

12. OVERALL RECONSTRUCTION OF SAV1

(Pl. 62)

By adding the third dimension for the reconstruction of the site, new problems certainly arise. In addition to the question of the actual elevation of the respective buildings, the placement of eventual windows and a second story require special consideration. With the 3-D model for the southern part of the fortified settlement of Sai, an attempt was made to present an idea of what this area of the town could have looked like in the New Kingdom. This should by no means be understood as an absolute, definitive solution, but merely a suggestion, for which many elements must remain hypothetical. What can however be illustrated through the reconstruction is how densely this area was built up, leaving hardly any space for open spaces between the buildings. The buildings themselves are, in their strict orthogonality, clear examples of Pharaonic architecture resulting from preliminary planning of the town's layout, with little margin for individuality. In this regard, it seems reasonable to assume that the elevations of the buildings were also more or less similar, only differing when a second story was added, as was the case at House H4 and SAF2. The assumed heights for one-storied houses are therefore about 2.50m, for two-storied buildings c. 4.70m. Also the magazines in the western part of SAV1 can be reconstructed as uniform building blocks with the same heights, being about 4m high.²⁸¹ All in all, these similar elevations add to the impression of uniformity, which seems to be appropriate for such a planned town quarter.

The reconstructed layout of SAV1 (Plan 2) clearly shows the two-part design with about one half of the area, the western side, designated as storage area with several rows of magazines and the other half, the eastern side, as residential area with the

smaller houses H1–H5 and the so-called governor's palace SAF2. The two quarters are distinctly separated by a dividing wall, with no direct access between them.²⁸² While the western part is mostly filled with longitudinal storage rooms, the eastern half is dominated by the c. 2,000m² large mansion SAF2. A close vicinity between such a large house, probably belonging to the most important inhabitant of Sai Island, and rather simple dwellings is not unusual and can also be observed at other Pharaonic towns. In the eastern part of Kahun, for example, large mansions, comparable in size to SAF2, are situated directly next to worker's houses.²⁸³ The same is also known from the workmen's village in Deir el-Medina, where the house of the Chief of Works is situated among the poorer houses,²⁸⁴ and from Amarna, where the residential area consists of houses of varying sizes.²⁸⁵

As for the houses themselves, the surface areas of the dwellings fit well with the houses at other sites throughout Egypt (Figs. 19, 20). As already mentioned, the size of SAF2 is comparable to the larger Kahun mansions, while the smallest houses at SAV1, Houses H1–H3 (about 55–58m²) are similar to the small houses in the western quarter in Kahun, as well as the houses in the workmen's villages in Amarna and Deir el-Medina. The houses H4 and H5 are larger, at 370m² and 300m² respectively, which by comparison fall into the range of rather large dwellings.²⁸⁶ It must be noted, however, that House H5 alternatively could have consisted of two separate houses, which would then have been considerably smaller.²⁸⁷ Also, the northern part of House H4 is reconstructed, therefore the actual house surface area is not known. However, the house was certainly larger than the other dwellings

²⁸¹ This height results from the remaining height of the walls on the southern side of SAF5, with the addition of a vaulted ceiling.

²⁸² Cf. Kahun, where the western quarter with the worker's dwellings is also completely closed off from the eastern part of the city by a dividing wall. For a plan of Kahun see for example UPHILL 1988, 28, fig. 12; KEMP 2006, 212, fig. 76.

²⁸³ Cf. UPHILL 1988, 27–33; KEMP 2006, 217.

²⁸⁴ Cf. UPHILL 1988, 24.

²⁸⁵ Cf. KEMP 2006, 311–313; fig. 109.

²⁸⁶ Cf. the larger houses in Elephantine were between 100 and 230m², while the larger houses in Amarna varied between 200 and 450m². For Elephantine see VON PILGRIM 1996a, 196–198; for a list of house areas of selected Amarna houses see KEMP 2006, 312, fig. 109; CORREAS-AMADOR 2013, 137, table 4.12.

²⁸⁷ See Chapter 9.3.

