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THE EXCAVATION OF MEDINET HABU—VOLUME I

GENERAL PLANS AND VIEWS

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THE EXCAVATION OF MEDINET HABU—VOLUME I

GENERAL PLANS AND VIEWS

BY
UVO HÖLSCHER



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FOREWORD

Architecture in stone masonry had its origins in Egypt. It is, therefore, the more remarkable that no comprehensive architectural survey of ancient Egyptian buildings has ever been undertaken. Not one of the Empire temples of Egypt has been exhaustively examined from the point of view of architecture, and no publication reporting any such complete investigation is available.

Such studies are rendered exceedingly difficult by the fact that already in ancient Egyptian times succeeding generations were accustomed to destroy the buildings of their predecessors for the sake of the building materials. Many of the finest structures of earlier Egypt were treated as stone quarries by the descendants of the men who had built them. The excavations of the Metropolitan Museum of Art at Lisht have disclosed the fact that the Middle Kingdom pyramids there contain beautifully sculptured blocks from Old Kingdom mastabas. Similarly, the Middle Kingdom temples were quarried out for building stone by the royal builders of the early Empire. And, indeed, the extraordinary operations of Chevrier in his difficult engineering feats of mining under the ponderous blocks in the pylon of Amenhotep III at Karnak have disclosed so many sculptured blocks from the magnificent chapels erected by this Pharaoh's ancestors, only a few generations before his time, that it will be possible actually to restore these older buildings almost completely. On the western shore of the Nile at Luxor perhaps the most sumptuous building ever erected in Egypt—the mortuary temple of Amenhotep III, which once rose behind the colossi on the Theban plain—was used as a quarry by the pharaohs of the Nineteenth Dynasty; and the massive stela bearing Amenhotep III's building record was found by Petrie re-used in the temple of Merneptah, alongside which now rises the first headquarters building of the Oriental Institute. It is thus evident why the Eighteenth Dynasty mortuary temples of the pharaohs at Luxor have left so few visible traces behind. They were destroyed by the ancient Egyptian rulers themselves. The chief reason why the vast mortuary temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu is the best preserved Empire temple in Egypt is the fact that Ramses III was the last of the emperors; there were no emperors who came after him to quarry away his buildings to supply materials for the erection of their own.

Exposed, as they were, to invading armies from Asia and the sea, the great ancient cities of the Delta and all the impressive buildings which they once contained now lie prostrate and desolate. As every traveler on the Nile knows, north of Cairo there is not a single temple standing. The same thing is true as far up the river as Abydos, where only the rear halls of the temple of Seti I still survive and the temple of his son Ramses II has been razed practically to the ground. The stately Denderah temple between Abydos and Luxor is of Ptolemaic age. As we consider these facts, they very substantially enhance the importance of Medinet Habu. Being the best preserved temple of the Empire, the great temple of Ramses III offered practically the only opportunity for thorough investigation and reconstruction of such a temple complex as a whole.

It is the more remarkable, therefore, that this temple should have been allowed to remain neglected as long as it was. Nevertheless, when modern archeology began to devote some attention to this building the results were disastrous. Perhaps no ancient building in Egypt is a more distressing example of regrettably incompetent methods of excavation—or, we might rather say, of complete *lack* of method—involving no attention to the important sun-dried brick construction, but only an effort to clear the *stone* buildings, notwithstanding the fact that the enormous Medinet Habu complex was very largely constructed of sun-dried brick. How much priceless evidence has been lost to science by the earlier clearances at Medinet Habu will be evident from further study of the present and future volumes of this series.

Following upon this destruction in the name of science came the native diggers of fertilizer, the *sebbakhin*. The discovery by the natives that the rubbish heaps covering old Egyptian buildings were strongly impregnated with nitrogenous components has been one of the most fatal factors in the destruction of ancient evidence. For two generations the natives in the vicinity of Medinet Habu have been permitted to regard its heaps as a source of fertilizer and to dig indiscriminately among the mounds covering the

great site. They have carried away thousands of cubic meters of such rubbish, pushing their clearances down to the virgin soil itself. Between the *sebakh*-diggers on the one hand and incompetent early excavation on the other, a vast amount of evidence at Medinet Habu has suffered complete destruction.

The possibility of recovering an Empire temple as a complete architectural unit was very attractive. As organized for work in Egypt the Oriental Institute had in the beginning contemplated only the study and preservation of *written* records, attacking first the Coffin Texts, then the thousands of square yards of sculptured and inscribed records on the walls of Medinet Habu, later the paintings in the Theban tombs, the temple records of Abydos, and finally the mastaba tomb scenes in the cemetery of Memphis. As our copying of the walls of the Medinet Habu temple progressed, however, it became more and more obvious that our record of the place would be singularly incomplete if it did not include a final and exhaustive study of the architecture. The funds were therefore found, and an Architectural Section was organized under the able leadership of Professor Uvo Hölscher, of Hannover, who had in former years made a penetrating study of the architecture of the Medinet Habu complex in so far as such study was possible without excavation. The Institute thereupon determined to undertake a complete clearance of the place—a task which has consumed more than five seasons and has involved the moving of an enormous volume of rubbish.

Hölscher's brilliant recovery of the architecture of the adjoining pharaonic palace is one of the most substantial contributions yet made to our knowledge of the history of Egyptian architecture. I am sure that students of architecture everywhere, especially if they are privileged to visit Egypt, will be grateful that under Hölscher's direction the Oriental Institute has permanently preserved the exceedingly interesting plan of this palace. Its walls were all of sun-dried brick, while the doorposts and lintels of important doorways were of stone. Being no longer engaged in any supporting walls, these had, of course, fallen prostrate. The walls had entirely disappeared; indeed, they had been so thoroughly grubbed out by *sebakh*-diggers that it was a matter of the greatest difficulty to trace them at all. In order to erect and replace the stone doorposts and lintels it was necessary to rebuild the ancient walls to at least a certain limited height. This was done with *burned* brick, insuring the permanence of the entire reconstruction. It is now possible to walk through the ancient doorways with doorposts and lintels in position and to traverse the halls, corridors, and living-rooms of a pharaonic palace precisely as arranged by the royal architects of Ramses III.

The extension of the clearance to the front of the temple resulted in the discovery of a landing quay and a canal leading from the temple to the Nile. With the whole great site thus laid bare, it has been possible to reconstruct the entire complex. Correlated with the river by the connecting canal, it forms a very impressive and comprehensive picture—one hitherto unknown to archeological research.

Investigations outside of the huge inclosure wall surrounding the temenos resulted in Hölscher's discovery of the mortuary temple of Eye, the successor of Tutenkhamon. Eye had evidently already collected materials originally belonging to Tutenkhamon for the adornment of a mortuary temple; but a whole series of foundation deposits discovered by Hölscher has made it quite evident that Eye was the actual builder of the temple, although the name of Harmhab surcharged over Eye's on the two statues of Tutenkhamon found on the site shows that, as at so many other places, the usurper Harmhab had here taken possession of the monuments of his predecessors.

This folio of plates is to be followed by a series of text volumes of smaller format. These will treat not only of Ramses III's great temple and its own appendages but of the smaller buildings of both earlier and later date on the site, especially the Eighteenth Dynasty temple.

It is an unusual pleasure to congratulate Professor Hölscher on the successful completion of this far-reaching investigation and to express our appreciation of his valuable co-operation.

JAMES HENRY BREASTED

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INTRODUCTION

MEDINET HABU PREVIOUS TO OUR EXCAVATIONS

Medinet Habu, the most southerly ruin of western Thebes, was undoubtedly one of the most imposing ruins in Egypt until about the beginning of the nineteenth century. The pictures left to us by the first European travelers who visited Medinet Habu, and the earliest photographs, show Coptic houses, erected among the ruins of the pharaonic period, covering the mound as a whole. Traces reveal that these medieval structures rose 15 meters or more above the pavements of the temple courts. The tall, narrow houses filled the whole of the former fortified temple area and even extended northward and eastward beyond it. This Coptic town of the early Christian centuries was called Jēme. It must have had a large number of inhabitants, probably some tens of thousands, closely penned together, wretched, and dirty, as became the oppressed condition of the Copts.

Jēme as seen by early European travelers had none of the attractiveness and picturesqueness of Upper Egyptian provincial towns or even of the populous *fellahin* villages; it was merely a waste of ruins, barrenness, hopelessness, and decay. No footstep was to be heard in the neglected streets; no human voice resounded from the houses, now fallen to pieces and sheltering none but foxes, jackals, snakes, and owls. Of the architectural details, decorations, articles of daily use, and innumerable ostraka which we came upon in excavation, none points to a date more recent than the ninth century after Christ. Whether the catastrophe which then occurred was due to war, epidemic, or religious persecution we cannot say. For a thousand years thereafter Jēme stood as a city of desolation, apparently under a curse. The horror of it was that the town had apparently not been overwhelmed by enemies or its houses razed to the ground; it was just forsaken! The inhabitants had abandoned it, taking with them whatever seemed worth taking—shutters, doors, beams, and boards that could be used elsewhere. Up to recent times the ill-starred town remained as they had left it, with the arched roofs and square windows in its crumbling walls gaping one above another, several stories high.

The earliest travelers were interested primarily in the monumental ruins of the pharaohs, which were to be seen among this wreckage of a later period. But it was little, indeed, that such travelers could gather from what they saw! Thus the scientific value of our oldest literature about Medinet Habu is very small. The early works which seem to me to provide important evidence are:

- WANSLEBEN, JOHANN M. *Nouvelle relation en forme de journal d'un voyage fait en Égypte ... en 1672 & 1673*. Paris, 1677.
- GRANGER, TOURTECHOT DE. *Relation du voyage fait en Égypte par le Sieur Granger en l'année 1730*. Paris, 1745.
- NORDEN, FREDERIK LUDVIG. *Travels in Egypt and Nubia [in 1737/38]*. . . . Tr. from the original . . . and enlarged with observations from ancient and modern authors . . . by Dr. Peter Templeman. London, 1757.
- NORDEN, FREDERIK LUDVIG. *The antiquities, natural history, ruins and other curiosities of Egypt, Nubia and Thebes, exemplified in near two hundred drawings taken on the spot*. London, 1792.

Of primary importance are the numerous sketches and explicit descriptions furnished us by the scholars who followed the French army under Napoleon in 1798–1801.¹ For our knowledge of the state of the Medinet Habu temple and its appendages, however, their value is not decisive, for the drawings give rather a general impression than an exact survey. To these famous French scholars and artists it was more important to get an idea of the style of Egyptian buildings, sculptures, and paintings than to pierce through to the gigantic and still largely obscure building plan and to architectural details. Even Champollion, in his incomparable studies made in 1829,² contributed little information on the architecture of Medinet Habu.

The temple complex itself has only slowly and by degrees attracted the

¹*Description de l'Égypte*. Antiquités: Planches, T. II (Paris, 1812) Pls. 1–17; Descriptions, T. I (Paris, 1809) chap. ix, pp. 21–64, by Jollois and Devilliers. In the 2d ed. the text is in T. II, pp. 41–134. See also D. Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte* (Paris, 1802) and *Egypt Delineated* (London, 1826).

²Jean François Champollion, *Monuments de l'Égypte et de la Nubie d'après les dessins exécutés sur les lieux* . . . (4 vols.; Paris, 1835–45) and *Monuments de l'Égypte et de la Nubie. Notices descriptives conformes aux manuscrits autographes rédigés sur les lieux* (2 vols.; Paris, 1844–89).

notice of visitors—increasingly so since the peasants have been digging and removing *sebakh* from the mounds that were scattered over the ruins. *Sebakh*, the nitrogenous earth found in the ruins, is a most valuable fertilizer. Especially since the end of the Mameluke period, the more the Egyptian populace has increased in numbers and well-being, and the more agriculture has improved, the more demand has there been for *sebakh*. Great numbers of the natives have dug year after year in the higher mounds over the ruins, sifted the *sebakh*, and thrown away the useless stones and potsherds. With hundreds of donkeys and camels they have, day by day, borne this fertile soil to the fields in sacks.

What changes took place at Medinet Habu in the years between the French expedition of 1800 and the Prussian expedition of 1845 cannot be exactly deduced from the records which these expeditions have bequeathed us. Richard Lepsius, the leader of the Prussian expedition, provided the first useful ground plan of the Medinet Habu buildings. To his marvelous penetration and to the care of the architect, Erbkam, we owe the production of Lepsius' monumental work, *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien*.³ In addition to his plates, the text volumes are a source of most important information. Lepsius did not confine himself to depicting merely what he saw, but by prospecting and digging here and there he tried to explain the interrelationships and the history of the buildings.⁴ He brought back as a present from the viceroy Muhammad Ali to the King of Prussia several valuable pieces of architectural and historical interest. The Berlin Museum thus acquired a stamped brick from the vicinity of the so-called "Small Temple," three blocks with bas-reliefs from its Ethiopian pylon, and from the Temple of Eye and Harmhab the bust of a colossal statue of a king.

When the Service de Conservation des Monuments de l'Égypte was formed under Mariette's direction, Medinet Habu was one of the first ancient sites to be systematically brought to light. From April into August, 1859, one of the inspectors of the Service, M. Bonnefoy, conducted operations there. After his sudden death from sunstroke, M. Gabet served from 1860 till 1863. But the work, though hardly begun, was soon brought to a standstill through lack of funds. In 1888 a fresh start was made, with the clearing operations under the energetic supervision of Georges Daressy, who carried them through to completion. Their progress was as follows:

1889. A narrow passage was dug from the Eastern Fortified Gate to the Great Temple, and the first court of the latter was completely laid bare, and certain repairs were begun.⁵
1891. The second court, in which stood a Coptic church, was cleared. The Coptic columns and other architectural pieces were removed from the temple.
- 1892–95. The whole area east of the first pylon was dug down to the Ramses III level.
- 1895/96. The Eastern Fortified Gate (described at the time as the "pavilion" of Ramses III) and the rear part of the Great Temple were cleared.
- 1898/99. The exterior of the Great Temple was laid bare.⁶

It is evident, then, that the Service des Antiquités intended merely to uncover the stone structures, not to excavate in the present-day scientific sense. Buildings of brickwork, considered inferior, were passed over as of no interest and were completely removed, without any sort of record being made. From time to time M. Daressy reported on individual finds.⁷ After the clearance of the interior had been completed, he published for the Service des Antiquités a description of Medinet Habu entitled: *Notice explicative des ruines de Médinet Habou* (Le Caire, 1897).

³Berlin, 1849–1913.

⁴In his *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien: Vorläufige Nachricht über die Expedition, ihre Ergebnisse und deren Publikation* (Berlin, 1849) pp. 12 f. he says: "Ein Hauptaugenmerk richteten wir, wie überhaupt während der ganzen Reise, so namentlich auch hier [in Theben], auf die genaueste Aufnahme der architektonischen Pläne sämtlicher Gebäude und anderer Lokalitäten, die uns irgend von Erheblichkeit schienen, und scheuten uns zu diesem Zwecke auch nicht längere Ausgrabungen zu unternehmen."

⁵G. Daressy, "Le voyage d'inspection de M. Grébaut en 1889," *Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Égypte* XXVI (1926) 1–22. Pages 9–10 deal with Medinet Habu.

⁶On the foregoing summary see *Medinet Habu* I ("Oriental Institute Publications," Vol. VIII [Chicago, 1930]) 3, n. 20.

⁷In *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes* XVII (1895) 118–20, XIX (1897) 15–21, XX (1898) 74–76, 81–85, and 113–20, XXI (1899) 30–39, XXII (1900) 144–46, XXIII (1901) 4–18, and *Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Égypte* IX (1908) 66–68, XI (1911) 49–63, XIII (1914) 262, XIX (1920) 173.

Photographs, sketches, and other records helpful for the history of the site during the nineteenth century include:

- WILKINSON, JOHN GARDINER. *Topography of Thebes, and general view of Egypt*. London, 1835.
- HOREAU, H. *Panorama d'Égypte et de Nubie*. Paris, 1841.
- ROBERTS, DAVID. *Egypt and Nubia, drawings made on the spot by David Roberts. With historical descriptions by William Brockedon*. 3 vols. London, 1846-49.
- GREENE, JOHN BAKER. *Fouilles exécutées à Thebes dans l'année 1855*. Paris, 1855.
- FRITH, FRANCIS. *Egypt and Palestine photographed and described*. 2 vols. London, 1858-59.
- BEATO. Many photographs taken both before and after the clearance of the temple.

When the clearing operations had been completed in 1899, the necessary work at Medinet Habu was considered ended. The masses of ruins round about the Great Temple and outside the Great Girdle Wall remained the prey of *sebakh*-diggers. How much was destroyed and lost in this way we can only surmise. Many individual pieces discovered by the natives were sold to antiquity dealers. No doubt the *sebakh*-digging at Medinet Habu brought into the hands of the natives a number of the most renowned papyri, such as the late Ramessid documents concerning tomb robberies and the harem conspiracy against Ramses III. Similarly, the so-called "Jême papyri" were certainly found among our ruins.

In 1903, south of the Great Temple, in the area later recognized as the royal palace, natives found fayence tiles in the form of fettered foreign prisoners. Some of these tiles reached dealers in antiquities and were sold by them to foreign museums; but energetic steps taken by Howard Carter, then chief inspector of antiquities, stopped this and recovered most of the tiles for the Cairo Museum. Unfortunately even these valuable finds were not sufficient to bring about the prohibition of *sebakh*-digging at Medinet Habu.

For his volume on *Das Hohe Tor von Medinet Habu*⁸ the present writer made in 1909 a separate study of the Eastern Fortified Gate and pointed out the connection between this and the royal palace which must have been situated to the south of the Great Temple.⁹ It was shown¹⁰ that traces of the palace walls, which were built with perishable mud bricks, could still be recognized on the stone wall of the temple.

Encouraged by that publication and by the discovery of the tiles, in 1912 M. Gaston Maspero, then director of the Service des Antiquités, asked Mr. Theodore M. Davis to undertake an excavation within the boundaries of Medinet Habu to ascertain what outbuildings of the Temple might still remain among the rubbish. After some experimenting, it was decided to concentrate on the area which had been pointed out as the site of the Palace. To clear it, not only the rubbish but also all the remains of brick walls, including the Ramessid walls (unrecognized as such), were removed down to the floor level of the former Palace. Only the stone doorposts, the bases of columns, the dais of the throne, and some stone wall slabs were left untouched. Some openwork window slabs were sent to the Cairo Museum and to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. But of the plans of the Palace itself nothing was recognized.

Since this digging brought no result, the Service des Antiquités believed that no further gain to science could be obtained from Medinet Habu. Hence, putting aside their scruples, the authorities relinquished everything to the *sebakh*-diggers. Thus after 1913 the brick walls of Ramses III were wrecked to their foundations, and the ruins thus fell into the deplorable condition in which we found them. Further attempts had been made to free the area to some extent from the rubbish left by the *sebakh*-diggers, but little was accomplished. Only the well to the south of the Temple in square O 6 (Plate 1) and the pillars in K 6 were exposed.

OUR EXCAVATIONS AT MEDINET HABU

The Oriental Institute had at first limited its task to studying and publishing the scenes and inscriptions to be found on and in the Medinet Habu buildings. Three folio publications of the Epigraphic Expedition, led by Dr. Harold H. Nelson since its establishment in 1924, have appeared. Others are in preparation.

⁸12. Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft (Leipzig, 1910), part of which had been first printed as a dissertation in 1909.

⁹*Ibid.* pp. 14 and 48-54.

¹⁰*Ibid.* p. 52.

From the beginning, however, it was apparent that a publication of Medinet Habu which included only the epigraphic record of the surviving reliefs and inscriptions and did not embrace a careful study of the architectural history of the site would be incomplete. In the winter of 1926/27 I was therefore commissioned to survey the existing buildings and prepare a plan of Medinet Habu. From February to April, 1927, I was assisted by Mr. H. Bayfield Clark, who came from the excavations of the Egypt Exploration Society at Tell el-Amarna. Meantime consideration was given to the idea of digging the whole area of Medinet Habu and thus for the first time gaining an understanding of a great mortuary temple of the Empire in its entirety.

After the Egyptian Service des Antiquités in the summer of 1927 had granted the concession for excavating, the Oriental Institute formed a special Architectural Section under the direction of the author, side by side with the hitherto existing Epigraphic Section under Dr. Nelson. The administration of both sections remained in the hands of the latter as field director.

I proposed to carry out the digging in three campaigns, whereas it has, in fact, lasted six seasons, since in the course of excavation important parts situated outside the Great Girdle Wall of Ramses III proved also to belong to the complex and therefore had to be included. In scientific investigation one cannot limit one's self to a particular building period such as that of Ramses III, picking out only its buildings regardless of their relative importance as compared with earlier or later structures. Fragments of buildings or documents of civilization of every period, whether considered a period of prime or of decay, are indeed equally qualified for, and entitled to, a place in the history of culture and art. Only on this comprehensive basis can we obtain the real picture of the rise, growth, decay, and renewed development and decay of the civilization achieved at Thebes, one of the most important centers of human history.

Besides this large folio volume of plates, there will be three text volumes dealing with the architecture: (1) buildings earlier than the time of Ramses III; (2) buildings constructed under Ramses III; (3) buildings later than the fall of the Ramessids. Objects which do not belong directly to the buildings will be published separately.

Details of our excavation campaigns are as follows:

FIRST CAMPAIGN, October, 1927—April, 1928

Assistants: Hans Steckeweh, Edward L. DeLoach, and temporarily H. Bayfield Clark.

Photographer: Olaf Ericson Lind.

The area inside of the Great Girdle Wall from its southwest corner to and including the Palace was excavated, as were the surroundings of the Small Temple.

SECOND CAMPAIGN, October, 1928—March, 1929

Assistants: Hans Steckeweh and Harald Hanson.

Photographers: Arthur Q. Morrison and Henry Leichter.

The area from the Palace as far as the Eastern Fortified Gate and the well of Nectanebo in H 12 were excavated. The front half of the Palace was restored.

THIRD CAMPAIGN, October, 1929—March, 1930

Assistants: Hans Steckeweh, Harald Hanson, and temporarily Siegfried Heise, Jack S. Bolles, and Gordon Loud.

Photographer: Henry Leichter.

The district north of the Great Temple was excavated. Restoration of the Palace was completed.

FOURTH CAMPAIGN, October, 1930—April, 1931

Assistants: Hans Steckeweh, Siegfried Heise, and Laurence C. Woolman.

Photographer: Henry Leichter.

The hitherto untouched area west of the Great Temple was excavated, as was the Roman-Coptic settlement east of the Great Girdle Wall. Trial trenches revealed the presence near by of the Temple of Eye and Harmhab. Finally, the Palace in the Ramesseum was excavated, and the magazines of that temple were examined.

FIFTH CAMPAIGN, October, 1931—March, 1932

Assistants: Hans Steckeweh and Mrs. Hetha Steckeweh.

Photographer: Henry Leichter.

The Temple of Eye and Harmhab, the Western Fortified Gate of Medinet Habu, and some chapels beyond the latter to the west were excavated. The registering of the finds and photographs was undertaken by

Mrs. Keith C. Seele. The scientific description of the finds was placed in Rudolf Anthes' hands.

SIXTH CAMPAIGN, October, 1932—April, 1933

Assistants: Rudolf Anthes, Dietrich Marcks, and Mrs. Keith C. Seele. Photographer: Henry Leichter.

The finds were divided, packed, and shipped. The Small Temple and the temple area of Eye and Harmhab were re-examined.

The workers, men and boys, engaged in digging numbered usually between two hundred and four hundred. As foreman in the first campaign we had Hamid Ahmad Hamid, from el-Uwaidat near Qift, sent by the Oriental Institute from its Megiddo excavations. In the following campaigns Sharid Muhammad Mansur, of el-Kal'ah near Qift, was the head reis.

My especial thanks are due to the leader and all the members of the Epigraphic Section, who willingly and whenever asked assisted me with their special scientific and artistic abilities. Individual contributions of theirs to the Architectural Survey volumes are duly acknowledged as they occur.

TECHNICAL NOTES ON THE PLATES

In this large folio volume are assembled those plates which show the survey and the results of the excavations and which serve as the basis for all discussions in the following text volumes. There are also a few reconstructions and colored plates which properly belong in the text volumes but are too large for the latter.

As shown by the airplane views, Plates 35–36, the whole area of Medinet Habu, which formed our concession, has been systematically dug and examined, with trifling exceptions. The unexamined parts are small areas outside the Great Girdle Wall where the rubbish of former excavations was piled high and where no further results of any particular worth were to be expected as far as we could judge after making several trials. We therefore used such spots as dumps for our own refuse.

