

Report on the
Twelfth Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission
in Syene / Old Aswan (2011/2012)

by

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in cooperation with

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1. Introduction and Overview

The twelfth season of the joint archaeological project of the Swiss Institute of Architectural and Archaeological Research Cairo and the Aswan Inspectorate of the Ministry of State for Antiquities in Syene/Old Aswan took place between October 16th, 2011 and April 5th, 2012 (Fig. 1)¹.

¹ We are grateful to the Ministry of State for Antiquities and the members of the Permanent Committee for granting permission to undertake the Joint Mission in Aswan. We appreciate very much the fruitful cooperation with our colleagues of the Aswan Inspectorate in this joint mission. The mission was directed by CORNELIUS VON PILGRIM and MOHAMED EL-BIALY. The fieldwork was directed by WOLFGANG MÜLLER. Team members were the Egyptologists, I. FORSTNER-MÜLLER, M. MAREE, V.

Site Management in Area 2 (*Birket Damas*)

After having completed the investigation of the site for the construction of an urgently needed magazine and office building for the mission in Area 2 at Birket Damas during the previous season, construction works should have started in Fall 2012. The magazine building, which is designed as an integral element of a retaining wall supporting the street to the south of Area 2, is part of a comprehensive site management project including the final relocation of the road (Sh. el-Gabbana Fatimiya) that divides the central archaeological zone of Aswan into two separate areas (Area 1/ Isis Temple and Area 2 / Town Wall at Birket Damas). Due to the bad condition of the road and its insufficient support on each side the development and sustainable protection of both antiquities areas, situated beside the road at a much deeper level, are impossible. In addition, leaking water conduits beneath the road pose a constant threat to the monuments and to the stability of the road. At the request of the former SCA the Swiss Institute had therefore developed a masterplan to establish a central archaeological zone in Aswan including the relocation of the road in question, and this was fully agreed by the Governor of Aswan and all relevant departments of the City Council. Construction works were entrusted to Orascom HD, and Samih Sawiris generously agreed full absorption of costs for works on the infrastructure.

During the last season an enclosure wall was built on the eastern side of Area 2 that for the first time prevented any uncontrolled access to the site. The wall, with a height of 2.5 m, is built in a frame construction of reinforced concrete and burnt bricks, and is equipped with a double-winged iron gate. Arrangements were made on the capstone on top of the wall for the installation of a lighting system for security reasons.

However, protests by local residents against temporary traffic calming beside the construction site (which was inevitable for safety reasons) and unjustified claims to property rights on the unstable western and southern enclosure wall that was to be replaced along the streets impeded the start of construction of the magazine and the supporting walls of the southern street. Finally, due to political opposition of local Salafi groups to any involvement of Samih Sawiris and Orascom HD in the works, the entire project had to be stopped. As a result of the headquarters of Orascom being attacked, the company was driven away from

MICHEL and MARCUS MÜLLER, archaeologists C. DOPPELHOFER, M. HEPA, B. JANULIKOVA, A. KIRCHKNOPF, T. KOCH, S. LADSTÄTTER, L. REMBART, H. SCHWAIGER, L. ZABRANA, epigrapher S. PFEIFFER, S. PFEIFFER-CABOR, S. TORALLAS TOVAR and A. ZOMENO RODRÍGUEZ, photographer N. GAIL and A. KRAUSE, geomorphologist M. DE DAPPER, palaeobotanist U. THANHEISER, anthropologists J. NOVACEK and K. SCHEELEN, and conservator E. PEINTNER. Assigned inspectors were HANY SALAH MAHMOUD, USAMA AMR, AHMED AWAD, SHAZLI ALI ABDEL AZIM, MAHMOUD ABDELLA and ADEL TOHEIMY. In summer 2011 work was supervised by USAMA AMER and MOHAMED ABDEL BASED. We are much indebted to PAMELA ROSE for correcting the English of this report.

Aswan and the future of the project to develop a central archaeological zone in Old Aswan had to be postponed.

Conservation Works in Area 2

With a future opening to visitors of the site of Area 2 as part of a central archaeological zone in mind, a restoration of the town wall of the Late Period was started². Whereas parts of the wall are well preserved and stand to a height of four meters, a wide lane had been cut into the eastern section of the wall when the area had been misused in the past by the neighbouring Cleaning Company. It was decided to execute the reconstruction of the wall in a discreet and unobtrusive manner. The missing section of the wall, which originally consisted of undressed granite rubble, was rebuilt with walls of small used sandstone blocks and mud mortar in order to allow the viewer to distinguish between ancient and added stonework (Fig. 2).

Archaeological Work

With the site management of Area 1 in mind, archaeological work last season concentrated mainly on further cleaning and investigations in the same area. Major work was devoted to a comprehensive study of the chronology of the various building phases of the town wall. According to the latest results, the fortification was founded during the Late Period when Aswan, together with Elephantine, guarded the southern border of Egypt. Whereas the fortification walls of Elephantine fell into disuse and a fortified temenos was built during the Ptolemaic Period, the fortification of Syene was repeatedly repaired and reinforced during the Roman Period, and the southeastern part of the fortification was possibly integrated into a smaller fortified district in the Graeco-Roman town.

Beyond the town wall remains of a domestic quarter were cleaned and recorded. Most of the houses had suffered badly from illicit excavations in the past. Nevertheless, the urban structure of the quarter was still needed to be investigated, and the stratigraphy and chronology of its development was studied³.

The systematic survey of ongoing construction sites that come to the attention of the MSA Aswan also continued during summer 2011 (Fig. 1). Two small construction pits (Areas

² We are much indebted to the *Bundesamt für Kultur BAK* of the Federal Department of Interior in Berne for the financial support of the site management in this area.

³ The work in the domestic quarters and the study of pottery is financed by the Austrian *Fond für Wissenschaft und Forschung* (FWF Project P23866 „Housing in Antiquity in Syene and Elephantine, Upper Egypt” under the direction of S. LADSTÄTTER).

69, 70) were investigated by means of limited sondages. In the vicinity of the Temple of Domitian further rock inscriptions of the 13th dynasty were discovered, all of them, however, had already been extracted from their original location during earlier construction works. However the inscriptions may belong to a series of similar inscriptions discovered in situ during earlier rescue excavations in the immediate vicinity. Valuable additional information regarding the extent of an Old and Middle Kingdom harbour site (Area 23) was revealed during a short rescue operation in two adjacent building lots (Areas 72, 73) and in a small sondage further to the north (Area 74). Short term investigations in Areas 77 and 78 did not produce any archaeologically relevant data.⁴

Besides the current fieldwork, the restoration and documentation of small finds and pottery sherds was continued, and also palaeobotanical and anthropological studies. The pottery studies concentrated on Ptolemaic and Roman pottery found in previous seasons in Areas 13 and 15 as well as on the Middle Kingdom pottery from various areas in the town⁵. The investigation of human skeletal remains, conducted during a four weeks stay in March, focussed on the estimation of age at death, identification of sex and diagnostics of certain pathological changes that are visible on the skeleton⁶. 95 individuals from Area 45 and one individual from Area 59 have been identified, among them 14 subadult and 82 adult individuals, including 22 males and 35 females in all age categories. There was an unusually high number of elderly individuals, deceased at older mature, or even senile age. A remarkable finding was evidence for cremations. These fire-burials are known from the Roman Age in Italy and Europe, but usually not from northern Africa and not as late as the Late Roman Period. Among the studied skeletons a large number of real cremations were noted, documenting an extraordinary and hitherto unknown aspect of Roman burial rites in Upper Egypt. The anthropological investigation was able to identify a large number (up to 13) individuals in only one cremation, i.e. an *ustrina*. Some other skeletons were obviously burned in tombs long after their death without the intention of a fire burial.

In preparation for a comprehensive study of all the ostraca discovered by the mission during previous years, the ostraca were inventoried and newly arranged according to language and excavation area⁷. The inventory now consists of 1261 entries. Among these are 97

⁴ Area 78 was situated at the corner of the Sh. Abbas Farid and Sh. Sheich Saleh El-Komi. After one day of investigation it became evident that modern sanitary pits had destroyed prospective archaeological remains to a depth of 4m below street level. The work was stopped for security reasons on February 28th 2012. No excavation took place in Area 77 because no construction work is imminent.

⁵ The pre-Roman pottery is studied by SABINE LADSTÄTTER and LAURA REMBART, the Middle Kingdom pottery is studied by IRENE FORSTNER-MÜLLER.

⁶ The anthropological studies were conducted by J. NOVACEK and K. SCHEELEN.

⁷ The inventory was prepared by S. TORALLAS TOVAR and A. ZOMENO RODRÍGUEZ, who will study the Greek and Coptic ostraca and the Arabic ostraca respectively.

Arabic, 10 Aramaic, 175 Coptic, 54 Demotic, and 548 Greek ostraca. Regarding the Arabic ostraca, A. ZOMENO RODRÍGUEZ noted that they form a very coherent and exceptional collection of texts, which doubles the number of texts on ostraca to date. Their comparative study will provide an important step in Arabic and Islamic texts from the early period. The recording of the rock inscriptions that were cut from various construction sites in previous seasons was continued by M. MAREE. Three additional rock inscriptions were discovered in a waste dump to the north of Area 3. They had apparently been cut out in the past during the construction of houses in the immediate neighbourhood and may have come to light after the recent demolition of these houses.

Finally, the restoration of a sarcophagus (Reg.No. 2606) (Fig. 3) from the rescue excavations of MOHAMED ABDELTAWAB EL-HETTA in 1962 (stored in the Museum of Elephantine) was continued.

C.v.P.

