

PREFACE

Traditionally Egyptian archaeology has focused on stone monuments, tombs and temples, with little attention paid to domestic architecture made of unfired mudbrick. The need to explore the domestic settlement sites along the Nile Valley has been addressed only since the 1970s¹ and even today, Egyptian settlement archaeology is still in its infancy.² Nevertheless, the Egyptian “Wohnhaus” was subject of Egyptological research since the early times of Flinders Petrie, Ludwig Borchardt and Herbert Ricke.³ In more recent years, Felix Arnold, Manfred Bietak and Cornelius von Pilgrim (among others) complemented the study of domestic buildings with new results from fresh fieldwork.⁴

Apart from novel ideas about the “Wohnhaus”, much progress has been made in recent decades in Egyptian settlement archaeology with ongoing research at sites like Amarna, Elephantine, Abydos and Tell el-Dab^a/Qantir.⁵ In their seminal publications “Busy Lives at Amarna”, Barry Kemp and Anna Stevens have highlighted the rich potential of a contextual approach with interdisciplinary measures, including aspects of the environment, the landscape and the material culture.⁶ In general, during the last decade, Egyptological studies have begun to stress social aspects of domestic architecture⁷ as well as social and cultural identities of the occupants.⁸

The latter approach nicely coincides with the current goals of the *European Research Council project AcrossBorders* (ERC Starting grant no. 313668 “*AcrossBorders – Settlement patterns in Egypt and Nubia in the 2nd Millennium BC*” and

FWF START Prize Y-615). Sai Island, as one of the most important New Kingdom sites in Upper Nubia (Northern Sudan), can be understood as the prime example for settlement policy of New Kingdom Egypt in the area between the Second and Third Cataracts. The *AcrossBorders* project aims to provide new insights on the lifestyle and the living conditions in New Kingdom Nubia, thanks to new fieldwork and multi-layered research on Sai Island. A data-based approach – focusing on the architecture and material culture, as well as investigating how environmental conditions affected daily life – will help achieve a more complete understanding of the New Kingdom town of Sai, in both its regional setting and its historical context.

In general, Egyptian towns founded in Upper Nubia during the period of the New Kingdom (c. 1539–1077 BCE) offer the unique chance to conduct a detailed analysis of domestic life at the junction of Egyptian and Nubian culture. In direct opposition to sites located within the borders of modern Egypt, these sites in Northern Sudan are better preserved and more accessible because they have not been superimposed by modern houses or cities.⁹

For many years, in line with traditional Egyptology, only temples and tombs were the focus of studies on the Pharaonic architecture in Nubia – this has changed dramatically in the last decade with resumed excavations at Amara West, Sesebi, Tombos and Sai Island.¹⁰ There is still a considerable lack of knowledge about the social stratification, population and structure within

¹ E.g. KEMP 1972; BIETAK 1979.

² Cf. FORSTNER-MÜLLER/MÜLLER 2011.

³ PETRIE 1890; RICKE 1932; BORCHARDT/RICKE 1980.

⁴ ARNOLD 1989; BIETAK 1996; VON PILGRIM 1996a.

⁵ E.g. KEMP/STEVENS 2010; KEMP/STEVENS 2011; KOLTSIDA 2007, 1; SPENCE 2010; BIETAK/CZERNY/FORSTNER-MÜLLER 2010. For a recent summary of urban life in Egypt, see also SNAPE 2014.

⁶ KEMP/STEVENS 2010; KEMP/STEVENS 2011. See also KEMP 2012.

⁷ E.g. KOLTSIDA 2007.

⁸ E.g. SHAW 2004; SPENCE 2010.

⁹ Cf. FORSTNER-MÜLLER/MÜLLER 2011, 209; BUDKA/DOYEN 2013, 167.

¹⁰ Cf. SPENCER/STEVENS/BINDER 2014; SPENCE/ROSE et al. 2009; SPENCE/ROSE et al. 2011; SMITH/BUZON 2014; BUDKA/DOYEN 2013.

Pharaonic towns in Nubia, but these questions are now being addressed from various perspectives and with diverse methods.¹¹ To recreate a snapshot of everyday life in New Kingdom Upper Nubia, a well preserved settlement like Sai offers rich data of various quality and character.