How to dispose of the refuse of excavations is recognized as a serious problem. In the first place, one may cover up an area which, though once prospected and rejected, it may later prove necessary to investigate. Secondly, great masses of refuse, if piled up as an embankment or a mound, may introduce a very ugly alteration from the natural and historic appearance of a site. It was therefore our endeavor so to dispose of the enormous quantities of debris that had to be removed from Medinet Habu that the landscape might suffer no detriment and that at the same time the debris might prove an immediate gain in the cultivation of the neighboring soil.

Our ends were achieved in various ways. To the northeast, southeast, and southwest great quantities of rubbish were piled up beyond the town wall and handed over to the natives for them to sift out and carry away the *sebakh*. By this means the rubbish mounds became reduced to about half their original height. Thus in the following year's work we could throw our rubbish once more on the same slopes.

Other accumulations were utilized to form a dike to the southeast through the inundated district toward the village of el-Ba'irāt (Nag' el-Kōm). This dike, about 180 meters long and 7 meters wide, was finally faced with stones, and an outlet for water was provided, so that in flood time it now offers the only dry path through the fields from the village of el-Ba'irāt to the higher desert land.

Certain spots which had to be deeply dug, thus allowing ground water to collect in flood time, were filled up again with refuse to prevent the formation of pools and morasses. Such spots occur in the foreground of the temple area of Medinet Habu (Plate 1, E-H 4-12).

Finally, in the temple area of Eye and Harmhab the sand and stone debris removed from the ruins was carefully heaped up to form a dike of equal elevation, in order to safeguard the district against unintentional or wanton disturbance.

For the surveying of Medinet Habu and of the Temple of Eye and Harmhab the axes of the temples were taken as the base lines of the co-ordinates. The chief buildings face the Nile. Since the Nile flows in general from south to north, in Egypt the expression "north" signifies "downstream." This *nominal north*, however, deviates from the *true* or from the *magnetic north* more or less, in proportion to the windings of the river. It will be seen from the compass marked in our plans that at Medinet Habu the deviation from the magnetic north is considerable. In the Great

Temple of Ramses III February 3, 1927, the difference was 48.8° E. At the same time in Luxor the magnetic north showed a declination from the true north of 0.8° W.¹¹ Hence the nominal north at Medinet Habu deviates 48.0° E. from the true north; in other words, the axis of Medinet Habu is 42.0° W.

With regard to the Temple of Eye and Harmhab (Plate 33), the difference between nominal and magnetic north was 42° 11' or approximately 42.2° E. As at the time (March 7, 1932) the magnetic north declined from the true north by 0.4° W., this would give the deviation of nominal north from true north for the Temple of Eye and Harmhab as 41.8° E.; in other words, the axis of the temple is 48.2° W.

For the leveling of Medinet Habu the threshold of the first pylon was chosen as the zero-point. This point lies 77.09 meters above sea-level. A bench mark of the Survey Department on top of the granite threshold between the two guardhouses of the Eastern Fortified Gate (Plate 7, C 8) stands at +76.82 meters, that is, 27 centimeters lower than our zero-point of leveling.

For the Temple of Eye and Harmhab a pavement stone in the gateway of the brick pylon of Eye (Plate 33, G 5) was taken as zero-point. It lies 81.47 meters above sea-level. A bench mark in M 7, 3.34 meters lower, is registered as +84.81 meters.

The leveling figures are of great importance with respect to the highest water levels of the Nile. Nowadays, since the floods can be regulated, the water in the Theban district rises to about 76 meters above sea-level,¹² that is, to about 1 meter below our zero-point for Medinet Habu. In olden times, however, the fertile land lay considerably lower than it does at present. We may estimate that in the three thousand years since Ramses III it has risen some 3 meters by accumulation of alluvial deposits. Ancient floods, then, reached levels much lower than do the modern ones. An extraordinarily high flood in the seventh year of Ramses IX, that is, about 1135 B.C., is marked on the quay wall in front of the Eastern Fortified Gate. It stood at -1.64 meters according to our survey, that is, 75.45 meters above sea-level.

The level of ground water corresponds approximately with that of the Nile, even in the non-inundated districts, though there the infiltration proceeds more slowly on account of the hard soil. At Medinet Habu we have observed that there may be a delay of a whole month. At any rate, we know that in the lower levels of the excavations, where today we find ground water, there was in ancient times no water at all.

In the survey plans the heights of those parts of walls still standing are, as a rule, shown by shadows. The lengths of the oblique lines forming the shadows correspond with the heights of the shadow-throwing walls above the ground levels, the absolute heights of which are indicated by inscribed figures. If still standing to a height of more than 1 1/2 or 2 meters, parts of buildings are given in section. Their shadow lengths correspond with the heights of the sections.

Plates 35 and 36 give bird's-eye views of the excavated area and illustrate the state of preservation of the buildings.

The ancient measure of length according to which the Temple of Eye and Harmhab and the complex of Ramses III were evidently planned and staked out is the Egyptian ell or cubit, which is about equal to 52.5 centimeters or 20 2/3 inches. At Medinet Habu, for example, the first pylon is 130 ells long, the second 100 ells; the first hypostyle hall is 50 × 36 ells, the second and third hypostyle halls each 32 × 16 ells.

The following remarks apply to individual plates or groups of plates:

Plate 1

Plan of Medinet Habu, made before our excavations started in 1927; drawn 1:400, reduced to 1:1000. It is seen that at that time only the Great Temple and various lesser buildings in the foreground of the area had been

¹¹For the magnetic values see the *Egyptian Government Almanac* for 1927–33.

¹²Figures for Luxor given me by the Irrigation Department are:

1878	Highest flood before construction of the barrages	77.62 m.
1917	Highest flood since construction of the barrages	76.65 m.
1932	Flood	76.02 m.
1933	Flood	75.93 m.

laid bare. The mounds shown by the contour lines represent mostly not the actual rubbish heaps of ancient settlements, but slopes of bricks, stones, and potsherds sifted out and thrown aside by recent *sebakh*-diggers when they searched the whole temple area. As the survey plans on Plates 3–15 show, the *sebakh*-diggers went, as a rule, down to the virgin soil and even hacked out most of the mud bricks of the Ramessid foundations. It is curious to note that such Coptic houses as stood rather high on refuse were partly preserved. The reason for this is that brick walls which have never been covered with earth contain practically no nitrogen and are therefore useless for *sebakh*. So they were left alone, but search was made among and even below their foundations. The *sebakh*-diggers removed only those houses below which it was expected that old bricks or rubbish would be found in fairly large quantities.

The column bases and throne dais shown in K–L 6 were exposed by the excavation which Mr. Harry Burton conducted in 1912 in behalf of Mr. Theodore M. Davis.

Plate 2

Reconstruction of the temple area of Ramses III, based on the results of excavation as shown in Plates 3 ff. The chapels of the royal family, lying west of Medinet Habu, will be given in the second text volume.

Plates 3–15

The original drawings were made 1:100 and then reduced to 1:333 1/3 or 3:1000. Paired with the survey plans are chronological plans which, to a certain extent, reconstruct and date the structures found in the various strata. The plans include, as far as was possible with a scale of 1:100, all details noticed in digging. The bricks are not schematically sketched, but are carefully distinguished as headers, stretchers, etc. Only the very thick walls, where it seemed useless to measure each brick separately, are shown in a gray tone. The excavation was carried down to virgin soil in as far as this was not prevented by structures of a higher stratum which had to be preserved. To distinguish leveling figures referring to virgin soil, they have been underlined.

The Coptic building scheme is shown separately on Plate 32. The principal remains of Coptic houses occurred in the northwestern part of the area. Valueless fragments were found on top of the southern Girdle Wall also, but are not represented. Other Coptic house quarters were discovered outside (southeast) of the Great Girdle Wall (Plates 9–10) and also in the area of the Temple of Eye and Harmhab (Plates 33–34).

Plates 16–19

Drawings of the Small Temple in its present condition. Reconstructed parts of the building are represented by horizontal hatching only. The oldest form of the Small Temple, as evidenced by deep excavation in 1933, will be shown in special plans in the first text volume.

Plates 20–22

Drawings of the Great Temple. Reconstructed parts of the building are shown by horizontal hatching.

Plates 23–24

In the Great Temple, as with nearly all Egyptian buildings, we miss principally the former coloring of the reliefs. Intensive study, such as the Epigraphic Section especially has devoted to the matter, has shown us how the buildings must have looked in their original coloring. These plates give examples of this.

Plates 25–29

Survey of the Eastern Fortified Gate. Reconstructions will be shown on plates in the second text volume.

Plate 30

The eastern Girdle Wall with its Fortified Gate and quay, as reconstructed.

Plate 31

An example of the decorative architectural details in the Palace, showing remains of painting. This picture was painted in water colors immediately after the piece was laid bare and before the colors had been fixed (with celluloid dissolved in amyl acetate). The complete recess to which this panel belongs will be shown in the second text volume.

Plate 32

Map of the Coptic town of Jēme (cf. remarks concerning Plates 3–15). Of this narrow town, only scattered groups of houses and traces of short streets were left. The probable distribution of other blocks of houses and of street continuations is schematically marked by a gray wash. Detailed drawings of houses and churches will be given in the third text volume.

Plate 33

Plan of the Temple of Eye and Harmhab, combining survey and reconstruction. Bed rock is shown by dotted contour lines. The earliest building period, as far as we can prove, was under Amenhotep III in the Eighteenth Dynasty. Under Eye the area was leveled, and its hollows were filled with gravel which hid the lower, older buildings. Torrents of later times have forced their way through the temple area and washed away every trace of structures that lay in their path.

Plate 34

The more recent strata of the same area are shown in this plate in so far as they could not be shown in Plate 33.

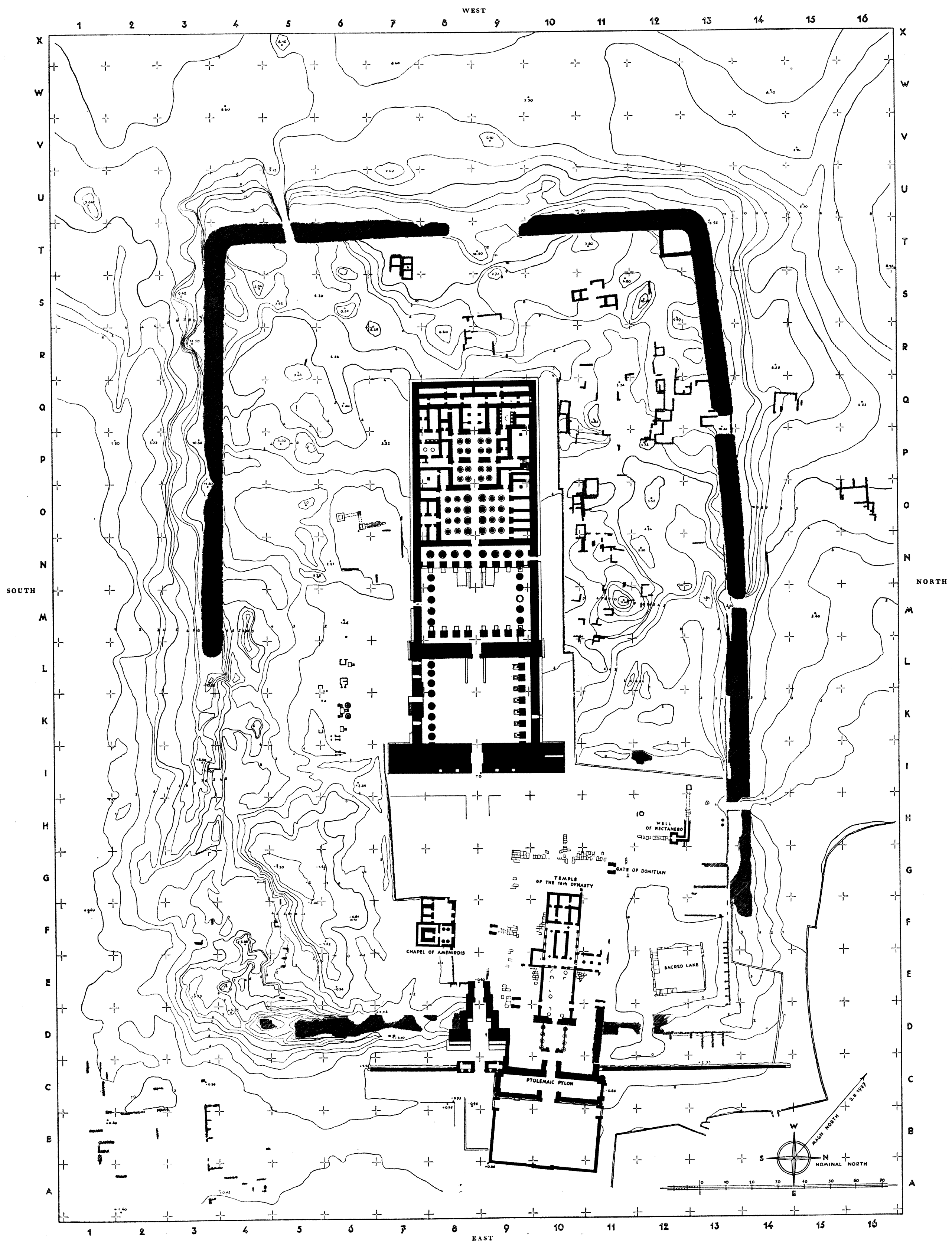
Plates 35–36

Airplane views taken by Mr. Reed N. Haythorne from the Oriental Institute's chartered plane "Achilles," piloted by Capt. Gordon P. Olley, in the spring of 1933. They give a general idea of the excavations and reveal the state of preservation of the buildings.

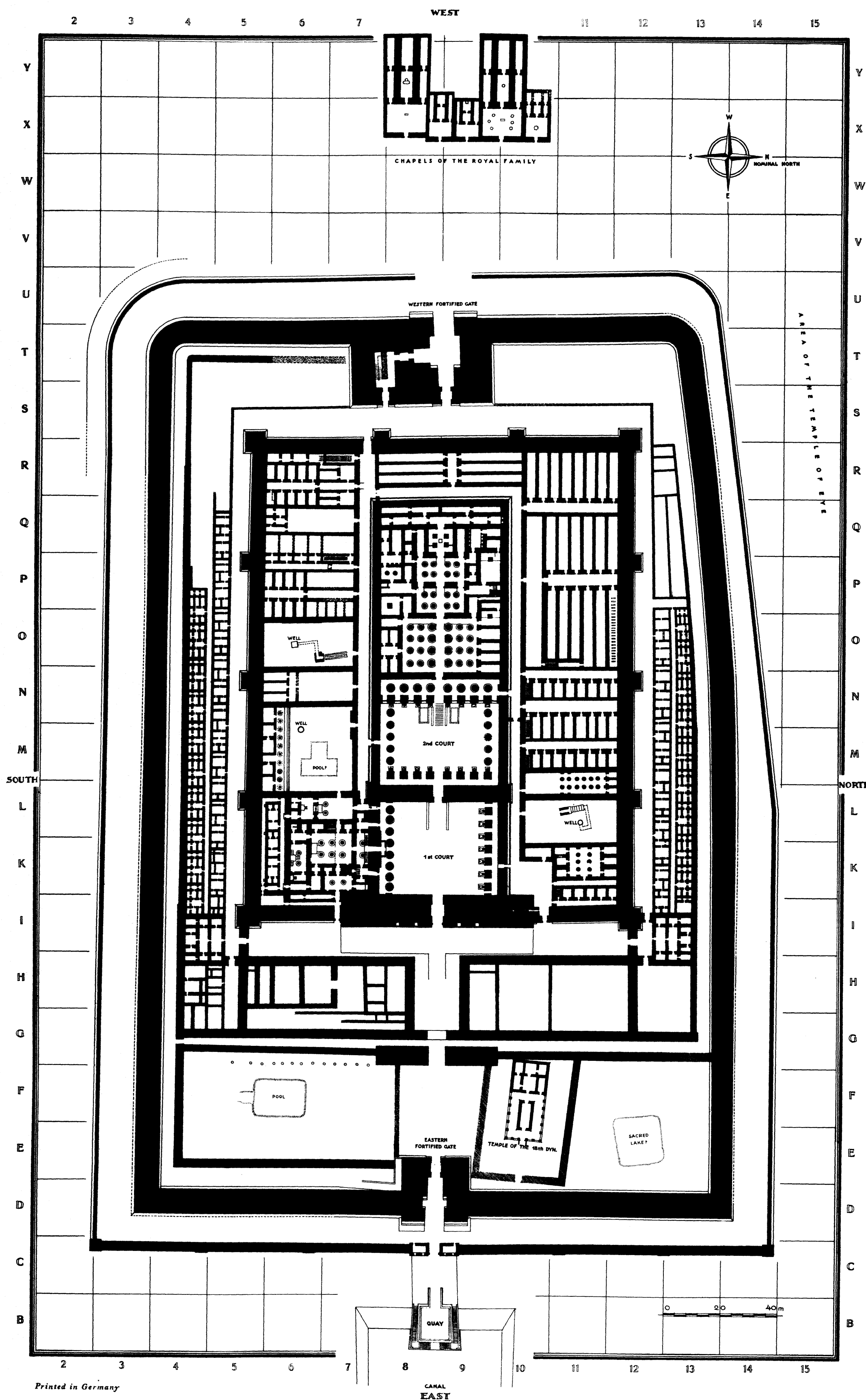
Plate 37

Two photographic views of Medinet Habu taken in 1932/33 by Mr. Leichter. They supplement those published by Dr. Nelson in *Medinet Habu*, Volume I, Plates 2–7.

PLATES



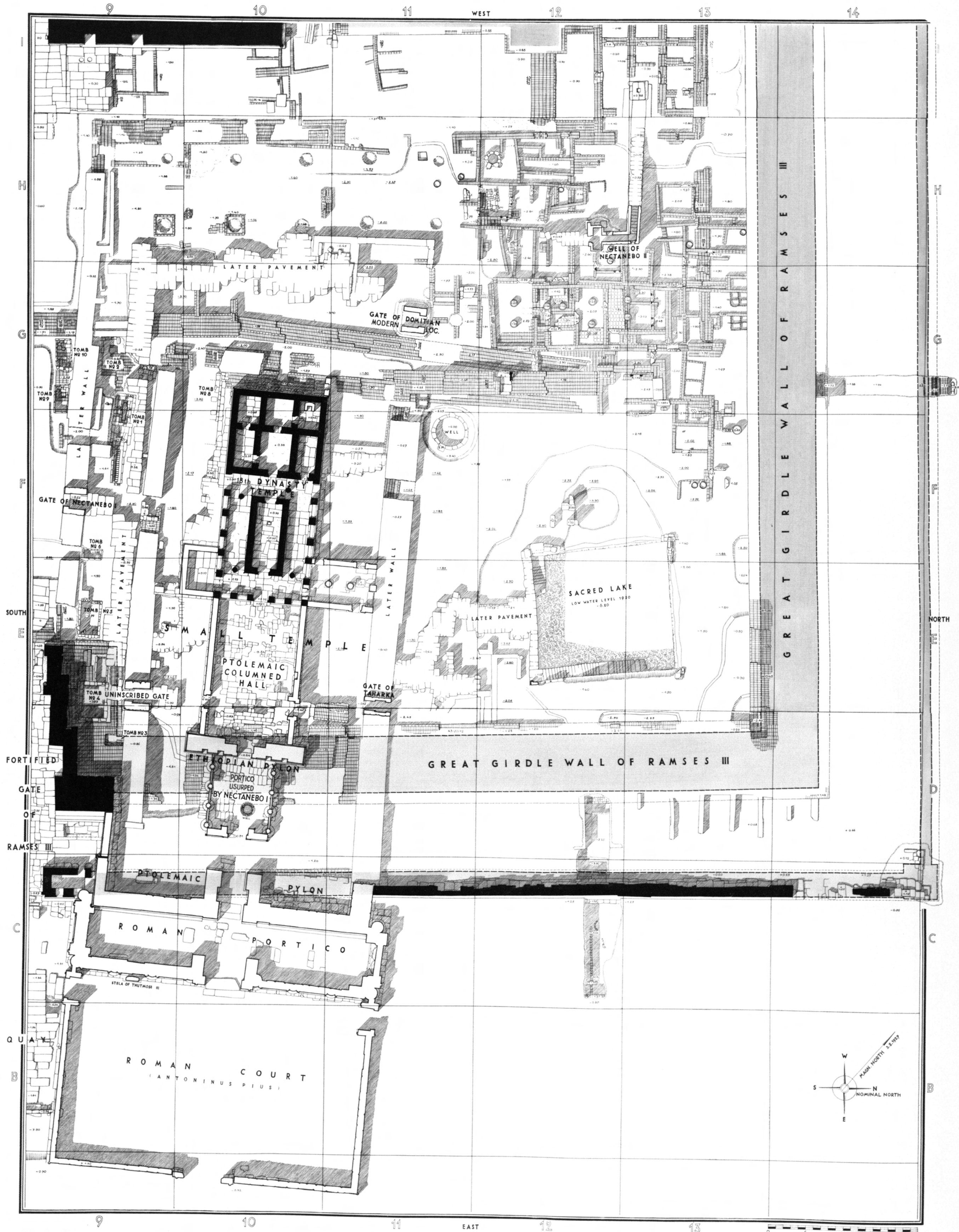
GROUND PLAN OF MEDINET HABU
AS DISCERNIBLE BEFORE BEGINNING OF THE EXCAVATION (1927)
SCALE 1:1000



