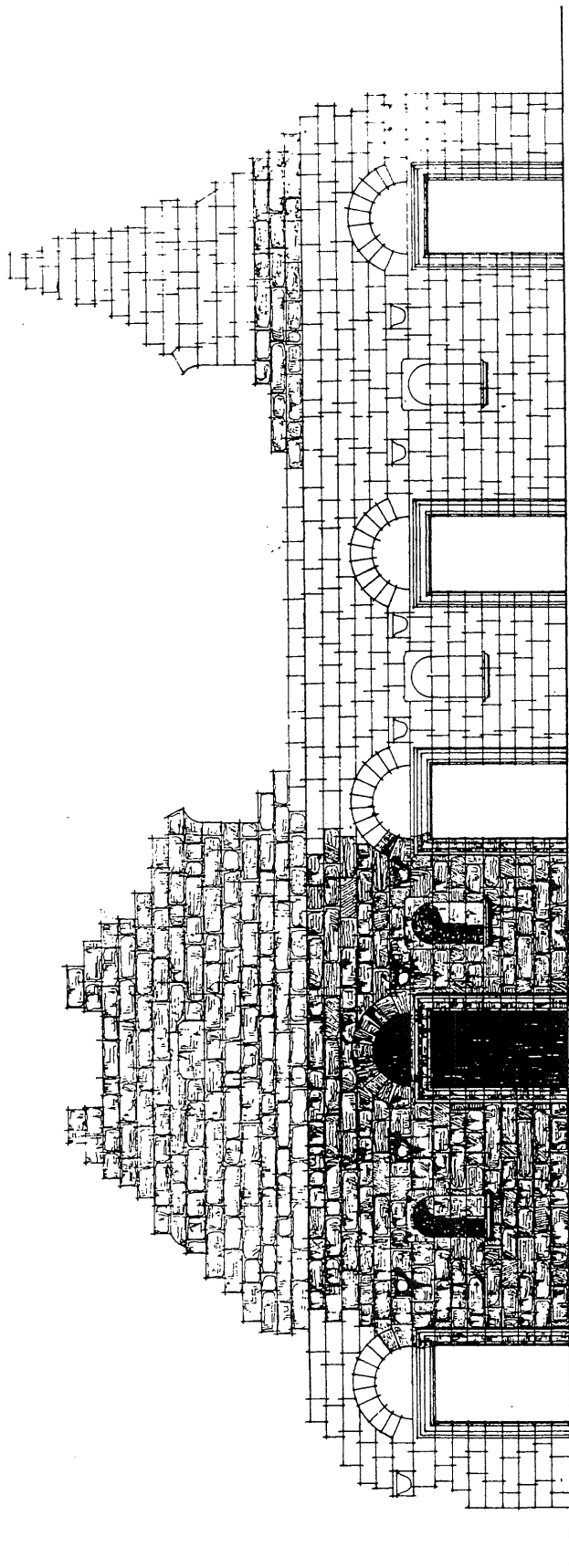


Fig. 23



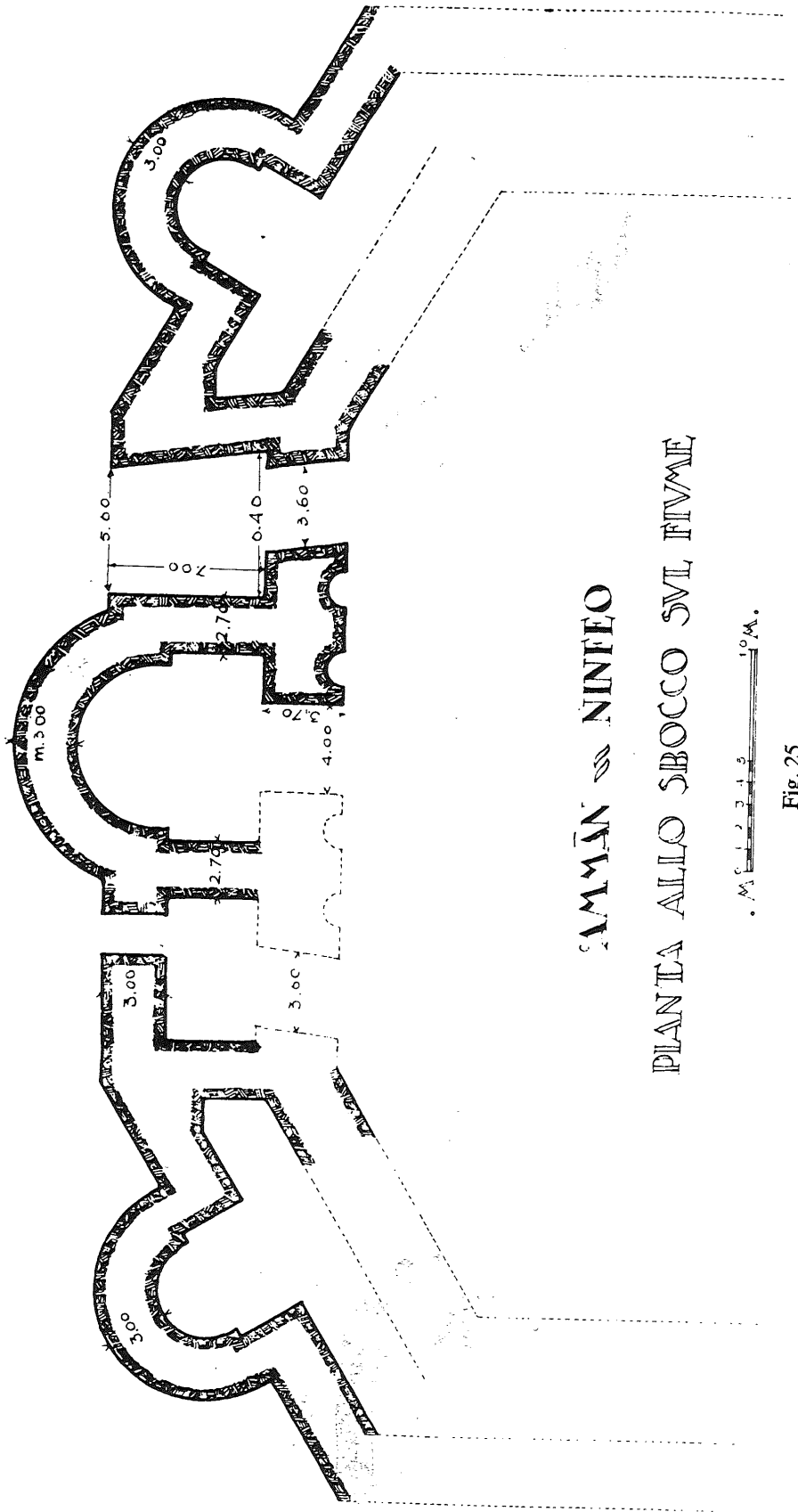
LA PARTE IN NERETTO E' GVELLA  
ESISTENTE