2. Investigation of the town wall of Syene (Area 2)

While in previous seasons the southernmost part of Area 2 and the southern sector of the city wall were investigated,⁸ during season 12 the focus of the work was on the eastern sector and the “bastion”, the corner where eastern and southern sectors of the wall meet (Fig. 4).⁹

The eastern sector of the town wall

The eastern sector of the town wall is visible for more than 90m in Areas 1 and 2. The wall is best preserved in Area 1 to the east of the Temple of Isis, where its western face still stands to a height of nearly 8m. The wall consisted of a socle made of granite rubble and a mud-brick superstructure. The mud-brick part of the wall was at least 4m high. The most remarkable feature of the wall is the visible massive stonesocle with a height of more than 4m.¹⁰

⁸ Cf. W. MÜLLER, in: C. v. PILGRIM/W. MÜLLER, ‘Tenth Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2009/2010)’, *ASAE*, forthcoming ([http://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report on the Tenth Season of the Joint Swiss Egyptian Mission in Syene Old Aswan \(2009 2010\).pdf](http://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report%20on%20the%20Tenth%20Season%20of%20the%20Joint%20Swiss%20Egyptian%20Mission%20in%20Syene%20Old%20Aswan%20(2009%202010).pdf)) (quoted henceforth as *Tenth season*), pp. 2-6). *Idem*, in: C. v. PILGRIM, ‘Report on the Eleventh Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene / Old Aswan (2010/2011)’, *ASAE*, forthcoming ([http://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report on the Eleventh Season of the Joint Swiss Egyptian Mission in Syene Old Aswan \(2010 2011\).pdf](http://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report%20on%20the%20Eleventh%20Season%20of%20the%20Joint%20Swiss%20Egyptian%20Mission%20in%20Syene%20Old%20Aswan%20(2010%202011).pdf)) (henceforth cited as *Eleventh Season*), pp. 4 – 15).

⁹ The terminology follows HORST JARITZ (H. JARITZ/M. RODZIEWICZ, ‘Syene – Review of the Urban Remains and its Pottery’, in: *MDAIK* 50 (1994), p. 116.

¹⁰ H. JARITZ/M. RODZIEWICZ, ‘Syene – Investigation of the Urban Remains in the Vicinity of the Temple of Isis (II)’, in: *MDAIK* 52 (1996), 235.

The breach

The southern part of the eastern sector of the wall was almost completely destroyed for a length of approximately 18m (Fig. 5). The breach was most probably caused by the use of heavy equipment such as front-loaders at an unknown date as traces of excavator shovels were found all over the area. The wall was already damaged when HORST JARITZ drew the first plan of the site in 1991.¹¹ The breach was then still covered with windblown sand and debris. After cleaning, it became obvious that the course of the western face of the wall was completely preserved for the whole length of the breach. A small part of the eastern face was completely destroyed but even there slight traces were still visible on the exposed granite surface. The course of the wall could thus be reconstructed for the complete breach-area. A small trench dug at the western face of the wall and investigations in the areas where the wall was already destroyed, showed that the outer faces of the wall rested on the granite bedrock. As the surface of the bedrock sloped up from west to east, the wall was founded deeper and thus was better preserved in the west than in the east. While the westernmost 2m of the wall were partly dug into quarry debris that had accumulated during the Pharaonic period,¹² the centre of the wall rested on the same material that consisted mostly of densely packed granite chips and sand.¹³

The partial destruction of the wall in the area of the breach provided a unique opportunity to study the construction of the earliest phase of the wall in great detail. The outermost 1.5 – 2m of the wall were constructed of stones (predominantly rose granite but also other local granite derivatives) slightly larger than those used for the core and were laid carefully in such a way as to create a smooth face to the wall. Only at the outer limits of the wall was mud mortar used. The core of the wall was made of loosely packed granite rubble of different sizes. The outer face of the wall was coated in a thick layer of white painted mud plaster. The wall showed different degrees of banking, but was generally significantly wider at its base than at the (reconstructed) top. The width of the wall as seen on the plan has therefore always to be regarded as dependent of the preserved height of the wall at a given location. Even taking this into account, the width of the southern sector of the wall increased significantly from north to south and reached its maximum next to the bastion, at more than 9.5m at the base while it was only approximately 5.5m wide further to the north at the top of the stone part of the wall (here several layers of mud-bricks of the original superstructure were still preserved).

¹¹ *Ibid*, fig. 1.

¹² The pottery has yet to be studied in detail. While the earliest deposits at the site seem to date to the New Kingdom, the latest material dates to the Late Period.

¹³ Cf. W. MÜLLER, 'Area 46', in: C. v. PILGRIM/W. MÜLLER, 'Report on the Ninth Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2008/2009)', *ASAE*, forthcoming ([http://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report 9th Season 2008-2009.pdf](http://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report%209th%20Season%202008-2009.pdf) (quoted henceforth as *Ninth Season*), pp. 11-13, fig. 16)

The northern part of the eastern sector of the town-wall

In the northern part of the eastern sector the stone socle of the town wall (ES 2) was preserved to its full height. Of the mud-brick wall sitting on top of the stone wall very little was left. As was the case with the southern sector, the wall was repaired several times during its long period of use (Fig. 6).¹⁴ Due to the fact that the western face of the wall is still mostly obscured by the houses of the Roman city quarter to the west, only the eastern face of the wall could be investigated in detail and will be described below.

The erosion of the wall of the Late Period was especially evident on the preserved top surface of the wall, where several pits were cut into the stone socle. The only repair visible on the surface was a patch of carefully laid mud-bricks that differed significantly in texture and measurements from the bricks used for the original superstructure.

Repair phase 1 (ES2)

The earliest casing of the wall was set against the eastern face in the Late Ptolemaic Period (Fig. 7). It consisted mostly of sandstone and some granite at the face and granite rubble at the core. At the time of construction of this casing the original city wall was only preserved to a height of 2.40m. The 1.30m wide casing was set against the face of the earlier wall (with the original plaster still preserved). The granite filling adjoining the casing covered the remains of the Late Period wall. The city wall in this area was therefore reconstructed to a considerable degree in the Ptolemaic Period. The fact that the original southern end of the casing was situated just to the north of the breach proves that the damage to the city wall was of a local nature. Soon after its construction the casing started to collapse, probably due to its weak foundation as it was set on layers of loose wind-blown sand. A crack was visible in the southern face of the casing and its preserved upper courses tilted slightly towards the east.

Repair Phase 2 (ES3)

The poor shape of the Ptolemaic construction soon necessitated further repair work. A mud-brick wall was set against the face of the earlier casing (Fig. 8). The wall showed two distinct phases. At first a 1.60 – 1.70m wide wall was built against the eastern and southern face of the casing. The northern end of the construction was preserved while the southern end was destroyed when the breach came into existence (the north-south extension was 6m + x). While the building process was still under way, the construction changed considerably. During the first phase the bricks were laid in an orderly way. The later wall was erected in a kind of casemate construction on top of the earlier one. The faces of the wall were proper mud-brick

¹⁴JARITZ/RODZIEWICZ, *MDAIK* 50, p.117. v. PILGRIM/MÜLLER, *Tenth Season*, pp. 4-5.

walls, and the core consisted of thrown-in mud-bricks and mud-mortar. In the second phase the wall protruded significantly further towards the east and thus became a buttress that supported the town-wall at a weak point. For both phases of the wall and the patching on the surface of the town wall (Fig. 10) the same kind of bricks was used. The most remarkable features of the sandy mud-bricks were small holes, indentations of fingers pressed into their broadest-surfaces.¹⁵ This repair phase most probably dates to the Early Imperial Roman Period.

Repair phase 3 (ES4)

When the town wall to the north of the Early Roman construction needed additional support, a north-south oriented mud-brick wall was set against the Ptolemaic casing. It abutted the northern face of the Early Roman “buttress” and was built on a massive foundation of sandstone and granite (Fig. 9). Some of the stones were reused well-dressed blocks and other stone artefacts. The foundation was dug deep into layers of pottery dating to the Early Imperial Period. It showed two phases and consisted of very hard dark sandy mud-bricks. The pottery from layers associated with the wall hints at a date in the 3rd – 4th century AD.

Repair phase 4 (ES5)

After a considerable amount of time, probably in the Late Roman Period, another casing was erected against and on top of the remains of the mud-brick wall (Fig. 10). It consisted of rose granite rubble and was constructed without the use of any mortar. The casing was preserved over a north-south extension of nearly 10m. At its northern end it bonded with another casing that consisted of reused, mostly decorated sandstone blocks closely resembling the Late Roman casing attached to the southern sector of the town wall. As was the case there, several courses of the mud-brick superstructure of the Late Roman city wall were still preserved on top of the casing. The northern end of the rose granite casing was rounded, probably because the sandstone casing originally ended in a tower, of which only traces of an east-west wall remained when a later tower was attached to the Late Roman casing in phase ES6. The casing was erected on more than 1.40m of settlement debris that was contemporary with the mud-brick casing. The 3rd-4th century AD mud-brick wall was already completely eroded at the time of construction of the later casing. A Late Roman date, just like that of the sandstone casing at the southern sector of the town wall, seems therefore to be the most feasible.

¹⁵ Bricks marked in this way are usually dated to the Middle Kingdom. Cf. H. JARITZ, ‘The Investigation of the Ancient Wall Extending from Aswan to Philae’, in: *MDAIK* 43 (1987), p. 70. C. v. PILGRIM, ‘Swiss Archaeological Mission at Aswan-South: The Fortification Wall between Aswan and Shellal. Report on the First Season March 2011’, *ASAE*, forthcoming.

Repair phase 5 (ES6)

The tower abutting the Late Roman casing comprised two chambers (Fig. 11). It protruded from the face of the wall for more than 4m. Its north-south extension is given by JARITZ as 11m.¹⁶ The massive walls of the tower were 1.5m wide and made of reused blocks, some of them decorated in Egyptian style during the Imperial Roman Period.¹⁷ The wall consisted of two faces made of well laid blocks and a core of lime mortar, sandstone rubble and broken fired bricks. The dating of the tower is impossible to establish for the time being but, taking into account the facts that the masonry differs significantly from the Roman casings and that it replaced an earlier Late Roman construction, an Islamic date for the tower seems to be most probable. The tower marks the latest evidence for the existence of a town wall in Area 2.