GROUND PLAN OF RAMSES III'S TEMPLE AREA AT MEDINET HABU

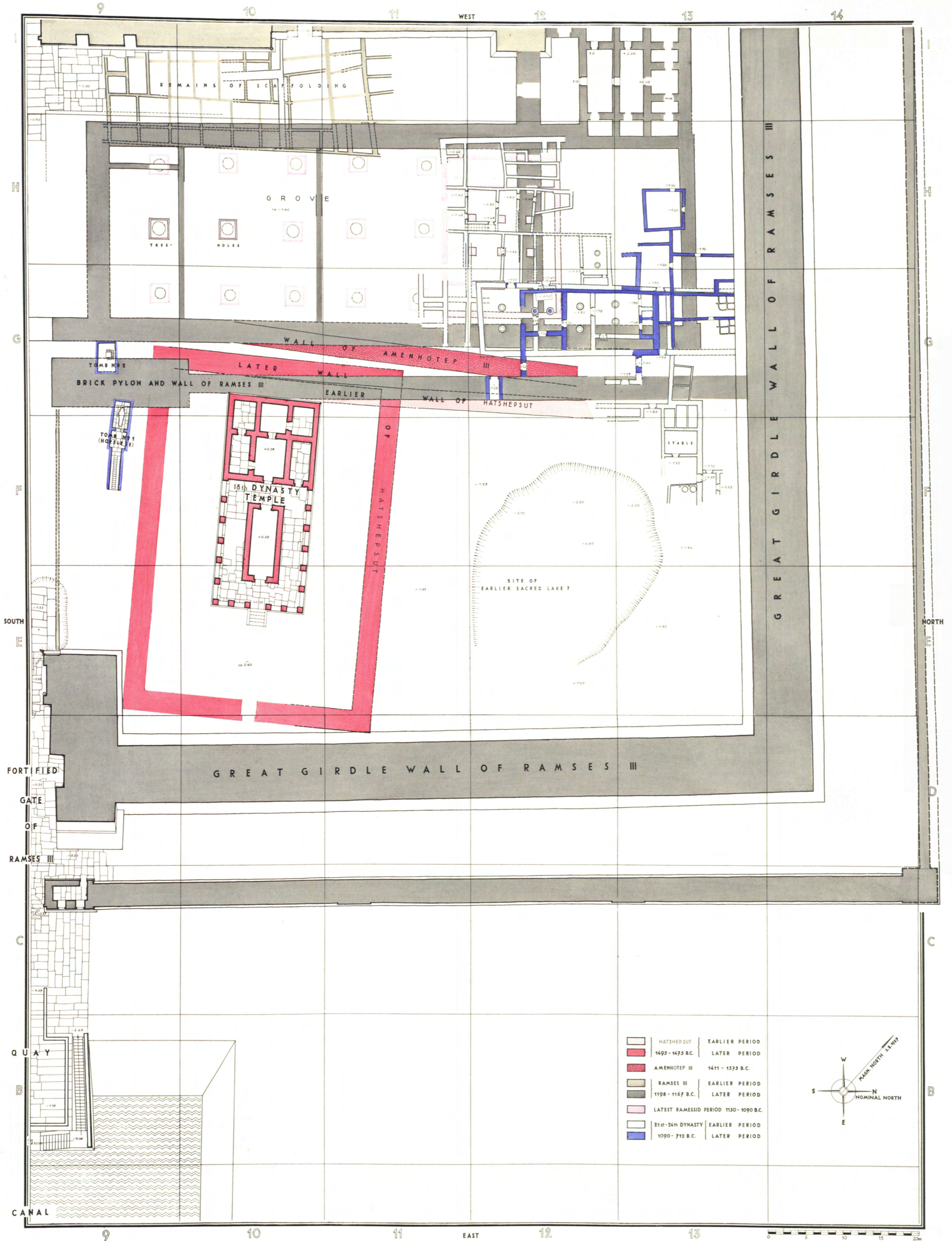
RECONSTRUCTION

SCALE 1:1000

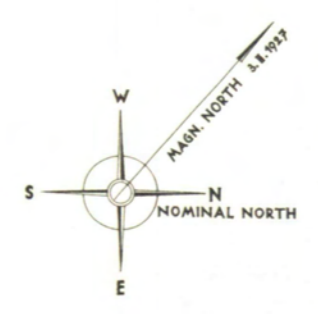


SURVEY OF MEDINET HABU
NORTHEAST PART. EARLIER PERIODS
SCALE 1 : 535 1/2

Zero-Point of Leveling, 77.09 m NN

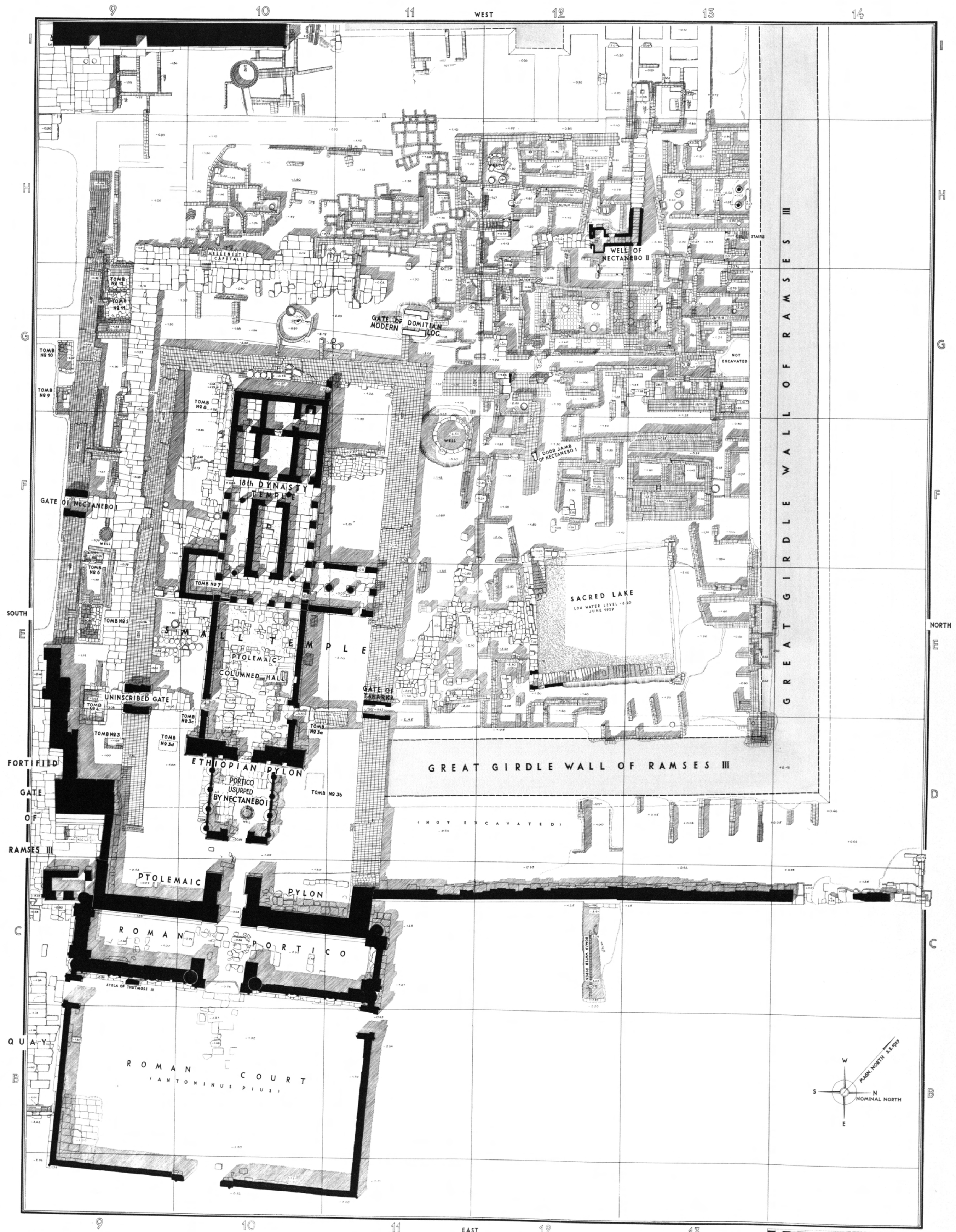


[Light Grey Box]	HATSHEPSUT	EARLIER PERIOD
[Red Box]	1495 - 1475 B.C.	LATER PERIOD
[Dark Red Box]	AMENHOTEP III	1411 - 1375 B.C.
[Light Brown Box]	RAMSES III	EARLIER PERIOD
[Dark Brown Box]	1198 - 1167 B.C.	LATER PERIOD
[Pink Box]	LATEST RAMESSID PERIOD	1150 - 1090 B.C.
[White Box]	21st - 24th DYNASTY	EARLIER PERIOD
[Blue Box]	1090 - 712 B.C.	LATER PERIOD



Zero-Point of Leveling: 77.09 m NN

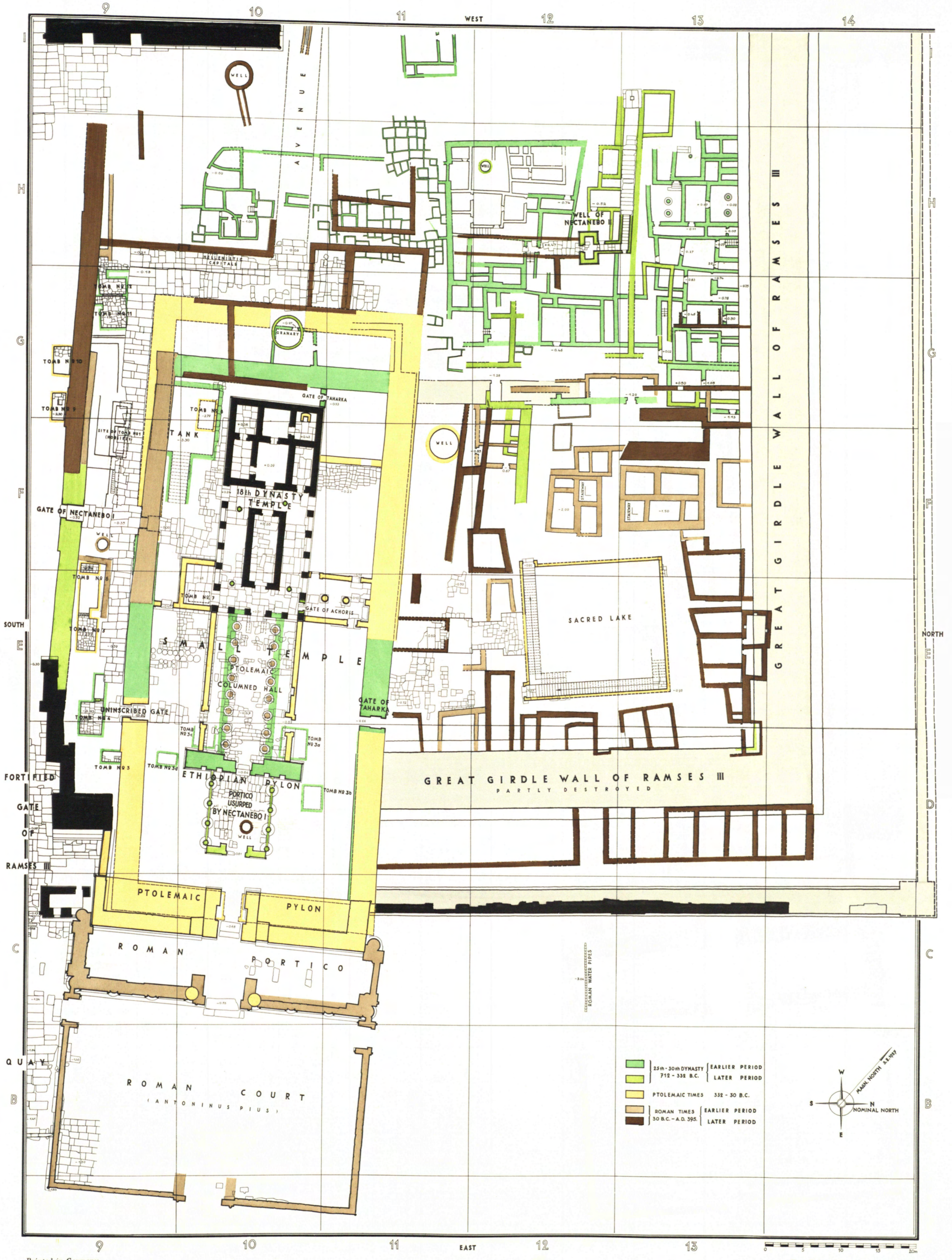
CHRONOLOGICAL PLAN OF MEDINET HABU
 NORTHEAST PART. EARLIER PERIODS
 SCALE 1:355 1/5



Printed in Germany

Zero-Point of Leveling, 77.09 m NN

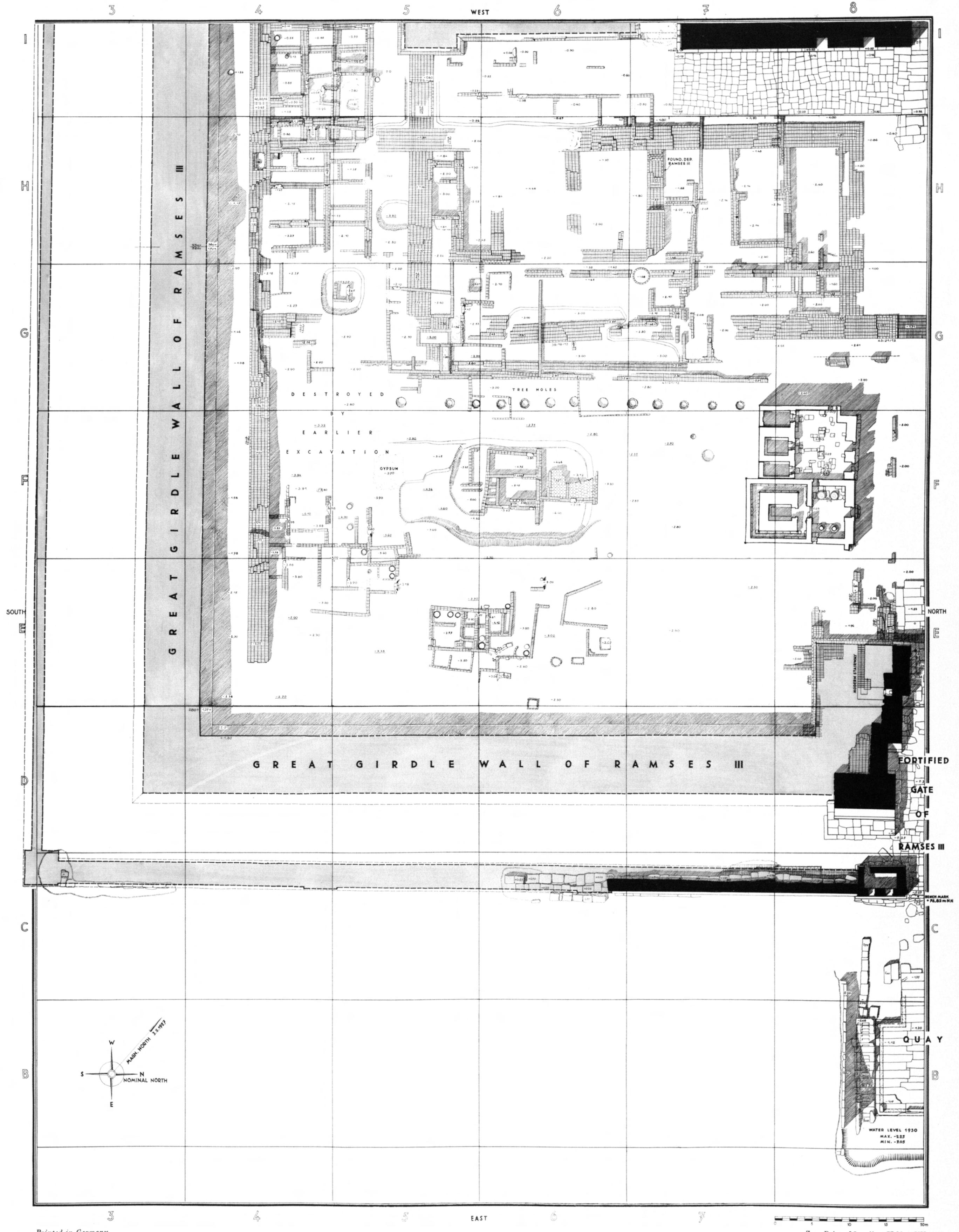
SURVEY OF MEDINET HABU
 NORTHEAST PART. LATER PERIODS
 SCALE 1 : 333 1/3



CHRONOLOGICAL PLAN OF MEDINET HABU

NORTHEAST PART. LATER PERIODS

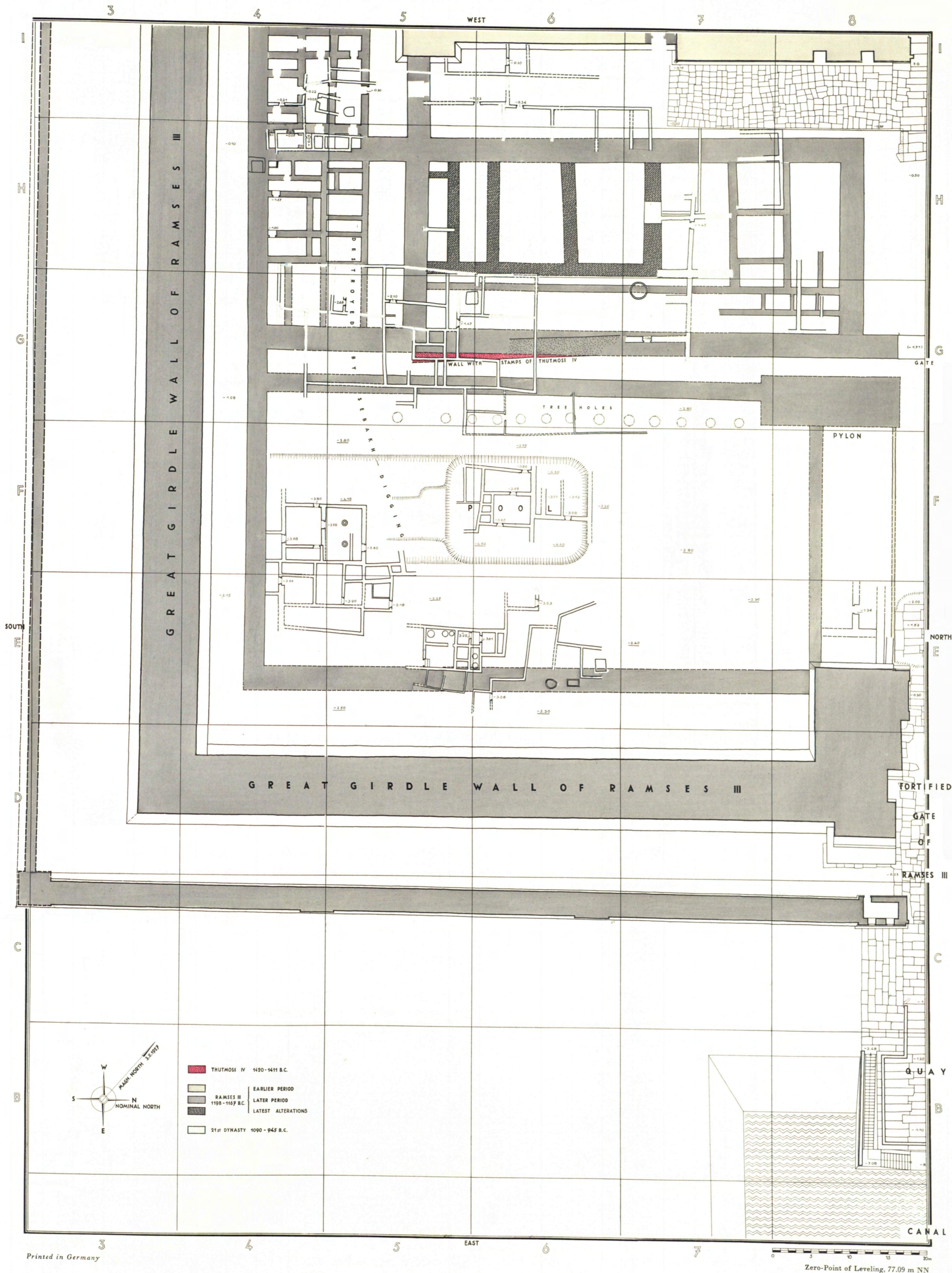
SCALE 1 : 333 1/3



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SURVEY OF MEDINET HABU
SOUTHEAST PART. EARLIER PERIODS
SCALE 1 : 535 1/5

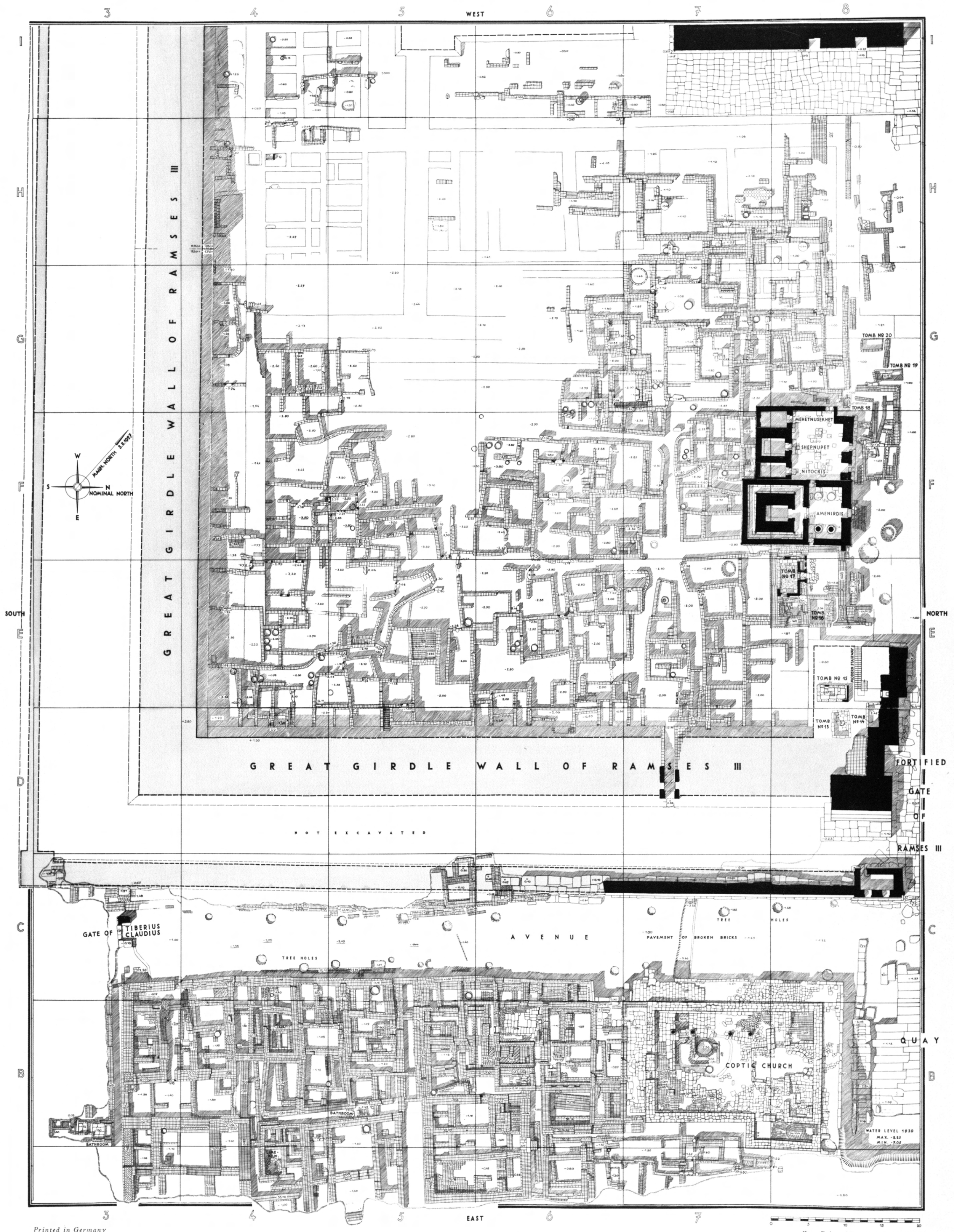
Zero-Point of Leveling, 77.09 m NN



CHRONOLOGICAL PLAN OF MEDINET HABU

SOUTHEAST PART. EARLIER PERIODS

SCALE 1 : 333 1/5



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SURVEY OF MEDINET HABU
SOUTHEAST PART. LATER PERIODS
SCALE 1:3535

Zero-Point of Leveling, 77.09 m NN



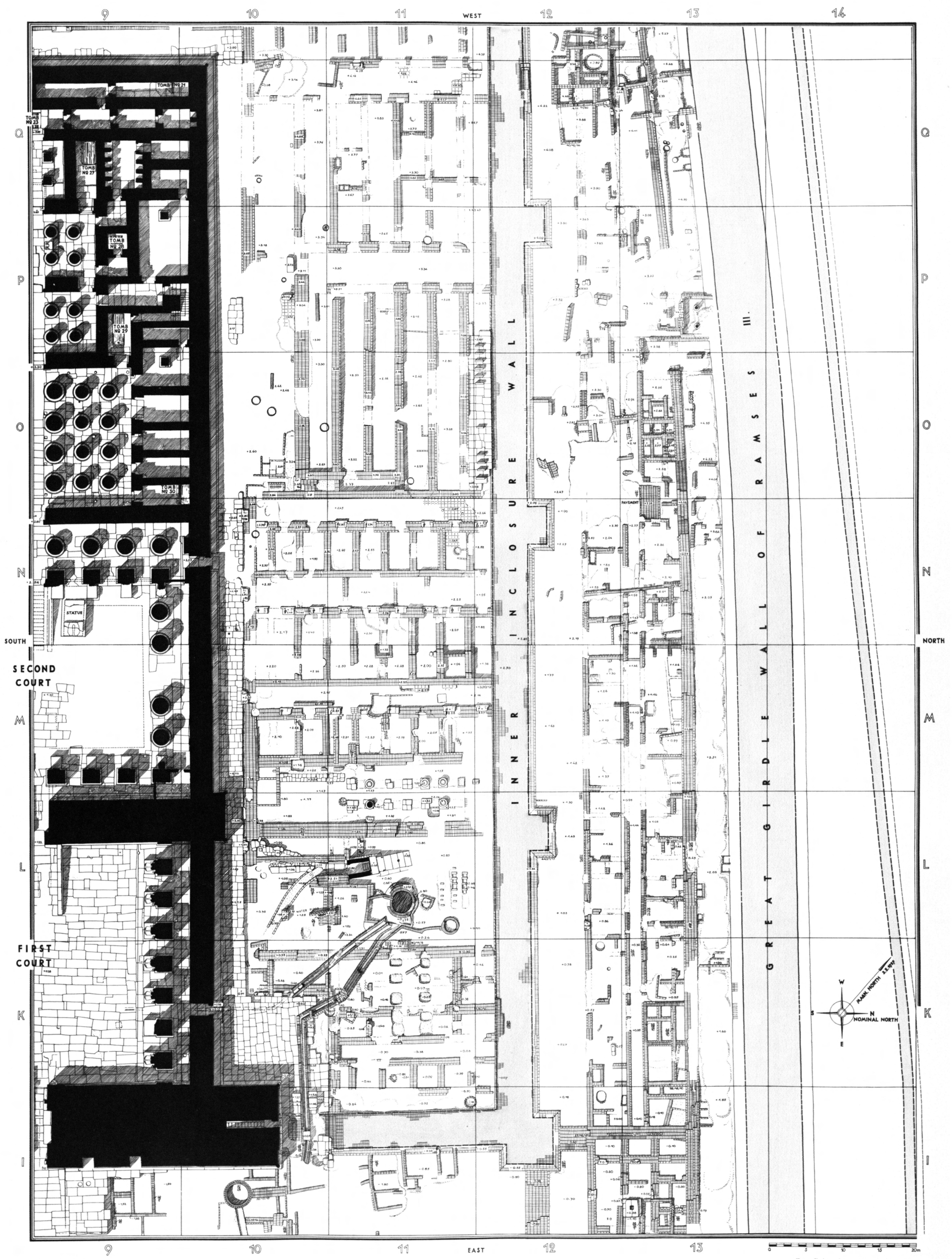
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Zero-Point of Leveling, 77.09 m NN

