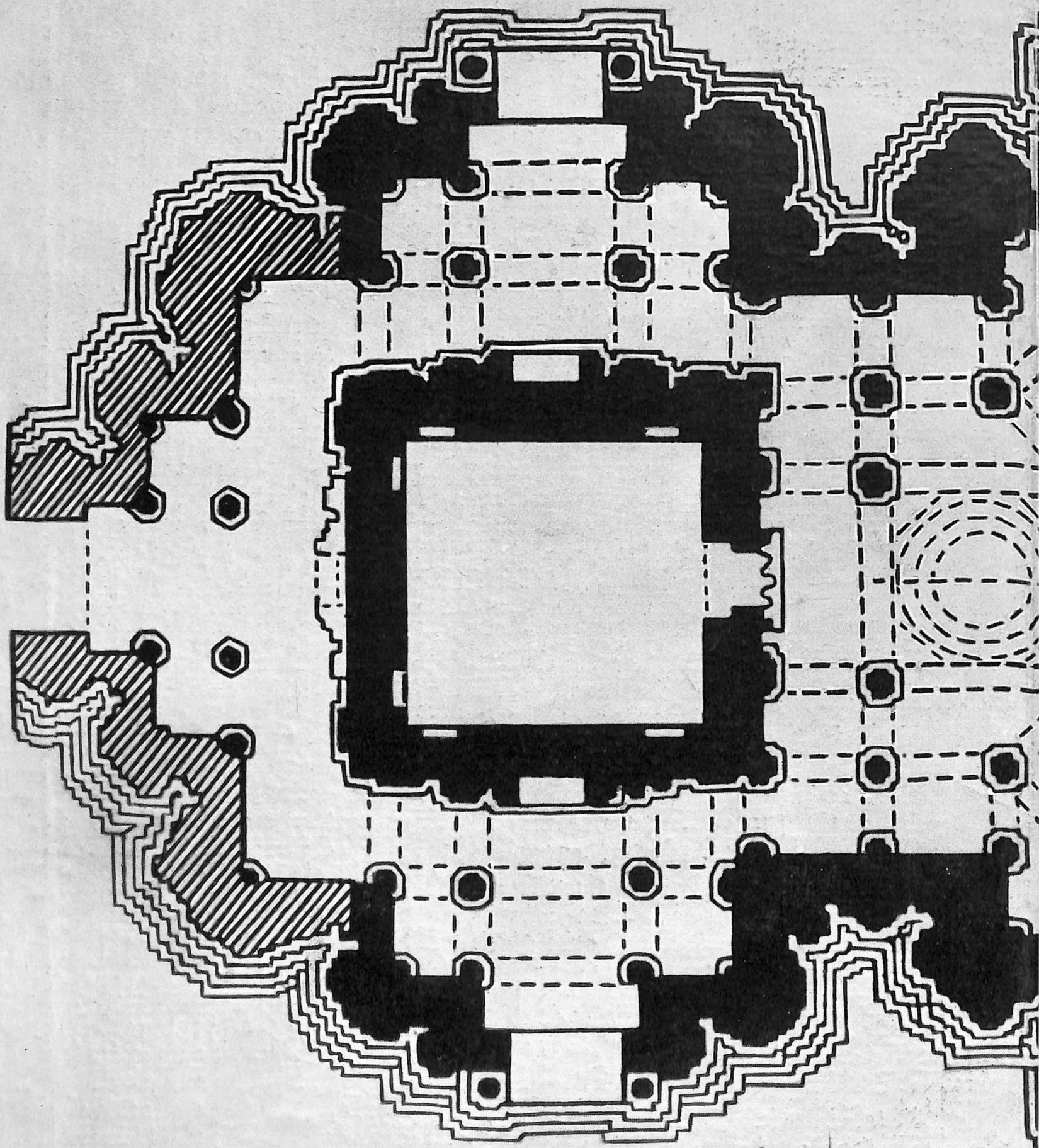
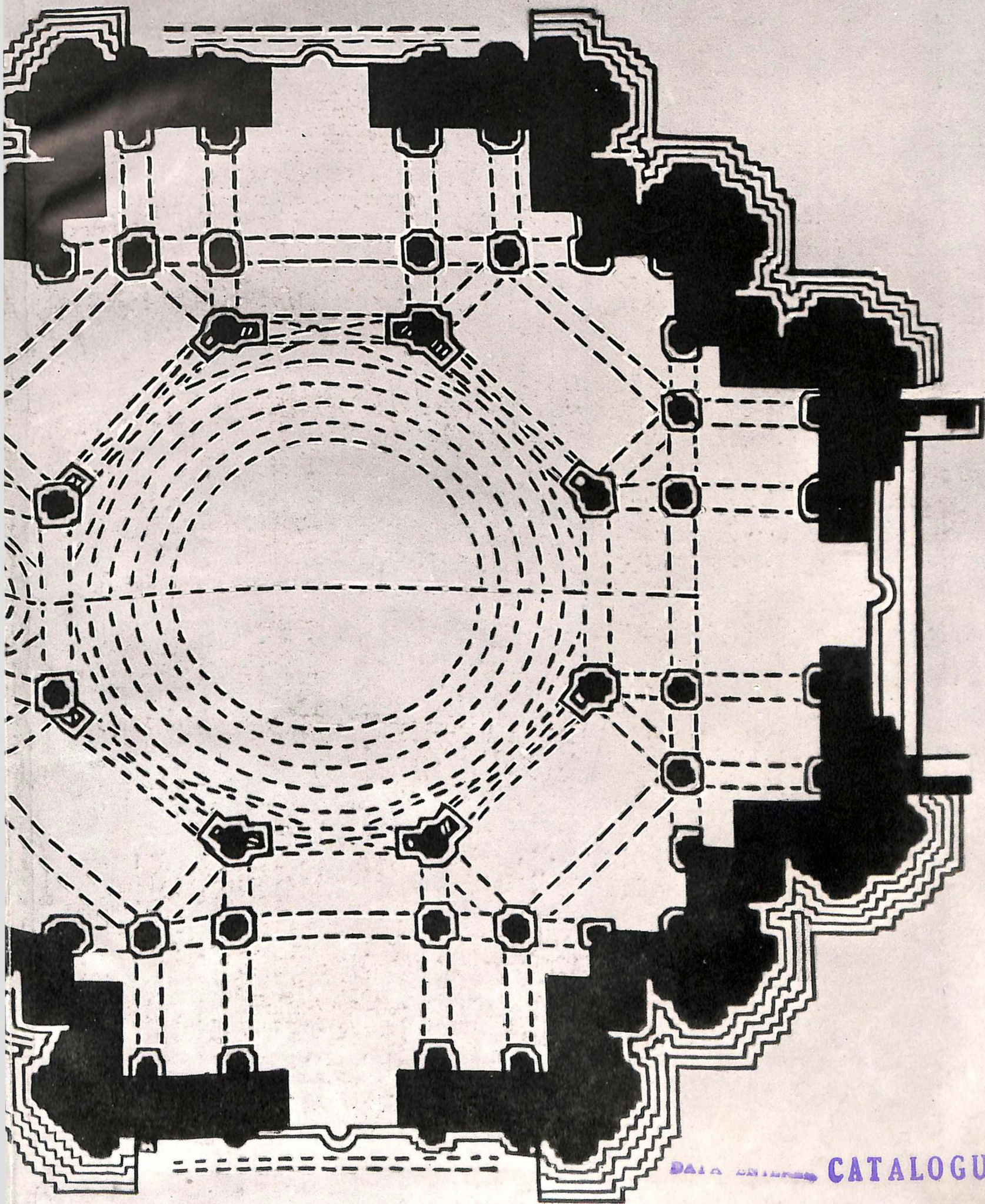


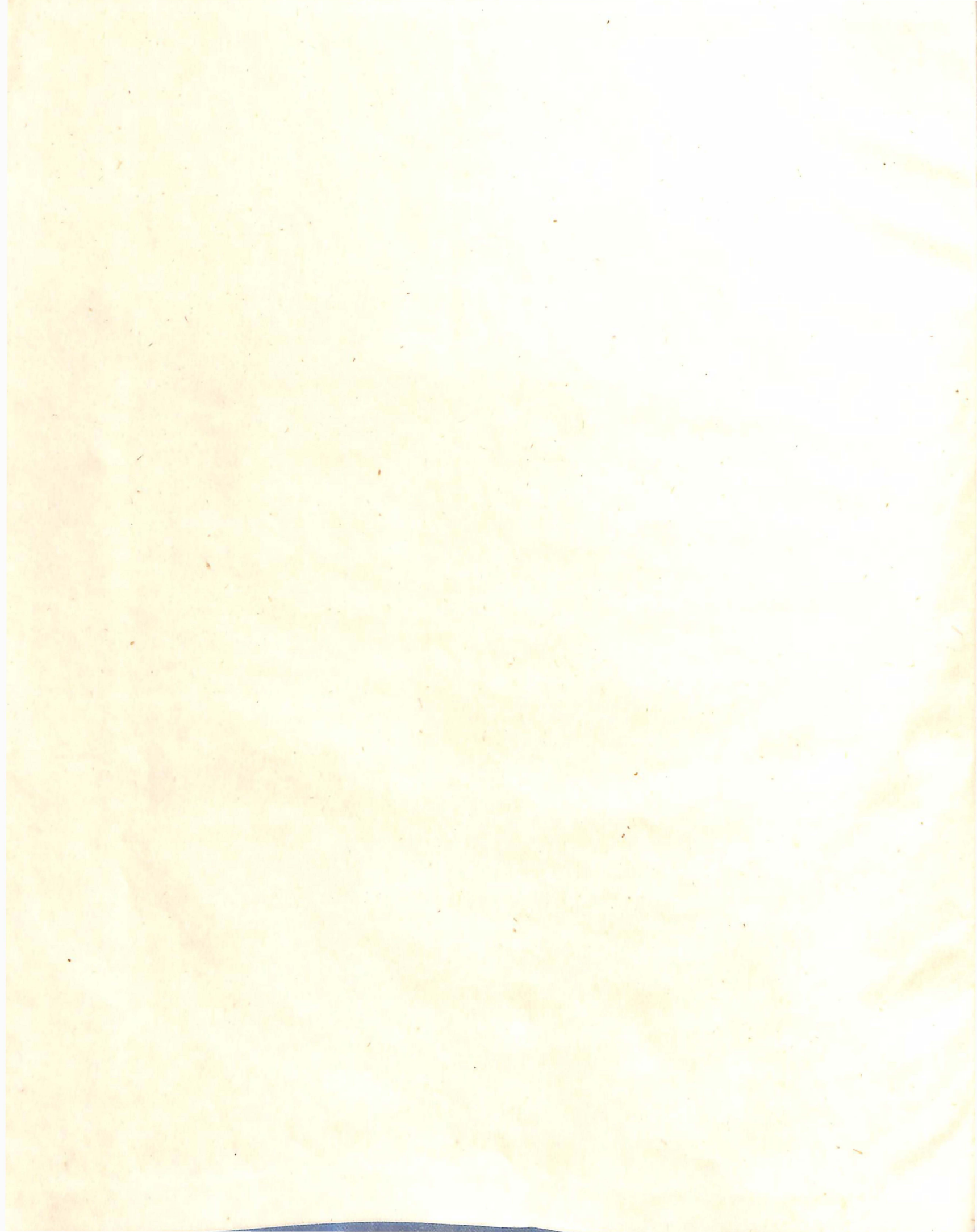
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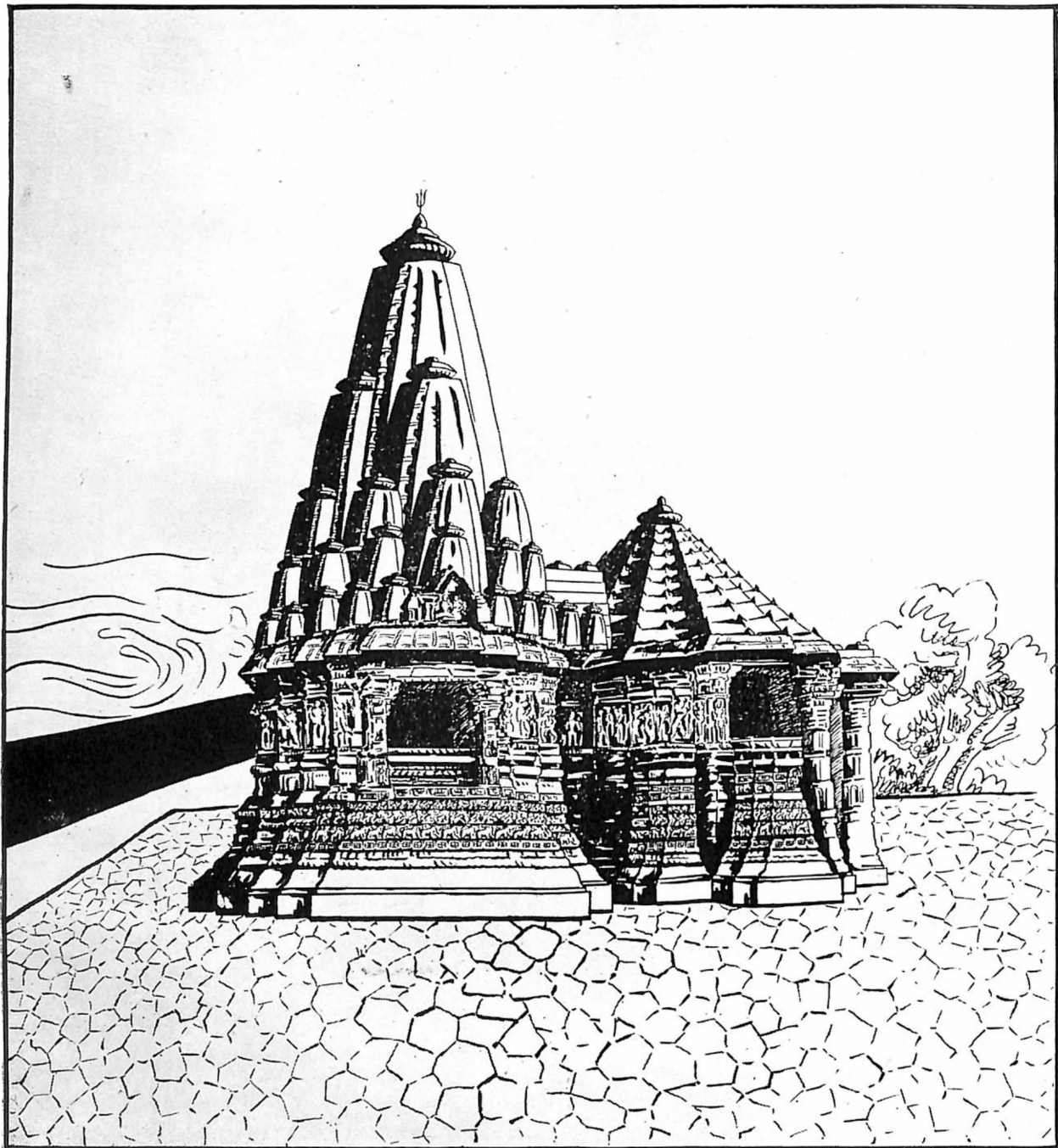
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PLAN SHOWING THE RESTORATION
OF THE TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA

SOMANATHA TEMPLE

Edited by
V. N. MORE



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IN MEMORY OF
GANDHI

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P R E F A C E

MORE than one factor has contributed to the celebrity of the historic temple of Somanatha. The site of Prabhas-Pattan, on which it stands was already well known in the Mahabharata, although no mention is made there of the shrine. Originally it may have been a place of Vaisnava pilgrimage, later on appropriated by the Saivas. The universal sanctity of the place, however, is attested by the construction of Surya and Jaina temples in the mediaeval ages in Pattan itself.

