

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ITALIAN EXCAVATIONS IN THE 'AMMĀN CITADEL 1927-1938¹

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July 25th 1938

The members of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Trans-Jordan, whose seat is in Amman, met in Brindisi to board the seaplane to Athens.

July 26th

They continue their journey to Haifa making a stop in Rhodes.

July 27th

From Haifa to Lydda by train and from Lydda to Jerusalem by car.

July 28th

They stop at Jerusalem because of the Palestinian insurrectional movements.

July 29th

Jerusalem-Amman by car.

July 30th

Preparation for excavation work cannot be started because tools and "decauville" material are lacking: it is impossible to collect the above mentioned material from the storehouse of the Directorate of Antiquities of Amman because of the drivers' strike... ...

August 4th

Work starts near the eastern gate and the final arrangement of the "decauville" track is settled... November 22nd

Work is aimed at a radical cleaning of the Arab monument and at completing the clearing out one of the rooms. Furthermore, the arrangement of the basilica is started by cutting the path

that crosses it."

These evocative notes, of a time only in part passed, are the starting and the final records from the excavation diary drawn up by the field assistant during the last 1938 campaign of the Italian Mission of the 'Ammān Citadel. The outbreak of the Second World War and the engaging appointment of Renato Bartoccini, the director of the mission, in the Italian public administration, imposed a definite halt to the research in 'Ammān.

Unfortunately, since then those works had been almost forgotten in spite of the preliminary reports, published between 1930 and 1939.

It is true, in fact, that before 1973 (Zayadine 1973) no mention was made of those issues².

In consideration of the radical change made on the archaeological landscape of the citadel through the uncovering of the Great Temple and more than half of the Umayyad Palace, which had been unchanged until the early 1990s, those works were but irrelevant:

"...In figures, there have been five digging campaigns, employing 350 workers for an amount of 20.000 working days. 30.000 cu. m. of materials have been removed, bringing to light more than 7.000 sq. m. of monumental areas....." (Bartoccini 1939).

No matter how things have developed, the following remarks are intended to complete

1. For the present overview, beside the examination of the published material, I could take advantage of the documents preserved at the Institute of Ancient History of the University of Perugia and in Macerata at «Centro Studi per l'Africa Settentrionale». Here, I would like to thank Prof. Antonino di Vita for having allowed me to make use of those documents.

2. A mere mention of the Italian work on the site of the Great Temple, probably based on the Department of

Antiquities files, was available already before that date, but without bibliographic references (see Tell S., Notes on the Archaeology of 'Amman. *ADAJ* 14 (1969): 30). It must be also omission is also remarkable in the report of the trial trenches made for the construction of the museum, likely planned on the citadel between the monuments just brought to light by Bartoccini (Harding G.L., Excavations on the Citadel, Amman. *ADAJ* 1 (1951): 7).

those unfortunately incomplete works. In order to facilitate the reading, Bartoccini's quotations were translated from Italian.

The beginning of the Italian adventure in Transjordan is described in this way:

"... ..After the establishment of the Emirate, the Italian Association for the Missionaries decided to build there a hospital. Soon afterwards, also an Archaeological Mission was sent there, the care of which was entrusted to the Direction of the Italian Scientific Missions in the Levant presided by H.E. Paribeni. Having participated in the war in Palestine, he felt and still feels a nostalgic affection towards those countries. The mandatory power granted our request for an excavation permit..... In October 1927, comrade Giacomo Guidi.... carried out the first survey in Amman, and started the first excavations on the acropolis..... The following year, Giacomo Guidi succeeded me in the Direction of the Excavations in Tripolitania, as I was entrusted with that of the Mission in Trans-Jordan" (Bartoccini 1939).

More than the nostalgic feeling or the comfort from the presence of the missionaries, it was a political opportunity to suggest Roberto Paribeni, the 'Direttore Generale delle Antichità e Belle Arti', should start archaeological research beyond the Jordan river. Notwithstanding the endemic economic difficulties, fascist Italy could not avoid being present in regions where European and American scholars had already gathered prestigious scientific positions³.

Besides the first 1927 mission, the field activity in Transjordan consisted of only four campaigns: June-September 1929, July-October 1930, January-April 1933 and July-November 1938.

As far as Giacomo Guidi's 1927 mission re-

sults are concerned, I could only go through a short manuscript he sent to Renato Bartoccini including, together with the Excavation Permit, a letter dated June, 2nd 1929 wishing him good work, just a few days before the latter left to 'Ammān'⁴.

On the 25th October 1927 the survey of the acropolis started and continued until the end of November.

From the above mentioned manuscript, it appears that Guidi could have at his disposal an average of 60 workers led by the assistant Musa Kamar. The Dominican Fathers for their hospitality and Dr. Fausto Tesio, director of the Italian Hospital, for his friendly support, were worthy of credit. The bases to establish a long term research were immediately evident to him. The first pick was dealt inside the area delimited by the remains of a structure appearing like a four-sided portico of the Roman times, north of the well-known Arab building:

".... the excavation began from the north-east corner so to have the advantage to discharge the earth down to the desolated valley below..... while digging, it was possible to find, inside the four sided portico, Byzantine and Arab structures. Some of them, judging from the remains of masonry built column bases must have had a quite fair aspect. ... In the superficial layer, there was plenty of interesting fragments of Arab pottery in geometric style: afterwards, I saw some of the integral pieces of these ceramics in the little museum of Nazareth... Had chosen a space free from the Byzantine-Arab structures, it was possible to dig a deep trench... ..many remains of characteristic pottery were found, dating back to the Hellenistic period, to the Iron Age and finally to the Bronze Age III. Therefore, the scientific systematic exploration of the four-sid-

3. In Transjordan in particular, the numerically irrelevant presence of western wealthy missions, would not have caused embarrassment for Italian government. Despite various misadventures, the mission in Transjordan was in reality the most fortunate among the Italian adventures in Middle East. On the contrary, the mission in Mesopotamia, planned since 1929, was realized in 1933, with only one excavation campaign which lasted three months at Kakzu, under the direction of Giuseppe Furlani. The mission in Yemen, was no longer successful. It ended with a mere philological mission of Ettore Rossi in 1936. Though strongly wanted by the central government, the mission in Persia had an even

more miserable destiny and despite various scientific projects were presented, it was not funded in that period (Petricioli 1988: 129-152).

