

EXCAVATIONS AT SPARTA, 1924–25.

§ 2.—THE THEATRE.

(PLATES XIV, XV.)

THE scanty references preserved from the ancient writers who alluded to the Theatre at Sparta include no description of its shape, size or appearance, with the single exception of the passage in which Pausanias tells us (iii. 14. 1) that it was of white marble (*λίθου λευκοῦ, θέας ἄξιον*). The other authorities make mention of it only in reference to festivals or other events which took place in it. These allusions cover a long period, but do not help us to gain any idea either of the history of the building or of its form or size at any given date. They may be advantageously cited in chronological order, thus :—

Herodotus, vi. 67. (The quarrel of Demaratos and Leotychidas in the Theatre on the occasion of the Gymnopaïdai, *ca.* 491 B.C.)

Xenophon, *Hell.* VI. iv. 16. (The news of the battle of Leuktra arrived on the last day of the Gymnopaïdai, *τοῦ ἀνδρικοῦ χοροῦ ἔνδον ὄντος*. That *ἔνδον* means ‘in the theatre’ is confirmed by Plutarch’s account, *Ages.* 29, which repeats Xenophon’s, adding *ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ*.)

Athenaeus, xv. 631 c. (Quoting Aristoxenos (Aristotle’s pupil) for the celebration of the Gymnopaïdai in the Theatre); and iv. 139 e (quoting Polykrates (date unknown) for the procession of boys on horseback passing through the Theatre on the occasion of the Hyakinthia.)

Lucian, *Anacharsis*, 34. (A. is bidden not to laugh at the Spartans, nor to suppose that they toil in vain, *ὁπόταν ἢ σφαίρας πέρι ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ συμπεσόντες παίωσιν ἀλλήλους*.)

Pausanias, iii. 14; see above.

We only learn, in fact, that from at any rate the early fifth century the Spartans celebrated the Gymnopaïdai in the Theatre; that the Orchestra was accessible to horsemen; and that it was the scene of the Ball-game. It is plain that archaeology, not ancient literature, alone will give us fuller particulars concerning the Theatre at Sparta.

The late Guy Dickins, in publishing his account of preliminary investigations at the Theatre in 1906 (*B.S.A.* xii. pp. 394 ff.), has usefully summarised the evidence furnished by the descriptions of travellers who visited Sparta from 1770 onwards, and a reference to his remarks will suffice. We may now more confidently endorse his conclusions: (1) that the 'stage-buildings' seen by Leake and Dodwell early in the nineteenth century, and by Curtius in 1852, were, in fact, the remains of Byzantine houses built over the stage (some, as will be seen, actually rest on walls belonging to the stage). (2) That the careful dimensions given by Gell cannot rest on accurate measurements. Indeed, wherever we can check them they are wrong, and it is pretty clear that he could not have dug down to the Orchestra to measure its radius, which he gives as 70 feet.¹ A point where we might have hoped for useful information from these earlier accounts is the exact arrangement of the *cavea*, for it is clear that the process of spoliation of the marble seats has mostly taken place within the last 150 years. Actually, apart from the view given by Leroy,² looking across the stage-region towards the east of the *cavea*, which is not of sufficiently close accuracy to help us, and the details given by Gell, we have nothing at all to guide us where the seating has all disappeared. It is, however, certain that already in mediaeval times the marble seats of the Theatre were being removed for building purposes, for whole or broken ones appear in Byzantine structures elsewhere on the Acropolis. Nevertheless, as our plan shews, it has been found possible by tests made at various points in the *cavea*, in addition to the complete clearance at two points of portions of the lower rows of seats, to arrive at a pretty correct restoration of the whole of the seating-arrangements (see the Plan, Pl. XIV).

The results of the trial-trenches dug in 1906 are fully published (*B.S.A.* xii. *loc. cit.*), and we need only note that they were practically confined to opening up a long trench along the west side of the stretch of late (Byzantine) wall which runs southward from the east end of the western retaining-wall, and to clearing the junction of these two; and within the Theatre itself, one shaft was sunk to examine the lower part of the seats

¹ *Narrative of a Journey in the Morea*, p. 328. He must surely mean diameter though actually he says 'radius,' which is even less nearly correct. The radius, taken from the ascertained centre of the Orchestra to the inner edge of the blocks forming the sides of the water-channel round it, is 12.25 metres (slightly over 40 feet 2 in.).

² *Les Ruines des plus beaux Monuments de la Grèce*, Pl. XIII.

just inside the same retaining-wall. As a matter of fact, the latter trench, which also found the Orchestra-floor, did not furnish very exact *data* as to the arrangement of the seating; as it found a rather destroyed portion. The other trial made at the Theatre was a long trench cut in 1909 from near the top of the *cavea* on its east side down towards the stage. This revealed extensive remains of the upper rows of seats, in considerable confusion, and clear traces of the existence of a *diazoma*. Lower down it was not carried deep enough to penetrate below the Byzantine level above the stage, and as a result nothing came to light which was deemed worthy of publication.

We began in April, 1924, with the intention of locating the stage-buildings, and of ascertaining, if possible, the dimensions of the Orchestra, and the state of preservation of some part of the lower rows of seats in the *cavea*. This programme was carried through, though less of the stage-area was cleared than we had hoped, owing to the complicated nature of the Byzantine settlement which covered practically all the region examined. On the other hand, the unexpected discovery that the east Parodos-wall was faced with marble blocks, of which the great majority bore inscriptions, made us devote more labour than we should otherwise have wished to the task of uncovering the wall, and searching, with no small success, for fallen blocks in front of it. We further lost time, close to the end of the season, as a result of torrential rains washing down many tons of earth into one of our deepest and most important cuttings, which had to be cleared by forced measures, before we closed down for the year, to enable the surveying to be completed.

As the result of our first campaign, which had only lasted from March 31st to May 31st, we had reached the Orchestra-floor, at an average depth of sixteen feet, and had cleared about one-fifth of its surface; of the stage, we had found, and cleared, nearly all the *Hyposcenum*,¹ and had uncovered a large part of the presumed *Scenae Frons* running parallel to it, and the central part of the space between the two; we had cleared part of the lower seats at three points, namely, adjoining the extreme south-west and south-east corners of the Orchestra, and in addition, at eleven metres'

¹ I advisedly use this term to avoid the complications involved by the use of *Proscenium*, without intending to claim it as the only possible name for this wall. Dörpfeld-Reisch, *Gr. Theater*, p. 301, deny the correctness of *Hyposcenum* in the sense of 'Bühnenvorderwand.' If I appear to defy this view it is only through inability to find a suitable alternative. 'Stage-front' is scarcely standardised in the sense required.

distance north of the *Hyposcenum*, had found the lower rows of seats on the east, together with one of the stairways; of the eastern retaining-wall we had uncovered about eight metres' run of inscriptions, and had verified its continuation five metres further east. Of the Byzantine settlement which covers nearly all the area examined, we had planned and levelled up all the walls we found, and had removed them when necessary; and we had obtained, from a careful study of the coins found in association with them, a good deal of evidence for the probable limits of the Byzantine occupation of the site (cf. note on p. 157 below).

In 1925 we almost completed the clearance of the stage, except for strips left for barrow-tracks, and digging behind the *Scenae Frons* found at an unexpectedly deep level remains of a wall which seems to indicate a stage of—possibly—Hellenistic date. Other conclusions now reached regarding the various periods represented in the stage-buildings will be considered later. In the *cavea* we completely cleared the corner of the eastern seats nearest the stage (cf. Fig. 3), and, by removing the Byzantine masonry from above the western retaining-wall, found the remains of ten rows of¹ seats almost undamaged, together with the lateral stairway outside them. Of the east retaining-wall, we cleared all the rest of the inscribed blocks, and followed it further east to a point where it returns outwards; and, moreover, by laboriously removing large numbers of fallen *poros* blocks from the far (east) end of this wall, were enabled to recover its original line, and to find that below the average modern ground-level, the marble facing-blocks are still *in situ*. Of the western retaining-wall, we found that the marble facing had practically all been stripped from the eastern end, as far as the southward return,² which corresponds to that displayed by the east wall. The *cavea* was extensively tested at other points, and it appeared that scarcely any remains of the upper seats could be traced in its western half, but high up near the centre a portion of the seating and another stairway came to light; and further clearance of the *diazoma* located in the trench dug in 1909, in combination with a close study of the remains of the seating, has enabled us to plan the whole of the *cavea* in an almost final form. The returns of the retaining-walls, from their outward extremities, were carefully cleared, and offer interesting constructional features; and more light was thrown on the problem of

¹ See Fig. 6, and contrast it with Fig. 8 (before removal of the Byzantine material).

² See p. 132 below.

the date, by a study of the relation of the back wall of the *cavea* to the remains on the Acropolis.

The Cavea.

It is inevitable that certain elements in the plan should be conjectural, where so much is destroyed. We have, however, proceeded on the assumption, which fuller investigation might compel us to modify to a small extent, that the lay-out of the seating was uniform and, in general, symmetrical.¹ This is warranted by all details hitherto observed, and consequently we assume that every stairway located has a corresponding one on the opposite side of the central axis. The plan shews ten in all below the *diazoma*, numbered there, for convenience of reference, I–X. Of these we have uncovered portions of Nos. I, V, and VIII–X, and there is no reason to doubt that they were continued upwards above the *diazoma*, to the upper extremity of the seats. As is usually the case, the blocks of upper seats are again subdivided by an additional stairway inserted between each of the continuous ones, and these are numbered on the plan as II*a*, III*a*, etc. (No such upper stairs are restored in the narrower blocks of seats nearest to the retaining-walls, as they would be superfluous.) Of these, we have only found portions of V and VII*a*, and it is at the lower end of the latter alone that we have actual remains of the *diazoma*.

The width of the two lateral stairs (I and X) is 1.05 m., the remainder being .95 m. The height of the steps is normally half that of the seats, namely, .1625 m. for the lower seats (which average .325 m. high), and apparently .16 m. for the upper (which are restored as .3 m. high). The presence of the *diazoma* is responsible for an exceptional arrangement, where it was necessary to achieve a sharper rise to reach the top of the *podium*, and we restore six steps in place of four to give access to the first seat above it (see the section, Fig. 2). The lower seats, which numbered thirty rows,² had in front of them, as at Megalopolis³ and elsewhere, a single row of benches with backs, behind which runs a passage-way. Here, however, the front row of seats proper is raised on a plinth or step, on which the feet of the front-row spectators rested, leaving the whole

¹ Certain exceptions will be noted as we proceed.

² Or, more strictly, thirty-one if we restore one on the outer edge of the *diazoma* (cf. p. 126).