A building at the southern sector of the wall was termed a tower by JARITZ and compared to the tower attached to the eastern sector.¹⁸ Whatever it is, the southern building was erected after the destruction of the Late-Roman casing (ES6). Hence its interpretation as a tower belonging to the aforementioned wall seems to be questionable (SS4).¹⁹

The “Bastion”

Eastern and western sectors of the city wall meet at an acute angle on top of a granite massif in the southeastern part of Area 2 (Fig. 12). The area of the southeastern corner of the town of Aswan for more than a millennium was severely damaged and covered with debris and wind-blown sand at the beginning of the investigation, which produced a new picture of this crucial part of the town’s fortification. The modern northern end of the “bastion” area is the result of the destruction that happened when the wall was breached (Fig. 13).

The south-eastern corner of the Late Period town wall (B1)

The eastern face of the Late Period wall could be traced in the bastion area for nearly 10m. As there was no trace of the southern face of the Late Period city wall in the bastion area, the corner of that period was not preserved.

Repair phase 1 (B2)

In the Imperial Roman Period a banking wall with a width of 2m at the base was attached to the eastern face of the Late Period wall. The mud-brick wall was built on a foundation of rose

¹⁶ JARITZ/RODZIEWICZ, *op.cit.* The northern end of the tower is now completely covered by the sloping retaining-wall supporting the modern street.

¹⁷ A_block decorated with a Maltese cross still seen by JARITZ (*Ibid.*, p. 117, pl. 18a), is now completely covered with modern debris.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*

¹⁹ MÜLLER, in: *Tenth Season*, pp. 5 – 6.

granite rubble in the north and set directly on the granite bedrock in the south, where the granite massif reached its full height. The foundation thus compensated for the difference in elevation of the bedrock. The mud-brick wall was preserved further to the south than the Late Period wall to which it was attached (Fig. 14). The mud-brick construction showed a distinct corner as remains of its southern section were still preserved and provided therefore indirect evidence for the location of the Late Period corner, as the northern face of the southern sector of the mud-brick wall marked the approximate location of the southern face of the Late Period wall. It thus became clear that no bastion was situated at the southeastern corner of the Late Period town wall or its first Roman repair phase. The substantial width of the wall in this region however would be spacious enough for an integrated, non-projecting tower.

Extension phase 2 (B3)

The Late Roman Period saw a complete change of layout of the corner of the wall when a true bastion came into existence. Two walls meeting in a corner at the south-west of the bastion area had already been observed by JARITZ.²⁰ Recent investigations have confirmed his observation that the well-dressed, partly reused sandstone blocks used in these walls were the outward facade of a construction mostly consisting of granite rubble (Fig. 15). In contrast to the construction of the Late Period wall, granite chips, most of them of slab-like form, were laid out horizontally with layers of lime mortar in between them. The sandstone blocks, some of them still with bosses were also bonded with lime mortar. The southern face of the bastion was preserved to a height of two courses of blocks in some places. Towards the southeastern corner only the bedding of rose granite slabs was still preserved. Excavations at the eastern limit of the Late Roman bastion showed that the eastern face was constructed in the same way as the southern front. Four blocks of the original face were still preserved. The sandstone blocks of the same size as in the south were also still with bosses. They were laid with the use of copious amounts of lime-mortar and rested on a bed of rose granite slabs that were used to create a level base for the wall. As the rose granite foundation was still well preserved, the whole layout of the bastion with the exception of its northern limit could be reconstructed. While remains of the rose granite core of the bastion could be found 2m to the north of the southern limit of the breach, an impression in lime mortar, most probably of a sandstone block from the northern face was situated just at the southern limit of the breach. For the time being it is impossible to reconstruct the northern limit of the bastion with a high degree of certainty. Probably the rose granite foundation projected several metres further to the south than the facade of sandstone blocks. The Late Roman bastion covered an area of at least 300sqm. The extant remains belong to a massive platform that served as a foundation for a

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 116, fig.1.

bastion with high representative value. It has to be stressed that the bastion is the first element of active fortification of the town-wall that had previously lacked towers or bastions during its earlier phases. The removal of the sandstone blocks in the Mamluk period or later marks the time of destruction of the bastion and probably the end of use of this part of the town wall.

Later phases

There are few traces of later additions to the Late Roman phase of the bastion. Extensive traces of cast-masonry, similar to the core of the Islamic tower attached to the eastern flank of the wall at the very north of Area 2, may be the last remains of an Islamic addition to the wall.

General Phases of the Town Wall	Eastern Sector	Southern Sector²¹	“Bastion”
G (Post Town-Wall)		SS4	
F (Islamic)	ES6		
E (Late Roman)	ES5	SS3	B3
D (Roman Imperial)	ES4	SS2	B2
C (Early Roman Imperial)	ES3		
B (Late Ptolemaic)	ES2		
A (Late Period)	ES1	SS1	B1

Tab.1: Tentative summary of rebuilding- and repair phases detected in the town-wall of Syene in Area 2.

Extramural activities

In contrast to the situation in the southern part of Area 2, very little material of archaeological relevance remained to the east of the town wall due to modern destruction and natural erosion. A first investigation of the extramural stratigraphy associated with the town wall showed that the massive deposition of settlement debris (predominantly pottery) in this area began with the Late Ptolemaic Period. A significant difference between the areas to the south and east of the townwall was observed: to the east several metres of layers of settlement debris dating from the Late Ptolemaic to the Imperial Roman Period had accumulated against the town wall, while in the south the Late Roman deposits were significantly more massive. The lack of Late Roman material to the east is due to the fact that no pre-modern layers associated with the Late Roman casings were preserved. The small amount of Late Ptolemaic or slightly later material to the south however remains peculiar.²²

²¹ SS I: Late Period core of the town-wall; SS II: Roman Imperial Mud-brick construction; SS III: casing of reused sand-stone blocks; SS IV: “tower” – Islamic building of trapezoidal ground-plan.

²² As throughout this report the pottery assessment is of a preliminary nature and awaits proper study by specialists.

During the earlier Ptolemaic Period and the Late Period very little waste was deposited outside the town. Layers of wind-blown sand alternate with more or less pronounced mud surfaces. The lack of waste may be due to other strategies of waste-disposal at the time. Excavations in Area 15 showed that the situation *intra muros* is different from the findings *extra muros*.²³ While huge amounts of waste of all kinds (pottery, industrial waste, animal bones) were deposited in streets and even as a filling between floors inside houses from the Late Period until the beginning of the “urban phase” (early 2nd century BC), very little waste was found inside the town from then onwards.²⁴ The extramural investigations imply that the favoured dumping areas from the Middle – Late Ptolemaic Period until the end of antiquity were situated outside the town.

Burials

As in Elephantine, simple pit burials dating to the Early Ptolemaic Period were situated just outside the town wall.²⁵ In Tomb 7 (Fig. 16) the body of a child was interred in a supine position with the head to the south, facing towards the town wall to the west. Except for some traces of textiles no grave goods were found. The grave clearly predated the Late Ptolemaic casing, as did the completely robbed Tomb 8 where only some bones and scarce remains of textiles were still preserved.

Activities predating the town-wall

In a small trench dug in the breach area the final traces of a narrow (one brick wide) wall were detected. The wall was removed in order to make room for the city wall. Only the imprint of the lowest course of bricks in mortar bedding was preserved. The wall sat on top of a layer of quarry debris that had accumulated between unquarried isolated granite boulders. The date of the debris and the remains of the wall cannot be given in detail at the moment but the situation resembles the findings in the south of the area, where traces of quarrying activities throughout the Pharaonic Period were observed.

W.M.

²³ W. MUELLER, in: C. v. PILGRIM ET AL., ‘The Town of Syene. Report on the 5th and 6th Season in Aswan’, *MDAIK* 64 (2008), p. 318 and 323.

²⁴ The phenomenon is currently studied in detail by JOHANNA SIGL in her dissertation *Die Tierwelt von Syene/Aswan* at the University of Munich.

²⁵ Cf. D. RAUE/P. KOPP/C. v. PILGRIM, in: DAI Abt. Kairo, *Rundbrief*, Januar 2011, p. 4.

3. Investigation of a town-quarter of Graeco-Roman Syene (Area 2)

In area 2 (figs.17-18) a couple of houses within the city wall of the Late Period were already exposed but their chronologies were uncertain. On the basis of their architectural construction, multiple houses were distinguished, three of which were already completely excavated. The results in the surrounding areas and preliminary investigations during the 11th field season allowed a tentative identification of the buildings as Imperial Roman housing with late antique reuse. This last phase can only be partly identified.

The scientific goal of this excavation is to link the architectural remains with the stratigraphy and finds which will also allow an identification of the function of various rooms or parts of buildings. In addition it may also be possible to distinguish hierarchies between the rooms. The ratio of public to private space and the relationship between private rooms is an important factor in the analysis of housing.

It is necessary first to understand the chronological development of this quarter and identify its different uses over time with respect to general tendencies of Roman and Late Roman housing. Due to the earlier excavations the latest phases of use can only be studied in a few disjointed areas.

In addition to the diachronic analysis the study will emphasize synchronic aspects, indicative of larger phenomena.

In addition to the excavations a building analysis was carried out: the remains were documented and then the architectural anomalies analyzed. Since the archaeological investigations focus primarily on the housing, the work was conducted exclusively in the southern area because of the condition and the completeness of the archaeological remains which preserve more conclusive evidence.

Late Period

The earliest findings (fig. 19) within the city walls – constructed in the Late Period – are likely directly connected with the establishment and early use of the fortification. The structure, however, could only be excavated in one small area. In comparison to the later structures, these mud-brick walls are impressive due to their massive thickness, measuring up to 1.2 m. Due to later constructions no contiguous ground plan can be established nor can the function of the building be clearly determined. After the abandonment of the house complex further walls were constructed but their dating has not yet been determined. The later structures and the previous archaeological work have also made it difficult to identify the function of the building. The manner of construction of a 5.4 m long wall is striking and

consists of double shelled rubble masonry. The construction of the outside faces suggests that they were not part of the foundation but instead the walls.

