

THE FORUMS OF *CONIMBRIGA* AND *AEMINIUM*: COMPARISON AND SUMMARY OF THE STATE OF THE ART

Los foros de Conimbriga y de Aeminium: comparación y síntesis del estado de la cuestión

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ABSTRACT: This paper presents the forums of the Roman cities of *Conimbriga* (Condeixa-a-Velha, Portugal) and *Aeminium* (Coimbra, Portugal), both of which date from the time of Augustus. The *Aeminium* forum was completely rebuilt in the time of Claudius/Nero, while the *Conimbriga* one was remodelled in the same period, before being demolished under the Flavians to make way for a completely new construction. This article offers a state-of-the-art comparison of the architectural models used in these two cities, based on the analysis and review of the available data, partly supplied by recent archaeological excavations. The geographic and chronological proximity of these two forums mean that it is of interest to compare their architectural design, which differ considerably in aspects such as volumetry, layout and the conceptual model used. The article discusses the proposals for the development of the *Conimbriga* forum and indicates an up-to-date bibliography for both public spaces, resulting, in the case of *Aeminium*, from a large-scale research and intervention project carried out in recent years.

Key words: Lusitania; conventus Scallabitanus; Forum; 1st century architectural models; reconstruction of architectural models.

RESUMEN: Se presentan en este trabajo los foros de las ciudades romanas de *Conimbriga* (Condeixa-a-Velha, Portugal) y de *Aeminium* (Coimbra, Portugal). Ambas ciudades construyeron sus foros en época del emperador Augusto. El de *Conimbriga* sufrió una remodelación en tiempos de Claudio/Nerón. El de *Aeminium* fue reconstruido por completo en la misma época. Por su parte, el de *Conimbriga* fue demolido bajo el poder de los Flavios para dar cabida a una construcción totalmente nueva. Partiendo del análisis y revisión de los datos disponibles, algunos de ellos fruto de recientes excavaciones arqueológicas, se realiza una síntesis comparativa actualizada sobre la evolución de los modelos arquitectónicos de los foros de estas dos ciudades del extremo occidental de la Lusitania. Dada su proximidad geográfica, además de su idéntica cronología, parece interesante confrontar los proyectos arquitectónicos de *Conimbriga* y de *Aeminium*, muy diferentes uno del otro en términos de diseño, volumetría y modelo conceptual. Se discuten las propuestas sobre la evolución constructiva de los foros remitiéndose a la bibliografía actualizada sobre ambos espacios públicos, resultado, especialmente para el caso de *Aeminium*, de un amplio proyecto de investigación e intervención arqueológica llevado a cabo en estos últimos años.

Palabras clave: Lusitania; conventus Scallabitanus; Forum; modelos arquitectónicos del s. I d. C.; restitución de modelos arquitectónicos.

1. Introduction

Conimbriga (Condeixa-a-Velha) and *Aeminium* (Coimbra) (Fig. 1), referred to by Pliny (4, 113) were, in the time of Augustus, *civitates stipendiariae*. Pliny, in his list of *civitates* of this status (4, 118), mentioned the *Aeminienses*, but did not include the *Conimbrigenses*. However, there is no reason to



FIG. 1. Map showing the locations of Conimbriga and Aeminium.

suppose that *Conimbriga* had a different political-administrative status, particularly as Pliny declares that his list is not exhaustive.

The two cities had their forums in the period of the first emperor. In the Claudio-Neronian period, the forum of *Conimbriga* was equipped with a small *curia* and its *porticus forensis* was remodelled. In the same period, the forum of *Aeminium* was rebuilt.

The *ius Latii* may have been granted to both cities by the Flavians. However, in the absence of any epigraphic evidence of the title of *municipium* or of inscriptions recording *duoviri*, their status remains doubtful. However, it is likely that they benefitted from the extension of the *ius Latii* to the whole of Hispania in 73-74 AD.

For *Conimbriga*, this is suggested by an altar stone dedicated to *Fl(aviae) Conimbrigae et Larib(us) eiu[s]* and an inscription to *C(aius) Turranius Rufus*, of the *Quirina* tribe (Étienne and Fabre, 1976: 28-30 and 91-93).

For *Aeminium*, the only potentially useful piece of data is an inscription in honour of *M(anus) Antistius Agrippinus* of the *Quirina* tribe, placed by *G(aius) Flavius Baeticus*, who was his heir. The inscription was found at Tentúgal, on the right bank of the River Mondego, a settlement that will certainly have been in the territory of *Aeminium*. Even if we accept that *G(aius) Flavius Baeticus* was from *Conimbriga* (Étienne and Fabre, 1976: 25-27 and 57-58), there would have been nothing to prevent him inheriting property in the *civitas* of *Aeminium* from a citizen from there. Indeed, a clearer inscription is necessary before we can take *Quirina* as the tribe of *Aeminium* with no doubt.

As most authors recognise that this tribe was the one to which belonged the citizens of the *civitates* that received the *ius Latii* through the edict of 73-74 AD, it is plausible that *Conimbriga* and *Aeminium* were promoted in status in the time of the Flavians. *Conimbriga* completely renovated its forum. This did not happen in *Aeminium* because its forum had been rebuilt, as mentioned above, in the Claudio-Neronian period immediately before. As these cities were only 10 miles apart, it is interesting to compare their respective forum complexes, which

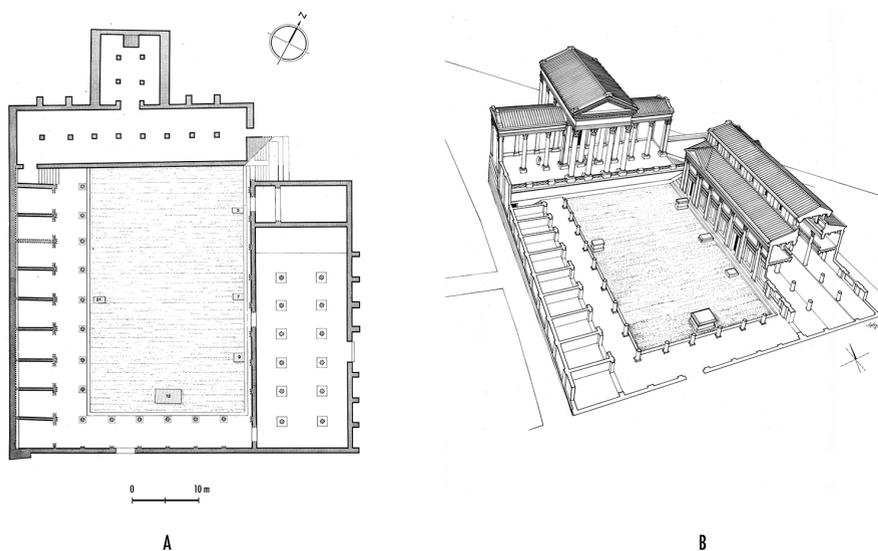


FIG. 2. Reconstruction of the Augustan forum at Conimbriga (Alarcão and Étienne, 1977).

are very different in design yet coincided or overlapped in time.

