

6. STREETS⁹⁰

(Fig. 9)

The southern part of the town, SAV1, follows the orthogonal layout of an organized plan with an approximately north-south and east-west orientation. From this planning, some of the original streets can still be clearly identified, namely four east-west running streets (Rues EO1–EO4) and four north-south oriented streets (Rues NS1–NS4). If the remaining area of the fortified settlement on Sai also followed this layout cannot be determined, as only about one third of the town area has been excavated. It is however clear that at least the northern part, SAV1 North,⁹¹ and the western part at the newly excavated area SAV1 West⁹² did not share the same strict perpendicularity.

From the main gate in the west, SAF4, the town was entered via the east-west oriented street Rue EO1, which led to the site of Temple A. Of this street, actually only the southern border is known, formed by the northern walls of the row of storage rooms M13–M18. Assuming that the street passed directly by the southern side of Temple A and lay in the axis of the western city gate, its width can be reconstructed as 5.31m. This main thoroughfare serves as the northern boundary of SAV1 and it is indeed unfortunate that it is not known if and what kind of buildings were on the street side opposite of the row of magazines M13 to M18. These magazines could not be directly accessed by Rue EO1, but only via the north-south running street Rue NS4 that led into the area of the storage rooms SAF5.⁹³ To the east of the magazines no trace of Rue EO1 has remained and it can only be reconstructed as the boundary of the houses H4 and SAF2.

As mentioned, the short north-south oriented street Rue NS4⁹⁴ gave access to the storage area

SAF5 (Pl. 19.1). It was situated between the magazines M15 and M16 and seems to have been the only entrance way into this part of town.⁹⁵ For being the main access, this street is surprisingly narrow, at 2.03m. Its entire length comprised 11.80m, ending at Rue EO1 in the north and Rue EO2 in the south. On the southern side there were buttresses built onto the eastern and western walls, narrowing the width of the alley to 1.21m. Two courses of bricks were situated between these buttresses, on which there presumably formerly had been a stone threshold, marking the actual entrance into the storage area.

The alley Rue NS4 opened onto Rue EO2 (Pls. 19.2 and 20.1), running parallel to Rue EO1. This east-west oriented street was part of the storage area SAF5 and gave access to the magazines M13–M18 lying on the north side of the street. To the east the street ends at the enclosing wall of the storage area, while the western end is not known. The eastern part of Rue EO2 is 1.91m wide, while the western part has a width of 2.60m, since the magazines in that area are slightly set back. Two stone thresholds accentuate the street crossing with Rue NS4, and the western one is aligned with the western wall of Rue NS4. Here, parts of the northern doorjamb are still *in situ*, bearing an inscription of the viceroy Nehi (Pls. 20.2 and 20.3).⁹⁶ The second threshold is situated 3.02m to the east. Both span the entire width of Rue EO2. A further east-west aligned threshold could be detected underneath a secondary wall to the south of Rue EO2, directly opposite of Rue NS4, indicating that Rue NS 4 formerly continued onwards to the south.⁹⁷

In the southern part of SAF5 a further east-west oriented street can be found, Rue EO3. It can be

⁹⁰ The excavator M. Azim assigned the existing street names Rue EO1 to EO4, Rue NS1 and Rue NS4. See AZIM 1975, 98, pl. IV. For a better understanding of the town layout the names Rue NS2 and Rue NS3 were recently assigned to the narrow corridors in the area of the houses H1 to H5. On Azim's plan of SAV1 (Fig. 3), the designations Rue NS2 and Rue NS5 exist for streets that the recent examinations could not verify.

⁹¹ For the results of the excavations at SAV1 North see DOYEN 2009, BUDKA /DOYEN 2013.

⁹² For the preliminary results at SAV1 West see BUDKA 2014b, 63–65.

⁹³ See AZIM 1975, 111.

⁹⁴ Cf. Chapter 14.15.

⁹⁵ Cf. AZIM 1975, 111.

⁹⁶ Cf. AZIM 1975, 116; VERCOUTTER 1956, 74–75.