The Pharaonic town of Sai Island has the shape of a fortified settlement with an orthogonal layout in a south-north direction.¹² As highlighted by recent excavations, there are several different sectors within the town, which contrast regarding their layout and dating.¹³ Whereas the southern part (SAV1, see below) reflects the orthogonal planning of the town, with building units organised along north-south and east-west axes, other areas (SAV1 North and SAV1 East) show a more diverse plan in earlier levels. The earliest remains from these two sectors date to the early 18th Dynasty and find a close parallel in the Kerma site Gism el-Arba.¹⁴ From the mid-18th Dynasty, the domestic features in all parts of the fortified town fall into the category of Egyptian-style architecture in Nubia, well attested in the neighboring Pharaonic towns.¹⁵

The present volume deals with the internal structure of this town at Sai Island, concentrating on the organization of the living space, the architectural outline and features of the individual buildings in the southern part of the site. This study of the domestic architecture by Ingrid Adenstedt, as part of the FWF START project Y-615 “Across ancient borders and cultures”,¹⁶ is based on research and documentation work undertaken on Sai Island in 2013 and 2014. The architectural remains of the southern area within the town, named SAV1 (label by Jean Vercoutter for: Sai Adou Ville 1) and dateable to the 18th Dynasty,¹⁷ have been revisited. They are the best preserved ruins within the town area and it seemed logical to start a 3-D reconstruction with these re-

mains, especially with the excellent documentation by Michel Azim as a base to build from.¹⁸

The remains in SAV1 seem to illustrate the heyday of Sai during the mid-18th Dynasty, and it is clear that from the time of Thutmose III onwards, the site was an important administrative centre for the region.¹⁹ A stone temple (Temple A) and large magazines (SAF5) are core features of the southern town area, as is a large administrative building, the so-called governor’s residence (SAF2). Together with small houses of Egyptian types and various streets, the architecture of SAV1 nicely illustrates key elements of a typical “temple-town” of New Kingdom Nubia, including an orthogonal layout.

This volume is the first of a series of monographs as outcome of the START and ERC project AcrossBorders, and the architecture of SAV1 can serve as a sound basis for a deeper understanding of settlement patterns in Sai during the 18th Dynasty. The reassessment of SAV1, the southern part of the New Kingdom town of Sai Island, has produced several new results, which are relevant for a better understanding of the town layout.

I hope that the high efforts, meticulous plans and 3-D reconstruction by Ingrid Adenstedt will be not only recognized, but will fulfil their desired outcome: to illustrate as one specific case study living conditions in respect to domestic space and Egyptian architecture in New Kingdom Nubia.

Acknowledgments

Funds by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF START project Y615-G19) enabled the research for this study. First of all, we are very grateful for the permission by the French Mission as concession holders of Sai Island (until 2015: UMR 8164 HAL-MA-IPEL, University Charles-de-Gaulle Lille 3, France) to work on this subject; thanks go in particular to Didier Devauchelle (head of the Sai Is-

¹¹ See, as an exemplary volume with a variety of relevant papers: SPENCER/STEVENS/BINDER 2016. For a general assessment of domestic architecture in ancient Sudan (from Prehistoric to medieval and recent times) see FITZENREITER 1999.

¹² Cf. AZIM 1975; DOYEN 2009; BUDKA/DOYEN 2013; BUDKA 2014b; BUDKA 2015a.

¹³ See BUDKA 2015a.

¹⁴ BUDKA 2014b, 61 (with further literature in footnote 70).

¹⁵ Cf. FITZENREITER 1999, 119–120.

¹⁶ See BUDKA 2014a; BUDKA 2014b; BUDKA 2015a.

¹⁷ Six levels of occupation were recorded by M. Azim. These levels were only roughly dated and assigned to the Pharaonic, Meroitic and post-Meroitic periods as well as to two phases within medieval times and finally to the Islamic period (Ottoman fortress). See AZIM 1975, 93–95; GEUS 2004, 115; FRANCIGNY 2014, 798–799. AcrossBorders and the present study focus on the Pharaonic remains only.

¹⁸ AZIM 1975.

¹⁹ Cf. BUDKA 2014b; BUDKA 2015a.

land Archaeological Mission until 2014) and Florence Doyen (field director prior to AcrossBorders until 2012). Work at the site would not have been possible without the support of the Sudanese authorities (NCAM), and here we would like to thank especially Abdelrahman Ali, El-Hassan Ahmed und Huda Magzoub.

The terrestrial 3-D laser scanning campaign on Sai Island, realized thanks to a cooperation with Robert Kalasek from the Vienna University of Technology, Department of Spatial Development, Infrastructure and Environmental Planning, was fi-

nanced by the FWF and provided the necessary data for the present volume.