CHRONOLOGICAL PLAN OF MEDINET HABU

SOUTHEAST PART. LATER PERIODS

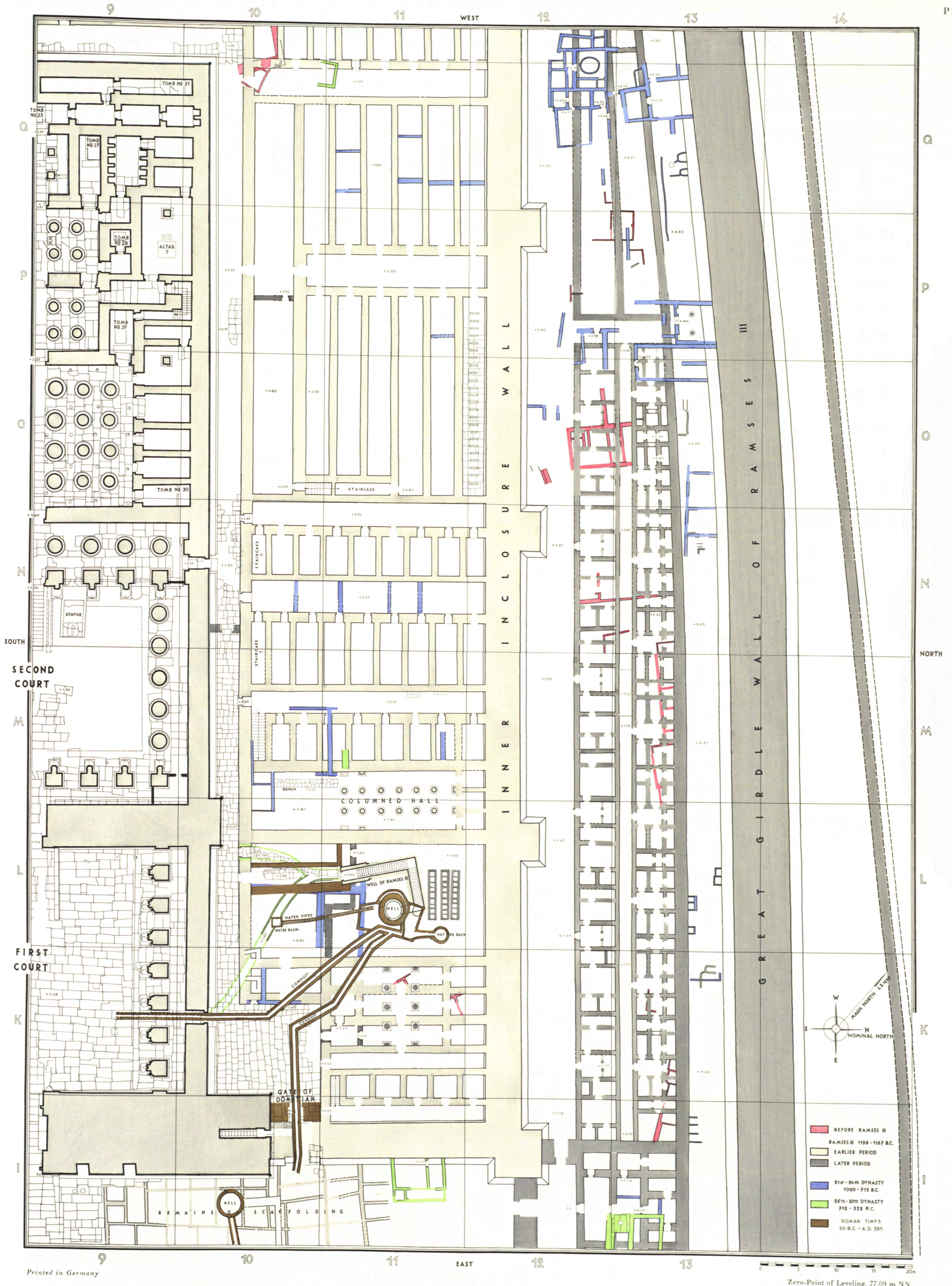
SCALE 1:333 1/5



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Zero-Point of Leveling: 77.09 m NN

SURVEY OF MEDINET HABU
 NORTH CENTRAL PART
 SCALE 1:333 1/3



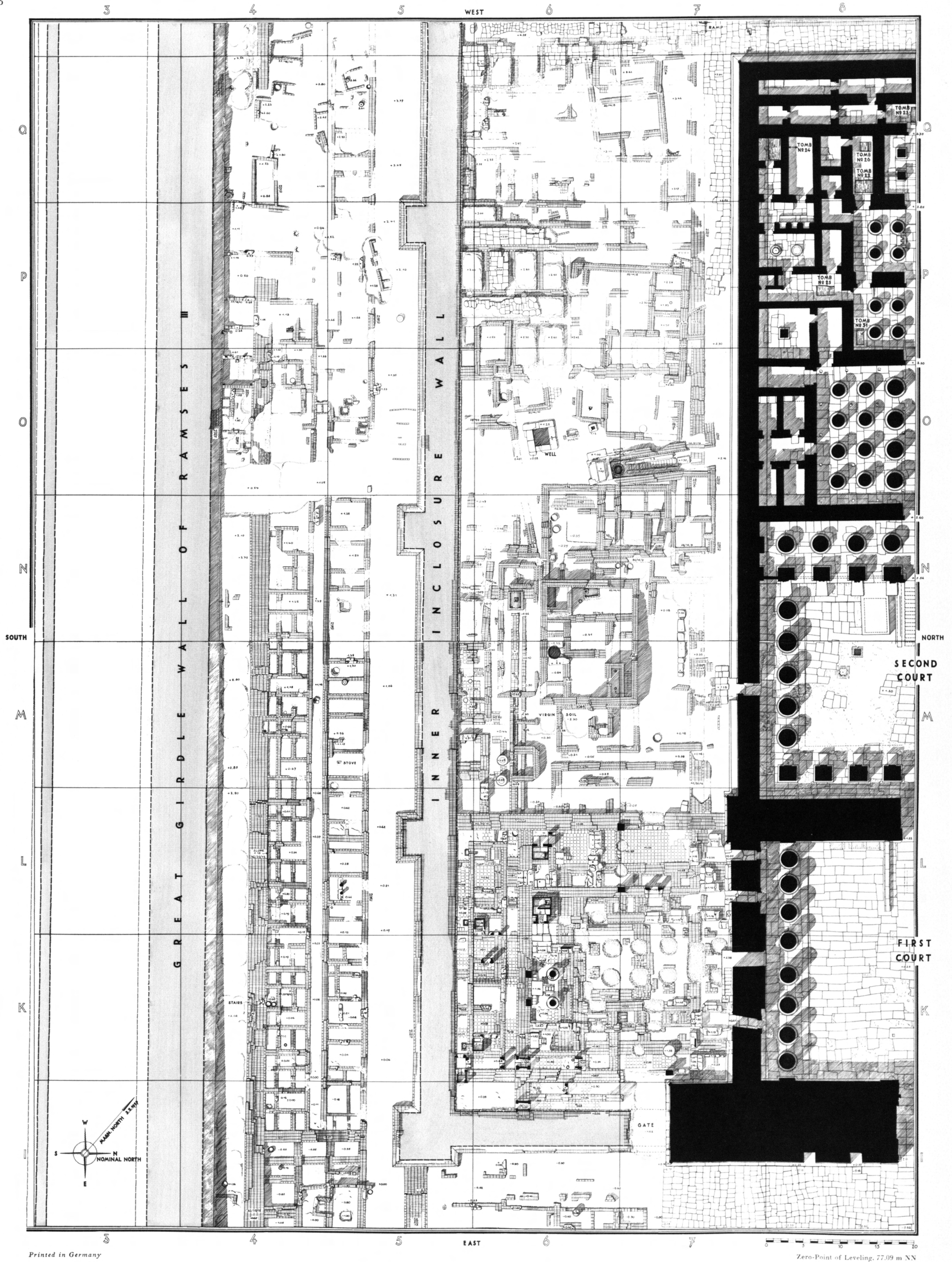
Printed in Germany

Zero-Point of Leveling, 77.09 m NN

CHRONOLOGICAL PLAN OF MEDINET HABU

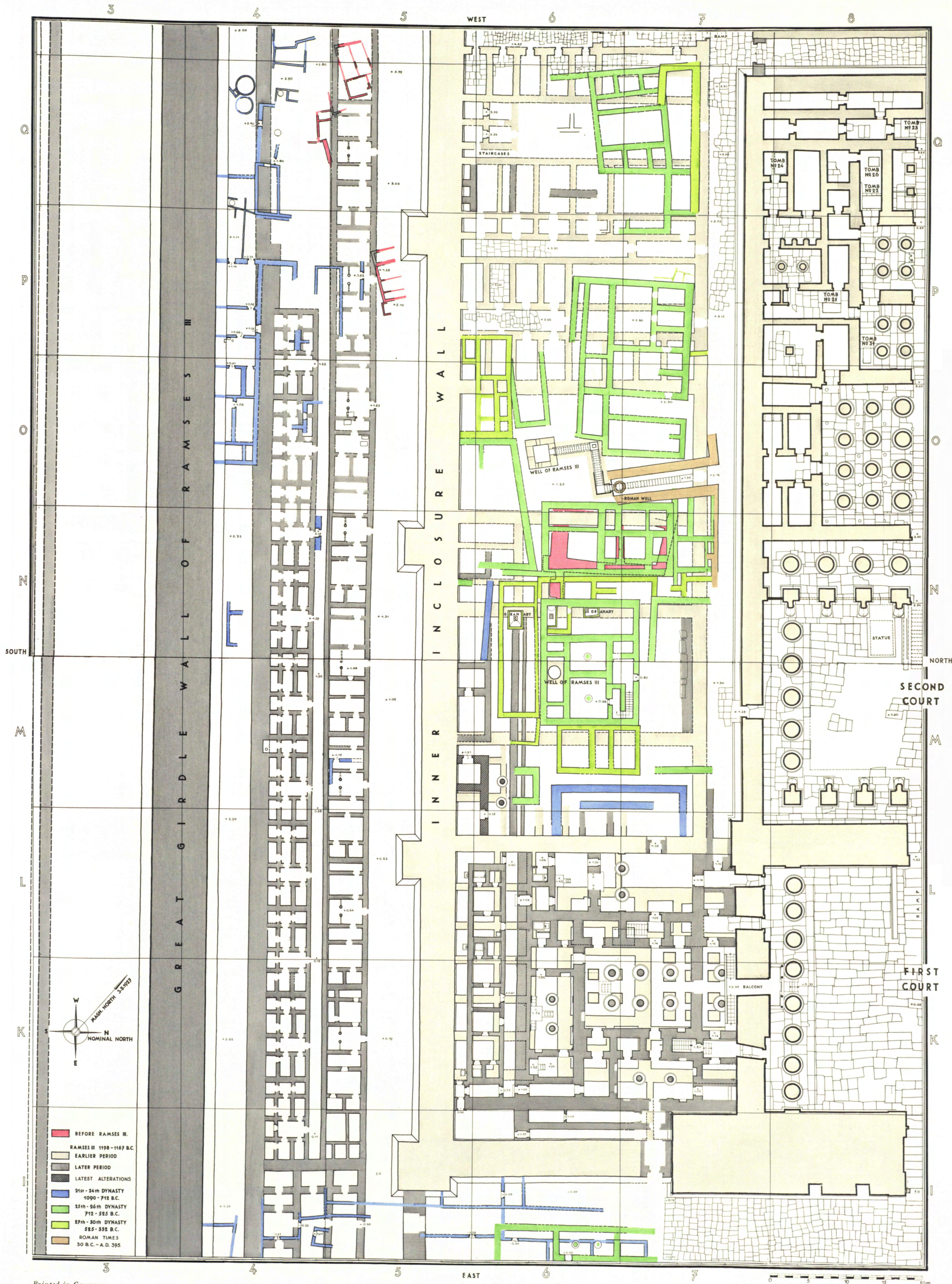
NORTH CENTRAL PART

SCALE 1 : 333 1/3



Printed in Germany

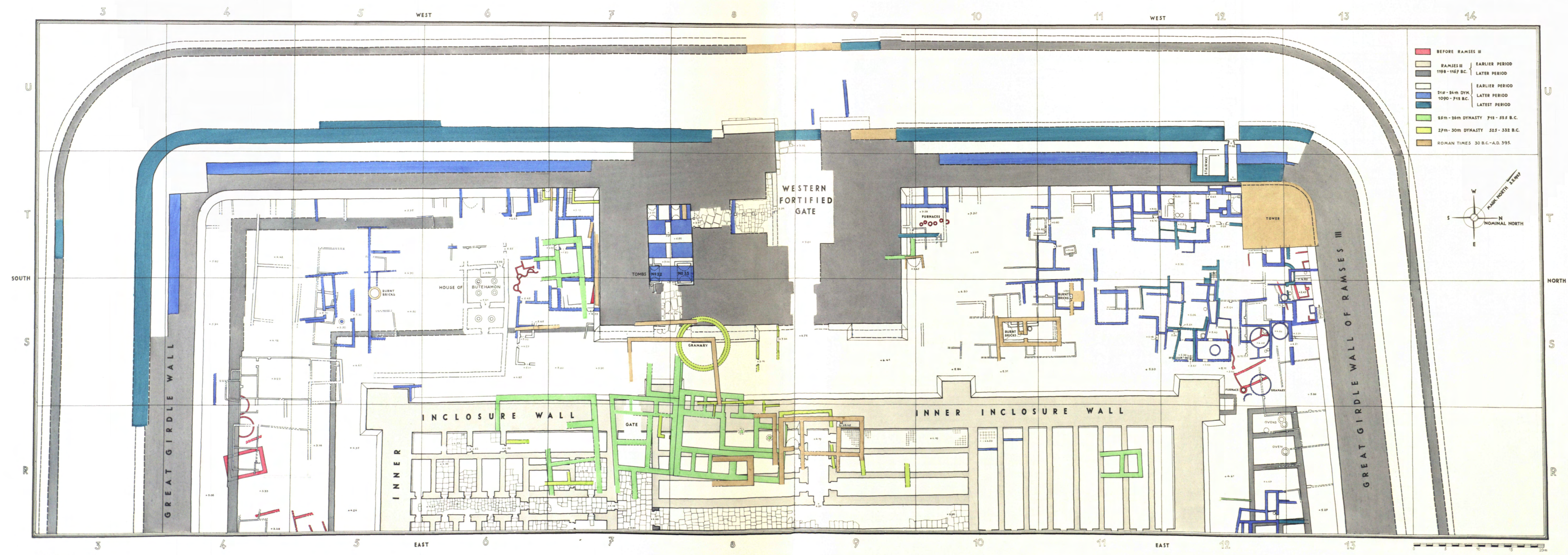
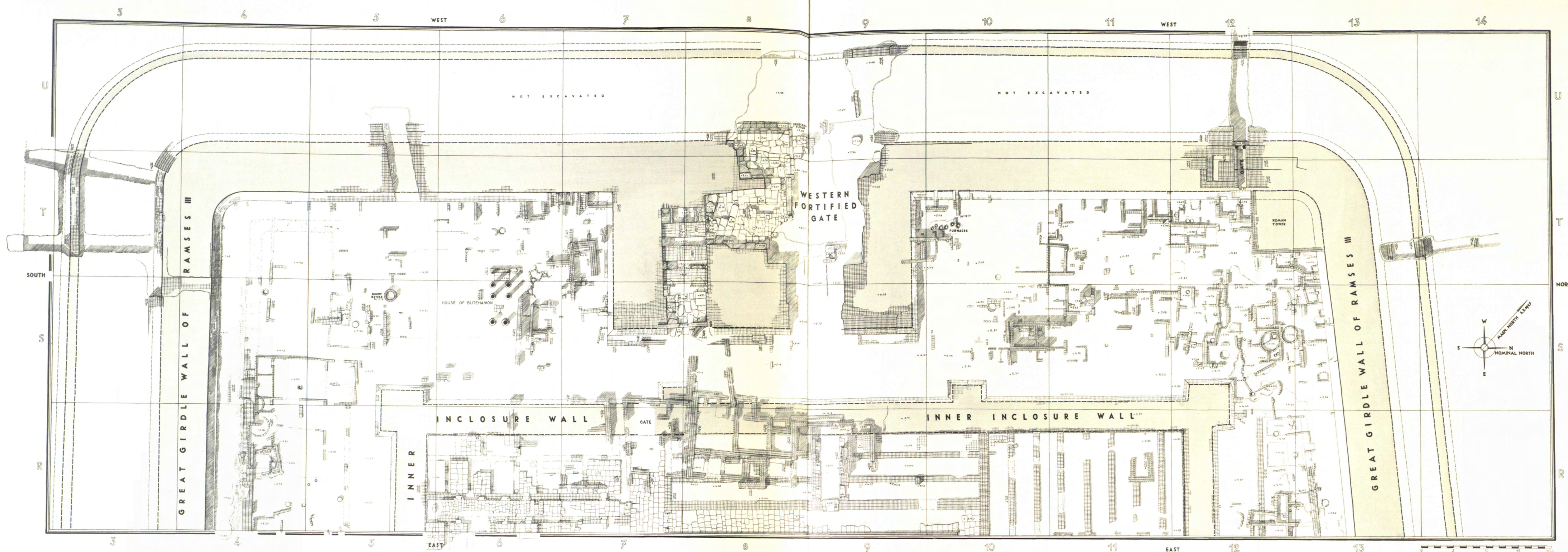
SURVEY OF MEDINET HABU
SOUTH CENTRAL PART
SCALE 1: 333 1/3



CHRONOLOGICAL PLAN OF MEDINET HABU

SOUTH CENTRAL PART

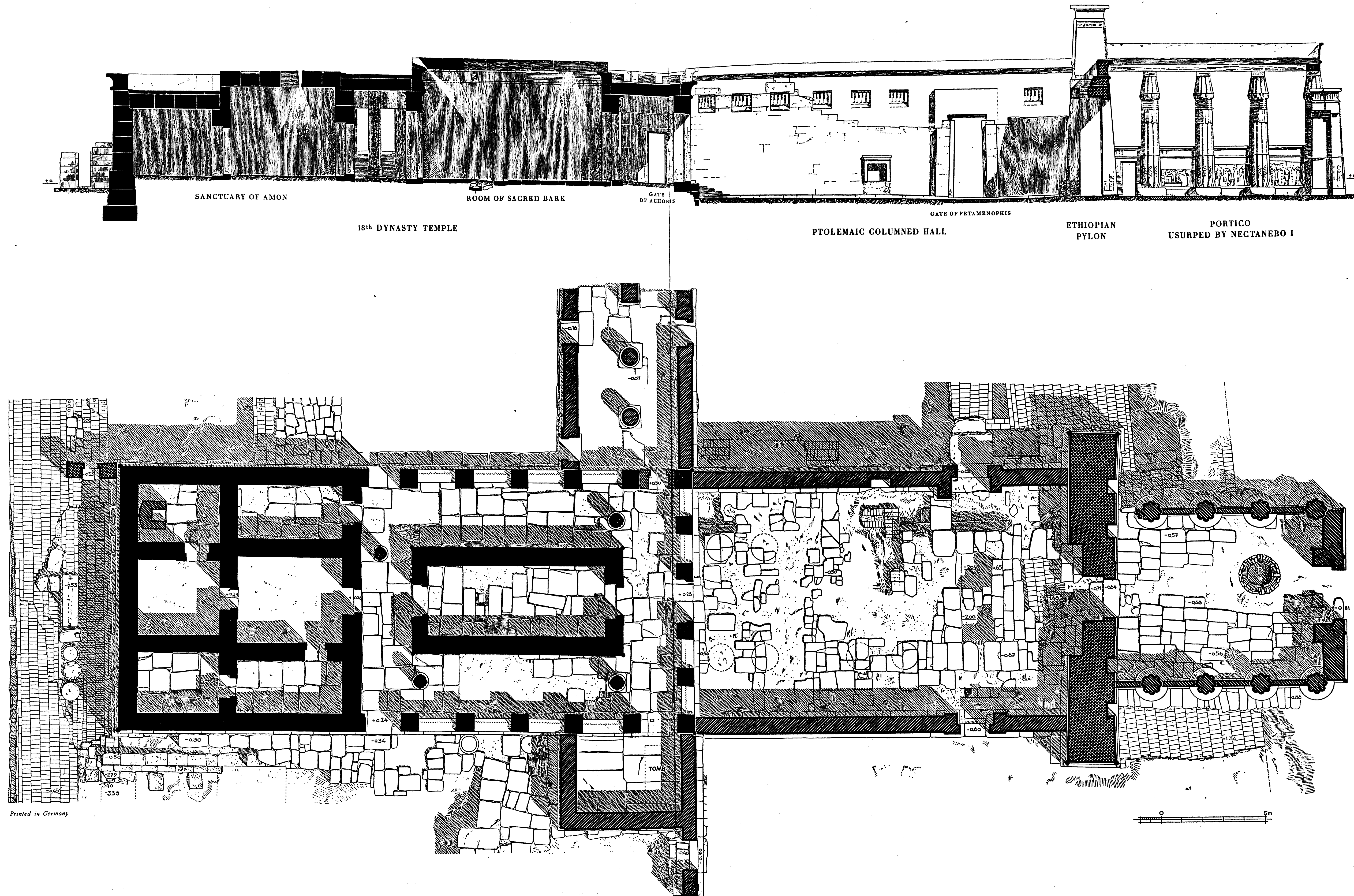
SCALE 1:353 1/5



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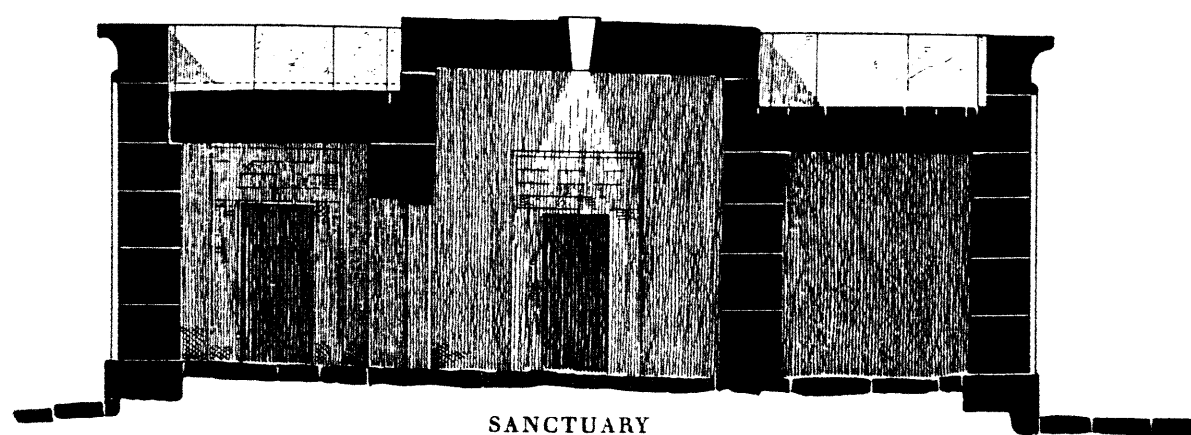
Zero-Point of Leveling, 77.09 m NN