⁹⁷ Three sandstone thresholds on the western wall of magazine M12 show that the former storage rooms in this area were entered from the west and therefore from the extension of Rue NS4.

traced from its eastern end at the dividing wall to the storage room M7 in the west, but it is not known if the street continued further onwards to the west. Rue EO3 was continuously 4.35m wide and it enabled access to the storage rooms M1–M7 on the south side and M8–M11 on the north side of the street, whereby at least three more magazines can be reconstructed to the west of M11, which also were entered from Rue EO3.⁹⁸

Since there must have been an access route to Rue EO3, one can assume that a north-south oriented street existed in the western part of SAF5.⁹⁹ However, this area has been either completely overbuilt in later periods or has deteriorated, therefore no statements can be made to the position and width of the street.

In the eastern part of SAV1 with the domestic quarter and the so-called governor's palace SAF2, one main thoroughfare existed, the north-south oriented street Rue NS1 (Pl. 21.1). This 1.50m wide street was situated between the houses H1–H4 to the west and the large dwelling SAF2 to the east, which had at least three entrances lying on Rue NS1. Maybe the houses H1–H3 could be accessed from Rue NS1 as well.¹⁰⁰ It seems possible that Rue NS1 continued on to the north, where it would have met with the main east-west thoroughfare Rue EO1. Though if it went even further northwards cannot be determined, it must be noted that the western side of Temple A was exactly aligned with this street.¹⁰¹ Also, further to the north, Building A was situated along a supposed northern extension of Rue NS1.¹⁰² At the southern end of the street, where it opened into the east-west oriented street Rue EO4, the southern wall of House H1 protrudes out into Rue NS1, acting like a doorjamb and hereby narrowing the street to 1.16m at the junction of Rue NS1 and Rue EO4.

The other north-south oriented streets in the domestic sector, Rue NS2 and Rue NS3, are in fact narrow corridors (1.15 and 1.30m wide) that served as access roads for the entrances to the houses H1–H5 and did not function as through-roads. Rue NS2

was 28.75m long, reaching from Rue EO4 in the south to an open area situated between the houses H3 and H4 in the north. Through this corridor the houses H1–H3 on the eastern side and the house H5 on the western side could be accessed. The houses H1–H3 had one entrance each, while the situation is not so clear for H5 on the western side, where there could have been up to four entrances.¹⁰³ The 1.30m wide Rue NS3 was situated to the west of House H4 and stretched from the open area H3N in the south to probably Rue EO1 in the north. This northern part, however, does not exist anymore and is an assumed reconstruction. From this street, one entrance into House H4 has been preserved in the form of a stone threshold, but if other doorways existed as well can no longer be determined. On the southern end of the west side of the street are simple structures, where the walls were very narrow, consisting of only one row of stretchers. These structures could be entered from Rue NS3 as well. At the southern end of Rue NS3 is a course of four bricks at ground level, which could have been the substructure for a threshold located here.

The area H3N, situated between the houses H3 and H5 in the south and H4 in the north, seems to have been an open area which could be accessed from the streets NS1, NS2 and NS3. The entire area was 4.40m wide and 12.10m long. From Rue NS1 it was closed off by a 3.26m long wall, leaving a 1.14m wide entrance. This wall was not exactly aligned with the western border of Rue NS1, but lay 1.05m further to the west, thus widening Rue NS1 in this area.

Lastly, one further east-west oriented street is known, Rue EO4, which is situated to the south of the domestic buildings and SAF2, adjacent to the southern fortification wall (Pl. 21.2). In the west, this street ended at the partition wall to the storage area SAF5 and the eastern end is not known, since this area is either badly deteriorated or overbuilt by later structures. Rue EO4 was 2.76m wide and had crossing points with the streets Rue NS1 and Rue NS2. In the west, a further 1.12m wide north-south

⁹⁸ See Chapter 8.

⁹⁹ In Azim's plan (AZIM 1975, 98, pl. IV) the street Rue NS5 is situated here.