Ptolemaic Period

In the Ptolemaic period extensive construction work took place in this area. The structures (fig. 20) erected in this period roughly define the building parcels and public areas which remained in use for a long time (possibly until late antiquity). Due to later buildings and the state of preservation, floor plans were mainly discovered in the eastern part of the excavation area. There are at least two complexes that are clearly separated from each other. The northwestern part of the south complex is preserved and includes the entrance to the building. The northern complex consists of multiple parts: a central, rectangular building was constructed that may be either a podium accessible through a stairway from the north or a building on a socle with a room in front of it. The complex appears to have been entered from the north. Later three rooms were created through division of the area to the north: the eastern room functioned as a barn. After the abandonment of this building the area was not occupied for some time and was mainly used for the deposition of animal carcasses, bovidae and canidae.

Roman Imperial Period

In the early Imperial period the use of the entire area completely changed. A row of houses was constructed that were partly built up directly against the city walls and also had to take the town wall into consideration in the design of the floor plan. Additionally a rose granite massif to the southeast had to be taken into consideration. The earliest building, House 17, (fig. 21) is at best poorly preserved in this eastern part and the floor plan can only be partly reconstructed. This building was entered through a courtyard to the west which was accessed from the west over a north-south road. Multiple installations are in this courtyard, such as ovens and fire places, but also layers of granite chips that might indicate use of space by craftsmen. Another building can be found to the southwest of these housing complexes, but due to later constructions it is not exactly understood and therefore it is impossible to determine where it fits into the building sequence. In the northeast of the excavation area a rectangular – almost square – house was constructed on the remains of the abandoned podium building (House 15, fig. 22). This building partly incorporates still-extant stone and mud-brick masonry and in the east takes advantage of the city wall, which most likely functioned as the back wall of the house. This complex was entered through a courtyard to the east where a small rectangular building was constructed. This small building communicated with the street and was not connected with the courtyard in any way. Interestingly, rose and black granite were preferred for the construction of the walls. Based on the evidence of the stairs

this building had two stories. In the courtyard of this building there are again multiple installations that, analogous to the courtyard already mentioned, may indicate use by both the household and craftsmen. The house itself has an entrance corridor on the ground level from which a square room was entered, and also led to the stairwell which indicates that an upper level existed.

A gradual increase in elevation is noticeable in the street from which these two house areas are entered. Semicircular and rectangular mud brick and stone structures were erected and later small stairs were even set up to overcome the difference in elevation (fig. 23).

Another building was constructed in the southwest of the excavation area at a much higher elevation than the earlier houses along the same road. This public road is slightly constricted by the newly built house. The evidence suggests that the road and house were in use at the same time. Since it was now no longer possible to adjust the difference in level of the surface of the courtyard to the street new walls with their own foundations were constructed over the courtyard walls. They incorporated semi-finished products and by-products from stone vessel production. Additionally, stairs were constructed inside of the entranceway to the courtyards. During the construction of this house a vaulted cellar (fig. 24) was built up against the city wall and its construction technique is of specific interest. The vault is not only formed by a long barrel vault set against the city wall, but also includes a partial vault placed perpendicular to the end of the barrel vault. The square entrance is to the north east and gives access to the cellar through a two-stepped mud-brick construction. The entrance to the entire L-shaped building is provided through a door opening that is indicated by a door sill. Structures on the street side of the building may suggest the presence of a stairway leading up into the building.

While the buildings (fig. 25) in the east continued in use, the L-shaped building (House 18/19) in the southwest was adapted. The floor plan was basically maintained but the cellar no longer had any function. Possibly it was replaced by another cellar to the west but the vault is not completely preserved. Due to the building construction, an access to the cellar can be reconstructed to the southeast. Two high steps lead to the room. Above the still extant walls, that were partially deconstructed, new mud-brick walls were erected. A part of this construction in the extension of the street was no longer integrated into the complex but was located outside it. The entrance to this house remained in the same place – as indicated by the door hinge – but placed at a higher level. In two of the rooms of the house multiple niches were discovered. Soot traces on the capstones imply that lamps were set in the niches. In a later building phase this building was divided and a door opening was simply closed up to form a long, rectangular house to the west and another house to the south. To the south a wall was cut for another entrance to allow access to the house from outside. Inside the house a pavement of rose granite chips and spolia was laid which may indicate an open room. Also, a

stairwell was added and set against the city wall. It is possible that this stairwell led to an upper story but the other walls do not bear any traces that might support this interpretation. Additionally, the preserved part of stairs is not steep enough to bridge the difference in elevation up to the upper story. Another possibility is the exploitation of the Late Period city wall through this stairwell, which would mean that the Late Period city wall was integrated into the housing architecture and increased the living and work space of the house. There are though no indications on the surviving city wall for such a use, which would also limit the function of the wall as fortification.

Only very few finds were made that could illuminate the last phases of use within the Imperial houses, due to the earlier excavations. Sporadically it was possible to identify and remove layers that could then be related to architectural structures. The situation is somewhat clearer in the courtyard area where interactions between household and craftsmanship can be seen, as already mentioned.

Late Roman Period

For the late antique period only very few remains have survived within the studied area. Settlement activities could be demonstrated but it was not possible to correlate the material remains with the architectural remains and thus it is only possible to make a cursory evaluation of their significance. The earlier, original Imperial housing system seems to have disappeared and the street was shortened successively and integrated into the housing as illustrated by a door opening at the north end of the street.

The latest, medieval phases of the architectural development of this specific part of area 2 can only be dated relatively since the walls could not be studied archaeologically, and their poor preservation did not allow further interpretation.

H.S.

4. Areas 69 - 71: Salvage excavations during the summer of 2011

Area 69²⁶ was situated only 20m to the west of Area 58²⁷ and opposite the road of Area 21,²⁸ where parts of a Roman cemetery were excavated. As was the case in Area 56,²⁹ 25m to the north, no tombs or pre-Islamic structures of any kind were detected at the site. The medieval

²⁶ The site was located in 10, Sh. Mahkama Adima. The excavation lasted from 09.04. – 27.04. 2011. Work was conducted by MOHAMED ABD EL-BASET, USAMA AMER MOHI ED-DIN, MAHMUD ABDALLAH ABDALLAH and SHAZLI ALI ABD EL-AZIM.

²⁷ MÜLLER, in: *Tenth Season*, pp. 7 - 10, fig. 16 – 21).

²⁸ C. v. PILGRIM, in: PILGRIM ET AL., *MDAIK* 64, p. 358.

²⁹ MÜLLER, in: *Tenth Season*, p. 6.

remains consisted of a succession of workshop areas with ovens. The situation resembles the findings in Area 58. The eastern limit of the Roman and Late Roman cemeteries in this area was situated to the west of Areas 56 and 69.

As the foundation pit of nearly 400 sqm had already been excavated when the construction work came to the attention of the Joint Mission, only a short investigation was possible in Area 70.³⁰ Observations of the sections showed that, unlike in Area 49³¹ (ca. 75m to the north) and in Area 40³² (30m to the west), no Roman tombs were situated here. Islamic (probably Ayyubid) houses were erected directly on top of Pharaonic quarry debris (granite boulders, chips and sand). They were then buried below more than three metres of densely packed burnt settlement debris and industrial waste.

Area 71³³ was situated in the Shôna district of Aswan just to the north of Area 61. No traces of ancient monuments were detected at the site. Several granite blocks with rock inscriptions were found reused in the foundation of modern walls (Fig. 26). As was the case in neighbouring Areas 61,³⁴ 46³⁵ and 16,³⁶ the six inscriptions date to Dynasty 13 and commemorated soldiers.³⁷

W. M.

5. Pharaonic workshops in the modern Suq of Aswan (Areas 72 – 74)

Area 72

The situation in Area 72³⁸ was similar to Area 70 in that the foundation pit had already been excavated to a depth of more than 4m when the Joint Mission was finally informed. This was all the more unfortunate because the area was located just 11m to the east of Area 23 with its rich Pharaonic stratigraphy.³⁹ The investigation consisted of documentation of part of the southern section (Fig. 27) followed by the extraction of selected pottery from relevant layers and the excavation of a small trench at the southern section two months later.

³⁰ The Area was located at the corner of Sh. Salah El-Din and Sh. Kilany. The excavation was conducted by W. MÜLLER and MOHAMED ABD EL-BASET, USAMA AMER MOHI ED-DIN and lasted only one day (24.05.2011).

³¹ MÜLLER, in: *Ninth Season*, p. 15.

³² *Idem*, in: C v. PILGRIM ET AL., 'The Town of Syene. Report on the 8th Season in Aswan', *MDAIK* 67, forthcoming.

³³ The site was investigated by MOHAMED ABD EL-BASET, USAMA AMER MOHI ED-DIN. Work started on June 6th 2011 and did not end yet as one rock-inscription could not be retrieved yet.

³⁴ MÜLLER, in: *Tenth Report*, p. 14, fig. 33 – 37.

³⁵ M. MAREE, in: *Ninth Report*, p. 14, fig. 18.

³⁶ v. PILGRIM, in: v. PILGRIM ET AL., *MDAIK* 64, pp. 311 – 312, fig. 2.

³⁷ The inscriptions are currently studied by MARCEL MAREE whom I thank for preliminary information.

³⁸ The site is located in the Suq-area at Sh. Shawarbi. A first investigation was undertaken on September 26th 2011, a second one from November 30th until December 2nd 2011.

³⁹ v. PILGRIM, in: v. PILGRIM ET AL., *MDAIK* 64, pp. 307 – 311.