One of the most popular incidents of Indian history is provided by Mahmud of Ghazni, the great iconoclast who led the most famous of his twelve expeditions against India to humble the might of the great Somanatha. Following him successive Muslim invaders tried to raze the temple to dust. Crisis upon crisis marked the chequered history of Somanatha. But each time the devout Hindu rebuilt the monument as soon as the invader turned his back after indulging in his favourite game of desecration and plunder. For nearly four hundred years this amazing drama of unending struggle between Muslim bigotry and Hindu zeal went on. Till at last, in the 15th century, the Hindus abandoned the shrine in sheer despair, to build a new temple nearby.

Somanatha, which was subsequently converted into a mosque, stands now but a ruined shell. It is the sacred duty of new and renaissant India to reconsecrate Somanatha and try to restore its former glory and splendour. Families of *Salats* (Silavats) or stone-masons, the descendants of those master craftsmen who built and re-built Somanatha still survive in Gujarat and Kathiawad.

It will not be a difficult affair to requisition their services in any scheme of reconstruction. For this purpose, a plan of reconstruction, with a diagram based on a careful and comparative study of all the contemporary monuments in Western India and Rajputana has been suggested in the little monograph, mainly compiled from authoritative archaeological sources. Somanatha re-built will undoubtedly be a symbol of Sourashtra re-born.

V. M.

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ARCHÆOLOGICAL

SURVEY

OF

INDIA

TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA AT SOMANATHA-PATTAN

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

"In Soreth are jewels five,
Horses, rivers, women;
Somanath the fourth;
Fifth, Huree's presence."

THUS the wandering minstrel of to-day sings the praise of Soreth—the ancient Sourastra. The most glorious of the five jewels of Sourastra—the Somanatha at Somanatha-Pattan, on the southern shore of Kathiawad, has acquired a legendary fame unequalled by any Hindu temple in India. It also enshrines one of the twelve pre-eminent *Jyotir-lingas* ('Lord of the Moon') which are scattered throughout India claiming a sanctity and hoary antiquity unsurpassed by others. "Many a time has its walls borne the brunt of battle and been levelled by the hand of the barbarian invaders only to rise again from its ashes, like the phoenix, as soon as the enemy had turned its back. The banner of Siva was again raised aloft above its pinnacles, and the bells, the conch and the drum once more announced the resumption of worship within." Of these assaults none is more famous than the historical expedition led against it by Mahmud of Ghazni in A.D. 1025.

Full of ancient ruins and relics of its former splendour, Pattan (1) is undoubtedly a very old sea-shore town as attested by Pauranic and historical association. It is the Prabhas-tirtha of Krisna fame. Besides the old ruined shrine of Somanatha and its modern shrine, other ancient architectural remains include the Jami Masjid, said to have

1. The name of the town is spelt in different ways. In an inscription in the temple of Harsata Mata at Verawal, dated A.D. 1246, it is called Deva-Pattana; it is also spelt this way in an inscription of Girnar; on a modern Gujarati map it is written Pattan, which some writers use, while others make it Pattan. The town is also called Prabhas-Pattan, Rehewas-Pattan, Prabhas-Tirtha, Siva-Pattan and Sorathi-Somanatha.

been constructed from materials of a Suryya temple formerly occupying the site; the temple of Parsvanath; Kotha or arsenal and portions of old Hindu eastern and western gateways. Some other notable structures such as a temple of Suryya, the Maipuri Masjid also a converted temple, several records and old Muslim mausoleums are found scattered outside the town.

The origin of the temple of Somanatha is however shrouded in obscurity. From the Mahabharata we learn that Prabhasa came to be regarded as a place of pilgrimage even during the days of the Yadavas of Dwarka, but no mention is made of the shrine of Somanatha. Perhaps the temple was erected by the Valabhi Kings (A.D. 480-767) who were staunch Saivites. It is recorded that Mularaja, the founder of the Solanki dynasty of Anhillavada Pattan in north Gujarat (A.D. 942-997) visited and worshipped at the shrine. In 1025 A.D. the first great crisis in the chequered history of Somanath came in the shape of the expedition of the great iconoclast Mahmud of Ghazni who advanced upon Pattan with a mighty army "to punish the arrogance of the Hindus and to destroy the symbol of the God that defied Islam." An account of this expedition is thus given in the *Rauzat-us-Safa* compiled in the 15th century, "Somanath is the name for an idol which according to the Hindus was lord of all idols Historians however agree that Somanath was an idol in a temple situated on the sea-side, which idol the Hindus worshipped, specially at the time of the eclipse, and they believe too, that the souls of the deceased came to Somanath, on first leaving the bodies they had occupied and were there assigned to fresh bodies. They also believed that the sea worshipped Somnath, and the rise and fall of the tide was considered to be proof of this. From the most distant parts of India pilgrims used to come to worship at this shrine: 10,000 villages were assigned for its support and there were so many jewels belonging

to it, as no king had ever one-tenth part of it in his treasury. Two thousand Brahmins(1) served the idol and a golden chain of 200 supported a bell-plate, which being struck at stated times called people to worship; 300 shavers; 500 dancing girls and 300 musicians were on the idols' establishment and received support from the endowment and from gifts of pilgrims." Such was the glory of Somnath—which Mahmud in his blind fury smashed with his own hands. Elaborate defence measures, desperate fighting and prayer for victory by the Hindus were of no avail. "Fifty thousand infidels, and more were slain round the temple which was vast in dimensions." We find in Ferishta a vivid account of how Mahmud stormed the fort, entered the sacred precincts and with a mace broke the Lingam into pieces paying little heed to the supplications of the Brahmans—one of such pieces being carried off by him to be used as a threshold of the mosque at Ghazni so that the Faithful might daily trample upon it and proclaim the unchallenged supremacy of Islam. This is supported by Al Biruni (c. 1030 A.D.) who adorned the court of Mahmud and came out to India with his expedition. In his *Tarikh-i-Hind* he says "The image was destroyed by the prince Mahmud—may God be merciful to him! A.H. 416. He ordered the upper part to be broken, and the remainder to be transplanted to his residence Ghazni, with all its coverings and trappings of gold, jewels and embroidered garments. Part of it has been thrown into the hippodrome of the town together with the Chakrasvamin an idol of bronze, that had been brought from Thaneshar. Another part of the idol from Somnath lies before the door of the mosque of Ghazni, on which people rub their feet to clean them from dirt and wet."⁽²⁾ Not only the iconoclastic zeal but also the notorious cupidity of the invader was amply rewarded. For it is said that "the temple of Somnath was supported by fifty-six pillars ornamented

(1) Ibni Asir (A.D. 1121), one of the earliest most reliable writers says one thousand.

(2) Journ. Bom. Br. R.A.S. XIX, p. 151.

with rubies, emeralds and other precious stones; each of these pillars bore the name of a different king of India as its embellisher. They were all despoiled of their treasures. It is also chronicled that that Mahmud transported to his distant capital the exquisitely carved sandalwood doors of the shrine encrusted with silver.

The temple though desecrated by Mahmud was not destroyed by him. Its destruction was carried out by the lieutenant whom he left behind to govern the country. Bhimadeva I (A.D. 1022-1072) of Anhillavada Pattan, who had been hovering about on the heels of Mahmud, appears to have retaken the town on his departure and to have rebuilt the shrine of Somanatha. About A.D. 1100 Siddharaja Jayasinha, the great Solanki hero and the reputed builder of Rudra Mala at Siddhapura in Gujarat and many other sumptuous edifices, visited Sri Somesvara at Deva-Pattan. Although it is not recorded that he had anything to do with the restoration of the temple it is quite likely that a great builder like him must have adorned the temple. Between that time and A.D. 1169 the temple was probably sacked again or was allowed to fall into ruin, for it is in that year that Kumarapala, who succeeded Siddharaja upon the throne of Gujarat reconstructed it in its present form. This we know from a dated inscription still extant in the little temple of Bhadrakali at Somanatha-Pattan. From a reading of the inscription it may also be inferred that Kumaragupta was advised by his famous Jain minister Hemachandra to restore the temple of Bhima Deva which was partly built of wood and therefore the rapid decay which the spray of the sea incessantly beating upon it only accelerated. After reconstruction and completion of the temple, Brihaspati, the temple priest, was made the governor of Somanatha-Pattan and Kumarapala and his family made a state visit and worshipped at the temple as a mark of consecration; that is also revealed by the same inscription dated Valabhi Sam (A.D. 1169).

For little more than a century the temple remained unmolested but it was not destined to remain so any longer for the second great wave of Muhammadan invasion under Alaf Khan a general of the Khalji Sultan of Delhi, swept down upon Pattan in A.D. 1297 and Somanatha was once more laid in dust. "The linga was torn up by the roots and the floor of the shrine was probably dug up in expectation of finding buried treasure, as was the usual custom of Muslim temple-wreckers. The *Sikhara* or spire was thrown down, the scores of images upon the walls were mutilated beyond recognition and the demolition of the fane must have been pretty complete. Gujarat was now kept very lively by the recurring inroads of Muhammadans; and in a few years, the last of the Hindu Kings of Anhillapura died a nameless fugitive. Yet another rebuilding of the *prasada* of Somanatha was taken in hand and carried out, as an inscription on Girnar tells us, by the local Chudasama King Mahipaladeva (A.D. 1308-1325), but it was apparently not completed during his life, for in another inscription on the same hill, it is recorded that his son Khangar IV (A.D. 1325-1351) established or set up Somanatha (i.e. the linga) in the temple." It is quite possible that the dilapidated structure standing in the neighbourhood of Kumarapala's temple was raised by Mahipaladeva himself as the architectural peculiarities and style of carving are definitely later.

Presumably up to this time, no Muhammadan conversion of the ruins of the older shrine into a mosque was allowed to stand as a menace to the last built temple, if indeed, the Muhammadans had attempted any such thing. Hitherto, observes Cousens, they had swooped down upon the shrine suddenly and as suddenly took their departure with all they could get in the way of loot. They did not stop to built mosques or convert temples to their use, and the few followers who were left in small a minority to risk any such the town of former families, were in too



the Hindus, in their last rebuilding at the hands of the Muhammadans, thing. In 1318, however Somanatha appears to have been again attacked. About 1394, the renegade Muzafar Khan, governor of Gujarat, carried out a furious religious war against the neighbouring Hindu chiefs, once more destroyed the temple of Somanatha and then converted it into a mosque. This refers in all probability, to the temple built by Mahipaladeva, and the already ruined shrine of Kumarapala may still have escaped destruction. Ferishta, after mentioning Muzafar Khan's expedition into Gujarat in A.H. 795 says: "He then proceeded to Somnath, where, having destroyed all Hindu temples which he found standing, he built mosques in their stead; and leaving learned men for the propagation of the faith, and his own officers to govern the country returned to Pattan in the year 798." The Hindus must, by this time, have been thoroughly disheartened, for never again did the fane of Somanatha rise in such splendour as it did under Kumarapala. The site, too, was probably now changed to where the last and present temple stands, that built by queen Ahalya Bai of Indore in the town not far from the ruins of the old one. The last indignity and crowning shame perpetrated upon these old remains, was at the hands of Mahmud Bigada or Muzafar II of Gujarat.

The well known story in connection with the sack of Somanatha, of Mahmud carrying away the gate or doors, is a myth, but may have some foundations in fact. It is almost certain that if the doors had been overlaid with silver embossed work, as was a common practice, he stripped the silver off and appropriated it. The so-called door of Somanatha brought back from Ghazni in the 19th century by a British Governor-General of India, with so much ostentation, and which is now at Agra, is really an original door of Mahmud's tomb the workmanship and proportions of which are not Hindu. Learning by bitter experience,

constructed a subterranean shrine in which of the temple, in the town the linga was placed for safety, a hidden passage leading to it, another linga was placed in the shrine above for ordinary use.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SOMANATHA

COUSENS gives a full vivid description of the temple as it stands now. It is reproduced fully below as it can hardly be improved upon.

"The old temple of Somanatha is situated in the town, and stands upon the shore towards its eastern end, being separated from the sea by a heavily built retaining wall which prevents the former from washing away the ground around the foundations of the shrine. Little now remains of the walls of the temple; they have been, in great measure, rebuilt and patched with rubble to convert the building into a mosque. The great dome, indeed the whole roof and the stumpy *minars* one of which remains above the front entrance, are portions of the Muhammadan additions. Lieutenant Postans, writing in 1838, tells us that, to within a few years of his visit, the roof was used as a battery for some heavy pieces of ordnance, with which the neighbouring port of Verawal was defended from the pirates who formerly infested this coast. One fact alone shows that the temple was built on a large scale, and that is the presence in its basement of the *asvathara* or horse-moulding. It was probably about the same size, in plan, as the Rudra Mala at Siddhapur, being, in length, about 140 feet over all. Though these two buildings were the largest of any in this part of the country, they were by no means remarkable for their size when compared with sacred edifices in Europe. St. Paul's cathedral could contain, comfortably three such buildings within its walls.¹

The walls, or at least, the outer casing of them, having in great

1. Cousens—Somanatha and other Mediaeval Temples in Kathiawad, Archaeological Survey of India, Volume XLV. Imperial Series, Plates II—IX.

part fallen, there is revealed, in several places the finished masonry and mouldings of the basement of an older temple, which appears not to have been altogether removed when the temple, we now see, was built, portions of this older temple being apparently left *in situ* to form the heart or core of the later masonry. This is well seen on the south side where some of the lower moulded courses of the plinth of the older temple are disclosed.² For several reasons, I have come to the conclusion that the ruined temple, as it now stands, save the Muhammadan additions, is a remnant of the temple built by Kumarapala, a king of Gujarat about A.D. 1169. If this be so, then the older temple, portions of which we find embedded in the walls, was probably that built by Bhima Deva I (A.D. 1022-1072) soon after the destruction of the temple, that preceded it, by the lieutenant whom Mahmud of Ghazni left behind him at Pattan. Of that temple, made so famous in history by the Sultan's attack upon it, not a vestige now remains. Bhima Deva's, judging by the fragments we see in the present walls, must have been a smaller and much plainer building than Kumarapala's. Kinloch Forbes says: 'I have remarked that the description of the temple of Somanath in Mahmud's time, as it appears in Ferishta, is not applicable to the present buildings, and that there is some ground for considering improbable that the building desecrated by Mahmud would have been returned to by the Hindus. I have also produced a distinct assertion made certainly more than a century after the time of Bheem Dev, but still made in the deliberate form of an inscription cut in stone in the temple itself, and by persons whose traditional account of the matter was likely to be correct, that the temple was built by Bheem Dev. No one, apparently, was so likely to be the builder as this prince, who led the army that attempted to save Somanath, and who became king on Mahmud's retirement'. Forbes

2. Op. Cit. Fig. 1.

considered that the present temple is that of Bhima Deva, and that the original temple was not upon this spot at all. He says: 'It is improbable, on these grounds, that the ruins we now behold are the remains of the temple which Mahmud visited. That temple may possibly have stood at the furthest extremity of the bay, where on a projecting promontory, are some remains called by the natives, as I believe, the Heera Kot, which I have not had the opportunity of examining.' But, in both surmises, I think he is wrong. Captain Wilberforce-Bell, in his history of Kathiawad, follows Forbes' opinion, and says that Siddharaja is reported to have undertaken the adorning of Bhima Deva's temple, but he gives no authority for his statement. Lieut. Postans seemed to think that he saw the temple as it was left by Mahmud, but in this he was quite wrong. He was still further out in his idea that 'the Somnath was originally a Buddhist temple, afterwards appropriated to the worship of Siva.' He was writing of the temple as he saw it decorated with Brahmanical images which he evidently did not recognise: there is not a Buddhist feature or image about it, and yet he says: 'but in its style of architecture and ornament (particularly the male and female figures) it is in vain to look for any Hindu features, whilst in all points it agrees most accurately with the Buddhistical.' Dr. John Wilson, however, whose opinion the Captain invited, disagreed with him and added: 'The temple is entirely similar in its form, construction, ornamental figures, to the older Shiva temples in various parts both of the peninsula and continental Gujarat.'