Despite all the research carried out in recent years, the forum of *Aeminium* is not very well known, as the publication presenting it in detail (Alarcão *et al.*, 2009) does not appear to have been widely disseminated amongst the scientific community. As for the Augustan forum of *Conimbriga*, the reconstruction initially proposed (Alarcão and Étienne, 1977) (Fig. 2) was contested by Gros (1979), Congès (1987) and Pfanner (1989), leading to a revision of the original proposal. The basilica and *curia*, which had originally been presented as Augustan, were later assigned to the Claudian period (Alarcão *et al.*, 1997). This article goes one step further in the attempt to reconstruct what would have been the Augustan forum of *Conimbriga*.

2. The forum of *Conimbriga*

It is not easy to reconstruct the Augustan forum of *Conimbriga*. The destruction caused by the building of the Flavian forum on the same area was so severe that little of it remained. The only things found were *dissecta membra* from which it is difficult to compose a coherent body.

It is obvious –and this has never been contested– that the Augustan forum of *Conimbriga* had a cryptoportico in the north formed by a rectangular body with two naves and eight pillars, and a square-shaped annex with four pillars (Fig. 2A). The cryptoportico had two accesses: one via a staircase in the north-western corner of the square or *area publica*; the other via a door in the shorter eastern side.

The architect resorted to the cryptoportico solution so as to create a raised platform over the *area publica*. According to the reconstruction initially presented (Fig. 2B), there was a temple on the platform whose *cella* corresponded to the annex of the cryptoportico, and a portico with eight columns that coincide with the eight pillars of the cryptoportico. The *pronaos* of the temple included the four central columns of the portico –slightly taller– and these were replicated by four others on a front wall of the platform. The portico will have been enclosed, back and sides, by walls punctuated by pilasters.

Contesting the reconstruction proposed, Gros, Congès and Pfanner argued that the Augustan forum of *Conimbriga* would not have had a temple, and suggested instead that there was a basilica with *aedes* on the platform. Taking the ground plan into account, and considering that the basilica with *aedes* was a current model in the time of Augustus, the proposal is acceptable in principle. However, there are some counter-arguments.

Let us begin by considering the height of the platform above the *area publica*. The flagstones of the *area publica* of the Flavian forum were at a height of 1.73 m at least. This was probably not very different to the level of the Augustan square: remains have been found at this height of the walls

of indigenous houses that were demolished to make way for the new forum.

The original publication (Alarcão and Étienne, 1977: 32) suggested that the platform could have been at 2.20 or 2.40 m above the square. Congès

(1987: 712, n. 1) reduced this to around 1,20 m. We maintain the proposal of 2.20 m, which would require a staircase with 11 steps of 0,20 m in height.

Fig. 3 shows a south/north cross-section from the square of the forum –at a height of 1.73 m–

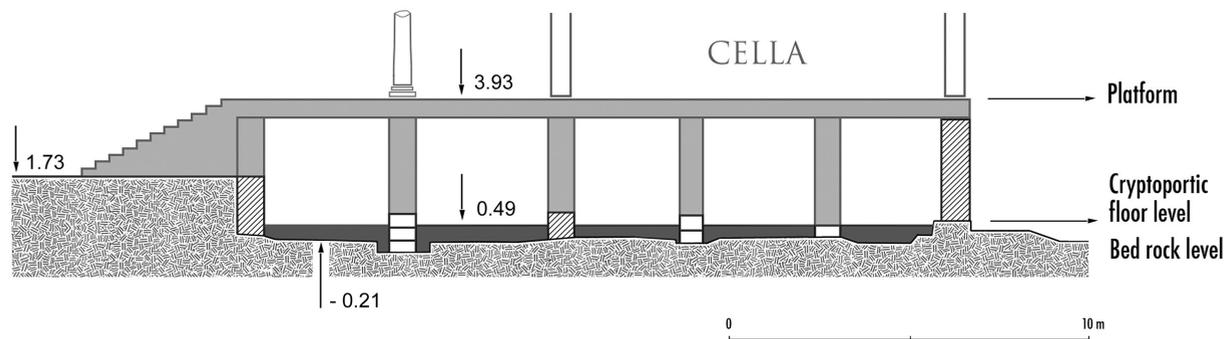


FIG. 3. *Cross-section of the Augustan cryptoportico of Conimbriga, with the hypothetical reconstruction of the staircase giving access to the platform and of the level at which it is found.*

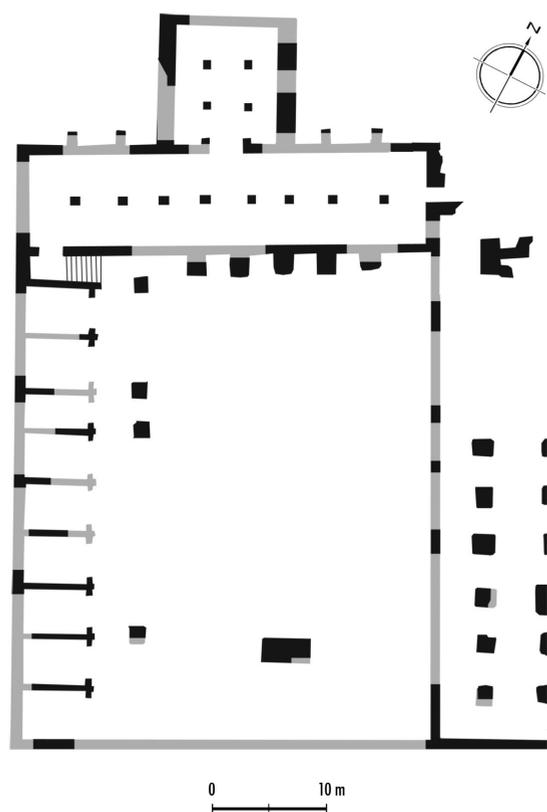


FIG. 4. *Reconstruction of the ground plan of the Augustan forum of Conimbriga (redrawn on proposed by Congès, 1987).*

to the back wall of the annex of the cryptoportico. The height of -0,21 m was recorded on the rock; the ground floor of the cryptoportico would have been at 0,49 m. The platform would have been at 3,93 m.

A. R. Congès, in his planimetric reconstruction of the Augustan forum (Fig. 4), has not shown the location of the staircase that would have given access to the platform. On the front walls, she drew five solid bodies. Did she believe that the steps would have been between these masses?

In fact, only two solid bodies were recognised during the excavation (Alarcão and Étienne, 1977, pl. III). One of these seems to correspond to what remains of the staircase of the Augustan forum. The other may have served as the base for a Flavian plinth for a statue or honorific inscription.

Fig. 5 shows our new proposal for the reconstruction of the Augustan forum. A comparison with Fig. 2 is sufficiently explicit. What reasons do we have, therefore, for maintaining the temple, rejecting the idea of the basilica with *aedes*?

In accordance with the examples known from various forums, the basilica with *aedes* followed the Vitruvian model of *Fano* (Vitruvius, 5, 1, 9-37): that is to say, it was a basilica with a central nave and ambulatory.