³ *Excavations at Megalopolis*, pp. 37 ff., and Fig. 24.

passage free (Fig. 1, and cf. Fig. 6), while at Megalopolis their feet rested on the passage itself. The interval at Sparta between the back of the bench and the fillet of the front seat is 1.10 m. (80 cm. being occupied by the passage, and thirty by the step above), whereas the Megalopolis interval is *ca.* .915 m. (3 feet). The exact profile of the benches is not ascertainable, as their remains are much chipped, where preserved at all, but the seat itself had a curved surface and formed a more obtuse angle with the back than those at Athens, Megalopolis or Epidaurus.¹ In front

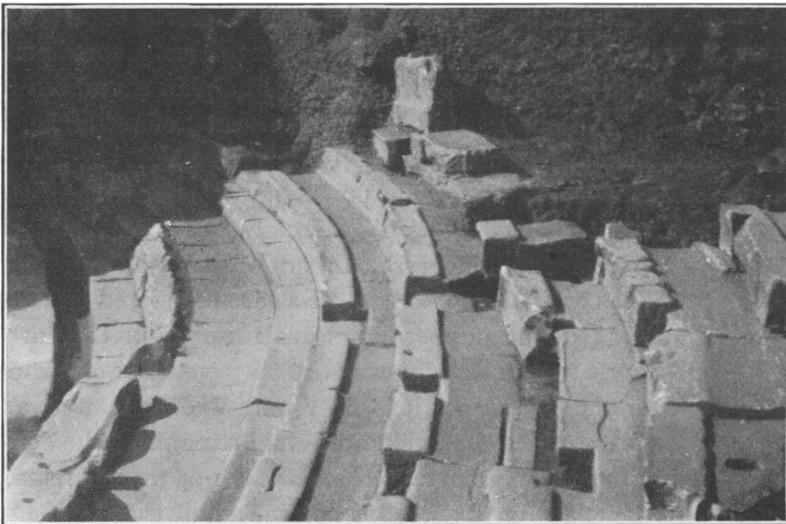


FIG. 1.—LOWER SEATS IN EAST OF CAVEA, LOOKING NORTH.

of them ran a water-channel, .50 m. wide, and of slightly greater depth, built of well-dressed marble blocks resting on two courses of *poros*. In the eastern half of the *cavea* it had been much disturbed, but its outflow could be traced for some distance at first in a S.-E. direction, till it had cleared the angle of the stage, and then southwards; cover-slabs were found in position for short distances both north and south of the eastern retaining-wall, the former apparently a later reconstruction. At its western outflow it seemed to have been blocked later by the construction of a flight of three steps, leading southward past the end of the *Hyposcenum*, which we shall notice

¹ Whether these benches represent, as seems to be the case at Megalopolis, an addition to the original plan, is not yet clear. Certain indications point in that direction, and require to be further investigated.

below (p. 142 f.) in dealing with the stage. The nearer wall of this channel (·45 m. wide) served as foot-rest to the benches, and the further side, adjoining the paving of the Orchestra, was found, opposite the foot of Stairway VIII, and for a short distance each side of it, to bear inscriptions (four lists of Nomophylakes, and one *cursus honorum*), dating from the second quarter of the second century after Christ (*vide* § 3, No. 2). Where so much disturbance has taken place, it is not easy to attain an absolutely accurate series of measurements for the seats, and our figures are based on a comparison of a careful selection of the best-preserved examples. The average projection of each row in front of that above seemed to be ·73 m. in those below the *diazoma*, and ·72 m. in those above it. Thus the breadth, on the plan, of the lower thirty seats was 22 m., and that of the upper twenty, 14·4 m. Each row consists of a seat-space, ·30 m. wide, behind which is a space ·43 m. wide, and sunk *ca.* ·015 m., to take the feet of the persons sitting in the row above. That minute differences would be detectable to-day, even if no destruction had taken place, would not be surprising; and it is not unlikely that, to hasten the draining-off of rain-water, each row sloped a trifle downwards from the centre towards the nearest flight of steps. This, however, has not yet been confirmed.

It was further observed that the six lowest rows of seats were made more comfortable by being slightly hollowed out, as may be well seen in the view of the eastern portion of the *cavea* (Fig. 1). We noted also that the risers of the seats are invariably undercut, and have a plain fillet above and below; the latter feature is far from common, and is unknown in the chief theatres of the Greek mainland, where, if there is a fillet, it is only on the upper edge of the riser. This fillet returns down each end, not only where the seats abut on a stairway, but also, occasionally, at the junction of two blocks of marble.

The great majority of the seats found *in situ*, and many of those found dislodged, are composed of large blocks of the required height, and averaging ·90 m. square, with a strip *ca.* 15–18 cm. wide left roughly finished where it was covered by the seat above. Sometimes, however, a slight moulding is added to the inner edge, in spite of the fact that it would have been invisible.¹ There are a few possible instances of patch-work, presumably later than the original construction, especially the use of a separate piece of marble *ca.* ·30 m. wide, to form the seat proper.² Small

¹ Cf. Fig. 3, seat marked A.

² The edges are too straight for this to be merely due to later breakage in every case.

sinkings, square in section, intended to support the posts for an awning, were noted at irregular intervals in the foot-rest of the front benches in the east of the *cavea*; there is a pair set symmetrically just clear of the foot of Stairway VIII, and two further south. A similar sinking exists in step 9 of Stairway I, and smaller round holes, through which to tie the awning-ropes, are found in certain of the seats. Similar cuttings are not uncommon, *e.g.* at Megalopolis (*op. cit.*, p. 35).

The Diazoma.

The only direct evidence for a *diazoma* was obtained by cleaning out the old (1909) trench at the point where the existence of this feature had been recognised in it. The marble had all been stripped away, but the substructure of coarse limestone seemed little disturbed. We uncovered a horizontal foundation 1.65 m. wide, and six short steps above it, each .25 m. high, and giving a rise of 1.50 m. in 1.80 (5 : 6) in place of the average rise of *ca.* 1 : 2 $\frac{1}{4}$. Above them, the foundations seemed to indicate a return to the normal pitch, or rather the slightly steeper one which we suggest for the upper seats. These foundations seem to fit most satisfactorily with a restoration giving us a *diazoma* 1.20 m. wide, with a seat projecting another .30 m., the normal width. It is not unlikely that this first row may have consisted of benches with backs, in which case they may be assumed to have had a width of .50 m., as did those in front of the lower seats, which would narrow our passage-way down to 1 m. Above it we restore a *podium* also a metre in height, and a foot-rest for the first row of upper seats, .75 m. wide, as opposed to the normal one of .43 m. (Fig. 2).

Whether there was also a lower *diazoma*, half-way up the lower blocks, remains unknown. We can only tell that there cannot have been one as low down as the tenth row, or below, for the continuity of these tiers was found unbroken alongside Stairway I, and the pit which located Stairway V shewed no traces of a passage interrupting rows 16–19 inclusive. It may, perhaps, prove possible to verify the point in the coming season, but I am not hopeful; in any case, we may assume that if there was such a lower passage, as would not be unusual,¹ it was narrow, and did not interrupt the grading of the seats, for our measurements shew a continuous rise in the gradient of the lower seats up to the main *diazoma*.

¹ At Epidaurus, with even more rows of seats than at Sparta, there is no lower *diazoma*.

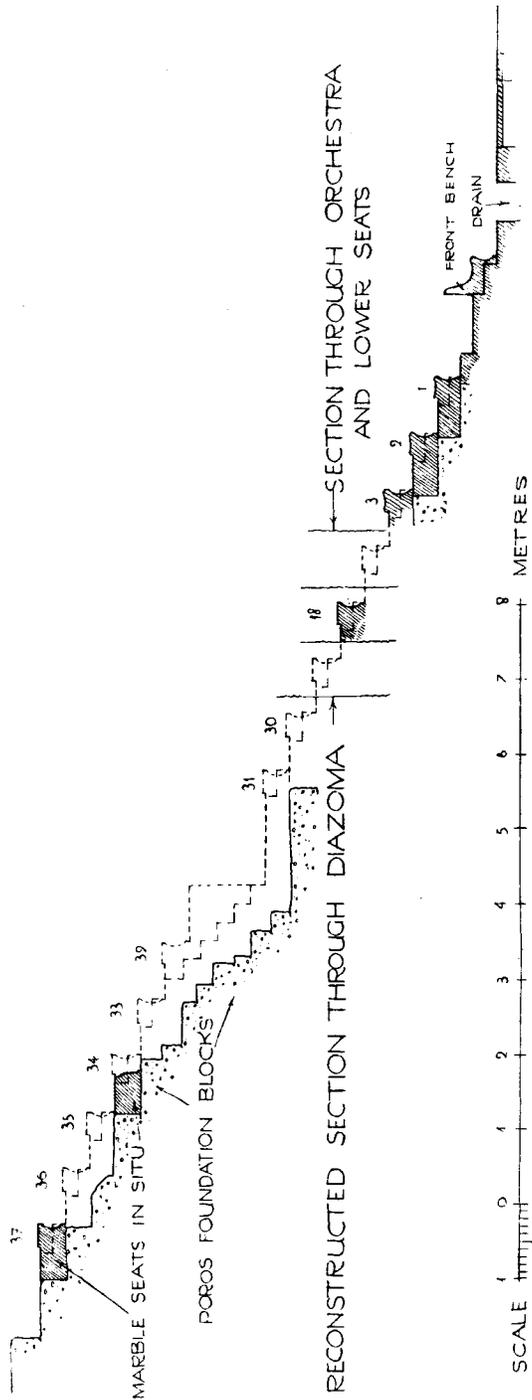


FIG. 2.—COMBINED SECTIONS OF LOWER SEATS AND *Diazoma*.

Substructure and Retaining-Walls.

It is not clear to what extent the *cavea* rests on made-up ground. While it is obvious on the one hand that the hill out of which it is cut is natural in the centre, there is good reason for believing that the wings are largely supported on an artificial embankment. Thus our Theatre will in this respect resemble those of Argos, Athens, and Megalopolis, among others. Not only is this probable in view of the unnatural shape of the hill otherwise implied, but it is rendered almost certain by the extremely



FIG. 3.—LOWER SEATS OF E. *CAVEA* PARTLY CLEARED.

massive retaining-walls, which have so long formed one of the most striking features of the site of ancient Sparta. This conclusion was completely confirmed by the result of our testing the ground in, and behind, the upper portion of the *cavea*. As will be seen below,¹ the region lying south of the western half of the Sanctuary of Athena Chalkioikos, for a distance of at least 16 m. in a southerly direction, was found to be made up with a layer of foreign clay, increasing in thickness as it descended the slope towards the back of the *cavea*; this layer, when our excavations ended for the season in 1925, had already attained a depth of over 3 m. We cannot tell how far down the auditorium this belt of clay runs, and

¹ § 4, p. 251 f.

anything like an exhaustive test of its extent would be out of the question, owing to the expense involved. Nevertheless, we verified its existence for most of the way round in a southerly direction towards the west retaining-wall, by a trench following the level at which, had they been preserved, we should have cleared the sixteenth and seventeenth seat-rows above the *diazoma*. This trench, moreover, revealed an interesting feature of the structure, namely, a terrace-wall, built of small rubble with many rounded cobble-stones set in mortar, of a width of *ca.* .72 m. and going down to approximately two metres' depth below the present ground-surface. This was traced almost continuously from Stairway V nearly to the line where Stairway II should come, but between the latter and the outer edge of the *cavea*, above the west retaining-wall, all signs of it had vanished.¹ In the other direction, just west of Stairway V, it ran into a sort of *glacis* of similar material, which supported the remains of three seats (Nos. 17-19, upper), of which the position is indicated in the plan (Pl. XIV). Its eastward continuation could not be verified, as intrusive mediaeval masonry breaks the line. This wall is obviously made for the purpose of helping to support the embankment, and it would be natural to expect it to be coterminous with the made bank. Pending more extensive tests we cannot tell if any more, similar, terrace-walls were employed, but it is not unlikely; indeed its unexpectedly narrow width would seem to make it of little use if it stood alone. Nor have we yet ascertained to what extent the uppermost seats were supported merely on rubble-concrete. Indications to the contrary were obtained in the trench which revealed the *diazoma*, for, as we have seen, the substructures of the steps, and seats alongside them, in Stairway VIIa, consisted of close-fitted blocks of coarse limestone, similar to those supporting the lower seats and steps wherever preserved. Further digging will be needed before we can tell whether the eastern half of the seats as a whole have this masonry-foundation above the *diazoma*, or, if not, at what points it gives place to rubble; and, moreover, whether the presence of the former is an indication that the subsoil is the natural hillside, and again, if the use of rubble-foundations is confined to the 'made' ground. We have, on the other hand, no indication anywhere that the lower seats and steps rest on any other foundation than limestone blocks, as already stated. Their

¹ But there is no need to infer that the clay embankment gave place again to the natural ground. On the contrary, the collapse of both extremities of the *cavea* is a further proof that it was 'made' ground.

style of construction can be well seen in the views of the eastern portion of the lower seats (Figs. 3 and 4), and a particularly well-preserved example appears on Stairway X, where the marble treads have all been stripped.

