

3. OVERVIEW OF SAV1

(Fig. 6; Plans 1–4; Pl. 54)³¹

The New Kingdom town of Sai Island, situated on a sandstone outcrop bordering the eastern branch of the Nile, follows the typical form of an Egyptian fortified town.³² While the western and central areas were relatively flat, the eastern part of the town slopes first gently downwards for about 2.0m and then steeply drops off towards the Nile with a height difference of about 8.0m. A c. 4.40m wide enclosure wall surrounded the approximately 240 × 120m large settlement.³³ The southern part of the town, SAV1, underlies a strict perpendicularity with roughly north-south and east-west oriented streets and large rectangular buildings. In contrast, the excavations in the northern and the western parts of the town present a different picture with a rather irregular layout of the streets and small, mostly domestic houses.³⁴ The central part (about two-thirds) of the settlement has so far not been thoroughly examined, though to the north of the small sandstone Temple A on the eastern side of the town, Building A has been excavated since 2013.³⁵ This building, similar to SAF2 to the south of the temple, proves to be very important for the internal structure of the town, since it shows that the orthogonal layout known from the southern part of the town extended further to the north.³⁶

The southern part of the town was bordered in the north by the east-west oriented street Rue EO1. On its western side was the presumed main entrance into the settlement, labelled Gate SAF4.³⁷ From this gate the aforementioned street, thought to be one of the main thoroughfares of the town, led to the sandstone Temple A, which lies directly to the north

of the street on the eastern side of the town. To the south of Rue EO1, three distinct sectors can be identified: in the west is the quarter SAF5 with silos and several rows of rectangular storage rooms, in the center a domestic quarter consisting of five houses (H1 to H5) and in the east the so-called governor's residence, SAF2. The storage area SAF5 is separated from the residential area by a north-south oriented dividing wall, with no passageway connecting the two city quarters. On the northern, southern and western sides, SAV1 was enclosed by fortification walls. A second known gate is situated in the southern enclosure wall, to the south of House H5.

When looking at the city map of the southern part of the New Kingdom town, a slight difference in alignment of the buildings between SAF5 in the west and the residential quarters in the east is noticeable. The reason for this is not clear, but perhaps it is an indication of different building phases between the eastern and western parts of the town. For the town in general, recent research has established three main phases for the development of the settlement, beginning in the early 18th Dynasty when Sai was probably a simple landing place and supply base, though the size and internal structure of this early settlement is not known.³⁸ The town enclosure was definitely established during the reign of Thutmose III,³⁹ together with Temple A,⁴⁰ Building A⁴¹ and presumably the buildings of SAV1. As exemplified by Temple A,⁴² there were several building phases during the reign of Thutmose III, as well as under his successors Amenhotep II, Thutmose IV

³¹ The naming of the different areas and the main streets derive from the excavation by M. Azim, while specific room numbers were assigned during the reexamination by the author.

³² Cf. KEMP 1972a, 651–656.

³³ For the reconstruction of the enclosure wall and the expansion of the town see Chapter 5.

³⁴ For SAV1 North see DOYEN 2009, 17–20; BUDKA/DOYEN 2013, 167–208; DOYEN 2014, 367–375; for SAV1 West see BUDKA 2014b, 63–65; BUDKA 2015a, 45–46.

³⁵ BUDKA 2014b, 61–63; BUDKA 2015a, 43–45; BUDKA 2016.

³⁶ BUDKA 2015a, 51.

³⁷ Cf. AZIM 1975, 120.

³⁸ This is supported by archaeological evidence from SAV1 East and around Temple A. BUDKA 2015a, 51.

³⁹ Results from the excavation at SAV1 West confirm this dating. BUDKA 2015a, 45–46.

⁴⁰ THILL 1997, 105–117, AZIM/CARLOTTI 2011–2012, 39, 45; BUDKA 2014b, 60.

⁴¹ BUDKA 2014b, 61–63; BUDKA 2015a, 43–45.

⁴² Cf. Chapter 7.

and Amenhotep III. Finally, the town was still in use during the 19th Dynasty.⁴³

Returning to the shifted alignment between SAF5 and the eastern part of the settlement, it seems possible that the area of SAF5 with the north-south dividing wall to the east was first – maybe during the first development phase – established as a storage area with silos,⁴⁴ while in the second phase under Thutmose III the rectangular storage rooms were erected following the direction of north-south dividing wall. At the same time, the domestic buildings and the governor's palace in the east were built, following a slightly different alignment. Currently, there are no ana-

lyzed finds from SAV1 to establish an exact dating for this area, though an important clue is given by an inscription on a door post situated in the northern part of SAF5, which names the viceroy Nehi (Pl. 20.2), indicating that at least this part of SAV1 must have been erected during the reign of Thutmose III.⁴⁵

While three different development phases can be noted for SAF5 during the New Kingdom period⁴⁶ and five building phases were established for Temple A,⁴⁷ little restructuring could be observed in the area of the residential buildings or the governor's palace SAF2, indicating a rather short usage period for these buildings.

⁴³ BUDKA 2015a, 51. New finds from the town site as well as the cemetery SAC5 confirm this development phase.

⁴⁴ Cf. Chapter 8.1. Some of the silos in SAF5 were later overbuilt by the rectangular storage rooms.

⁴⁵ Viceroy Nehi was in office during the years 22/23–52 (see MÜLLER 2013, 106–108); his building inscription dates to year 25; all in all, this building phase in SAF5 seems to

date to the third decade of Thutmose III' reign. See also AZIM 1975, 116; VERCOUTTER 1956, 74–75.

⁴⁶ Cf. Chapter 8.1. Especially for the southern row of magazines in SAF5 the large amount of reconstruction work that seems to have been undertaken at the walls of the storage rooms must be noted. See Chapter 8.2.

⁴⁷ AZIM/CARLOTTI 2011–2012, 45–47, 65.