4. An editorial news on Guidi's mission is given on the magazine « *Oriente Moderno* » in January 1928. The Excavation Permit to excavate the Acropolis of Amman bears the n° 3, issued under Trans-Jordan Antiquity Ordinance, signed by George Horsfield, Inspector of Antiquities (for the Director of Antiquities), by Hassan Khalid Aloul, Chief Minister, in confirmation, and by Giacomo Guidi (for the Missiones Scientifiques Italiennes en Orient) in acceptance; the date is October 18th, 1927.

ed portico's subsoil are promises for interesting findings especially of biblical and Greek period. At this point, it seems there's no more doubt that the fortified citadel, under the walls of which general Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, fell, had to be located in the third terrace of the acropolis of Amman".

In his first campaign in the summer 1929, Bartoccini reconsiders his predecessor's hypothesis affirming that the Biblical Rabbath Ammon could not be located on the third terrace as this is only the result of a filling contained by the imposing Hellenistic-Roman walls, on which the four-sided portico had been built. The most ancient city had rather to be located on the first terrace, that is in the long eastern wing of the acropolis (Bartoccini 1930: 15).

The field activity was mainly focused on bringing to light the Great Temple in the second terrace:

"... we dug for an average of 3 m. down to the Roman soil; I made a 2 m. more down sounding collecting material of various epochs....the temple foundations are still deeperthe temple podium preservesa nice wide base moulding. Astride the joint of two blocks of the base there were the letters A//ZE.The temple pronaos.....was a tetrastyle of the Corinthian order, the columns were composed of more elements...On one of each drum faces there is the Greek name Δωσϵοσand some sign which I believe to indicate their positioning...Observations of some interest were made on the monument structure itself. The workmanship of the cella have nothing to share with that one of the pronaos. The stone material itself shows sensible differences..... At any rate it is certain that the pronaos was added to a preexisting, perhaps not Roman, building, built under Marcus Aurelius rule.... I began then the unearthing of the cella ... walls of various structure and orientation associated with change of findings started to appear" (Bartoccini 1930: 15-16).

The hypothesis of the temple having a tet-

rastyle pronaos, certainly deriving from Butler reconstruction (Butler, H.C., *Ancient architecture in Syria, Section A*, Leiden, 1907), has been eventually revised during the restoration work carried out by the American Center of Oriental Research in 'Amman (Kanellopoulos 1994). The front must have had, in fact, six columns (see also Zayadine 1977-78: fig. 1).

In July 1930 (second campaign),

"... ..the mission was welcome with the usual warmth by Col. Cox, English resident, by the President of the Emirate's Council, by Mr. Head, regent of the Department of Antiquities... With me, there were architect Carlo Ceschi, who made a complete surveying of the Amman monuments, and an assistant⁵....Towards to the end of the campaign, H.H. the Emir Abdallah visited the mission's work... "The work began with the resumption of the excavation in the temple.... [where] it was soon brought to light a colossal marble elbow, part of a possibly female statue..."

No mention is made of the fragmentary left hand belonging to the same colossal statue, at present, together with the elbow, at the sides of the Museum's entrance, evidently a later finding.

"....to continue the excavation it became necessary to remove a pillar laying sideways in the cella and a number of ashlars which have been numbered and stocked in the vicinities.... The bed rock was soon reached showing a convex shape.... a cistern was uncovered (together with two others outside the temple) filled up by stones among which only a couple of black ware monochrome handleless lamps (cocked-hat lamp) were found. Just close to the temple front a big rock appeared and.... stone blocks against its south side have been interpreted to form rudimentary steps. Once cleared, a cavity on its top was recognized associated with other cavities at its base connected by a drainage groove. To its north east side a small cave, the roofing of which had collapsed was also found..... We were then

5. Ceschi's drawings of the lower city's monuments, Theatre, Odeon, Nymphaeum and of the Great Temple and Water Reservoir on the acropolis have been already

published by the director of the Spanish Archeological Mission in 'Amman (Almagro 1983).

at the presence of the Ammonite sacrifice sacred rock, the most ancient worship site of this bellicose people...” (Bartoccini 1932: 16-23).

The subject of the “Ammonite sacred rock” was resumed in a separate short article (Bartoccini 1935). The identification of the site with the ‘high places’ of Semitic tradition, though, was not shared by Zayadine who considered not fully convincing the supplied identification elements (Zayadine 1973). The rock, oriented eastwards apparently like a ship prow, seemed to confirm the discoverer the hypothesis that the citadel mentioned in the Bible had to be located on the lower terrace. So he decided to open a large north-south trench on the lower terrace — and therefore the excavation permit had to be extended — spanning from one terrace side to the other. At the end of the campaign the first building structures appeared at about a depth of one metre. The collected material consisted, mostly of Roman potsherds.

The availability of a ‘decauville’ allowed the excavation to start again and more rapidly extending the work begun in 1927 in the four-sided portico. Together with the various architectural elements, an abundance of Arab pottery was found, of the type already observed by Guidi, was gathered:

“... ..In the layer which can be dated back a few centuries later than the construction of the well-known Arab building, we brought to light a big quantity of potsherds of a rather unrefined and porous mixture with external pale-yellow wash on which brown geometric decorations

are painted, generally distributed on horizontal zones... ..We are dealing with a new ceramic production. Only the Kaiser Friedrich Museum has two samples of uncertain origin but certainly not coming from an excavation, and three or four fragments found near one of the Arab castles of the desert area bordering Amman. Therefore, for the first time, their exact context can be declared... ..In this case, we should date the finding back to the 12th-13th century... ..I took a typologically complete collection of the above described ceramics to Italy and gave it to the “Museo Internazionale della ceramica” in Faenza” (Bartoccini 1932: 22-23, **Fig. 1**)⁶.