AMMAN - L'ODEON

Fig. 24

ELEVAZIONE  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 PA

N A A R E L - ' A M M Ā N



'AMMĀN

PLANTA ALLO SBOCCO SVL FVME

10 M.

Fig. 25

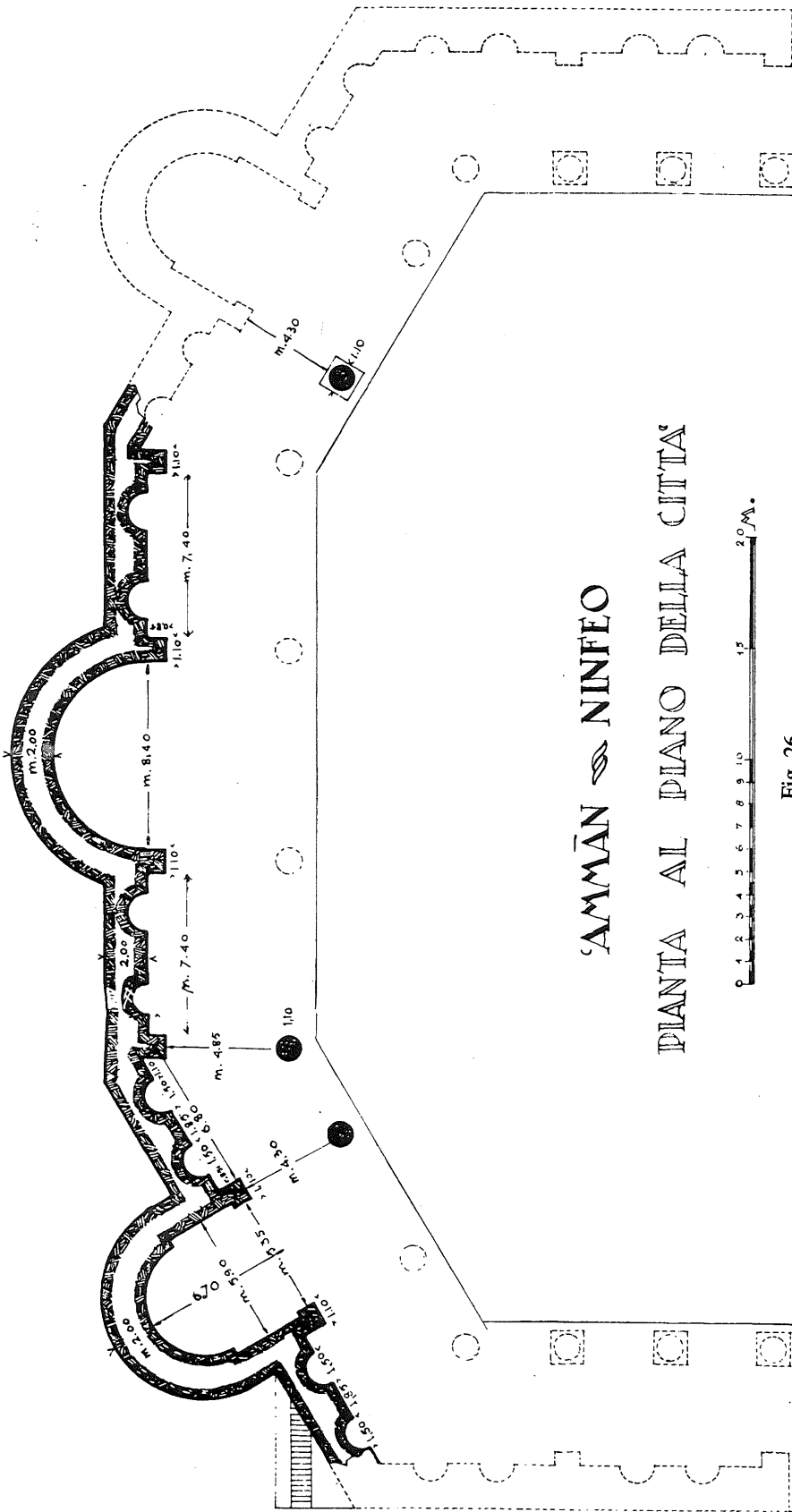
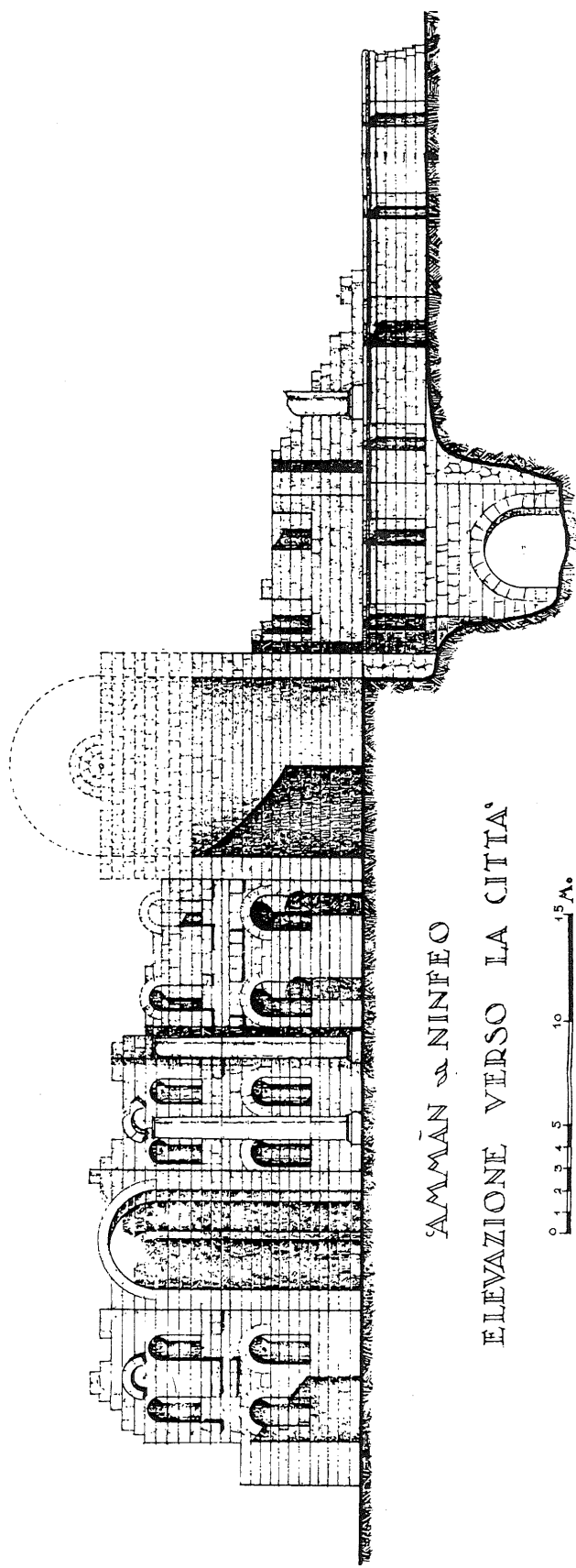