The wall marking the rearward limit of the *cavea* was visible at the two extremities of the semicircle before our work began.¹ We followed it from the west, in a succession of trenches along nearly half its course

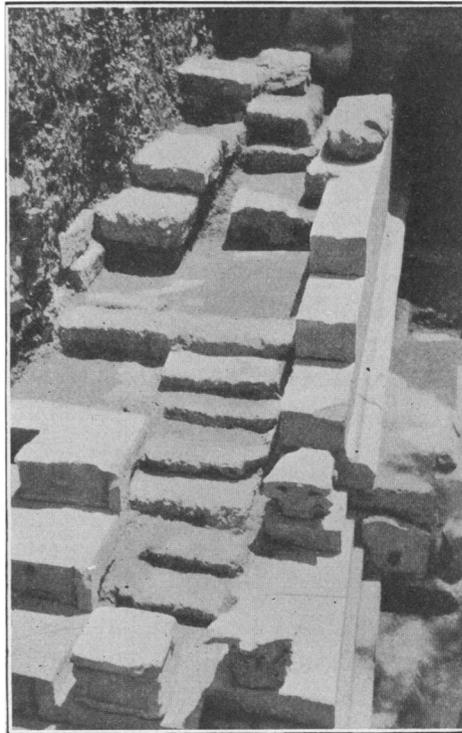


FIG. 4.—E. *CAVEA*: RETAINING-WALL AND FOUNDATIONS OF STAIRWAY NO. X.

towards the axial line of the *cavea*, but east of this it proved impossible to trace owing to the presence of Byzantine walls, especially in the sector behind Stairways VI and VII. Where we found it, it was of uniform construction, a footing of rubble, set in mortar (2 m. deep), on which were one or more courses of dressed limestone blocks, varying in length between

¹ Cf. *B.S.A.* xii, p. 402. The diameter of the semicircle which it forms is wrongly given as 104 m.; it is almost exactly 114 m. between the outer edges of the stones.

1·10 and 1·60 m.; they were *ca.* ·80 m. wide and ranged in height from ·28 to ·38 m. (In Fig. 7 the E. end of this wall appears against the sky-line).

From the levels observed, it was plain that the foundation ascended in steps to correspond with the rise of the ground-level from the extremities of the semicircle towards the centre; and to obtain a wall of uniform height, the outer ends were built up several courses high. Thus there are five (or possibly six) courses lost at the western end, where the present level of the wall-top is *ca.* 2 m. below that of the wall found in the trench south of the E. end of the Chalkioikos-Sanctuary (where it appears that no courses are missing); and, at the eastern extremity, where it is ·29 m. lower than on the west, one more course is to be restored. Actually there are four courses in position here already, as against two at the western extremity, which shews that the foundation was laid at a correspondingly deeper level than at the other end.

Whether there was an arcade behind this wall, as Gell states,¹ is very doubtful, for nothing definitely indicating one can now be seen, nor have we uncovered any masonry suggesting its existence. It is also clear that the Roman walls south of the Chalkioikos-Sanctuary belong to houses of late date, which have no original connection, either in structure or in orientation, with the outer wall of the *cavea*. Among the few finds associated with the foundations of this wall there was no object pointing to an earlier date for it than the Roman period, to which it should presumably be ascribed in view of the style of construction. Unless we should obtain evidence to the contrary, it seems natural to regard it as contemporary with the marble seats of the *cavea* (see below, p. 251 f.)

The Retaining-walls.

Attention was also paid to the massive retaining-walls which support the outer edge of the embankment, both on the south and, for distances not yet determined, on the east and west. The former, of which the general direction is east and west, present various interesting features. It was thought at first, in confirmation of Mr. Dickins's observations, that these walls would meet, if continued in a straight line, but more careful study and measurement have shewn us that this is not true, and that they would form, if produced, an angle of 179°, each wall being only half a

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 328.

degree out from forming a right angle with the axial line through the *cavea* and Orchestra. It is not impossible that this represents an error in their original setting out.

Moreover, instead of running in straight lines from the Orchestra to their outer angles (*i.e.* where they return northward) they shew an unexpected southward return, and then continue in their original directions.¹ This was first found in clearing the west wall, which we followed westwards from the Orchestra end, and remained inexplicable until, in clearing the base of the east wall, abreast of the wall behind the *cavea*, we found the three lowest steps of an external staircase projecting from the lowest course of the marble facing of the wall. Time did not permit us to follow this throughout, but when the east wall was found to have likewise a return carrying a projection corresponding to that on the west, the purpose of these returns became clear, namely, as the supporting-walls of these external flights of steps (for we must assume that the western retaining-wall was similarly equipped). Their object can only have been to give access to the *diazoma*; and the plan shews that if we restore 55 steps, each .18 m. high, with treads .302 m. wide, we obtain the desired rise of *ca.* 9.90 m. in a length of 16.65 m. to bring us up to the level of the *diazoma*, as ascertained, approximately, in the *cavea* opposite Stairway VII *a*. In view of the breadth of this projection we restore the steps with a width of 2.50 m., assuming that the marble facing-blocks on the projection were of the same width as those of the main walls. This is still subject to confirmation, but not unlikely.

Such external stairways leading up to the *diazoma* are far from common. At Mantinea, where the whole of the *cavea* is supported on an artificial embankment, in addition to the external stairs at two points on the arc of the curve, there is an exterior flight alongside the N.-E. retaining-wall, not unlike ours at Sparta, whereas on the S.-E. there is one which leads up likewise to the *diazoma*, but starts from the end nearest the Orchestra, on the outside of the retaining-wall.² I purposely leave out of account the examples of stairways in Roman theatres carried up

¹ There seems to be a slight difference in the measurements in this respect. The return on the west is 33.70 m. from the (presumed) outer S.-W. angle, while that of the east wall is only 33 m. from the (presumed) outer S.-E. angle; thus they are respectively 36.30 and 37 m. from the axial line of the *cavea* and Orchestra, which seems exactly to divide the total distance of 140 m. from angle to angle.

² Fougères, *Mantinee*, p. 169 f.

over the Parodos-arch, and roofed over (*e.g.* those at Aspendos and Patara), and the rock-cut ramp at Syracuse.

Another feature of outstanding interest in the retaining-walls is the presence of inscriptions on the marble facing-blocks of the east Parodos, where they are preserved for a length of *ca.* 14 m. Although the end of this wall nearest the Orchestra has been removed (*cf.* Fig. 3), we may safely assume that the inscriptions commenced close to the pedestal in which the wall terminated. These texts are described and published in full, together with those on the fallen blocks and fragments, in the following section

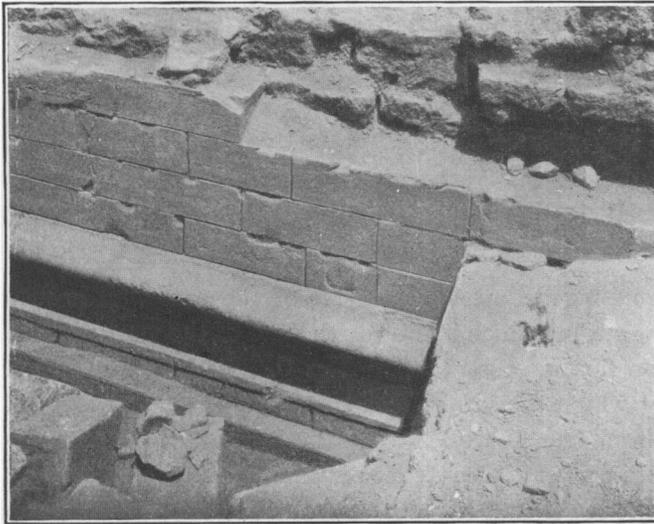


FIG. 5.—E. RETAINING-WALL: MARBLE FACING CLEARED DOWN TO FOUNDATIONS.

(pp. 160 ff.) That the west wall, from which the marble facing has been almost entirely stripped, was likewise inscribed, appears highly probable (*see* p. 200). The elevation, together with a sectional view, of the blocks still *in situ* in the east wall is shewn on Pl. XVI (*and cf.* Fig. 5). The blocks are slightly bevelled at all four edges in front, and are closely fitted, without mortar; many of the fallen blocks have cuttings for clamps, in some of which are the remains of the lead which held them. The dressing of the face varies, as the unscribed blocks have not the carefully smoothed finish of most of the inscribed ones; but some of the latter were inscribed without this final dressing of the surface.