During the same campaign a ‘water reservoir’, which had been seen already by Conder (Conder, C.R., *The survey of Palestine I*, London, 1889), north of the northern bastion, was cleared.

Bartoccini, like the British traveller, associated it with a passage of Polybius [Histories] according to whom, during Philadelphia’s siege, Antiochus the Great defeated the besieged Ptolemy Philopator by cutting off the water-supplies that must have been granted by a secret passage from inside the fortress to a water reservoir. The investigation on the cistern was resumed in the following campaign 1933:

“..the channel giving into the great cistern opens outside the present walls. It must therefore be supposed that these ones were erected when the first was not in use anymore. ...From a careful exam of the foothill one can suspect..... the existence of a more advanced city wall, con-



1. Faenza, Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche, samples of medieval pottery from the 1930 excavation in the “four sided portico”.

6. Of the 80 pot shards brought to Italy in 1930, only 40 have survived the bombing of the museum during the

Second World War, and they are still available.

temporary to the one on the first terrace dating to the bronze age...In the next campaign I plan further investigation in that area. (Bartoccini 1934: 275-276).

If any, Bartoccini did not give record of further research. However, the suggestion of the existence of a more ancient city wall was much later confirmed. The water reservoir and the area surrounding it were, in fact, carefully investigated allowing for the reaffirmation of the extent of the historical reconstructions advanced by Conder and Bartoccini (Zayadine, Humbert and Najjar 1989; Zayadine 1990). In my opinion, judging from its layout, the water reservoir, as it appears now with its thick plaster lining, must have been originally made for a hypogeal tomb.

We must realize, however, that our archaeologist was not lucky, indeed. In 1949, in fact, just a few metres away from the above mentioned reservoir, four exceptional sculptures (R.D. Barnett, *Four Sculptures from Amman*. *ADAJ* I, 1951), which had to be associated with an Ammonite shrine dating back to the 8th century B.C., were found. They could have given Bartoccini a much wider scope of research.

Still in the 1930 campaign:

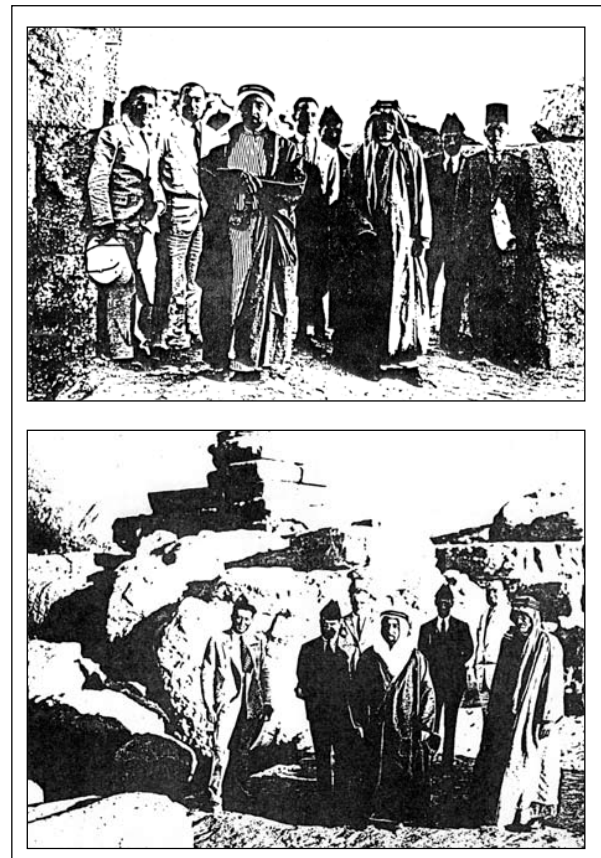
“.....We isolated and discovered part of a coeval construction [with the Arab building], similar in style, which raised on the northern limit of the terrace. It promises to reveal new decorative material with a better link with the very well-known material of Mshatta. The gate in the western side of the walls, that I had identified in a series of soundings carried out to recognize the exact perimeter of the acropolis, had to be probably connected to this group” (Bartoccini 1932: 23).

January and April 1933 (third Campaign):

“...As regards the workers, we had a great choice, due to the crisis in the work sector that also Trans-Jordan was going through... ..In this campaign, but never before, the whole Islamic world was represented on the acropolis of Amman: Javanese, Zanzibaris, Somalis, Eritreans, Yemenite, Iraqis, Druses, Syrians, Circassians, Tripolitans, Tunisians, Egyptians, a small tower of Babel complicated by natives already immigrated from South America who

were keen to make their comrades believe they were “almost... Italians”, as they spoke Spanish or Portuguese! Exquisite, as usual, the welcome of H.H. the Emir Abdallah and col. Cox,.....and of the colleagues Horsfield and Head....” (Bartoccini 1934: 275, **Fig. 2**).

The presence of such a variety of labours was due to a different reality. The events that occurred in Cyrenaica as result of political and military actions carried out by the Italian colonial government, and in particular the killing of the rebel Omar Muktar in 1931, anti-Italian actions were provoked throughout the whole Muslim world: the workers of 'Amman demanded an excessive pay increase and the owner of the land, where the excavation debris were usually thrown down, demanded a lease. The removal of the anti-Italian impasse, came through an unexpected chance: the British premier J.R. MacDonald paid Mussolini a visit and soon after this, the latter made a declaration for the non



2. 'Amman, official visit to the Italian Archaeological Mission at the Citadel in 1933 (centre, Emir Abdullah; left, R. Bartoccini).

partition of Syria. Bartoccini was able to take an advantage of those circumstances: after dismissing the entire labour gang, he recruited again the milder of them and paid the land owner a ten years lease (Petricioli 1988).

The work continued as usual in the four-sided portico (from then called “agora”).