Domestic Buildings	Surface Area	Dimensions (meters)	Dimensions (Egyptian cubits)
H1	57.96m ²	9.58 × 7.30m	18.28 × 13.93
H2	55.19m ²	9.12 × 7.43m	17.40 × 14.18
H3	56.42m ²	9.97 × 7.48m	19.03 × 14.27
H4	373.50m ² (reconstructed)	31.44 × 11.88m	60 × 22.86
H5	303.16m ²	28.74 × 11.65m	54.85 × 22.23
SAF2	2,020m ² (reconstructed)	64.24 × 31.46m	122.60 × 60.04
Storage Rooms			
M1	36.00m ²	13.00 × 2.75m	24.81 × 5.25
M2	48.88m ²	12.32 × 3.97m	23.51 × 7.58
M3	46.09m ²	12.78 × 3.63m	24.39 × 6.93
M4	47.50m ²	12.98 × 3.65m	24.77 × 6.97
M5	46.73m ²	13.07 × 3.61m	24.94 × 6.89
M6	50.35m ²	13.22 × 3.83m	25.23 × 7.31
M7	52.39m ²	13.62 × 3.83m	26.00 × 7.31
M8	44.54m ² (reconstructed)	12.42 × 3.50m	23.70 × 6.68
M9	53.16m ² (reconstructed)	12.42 × 4.28m	23.70 × 8.17
M10	47.74m ² (reconstructed)	12.42 × 3.84m	23.70 × 7.33
M11	45.21m ² (reconstructed)	12.42 × 3.64m	23.70 × 6.95
M12a	40.79m ² (reconstructed)	12.77 × 3.32m	24.37 × 6.34
M12b	52.84m ² (reconstructed)	12.74 × 4.14m	24.31 × 7.90
M12c	39.63m ² (reconstructed)	12.72 × 3.13m	24.27 × 5.97
M12d	48.02m ² (reconstructed)	12.68 × 3.76m	24.20 × 7.18
M13	39.34m ²	9.99 × 3.93m	19.06 × 7.50
M14	40.13m ²	10.10 × 3.96m	19.27 × 7.56
M15	39.33m ²	10.02 × 3.92m	19.12 × 7.48
M16	20.77m ²	9.48 × 2.28m	18.09 × 4.35
M17	36.69m ²	9.75 × 3.64m	18.61 × 6.95
M18	35.77m ² (reconstructed)	9.75 × 3.59m	18.61 × 6.85

Fig. 19. Measurements of the buildings of SAV1

Site	House	Surface Area
Elephantine	H10	93m ²
(Middle Kingdom)	H25	77m ²
	H70	105m ²
	H86	170m ²
Kahun	Mansion 1	2,560m ²
(Middle Kingdom)	Mansion 2	2,520m ²
	Western quarter (average house)	60m ²
Tell el-Dab'a	House I	76m ²
(Middle Kingdom)	House II	91m ²
	House IIIa	192m ²
Askut	Commander's residence	275m ²
(Middle Kingdom)		
Buhen	Commander's residence	1,000m ²
(Middle Kingdom)		
Uronarti	Administrative building	550m ²
(Middle Kingdom)		
Amarna	N49.18 (House of Ranefer)	320m ²
(New Kingdom)	P47.6	225m ²
	P47.19 (House of Ramose)	477m ²
	Q47.23	452m ²
	Workmen's village (average house)	52m ²
Amara West	Residence for the Deputy of Kush (E13.2)	710.50m ²
(New Kingdom)		
Deir el-Medina	Workmen's village (average house)	80m ²
(New Kingdom)		

Fig. 20. Surface area of selected houses at other sites

in this area and the thickness of the walls indicates that the house was solidly built, which perhaps could be seen as a means for promoting its importance.²⁸⁸

A look at the different ground plans of the buildings reveals that even if this area was entirely pre-planned, the layout of the dwellings is not alike, except for the identical row houses H1–H3. They also cannot be placed into general Egyptian house schemes, such as the typical tripartite plan.²⁸⁹ As already elaborated above,²⁹⁰ the so-called governor's residence SAF2, with its large columned hall, is comparable to buildings at other sites, especially the large Kahun mansions²⁹¹ and the commander's

building at Buhen.²⁹² A major difference to other common building layouts, however, is that the main entrances of the houses seem to always have been on the long side of the dwelling as opposed to the short side, as seen elsewhere in the tripartite houses, the Amarna villas, the Kahun mansions and the houses in Elephantine.²⁹³

Summarizing, the overall reconstruction of SAV1 most certainly emphasizes the very structured and organized character of the southern part of the Pharaonic town of Sai Island. This impression is even more enhanced by the 3-D reconstruction, revealing the strict orthogonality of the houses also in their elevation.

²⁸⁸ The thickness of the walls of a house can maybe be seen as a kind of status symbol. Cf. VON PILGRIM 1996a, 208–209, for similar observations at Elephantine and Amarna.

²⁸⁹ Cf. TIETZE 1985; BIETAK 1996.

²⁹⁰ See Chapter 10.1.

²⁹¹ Cf. BIETAK 1996, 32–33, figs. 12 and 13; KEMP 2006, 215

²⁹² Cf. VOGEL 2004, 128–129; VOGEL 2012, fig. 2.

²⁹³ Cf. TIETZE 1985; BIETAK 1996, 24, fig. 2, 32–33, figs. 12 and 13; VON PILGRIM 1996a, 197; KEMP 2006, 215, fig. 109.