FIG. 5. *Reconstruction of what would have been the Augustan forum of Conimbriga.*

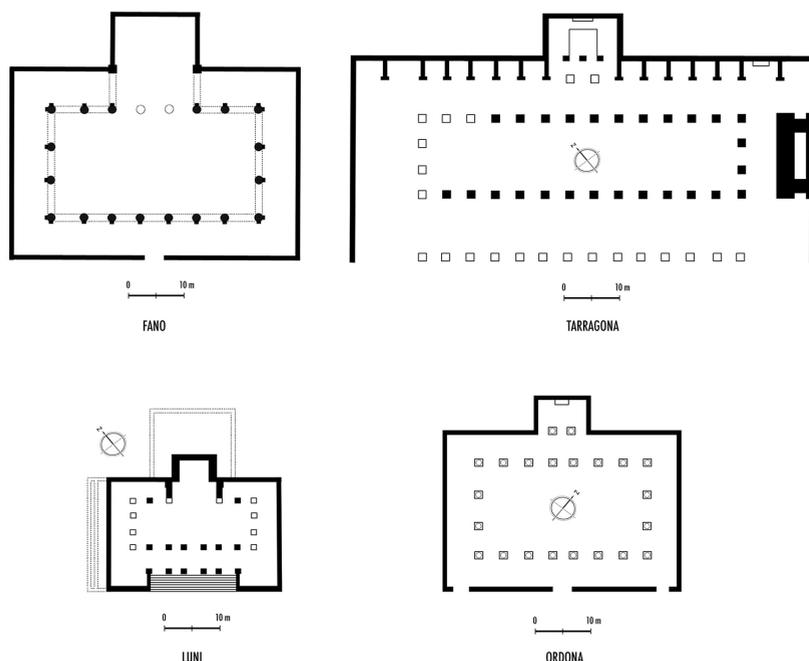


FIG. 6. *Basilicas of Fano, Tarraco, Luna and Herdonia, drawn to the same scale (from plans presented by Balty, 1991).*

The model is widely documented, for example in *Tarraco* (Tarragona, Spain), *Luna* (Luni, Italy) or *Herdonia* (Ortona, Italy) (Fig. 6). In other cases, instead of *aedes* we have what seem to be *curia*: in *Saepinum* (Altilia, Italy), *Lopodunum* (Ladenburg, Germany), *Iuvanum* (Salzburg, Germany) and *Sabratha* (Libia) (Fig. 7).

Our objection to the basilica with *aedes* hypothesis comes from the fact that it is not possible to accommodate such a model in the space of the cryptoportico at *Conimbriga*. However, might a single- or dual-nave basilica be acceptable? Such a model also existed and was found, for example, in *Noviodunum* (Nyon, Switzerland), *Lousonna* (Lausanne, Switzerland), *Veleia* (Velleia, Italy), *Iulium Carnicum* (Zuglio, Italy), *Thera* (Santorini, Greece) (Fig. 8).

In these cases, the basilica floor is at the level of the *area publica* or very slightly raised above it. In addition, in some cases, we can see “annexes” on the shorter sides, but never in a position similar to that of *Conimbriga*.

The existence of pillars in the cryptoportico of *Conimbriga* does not prove that, if there was a basilica on the platform, it would necessarily have had two naves. The pillars could have existed to support the platform, which may have had a single nave. What is more, the considerable height that the supposed basilica of *Conimbriga* would

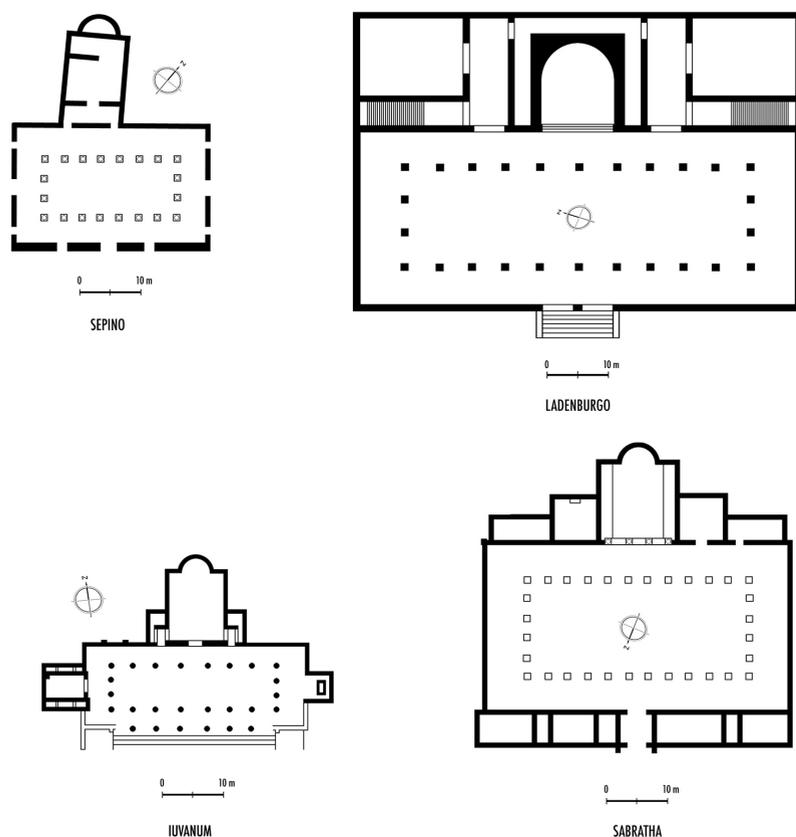


FIG. 7. *Basilicas of Saepinum, Lopodunum, Iuvanum and Sabratha (from plans presented by Balty, 1991).*

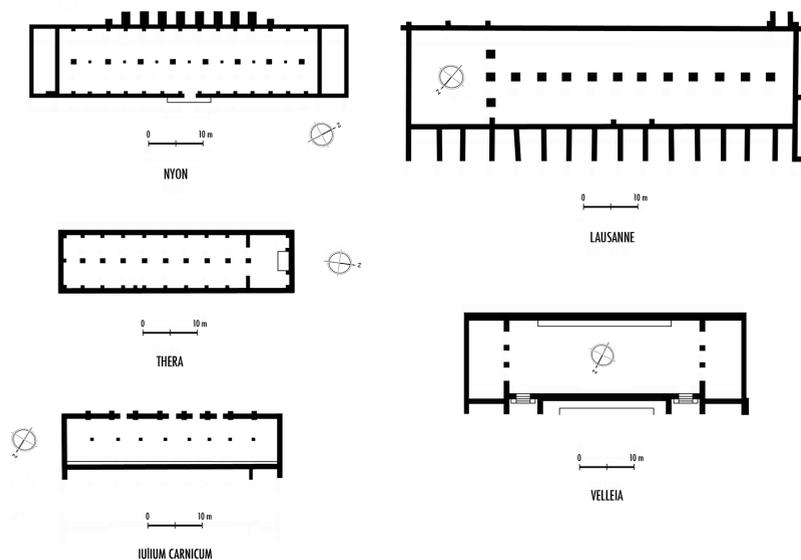


FIG. 8. *Basilicas of Noviodunum, Lousona, Veleia, Iulium Carnicum and Thera (by Balty, 1991 and Hauser and Rossi, 1998).*

have had above the *area publica* and the position of the supposed *aedes* –unparalleled amongst the single and dual-nave basilicas cited above– does not support the hypothesis put forward by Gros, Congès and Pfanner.