¹⁰⁰ Except for one entrance into House H3, the building features give no clear indication for entrances on the eastern side of the Houses H1–H3, since the walls are badly deteriorated and one cannot clearly define the present openings as original doorways. See Chapter 9.1.

¹⁰¹ For Temple A see AZIM/CARLOTTI 2011–2012. In their reconstruction of the temple a mudbrick enclosure wall existed on all sides. However, remains of this wall could only be verified for the north, east and south sides. If a wall actually had existed on the western side as well, the street Rue NS1 would have ended at the temple. Cf. Chapter 7.

¹⁰² For Building A see BUDKA 2014b, 61–63.

¹⁰³ Cf. Chapter 9.3.

oriented corridor, which could have belonged to House H5, merged with Rue EO4. In addition, the southern city gate was situated at this street, lying to the south of House H5. Close to the ground level, directly to the south of House H1, one can see the remains of an unusual structure: an at least 5.60m long serpentine wall with a thickness of one brick, of which only one course of bricks has been preserved, so the original height of this structure is unknown to us (Pl. 22). Perhaps this structure, possibly a half-height wall, served as some kind of protection for the outer wall of House H1 as well as the entrance to the corridor Rue NS2.¹⁰⁴ Immediately to the west of this structure and to the east of the southern gate, an almost square pillar (0.60 × 0.50m) was situated in the center of the street, constricting the passageway directly at the southern city gate, though a reason for this measure cannot be offered.

At the western end of Rue EO4 was formerly an opening to a much narrower alley with a width of 0.95m, situated between the back side of the row of magazines M1–M7 and the southern fortification wall. The opening was, however, closed off by

a narrow wall, and it could not be determined, if it belonged to the original Pharaonic structure or if it was erected at a later date. In any case, this narrow street could have been a so-called wall street, as is known from other fortified towns and fortresses.¹⁰⁵ A wall street also existed in the area of the western city gate, as can be verified by the still existing corner of an unknown structure, situated 1.12m to the east of the remains of the city gate, thus leaving a street-wide gap between the fortifications and a building situated here. It seems highly likely that the wall street continued along the entire length of the fortifications.¹⁰⁶

Generally, all the streets showed no signs of any special pavement, but remained unsurfaced.¹⁰⁷ As for the width of the streets, especially the north-south oriented streets seem very narrow. While the corridors Rue NS2 and NS3 are access roads for the individual houses, Rue NS1 seems to have been one of the main roads and, with a width of 1.50m, barely meets the minimum required standard of 1.20m, where two people can pass each other without touching.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Although not formed in such a way, doorways in Amara West were blocked by walls in order to prevent debris from accumulating in the entrance. Cf. SPENCER/STEVENS/BINDER 2014, 36. Also at the Middle Kingdom settlement of Qasr el-Saga in the Fayum depression such serpentine walls were observed in the street running along the southern and the western enclosure wall. Cf. ŚLIWA 1992, 179, fig. 1; HERBICH 2001, 182, fig. 1. A special thanks to Beatrice and Cornelius von Pilgrim for bringing this parallel to my attention.

¹⁰⁵ BADAWY 1966, 203; STEINER 2008, 103. In the New Kingdom town of Sesebi a wall street is also attested for, while the structures in Amara West reached directly to the wall, leaving no room for a wall street. See SPENCER 1997, Pls. III and IV.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. SAVI North, where there is also a gap of 1.61m between the city wall and the neighboring structures, leaving enough space for a street running along the wall. See DOYEN 2014, 368, fig. 1. A wall street is also attested for SAVI West, see BUDKA 2014b, 64. As could be observed by M. Semple in 2015, the wall street at SAVI West was later used to collect debris from the neighboring buildings. Personal communication by J. Budka.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. VON PILGRIM 1996a, 219 and 1996b, 255 for the same observation at Elephantine. In general, the streets in Egyptian towns seemed to have received no special treatment.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. VON PILGRIM 1996a, 219.