Martin Fera created the digital landscape model (Pls. 52.1 and 59) in 2015, based on kite photography. Last but not least, I would like to thank all people on Sai, who made our work not only successful but also really enjoyable, despite the curse of the black flies, the “*nimiti*”.

Julia Budka
Vienna, December 2015

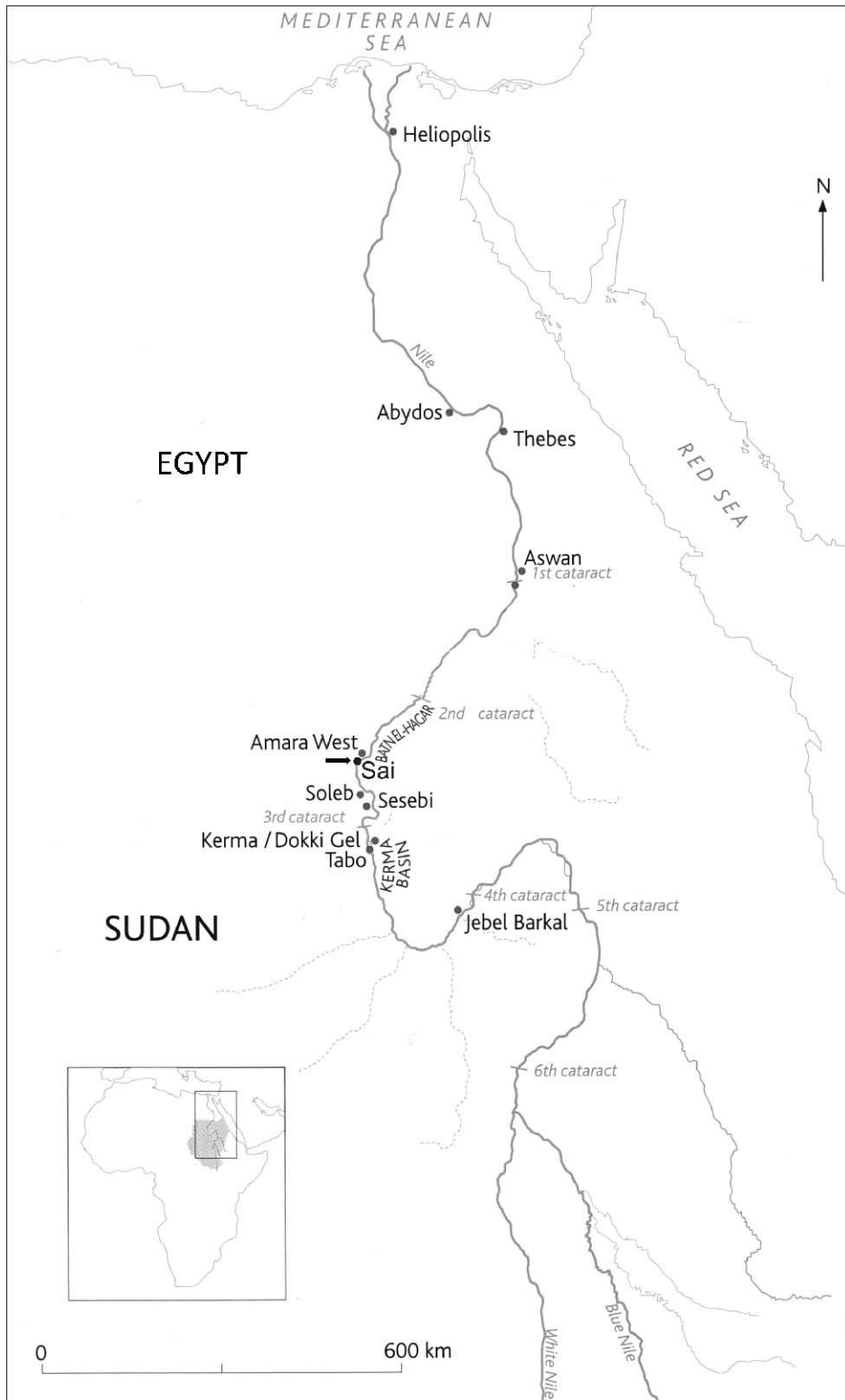


Fig. 1. Location of Sai Island along the Nile Valley. After: WELSBY/ANDERSON (eds.) 2004, 93, fig. 68