It should also be pointed out that the supporters of the basilica thesis have not proposed any solution for what would have been its façade, overlooking the square. Would it have been a wall with one or more doors? Or might it have been a façade of arcades, as in *Volubilis* (Morocco)?

Though we remain unconvinced by the idea of a basilica on the platform, Congès and Pfanner’s critique of our original reconstruction of a basilica on the eastern side of the forum (Fig. 2) seems fair. We now judge the design to be anachronistic. It might have been possible at a later period, but not in the time of Augustus.

While Congès admitted an Augustan chronology for the massive masonry fortifications that the excavation unearthed on this side (Fig. 4), he did not propose any description or reconstruction of the building on the eastern side of the forum. A review of the excavation data has led to a new proposal: that the basilica and *curia* may have been part of the Claudian remodelling of the forum (Alarcão *et al.*, 1997). New excavations carried out

by one of us (P. C.) in 2001 and 2004¹ have confirmed the chronology, leaving only one doubt: had this reform already taken place in the time of Claudius or did it date from the period of Nero?

It seems to us today that, in the period of Augustus, there was on this side a portico whose columns sat on those masonry blocks. In the time of Claudius –or in the Claudio-Neronian period– the portico was rebuilt. It was extended to the east, uniting the massive blocks so as to obtain a continuous foundation, which would have assured the kind of stability that could not have been provided by a portico with columns that were not supported by a continuous foundation wall.

There was an entrance gate in the buttressed wall of the portico, offering direct access to the portico from the outside.

We are reluctant to use the name “basilica” for this Claudio-Neronian structure. Perhaps the name *porticus forensis* is more apt. The building, however, may have had the functions of a basilica –i.e. judicial functions–.

The Claudian-Neronian reform included a small *curia* in the north. This might have been large enough for a city that was still categorised as *stipendiaria* at this time. Indeed, there will have been few important personages in the city. Might one of them have been *L(ucius) Papirius, flamen augustalis* from the province of Lusitania, who in the time of Tiberius, dedicated an inscription, *Divo Augusto*, in

¹ This research was carried out jointly with Virgílio H. Correia (Conimbriga Monographic Museum) and Rui Filipe Baptista. Detailed results will be published soon. The materials collected (particularly fine-wall ceramics and South Gaulish *terra sigillata*; Hispanic *sigillata* and Flavian production are notably absent) reveal a chronology that does not exceed the 1st half of the 1st century AD.

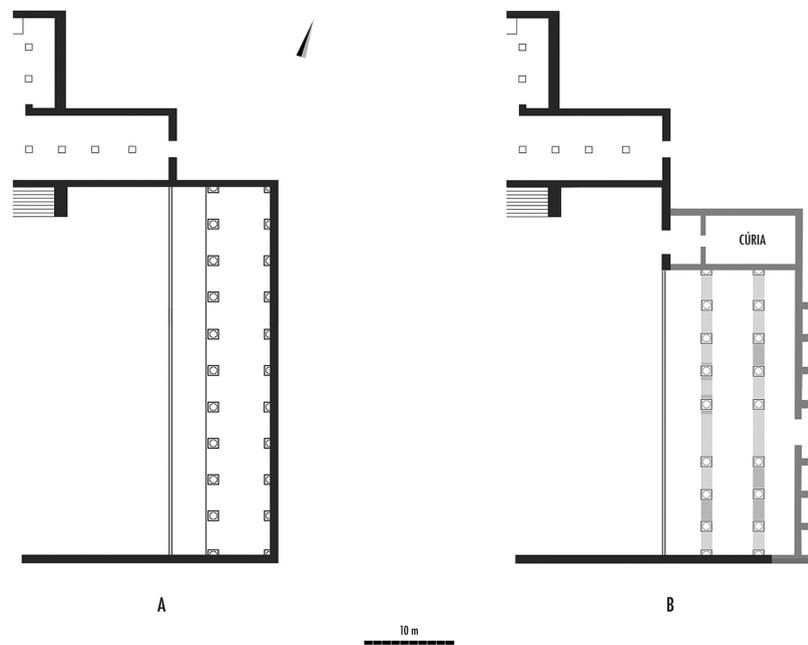


FIG. 9. *Development of the porticus forensis on the eastern side of the Augustan forum at Conimbriga.*

Conimbriga (Étienne and Fabre, 1976: 51-52)? The inscription has unfortunately been lost, and we do not know if it was engraved on an altar or on the base of a statue.

The monumental head of Augustus found in the forum of *Conimbriga* is a posthumous portrait, possibly done at the time of Claudius (Gonçalves, 2007: 74-77). There is also a cluster of imperial portraits dating from this or the Claudio-Neronian period, involving, in addition to Augustus, Agrippina the Younger and Claudius (Nogales and Gonçalves, 2005: 300-304; Correia, 2009).

Concerning the number of important people in the Claudio-Neronian city, we cannot speculate. Was *L(ucius) Papirius* from there or was he from another city and had merely favoured *Conimbriga* with some act of evergetism? The fact that he does not state his origin in the inscription would suggest that he was from *Conimbriga* –though this argument is not decisive–.

A final aspect of the Augustan forum warrants more attention. What was on the western side of the *area publica*? It is clear that a series of *tabernae*