The great temple, which faces the east, consisted, when entire, of a large central closed hall, or *gudhamandapa*, with three entrances, each protected with a deep lofty porch, and the shrine—the *sanctum sanctorum*—which stood upon the west side of the hall, having a broad *pradakshina* or circumambulatory passage round it. The latter was lighted by a large balconied window in each of its

three sides away from the hall, and these formed a very pleasing feature in the general appearance of the building from outside. That at the back, of west side, has fallen, and so have the three porches. It is quite possible that, like the temple of Surya at Mudhera, this one may have had a *sabhamandapa*, or open hall, slightly in advance of the main entrance, from which the beautiful ceiling in the Maipuri mosque may have been taken.¹ The original roof, which had fallen, with the exception of the inner domical ceiling shrine, has been entirely rebuilt in a rough and ready fashion by the Muhammadans, who raised the fallen pillars within, and finished off the exterior of the roof with a large Musalman dome and two stumpy minarets, thus converting it into a mosque. Of the original pillars and pilasters, which remind one of some of those in the temple of Tejahpala on Mount Abu (A.D. 1232), only a very few now remain, and these are in such an advanced state of corrosion, caused by the salt and damp air from the sea, that, save on these in the *pradakshina*, which have been better sheltered, all the surface carving has been obliterated. The present pillars, however appear to stand upon the sites and sometimes the bases of the original ones. The terrible honey-combing of the surface seems to point out the fact of the whole roofless interior having been exposed to the elements for long years before the building was converted to its later use. The interior of the shrine has shared in the general wreck, but retains most of its domical ceiling; the back wall, which has gone, has been replaced by a rough rubble one. Unfortunately the stone frame of the shrine doorway, always a distinctive feature in these temples, has also gone, and has been rebuilt. A short distance in front of it is a slightly raised square upon the floor, possibly the place where the Nandi reposed, but that, again has disappeared: fragments of one or more large Nandi are lying outside the temple.

1. Cousens—Op. Cit. Pls. XVIII—XIX

✓

The sculpture upon the exterior of the temple has been so effectually effaced by the despoiler that it is almost next to impossible to identify the few images that remain. Most of these are on the walls at the south-west corner of the temple, amongst which are a number of *devis*, or goddesses, and their female attendants. In the recess on the east side of the south balconied window, the practised eye will detect the mutilated form of Siva in the *tandava* dance, with the stumps of his twelve arms remaining, and the necklace of skulls hanging down between his legs. His Nandi, with only two legs left, stands down to his right hand his hair is done up in coils upon his head. The figure on his left, on the return of the wall, is probably another image of him. Up above these are seen small images of Siva and Parvati, the former seated with his devi upon his knee. Some of the other images, around the corners of the shrine, will probably be the usual *dikpalas* or regents of the points of the compass. Around the top of the basement, at the north-east corner, upon narrow bands, can be traced what appear to be scenes from the *Ramayana*. Some portions of the beautiful vertical mouldings, on either side of the main front doorway, remain, and these show that the whole doorway was exceedingly richly carved.¹ These mouldings extended up the side of the inner door-post, and must have covered twice the width of those now remaining on the south side of the door. The doorway was very likely about the same size in the opening that it is now, and the two upright inner posts are possibly the original ones in their first position.

In the heterogeneous collection of sculptured stones lying outside the temple are two large and one small image of Surya holding the full blown lotus in each hand.² The right hand and lower part of the legs of one have gone. The smaller images look like later work

1. Cousens—Op. Cit. Pl. V.

2. " " " Pl. VII.

than the big ones, and may not have belonged to the same temple; it is quite possible that the larger ones came from the old temple of Surya which was demolished to provide material for the Jami Masjid in the town. The angular stones, with the holes in them, to hold little finials, formed part of the roof of this or the Surya temple. Roofing with this kind of work is seen upon the hall of the old temple at Ambarnatha in the Konkan. The figure with the bearded and fierce moustache is Bhairava, a terrible form of Siva. He has had eight arms but they are much damaged. In one he holds a sword, in another a thunderbolt, while a third seems to grasp a decapitated head by the hair, part of the head being broken away.

The interior of the temple having been used as a mosque, the Muhammadans, as we have seen, re-erected many of the fallen pillars, roughly rebuilt the dome, and strengthened the cracked lintels with roughly constructed arches beneath them; and they attempted a little embellishment of the ring stones with a kind of *fleur-de-lis* ornament upon each stone.³ The old central ceiling of the hall must have been a very fine piece of work of the same general design as that in the Maipuri Masjid; but it must have fallen long before the conversion of the building, otherwise it would have been retained, after mutilating any images upon it, for its great beauty. All the bracket images could easily have been removed, as has been done elsewhere, so as not to offend the eye of the ruthless enemy of idolatry. Even had all the fallen stones been on the spot, they would have been so broken up that it would have puzzled any builder, not thoroughly acquainted with the original construction, to have put them together again; and, that they had no very capable builders at hand then, is shown by the rough nature of the repairs.

3. Cousens—Op. Cit. Pl. VI.

The space between the hall and the shrine, where the Nandi probably sat, does not appear to have been roofed in since the ceiling first fell, for it is under this open space that the pillars have suffered most from the weather. The stone of which these were built must have been very inferior, else they should have weathered as well as the stone of the outside walls; but even outside, occasional stones are found rather the worse for weathering. The original shrine door-frame had been removed, a very plain patched up one being substituted, and, roughly blocked up, served as a *mihrab* or prayer niche for the mosque; and, for this purpose, the original frame, with its crowds of images, would never have done. The inner walls of the *pradakshina*, running round the shrine, as may be seen in the photograph, in shadow on the right, were fully moulded and adorned with images on the same lines as the outside walls. This passage which, in many temples, is quite dark, is here lighted up by the great windows so that this decoration could be well seen. This arrangement of the shrine, its circumambulatory passage, and the large windows, was no doubt, similar to that of the Rudra Mala at Siddhapur and the temple of the Sun at Mudhera. The shrine, where the *linga* was placed, is not octagonal as Captain Wilberforce-Bell states; from the plan it will be seen that it is square. The hall, too, is square in plan with its corners recessed in the usual manner. The only octagonal arrangement is that of the inner pillars, so arranged to support the architraves under the central dome.

The general architecture of the temple shows it to be rather later than that of the best period of that style, that is, the eleventh century when the Mudhera, Ambernatha, Rudra Mala and Vimala Shah's shrines were raised. This is particularly noticeable in the pillars which, as I have already said, are more of the type of those

in Tejahapala's temple at Abu. In the early part of the eleventh century the Mudhera type was universal, and the pillars of that period certainly show a more vigorous design than the more fancifully cut-up patterns of the later period. Bhima Deva's temple may not have been so elaborate as Kumarapala's; it was probably hurriedly built to re-establish the fane, after its destruction, by a king whose country had just been overrun and impoverished by a remorseless foe."¹

1. Cousens—Op. Cit. pp. 13-17.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOMANATHA AND OTHER WESTERN INDIAN TEMPLES

THE general structural scheme of the temples of the Western Indian style consists of identical system of compartments as in most Indian religious architectural types. It comprises of a shrine with its cells and a pillared hall or *mandapa*. In the treatment of these two combined formations, while in every example retaining the same specific architectural character, the master-masons concerned showed by the manner in which they handed these conventional parts, considerable versatility and power of invention. The *Salat* plotted out his work in conformity with the established rules, varying this where necessary according to his instinctive artistic ability, employing his own architectural idiom, which however was always correct in grammar, and consequently in good taste. The plans of these temples, according to Percy Brown, resolve themselves broadly into two kinds, those in which each compartment forms a rectangle, in the latter case two are attached diagonally. The former system is found usually, although by no means invariably in the earlier temples of this period, and of which the Sun temple of Mudhera in Gujarat (11th century A.D.), if its detached hypostyle hall, or *sabha-mandapa* is excluded, is a typical example, while the temple of Somanatha (12th century A.D.) illustrates the diagonal arrangement. In all instances both the parallel and diagonal plans have their sides interrupted at intervals by projected or recessed chases forming angles, which, carried up into the elevation are productive of strong vertical effects of light and shade. Furthermore these angles are also of two kinds, as in one class of

building they are straight sided, and in another rounded or foliated. Finally, some of the larger examples of these Solanki temples appear to have been in two and perhaps three stories, but most of this type are too ruined for arrangements to be quite understood, although the principle on which these storied *mandapas* are produced may be seen in a Central Indian temple of another class, namely the Sas Bahu (11th century A.D.) in Gwalior Fort. ¹

As regards the elevational aspect of the Solanki type of temple, it will be seen that the architectural scheme is divided horizontally into three main sections, consisting of the basement of *Pitha*, the *Mandovara* or wall face up to the entablature or cornice, and the superstructure comprising the roof, or in the case of the shrine portion (*Vimana*) the spire or *Sikhara*. Something of this kind of threefold arrangement forms the elevation of the majority of temples in the Indo-Aryan style, but it assumes a fairly fixed convention in those on the western side of the country. Furthermore, the same divisional system may be traced in most of the other architectural productions, such as in the archways, towers, columns or any upright composition. For instance, each of these has a moulded base or basement corresponding to the *Pitha*, above which is a vertical portion containing niches and figures, resembling in this respect the *Mandovara* or wall face of the temple. The third or uppermost division of the structure, which may be referred to as the attic portion, whether tower or pillar, is designed according to need, for instance in the temple it is a series of ascending stories, and in the pillar, the capital and its entablature or other accompaniments.

"In the temple design the pitha or basement, the upper surface of which forms the floor of the building, is composed of a series of

(1) Percy Brown—Indian Architecture: Buddhist and Hindu, Pl. Cl.

mouldings and string courses the more important carved with repeating motifs arranged in an order fixed by convention the lowest being the *garaspatti* or horned heads¹ (*rakshas*), over this is the *gajapitha*, or elephant fronts, then comes the *asvathara* or horses, and finally at the top is the *narathara*, or human beings. Supported by this basement is the second or middle division, the *mandovara*, the most significant portion of the entire elevational scheme, as it comprises a vertical well-face reserved exclusively for figure sculpture, so that except for its medial position it corresponds to, and has all the attributes of a wide frieze. On this wall are enshrined in niches and tabernacles base-relief images of the deities and saints associated with the dedication of the temple, a sculptured pantheon carried usually right round the building. Then, completing the composition of the temple as a whole, there is the third of these formations, comprising the superstructure in which the roof of the assembly hall or mandapa is built up in the manner of a low pyramid, composed of horizontal courses, diminishing as they rise, and terminating in the usual vase-shaped finial. It is however in the treatment of the Shikara which surmounts the shrine that these western temples are most distinctive, as this spire is no longer one simple member, but a group of members, its lower portion being surrounded by a system of turrets or *urusringas*, these features being symmetrically arranged, each a replica in miniature of the large central structure, and each in such high relief as to be semi-detached or almost 'in the round.'

The interiors of these temples display several notable characteristics. In this western development the architectural style is definitely peristyle, as groups of elegantly carved pillars form an essential part of its content. These columns are arranged geometrically leaving an

(1) Percy Brown—Op. Cit. pp. 139-41.

octagonal area, or nave, in the centre of the main hall, while outside this they are so spaced as to constitute the aisles. The shafts of the pillars rarely taper, but are divided horizontally into decorative zones or drums, the upper being less in diameter than the lower, so that they diminish by stages, to finish in a bracket-capital or *sira*. Surrounding the nave the pillars are provided with an extension or attic or dwarf-pillars also bearing bracket capitals, the interval between the upper and lower *siras* being filled by inclined struts or braces each carrying an image, usually a female figure, carved in high relief. These attic pillars, with the architrave above, while raising the height of the nave, also support the central dome, which consists of a shallow bowl-shaped ceiling formed by a succession of overlapping courses, the joints being so concealed by intricate carving that the whole appears as if moulded in one piece. That significant feature of the temple interior, the shrine doorway, is designed so that its decorative scheme composes with that of the pillars, as it consists of horizontal bands of figures and foliage, the textural effect of this portal being that of a richly sculptured stratification.