The first traces of human activity were detected on top of a massive layer of nearly sterile greyish fluvial sand where granite chips and Old Kingdom pottery attested to Old Kingdom quarry and stone-processing activities at the site. The layer of debris with some burnt material was covered by a thin layer of fluvial sand. On top of that layer scarce traces of architectural structures became visible. Taking into account the results from nearby Area 23 (Stratum 3),⁴⁰ the severely damaged narrow walls most probably were parts of small workshop areas. The bottom level of the walls was at approximately 92.2m asl. No pottery could be retrieved from the walls but material deposited immediately on top of them was dated to late Dynasty 12.⁴¹ The structures were covered by a layer of yellowish fluvial sand mixed with some granite chips and pottery. On top of this layer was an approximately 0.6m thick muddy deposit with no recognisable structures. The few pottery sherds from this layer imply a date in the Middle Kingdom or slightly later. On top of a thin layer of sand and granite rubble, walls dating to the Late Roman or Early Islamic Period were detected (bottom level of the wall: ca. 93.9 – 94m asl).

A small trench was excavated immediately to the south of the western end of the southern section. The pottery from the layers of this trench confirmed the interpretation of the section described above. At the eastern end of the trench a test-sounding was excavated to a level of 91.4m asl. No earlier structures were encountered, only homogeneous layers of fluvial sand and small granite chips.

Area 73

After the construction pit of Area 72 was excavated, a small area (Area 73), left between this Area and Area 23 to the west where significant settlement structures from the Pharaonic Period were discovered during the 6th season was investigated. However, despite regular inspections by the MSA and members of the mission, the contractor again succeeded in excavating the area illegally at night without any supervision from the MSA.

Due to the topographical importance and the archaeological value of this area the mission achieved access to the site and initiated a brief investigation lasting two days⁴².

Besides the documentation of the southern section it was possible to excavate a small strip at the northern limit of the area and to dig a small sondage into the alluvial sediments at the bottom of the foundation pit.

The southern section of the area provided the main strata of the stratigraphical sequence (Fig. 28). The nature of all layers as well as their levels were almost identical to the archaeological sequence attested in Area 23, located only some few meters further to the west (stratum 6 to

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

⁴¹ For all information concerning Middle Kingdom pottery I thank IRENE FORSTNER-MÜLLER.

⁴² The investigation lasted from November 30th until December 1st 2011.

stratum 3)⁴³. The building layer of the 5th dynasty (corresponding to stratum 5 in Area 23) shows the same architectural features and degree of preservation as Area 23. Regarding the building layer of the late Middle Kingdom, however, some further information may be added. According to the available section the architectural setting of the built structure resembled closely those of the 5th dynasty represented by pillars of mudbrick with thin walls in between them. In a second building phase some walls were removed in favour of ovens.

A continuation of the same sequence of layers was investigated in a very limited excavation (3 x 1m) at the northern limit of the construction pit (Fig. 29). A narrow (one brick wide) mud-brick wall dating to the Old Kingdom (corresponding to stratum 5 in Area 23), roughly orientated north-south, was associated with a burnt mud surface that was covered with fragments of pottery. Separated by layers of alluvial sediments, a narrow north-south wall, situated at exactly the same location and oriented in the same direction as its predecessor, remained from a similar structure from the Late Middle Kingdom. Several mud surfaces and sandy layers were associated with this wall.

The small trench at the bottom of the foundation pit produced a surprise: after 1.5m of pure grey alluvial sand with few silty inclusions, a solid layer of pottery, mostly smashed beer-bottles and bread-moulds dating to the Old Kingdom, was encountered. The level of this assemblage that was deposited on top of a massive silty layer, was with 89.2m asl, well below the average level of the Nile flood at the time.⁴⁴ No permanent structures are thus to be expected associated with the pottery. The bedrock, saprolithic granite, was reached at 88.9m asl.

W.M./C.v.P.

Area 74

The area⁴⁵ was situated in the close vicinity of Areas 23, 72, 73 and 18, about 30 m to the northeast of Area 18. Due to the bad condition of the neighbouring buildings the effectively excavated area was very small (23sqm). Several deep robbery-pits made it nearly impossible to investigate the later layers properly.

Old Kingdom activity (Stratum E)

The bedrock was encountered at a level of 91.6m asl. The natural granite surface was therefore significantly higher than in Area 73. Layers of alluvial sand with little anthropogeneous material alternated with compact mud-surfaces. On these surfaces, dry land

⁴³ V. PILGRIM, in: V. PILGRIM ET AL., *MDAIK* 64, pp. 309f.

⁴⁴ S. J. SEIDLMEYER, *Historische und Moderne Nilstände*, *ACHET* A1, Berlin 2001, p. 90, tab. 7.

⁴⁵ The area was situated at 37, Sh. Harid Nars Halof. The excavation was conducted from December 3rd until December 18th 2011.

during low water, seasonal human activity took place. Besides post-holes and scarce traces of fireplaces, only pottery and some granite rubble without associated structures were found.

Middle Kingdom “bakery” (Stratum D)

The earliest phase (Stratum D3) of Middle Kingdom ovens and workshops was significantly damaged by later activities (Figs. 30, 31). An undulating half-brick wide mud-brick wall ran in an approximate east-west direction. Two similar walls abutted the northern face of the small wall and ran into the northern section. The walls separated three small, most probably unroofed, rooms. In the easternmost room a rectangular mud-brick construction (Oven 4), filled with ash and charcoal, was located. The structure differs significantly from the other ovens, but fragments of bread-moulds found with the ash imply that it was also used for baking bread. The remains of an earlier mud-brick wall to the south of these rooms were partly reused when an oven of rectangular-ellipsoidal shape was constructed (Oven 3). The oven was oriented north-south and measured 0.8 x 1.4m. Its walls were made of mud-bricks. A part of its collapsed flattened dome was still preserved at its northern end.

The most significant element of the second phase of use (Stratum D2) was a circular oven (Oven 2) in the southern part of the trench (Figs. 32, 33). The oven had a diameter of 1.20m and was operated from the south-east. The dome was completely destroyed but the bottom was well preserved. The oven was made of carefully laid mud-bricks and showed at least two phases of use. A second oven belonging to the same phase was nearly completely covered by the northern section.

In the third and last phase of the Middle Kingdom bakery (Stratum D1) a large oven of rectangular-ellipsoidal shape (Oven 1) covered most of the area (Fig. 33). It measured (2.8+x) x 2.2 m. Only the bottom of the oven was preserved. After the abandonment of the baking installation, the area was filled with a layer of broken bread moulds and vats made of coarse Nile-clay.

The whole sequence of short-lived installations was dated to late Dynasty 12.

Post Pharaonic activities (Strata C-B)

No later traces of human activity were detected before the Late Roman and Early Islamic Periods, at which time a street or square covered the area. The north-eastern corner of a building, visible in the western section, may be evidence of a junction of a north-south and an east-west street (Fig. 33). The wall showed three distinct phases, all of them associated with street layers. After the abandonment of the street, more than 1.5m of settlement debris were deposited in the area. The composition of the fill was peculiar as it consisted predominantly of Old and Middle Kingdom sherds with very little Late Roman material. The significant amount of Pharaonic pottery, mostly beer-bottles and bread-moulds, is indirect evidence of early

Pharaonic (settlement) activity nearby. The material was put in as filling in one process, probably as part of terracing work in connection with the construction of a later building on the site. With the exception of a nearly completely destroyed east-west wall that was detected in the western section, the remains of this building phase (Stratum A) were completely destroyed by robbery pits. Before the now-removed modern house was built on the site, a massive layer of wind-blown sand accumulated on top of the ruins, hinting at a long period of abandonment.

W.M.

Conclusion

Despite difficult circumstances the investigation of all three construction pits provided a lot of new data that compliment the evidence for Pharaonic settlement activities in the north of Aswan. While simple mud-brick structures and evidence for a centralised production of food were attested for most of the area during the late Middle Kingdom, structures of the same kind dating to the Old Kingdom were restricted to a smaller area, as no traces of this date were found either in Area 72 or Area 74. Whether this phenomenon can be attributed to ancient topographical features like an island or peninsula, or whether Old Kingdom features to the north of Area 18 and to the east of Area 73 were destroyed by flood events, cannot be answered for the time being. It is remarkable, however, that the stratigraphic sequence reflects only a restricted chronological range, which includes only building layers of the 5th dynasty, the late Middle Kingdom and the Late Roman Period, indicating a remarkable discontinuity of settlement activities in the wider area.

W.M./C.v.P.

6. Investigations in the northern part of Medieval Aswan (Areas 75 and 76)

Area 75

Only a short investigation was possible in the large area⁴⁶ (more than 200sqm) because the foundation pit was already excavated to a level of 2m below the surface of the Sh. Salah El-Din and more than 4m below the level of the street to the south of the site when members of the Swiss-Egyptian Mission arrived.

In the southern section two pre-modern Islamic building layers (Strata A-B) were discerned. The walls of Stratum A were preserved to a height of 3m (Fig. 34). The humble structures of Stratum B were not as well preserved but were beyond any doubt parts of houses of the medieval town of Aswan. The Islamic layers covered Late Roman tombs (Stratum C). They

⁴⁶ The area was situated at the Sh. Salah El-Din opposite Area 70. The investigation lasted from February 5th until February 6th 2012.

belonged to the common type of subterranean vaulted chamber tombs made of mud-bricks that usually contained multiple burials.⁴⁷ The existence of tombs in Area 75 marks a distinct difference from nearby Area 70. However, as a part of the extensive Late Roman cemetery of Syene was also detected further north in Area 49, the negative evidence from Area 70 must not be overestimated with respect to the limits of the aforementioned cemetery.

Area 76

The area was situated only 60m to the south-east of Area 75.⁴⁸ As was to be expected after the observations made in the southern section of Area 75, the small scale investigation produced a dense sequence of medieval settlement activity.