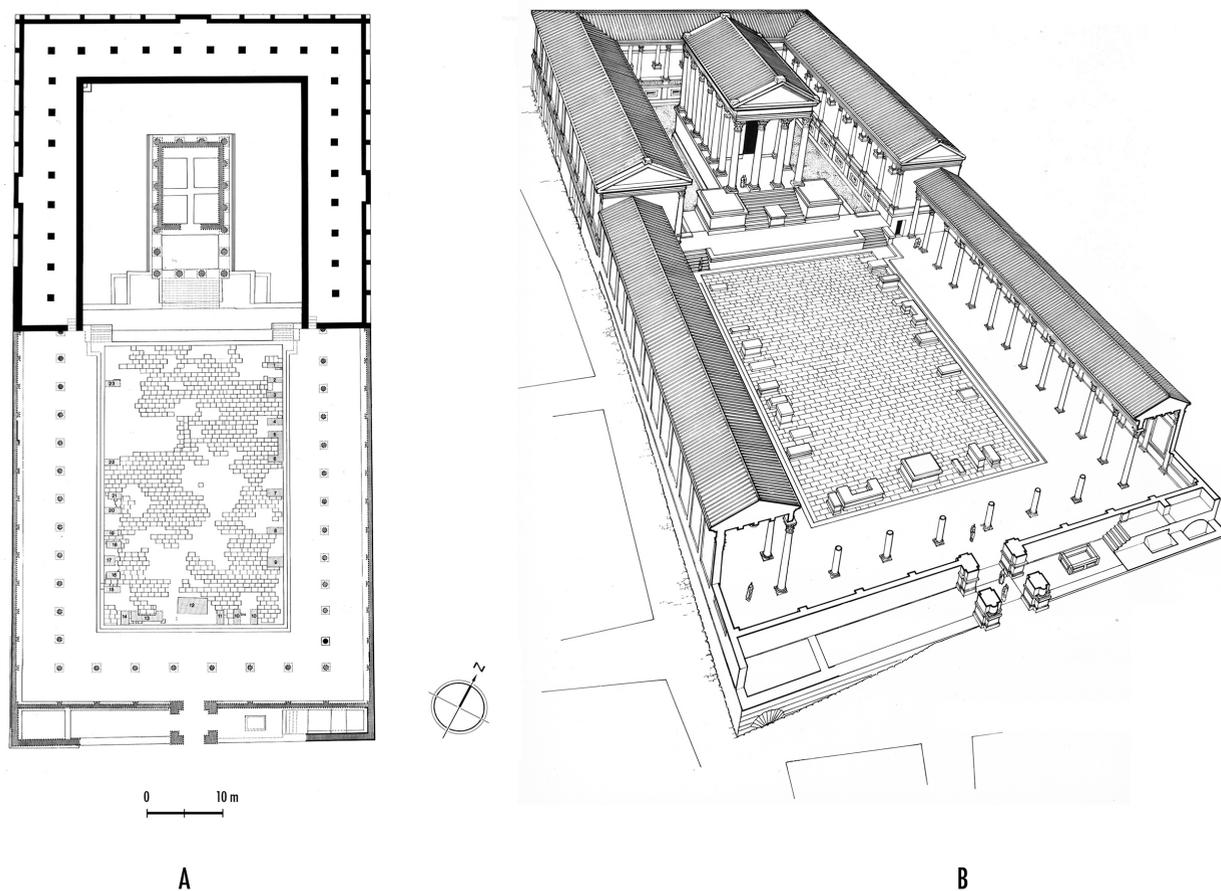


FIG. 10. Plan and reconstruction of the Flavian forum of Conimbriga (by Alarcão and Étienne, 1977).

had been located there for some time. However, we cannot determine their exact chronology. They undoubtedly belonged to the forum that was totally demolished under the Flavians in order to construct a very different monument. But did these *tabernae* already exist at the time of Augustus or were they built in the Claudio-Neronian era, when the eastern side of the *porticus forensis* was reworked? If they did correspond to this reform, what was there on the western side at the time of Augustus? A simple portico? In the forum of Amurarias, there was a portico and a series of *tabernae* on the western side at the time of Augustus. It is not completely clear if the *tabernae* opened onto the portico of the *area publica* or onto the exterior. In this second hypothesis, someone standing in the square, looking at the temple, would not even

see the *tabernae*. We present this solution in Fig. 5, though not unreservedly.

At the time of the Flavians, the earlier forum was demolished to make way for another construction (Fig. 10), which we have always called forum, while recognising that, without a basilica, *curia* or *tabernae*, it was only a religious precinct, consecrated to the imperial cult. If another monument was built at the same time in another part of the city to house the basilica and *curia*, this has not yet been identified; the location suggested by V. H. Correia (2009) is purely hypothetical.

The reconstruction of the Flavian forum has also been challenged by A. Congès (1987), though her objections did not find general acceptance—the reconstruction has been reproduced by various authors unreservedly—. We therefore judge it useless

to examine her proposal, which associates the *curia* that we have just assigned to the Claudio/Nero period with the Flavian one, along with the *basilica* or *porticus forensis*. The correction of the proposal to the Flavian forum has indeed been tested through the building of a model –and this has been the object of a report (Alarcão *et al.*, 1994).

3. The forum of *Aeminium*

The city of *Aeminium* also had its Augustan forum, which was entirely rebuilt in the time of Claudius (Carvalho, 1998; Alarcão *et al.*, 2009) –or rather, it was begun under Claudius but only completed in the reign of Nero–. The Claudian project reused a cryptoportico of the first forum, which was integrated into another one much larger.

The cryptoportico dating from Augustus' time was single-naved and vaulted with five doors that opened onto a terrace in the west. Given the steepness of the

terrain, this terrace must have been supported by a strong wall, possibly buttressed (Fig. 11). All vestiges of this wall disappeared with the Claudian rebuilding, and so its position cannot be determined.

A portico was raised over the cryptoportico. Bases of columns have been found on the level of the terracing of the later Claudian forum.

The cryptoportico would have formed the western limit of the forum, with the *area publica* extending eastward from it. A survey has established the height of this area at less than 2 metres lower than the floor of the portico.

Unfortunately, nothing has been concluded yet with regard to the buildings that flanked the *area publica*. We will not reproduce here an earlier proposal about the hypothetical location of the *basilica* and *tabernae* (Alarcão *et al.*, 2009, fig. 11) as we consider it to be highly speculative.

The Claudian forum of *Aeminium* is an extremely original construction. Its architect may have been a certain *Caius Sevius Lupus, architectus Aeminiensis*, who dedicated an inscription to the god Mars (*CIL* II 2559) near the Roman lighthouse at Coruña. Le Roux (1990) considered that *C. Sevius Lupus* may have been not the designer of the lighthouse but a military architect who could have served in a legion or auxiliary military corps before Nero, and who carved the inscription to Mars while passing through Corunha. However, we have no reason to doubt that he was the designer of the lighthouse. Hauschild (1976) has also found certain similarities in construction details of the lighthouse and the cryptoportico of *Aeminium*.

It is possible that our architect travelled through Italy learning about the *tabularium* of Rome, the monument of the acropolis of Ferentino and the large sanctuaries of Latium. Trips to Rome were not uncommon: in *Conimbriga*, there are two funerary inscriptions in memory of citizens that died, one en