A shallow vertical *anathyrosis*, *ca.* .12 m. wide, which runs regardless of the presence of vertical joints, appears at irregular intervals, as if intended to break up the monotony of the plain surface.¹ The inscriptions are sometimes cut on this *anathyrosis*, and seldom did the engraver deliberately avoid it. The height and length of the blocks appear in the drawing referred to already; their depth varies according to the course to which they belong. Most of the fallen ones hitherto examined are *ca.* .49 m. deep, but a few are *ca.* .74 m., and at the west end, those *in situ* in the first course above the *torus*-mould are .68 m. deep. We may note here that there are four marble facing-courses below the *torus* (cf. Figs. 4 and 5), their height and projection being as follows:—

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------|
| (1) | Ht. .24 m.; | projects beyond | course above | .16 m. |
| (2) | Ht. .25 m.; | „ „ „ „ | „ | .07 m. |
| (3) | Ht. .25 m.; | „ „ „ „ | „ | .07 m. |
| (4) | Ht. .22 m.; | recessed behind | course above | .26 m. |
| (5) | Ht. .36 m.; | (<i>torus</i> -mould) | projects beyond | |
| | | course above | | .29 m. |

The missing pedestal or pilaster of the east wall is restored in the drawing from that which stands at the end of the west retaining-wall, and appears, as far as preserved, in Fig. 6. Its base consists of two plain courses, of which the lower (measuring .92 × .61 m.) is practically flush with the front line, as well as with the surface, of the step below the first row of seats proper; above the second is a course made of a single block, of which the lower half is plain, and the upper has a simple pilaster-base moulding. Above this, but now lost, was a plain rectangular shaft, of uncertain height. Whether in addition to its capping it carried some form of decoration—perhaps a small statue—is problematic. We may compare, for a similar termination for a retaining-wall, the pedestals found at the Theatre at Megalopolis.² They stand on two plain courses, which line with the front of the first row of seats, and the shaft, from which the capping is lost, measures inclusive of its base, which has a simpler moulding than ours, 1.30 m. in height (or *ca.* 1.40 m. inclusive of its cap). No doubt

¹ The distances between these *anathyroses* are as follows (measured on centres and beginning on the left): 1-2, 2.80 m.; 2-3, 2.30 m.; 3-4, 2.50 m.; 4-5, 2.10 m.; 5-6, 3.70 m. Much is to be said for the suggestion, due to Mr W. A. Sisson, of the British School at Rome, that they were primarily intended as guides to the masons who were to dress down the blocks finally; but that this was left undone.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 43, Fig. 32.

ours also served as a terminal for the coping on top of the wall, but whether the coping at Sparta overhung the wall on each side, as at Megalopolis, or was flush with its sides, is still unknown, as we have not yet identified for certain any of the coping-blocks.¹ We may, at any rate provisionally, believe our retaining-walls to have ended in a pedestal perhaps 1·50 m. in

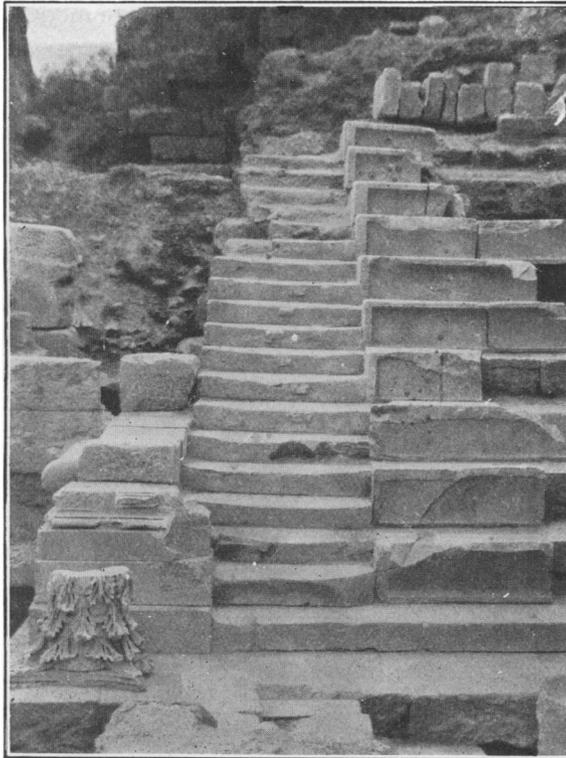


FIG. 6.—W. CAVEA: LATERAL STAIRWAY (NO. 1) AFTER REMOVAL OF BYZANTINE WALL (1925).

height over all, rectangular in section, with a simple moulding above, as well as below. In it, perhaps about half-way up, the wall-coping ended. The base of this pedestal comes level also with the *torus*-moulding, which returns on itself, just before reaching it, as can be seen in Fig. 6

¹ We have found, among fallen blocks from the wall, two coping-blocks, of different depth from back to front, ·49 and ·51 m. The former must belong, in view of our having found fallen blocks ·49 m. deep, presumably from the course directly below the coping.

The marble facing seems to have extended the whole length of the two southern retaining-walls, as far as their outer angles. On the west this has not been verified to the west of the projection that carries the outer stairway; but on the east, at a point directly below the end of the wall which marks the upper limit of the *cavea*, after laboriously removing an immense number of blocks fallen from the retaining-wall, we reached its original face, and found that at about the average modern ground-level (of the field behind), marble blocks *in situ* began to appear (Fig. 7). This level was also associated with a large quantity of marble chippings, testifying to the destruction caused by mediaeval stone-robbers. Following the marble blocks down to their foundation-course we came upon the bottom steps of the outer stairway already described, and found that, in all, nine courses of marble facing-blocks remained in position at the best-preserved point. These are about .39 m. high, and above them in the tenth course was part of a taller block, which indicated that a course of orthostat-blocks was here employed to vary the monotony. As the *torus*-moulding, as we have seen, followed the projection, presumably there was none on the main wall (where it would in any case have been out of place, and an actual impediment to the use of the steps; nevertheless it may have resumed E. of the foot of the stairs). Whether the marble facing extended right up to the top of the wall we cannot decide; too much has fallen away from the limestone backing of the wall to permit of an opinion. From the aesthetic point of view it seems probable that the facing went to the top. A certain amount of evidence appears in the photograph (Fig. 7) for the system of applying the marble blocks; we see, for instance, that course No. 9 consisted of 'headers' which ran much farther back into the wall, that the orthostat-course above was (naturally) shallow, and that courses 13 and 18 were again 'headers' deeply set in. The curious cutting-back of the lower part of course 19 of the limestone blocks was traced again nearer the angle. It is possible that it was so cut to carry a heavier facing-course, perhaps moulded (?);¹ but it may be merely due to the course of limestone blocks ('headers') which fitted into it having all fallen.

¹ The projecting moulding on the blocks of the west retaining-wall renders this far from impossible. It is well seen in Leroy's Plate XIII (*op. cit.*) but must have fallen since his visit.

Masons' Marks.

Many single letters, no doubt rightly interpreted as masons' marks, were recognised during the original excavations, and are reproduced in Mr. Dickins's article.¹ I noticed two only among the numerous fallen blocks from the backing of the east retaining-wall which we removed, as above described, but no systematic search was made for these marks.

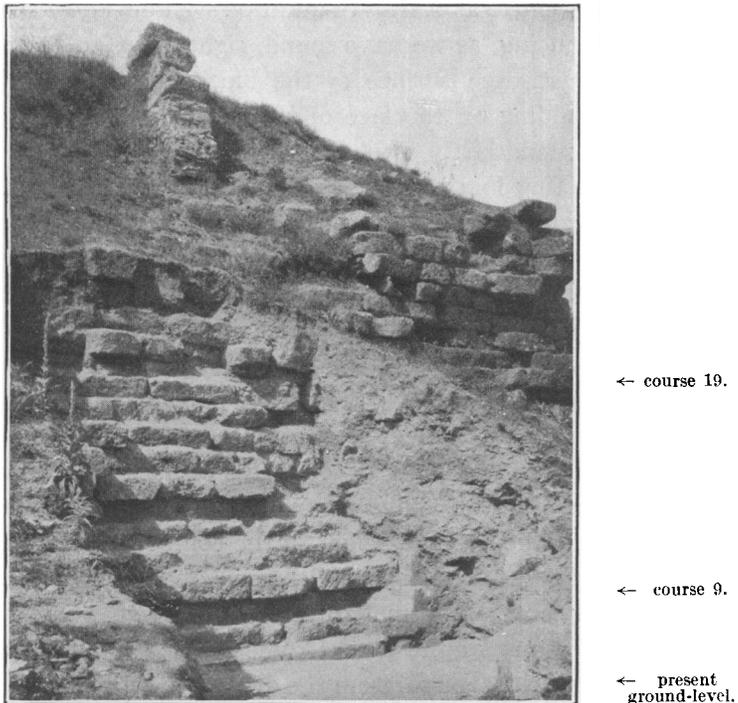


FIG. 7.—EAST RETAINING-WALL, PARTLY CLEARED.

These were Λ (ht. $\cdot 12$ m.), and \mathcal{M} (ht. $\cdot 095$ m.). They add nothing to the little chronological evidence obtained from a study of the previously published instances.

The Returns of the Retaining-walls.

The outer retaining-walls on the east and west were traced for part of their course with interesting results. On the west, starting from the

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 403.

extreme S.-W. angle, we now have a length of nearly 40 m. (measured along the chord of the arc) exposed down to foundation-level for most of this length; on the east, where fallen material has hitherto prevented us reaching the exact angle, we have followed the course of the wall to a point distant (again along the chord of the arc) 46 m. from the angle, the wall itself being clear for about 36 of them. The principal discovery is that these walls undoubtedly follow the curve of the *cavea*, and are set out from the same centre as it is. In addition we now know that they never had a marble facing, as we have found, right down to their foundations, the original rusticated surface of the blocks, mostly uninjured, and a projecting moulding on the face of the west wall is inconsistent with a marble facing; and lastly, we have secured exact details of the arrangement of projecting footing courses, for a short length on the east and a considerably longer stretch on the west, which strengthen them for the thrust of the bank of earth which they were meant to support. It is clear that these foundation-courses are not stepped symmetrically, as there is a wider projection visible (cf. the plan, Pl. XV) on the western ones at a point where we may compare them, namely, 20 m. northward from the angles. In fact the average projection of the western foundations is *ca.* .38 m., while that of the eastern is only .20 m. Moreover, the former consists of six, and the latter of only five courses which are off-set from the true line of the wall above ground. These courses average .39 m. in height, which is the average height of the courses of the wall itself. The strong rustication of the blocks is visible where they have escaped damage by weathering, and in contrast to the drafted edge, about 3-4 cm. wide, the centre of many of the blocks sometimes is left with a boss which stands out as much as .08 m. from the drafted margin.

How far these retaining-walls continued is still unknown. The course of that on the west is interrupted after 40 m. by the Byzantine fortress-wall of the Acropolis setting off in a north-westerly direction, and we did not try for it beyond this point. On the east, where we have traced it to a point 46 m. along from the angle, the last two metres were rendered difficult to expose by the presence of a later (Byzantine?) wall, in an advanced state of decay, which was built almost on top of it. To remove the latter promised too long and risky a task, but it may prove possible to verify the continuation of the retaining-wall still further along, where it may be clear of this complication. At the same time, it cannot

have been necessary to continue it much further, as a few more metres would undoubtedly bring us on to the natural slope of the hill, where such a wall would be superfluous. Similarly on the west, we know that the outer wall did not continue so as to reach the region which we excavated in 1925 in front of the west end of the Chalkioikos Sanctuary. Had it run another 25 m. in its original direction, we should have found it there. It should be easy to locate its termination in the coming season, now that this area will be free of crops, which caused us to restrict our trial-trenches here in 1925. We shall thus hope to complete the plotting of both ends of the returns, and the manner of their finishing-off is likely to be of some interest. How thick the backing of the wall is must also be tested, and further clues sought for with regard to its date.

The Orchestra.

As described above, we had to dig down about 5 m., on an average, to reach the level of the Orchestra. Its shape, as is shewn on the plan, is that of a semicircle with a slight addition, 4.50 m. in width, between the E.-W. axial line and the front of the late *Hyposceniūm*. It was at first thought, by Mr. Dickins, as a result of his tests in 1906, and by Mr. De Jong and myself after our 1924 campaign, that the continuation of the Orchestra south of the centre represented a pair of tangents drawn to the circumference, but fuller study has shewn us that the continuation is on a curve, but with a larger radius, and therefore a differently placed centre, than those of the semicircle proper.¹ The diameter up to the nearer edge of the block forming the side of the water-channel, already mentioned in connection with the front benches, is 24.50 m. All this area was, it seems, paved in Roman times with thin slabs about .30 m. square, of white and red marble.² Most of the area which we have cleared has been much disturbed,³ but close to the stage-front (*Hyposceniūm*) some almost undamaged portions came to light (cf. Fig. 8, lower r. corner).