After Strata A and B had been investigated, further excavation had to be restricted to the northern part of the area. Due to the small size of the sounding no relevant statements concerning the precise nature of the archaeological structures belonging to Stratum C can be made (Fig. 35). They consisted of the lowest course of a one-brick-wide east-west mud-brick wall and an obscure structure made of fragments of fired bricks and sandstone at the northern limit of the trench. Even though the north-south street did not yet exist, the architecture was already oriented in the same way as in Stratum A. While Stratum B is tentatively dated to the Ayyubid Period, Stratum C was of significantly earlier - probably Early Islamic - in date. For safety reasons the excavation was stopped at a level of 96.2m asl, still well above the layer of Late Roman tombs that were observed in Area 75 at a level of 95.5m asl.

The building tradition that started in Stratum B was maintained until the early twentieth century. A 1.5 brick-wide north-south wall (W76-13) marked the western limit of a north-south road (Fig. 36). House 2, to the east of the road, was only represented by its western front in the eastern section of the trench. Initially the road was approximately two metres wide. W76-13 was rather short-lived. Street layers, associated with House 2 which was preserved to a height of nearly two metres, soon covered the remains of the wall.

Stratum A4 saw the construction of House 1, the north-eastern corner of which was situated in the south-west of the excavated area (Fig. 36). A mud-brick installation was attached to the eastern face of the building soon after or at the time of construction. The surface of the installation was paved with fragments of fired bricks. The pavement was limited towards the east by a 1-brick-wide mud-brick wall and towards the north by a half-brick-wide east-west wall (W76-9) that was elevated from the surface (Fig. 37). As the level of the surface was too low for a *mastaba*, the construction most probably constituted a narrow

⁴⁷ Cf. For Area 45: W. MÜLLER, in: V. PILGRIM/MÜLLER, *Ninth Season*, pp. 4 - 6. For Area 49: *ibid*, p. 15.

⁴⁸ The site was located next to the Kilany Hotel. The excavation was supervised by MARIOLA HEPA and lasted from February 8th - 23rd. For safety reasons excavation was restricted to the southern part of the area (less than 15sqm of more than 80sqm were excavated).

porch in the street. Walls on the narrow sides may have carried a roof, a shade or even an upper projecting floor. Houses with similar installations were common in medieval Aswan.⁴⁹ House 2 still existed when House 1 was erected and continued to form the eastern limit of the road that was then more like a narrow passage, due to the fact that the porch of House 1 protruded into the road.

In Stratum A3 the foundation of a north-south wall (W76-11) marked the western limit of the road. The foundation was made of fragments of fired bricks and sandstone soon after the construction of House 1. Due to the bad state of preservation of the wall, it is not sure whether it abutted the northern face of House 1. Orientation and location of the wall clearly mark it as a successor to W76-13.

In Stratum A2 the north-south street was blocked by an east-west wall that abutted W76-9 and most probably the western face of House 2. The surface of the porch was already covered by street layers and therefore was no longer in use. A palm trunk attached to the southern face of the wall may have served as a threshold or step.

At the end of Stratum A, House 2 was abandoned and the wall W76-6/7 marked the eastern limit of the road. As was the case with a contemporaneous wall to the west of the street (W76-4), it was significantly damaged by the foundations of the modern building.

W.M.

Abstract:

This report gives an overview on the work conducted during the twelfth season of the joint archaeological project of the Swiss Institute of Architectural and Archaeological Research, Cairo and the Ministry of State for Antiquities, Aswan in Syene/Old Aswan. Excavations focussed on a domestic quarter of the Graeco-Roman Period and the construction and chronology of the town wall in Area 2. Due to political circumstances all scheduled activities in the framework of a wider project of site management of the central archaeological zone at Old Aswan (Areas 1 and 2) were limited to the construction of an enclosure wall in Area 2 and the restoration of the town wall of the Late Period.

⁴⁹ Cf. F. MAHMUD EL-AMIN/W. MÜLLER, in: V. PILGRIM ET AL., *MDAIK* 64, pp. 338-340 (Area 24); W. MÜLLER, 'Area 37', in: C. V. PILGRIM ET AL., 'The Town of Syene. Report on the 8th Season in Aswan', *MDAIK* 67, forthcoming (Area 37). Cf. L. 'ALI IBRAHIM, 'Residential Architecture in Mamluk Cairo', *MUQARNAS* 2 (1984), pp. 49-50, fig. 3 for examples in Cairo.

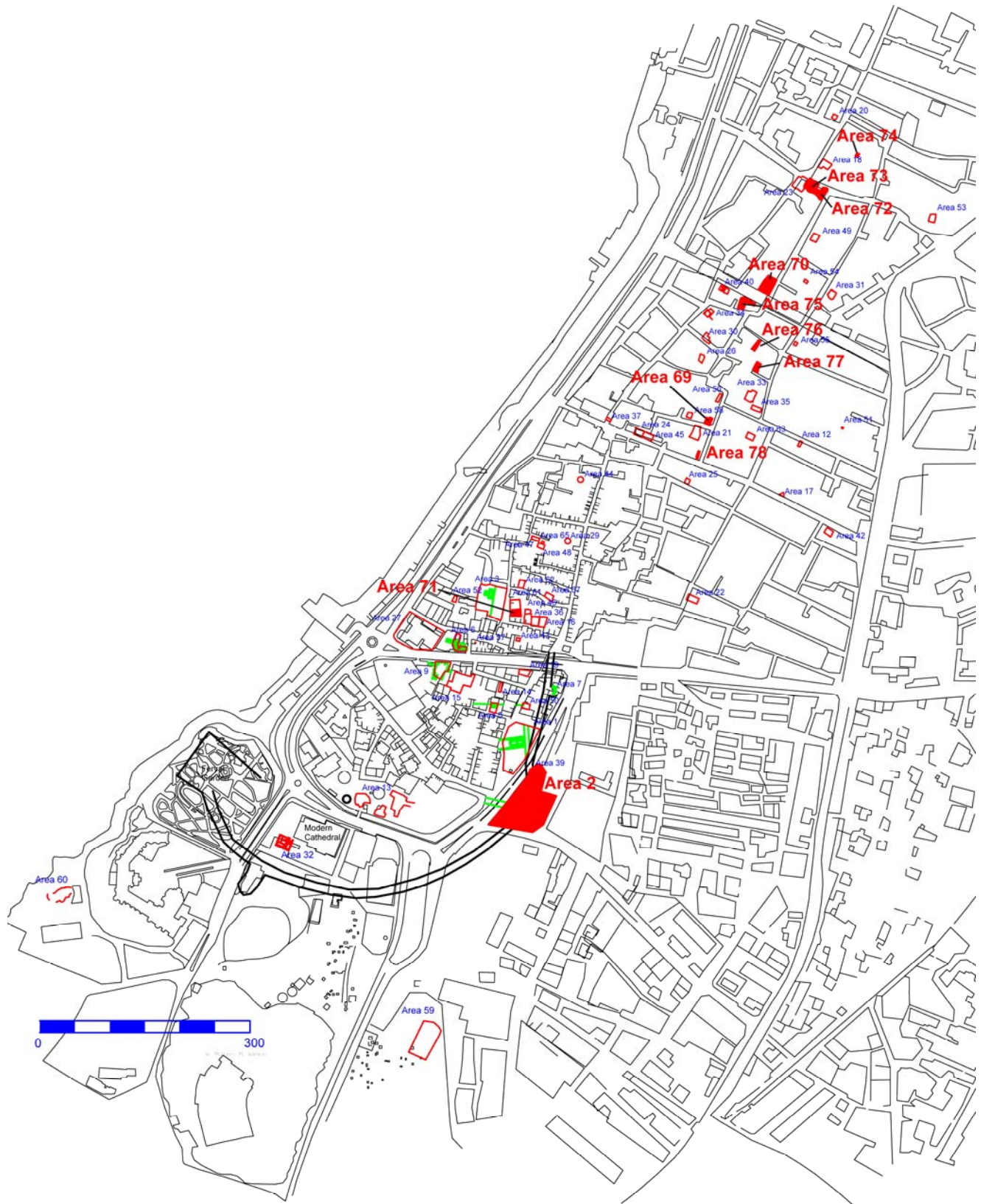


Fig. 1: Aswan: Map of excavated areas.



Fig. 2: Area 2: Conservation of the town-wall (photo: SIK/AK).



Fig. 3: Sarcophagus (Reg. No. 2606) during restoration (photo: SIK).