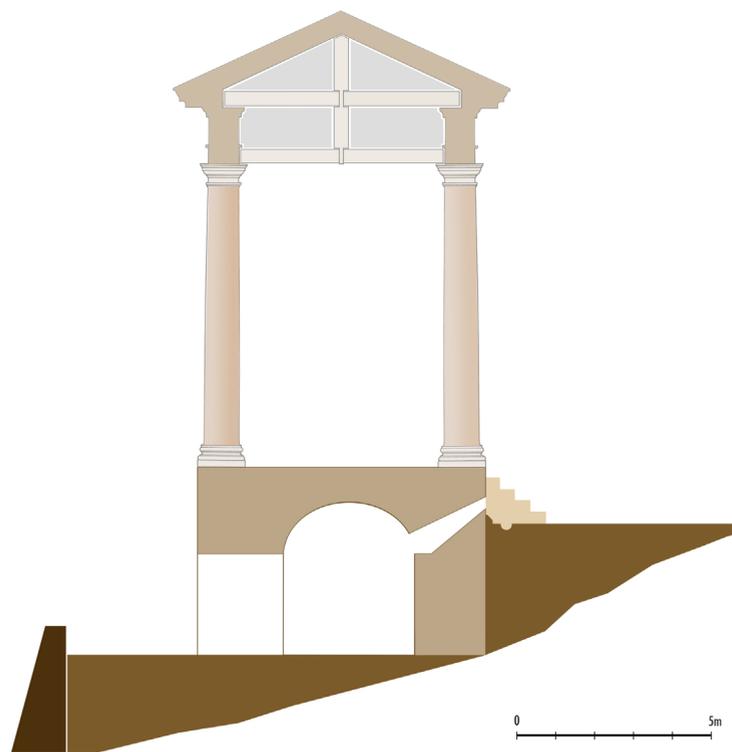
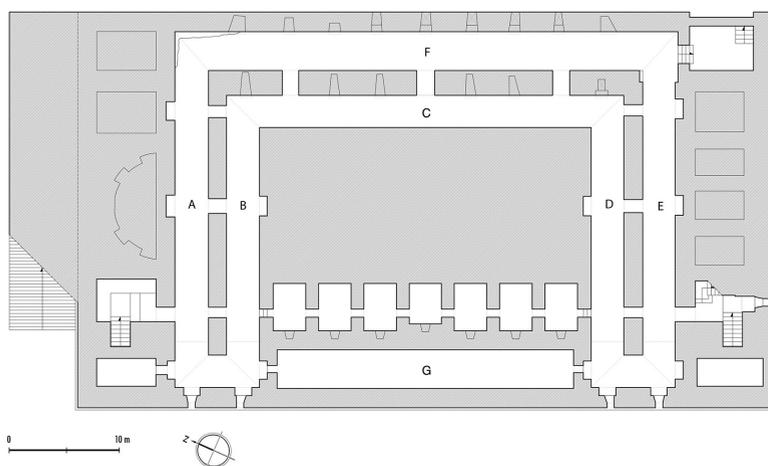
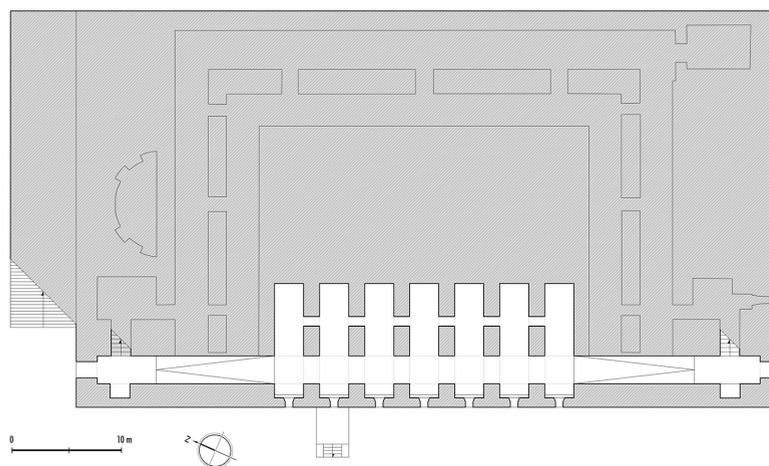
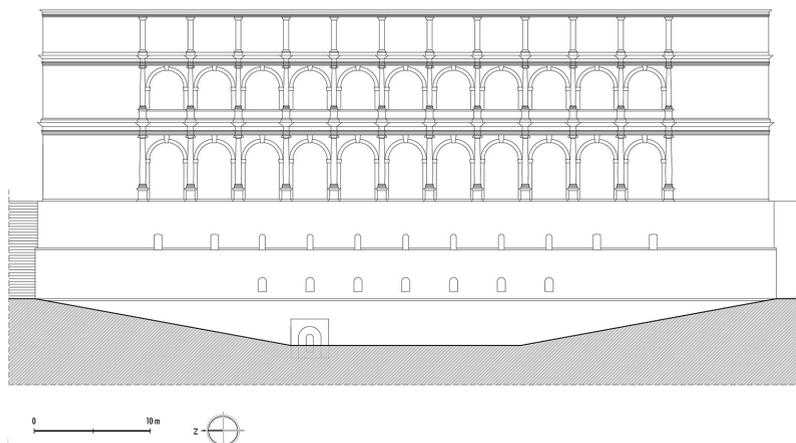


FIG. 11. *Reconstruction of the cryptoportico and portico of the Augustan forum at Aeminium (by Alarcão et al., 2009).*

FIG. 12. *Plan of the upper floor of the cryptoportico of Aeminium.*FIG. 13. *Plan of the lower floor of the cryptoportico of Aeminium.*FIG. 14. *Reconstruction of the western façade of the forum of Aeminium (by Alarcão et al., 2009).*

route to Rome, the other in the imperial capital (Étienne and Fabre, 1976: 61-63).

The terrain on which the forum of *Aeminium* was built was very steep. The architect constructed a cryptoportico in order to create a platform on which to place the buildings of the forum.

Solidly constructed, the cryptoportico has survived till today, with the exception of its western façade, which may have been destroyed in the 14th century by earth tremors. By the end of the 11th century, there was nothing left of the forum itself, though an episcopal palace had been built on top of the Roman cryptoportico. Undergoing multiple transformations and rebuildings, the palace lasted until the early 20th century, when it was converted into a museum –today the National Museum of Machado de Castro–. Recent rehabilitation works on the building led to excavations that enabled the reconstruction of the Roman forum. During the extensive programme of archaeological interventions that preceded and accompanied the remodelling and extension of the museum –1992 and 2008–, an area of around 750 m² was surveyed. These excavations yielded a great deal of data, which enabled the chronological sequences of the successive occupations of the space to be defined. Materials –mostly imported ceramics– recovered from contexts associated to the