“... ..The large sounding along the walls... ..towards the Arab building, towards the west, have revealed many and frequent re-makings of the protecting walls built around the third terrace... ..two interesting basalt stelae each bearing the image of a divinity were uncovered. The first of them was found near the [west] city gate,...the second was found while dismantling a part of the wall which from the Arab building goes straight to the agora [north] entrance... One of the figures is shaped like a mummy bearing the uraeus on his head ...; the other one, proceeding on the side has a cat head (!) adorned with the uraeus, the naked breasts below the egida.... For style and intrinsic anomalies, the

gods of the two sculptures must be assigned to the Syrian-Palestinian pantheon, influenced by the Egyptian artistic style; I think they can be dated to the IV-III century B.C.” (Bartoccini 1934: 278, **Fig. 3**).

Photographic images of the two stelae are reproduced in the report (Bartoccini 1934: 277) identifying the two gods Osiris and Bastit. An incredible oversight. Leaving out here discussion of the date of the pieces, we have to correct the interpretation of the second bas-relief which, by his “ram-head” is evidently an Amon. After the finding, the two important discoveries were dislocated at the sides of the entrance gate of the mission’s house, where they remained until 2004 when they were moved to the Citadel Museum.

“.....It is now clear that the all area (of the agora) was occupied by a complex of private constructions, chronologically posterior to the Arab conquest and topographically connected



3. Basalt stela of Osiris and Ammon, 2003.

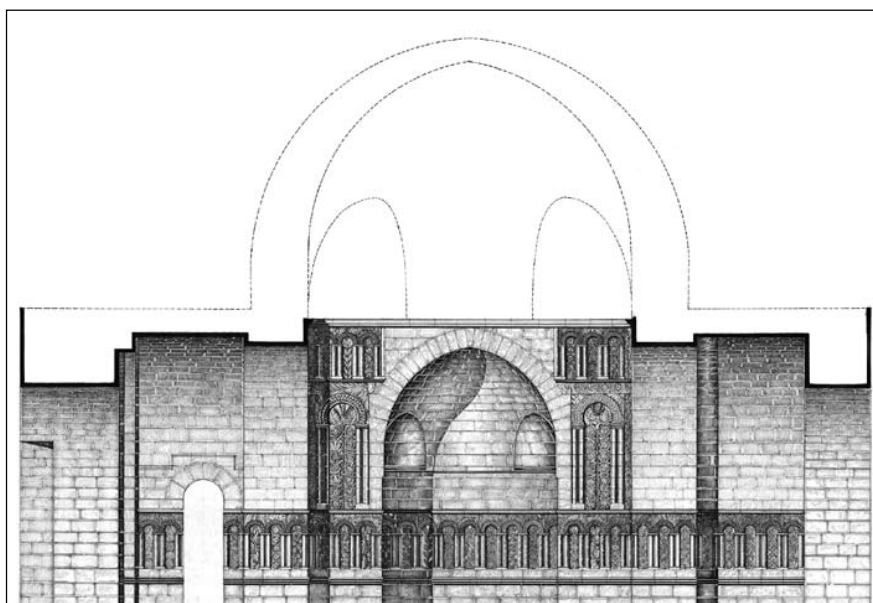
to the great monument . . .The whole was embellished with a double colonnade of which the bases were found. . . The main building was in fact in direct relation with a coeval building outside the agora at the limit of the fortification. . . The main construction represented the entrance to the complex and for this use two seats were located at the entrance gate sides. A similar arrangement was realized at the old [north] entrance to the agora. . . . In a synthesis. . . . we acquired the following: 1st The Roman agora, probably settled during the rule of an emperor of the Antonine dynasty 2nd The agora was endowed with a second outer [northwards] colonnade. . . . to create a portico. . . . 3rd At least, the eastern side of the agora was arranged with shops paved with a plain white mosaic flooring. . . The façade of this side was certainly different from the others. A number of corbels for sculptures was found; one of them is a big winged phallus. 4th Beyond the agora, between this last and the temple, already explored on the second terrace, there must have been buildings of an importance. A tradition , according to Mukaddasi, assigns [the Arab building] to the function of a mosque built on Uria's tomb. . . . That room is obligatory a by pass space and. . . . all induces to believe that it was simply a pavilion, in which the lord, that resided beyond the plaza, in the building on the walls, received the applicants: i.e. a diwan. The decorative apparatus adorning the interior of the building must have been repeated outside in its top part as the lower one was only plastered Fragments of columns and corbels. . . were possibly to create a blind arcade. Traces of coloured retouch are present, in which the red is prevailing. As for the date of this pavilion . . . the majority assigns it to a lord of a Sasanian dynasty in consideration of Persian influence to be recognized in the geometric and floral patterns of the decorative apparatuses . . . From the artistic point of view it as been associated with the Mshatta castle. . . but, also for this monument the most various hypothesis have been proposed. Strzygowski assigns it to the IV century, Brunnow to the V, Diehl to the VI, others to the VIII. I have no difficulty to assign it to the IV century (!), but for the Amman pavilion, I think we must descend to the second half of the VII century because, even tough there are evident reminiscences of Byzantine patterns

in some details of partition fillets, of panels and frames, it has an overall design which makes it stand out from the old classic world, taking it back to the typical products of the Arab architecture's origins. . . With this respect, the building is closer to Qasr-el-Qarani. . . . The main entrance of the Arab building from the agora side was found sealed and the interior was reshaped by partitions of a very late epoch. . . . after the collapse of the central dome. . . . Already before our excavation, the local archaeological office had executed propping works which resulted though, insufficient. I managed to build them again and to seal the most unsafe breaches. . ." (Bartoccini 1934: 279-282, **Figs. 4-8**).

In consideration of Bartoccini's classic background it is remarkable how close he went to the date suggested for the "Arab building". The excavation made by the Spanish mission, starting from 1974, ascertained that the Arab building is the result of a remodelling of a late-antique/ Byzantine construction which took place around the middle of the VIII century (Almagro-Olavarri 1982). More accurate observation on the building technique allowed for the hypothesis that later building additions were in the Abbasid period (Northedge 1992).