SURVEY AND CHRONOLOGICAL PLAN OF MEDINET HABU
 WEST PART
 SCALE 1:5531/5

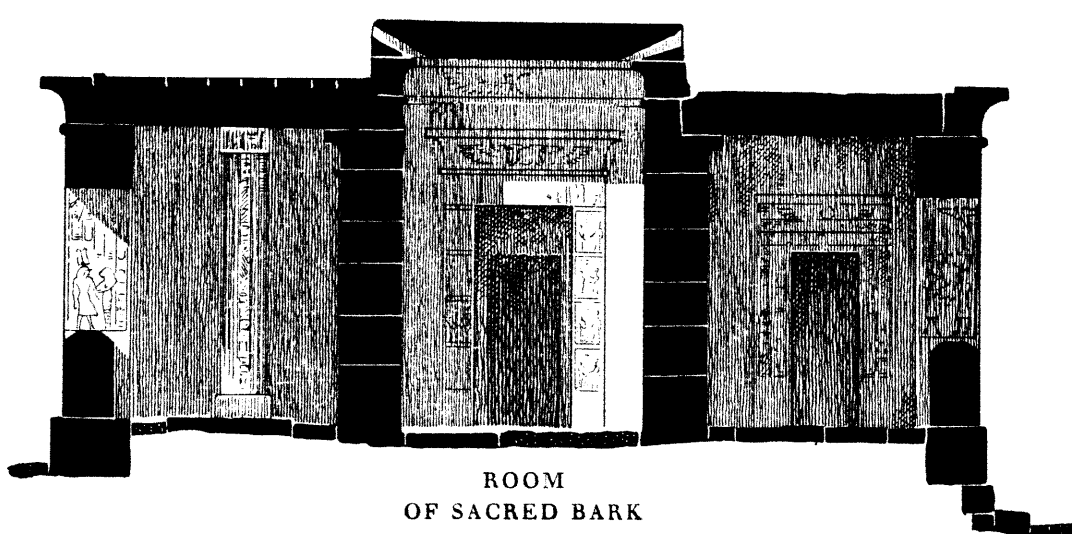


THE SMALL TEMPLE OF MEDINET HABU
GROUND PLAN AND LONGITUDINAL SECTION
SCALE 1:100

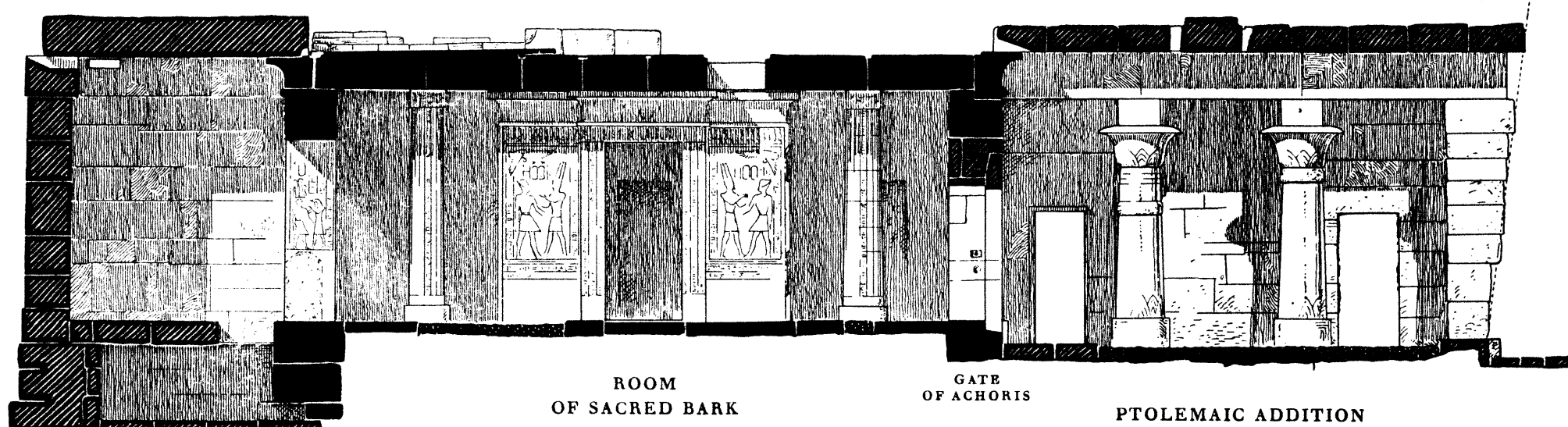
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SANCTUARY



ROOM
OF SACRED BARK

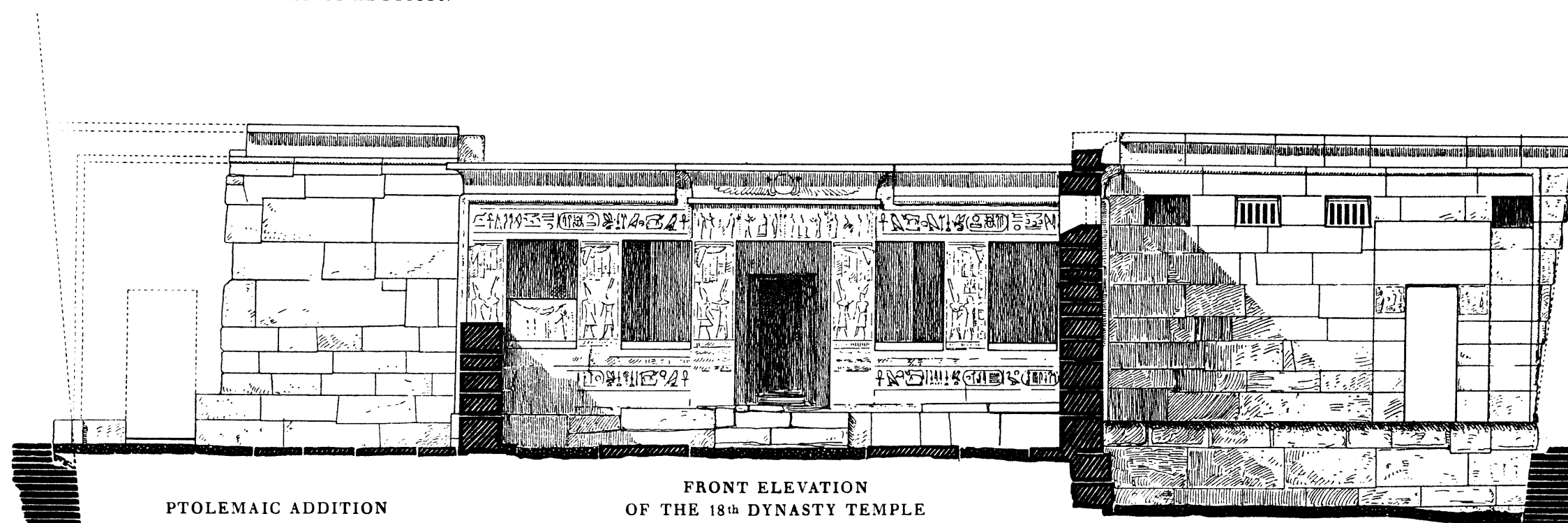


ROOM
OF SACRED BARK

GATE
OF ACHORIS

PTOLEMAIC ADDITION

PTOLEMAIC ADDITION

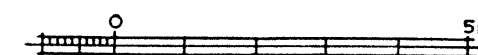


FRONT ELEVATION
OF THE 18th DYNASTY TEMPLE

PTOLEMAIC ADDITION

WALL
OF PTOLEMAIC
COLUMNED HALL

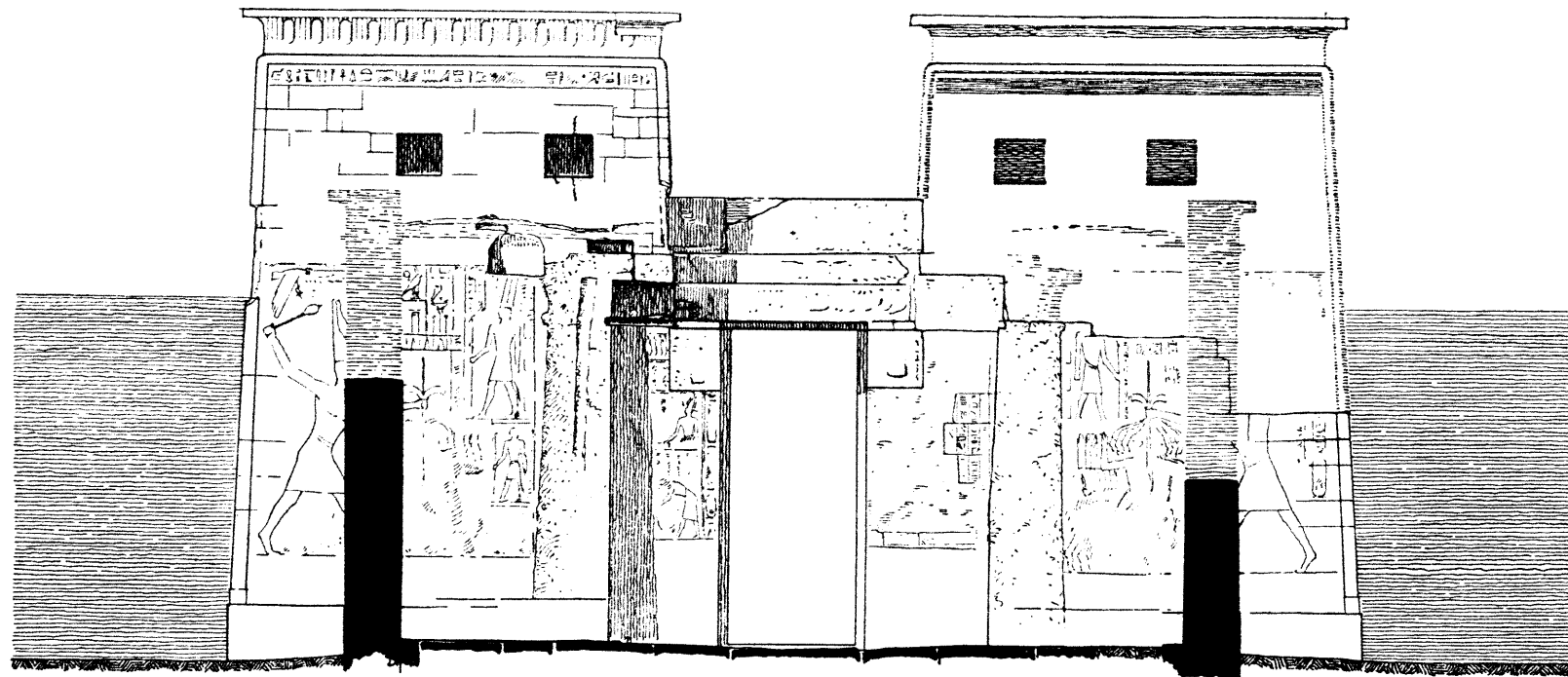
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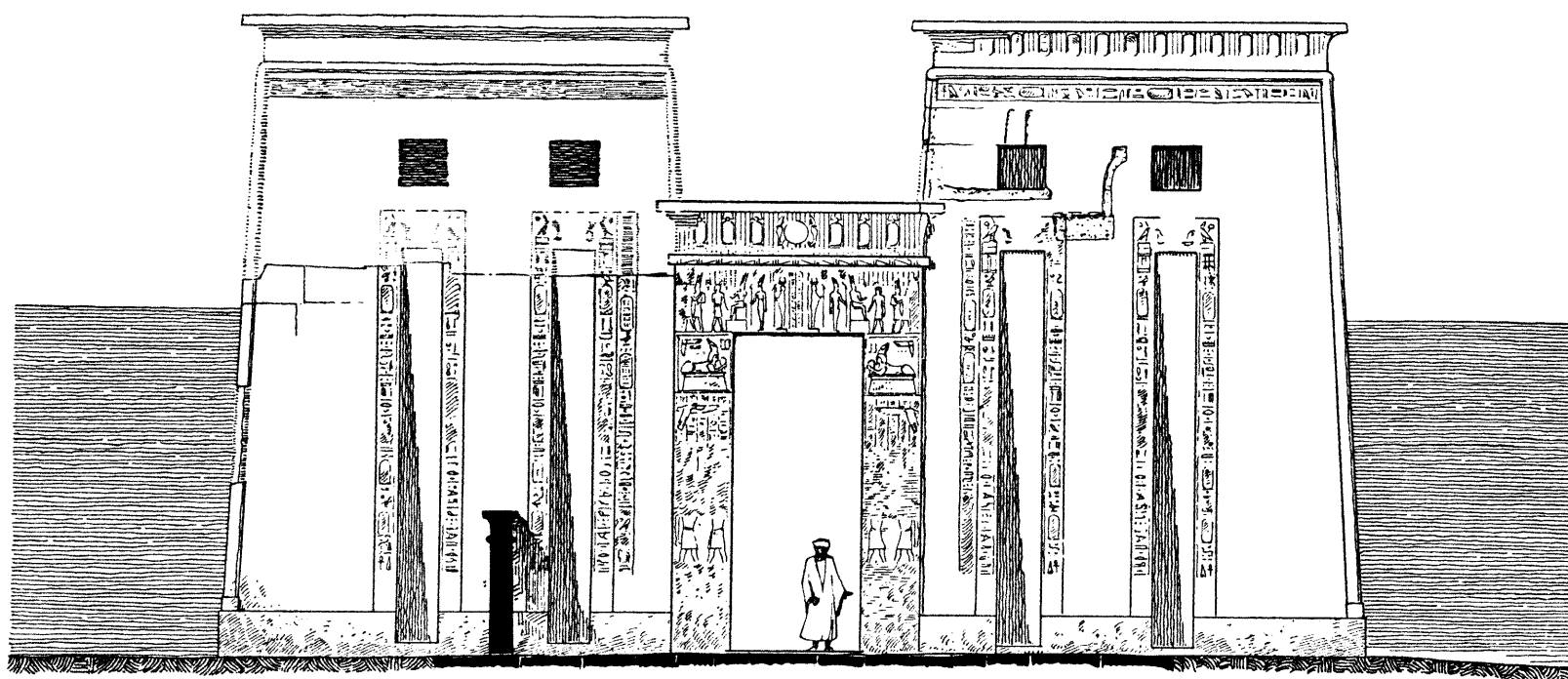
THE SMALL TEMPLE OF MEDINET HABU

CROSS-SECTIONS

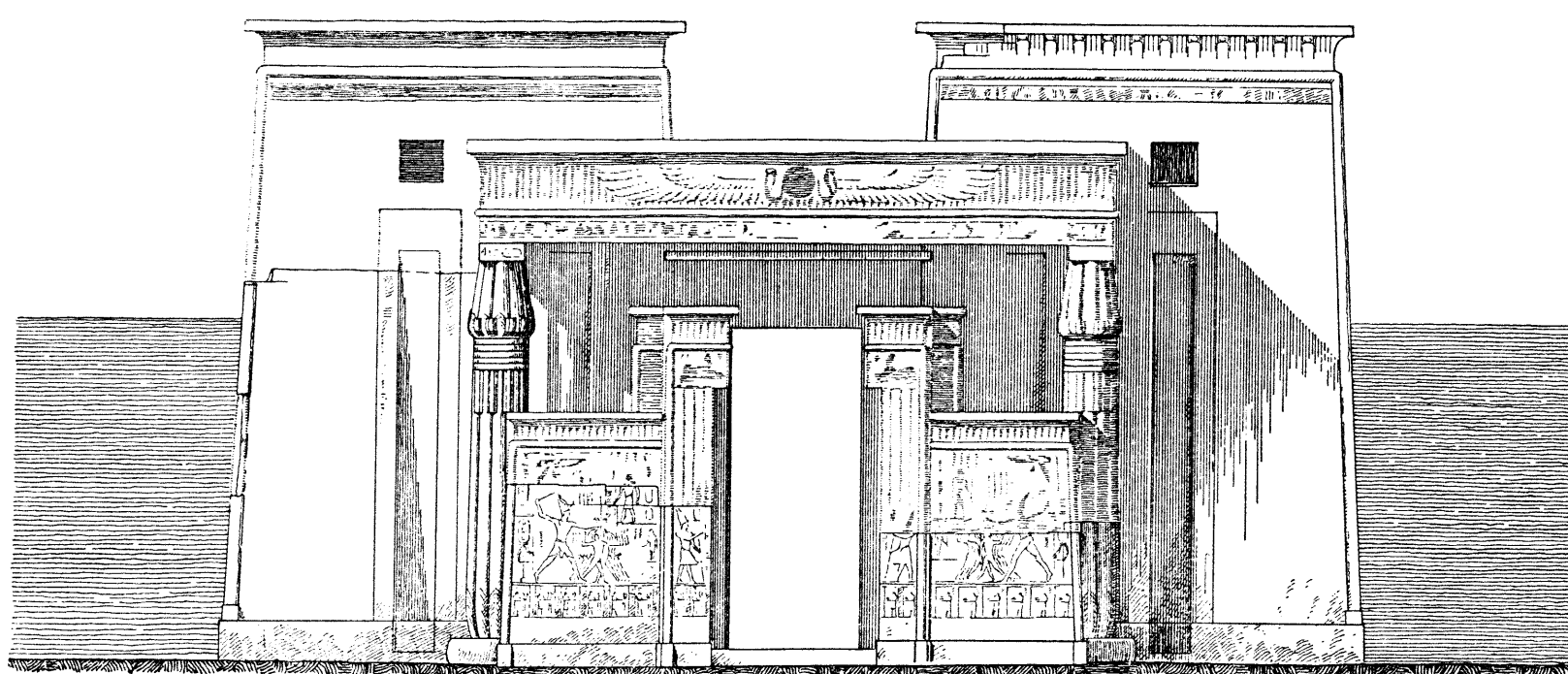
SCALE 1:100



WEST ELEVATION

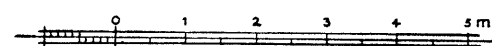


EAST ELEVATION



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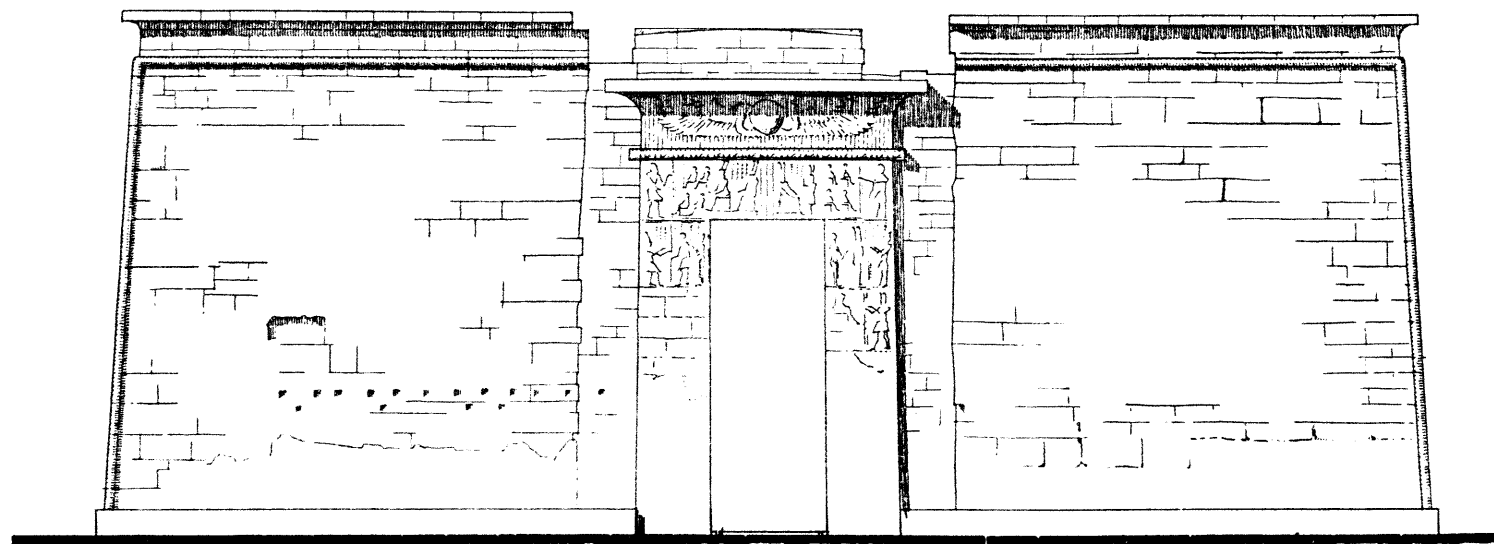
PORTICO USURPED BY NECTANEBO I



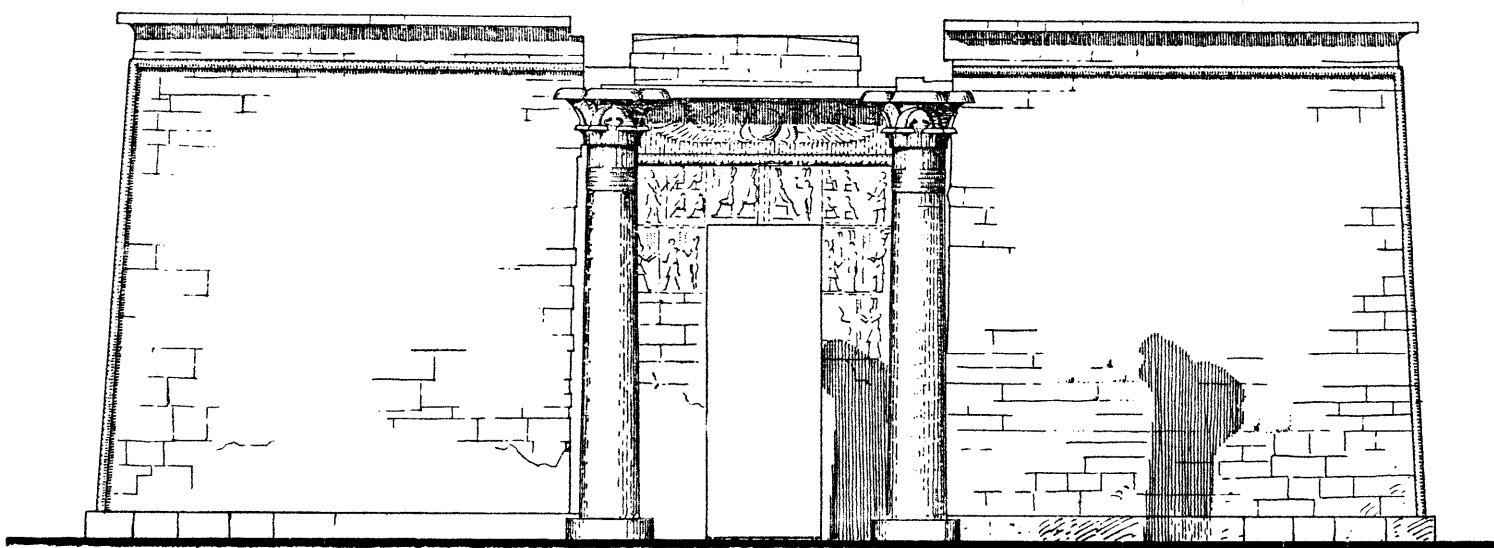
THE SMALL TEMPLE OF MEDINET HABU

THE ETHIOPIAN PYLON

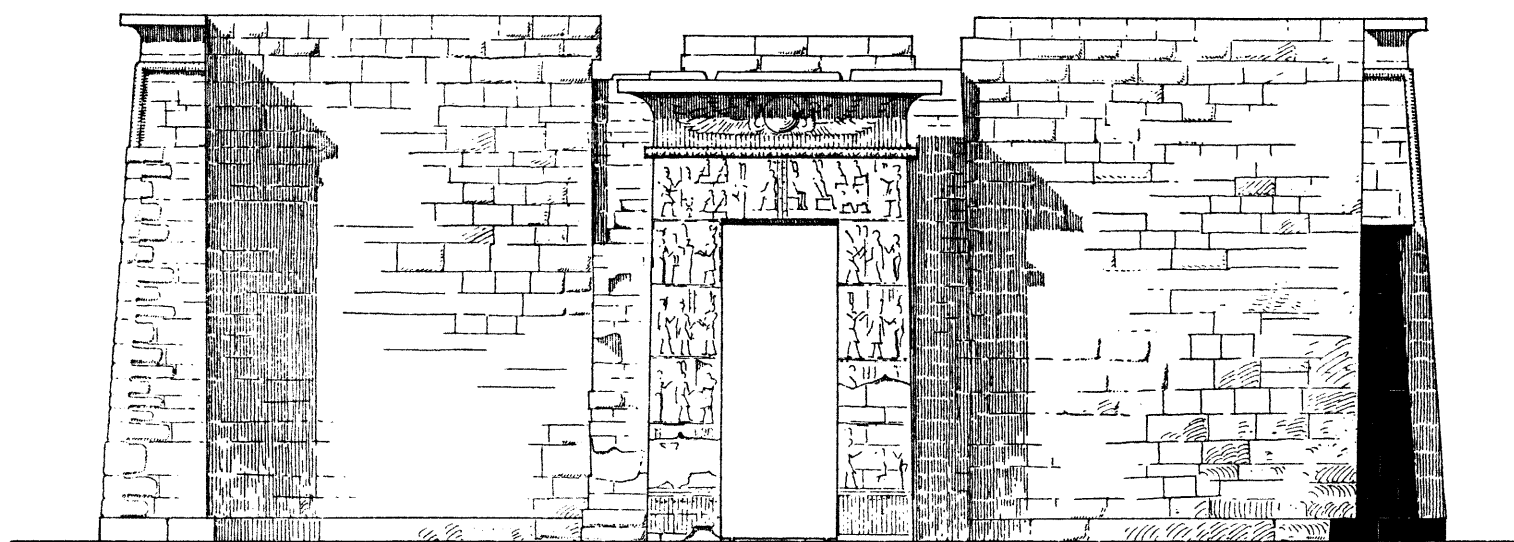
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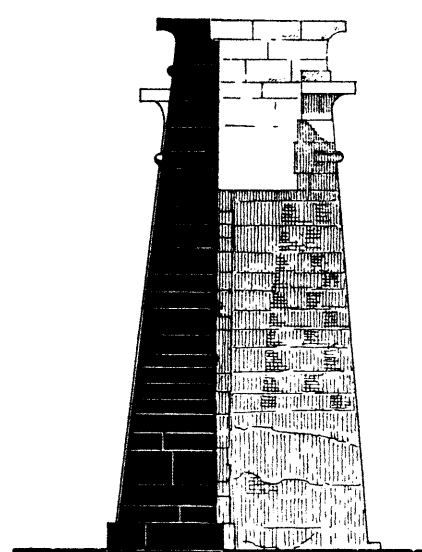
EAST ELEVATION