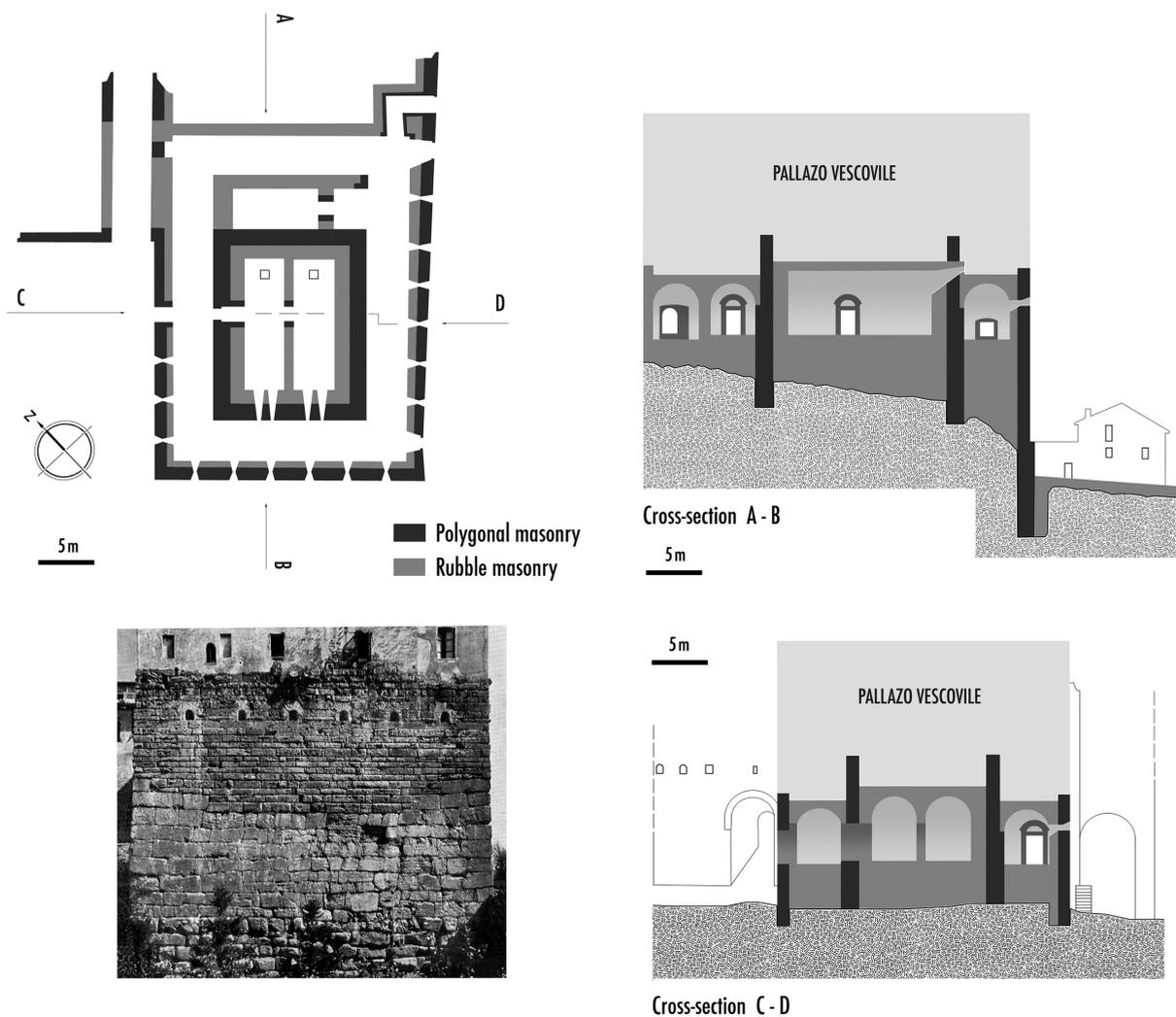


FIG. 15. *Cryptoportico of Ferentino (redrawn on Gullini, 1954).*

construction of the second forum of *Aeminium* has enabled it to be located in the Claudio-Neronian era (Carvalho, 1998)².

² The material recovered from the 2001-2008 excavations is described in various articles that have been accepted for publication: Carvalho, P. C. and Silva, R. C.: "South Gaulish terra sigillata in the forum of Aeminium (Coimbra, Portugal): a decisive component of the dating process". In Viegas, C. (ed.): *South-Gaulish sigillata in Southwest Hispania: circulation and consumption*; Silva, R. C.; Fernández Fernández, A. and Carvalho, P.: "La cerámica común de los contextos altoimperiales del forum de Aeminium (Coimbra, Portugal)". In *Rei Cretaria Romanae Fautores Acta 45* (Lisboa, 2016); Silva, R. C.; Carvalho, P.

The authors of the present article were responsible for the archaeological works but had the precious collaboration of architects Pierre André and Paulo Barrelas for the design of the forum. They, along with archaeologist Fernando Pereira dos Santos –who collaborated in the excavations– signed the publication that will be here referred to as Alarcão *et al.*, 2009. This publication, along with

and Fernández Fernández, A.: "La cerámica de importación de los contextos de época claudia del forum de Aeminium (Coimbra, Portugal)/The imported pottery from the early empire contexts of Aeminium forum (Coimbra, Portugal)", *Spal*, 27, in the press.

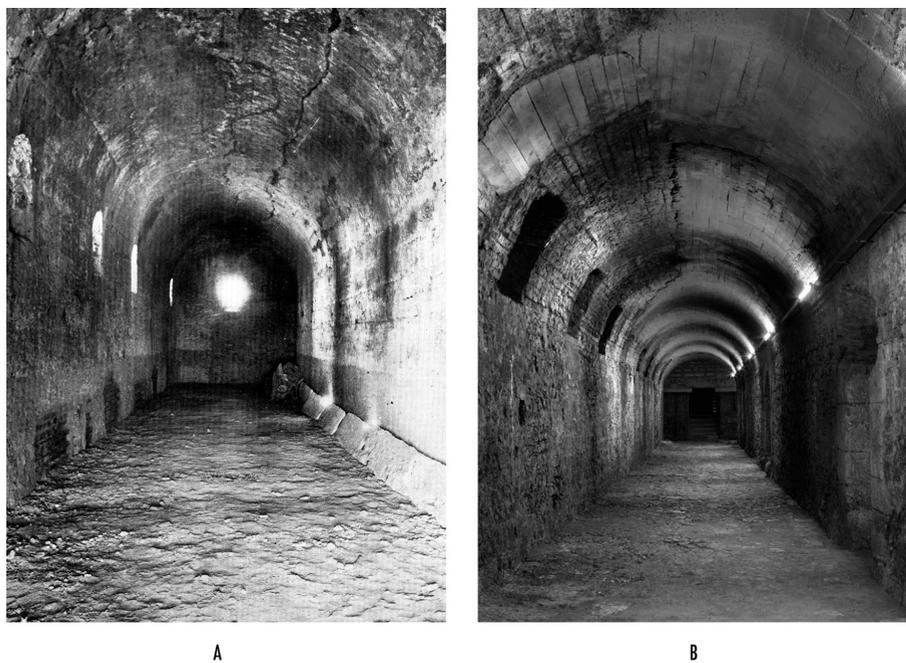


FIG. 16. Galleries of the cryptoportico of Ferentino (A) and Aeminium (B).

other texts³, include a significant amount of data –plants, stratigraphic cross-sections, drawings of contextualized materials, etc.– supporting the proposed reconstruction of the Claudian forum of *Aeminium*. This proposal is based on the plan of the cryptoportico supporting the forum and on another group of archaeological structures and architectural features identified during the excavation process.

The upper floor of the cryptoportico is formed of two galleries in a P-shape, one surrounding the other and both covered with barrel vaulting? Between the arms of the P are seven cells which communicate with one another through narrow passage ways (Fig. 12).

These cells rest on seven others on the floor below, which are longer and higher, and which meet an extensive longitudinal gallery (Fig. 13).

The cryptoportico resembles a high podium, unadorned, and broken only by slits to let in the

³ Cf. Carvalho *et al.*, 2010; Silva, 2011; Silva, 2013; Silva *et al.*, 2015; in addition to the doctorate dissertation of Silva, R. C.: “O Museu Nacional de Machado de Castro – um ensaio de arqueologia urbana em Coimbra: do forum augustano ao paço episcopal de Afonso Castelo Branco”, presented in 2016 at the University of Coimbra.

air and light (Fig. 14). It has some similarities with the cryptoportico of the forum of Ferentino (Gullini, 1954) (Figs. 15 and 16A), which, coincidentally, also became the site of the episcopal palace in the Middle Ages. At the base of the western façade –the highest, with an elevation of around 29 m–, the excavation uncovered a fountain (Carvalho *et al.*, 2010), which may have been part of a larger and more monumental *nymphaeum*.

Once the horizontal platform had been created on top of the cryp-

portico, the forum was built, with a two-storey portico. On the western façade, which was the tallest, this portico was punctuated on the outside by a series of arcades. The solution has some similarities with the façade of the *Tabularium* of Rome (Fig. 17). The architect’s option is easy to understand if we remember that, given the topography of the city and position of the forum, this portico would have overlooked the rooftops of the city and, further away, the river Mondego and slopes of its opposite bank.

Today, the Machado de Castro National Museum is built on top of the cryptoportico. The patio of the museum corresponds roughly to the *area publica* of the forum, and the *loggia*, built at the end of the 16th century, adopted a similar solution to the Roman one.

To the north of the forum was the basilica, with two naves and a semi-circular exedra (Fig. 18). On each side of the exedra were two rooms, possibly designed for administrative purposes.