¹ For an example of the secondary centres on which the *cavea* of a theatre is laid out, cf. the plan of that at Epidaurus.

² Mr. Dickins was wrong in saying 'greenish marble,' *B.S.A.* xii. p. 401. The red is *Lapis Lacedaemonius*.

³ Byzantine stone-robbers had penetrated in places nearly a metre below the level of the paving.



FIG. 8.—W. END OF *HYPOSCENIUM*, PART OF ORCHESTRA-PAVING ON R., AND BYZANTINE WALL BUILT OVER STAIRWAY NO. I.

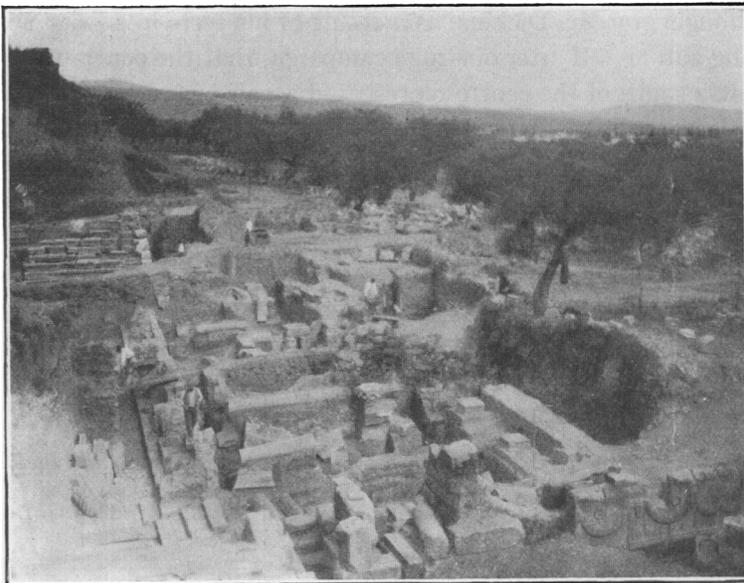


FIG. 9.—GENERAL VIEW OF STAGE-REGION, LOOKING EAST (1925).

The Stage.

It would be premature to attempt to give an exhaustive account of the stage-buildings, or to assign dates to the various periods represented by their remains, as we have by no means completed the excavation of this region. Here, much more than in the *cavea*, the presence of the Byzantine settlement is responsible for destruction, as well as merely for disturbance, of the earlier masonry. It will not, however, be necessary to deal in detail with the Byzantine structures at present, and we have accordingly omitted them, with two exceptions,¹ from the plan of the stage-region.

In the hopes of making this account more intelligible, the principal walls and other remains will be described as far as possible in order, from north to south. Nearest to the Orchestra, and at a distance of only 4.50 m. south of its centre, is the stage-front or *Hyposcenium*,² of which we uncovered the greater part in 1924, and the remainder, except for a quite narrow strip, left perforce as a barrow-track, in 1925. This has a length of 24.30 m., and its front wall is 1.45 m. thick; the returns are much slighter, being only *ca.* .58 m. thick, except at their south ends, where they abut on the wall of the *Scenae Frons*, and shew at this point a width of 1.04 m. At the point where it is best preserved, the front wall is standing to a height of a metre above the pavement of the Orchestra. It is mostly composed of well-trimmed limestone blocks, of varying sizes, on the back as well as front, with a rubble core set in mortar.³ Not only was it originally faced along the base with thin marble slabs, of which slight portions have survived, but it seems also to have carried a facing of marble slabs, resting on a ledge .31 m. wide, at a level of .24 m. above the Orchestra-floor (visible in Fig. 9). This cannot have reached to the extreme corners, as they are formed by larger limestone blocks, with no recess cut in them. Nor can this facing have been carried continuously right across the front of the *Hyposcenium*, as it is interrupted by two semicircular niches, recessed from the ledge, which are 1.80 m. wide and .85 m. deep. Traces of thin marble revetting remain in the western one. The presence of such niches in the front of Roman stages is far from rare,

¹ The cisterns in the E. stage-region, and the line of wall bounding it on the west.

² For the name see above, p. 121, note 1.

³ The style of building is not unlike that of the best portions of the Roman Amphitheatre at the Orthia site.

a well-known example being the larger theatre at Pompeii.¹ It is surprising that there was no staircase leading up on to the stage from the Orchestra, apart from the (later) steps at the W. end of this wall. Omitting the two niches, and the undecorated corners, it seems that there must have been 19 (6 + 7 + 6) metres' run of this marble facing, of which none has survived for certain. It seems possible, however, that we might be correct in recognising some of the missing blocks in the decorative festoon-blocks found by Mr. Dickins in 1906 in the western face of the Byzantine wall just opposite the west end of the *Scenae Frons* (*B.S.A.* xii. p. 397 and Fig. 2). These are 1.27 m. high, and have a depth of .37 m., without their mouldings.

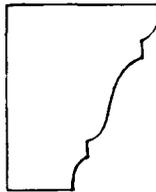


FIG. 10.—SECTION OF MARBLE MOULDING
FROM RETURN OF *HYPOSCENIUM*.
(Scale 1 : 2).

They would thus have projected appreciably if placed on our ledge (.31 m. wide), but this would have been masked by the marble incrustation on the course below them. In any case too little of them is preserved for us to say if they can be reconstructed to form one, or attributed to more than one, of the required runs of facing mentioned above. Their height, 1.27 m., added to the height of the base on which is the ledge, would not prove an improbable one for a Roman stage-front.² The returns of the *Hyposcenum* had likewise marble incrustation, with slabs, .016 m. thick, and a skirting course, of which a section is shewn in Fig. 10; this was found *in situ* at each end, but did not continue for the whole length of the W. return (the E. return is not yet fully cleared). At the west end, as can be seen in the foreground of Fig. 9, there is a flight of three steps, of poor patch-work construction, in marble, which mount from the Orchestra, directly past the west end of the *Hyposcenum*, above the outflow of the

¹ Cf. Mau, *Pompeii*, p. 145, and Rizzo, *Il Teatro Greco di Siracusa*, p. 145 f., for traces of the niches of the Roman stage-front there, and other parallels.

² As Dickins recognised, *loc. cit.*

drainage-channel, to a higher level, in the small room formed west of the return of the *Hyposcænium*. That these steps are of later date than the *Hyposcænium* is proved by the fact that they obscure the marble incrustation along the return of it, and incidentally prevent all egress from the Orchestra at its original level. The building of the *Hyposcænium* in any event left but a very narrow passage between it and the ends of the benches standing below the front seats, and it seems that when these steps were put in, the ends of these benches were broken away, on the west, to allow full access to the lowest step.

The returns, already mentioned, do not bond into the massive wall to the south, which is doubtless to be identified with the *Scenae Frons*, and we need not hesitate to regard them as later than it. The space enclosed between them, over which we must suppose the floor of the *pulpitum*, or stage proper, to have been laid, was found to be congested with worked marbles, especially towards its west end. Some lay in disorder, but others had been roughly heaped or laid together to furnish a foundation for the Byzantine settlement above. They included several pieces of architraves and cornices of various types, a large angle-piece from a coffered ceiling, pieces of three patterns of column (cf. Fig. 11) and as many types of capitals, and more than one inscription. The conspicuous shafts of red granite, of which one (3.50 m. long) is preserved intact, all lie pointing northward, as if they had fallen forward simultaneously.¹

As we shall see, the bases to which they belong are perhaps to be recognised. Another important find in this region, lying at a deep level, ca. 5 m. east of the western return, was the torso, of very fair Roman work, of a male statue with the remains of long hair descending on to the left shoulder; perhaps an Apollo or youthful Dionysos. In the hopes of further portions coming to light, its publication is withheld for the present.

The Scenae Frons.

At 8.20 m. distance behind the front of the *Hyposcænium* (12.70 m. south of the Orchestra-centre) is the wall of the *Scenae Frons*, of which we have not yet cleared the extreme ends. It seems, however, to have been more than 10 m. longer than the *Hyposcænium*, since we have traced

¹ This material must have been imported, as no granite is found in Greece. Cf. p. 147, below. Three of them can be seen in Fig. 9.

it, not quite continuously on the east, for a length of 34.50 m., and at each end it seems to be cut short by, or incorporated in—the relations are still doubtful—a still later wall which is built up against it behind, and returns both ways at its east and west ends. It is of a very different type of construction from the *Hyposcaenium*, being built of large squared blocks of limestone, carefully fitted, but not in very regular courses, some blocks which are lower than others being packed up with flat bricks, or occasionally small pieces of cut stone or marble. Its foundations are a very miscellaneous collection of material, including the broken shafts of more than one Doric column, and its width varies between 1.05 and 1.10 m. At its best preserved point near the centre it stands to a height of 1.46 m. above Orchestra-level, and its foundations do not go as deep as those of the *Hyposcaenium*, the under side of the lowest regular course being .15 m. above Orchestra-level. This wall was perhaps never carried up much higher than it now stands, as it may prove to have had as its primary object the carrying of a row of columns, of which considerable indications remain, in the form of moulded bases and plain plinths. These bases rest on plain plinths of grey marble, *ca.* .18 m. high, 1.05 m. long and .80 m. deep, which are set back *ca.* .10 m. from the front of the wall. Close to the west end of the wall two of these plinths are preserved, and on the westernmost the moulded base was found *in situ*. An almost identical type of base (the only difference being that it is nearly three centimetres higher: .249 m. as against .22 m.) was found fallen in front of the other plinth, and has been temporarily replaced there, as may be seen in Fig. 9. These moulded bases, to judge by that preserved *in situ*, were .628 m. square, and .22 m. high, with plain mouldings above and below. That they extended at intervals the full length of the wall is proved by the discovery of one of the supporting plinths at the extreme east end of it; it will be seen that the level, calculated independently, is only one centimetre different between the tops of these two plinths. This east-end plinth, located just by the return of the later wall which terminates ours, might be expected to be matched by a corresponding feature on the west, but here, as Fig. 12 shews, there has been a later disturbance, and the presence of the expected plinth is not satisfactorily verified, owing to the intrusion of a block of a different type. We have not yet found plinths at the east end corresponding in position to the two certain examples on the west, which are, on centres, 2.5 and 5.25 m. east

of the return. Whether more of these bases stood originally nearer the middle of the length of the wall is hard to verify, owing to Byzantine rebuilding. It must also be noted that remains of marble incrustation were found in position near the west end of the *Scenae Frons*. A well-preserved piece returns along the later wall, which runs N.-S. at right-angles to it; this is shewn in Fig. 12, which also shews the further complication of a portion of the same material running at a higher level on the face of the wall, which is of later construction, behind the *Scenae Frons*. This upper stretch of incrustation has not yet been followed downwards, and likewise has not yet been found *in situ* further eastwards along the wall, but this absence must be due to destruction.¹ It gives the impression of having formed the facing of the wall—which I describe as later—so as to serve as background for the presumed colonnade supported on the low wall in front. The meaning of the larger piece of marble incrustation running round on to the (later) west return, will be considered below in connection with other remains found in this region.