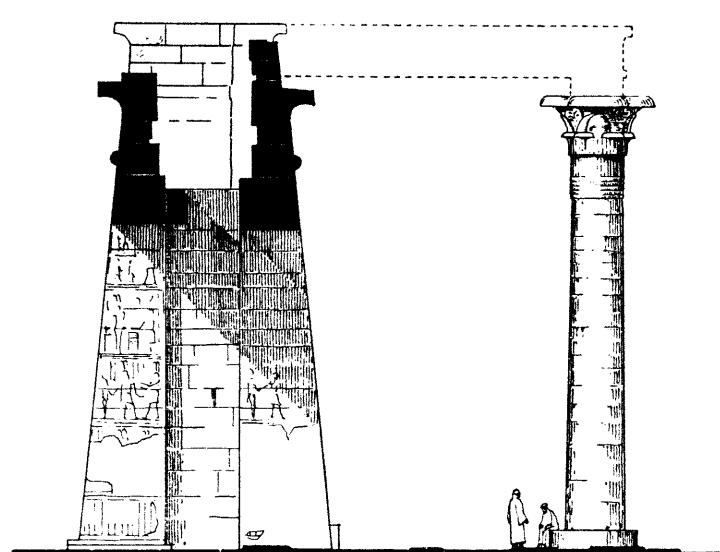
EAST ELEVATION
WITH PORTICO



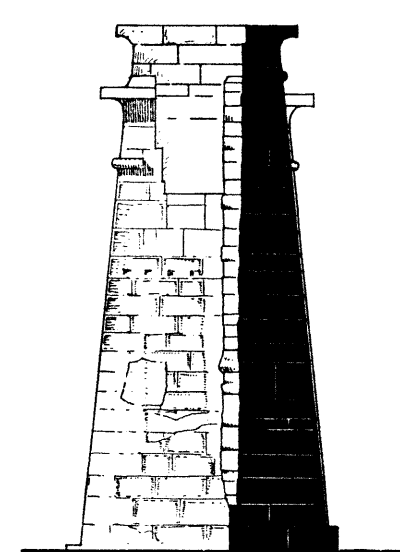
WEST ELEVATION



SECTION
THROUGH NORTH WING

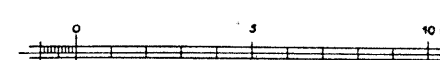


SECTION
THROUGH GATE AND PORTICO



SECTION
THROUGH SOUTH WING

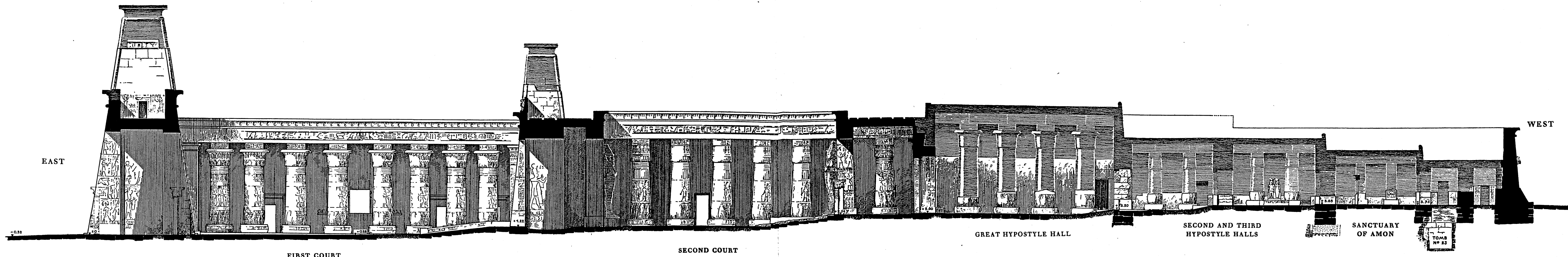
Printed in Germany



THE SMALL TEMPLE OF MEDINET HABU

THE PTOLEMAIC PYLON

SCALE 1:200



FIRST COURT

SECOND COURT

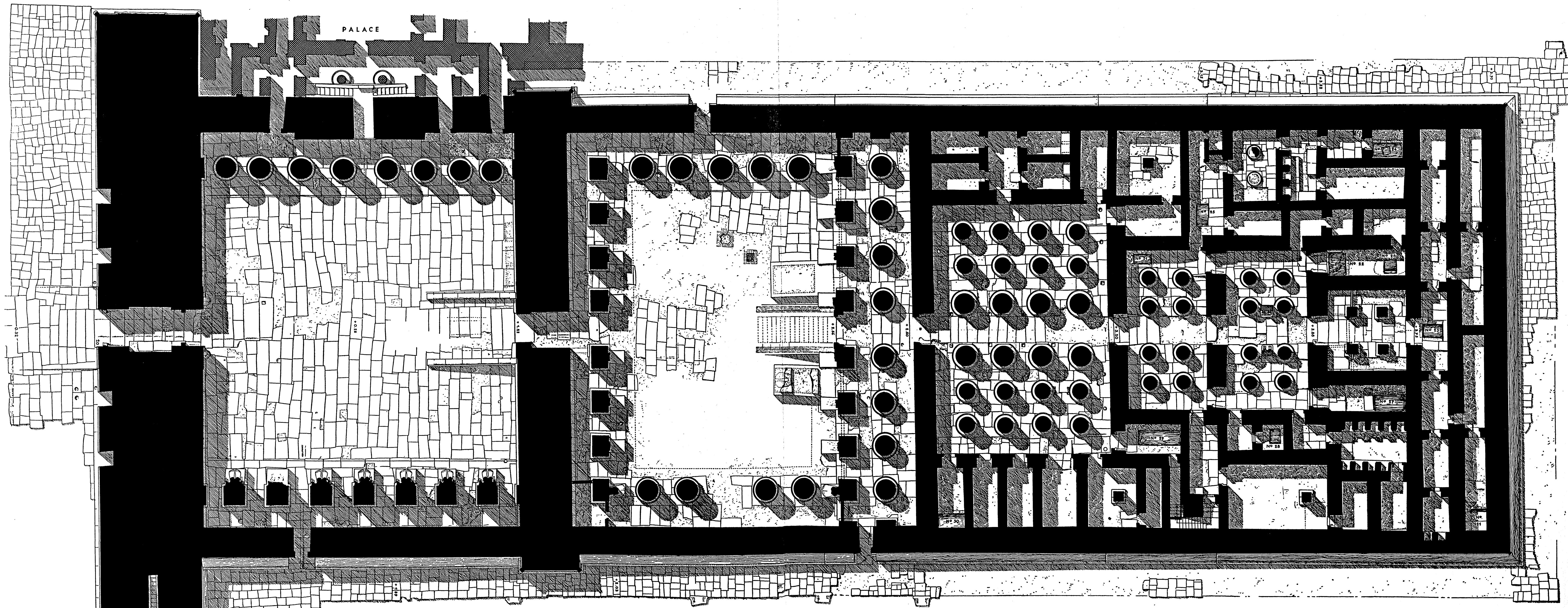
GREAT HYPOSTYLE HALL

SECOND AND THIRD HYPOSTYLE HALLS

SANCTUARY OF AMON

TOMB NO 23

LONGITUDINAL SECTION

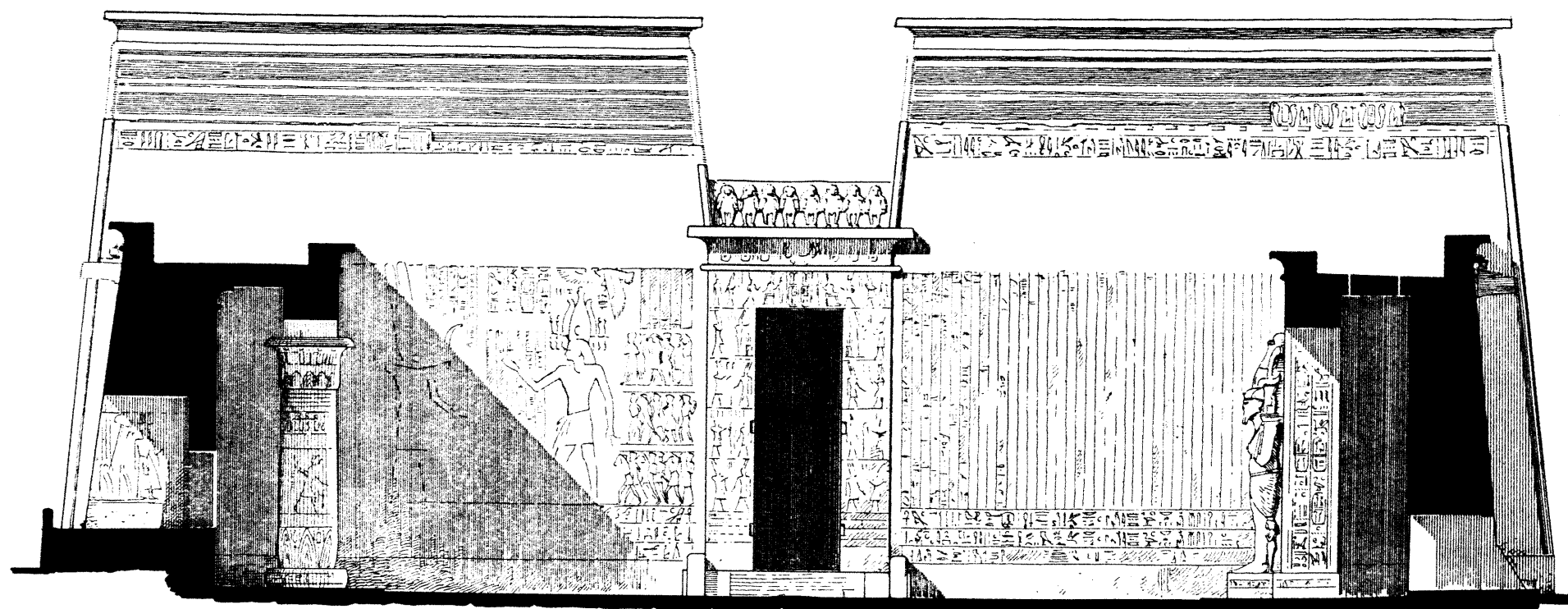


GROUND PLAN

Printed in Germany

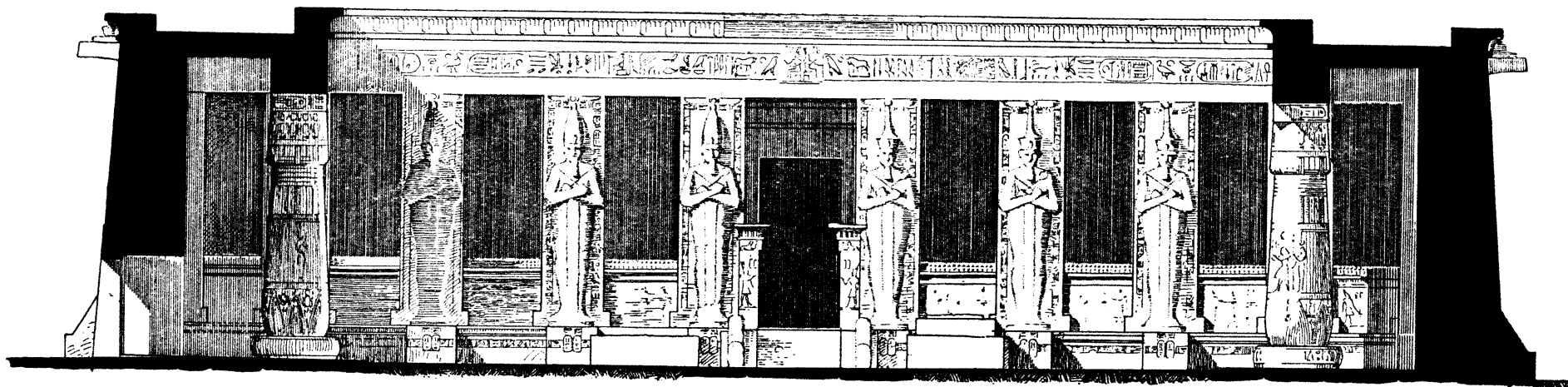
THE GREAT TEMPLE OF RAMSES III AT MEDINET HABU

SCALE 1:200

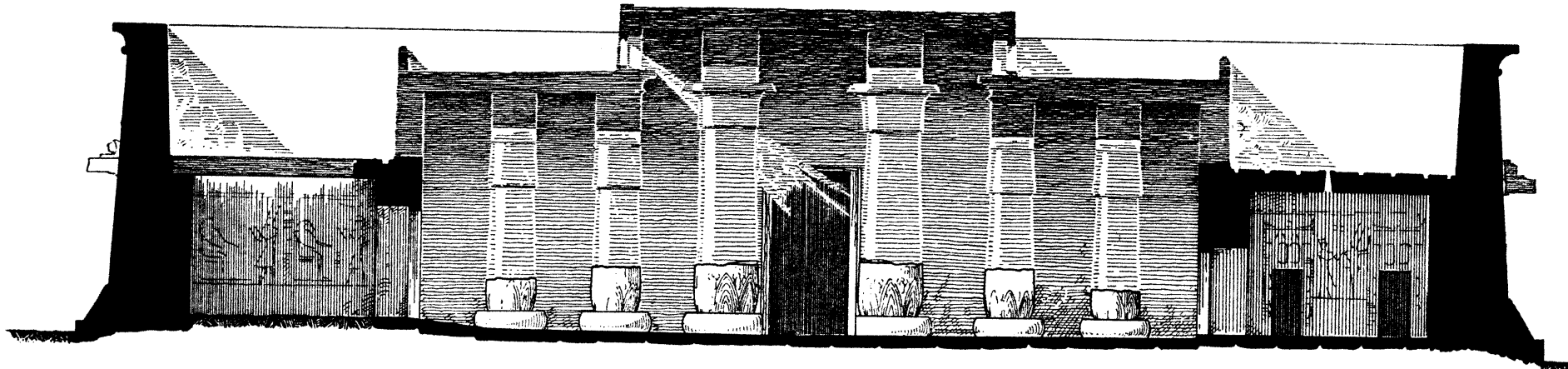


THE WINDOW OF ROYAL APPEARANCES

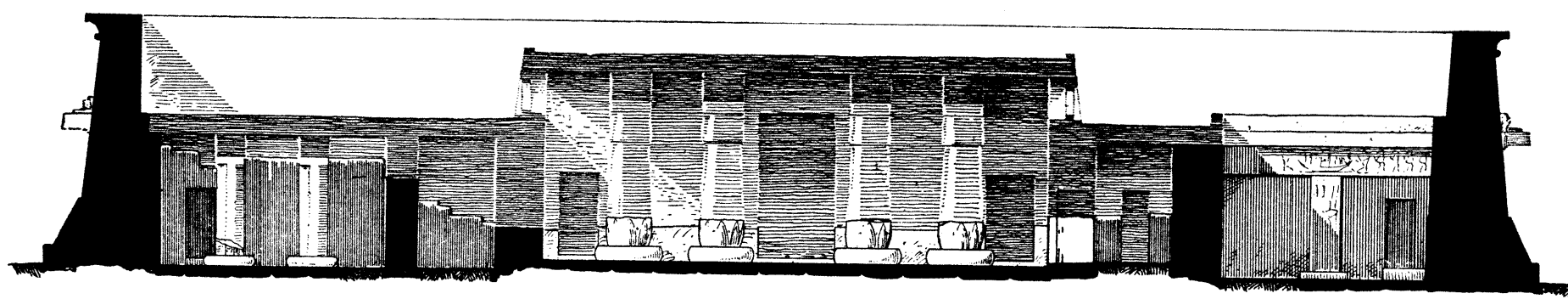
FIRST COURT AND SECOND PYLON
LOOKING WEST