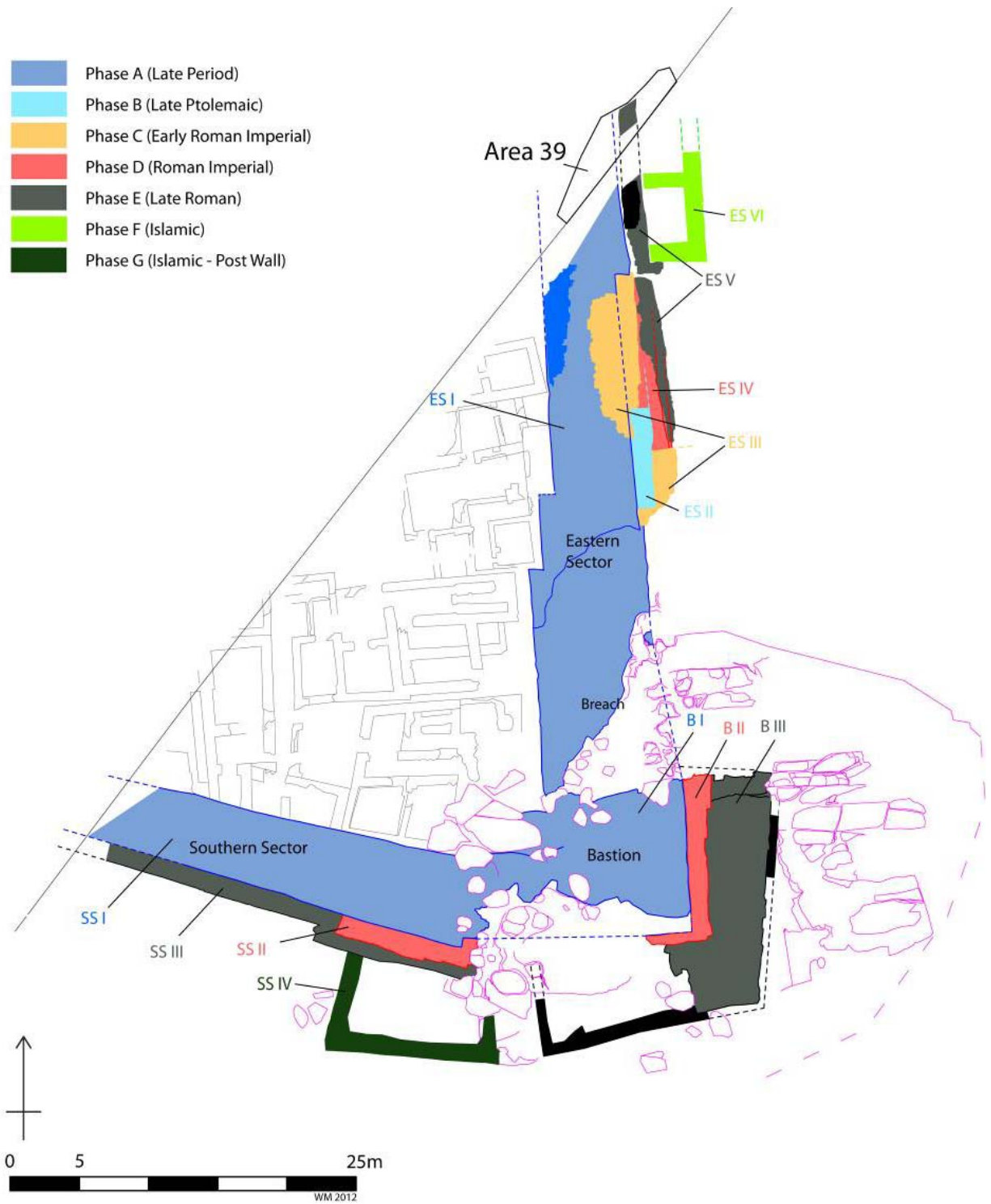


Fig. 4: Area 2: Plan with town-wall and Roman city-quarter.



Fig. 5: Area 2: View of the Breach from the south-east (photo: SIK).



Fig. 6: Area 2: Northern part of the eastern sector of the town wall (photo: SIK/NG).



Fig. 7: Area 2: View of the Ptolemaic casing (photo: SIK).



Fig. 8: Area 2: Early Roman repair work at the town-wall (photo: SIK).



Fig. 9: Area 2: Roman Imperial mud-brick casing at the eastern face of the town-wall (photo: SIK).



Fig. 10: Area 2: Late Roman casings at the eastern face of the town-wall (photo: SIK).



Fig. 11: Area 2: Post-Roman tower (photo: SIK/AK).



Fig. 12: Area 2: Overview of the bastion-area (photo: SIK).



Fig. 13: Area 2: Southern section of the breach (photo: SIK).



Fig. 14: Area 2: Roman Imperial mud-brick constructions (photo: SIK).



Fig. 15: Area 2: Eastern face of the Late-Roman bastion (photo: SIK).



Fig. 16: Area 2: Grave 8 (photo: SIK).

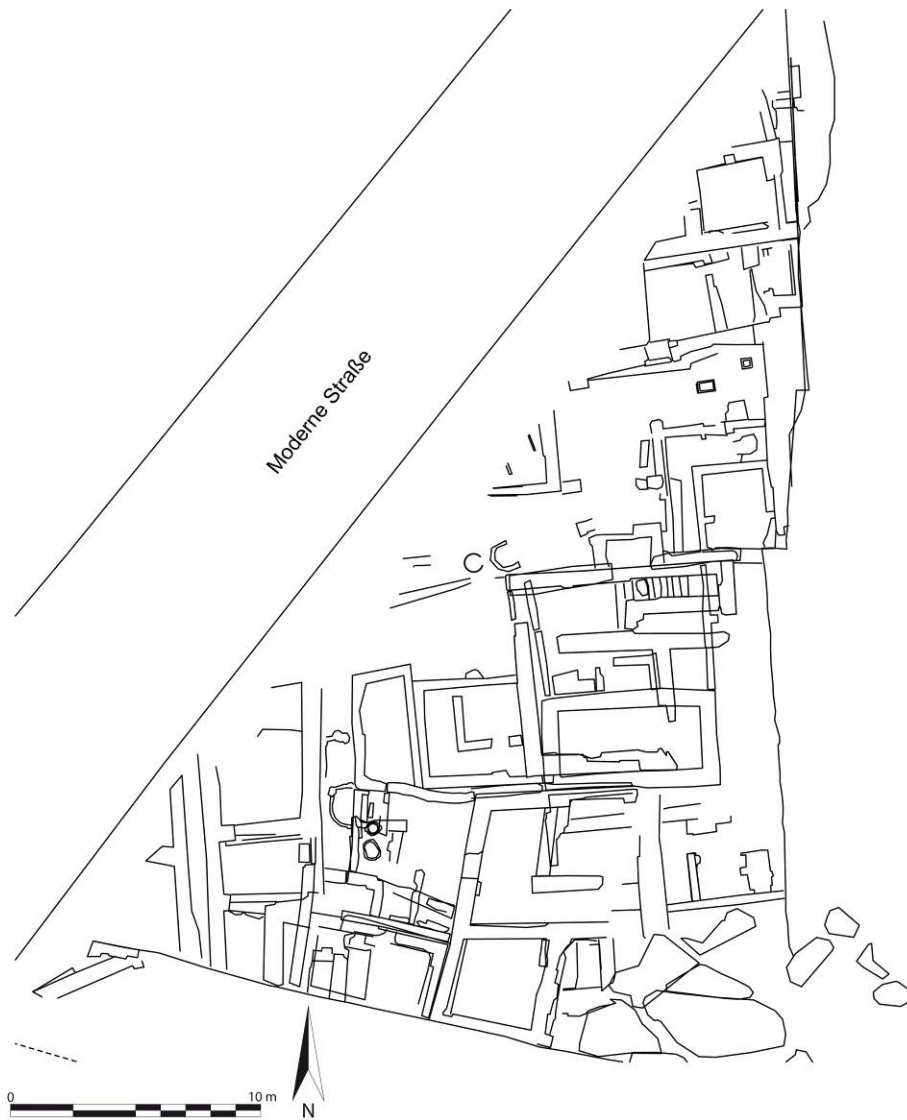


Fig. 17: Area 2: Plan of the Houses



Fig. 18: Area 2: Overview from the West (photo: SIK/NG).



Fig. 19: Area 2: Late Period Structures (photo: SIK/HS).



Fig. 20: Area 2: Ptolemaic Structures (photo: SIK/HS)



Fig. 21: Area 2: House 17 (photo: SIK/HS).



Fig. 22: Area 2: House 15 (photo: SIK/HS).



Fig. 23: Area 2: Alleyway with retaining structures (photo: SIK/HS).



Fig. 24: Area 2: Vaulted Room (Cellar) (photo: SIK/HS).



Fig. 25: Area 2: House 18 and 19 (photo: SIK/HS).



Fig. 26: Area 71: Detail of rock-inscription (photo: SIK).



Fig. 27: Area 72: Southern section (photo: SIK).



Fig. 28: Area 73: Southern section (photo: SIK).



Fig. 29: Area 73: Old Kingdom structures at the northern section (photo: SIK).



Fig. 30: Area 74: Structures of Stratum D3 (photo: SIK).

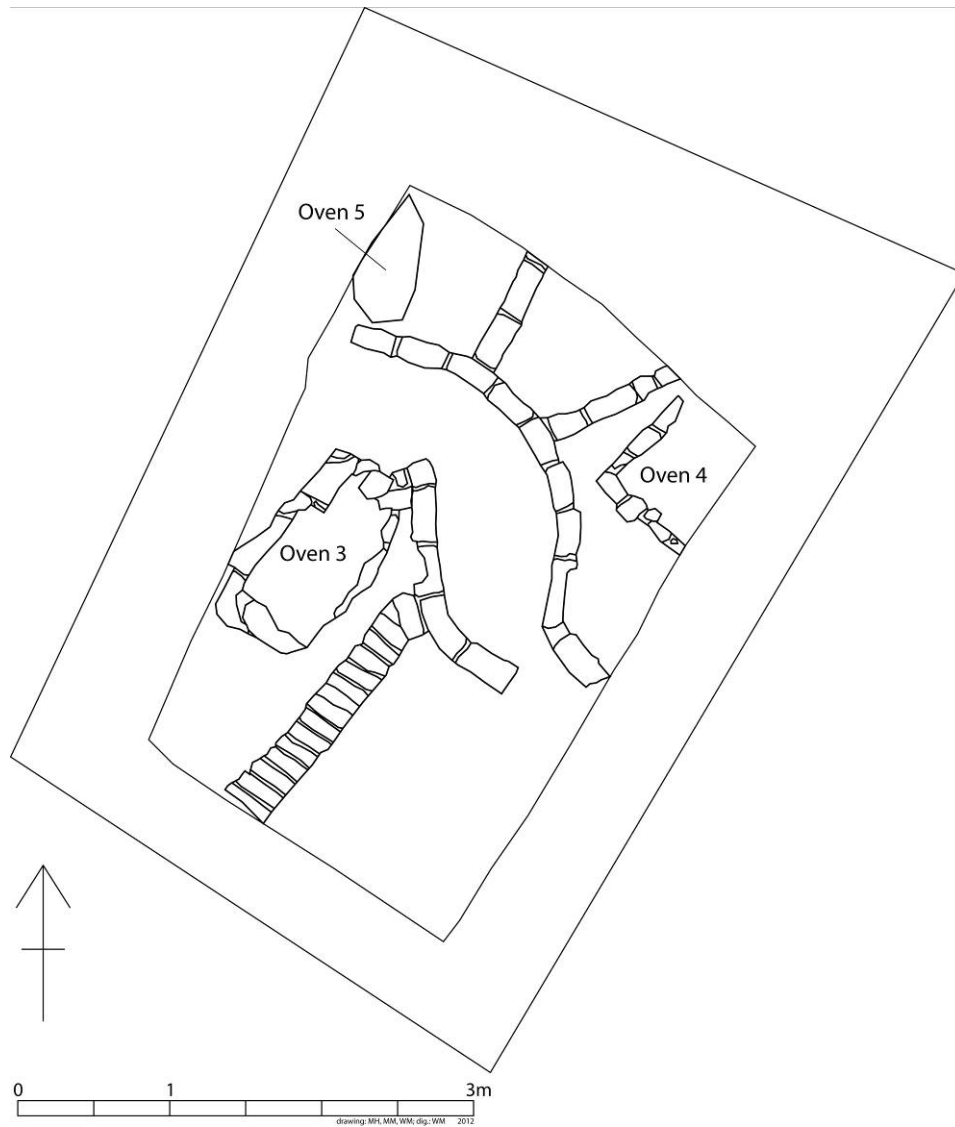


Fig. 31: Area 74: Plan of Stratum D3.