The colonnade which we must restore as standing on our *Scenae Frons* (without committing ourselves to a definite answer as to whether the wall served merely to carry these columns, or rose higher in between them) was not the only colonnade of which we have evidence in this area. Even more definite are the remains of a series of more massive columns standing in front of the wall. As the plan shews, we found three pairs of bases, or their foundations, standing *ca.* 1.50 m. (on centres) in front of the wall. The distance between the two on the west is *ca.* 2.55 m., as is the case with the eastern pair, while the central pair seems to have been set *ca.* 3 m. apart. The western pair seems to have been set nearly half a metre² further away from the central pair than was the other, and we also noticed a lack of symmetry in their details. The western base of the western pair consists of two courses: the lower, a plain block of hard limestone .30 m. high and .93 m. square, supports a massive block, also .93 m. square below, but chamfered so that its dimensions above are .75 m. square, the total height being .32 m., of which .11 m. is that of the straight piece below the chamfering. The other western base rests on a wider plinth, but had not been fully cleared by the end of our second season;

¹ A few fallen fragments of small size were found opposite the centre of the wall.

² Not less than .30 m.; perhaps slightly more. We have only the foundations of the central pair preserved, and exact measurement is difficult.

the illustration (Fig. 9) shews the west side of it, with an assortment of architectural marbles placed on it by the Byzantine builders. Of the central bases only the rough foundation remains, and the eastern pair differs considerably from the western in having mouldings on three sides of each. In each instance these pairs of bases stand on a foundation of massive limestone blocks, closely fitted, of which the upper surface differs

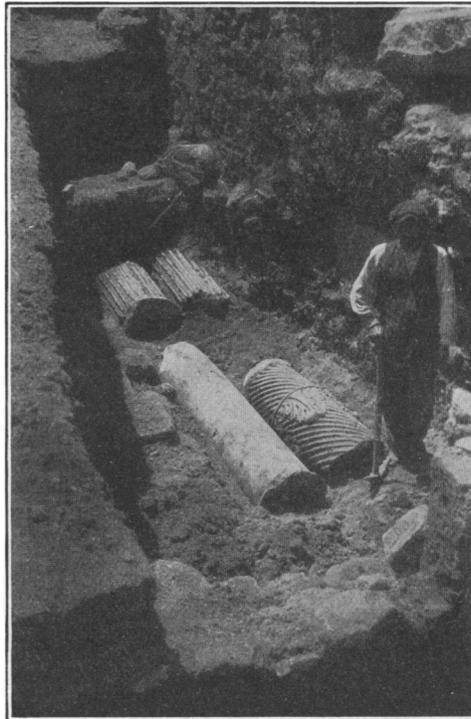


FIG. 11.—FRAGMENTS OF FALLEN COLUMNS AS FOUND, BEHIND *HYPOSCENIUM*.

but little in level from the Orchestra-paving: the westernmost is $\cdot 09$ higher, the central $\cdot 05$, and the eastern $\cdot 09$ m. The last two had likewise been used by Byzantine builders as foundations for structures of which the nature remained unintelligible to us. To judge by their positions when uncovered, it seems natural to connect with these six bases the massive granite columns already mentioned, in spite of the fact that the level at which the latter were found might point to their having been

moved and re-used in Byzantine times in a horizontal position, as walling-material. The coincidence that practically opposite three of the six bases, and not far away from a fourth, granite shafts, of uniform type, were found lying north and south, two of these four being complete, seems a striking argument in favour of our connecting them.¹ In this event, the numerous, but more fragmentary pieces of fluted columns,² found in the same area (some pieces of which may likewise be seen in Fig. 11), should probably be attributed to the bases on the wall of the *Scenae Frons*. It would be unwise to take this as certain, till the whole region has been cleared; and the matter is complicated by the existence of two other types of columns, represented by fewer fragments, it is true, namely, a plain unfluted type with a diameter of *ca.* .46 m., and an ornate pattern with spiral flutings interrupted by acanthus leaves, both found near the west end of the stage. Even more confusing is the variety, both of size and type, of the capitals found. No final conclusions have yet been reached as to the allocation of capitals to columns.

The relation of the six bases to the *Scenae Frons* is plain, but whether they are contemporary can hardly be decided at present. If they were, they must have masked the Corinthian colonnade—or columnar decoration—represented by the bases on that wall, though we must not overlook the possibility that they were used to carry the projecting columns of a system of façade with a broken front, which system might itself be an addition to the original plan of the *Scenae Frons*. Their relation to the *Hyposcenum* is also still obscure, but it seemed clear, as we dug, that the returns of the latter were of later date than the bases, for there was no attempt at connection, and, had the bases been later, the process of sinking their foundations would have surely disturbed the poor rubble walls of these returns, which is not, in fact, the case.

So far, then, we have our *Scenae Frons*, the massive colonnade in front of it, perhaps an addition to its original plan (though indicated on Pl. XV as contemporary) and the *Hyposcenum*, which is definitely later than both the other items, with a flight of three steps at its west end which must in turn be later than it. Before the end of our work in the second season we had clear proof of the existence of a still earlier period of

¹ The complete shafts are 3.50 m. in length; the upper diameter is .43 m., the lower .51 m.

² White marble, diam. .42 m., twenty-four flutes; if the height was to the diameter in proportion of 8½ : 1, this gives us 3.57 m. for the height of the shaft.

construction in the stage-region. In clearing the region south-west of the *Hyposcenium*, to which we may for convenience refer henceforward as the West Room, we found the remains of a wall two metres in front of the *Scenae Frons*, and quite unconnected equally with it or with the *Hyposcenium*. It is only one block wide, and consists of a footing-course of roughly-dressed limestone, *ca.* $\cdot 16$ m. high, on which rests a course of hard

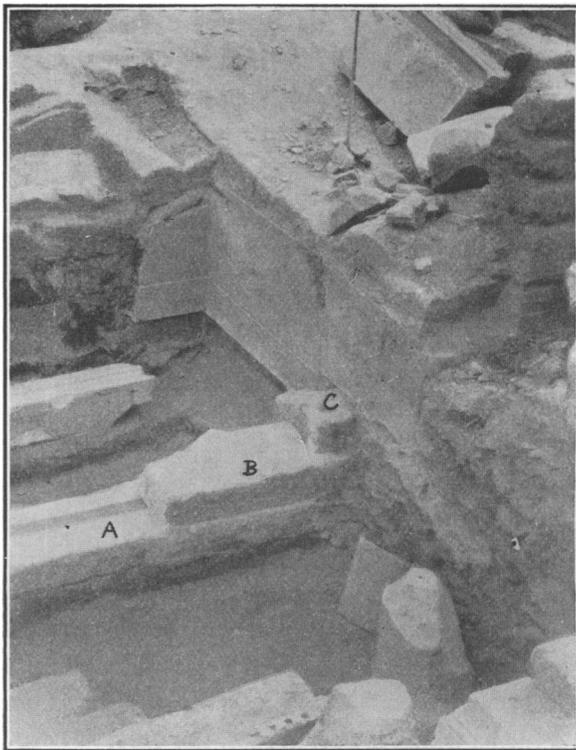


FIG. 12.—EARLY WALL (A), WITH LATER ADDITIONS (B, C), AT W. END OF STAGE.

conglomerate, which is dressed smooth, and indeed takes a high polish. On the upper surface, along the central axis of the block, runs a narrow semicircular sinking, $\cdot 16$ m. wide and $\cdot 075$ m. deep, which can be plainly seen at A in Fig. 12. A continuation of this line of wall appeared some 6 m. to the east, but it has not been traced any further in this direction. The foundation rests on yellow gravelly earth, which looks like undisturbed ground, at a level of $\cdot 30$ m. below the Orchestra-paving, and the

block near the centre of the stage, which belongs to the footing-course, is at a depth of $\cdot 06$ m. below the corresponding block in the West Room. At a later date this wall was raised above the course with the cutting, and remains were found of two more courses, respectively $\cdot 30$ and $\cdot 22$ m. high, which were built above it (Fig. 12, B and C). This wall was, however, no longer in use (whether as a result of deliberate removal, or not, is enigmatic), at the time when the marble incrustation already noticed was applied to the west wall of this room, for the lower edge of the marble slabs can be plainly seen to rise, in order to clear the remaining blocks of the wall, still *in situ*. This wall-facing is associated with a floor-level here shewn on the plan (Pl. XV) at pt. 222. 13,¹ just within, but $\cdot 76$ m. below, the Byzantine gateway leading into this region; and continues again northward, resuming its way after passing the place where the making of the Byzantine threshold and entrance has disturbed the masonry. It finally abuts on the western Parodos-wall of the theatre, as may be seen in Fig. 6, to the left of, and above the moulded pedestal in which this wall terminates.² A corresponding feature was observed on the east Parodos-wall (Fig. 3, B), which is there associated with a later and poorer pavement at a height of $\cdot 49$ m. above the original level of the Parodos-passage. This West Room, then, in its latest Roman form, accounts for the presence of the three steps at the end of the *Hyposcaenium*, for they lead up to a level closely agreeing with that of the late floor just mentioned. The floor in the S. half of the room must have lain at a lower level, to account for the marble facing being carried further down; the line of the wainscot-moulding is about $\cdot 20$ m. above the lower edge, which no doubt marked the floor.

It seems, therefore, that our *Scenae Frons*, when forming the S. wall of the West Room, only received its marble facing at the lower level, which would have been superfluous if none of it were visible below the plinths for the colonnade, at a later date. This re-modelling we should presumably recognise as the last episode in the constructional history of the site in Classical times.

Before we leave the early wall, we must note that a stretch of wall likewise one block wide, of very similar style, came to light behind (S. of) the *Scenae Frons*, at a depth of $\cdot 11$ m. lower than the foundation-course above

¹ Our levels are shewn in terms of metres, etc., above sea-level.

² Cf. p. 134, *supra*.

described as found near the centre of the stage. This lay below a hard-rammed clay-floor belonging to the large rectangular structure situated behind the *Scenae Frons*, which, I have little doubt, formed the *Σκηνοθήκη* of late Imperial times. We uncovered a stretch 8.60 m. long, terminated on the east by a wall returning southward from that of the later structure; it consisted of a single course of well-worked limestone blocks, resembling, and running parallel to, those found in the West Room. If, as is natural, we connect these two early walls, they would give us a structure 5.20 m. in internal width, and they thus would form the remains of the earliest stage-building hitherto identified in our Theatre. Whether we should date them earlier than the Imperial period is not yet clear.