The excavation of the big trench in the lower terrace, where Bartoccini was sure to find traces of the city destroyed by David, goes on:

" . . . my attention was attracted by the particularity of a stretch of the walls in which was evident a discontinuity indicating the blockage of a previous gate. From there, the decision to start the research. . . The discoveries can be for the moment subdivided in this way : 1st A thick soil stratum with abundant Roman potsherds. . . . 2nd Byzantine structures connected to some evidence of an agricultural exploitation of the area consisting in cisterns and irrigation channels. 3rd below the bigger of the various water reservoirs discovered, subsequently demolished, the bedrock cropped out, apparently the top of the hill. . . . The rock shows characteristic artificial cavities which are called " coupoles " by the Semitists. In one of them there was found a single potsherd of coarse ware, which I shall assign to the Bronze Age. . . . At the side of this rock crop it was gathered a double room cistern with



4. The great "Arab building", cross section, 1930.

eight pillars and a small polygonal column demonstrating the long use of the reservoir." (Bartoccini 1934: 284-285).

During the 1933 campaign, Bartoccini developed the necessity of consolidating, in Amman, a stable position for the Mission. With the support of Mariano de Angelis, consul in Jerusalem, the Italian Foreign Office decided to assign the amount of Lit. 80.000 for the construction of the Italian Mission House, at the same time sacrificing the funds for the 1935 digging campaign. In the meantime, Bartoccini was appointed as the official responsible for the Department of Antiquities and Arts in Puglia and while the building was in progress in Amman, he remained in Italy (Petricioli 1988⁷, Figs. 9-10).

In July 1938, after five years of inactivity, Bartoccini resumed the work on the acropolis of Amman.

No preliminary report was produced about this last digging campaign, except a few observations contained in an article on the entire work of the mission:

".....With this year excavation in Amman, we have proved the Crusaders' presence within

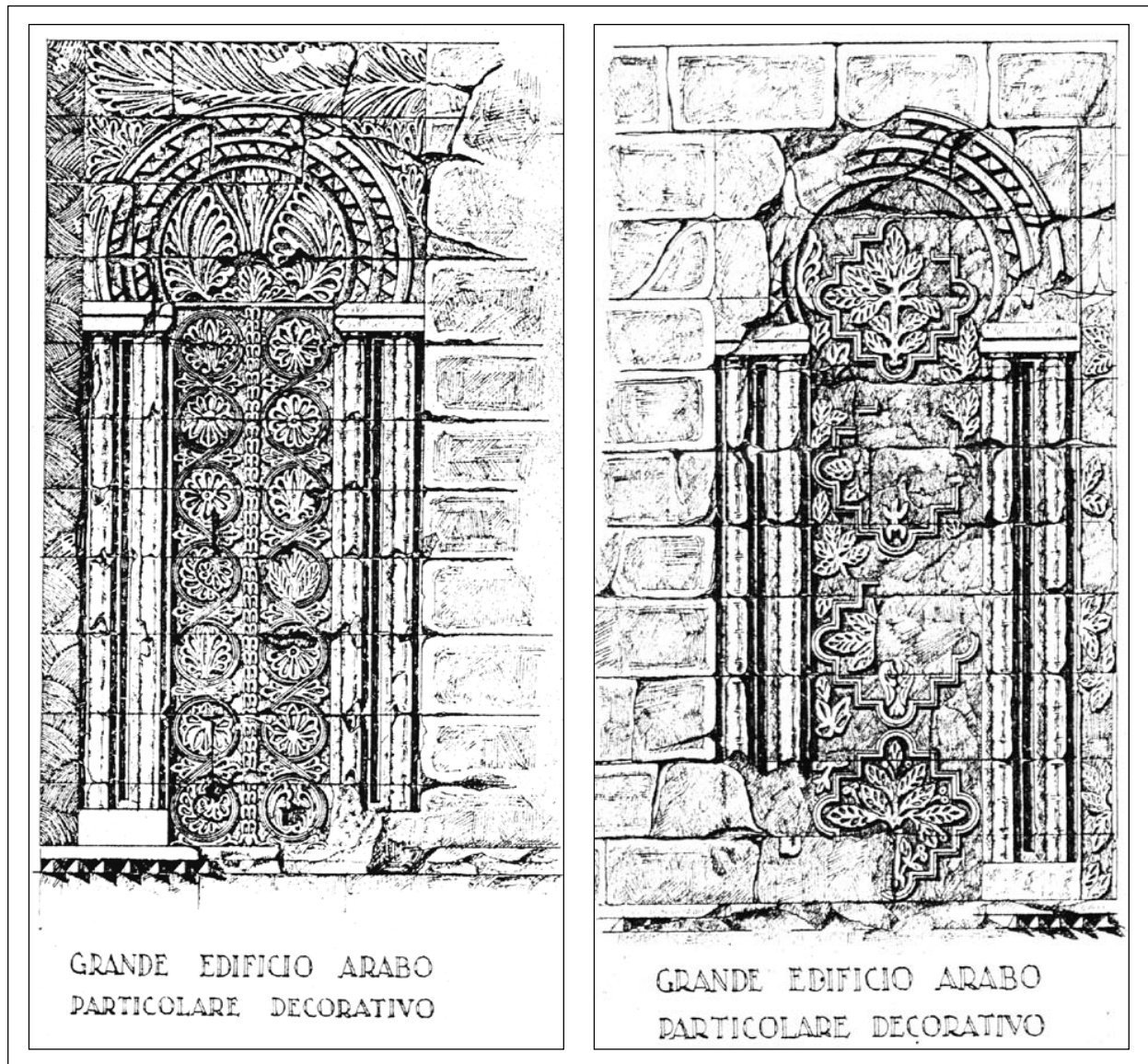
the Roman agora, which was from them transformed in a fortified settlement. Outside those walls we identified and dug a small three nave Basilica, apparently a Crusader's time reshaping of a small Byzantine church....." (Bartoccini 1939):

Explicit proof of the Crusaders on the citadel is not supplied. On the other hand, it is likely that the land of 'Amman passed for a short period under Crusader's control, while we know of Ayyubid work on the citadel (Northedge 1992: 55). As for the church of the acropolis of Amman, a first report was issued only in 1973 thanks to Father Begatti's enduring work (Begatti 1973). The resumption of the study of the church and the extension of the investigation are due to F. Zayadine in 1977 (Zayadine 1977-78: 34-37), but no reshaping from the time of the Crusaders has been observed.