There appears to be some esoteric reason for the scheme of relief decoration in the interiors of Hindu temples in the Indo-Aryan style, differing in extent from that of the exterior. While there are no limits to the exuberance of the sculpture on the outer walls, some restraint is observable in the amount and its distribution in the interiors. These indications of some form of what may be termed plastic prohibition, vary in different groups of buildings, for instance in the Orissan temples, as already shown, many have almost entirely plain interiors, the bare walls of their assembly halls being in striking contrast to the excessively rich decoration outside. On the other hand at Khajuraho in Central India, more freedom is discernible, a considerable amount of carving being found in the interiors of the

temples of this group. Still further to the west, in Gujarat and its proximity, the style shows that only the innermost passages and chambers are devoid of ornament, the remainder of the interior being profusely sculptured. From these circumstances it may be inferred that the original intention was to keep all the temples interiors relatively featureless, either not to divert the mind from the divine image, or by reason of some cause of a deep spiritual nature. But the irresistible chisel of the Indian carver could not always be repressed by precept, and his art was therefore inclined to intrude into all but the most sacred chambers and their immediate surroundings. The gradual reduction of his sculptured handiwork, combined with a decreasing effect of light as one penetrates further into the recesses of the sanctuary are particularly noticeable in the fully developed temples of the western school. Beginning with the open sunlit portico or *subha-mandapa* with its richly wrought pillars, one enters the enclosed and covered aisles of the assembly hall or *gudha-mandapa*, more sombre and less ornate than the preceding. This leads to the vestibule, the panelled and figured framework of the shrine doorway being often the only relief from its plane surfaces; openings on each side of this indicate the entrances to the dimly illumined featureless corridor of the ambulatory, progression finally ending before the mysterious deeply-shadowed sanctum of four bare walls. Yet heedless of the total darkness of some of the subsidiary chambers, the sculptor's hand could not be stayed, the ceilings of these being sometimes delicately filigreed and scalloped as they would be if illuminated by the bright light of day. Such intricate patterns are only revealed by the aid of a torch, the explanation of this paradox being that they are not intended to be seen by ordinary mortals, but are for the eye of God alone.¹

⁽¹⁾ Percy Brown—Op. Cit. pp. 139-41.

RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA

WHAT now remains of Somanatha is but the shell of magnificent edifice. In any future reconstruction of this renowned Saiva shrine careful study should be made before hand of all the shrines in Western India raised under the aegis of this Solankis. Though a Brahmanical temple Somanatha also illustrates the style employed by the Jains in Gujarat and Rajputana in the 11th and 12th century A.D. So intensive study of the architectural peculiarities and decoration of the following mediaeval and contemporary structures is essential in any scheme of restoration of the ruined temple of Kumarapala to its former glory:—

10th century—Temples at Sunak, Kanoda, Delmal and Kesara in Gujarat.

11th century—The Navalakha temples at Ghumli and Sejakpur in Kathiawad, Suryya temple at Modhera in Gujarat, Vimala Shah temple at Mount Abu, Rajputana, the Group at Karadu in Mewar and the temple of Ambarnatha in Thana district.

13th century—Tejapala temple at Mount Abu, Rajputana and temple of Neminatha at Girnar.

14th century—The temple of Suryya at Somanatha-Pattan.

The present ruins of the temple of Somanatha unmistakably show certain well defined features of the Western Indian style. The material used in these buildings has mostly been a local reddish sandstone which from a colour point of view is very effective. But it lent itself to great weathering, specially due to salt sea air. The round plan reveals that it was a development of Modhera and Siddhapur types and closely akin to these of Navalakha at Ghumli and Sejakpur and Neminatha

at Girnar. Of the elevation, much defaced, the moulded basement of *Pitha* is typically resolved into traditional string courses representing in regular upward succession the *Garaspatti* or horned heads (*Kirttimukha*), the *Gajapitha* or elephant fronts, the *Asvathara* or row of horses, and finally the *Narathara* or row of human beings. Part of the *Mandovara* or wall surface survives, after an intermediary band of deeply cut recesses and projecting mouldings of singular grace adding a great variety of light and shade without unnecessarily breaking up the outline. The stable horizontal accent of the basement is cleverly balanced by the upward movement of the vertical panels and pillasters of the *Mandovara*, the entire surface being richly carved in multiple divine and semi-divine figures in dynamic poses now alas, battered beyond recognition. The charming vertical mouldings of the main front doorway also envisage exquisite designs of floral and geometrical arabesque interspersed with gamboling Ganas and supported at the base by standing gods and goddesses, after the usual mediaeval Indian architectural pattern.¹ The few surviving pillars and pillasters of the interior are closely allied to those of Tejapalas temple at Mt. Abu and the magnificent workmanship of the scallops and cuspes of the ceiling in the Maipuri Masjid (formerly an adornment of Somanatha) is reminiscent of the intricately carved Jaina domes at Dilwara.²

Although not as refined as that of Modhera, the sculptural idiom of Somanatha resembled to a great extent the modelling of Ghumli, Sejakpur and Siddhapur. The ruins of Ghumli may also be profitably compared with that of Somanatha. "Though not by any means, so large as the temple at Somanatha-Pattan, being less than two-thirds the length or width, it supplies some of the missing part of that temple. The tower has mostly fallen, but there is sufficient

1. Cousens—Op. Cit. Pls. IV-V.

2. Cousens—Op. Cit. Pl. XVIII.a.

left in the miniature ornamental *Sikhara* at the base of the tower to know what the whole tower was like both here and at Somanatha. A large open and two-storied hall takes the place here, of the closed hall at Somanatha. The latter could hardly have been two-storied as such were not known amongst these temples, and the double storied open hall was rare, one of the finest having been that of Rudra Mala at Siddhapur, if that did not even have a third floor."¹ The temple of Navalakha at Ghumli may be somewhat older than that of Somanatha.

Siddharaja Jayasimha has been credited with so many buildings in Gujarat and Kathiawad that at the present day, if a villager be asked who the builder of any old ruin was, he promptly replies "Siddha Raj." The descendants of old Salats (Silavats) still exist in this part of the country and follow their calling on the traditions of their forefathers, but in such modified style as less wealth and less zeal have developed. They still possess some of their old Sanskrit books which they profess to follow, but is doubtful whether many of them can understand them intelligently, since they are written in slokas or verse, which are often obscure in their meaning. As an instance one such, engaged in an intricate architectural undertaking when questioned about as to how he could do it without models, plans or working drawings, significantly touched his forehead implying that all these material aids were stored in his mind. He then proceeded to chant the ancient rules of the craft, a miscellany of religious formulas and astronomical propositions, unintelligible to most but thoroughly understood by the workmen, as they followed the directions given in this manner, without a fault. Moreover the care and correctness with which the iconography on the temples was executed is proof that the master-masons had a sound working knowledge of the folk-lore and mythology of the country, most of the information being conveyed to them by means of the

1. Cousens—Op. Cit. p. 36.

Silpas, or rules of the craft. It was these men who were pressed into the service of the Muhammadans, when they gained the ascendancy in Gujarat and who built the mosques and tombs of the conquerors; and this the reason why we find these buildings so Hindu in feeling, the only limitation imposed being the rigid exclusion of figures upon their walls. Relics of the builder's guilds (*Sena*) still survive and descendants of the craftsmen are not infrequently found carrying on their trade in much the same manner as did their forebears in mediaeval times. It will not be a difficult task to requisition the services of these *Silavats* in order to resurrect, if possible, the glory that was Somanatha as a symbol of the faith of India and her undying culture.¹

1. Cousens, *Architectural Antiquities of Western India*, p. 35 and Brown, *Indian Architecture*, Vol. I, p. 139.

TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA AT DUNGARPUR

IN reconstructing the shrine at Somanatha-Pattan the temple at Dungarpur State in Rajputana may be studied with profit. Although of much later date than Kumarapala's temple, the Dungarpur structure probably erected in the 15th century, belong to the same architectural class of its more famous prototype differing in details but retaining most of the essential features. Unlike the Solanki structures, miniature Sikhharas do not multiply on the surface of the Vimana (tower) in elaborate profusion but are found to be embedded in the walls in double vertical stringcourses on both sides, almost reminiscent of the Lingaraja temple at Bhuvaneswar. The practice of building up the Vimana of smaller repetitions of itself came into vogue at Khajuraho, Central India at about the 10th century A.D. and ever since became a favourite mode of decoration and gradually an essential feature of the North Indian style of architecture. The tapering central bands are plain except for the diaper arabesque covering the surface. The Vimana is surrounded by a flat Amalaka which again is crowned by a small one. Repetition and elaboration of the same architectural motif is characteristic of this type of mediaeval monuments. Instead of multiple Sikhharas projecting from the Vimana, four miniature Sikhharas only abut against the surface of four sides. Double storied balconied windows, projecting from the walls not only is a pleasing device adding an air of lightness to the otherwise heavy tower, but it is a necessary architectural innovation to admit light into the dark interior passages of the Prakshinapatha as in the great temple at Somanatha-Pattan. Seen from the flank, the outline is pleasingly broken up in gradual stages—a technique which also started at Khajuraho. But unfortunately there is little organic connection between the Vimana and the double storied Mandapa consisting of open square porticoes

with the inevitable seat-back or *asana* surmounted by a dwarf dome. Unlike the earlier examples the porch is not covered with a low pyramidal roof placed diagonally on the substructure and rising in steps, each of which was ornamented with vases or urns of varying shapes. Deficient in the extreme grace and elegance that characterises the Central Indian monuments, the Dungarpur temple is nonetheless bold and vigorous and still show an originality and adherence to the tradition of the style and a freedom from any admixture of foreign elements. Division of courses, roll mouldings or angles, breaks in the surface, and regular voids in the substructure are not sufficient to relieve any flatness and monotony but they are active agents in producing a variegeted pattern of light and shade, of voids and masses.

Besides the temple, there is an elaborately carved and highly ornate Kirttistambha at Dungarpur. *Toran* gateways or Kirttistambhas, were common adjuncts to Brahmanical and Jain temples as well as to Buddhist stupas. The gateways at Baroli and the four massive Toranas at Warangal in the Deccan (c.12th century A.D.) belong to the same class. Another known type in the ruined temple of Galaganatha, stands outside Aihole, which from the style and carving may belong to about A.D. 900. It still retains the lintel supported by two massive square carved pillars, but the pediment, if there was any has totally disappeared. A still earlier example, but of more ornate style is the one at Pathari in the Gwalior State, near the Gupta site of Eran. It stands in front of an old temple called Gadarmar. The shafts of the pillars are sixteen sided with Gupta bases and capitals of the same pattern as the pillar from the Eran temple. The brackets that support the *Toran* arch—now lost—also bore female and animal figures on four sides, but these are mostly lost now. Above these brackets the pillars are circular and support a large abacus on the inner projection

of which rests the richly-carved lintel, which carries over its centre a circular stone or *Amlasila*, with lions on each of the end blocks. It has no pediment, and must belong to the age of the Gupta remains at Eran of the 5th century A.D.¹

The remains of the extensive city of Chandravati in Central India is represented by one of the noblest specimens of Toranas. It is remarkable for its solid proportions and chaste design.² Coming to Western India, in front of the great Suryya temple at Mudhera there stood a fine Kirttistambha gateway, but the whole of pediment has fallen and only the pillars 24 ft. 6 in. high remain standing of the structure erected in the A.D. 1026. Besides the arch at the Rudra Mahalaya at Siddhapur, about 32 ft. in height, but now considerably injured, there are at Vadnagar, the ancient Anandapur, two of the finest examples almost entire, about 35½ ft. in height. The style of these Gujarat Kirttistambhas is nothing but a natural but elaborate development of that of Chandravati.³ They must have belonged to some large temple in this once notable sacred city. Another smaller but similar gateway, of nearly 23 ft. total height, stands above a *Kund* or sacred tank at Kapadvanj, about 60 miles south-east from the last. The most richly sculptured of all these gateways is however found in Rewa, the capital of Baghelkhand, probably belonging to the end of the 12th century A.D.⁴

A study of the classic Kirttistambha of Vadnagar will show that "all the parts forming the Kirttistambha are devised on the same principles as these employed in the temple design, with the spreading base, figured shaft, bracket capitals and the tabernacled superstructure

1. "Ancient Monuments, Temples, etc. of India", pl. 222.

2. Archaeological Survey of Western India Vol. IX, p.98 and Todd's "Travels in Western India", p.134.

3. Fergusson—History of Indian and Eastern Architecture, Vol. II, pl. XXIV.

4. Fergusson—Op. Cit. pp. 136-37.

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3. Fergusson—History of Indian and Eastern Architecture, Vol. II, pl. XXIV.

4. Fergusson—Op. Cit. pp. 136-37.

being of much the same order, but if anything, even more ornate." The *Pitha* shows the same conventional arrangement of mouldings, viz. *Garaspatti*, *Gajapitha*, *Asvathara* and finally on the top the *Narathara*. The Mandovara also invariably reveals an identical display of bas-relief images of deities and saints associated with the dedication of the Torana enshrined in niches, supporting ornate friezes.

The Kirttistambha of Dungarpur, evidently of much later origin than that of Vadnagar, erected perhaps in the 15th century A.D. betrays a continuity of the form. It is not equally graceful in outline, those at Vadnagar being finer in every respect than the one at Dungarpur which has an air of frigidity about it. With reference to this example, it perhaps served a special purpose, as in the old. Being erected in the courtyard of a temple it was probably used for the cremonial swinging of the god (Hindola) or a pair of scales used to be slung on these rare occasions when a king, in fulfilment of a vow, had himself weighed against gold which was distributed in charity. It consists of two massive columns supporting a wide cornice above, on which rises a voluted pediment containing Visnu seated in the centre with Brahma and Siva his two sides, flanked by a pair of miniature shrines but without the charming Makara endings of the Vadnagar example. The double brackets of Vadnagar has disappeared as also the tapering character of the base of the columns and their traditional mouldings. The convoluted struts supporting the architrave have lost the old vigour discernible in the flying arches of Mudhera, Vadnagar and Dilwara. The female bracket figures are undoubtedly lineal descendants of the Yaksini brackets of the Sanchi Torana; 1500 years old. The shafts are octagonal and not curcular and are evenly diapered with mouldings and conventional or geometric patterns. An extreme effect of richness is sought to be obtained by

covering the surface with elaborate sculptured forms, repeated patterns of ornamental string courses, human figures and deities. The exuberance of decoration sadly obscured the architectural properties of the structure.

A close scrutiny of the bracket adornments in the shape of dancing and female musicians (Apsaras) (Figs. 3, 4, 5, 6,) will also reveal that all vitality and animation has disappeared from their modelled forms. Compared with their classical prototypes their doll like features are sharp, angular and almost metallic in appearance—an invariable characteristic of the late mediaeval age. A certain dramatic sense has no doubt been achieved by the rounded relief of the sculptures, almost detached from the background; momentary movements of the clear-cut limbs engaged in playing upon flutes, playing the cymbal or the drum or in dancing in graceful poses and the introduction of the sharpest contrast of light and shade. But the features have frozen and the pliant plasticity of yore is no more.

Front view of fourhanded image of Krisna standing in the open on a pedestal betray the same characteristics, standing in the typical Tribhanga pose, two of its hands are playing upon the flute, while the other upraised pair holds the *Gada* and *Padma* probably, head crowned by highly ornamental *Mukuta*, flanked by two standing images of Siva and Brahma and a cow. Krishna is beautifully framed by a decorative frame sculptured into vertical panels containing adoring Gopinis, musicians and dancers, and he stands on a pedestal showing lotus rosettes and Garuda in the centre.