We must note that, allowing for a slight slope from north to south, the level of the first visible course of this building would come at a quite appropriate depth to agree with the level of the Orchestra. It would be unwise to attempt to suggest a date for these walls until they have been more fully uncovered; on our present evidence I feel uncertain whether to regard them as belonging to an earlier period than the *cavea*. The semicircular cutting on the upper surface of the block in the West Room is not easy of explanation. Three other blocks of similar material and exhibiting a similar cutting were recognised, one at a higher level in the south-west corner of the same room, and two others, also re-used at a late level, behind the stage-centre, not far, in fact, from the early wall forming the south of our presumed building. While the channel naturally suggests a use for rain-water, we must not pass over unmentioned the chance that it may have served a very different end, namely, in connection with the presence of a wooden screen in the Theatre. We should in that case compare it with the cuttings in the blocks at Megalopolis (*op. cit.*, p. 85 and Pl. VII. 2), which likewise were covered over in a later rebuilding,¹ and at Delos.²

It remains to describe the massive wall which is built up against the back of our *Scenae Frons*, and forms the north side of a building lying behind it, which comprises, probably, three communicating rooms running the whole width of the stage-region, and in addition, northward returns at each end; to the latter, as found at the west end, attention has already been paid. The style of construction is on the whole similar to

¹ Cf. Dörpfeld-Reisch, *Griech. Theater*, p. 137. In view of the cutting at Sparta being semicircular in section it does not seem likely that it could have been for a screen.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 146 f., and Fig. 59.

that of the *Scenae Frons*, though rather more miscellaneous material has been used in it.¹ We have traced practically its whole extent (a length of 33 m.) on the north and about 8 m. of the south wall. These, and the returns at the extremities, are 91 m. wide. In the south wall, at a height of 31 m. above the surface of the single remaining course of the earlier wall (cf. p. 149 f.), is a course with several projecting blocks, on which perhaps a wooden floor originally rested. Above them, at an average level of half a metre (51 m. where measured), we found a hard-beaten clay floor, extending uniformly over the room as far as it has been uncovered; on this, close against the south wall, a little to the west of the centre, was standing a moulded column-base, obviously not in its original position. On this floor, or trodden into the clay, were many coins, none of which were of later date than the end of the third century of our era; they were mostly Roman Imperial, and included some second-century pieces.

Against the centre of the north wall were two large *poros* steps, the lower of which was 2.5 m. long, composed of four blocks, on which was resting a single rectangular block *ca.* 2 m. long; each is about .40 m. high. They gave access to an opening, presumably a doorway, 1.65 m. wide, which had been roughly blocked up in Byzantine times, with miscellaneous marbles, including a piece of architrave, to support the wall when rebuilt. There was no very clear corresponding opening in the *Scenae Frons* to the north of this, but in the south wall of the room another doorway, 1.77 m. wide, was recognised, likewise blocked up later. In the north wall we found another opening, possibly also for a doorway, but only .84 m. wide, situated 3 m. (on centres) to the east of the middle one, and likewise blocked later; and about 10 m. west of the central one was yet another opening, deepened for use as a drain or gutter in Byzantine times, when a street was driven north and south across the stage-region at this point. The western continuation of the north wall then served to carry the south wall of a late house.

The area enclosed on the north by this wall, and on the south by the corresponding one, was apparently divided into three rooms, if our assumption of a symmetrical arrangement is correct. Actually we have not yet located the wall separating the western from the central portion, but that which divides the east and central portions has been cleared, and proves to be undoubtedly contemporary with the main walls. In it is

¹ We noted a much larger proportion of broken-up marbles and of bricks.

a doorway .88 m. wide, rather north of the central line. This too was blocked in Byzantine times when the western half of the E. room was converted into a pair of cellars (presumably cisterns), built of brick and plaster-lined, with vaulted roofs, and separated by a wall .68 m. wide. Their floor-level is 3.10 m. below that of the room above them, the *maximum* internal height being 2.80 m.; the length (E.-W.) is 2.50 m. and the breadth 1.30 m. A man-hole, .80 m. square and brick-edged, is left in the centre of the roof of each. No finds of value occurred in either cellar except a much-damaged marble head—not worth reproduction—from a male portrait-statue, perhaps of an Emperor of the late third century. The interior of the rest of the room to the east of these cellars still awaits excavation, as does the whole of the western end of the area under consideration. Two early-looking partition-walls, found running southwards from the foundations at the west end of the north wall, may prove to belong to an altogether earlier structure.

Further excavation is also needed to shed light on the relation of the north wall of our *Skenotheke* to its two northward returns. That on the west, which has the same width, .91 m., does not seem to bond in, but must nevertheless be contemporary; as the plan shews, it is a continuation of the wall which must form the western end of the western compartment, and is distinct from, but runs side by side with, the outer Byzantine wall. As we have seen, it forms the west wall of the West Room, and has a large part of its marble facing preserved, though this was destroyed where the making of the Byzantine gateway has cut into it. North of this point, the line of the wall is resumed, and some of the facing-slabs are preserved, but this short stretch which ends against the Parodos-wall is built of less uniform, in fact of very varied material, and includes several re-used marbles, such as the statue-base dedicated to Lucius Caesar (No. 3 below), and a piece of coffered ceiling. The continuation of the marble facing of the wall seems to preclude us from assigning this to the Byzantine period of construction; but the northward extension may be a later Roman addition. A corresponding extension on the east, where similar material was employed, which was found to abut on the east Parodos, and to be associated with a later marble paving, has been already mentioned. The outermost wall on the west, which is 1.85 m. thick, must be altogether of later date, and we need not hesitate to assign it to the Byzantine period. Its chief feature of interest is the series of marble Festoon-

blocks, found in 1906, to which allusion has already been made. It is not necessary to discuss the features of the Byzantine settlement in general, but it is important to repeat here that the level of the threshold in the gateway is .76 m. higher than the latest observed Roman floor-level in the West Room.¹ The nature and date of the foundations of this wall can hardly yet be discussed advantageously, pending further excavation, and the tentative conclusions reached in 1906 may need substantial revision.²

Chronological Conclusions.

In view of the fact, which the preceding account of the remains of the *cavea* and stage has emphasised, that our excavation of neither region has reached a final state, it would be labour wasted, and a misleading undertaking, to attempt to give a detailed chronological scheme for the architectural history of the Theatre. We may, however, advantageously call attention to the chief evidence hitherto obtained, alike from the construction, the stratification and the incidental finds, from which certain tentative conclusions may be drawn.

The masons' marks on the retaining-walls³ indicate a date not before 200 B.C., and perhaps much later. But we have seen that their function is to support the clay embankment of the *cavea*, in which is a terrace-wall of apparently Roman construction; and the type of material used as foundations of the wall above the *cavea* (p. 130 f.) appeared to confirm the attribution to the Roman age.

If then the *cavea* in its final form cannot be earlier than the Roman period, what can be said for the marble facing of the retaining-walls? Here we obtain a safe *terminus ante quem* from the inscriptions. As we shall see below, all the texts on the east wall seem to belong to the period A.D. 100–150 (or at most to exceed these limits by five to ten years at either end). The surface of the blocks suggests that they had been exposed to the weather for some time before they were inscribed, and we might safely assume that they were already in position by the early Flavian period. It is noteworthy that an inscription exists (*I.G. V. 1, 691*), on a large architrave-block, recording a dedication of a building by

¹ Cf. p. 149, *supra*.

² *B.S.A.* xii. p. 400. We may also possibly have to modify the conclusions of Traquair (*ibid.*, p. 428 f.) regarding the date of this part of the fortress.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 403, and p. 137 above.

Vespasian—perhaps a stoa or gateway for the Theatre, where the stone was found,¹ and is dated to the year 77–78. We need not, however, credit him with any other activity in the matter of building the Theatre as a whole, nor can we tell where precisely his dedication stood.

We have, however, two more indications for the date of the building of the *cavea*. The first is the evidence of the coins. Though here too any conclusion must be only provisional pending the completion of the excavation, it is worth recording that we have found practically no coins definitely earlier than the first century B.C. in either the *cavea* or the stage-area. But certain specimens, in good preservation, of types current late in the second half of that century² came to light low down alongside the footing-courses of the west Pardoos, and among the seat-foundations in the eastern part of the *cavea*. It would not be strange, then, that these should have been lost during building operations in the time of Augustus. The other, but less definite, clue consists of the fact that we found inscribed bases from statues to Gaius and Lucius Caesar (Nos. 3 and 4 below), the former behind the centre of the stage, the latter rebuilt into a late wall abutting on the west Parodos. As we also found two left feet, of statues of similar style and position, on bases which may well have stood above these inscribed ones,³ and were undoubtedly of Roman work, it is tempting to suggest that this pair of statues stood in the Theatre, and were dedicated during the recipients' brief lifetimes, within a very few years of the beginning of the Christian era. We do not know that Gaius ever visited Sparta, but it would have been a graceful act, on the occasion of one of his visits to Greece, to honour him, and his brother, with statues; and thereby to gratify their grandfather Augustus, who would be mindful of his own association with Sparta. If we are to look more closely for circumstances in which the Theatre was built on the impressive scale indicated by its existing remains, in the time of Augustus, it is natural to associate with it the name and activity of his friend G. Julius Eurykles, who, as we know, presented to the city a Gymnasium in the Dromos.⁴

But, as was pointed out at the beginning of this report, we know that

¹ *B.S.A.* xii. pp. 400, 477. Fourmont, however, described it as '*prope Ecclesiam S. Nicolai*.'

² *E.g.* *B.M.C.* 63 ff., and 70. For an analysis of the coins found, see *Note*, p. 157.

³ The cuttings on the upper surface of the inscribed base of Lucius's statue shew that another block stood upon it.

⁴ Paus. iii. 14, 6; cf. E. Kjellberg, *C. Julius Eurykles*, in *Klio*, xvii. pp. 44 ff.

the Spartans had a theatre as early as the fifth century, and there is no reason to suggest that it was situated elsewhere. The conclusion which alone seems permissible must be that there was an earlier theatre, but on a smaller scale, remodelled and much enlarged in the time of Augustus (if my arguments are valid). We should perhaps recognise some of the *poros* substructures of seats and stairways as remains of the earlier *cavea* in position (whether or no it had marble seats); and we may confidently admit that the line of the retaining-walls of Roman date does not necessarily coincide with that of the earlier (and smaller) *cavea*. More attention will be devoted, when we have more completely excavated the *Parodoi*, to the possibility of remains surviving from an earlier *cavea*, which might have formed a fuller segment of a circle.¹

Admitting that the *cavea* was remodelled and enlarged in the reign of Augustus, we might expect to find a remodelled stage also of this date. Here, however, our evidence is less clear, and at present incomplete. We have seen that remains of stage-buildings of various periods have come to light, of which the earliest may be earlier than the Augustan era, but at present we can only suggest a relative, not a dated, order of succession for them. The problem is complicated by the evidence from the presence of numerous stamped bricks that there was a *Skenotheke*—possibly erected in the first century B.C.—of which we have not yet recognised the position.² More of these bricks came to light outside the stage-region on the west than elsewhere, and it is possible that it stood clear of the stage on this side.³ If we are correct in identifying the series of three connected chambers behind the *Scenae Frons* as the *Skenotheke* of Imperial times (second century after Christ?), it must have replaced the previous brick-built one; and, moreover, as we saw, it must be later, on structural grounds, than the *Scenae Frons*.⁴ Nevertheless the latter need not, therefore, be as early as the first century of our era, and there was an absence of first-century coins associated with the lower levels in front of it; nor have we any architectural elements suggestive of first-century work which we might ascribe to it. How long a period is represented by the various remodellings in this area cannot yet be stated with any

¹ The angle at which certain foundation-courses end off below the pilaster at the end of the W. retaining-wall seems to support this possibility.

² Cf. *B.S.A.* xii. p. 404; xiii. p. 191 f.

³ That at Megalopolis stood clear on the other side of the stage.