A precise description of the work of the 1938 campaign is available, consisting though of little more than quantitative data, in the assistant's diary mentioned above. We learn from it that the work continued, besides the new excavation of the church, in the area of the so called agora, in the small Arab monument north of it and in the

7. The building plot was chosen adjacent to the Italian Hospital, built few years earlier by the 'Associazione Nazionale dei Missionari', and the project was realized by the same architect Antonio Balduzzi (Bartoccini 1939). The property of the building, probably for

political reasons and with unknown procedures, during or soon after the Second World War, was transferred to the Italian Hospital. From 1991 to 2003 it was given in use to Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino to host the Italian-Jordanian Institute of Archaeology.



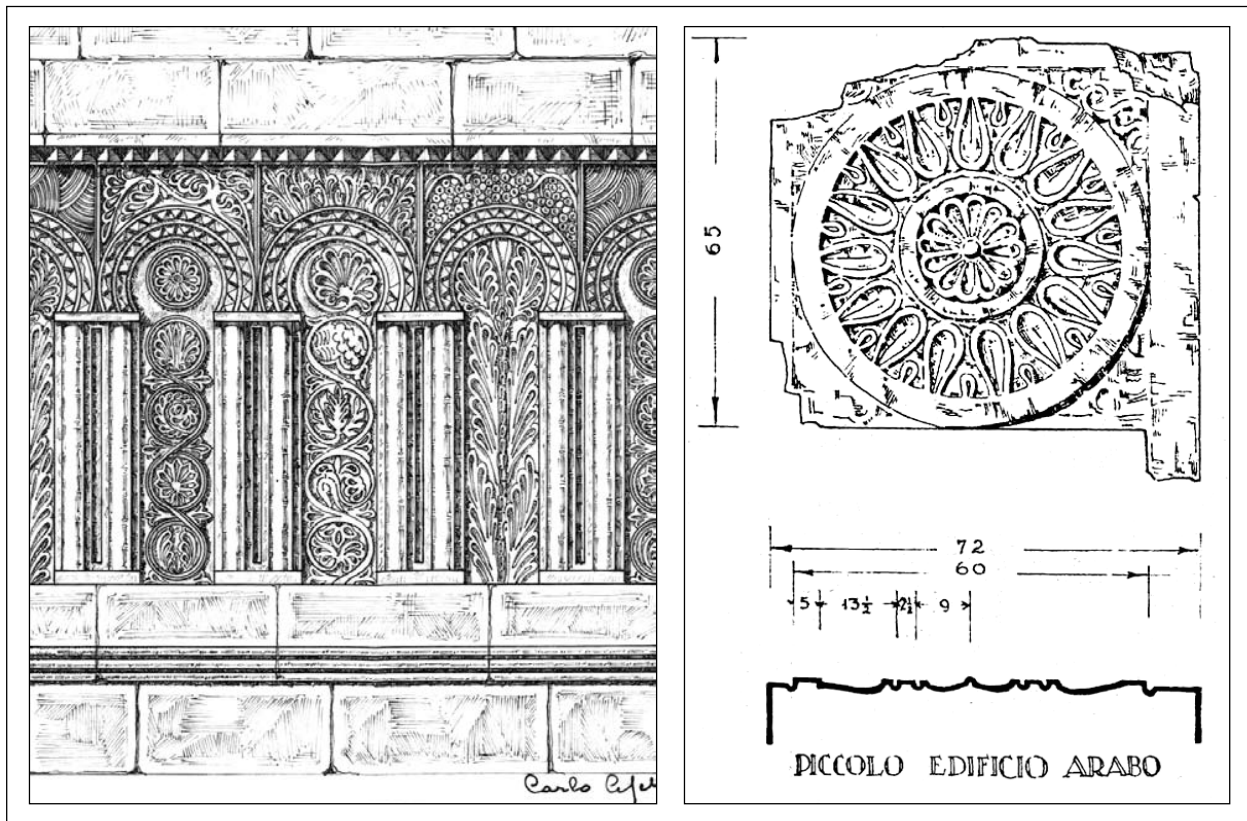
5. Decorative panels in the great "Arab building", 1930.

first terrace.

In summarizing the daily records, it comes out that the excavation of the agora, between the colonnaded street and the Roman east wall, of which also a sketch plan drawn by arch. Schettini is preserved (**Fig. 7**), allowing the identification of 44 rooms and three courts; in two rooms the bearing vaults of a staircases are indicated. In another room, indication of a window one metre from the ground is recorded. Beside the large quantity of ceramic and glass, numerous fragments of the Roman wall top parts with corbels and pediments are mentioned in the diary (**Fig. 8**).

The excavation in the area north of the agora brought completely to light the remains of an external colonnade, which shows a corner pillar with engaged half-columns and 22 rooms of the so called small Arab building. In clearing out the area, various architectural elements with Arab decorations were found.

From September 12th to November 14th, the excavation of the big trench on the lower terrace continued, extending it with an additional area of 20 x 18 metres (**Fig. 9**). Two metres below the surface, big walls take shape; one metre below, a tomb with a stone covering is found but not opened; and, nearby, fragmentary spherical pots



6. Decorative element from the small "Arab building", 1930.

are found. More walls in the layer below are found digging down to 5.1m under the surface level without finding either the bed rock or the walls' bases.