Fig. 26



AMMÀN al NINFEO

ELEVAZIONE VERSO LA CITTA'

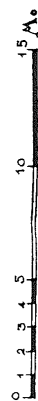


Fig. 27

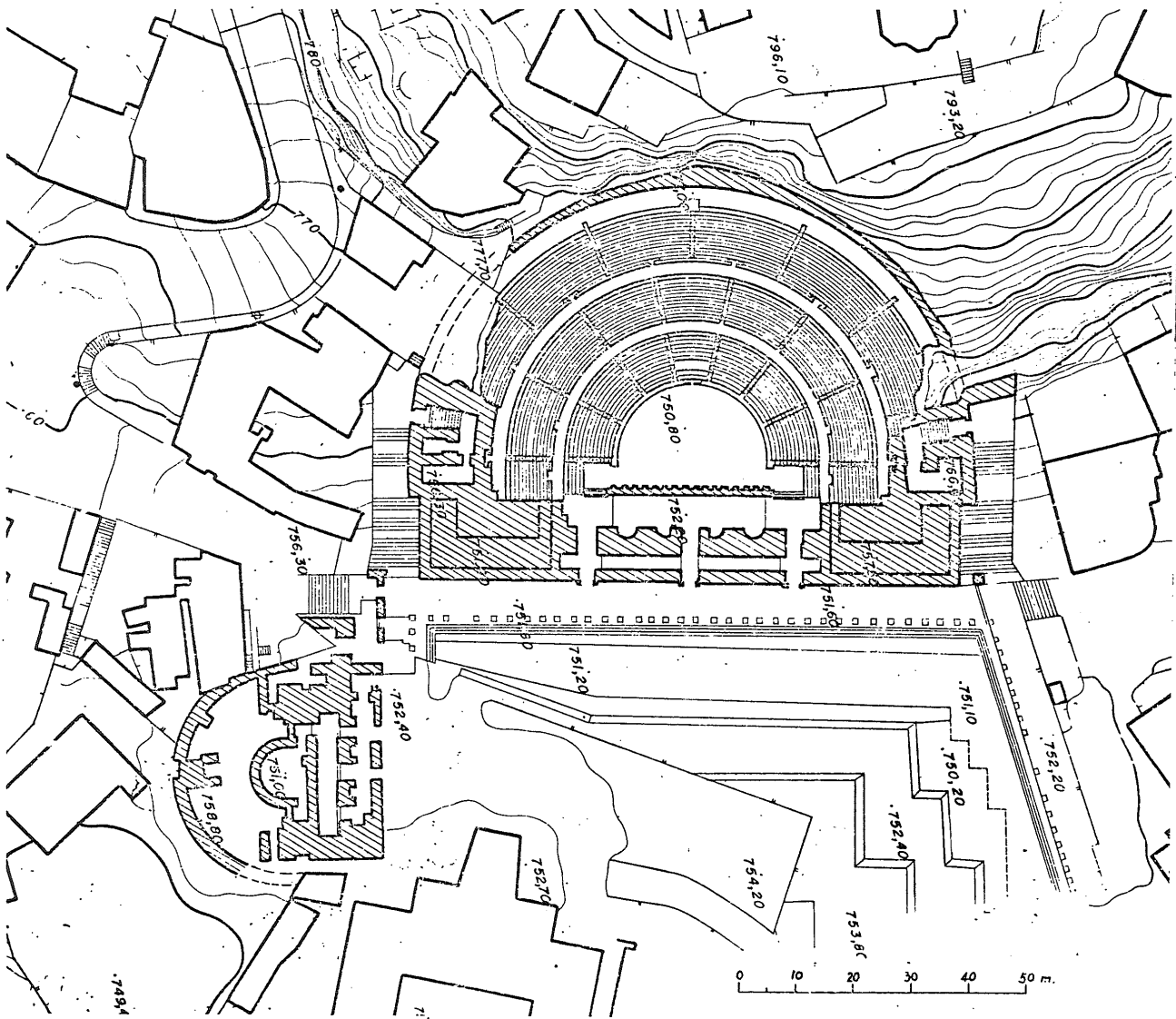


Fig. 28: The Theater and the Odeon Plan made by the Spanish Archaeological Mission (1970).



regards to the architect Carlo Ceschi, one of the great post-war Italian restorers whom I had the great fortune to become acquainted with and have as a professor during my specialised restoration studies at the University of Rome and the ICCROM. The best example of his teaching is, perhaps, his book *Teoria e Storia del Restauro*, which has contributed

to the training of so many specialists in the field of restoration with its readable explanation and development of the theories applied in this field over the years.

This is not the place to speak of his activities as restorer, although the drawings published here are sufficient examples of his professional worth.

Antonio Almagro  
Spanish Archaeological Mission