⁴ Cf. p. 150 f. above.

approach to certitude, but we have evidence of some importance for the later history of the site. The coin-series goes on well into the late fourth century without any conspicuous gap, and inscriptions tend to suggest that the site was not abandoned before that period. An unpublished fragment on a piece of an architrave begins [Ἐπι]φανεστάτοις καὶ ἀνδ[ρειο-τάτοις sc. Αὐτοκράτορσιν], which is hardly likely to be earlier than the time of Diocletian; ¹ and even more exactly datable is the document relating to repairs ordered at the Theatre by the Proconsul Publius Ampelius, in A.D. 359 (No. 20, below). How completely the Theatre was sacked by the invading Goths in 390 we cannot tell; but it appears that the site lay desolate for many centuries from soon after this date. It cannot be a mere accident that among the numerous Byzantine coins found at the Theatre, no recognisable piece (with one exception) belongs to the dynasty of Justinian (whose coins have been often found elsewhere in Sparta), and indeed it seems that no Byzantine Emperor earlier than the ninth century is represented among them. The *cavea* and stage-region seem to have lain abandoned and water-logged—to judge by the deep accumulation of greenish silt found above them—till the Byzantine settlement sprang up, which extended ultimately all over the stage and some distance up the *cavea*, probably in the ninth century.² To secure more stable foundations, and to raise their floor-levels above the sodden ground, they pulled down and heaped together many of the marbles which they found in the Theatre. The full extent and more exact date of the Byzantine occupation of the Theatre must await a detailed description which will not be attempted till more of the site has been uncovered, and the coins finally cleaned and classified. In the meanwhile, the remains of the Classical period provide no lack of problems, towards the solution of which the excavations of 1926 should take us appreciably nearer.

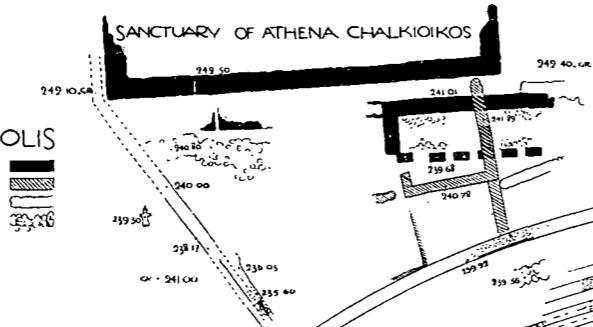
A. M. WOODWARD.

¹ It might well have been dedicated to himself and Maximianus. [A second fragment of the same architrave, found in 1926, contains the name [Γαλ]ερίφ Οὐαλερίφ Μαξιμιανῶ.]

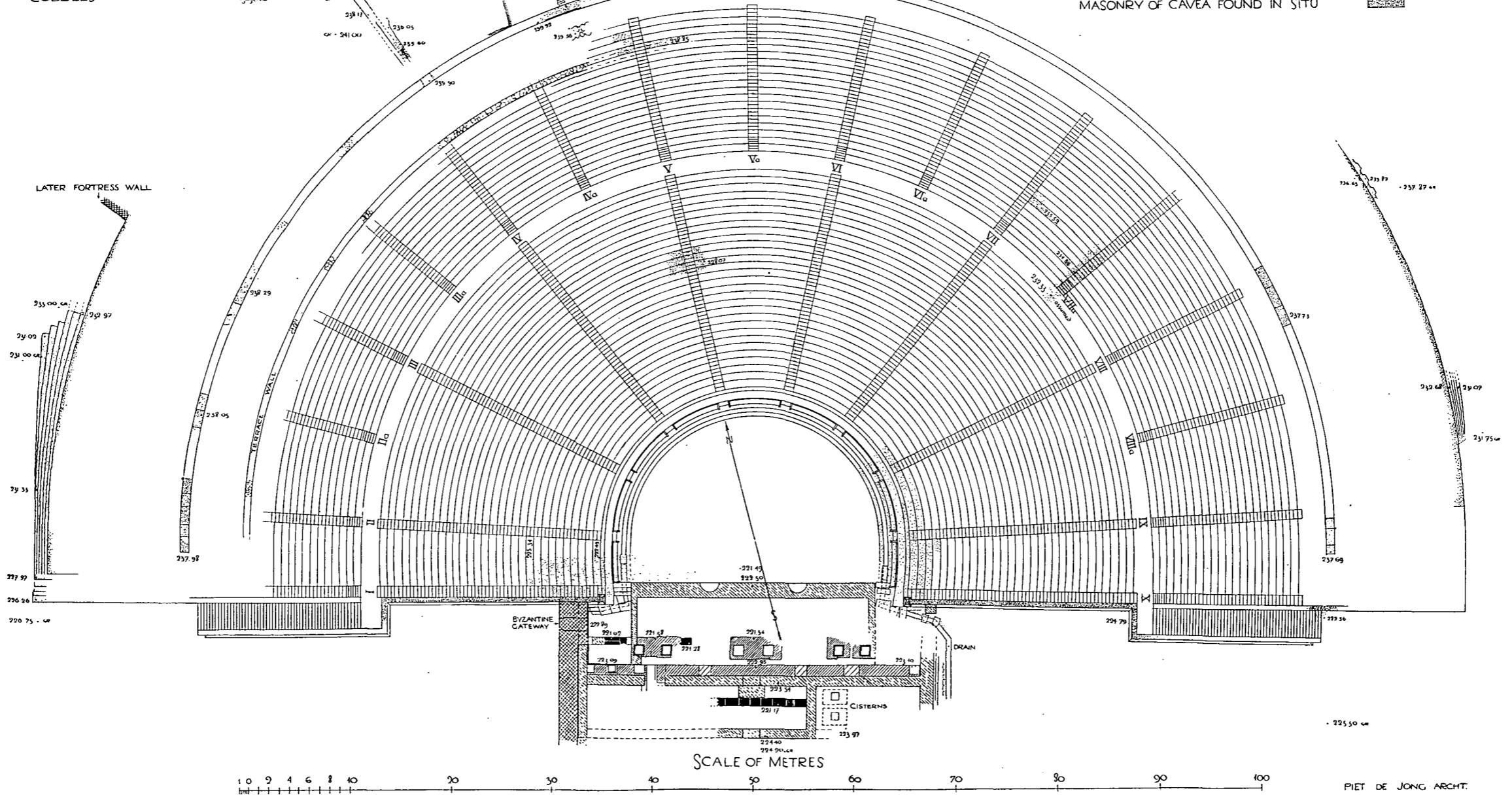
² I do not thereby imply that the fortifications should be dated as late as this. It does not seem necessary to do so, but this question must be set aside for later study.

THE THEATRE - SPARTA - 1924-25

CONVENTIONAL SIGNS
FOR
BUILDINGS ON ACROPOLIS
HELLENIC WORK
ROMAN (Later Houses)
BYZANTINE ?
COBBLES



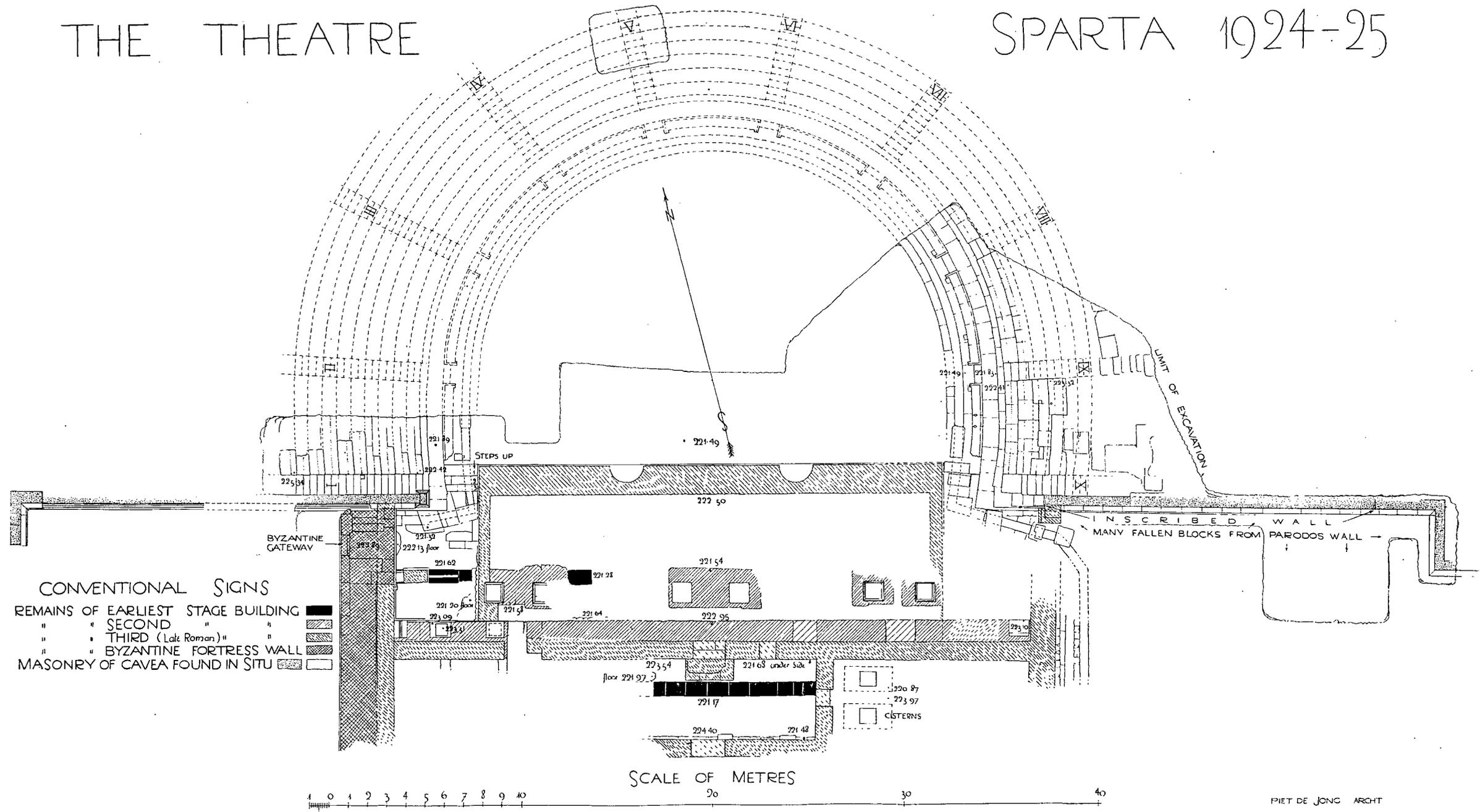
CONVENTIONAL SIGNS FOR THEATRE
REMAINS OF EARLIEST STAGE BUILDING
" SECOND
" THIRD (Late Roman)
BYZANTINE FORTRESS WALL
MASONRY OF CAVEA FOUND IN SITU



EXCAVATIONS AT SPARTA: THE THEATRE. PLAN SHEWING THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE SEATS IN THE CAVEA.

THE THEATRE

SPARTA 1924-25



EXCAVATIONS AT SPARTA: THE THEATRE. PLAN SHEWING LOWER ROWS OF SEATS IN THE CAVEA, THE ORCHESTRA AND THE STAGE-BUILDINGS.

PIET DE JONG ARCHT