At the same time, from September 19th to November 22nd, the opening of a new trench started near a modern path, with two columns emerging from the ground. 1.8m below the surface, it was found the floor of a building which was subsequently identified as a basilica by a central nave and side aisles, with annexed rooms and a colonnaded narthex. The semicircular apse had steps covered with marble. The altar table was to be supported by four small columns, the base location of which was recognized on a rectangular platform. The nave probably had a mosaic flooring, while the aisles were paved by flagstones. On ground and on site, a total of 14 bases, 4 of which in the external portico, 11 columns, 14 capitals, a voussoir with a cross engraved on it, were found (**Fig. 10**).

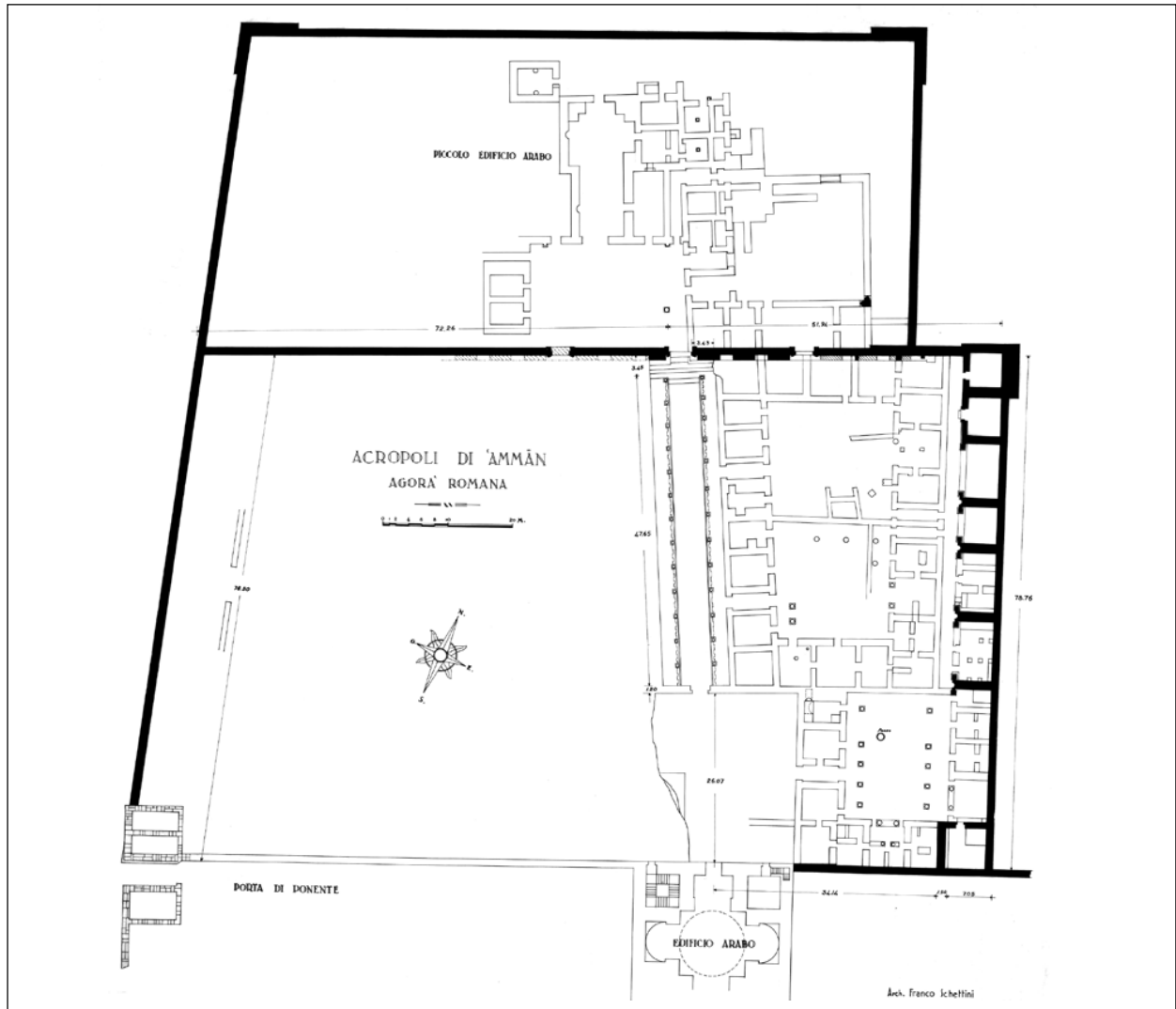
"At the end of December [1938] we celebrated in Amman the first decade of our institution

in a conference attended by English, Arab and our political and civil authorities.... The result of the various digging campaigns have been timely referred through exhaustive reports, awaiting for the final publication, we hope not to be late. Some discoveries of particular importance have already been reported in numerous conferences... that have informed the public about the spiritual activity of fascist Italy...." (Bartoccini 1939).

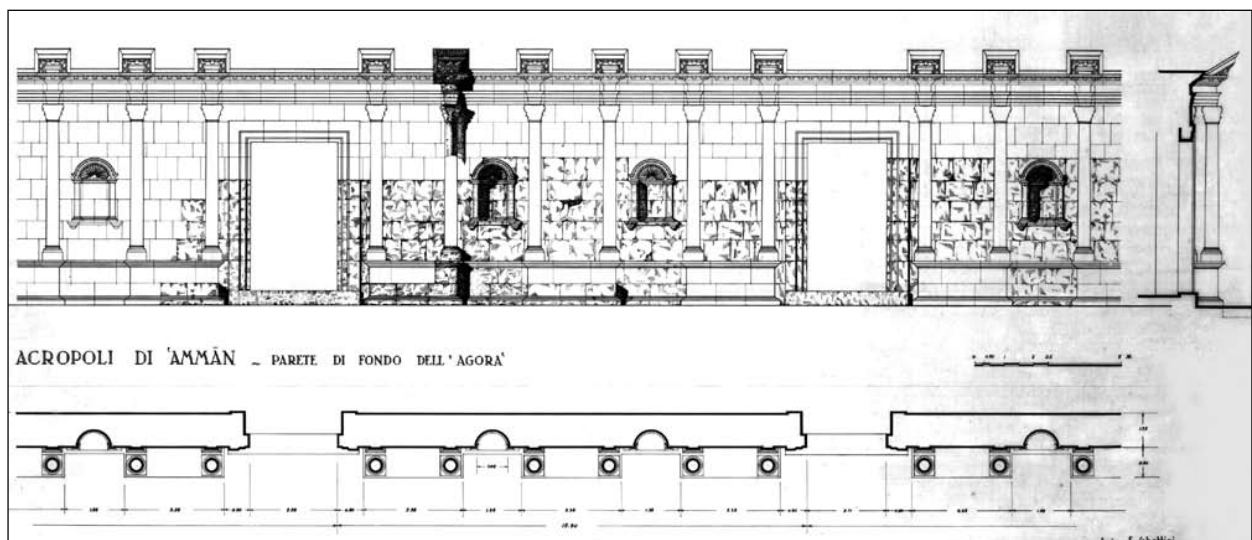
That was the last act of the Italian enterprise in Transjordan.