Fig. 32: Area 74: Oven 2 (photo: SIK/AK).

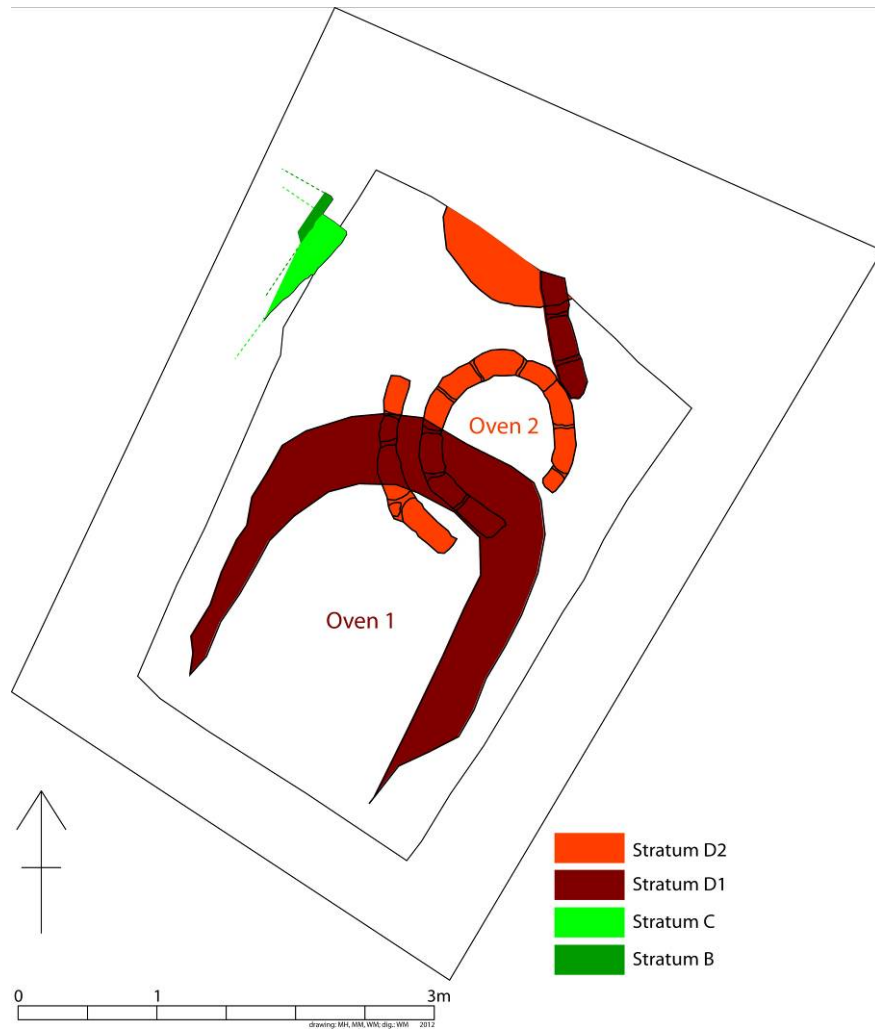


Fig. 33: Area 74: Plan of Strata D1 and D2.



Fig. 34: Area 75: Southern section (photo: SIK).

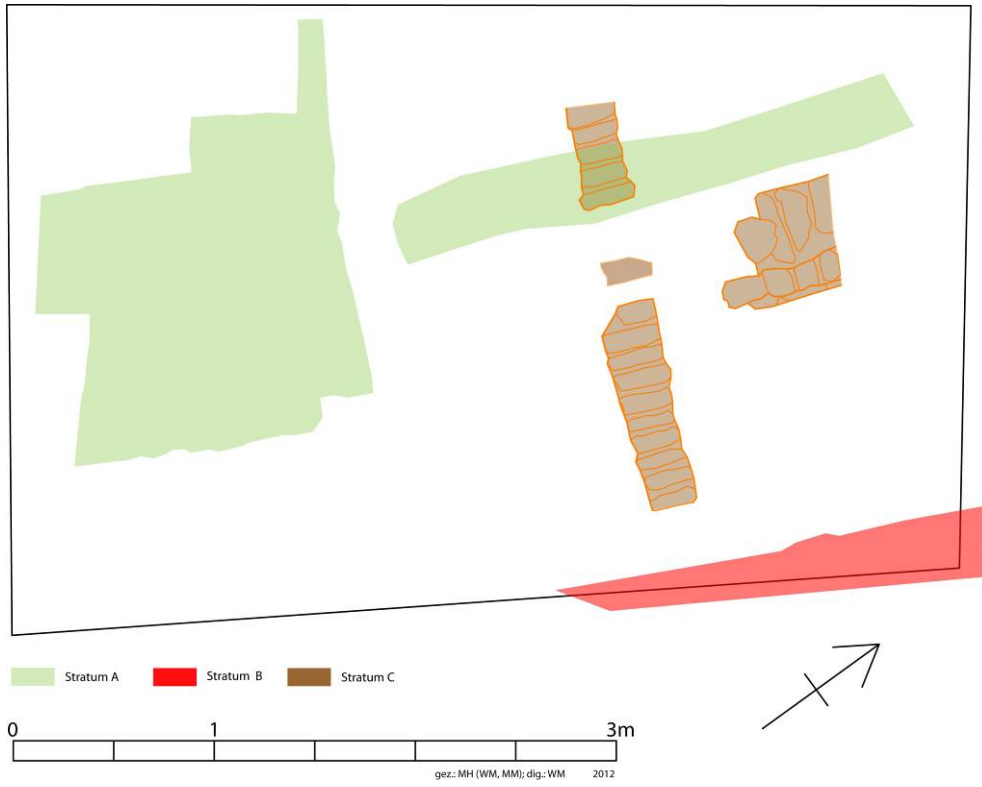


Fig. 35: Area 76: Plan of Stratum C.

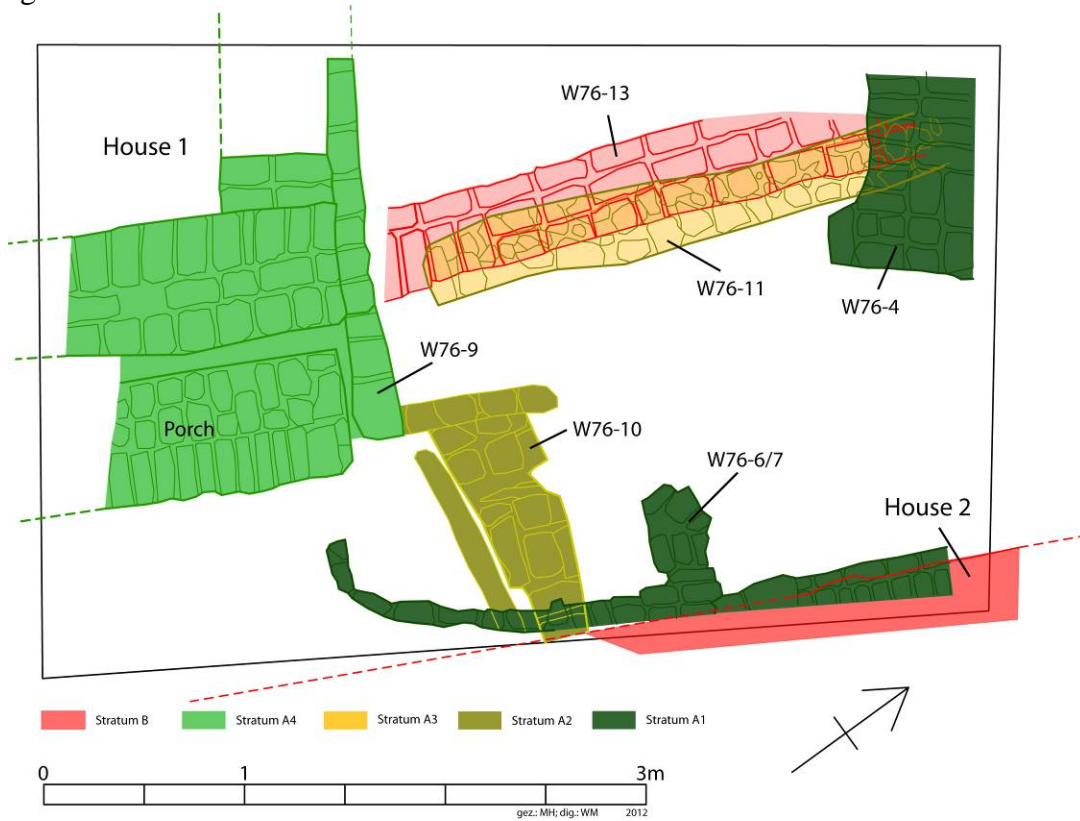


Fig. 36: Area 76: Plan of Strata A and B.



Fig. 37: Area 76: Detail of House 1 (photo: SIK).