SECOND COURT
LOOKING WEST



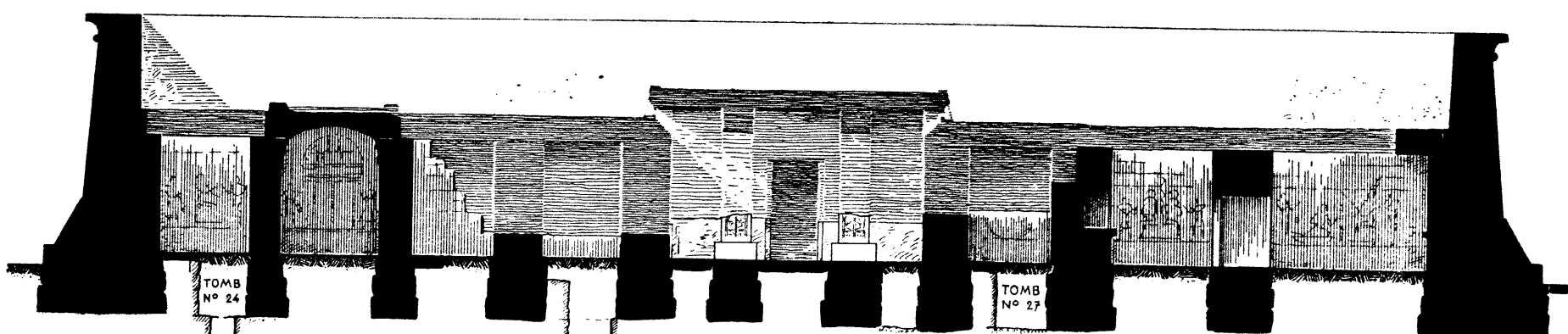
GREAT HYPOSTYLE HALL
LOOKING EAST



SANCTUARY OF OSIRIS

THIRD HYPOSTYLE HALL
LOOKING WEST

SANCTUARY OF RE-HARAGHTIS



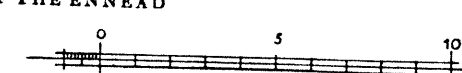
SANCTUARY OF OSIRIS

SANCTUARY OF AMON

SANCTUARY OF THE ENNEAD

Printed in Germany

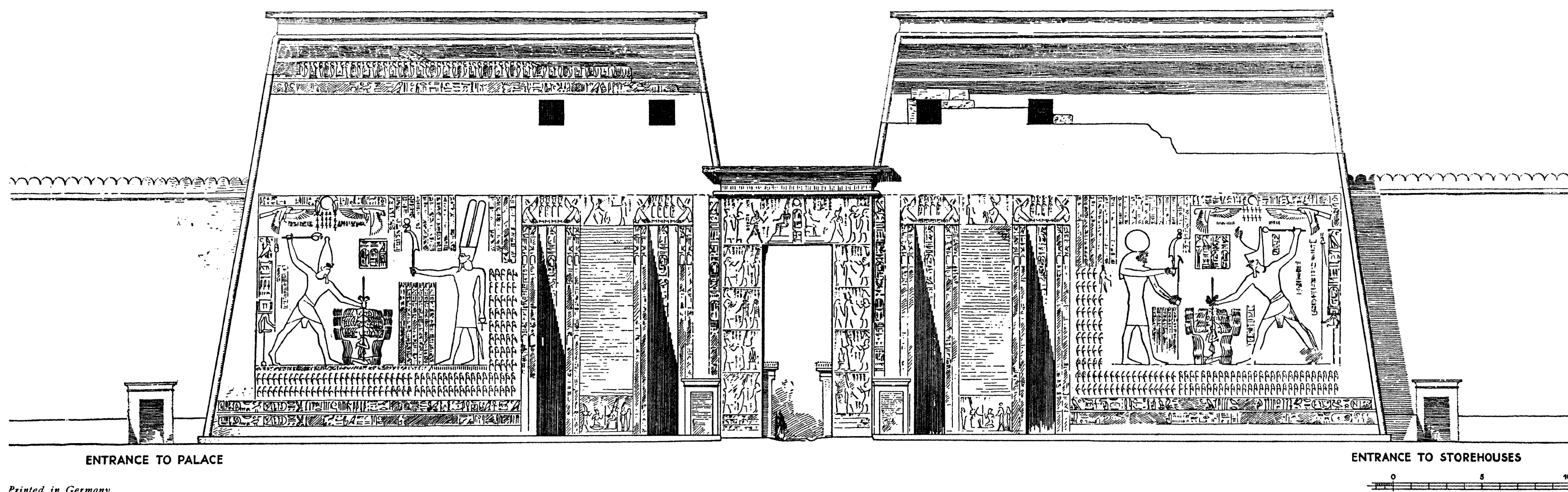
TOMB NO 24
TOMB NO 16
TOMB NO 27



THE GREAT TEMPLE OF RAMSES III AT MEDINET HABU

CROSS-SECTIONS

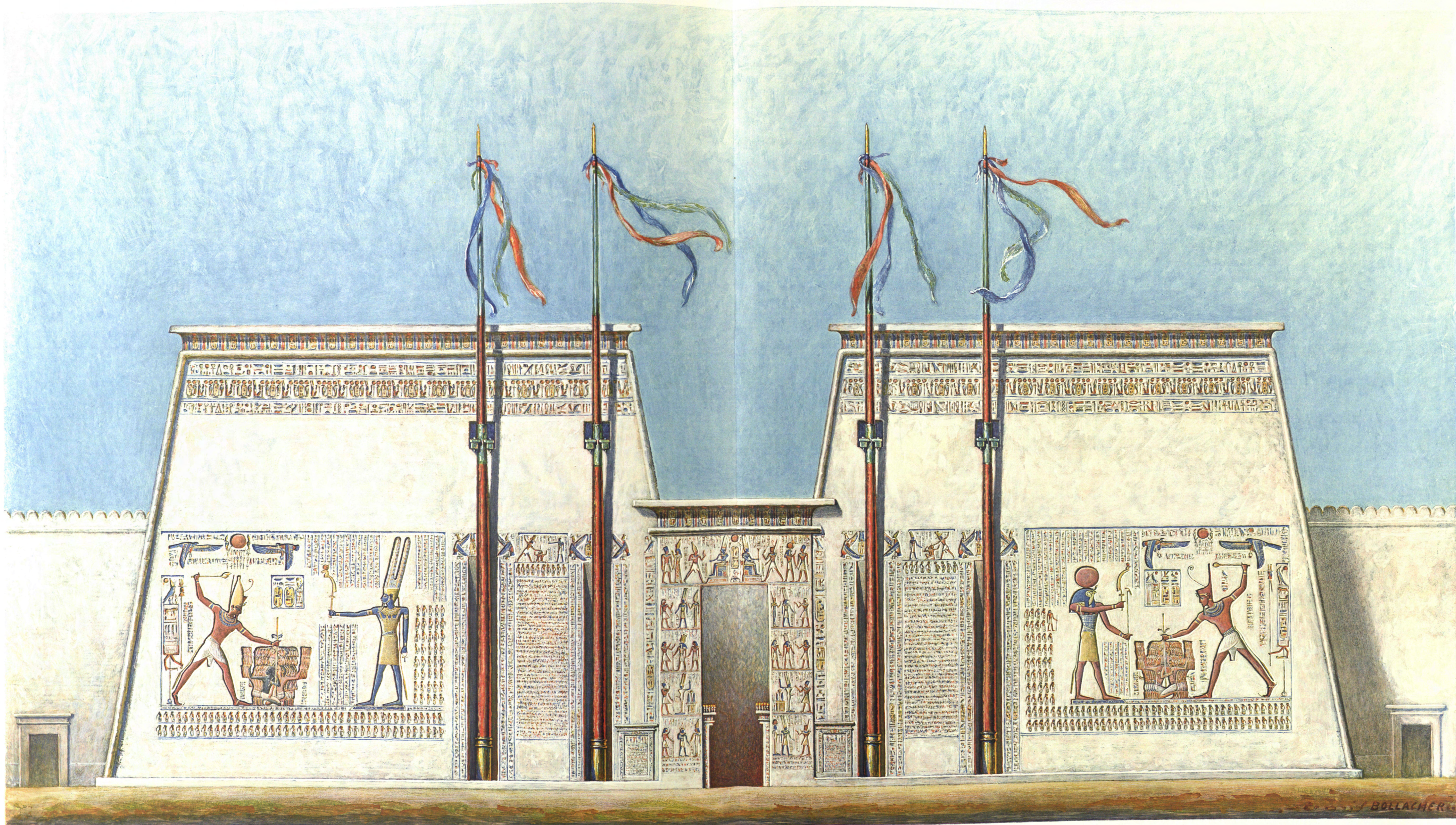
SCALE 1:200



THE GREAT TEMPLE OF RAMSES III AT MEDINET HABU

FIRST PYLON · ELEVATION

SCALE 1 : 200



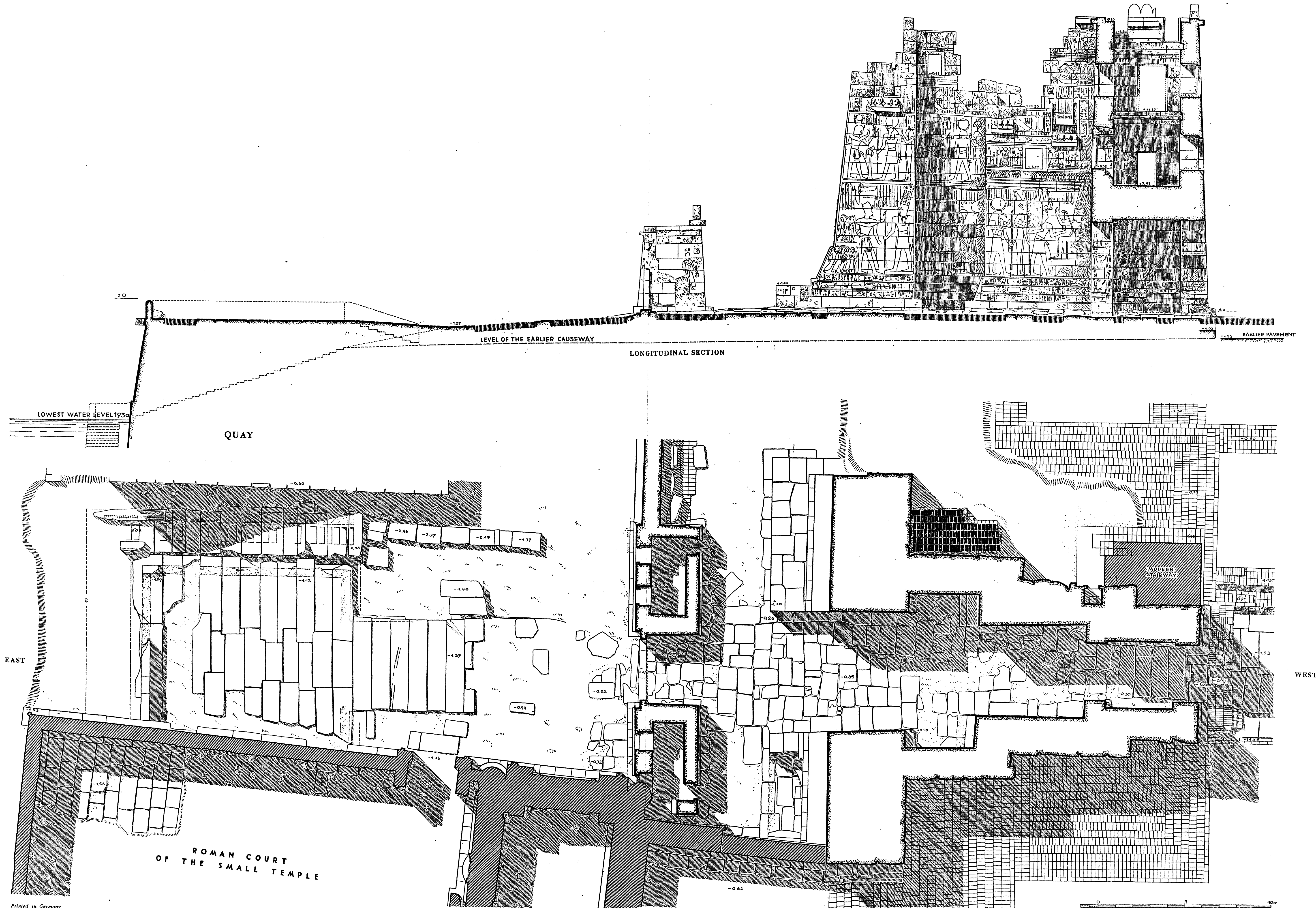
Printed in Germany by Ganymed, Berlin

THE FIRST PYLON OF RAMSES III'S TEMPLE AT MEDINET HABU. RECONSTRUCTION
LENGTH OF THE PYLON, 67.80 m.



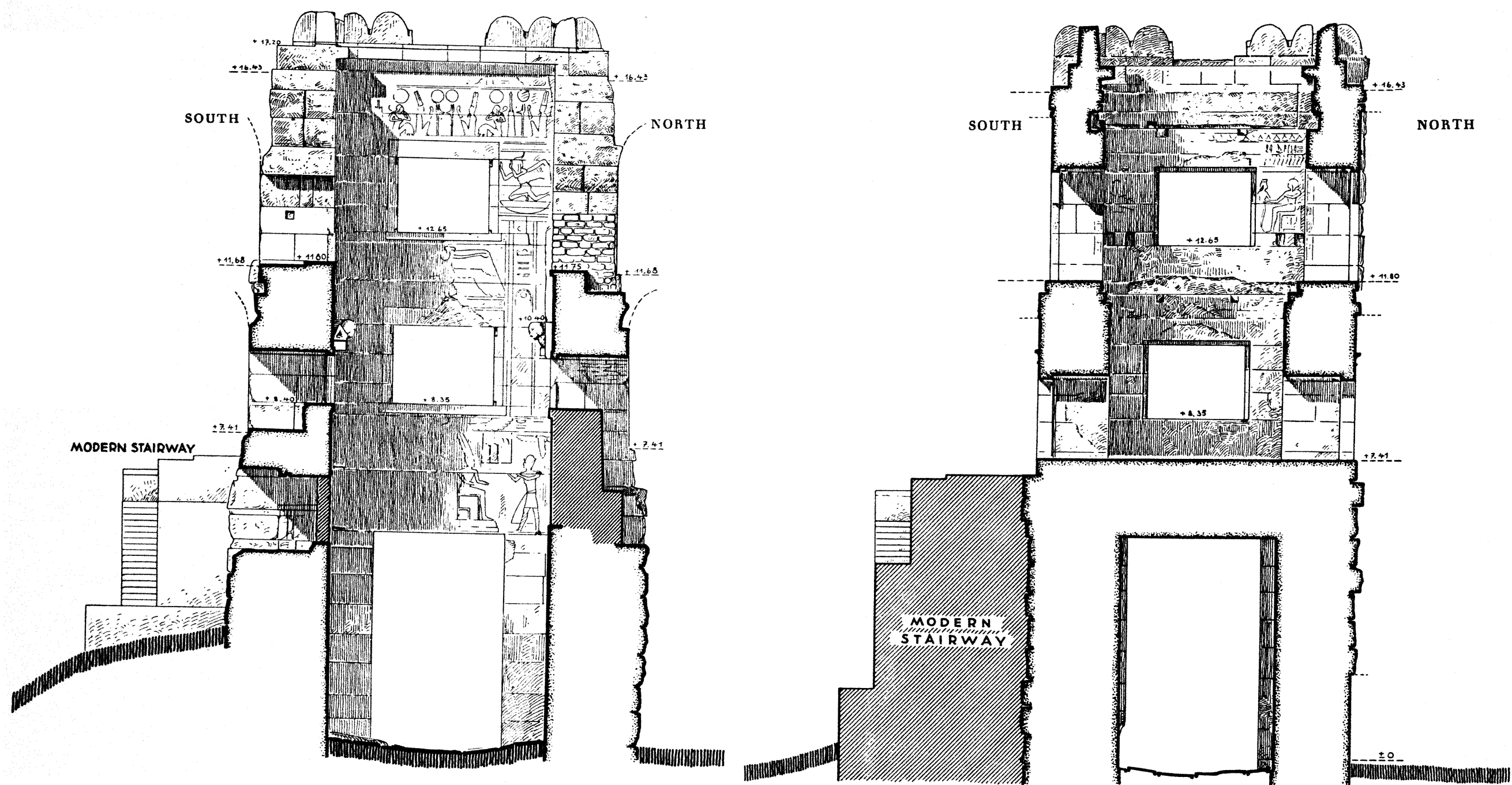
Printed in Germany by Ganyemed, Berlin

THE GREAT TEMPLE OF RAMSES III AT MEDINET HABU
SOUTHWEST CORNER OF THE FIRST COURT. RECONSTRUCTION



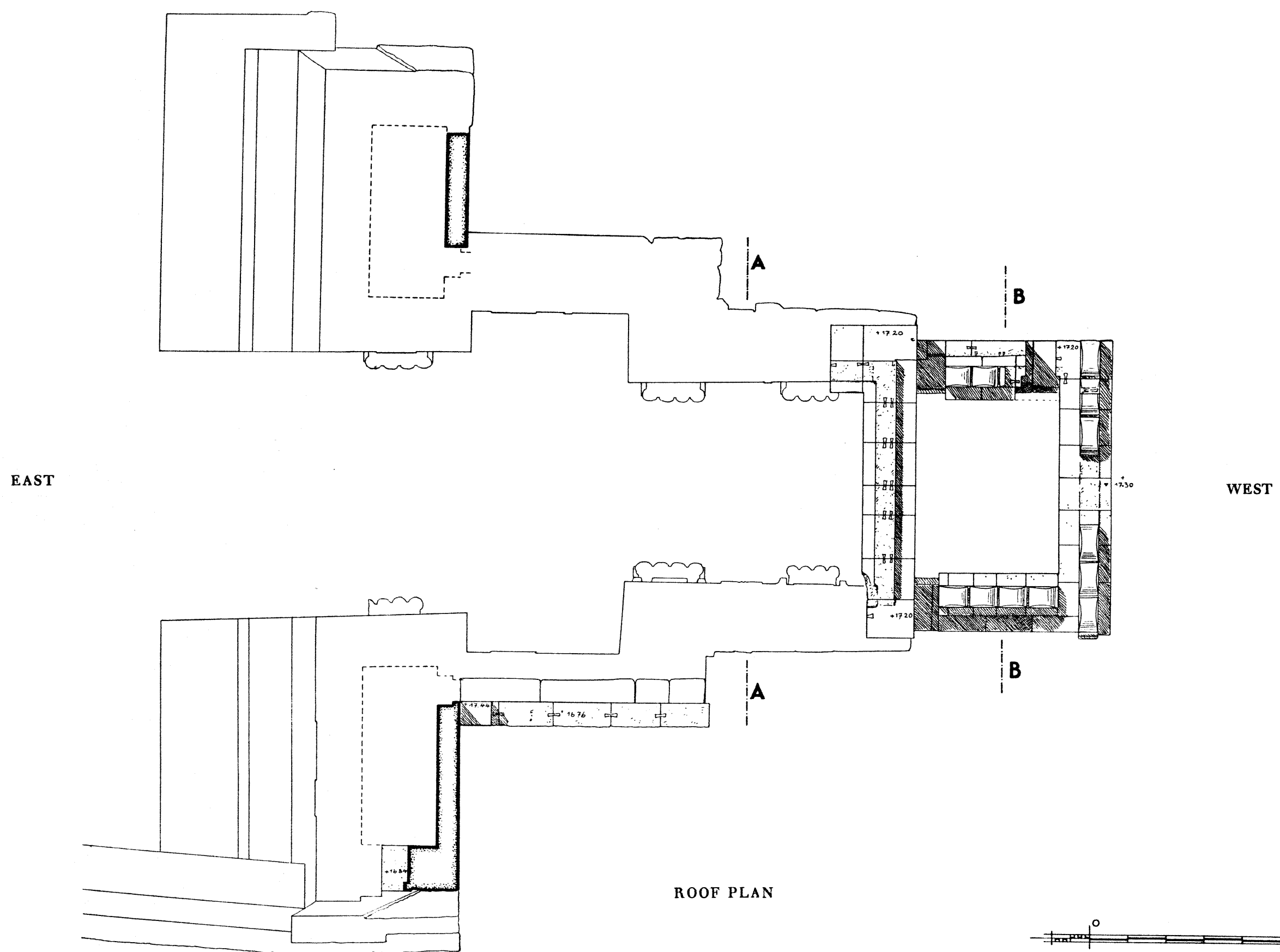
THE EASTERN FORTIFIED GATE OF MEDINET HABU
 GROUND PLAN AND LONGITUDINAL SECTION
 SCALE 1:100