It is a definite respite for the eye to turn from the bewildering treatment of the front to the absolutely plain and simple aspect presented by the back view of the same image, where the injunctions of the Silpa-Sastras and demands of the patrons no longer fettered

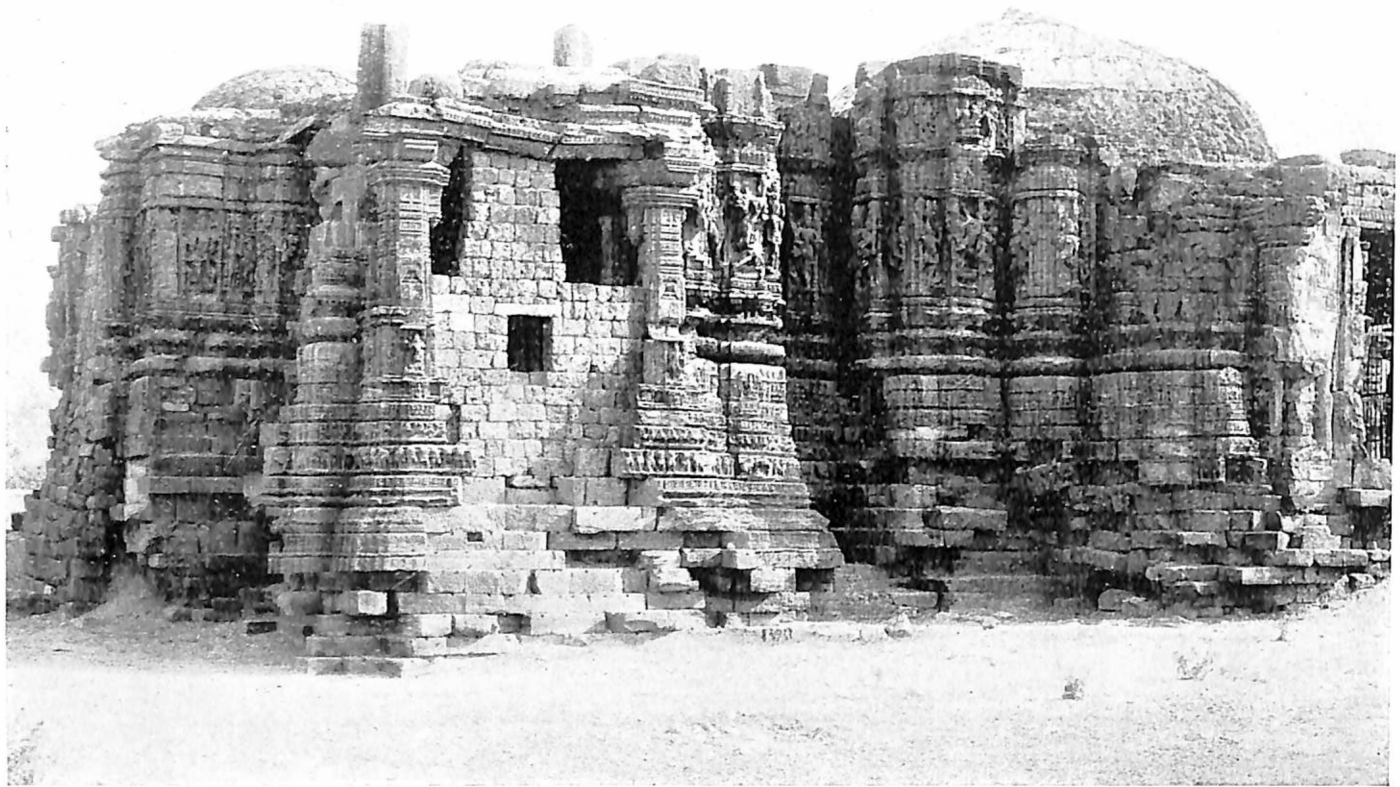
the hands of the sculptor. Undisturbed by ornamental exuberance and decorative paraphernalia, we get a direct conception of soft but coherent plasticity, of fully rounded volume sympathetically treated, of a pulsating body emphasized by gliding contours and rhythmic flow of uninterrupted lines. It is indeed a delightful study of the basic form of the human body.

Several other detached sculptures are noticed lying in the area. Of these a notable rectangular slab is carved with the Anantasayya scene. Visnu is seen lying stretched resting on the coils of the Sesha Naga whose hoods form a canopy over his head. Three of the hands hold the usual *Lachhanas*: Chakra, Padma and Sankha, while the Gada is lying recumbent by the side of the hand supporting the head. One of the feet of Visnu is being massaged by Laksmi. Below the bed is a series of figures representing Nagakanyas, while above hovering in the air another series, less stereotyped and full of movement, are the flying Gandarbhas, filling the air with sweet music. The composition is mainly horizontal consisting of three distinct bands with the full figure of Visnu in the middle, balanced by the uprights of Laksmi and the Ayudhapurushas. Being carved in high relief, figures project boldly from the background conducing to an intricate animated pattern of light and darkness. The base moulding of one of the pillars of the temple also visualises the same contrasting design of light and shade due to the flat slightly carved arabesque surface and dark interstices in between. The abstract foliage issuing out of a standing Kinnara at the bottom of the central panel is reminiscent of similar early mediaeval devices on Orissan and Central Indian monuments where the interconnection between the different elements are more pronounced. Inside the temple and sanctum of Somanatha, is found the Nandi whose compact modelling and summary treatment of form makes up for any loss of supernatural vigour characterising earlier prototypes.

PLATES



SOUTH SIDE OF THE TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA.



SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF THE TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA.



ANOTHER SIDE (N.W.) OF THE TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA



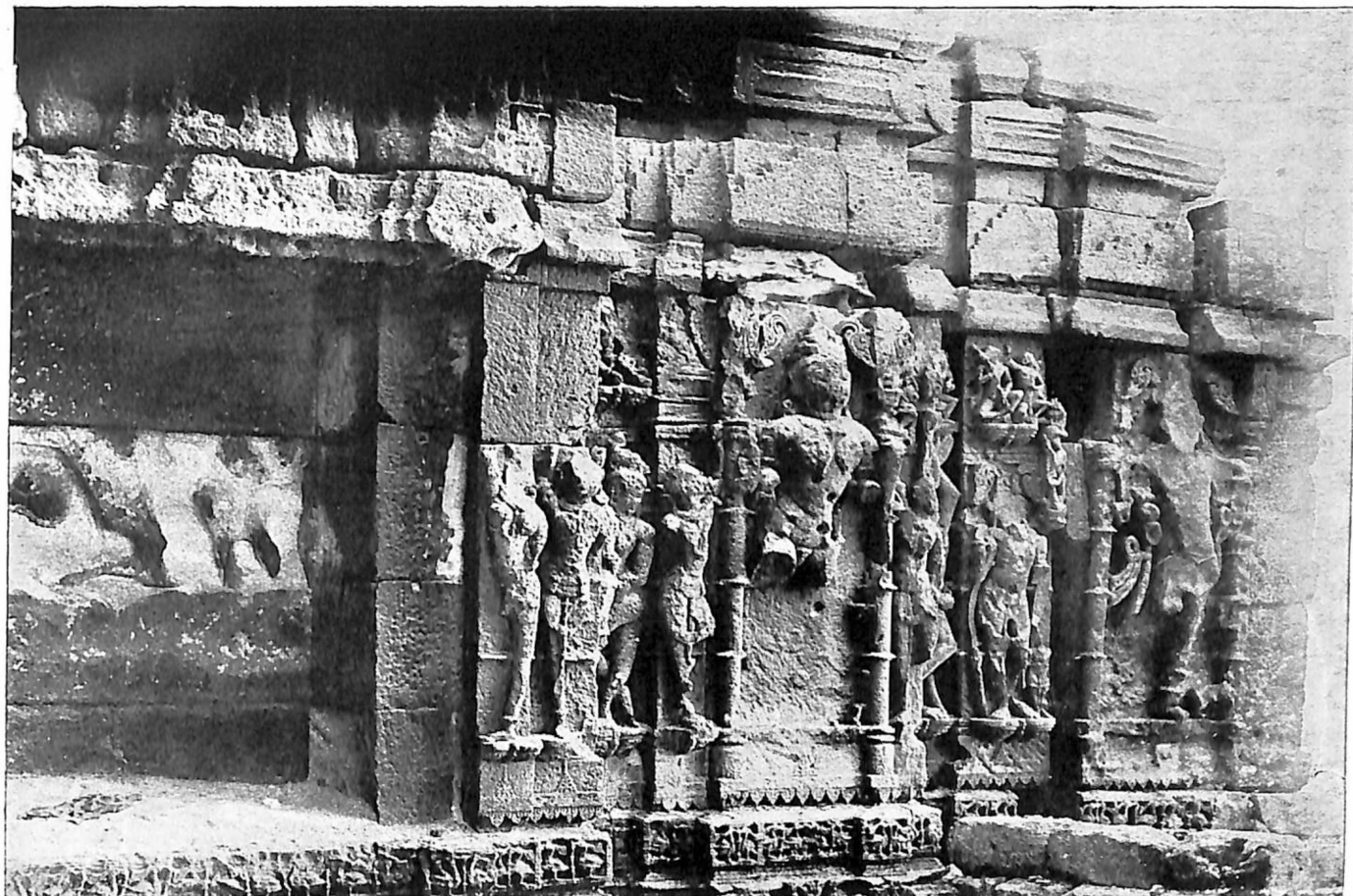
NORTH-WEST CORNER OF THE TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA.



MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA.



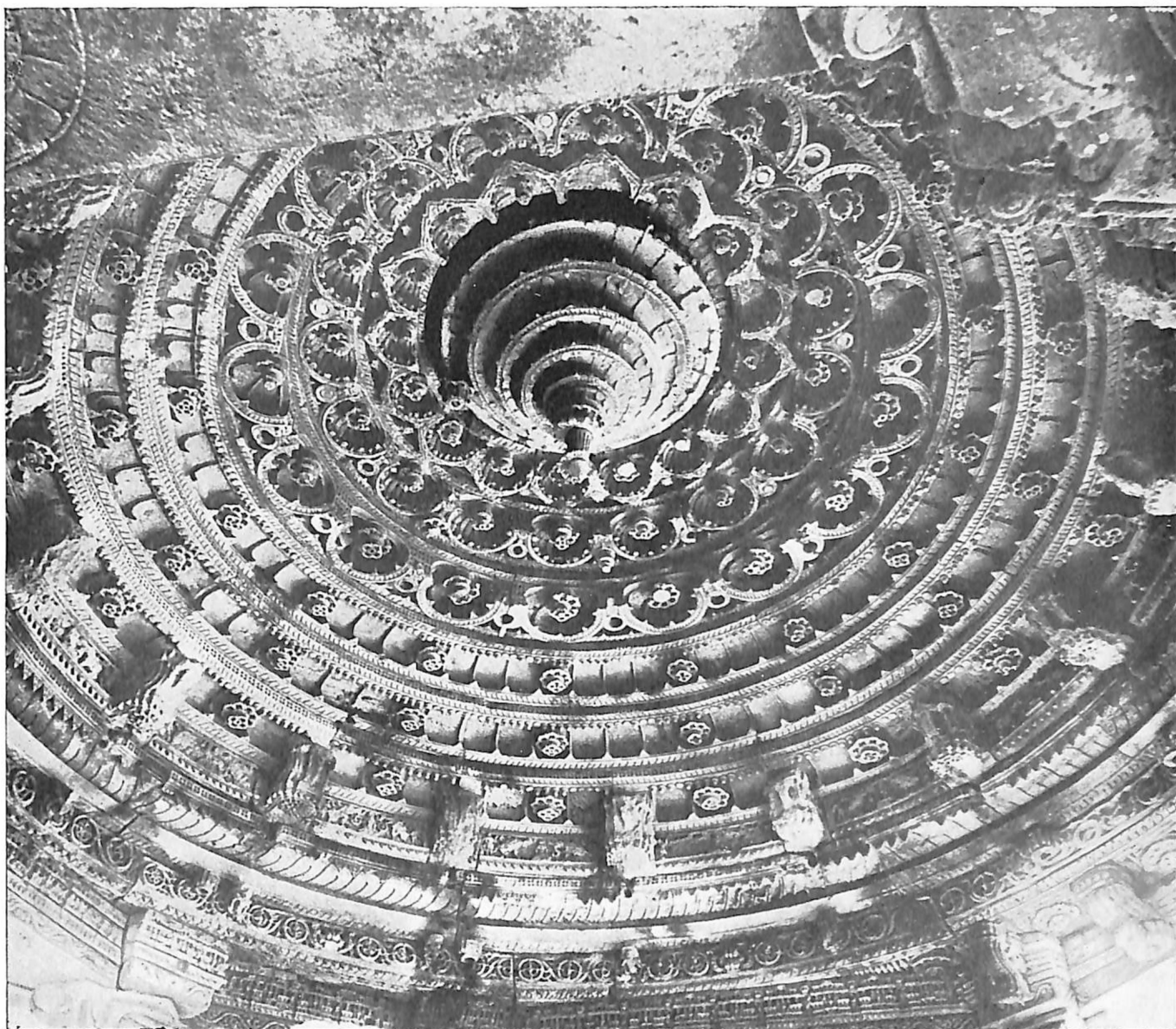
INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA.



SOME BATTERED SCULPTURES ON THE WALLS OF THE
TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA.



RUINED IMAGES NEAR THE TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA.