Bartoccini, for reasons unknown to me, while covering, also after the war, important positions in the administration of Cultural Heritage in Italy (Superintendent in Apulia, Superintendent of the Etruscan museum in Roma), never revised his work in the 'Amman Citadel.

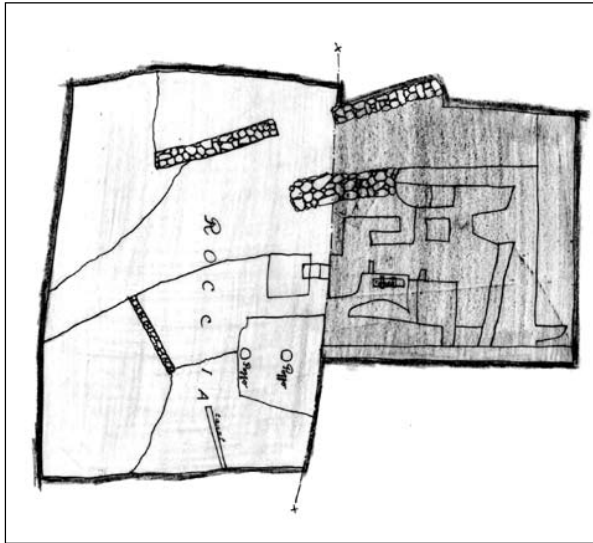
A real pity! Had Bartoccini speculated, at least, upon the extensive clearing of the 'Arab Palaces' that he brilliantly assigned to Umayyad times, the weight of the Italian Mission in Trans-Jordan could have enjoyed much more relevant consideration than it actually has.



7. Plan of the structures brought to light between 1927 and 1938 in the north sector of the Citadel, 1938.



8. Graphic reconstruction of the south side of the four-sided portico.

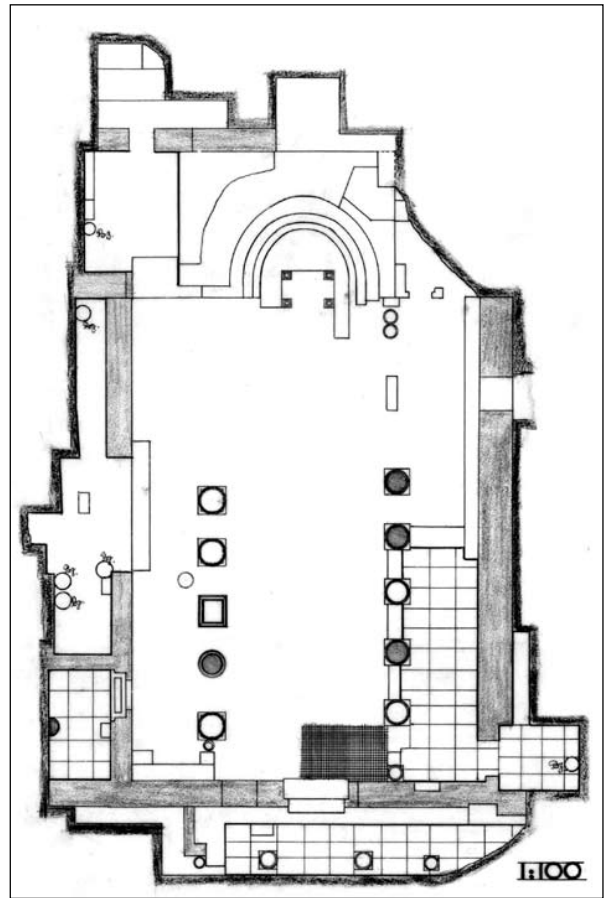


9. Sketch of the trial trench in the east sector of the Citadel, 1938.

I would like to suppose that the lack of a comprehensive publication is due to a rise of the author's own scruples, as much as a very possible lack of funds.

I would also like to suppose that had Ugo Monneret de Villard accepted the direction of the Mission in Transjordan as he was originally invited to do (Petricioli 1988), the research in the 'Amman Citadel, in consideration of his experience in Middle Eastern Art and Architecture, could have contributed a lot to the knowledge of the early Islamic architecture at least.

Starting from 1974, Bartoccini's work in the



10. Plan of the basilica in the Citadel, 1938.

upper terrace of the 'Amman Citadel was eventually inherited by the Spanish Archaeological Mission. The work, though, has been mainly dedicated to the restoration of the remains of the



11. 'Ammān, the house of Italian Archaeological Mission near the Italian Missionary Hospital in Jabal al-Ashrafiyyah, 1938.



12. 'Ammān, the Jordanian-Italian Institute of Archaeology, 1991-2003.

Umayyad cultural horizon. The Pre-Roman settlement on the acropolis remains still very poorly investigated. Nevertheless evidence of architecture of more ancient times continues to come to light. Besides the two basalt stele above mentioned (a third one has also recently appeared), fragments of capital of the vertical volutes type (proto-Aeolic/Palestinian) and a basalt cushion base have been seen by me reused in late walls.

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