On the opposite side of the basilica, Room B may have served as the *curia* –unless it was an *aedes* dedicated to the imperial cult–. Portraits of Livia,



FIG. 17. Above: *façade of the Tabularium of Rome* (by Holter, “Tabularium,” *digitales forum romanum*, <http://www.digitales-forumromanum.de/gebaeude/tabularium/?lang=it> (accessed 21/05/2017). Below: *3D reconstruction of the west façade of the Claudian forum of Aeminium* (by Alarcão et al., 2009).

Agrippina Maior and Nero (Souza, 1990: 19-22; Gonçalves, 2007: 79-81, 84-86, 92-93) allow us to

imagine what the Claudio-Neronican iconography might have been like. There would certainly have

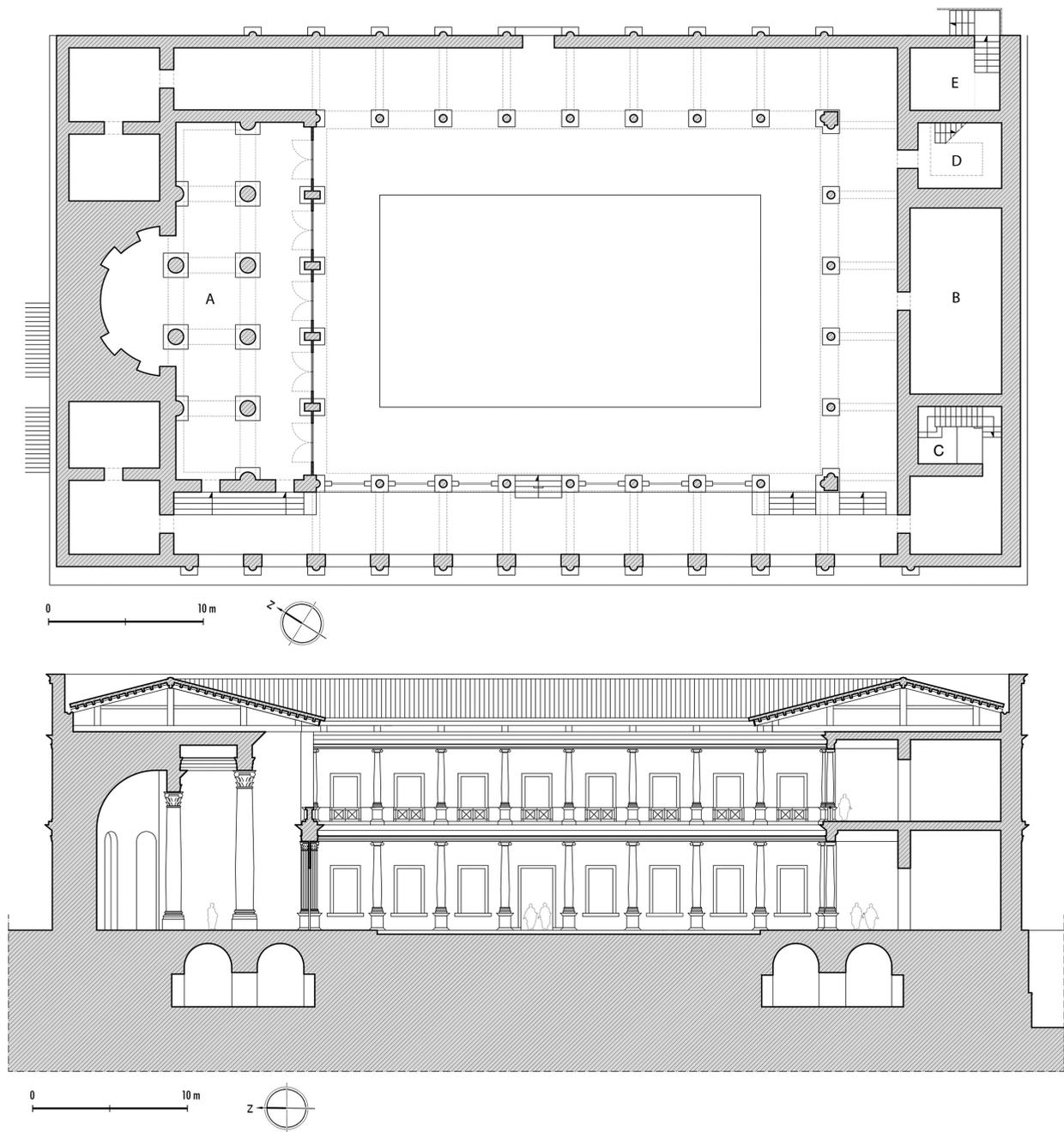


FIG. 18. *Plan of the forum of Aeminium on the level of the area publica and reconstruction of the elevation from the median longitudinal axis (by Alarcão et al., 2009).*

been a posthumous portrait of Augustus, which has since been lost. The portrait of Nero was later converted into Vespasian, while a portrait of Trajan would have been added subsequently to the gallery at *Aeminium*.

Space C corresponds to the stairwell giving access to the upper floor of the cryptoportico. Space D housed the staircase that led to the upper floor of the portico. Space E offered direct access from the exterior to the upper floor of the cryptoportico.

4. Conclusion

The forums of *Conimbriga* and *Aeminium* reveal quite different architectural designs, despite the fact that their (re-)construction periods partially overlap in time. The only point of contact lies in the pace of urbanistic development of their central public areas. In both cases, the first forum dates from the time of Augustus. In *Aeminium*, the forum underwent significant extension and renovation work in the Claudio-Neronian period, while in *Conimbriga*, it was entirely restructured in the Flavian period. However, in the latter case, there are no doubts whatsoever as to the presence of an intermediate phase. While the main public space in the city of *Aeminium* was being completely renovated during the Claudio-Neronian period, a basilica and *curia* were being constructed in the forum of *Conimbriga*.

Thus, it is worth emphasising that both cities –located in the *conventus Scallabitanus* in the province of *Lusitania*– seemed to have been promoting the monumentalization of their main public spaces before they were granted privileged legal status –*ius Latii*–. Such a discrepancy between the monumentalization of cities and the pace of their statutory promotion is not unprecedented. The same phenomenon has been seen in other cities of Hispania (Goffaux, 2003), showing that the urbanization process was underpinned by a very complex set of circumstances.

Roman architecture is generally considered to be very standardized, in the sense that the same models were repeated over and over again with little originality on the part of the architects. These two examples from *Conimbriga* and *Aeminium* indicate that, on the contrary, Roman architects could diverge considerably from one another as regards the design of their works. This is particularly interesting as these two cities were geographically very close together and also broadly contemporary.

The references that we have made to the *Tabularium* of Rome and to the forum of Ferentino suggest that some architects could have travelled and found sources of inspiration in distant places. So while Vitruvius' *De architectura* was widely

disseminated, it did not form the totality of the architect's training. It would have been through attentive visits to other monuments that the architects learned their trade, from both the aesthetic and the technical points of view –in the sense of the kinds of calculations that are today considered part of engineer's remit–. Unfortunately, the constraints of space mean that we are unable to go into detail about the technical aspects of the construction, though it would have been no less interesting to have compared the forums of these two Lusitanian cities in this light.

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