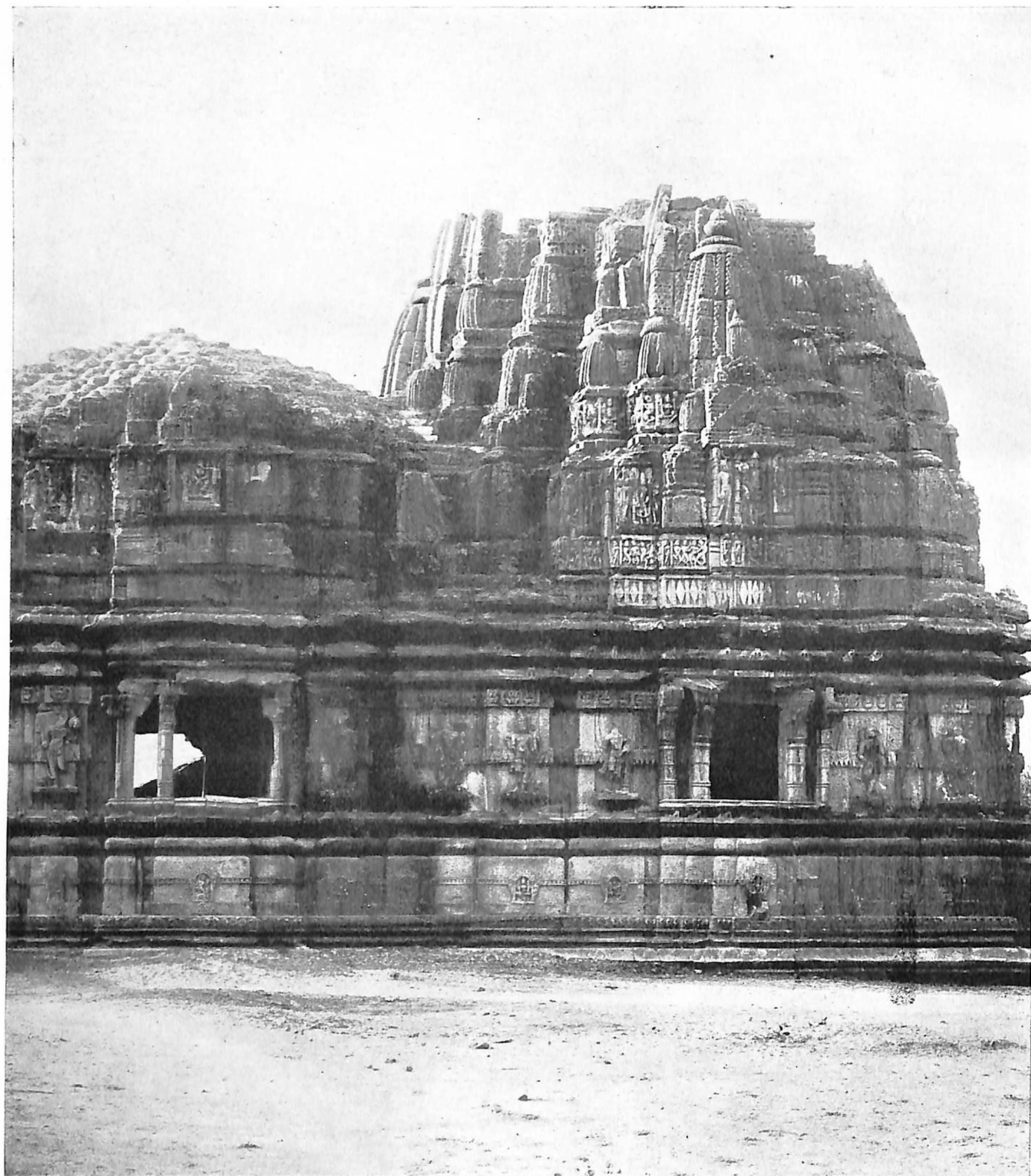
CEILING IN THE MAIPURI MASJID AT SOMANATHA-PATTAN.



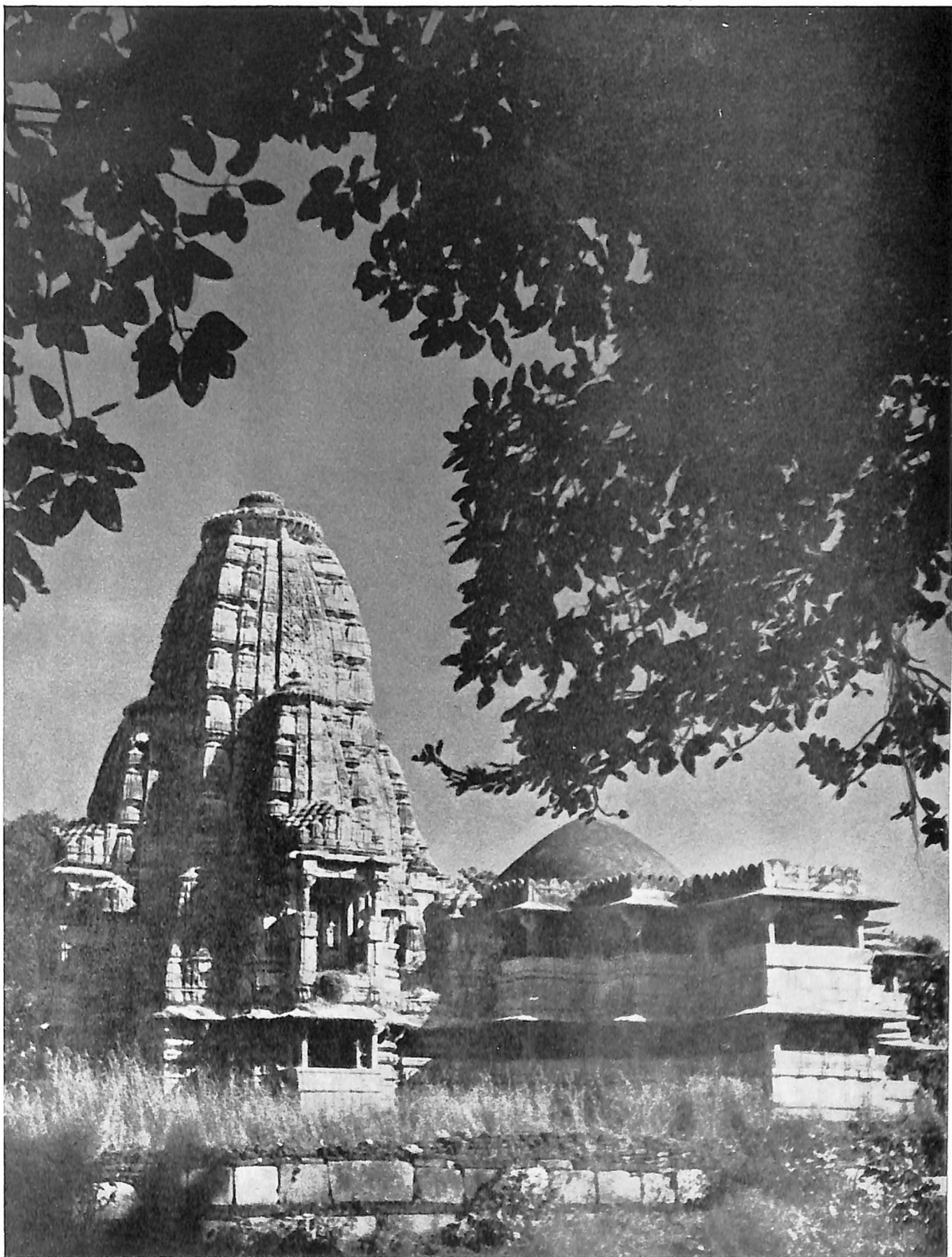
SCULPTURED ARCHITRAVE IN ROCK-CUT STEP WELL NEAR
SOMANATHA-PATTAN.



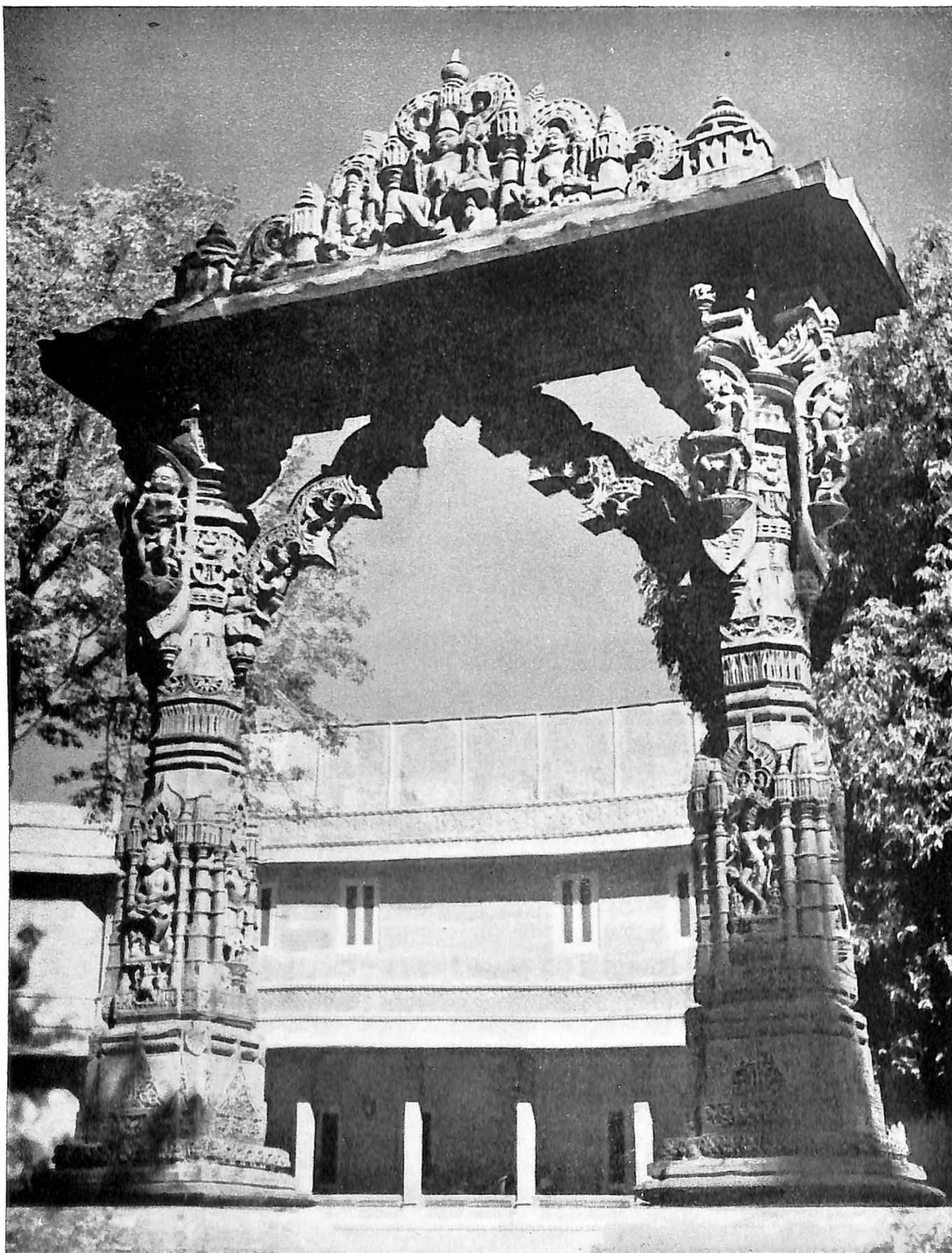
SMALL TEMPLE BEHIND THE TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA.



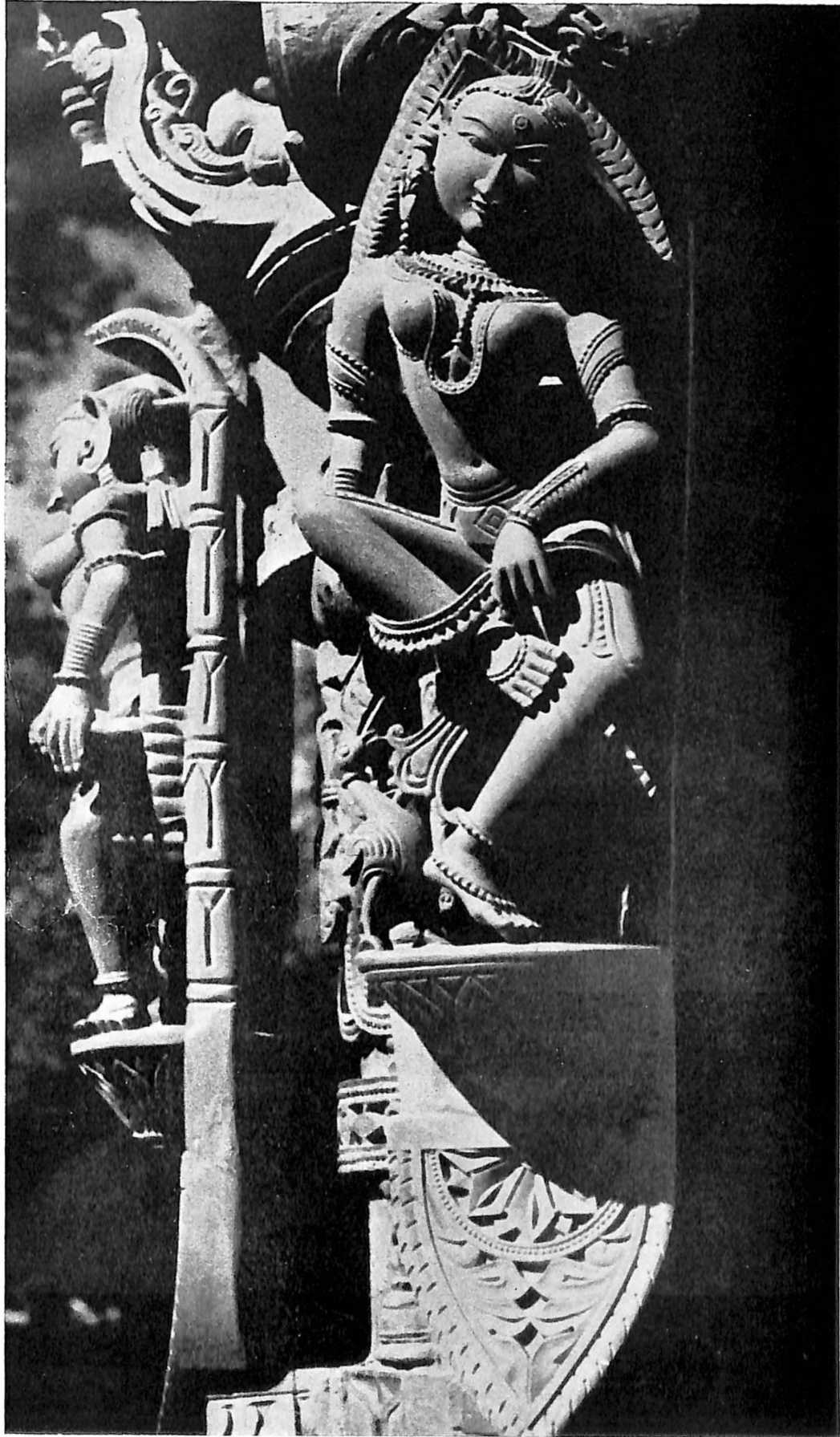
TEMPLE OF SURYYA AT SOMANATHA-PATTAN.