Printed in Germany



SECTION AA LOOKING WEST

SECTION BB LOOKING WEST

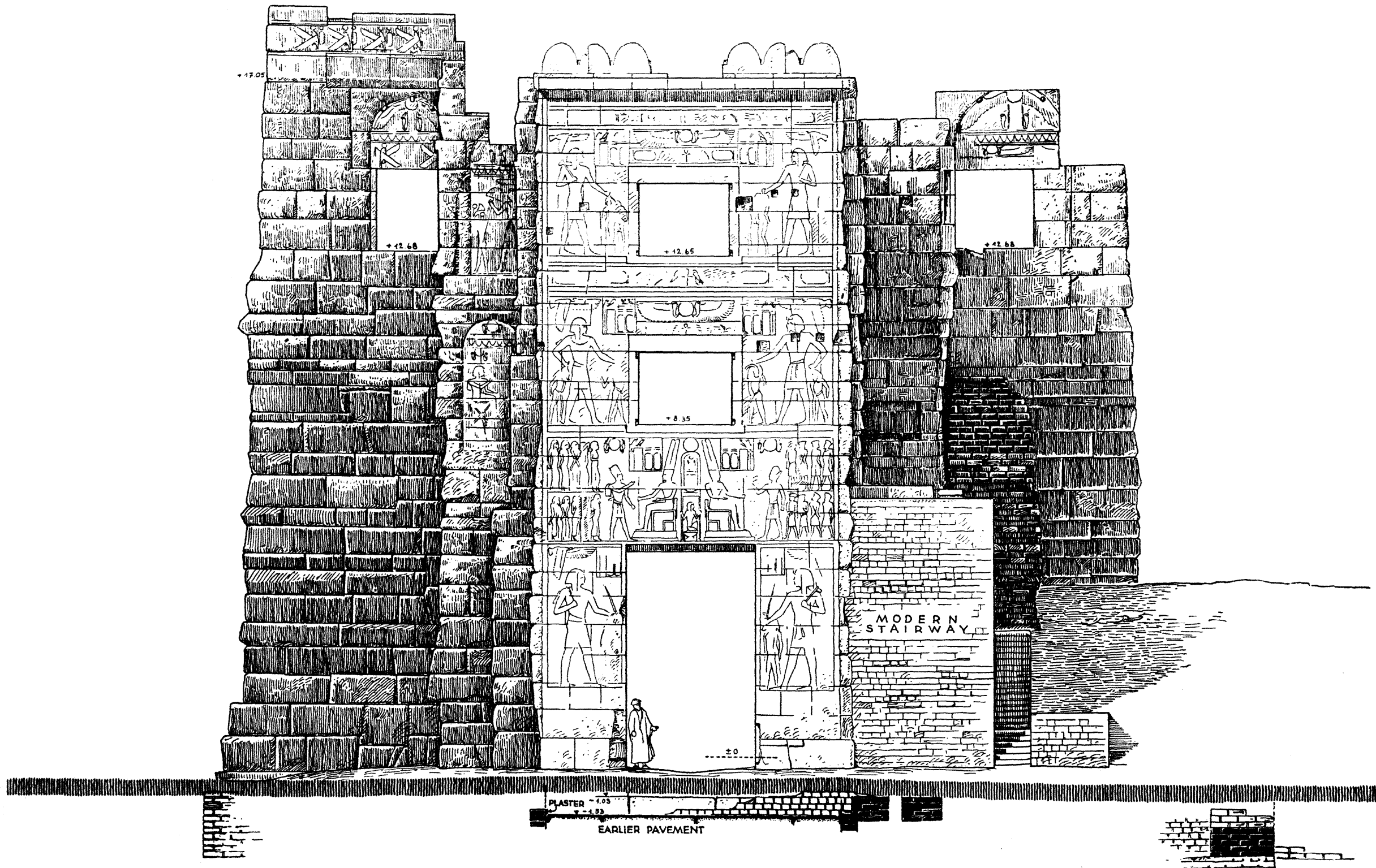


ROOF PLAN

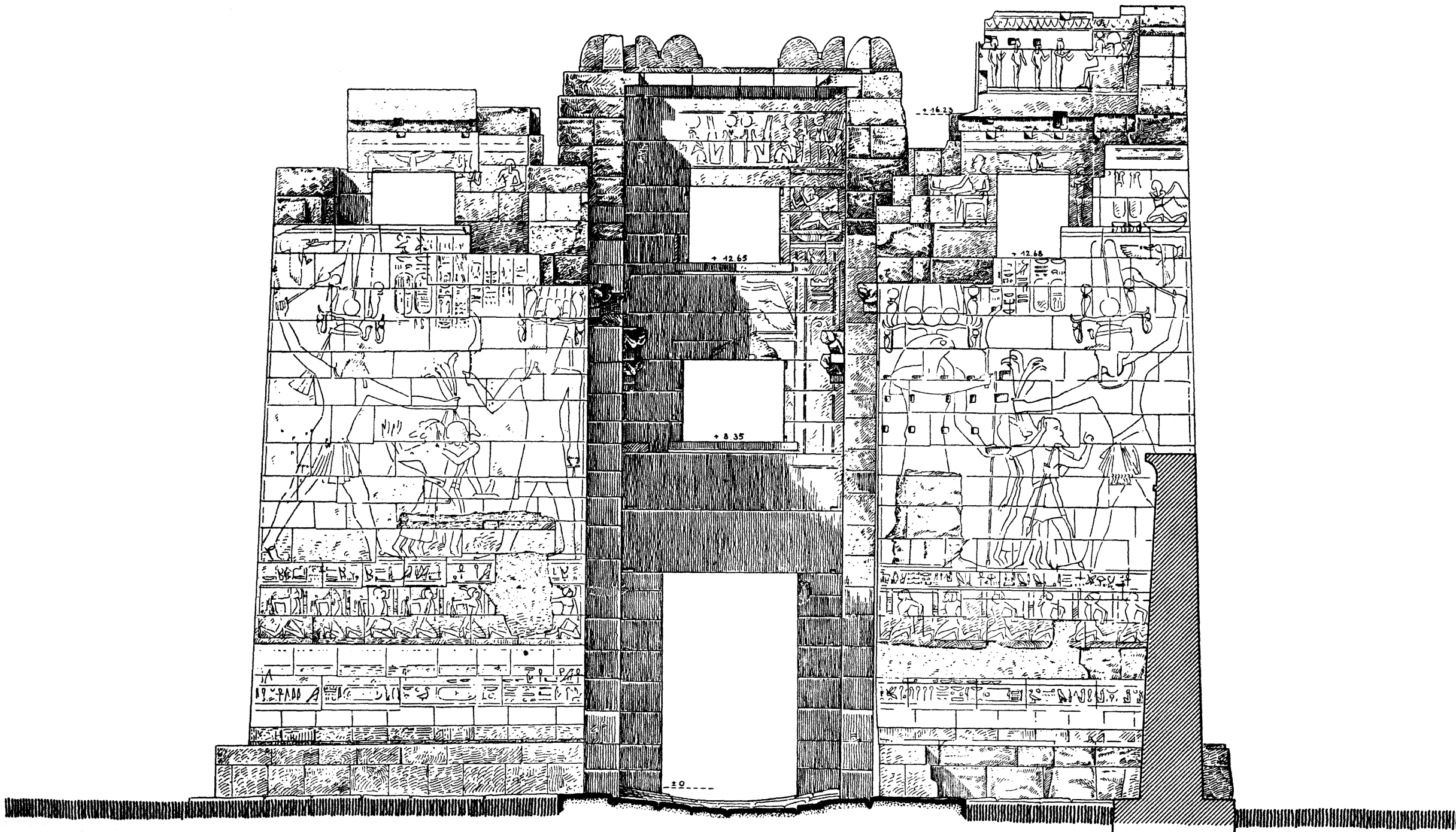
Printed in Germany

THE EASTERN FORTIFIED GATE OF MEDINET HABU
ROOF PLAN AND CROSS-SECTIONS

SCALE 1:100

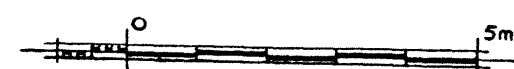


WEST ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION

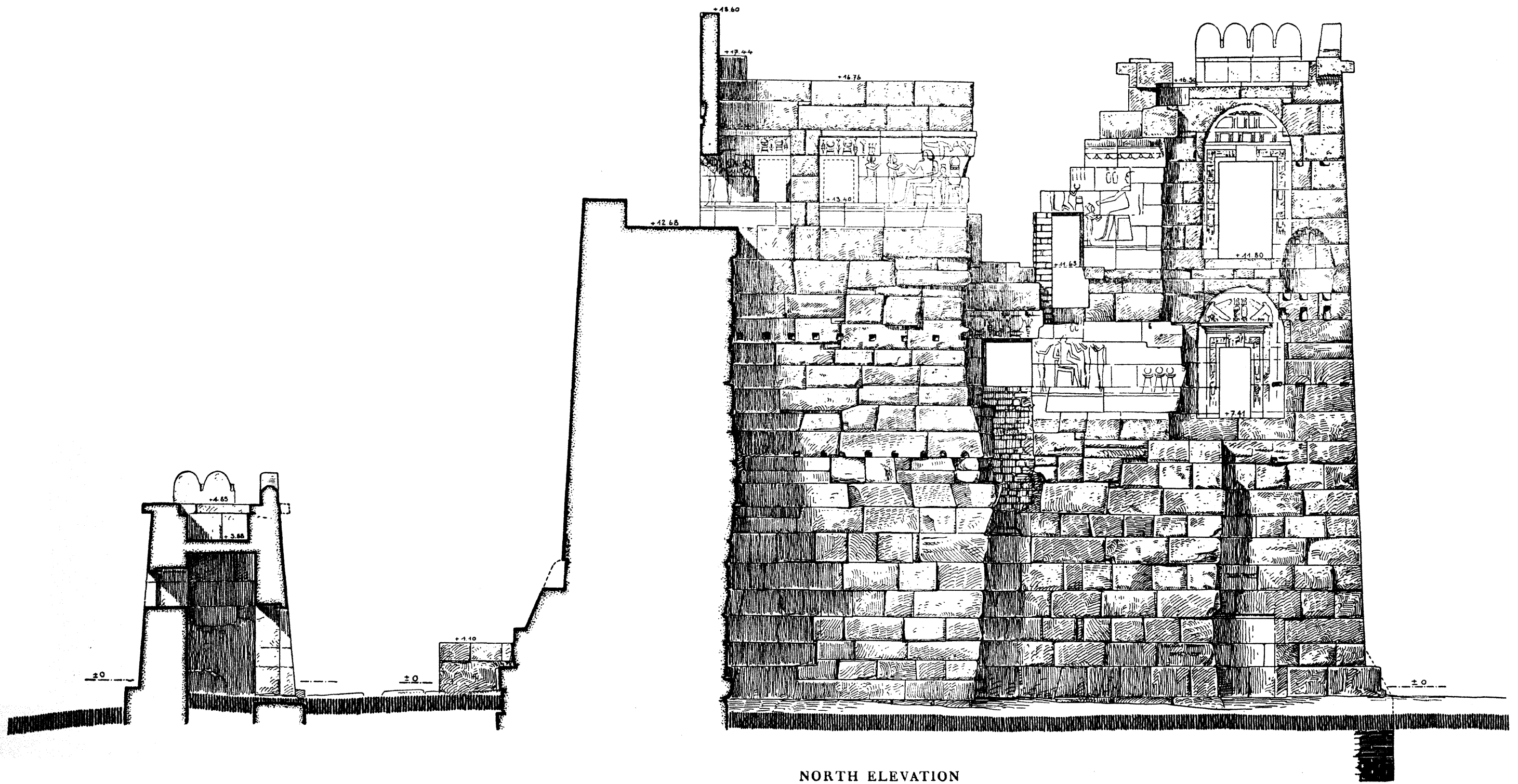
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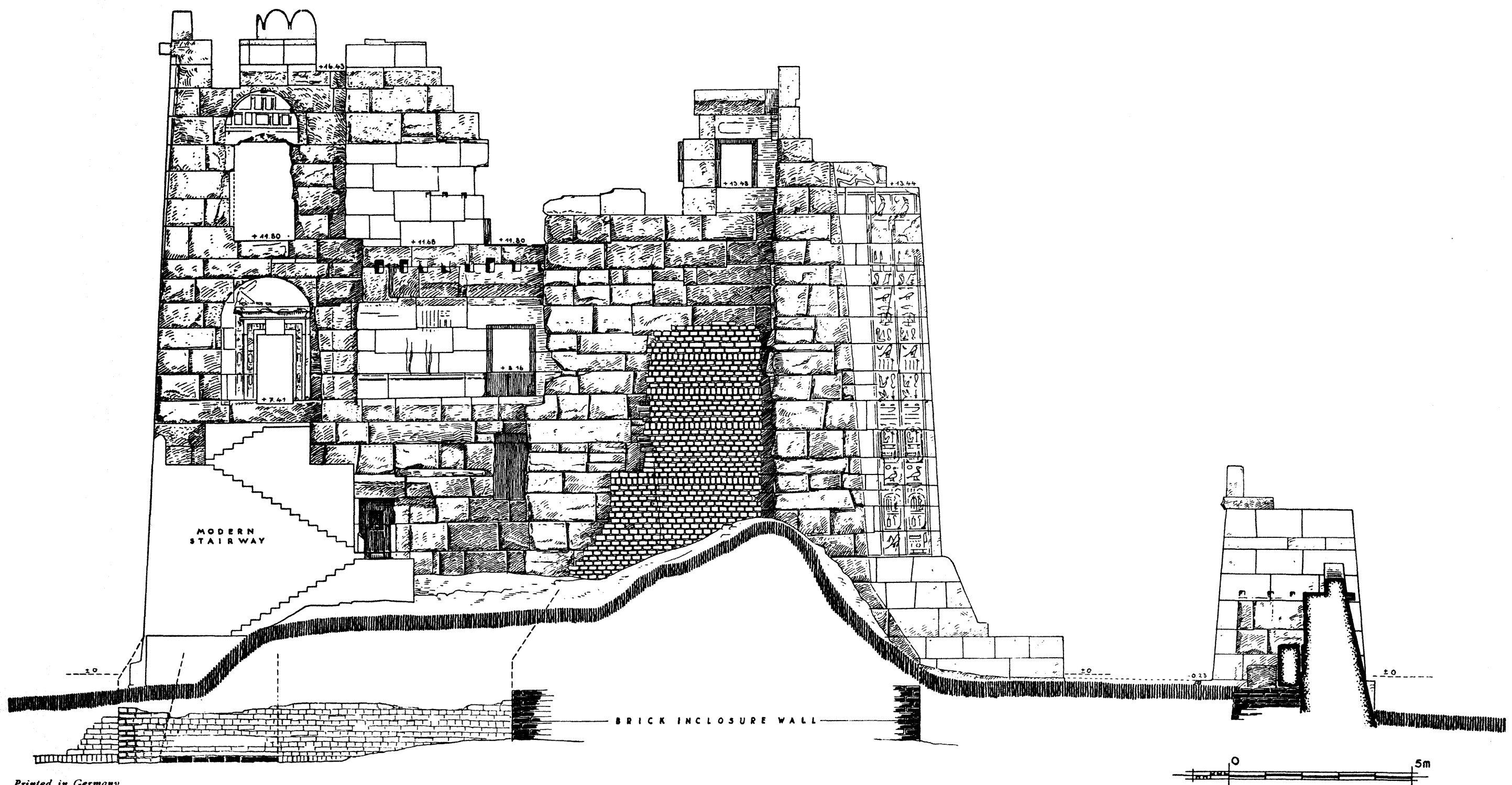
THE EASTERN FORTIFIED GATE OF MEDINET HABU

EAST AND WEST ELEVATIONS

SCALE 1 : 100



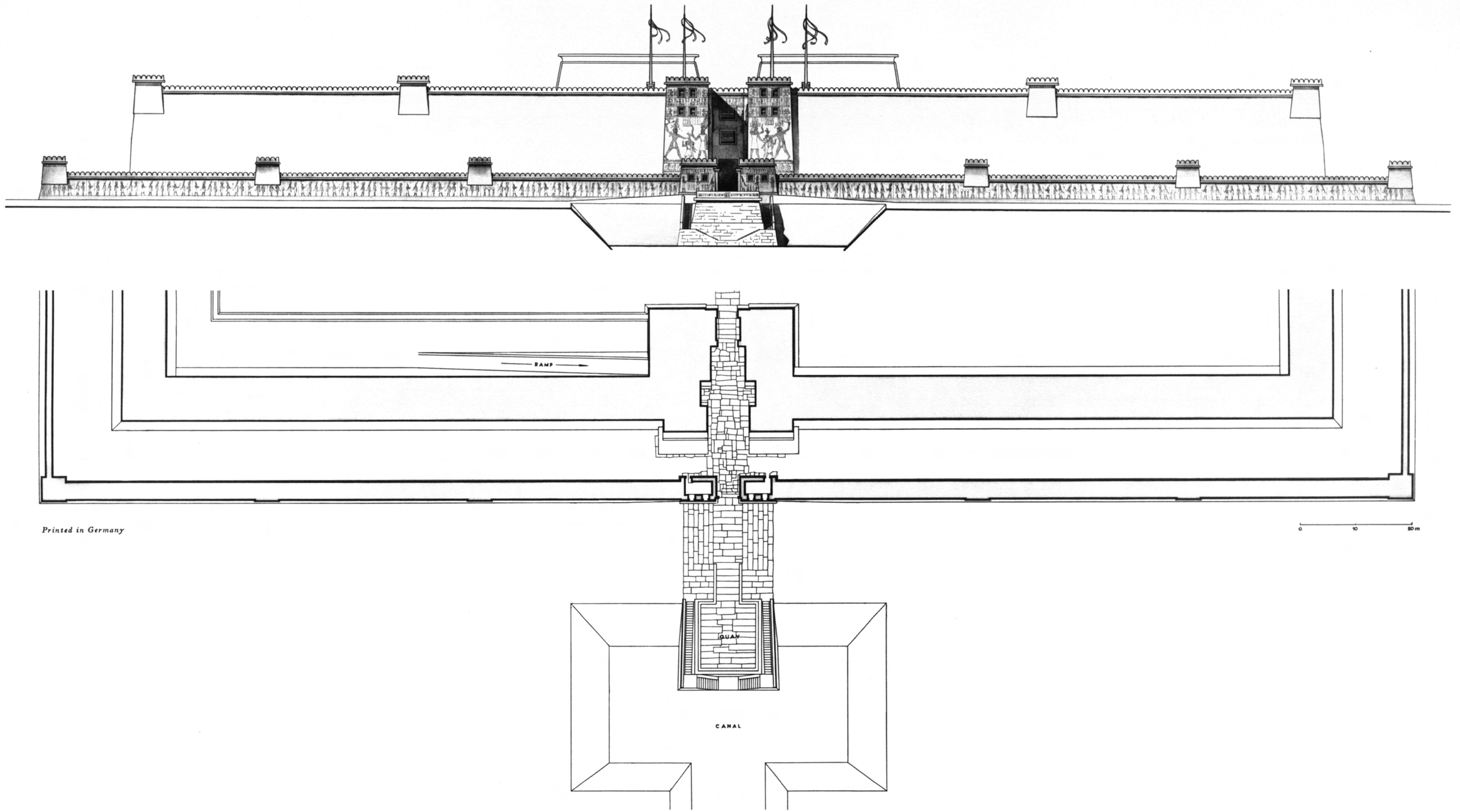
NORTH ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION

THE EASTERN FORTIFIED GATE OF MEDINET HABU
NORTH AND SOUTH ELEVATIONS
SCALE 1 : 100

Printed in Germany



THE EAST WALL OF THE FORTIFIED TEMPLE AREA OF RAMSES III

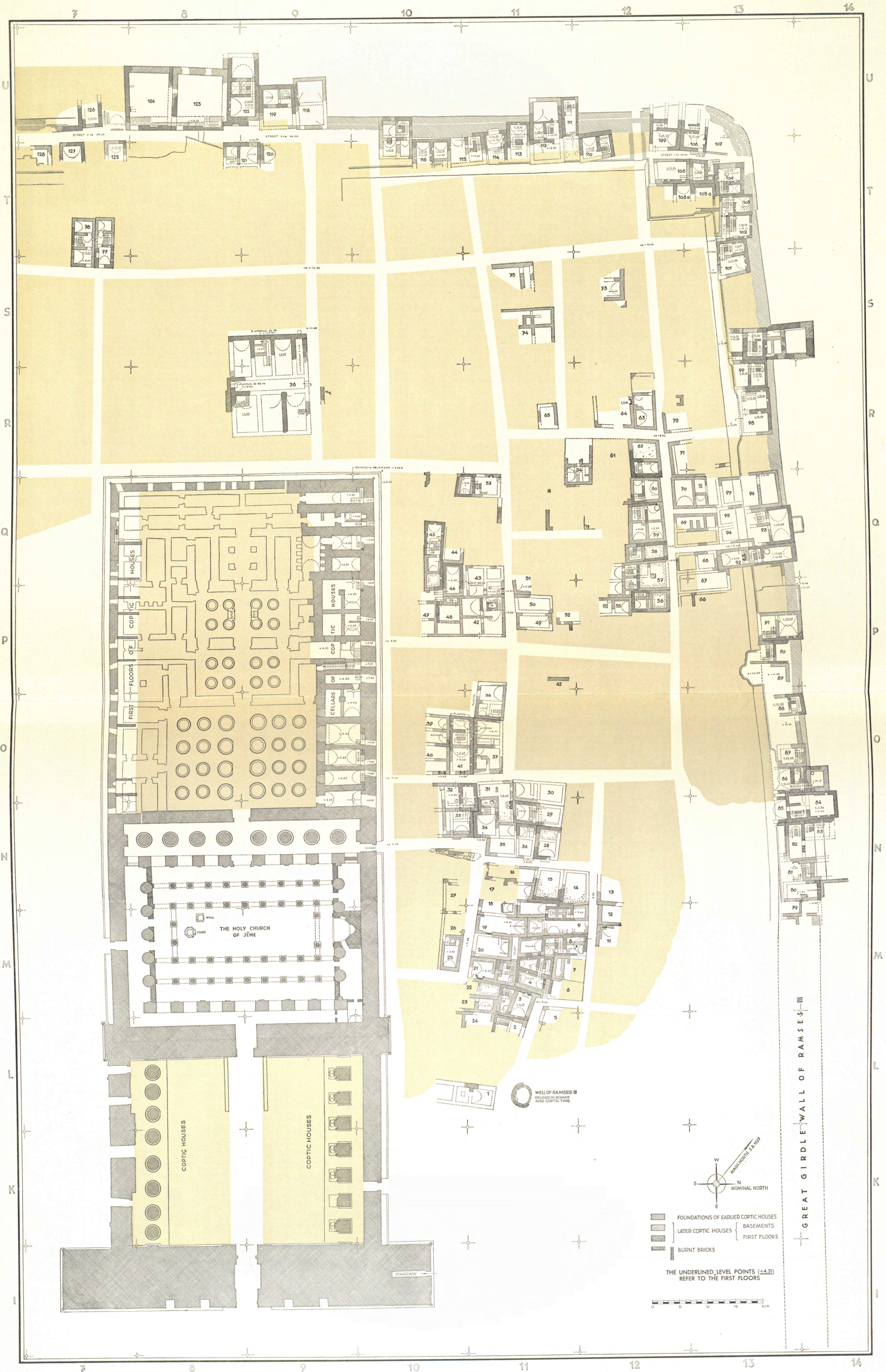
GROUND PLAN AND ELEVATION. RECONSTRUCTION

SCALE 1:500



Printed in Germany by Ganymed, Berlin

RELIEF FROM ABOVE THE RECESS IN THE THRONE ROOM OF RAMSES III'S FIRST PALACE
LENGTH OF THE BLOCK, 2.46 m.



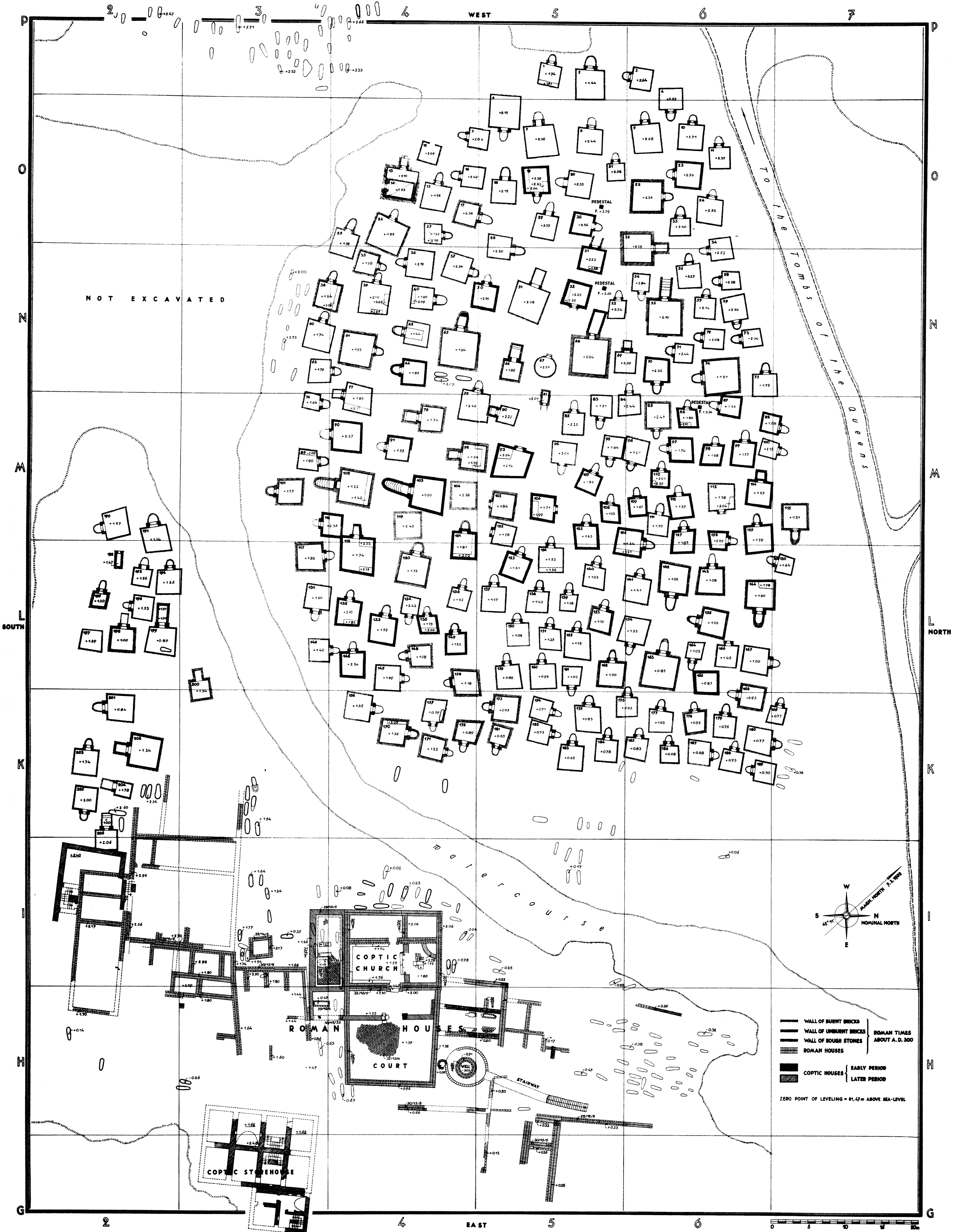
TO ADONIS

LATER TOMBS
IN ROMAN PERIOD

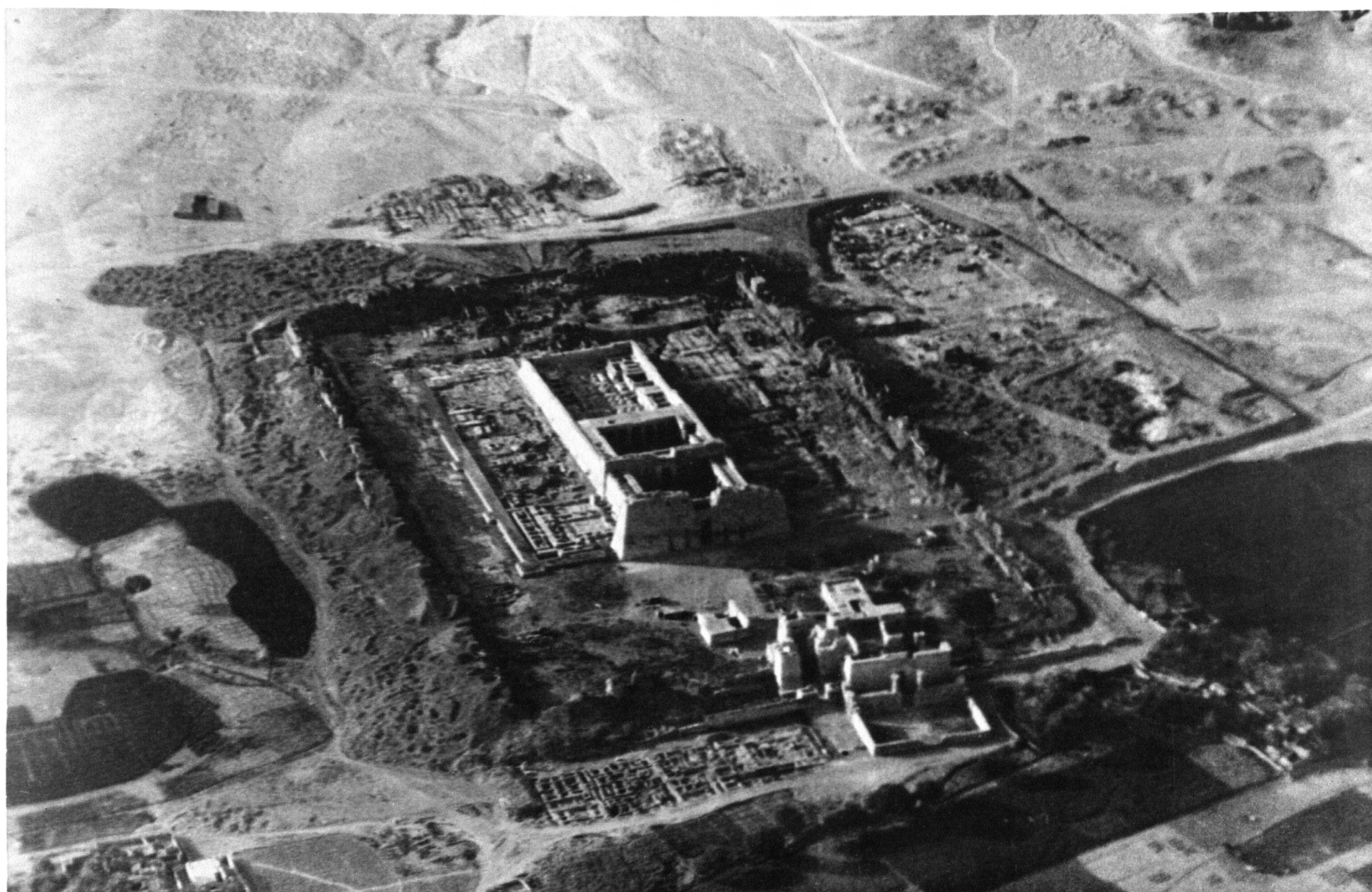


SOUTH

NORTH



CEMETERY ABOVE THE TEMPLE OF EYE AND HARMHAB



A

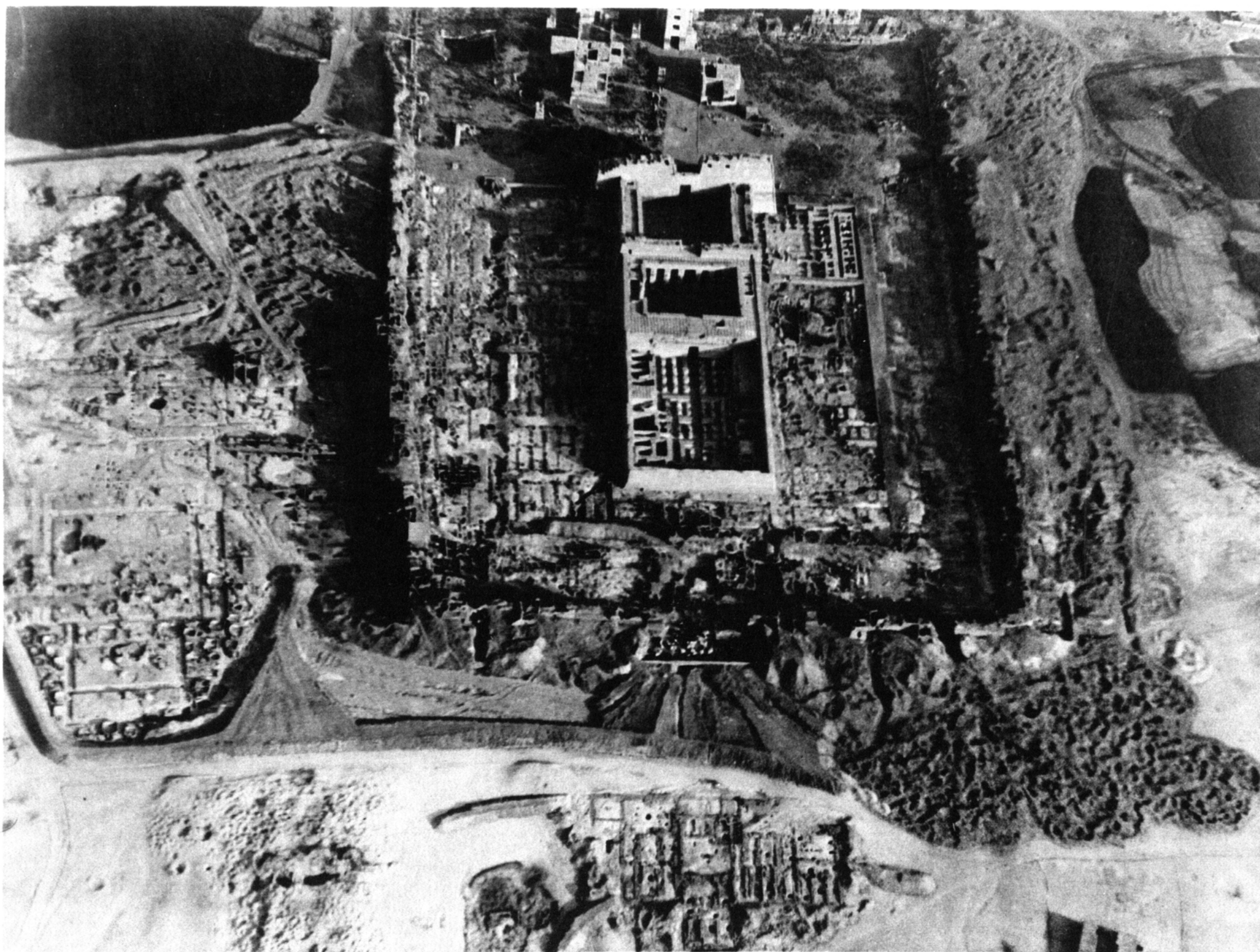


B

A. MEDINET HABU FROM THE EAST. AIR VIEW
B. MEDINET HABU FROM THE SOUTHEAST. AIR VIEW



A



B

- A.* MEDINET HABU FROM THE SOUTHWEST. AIR VIEW
B. MEDINET HABU FROM THE WEST. AIR VIEW



A



B

A. MEDINET HABU FROM THE NORTHEAST

B. MEDINET HABU. THE SMALL TEMPLE, THE EASTERN FORTIFIED GATE, AND THE TWENTY-SIXTH DYNASTY CHAPELS, FROM THE NORTHWEST