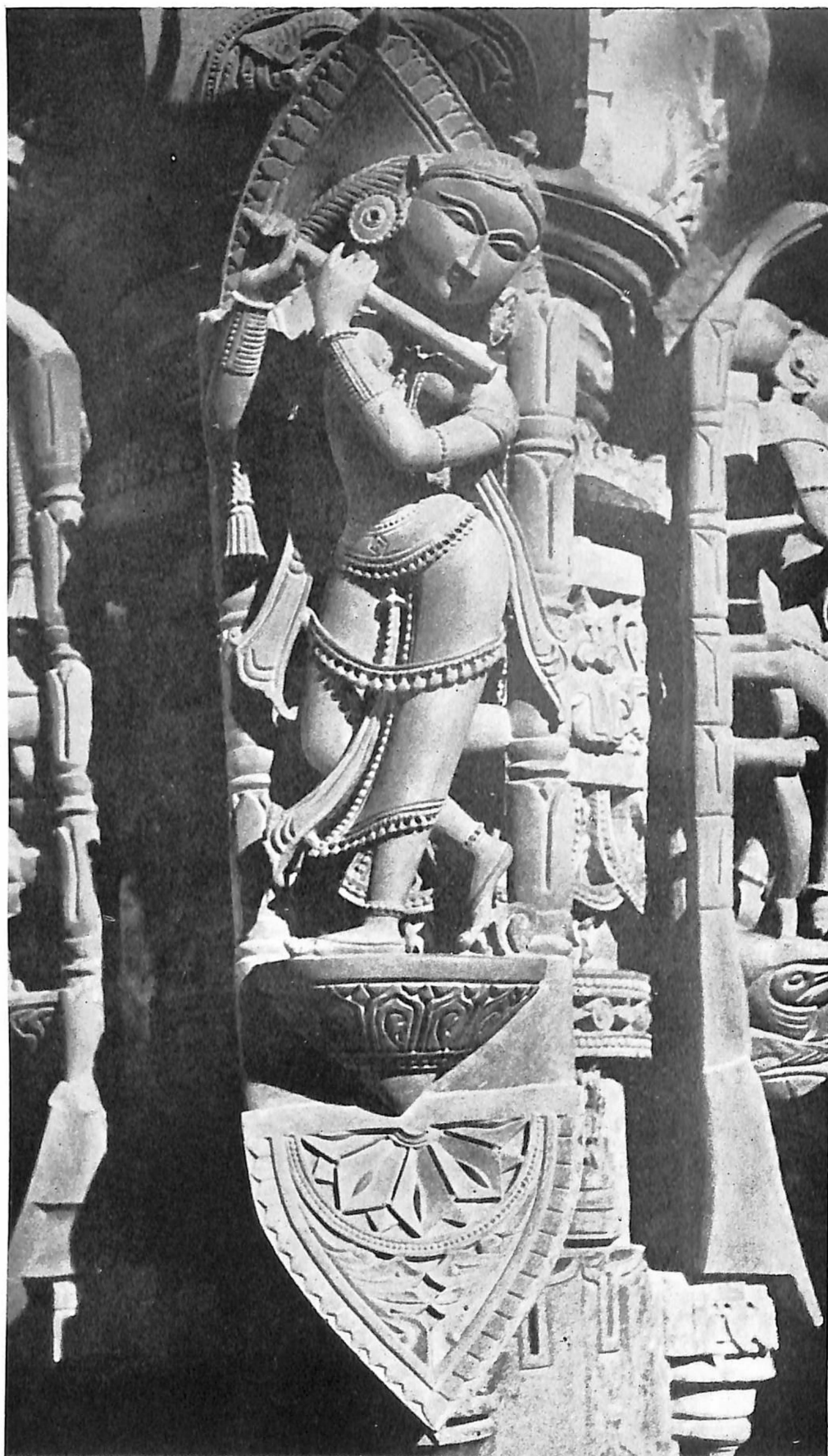
TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA AT DUNGARPUR.



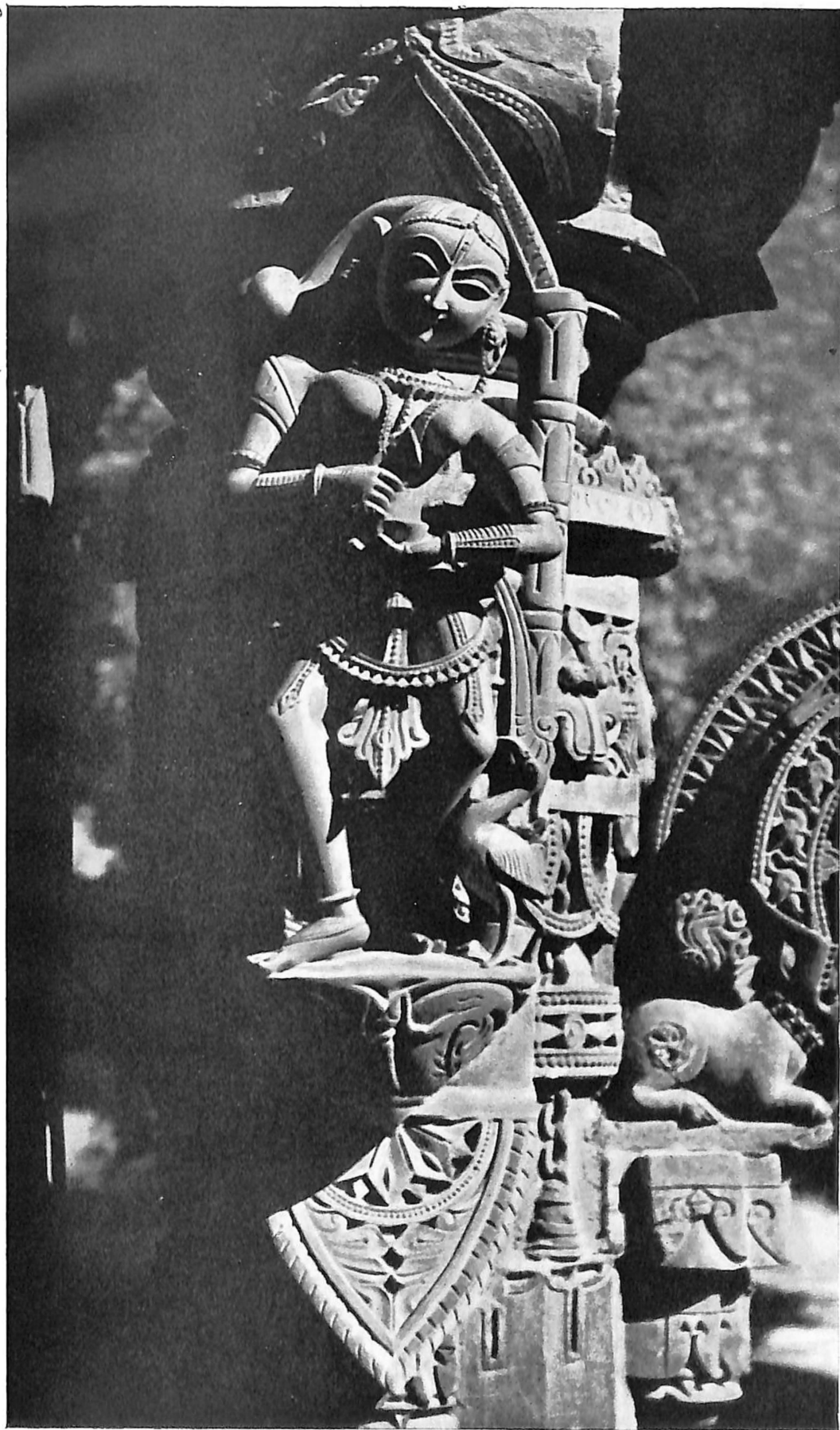
KIRTISTAMBHA AT DUNGARPUR.



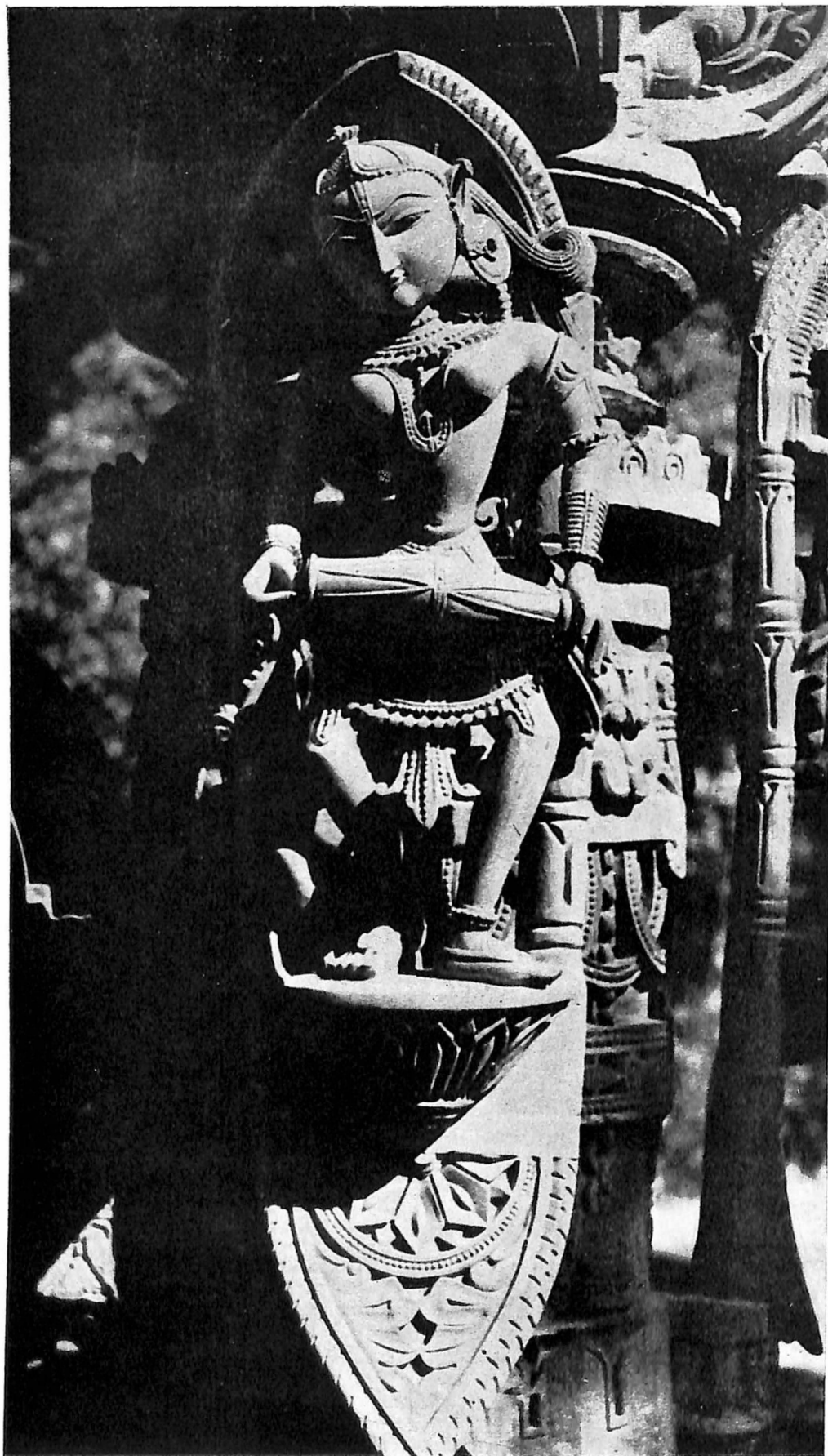
DETAIL OF THE KIRTISTAMBHA SHOWING
DANCERS.



DETAIL OF THE KIRTISTAMBHA SHOWING
MUSICIANS.



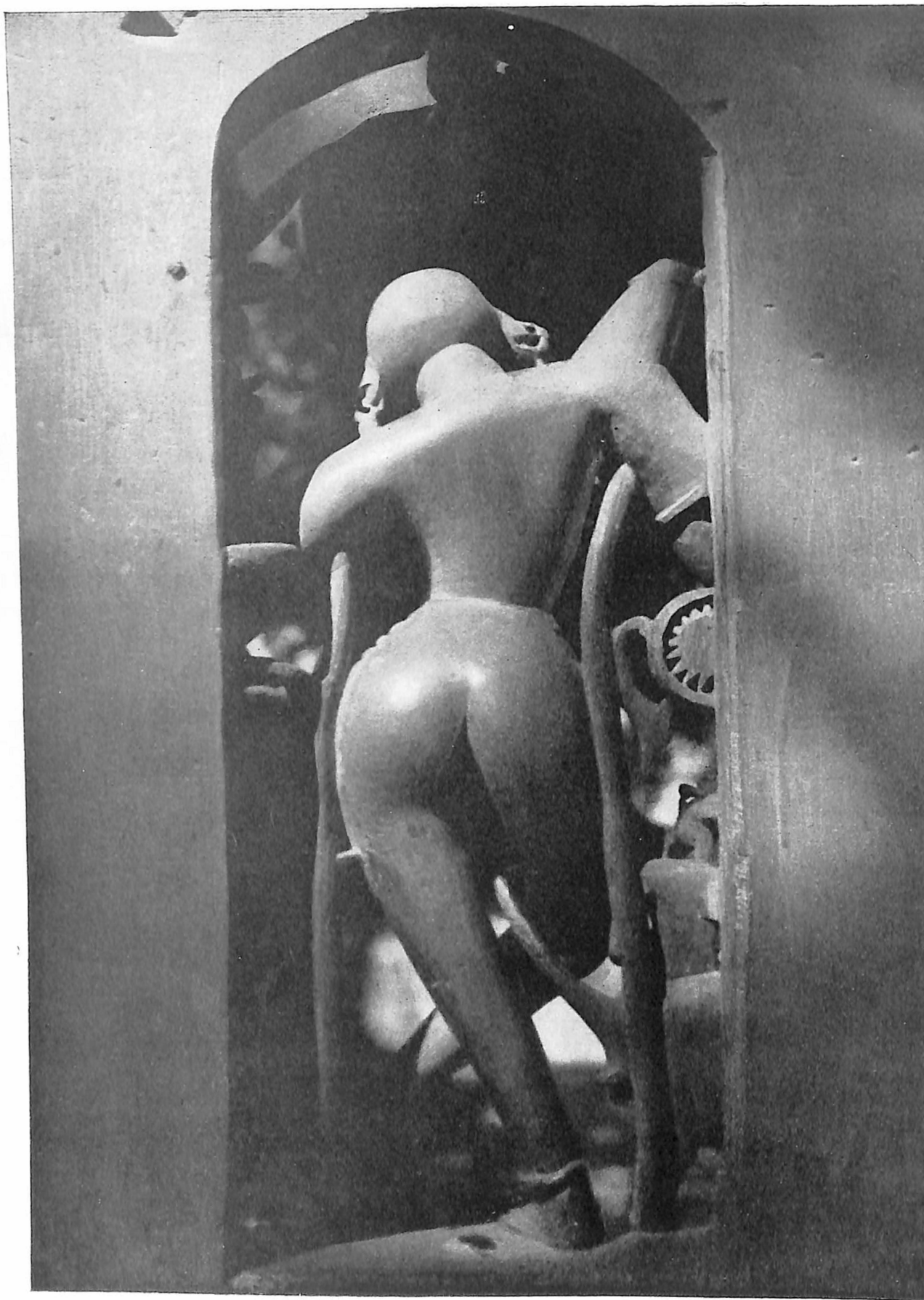
DETAIL OF THE KIRTISTAMBHA SHOWING
MUSICIANS.



DETAIL OF THE KIRTISTAMBHA SHOWING
MUSICIANS.



KRISNA IMAGE, DUNGARPUR—FRONT VIEW.



KRISNA IMAGE, DUNGARPUR —BACK VIEW.

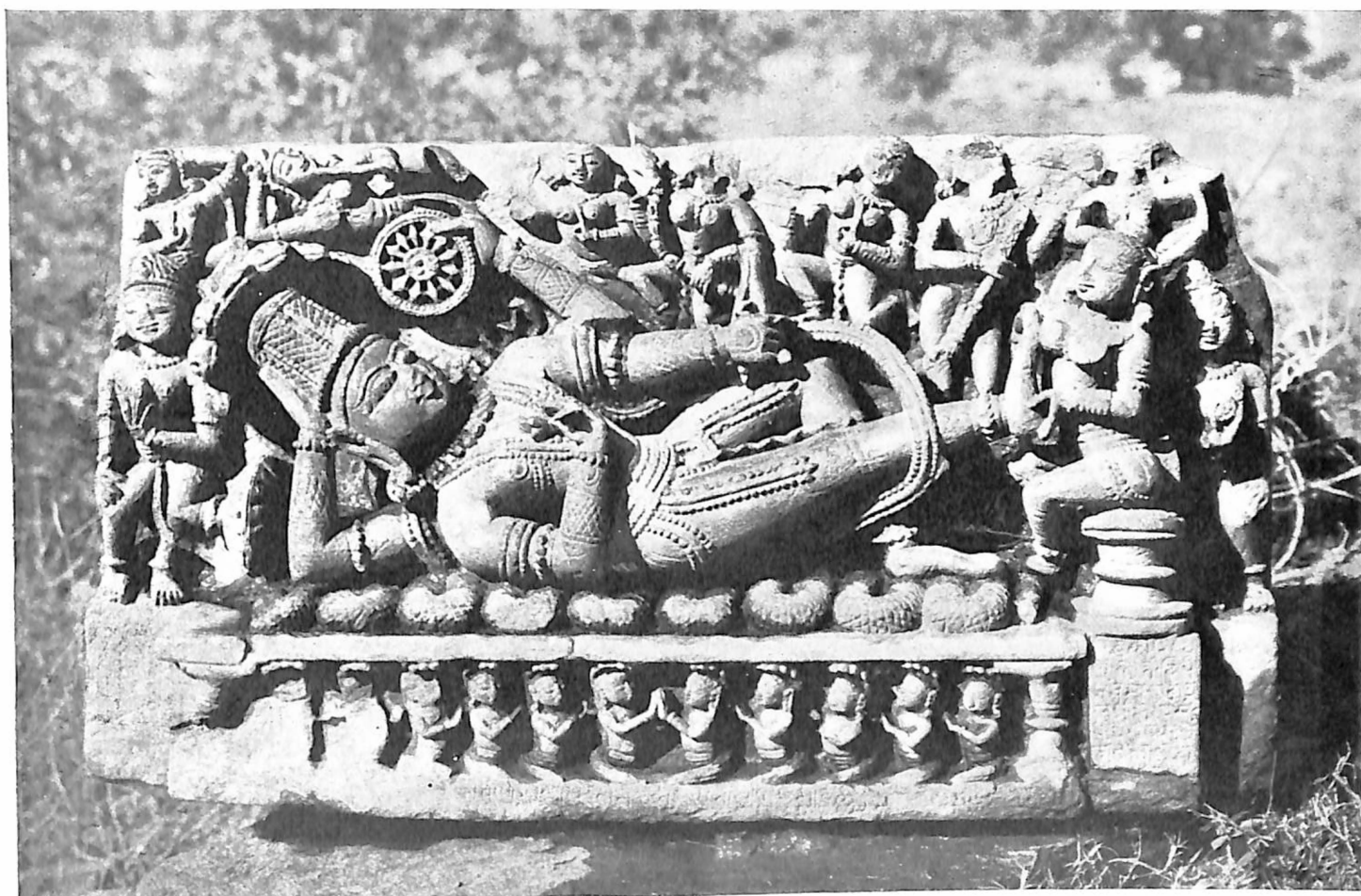


IMAGE OF VISNU ANANTASAYIN, DUNGARPUR.

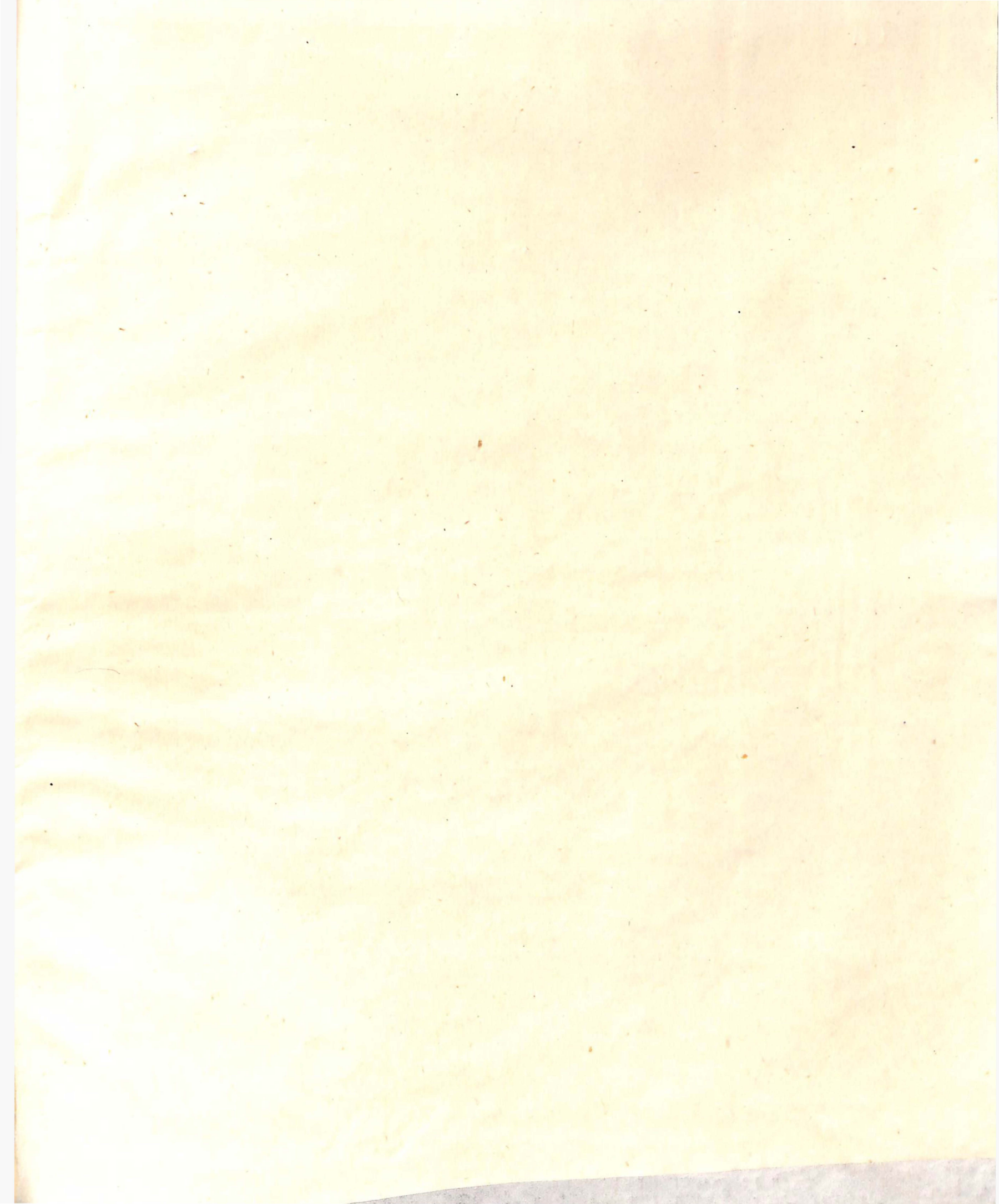


BASE MOULDING OF A PILLASTER, DUNGARPUR.

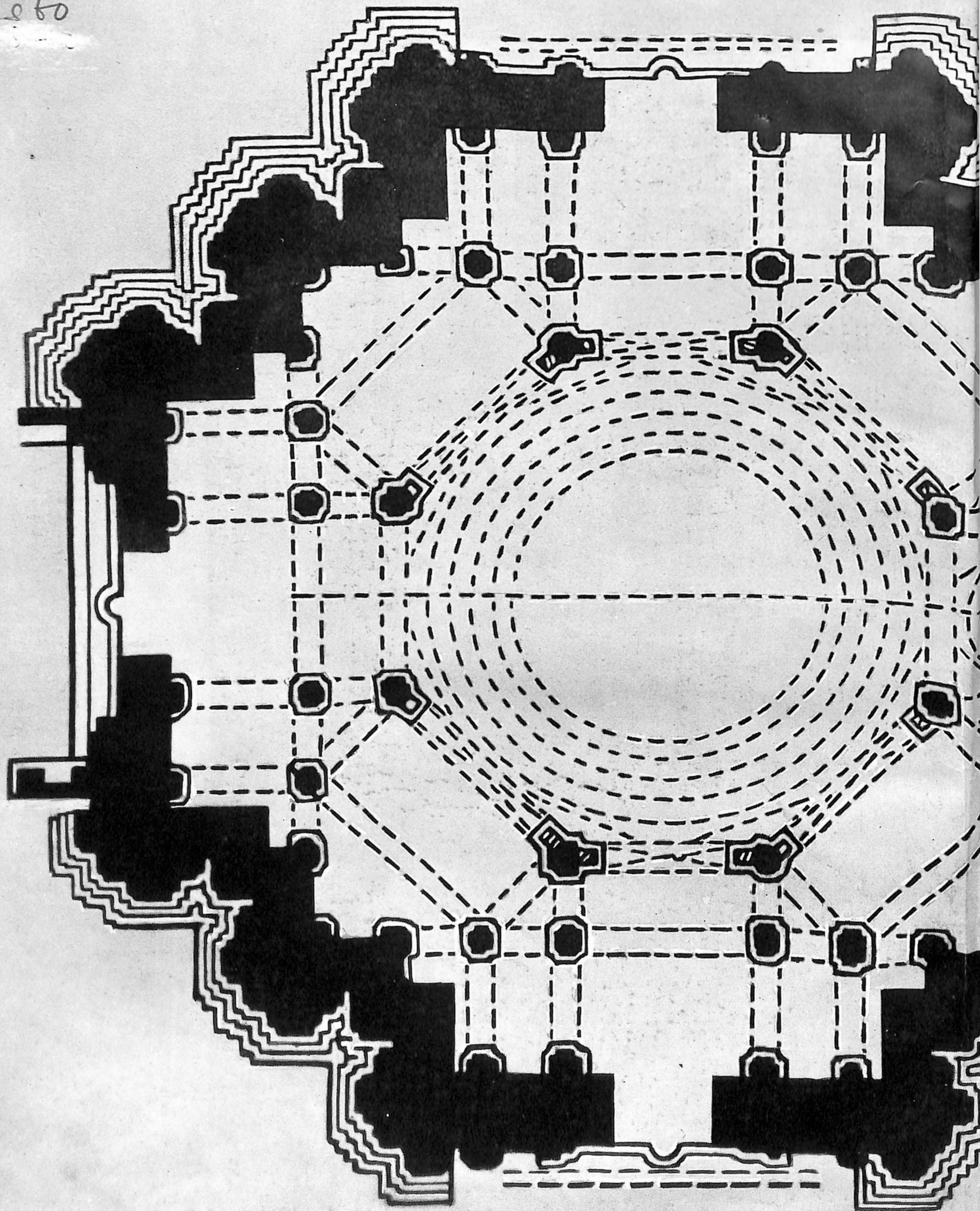


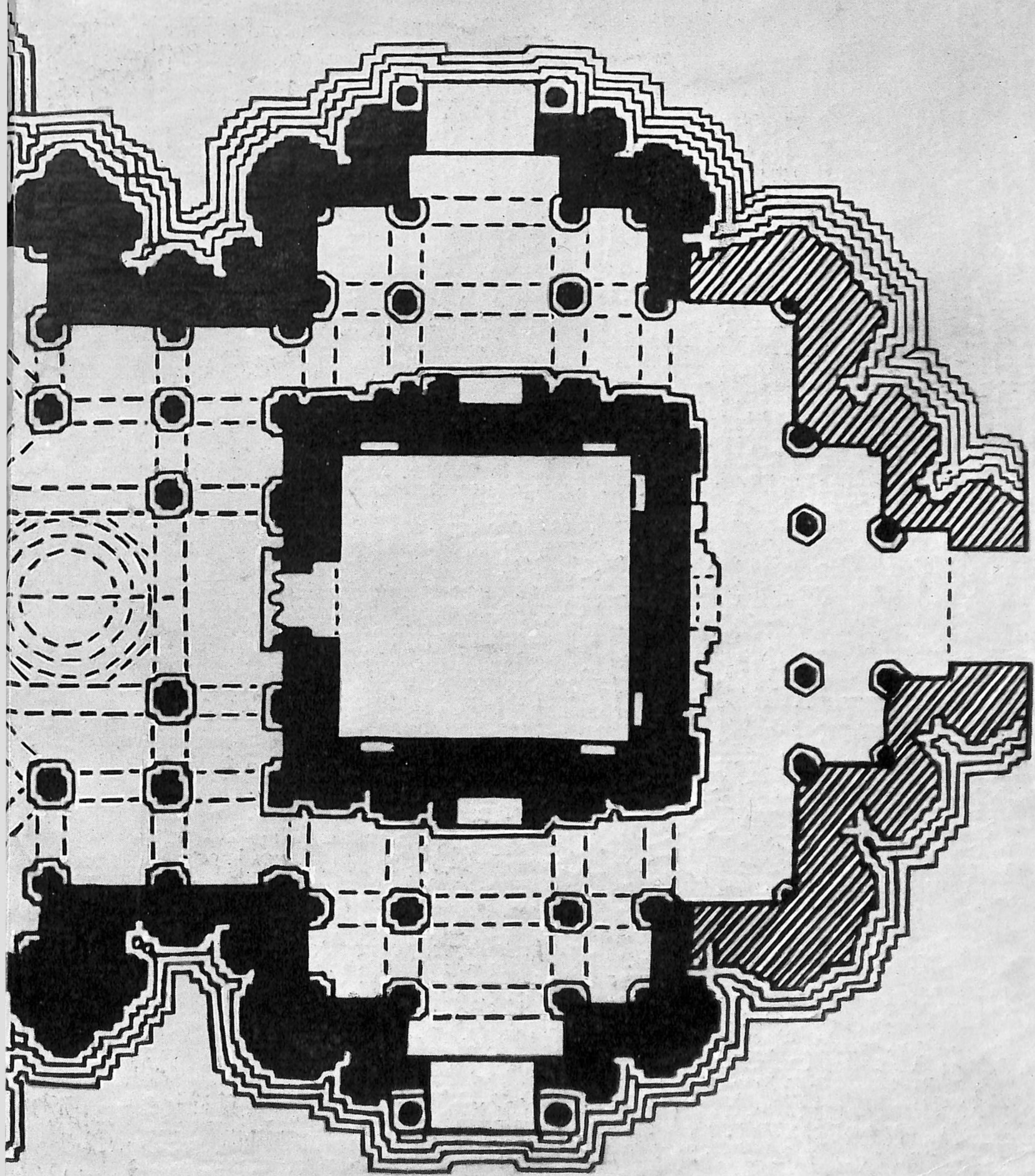
NANDI, TEMPLE OF SOMANATHA AT DUNGARPUR.





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