

PALACES IN SO-CALLED NUBIAN TEMPLE TOWNS: A REASSESSMENT

by Julia Budka

0. Introduction

The present paper aims to reassess buildings with a palatial character that have been labelled as “governor’s palace”¹ or “civil government residence”² in so-called Nubian temple towns of the New Kingdom.³ This group of buildings is in my opinion particularly interesting for the general topic of “palaces” in ancient Egypt, even if they do not fall into the category of royal palatial buildings. As it was stressed by BARRY J. KEMP, the Nubian temple towns offer rich information on settlement patterns and the layout of Egyptian towns, although they are situated outside of Egypt proper. KEMP evaluates the setting as follows: “Thus, in Nubia the Egyptians attempted to turn what must have seemed to them an unbearably backward land into an extension of their own country, building temple-centred towns of the type which probably now formed the backbone of urbanism in Egypt.”⁴ In line with KEMP’s hypothesis, I think it is worth investigating whether the so-called governor’s palaces in Nubia give us information about the typical setting of such buildings at sites located in Egypt – furthermore it can be considered whether they enable us to reveal “the extent to which familiar schemes are adapted to changed circumstances.”⁵ This question of “adaptation” of New Kingdom domestic architecture used in Egypt and transferred to Nubia is currently the focus of the European Research Council Project AcrossBorders.⁶

1. Fortified towns in New Kingdom Nubia

Fortified towns in New Kingdom Nubia (Fig. 1), as exemplified by Buhen, Amara West, Sai Island and Sesebi,⁷ are generally associated with an orthogonal layout and urban planning, with distinct quarters

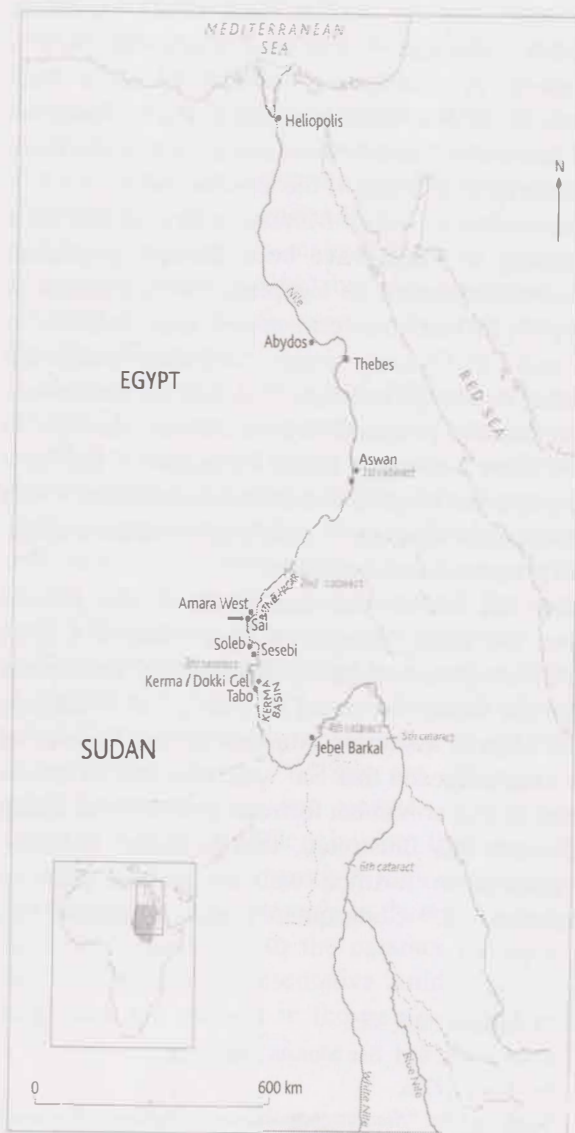


Fig. 1 Location of Sai Island along the Nile Valley (after: WELSBY and ANDERSON (eds.) 2004, 93, fig. 68)

of various functions including a sacred quarter with a stone temple. KEMP has stressed the prime importance of the religious buildings for these Pharaonic foundations in Nubia,⁸ introducing the term “temple town” for this specific urban layout.⁹ No temenos wall is attested for the temples within

¹ FAIRMAN 1948, 6; SPENCER 1997, 161. See also BUDKA 2001, 84–85 (“Gouverneurssitz”) and FUCHS 2009, 77 (“Gouverneurspalast”). Cf. SMITH 1976, 2: “commandant’s palace” for the New Kingdom building at Buhen.

² KEMP 1972a, 651 and 653.

³ For these towns see KEMP 1972a, 651–656.

⁴ KEMP 1972a, 654.

⁵ KEMP 1972a, 654.

⁶ See BUDKA 2013; BUDKA 2014 and for general information: <http://acrossborders.ocaw.ac.at/>.

⁷ KEMP 1972a, 651–653; MORRIS 2005, 5. Cf. also STEINER 2008, 151; FUCHS 2009, 72–79; GRAVES 2011, 55, 61–63.

⁸ KEMP 1972a.

⁹ KEMP 1972b, 664. See also FUCHS 2009, 78; GRAVES 2011, 63. MORRIS 2005 favours the use of the term “fortress town.”

these sites;¹⁰ the temple is enclosed like all the other areas and buildings by the town wall only – following KEMP this might be an indication that symbolic fortification was sought for houses erected in Nubia.¹¹

A reassessment of the term “temple town” for the Nubian fortified towns of the New Kingdom¹² is currently in progress within the framework of AcrossBorders by Jödis Vieth (PhD candidate at LMU Munich).¹³ A related study, but with a linguistic approach, was completed as a PhD thesis in 2010 at the Sorbonne in Paris; based on this research CLAIRE SOMAGLINO is now preparing a lexicographical study of the term *mnnw*.¹⁴

According to ELLEN MORRIS, *mnnw* of the New Kingdom in Nubia have been densely populated and are comparable to Egyptian towns situated in Egypt.¹⁵ In fact, the term *mnnw* may indicate in the mid-18th Dynasty simply “a walled settlement erected in foreign territory.”¹⁶ A similar assessment was already proposed by INGEBORG MÜLLER in 1979 (now published in 2013): *mnnw* of the New Kingdom are larger town areas whereas *htm* – best translated as “fortress”¹⁷ – only refers to the central, well protected area or citadel.¹⁸

For Sai Island, the case study of the present paper, the label “fortress of Shât” (*mnnw n Šꜣꜥ.t*) was reconstructed on a fragmented inscription from the town site, dated to year 25 of Thutmose III.¹⁹ Morris, assuming Ahmose as the founder of the site, proposed that Sai was “the first of a new breed of Upper Nubian fortress-towns.”²⁰ As recent fieldwork has illustrated, this is rather unlikely: at present no fortified wall is attested prior to Thutmose III.²¹ Consequently, also Thutmose I as

the founder of the fortress on Sai²² is not probable from the archaeological perspective. The fortified enclosure wall and the stone temple justifying a designation as *mnnw* were only built during the reign of Thutmose III.²³

Recent archaeological studies, especially the work by NEAL SPENCER at Amara West, have highlighted the complex microhistories and rapid changes regarding the architecture and the use of space within Nubian *mnnws*.²⁴ It became evident that besides a planned outline, Egyptian settlements in Nubia illustrate individual needs and modifications of buildings due to changing environmental conditions, possible sociocultural changes and personal choices.²⁵ In the following, the question will be raised whether this holds true for the so-called governor’s palaces as well.

1.1 Palace and temple: state-of-the-art

*“The temple or temples received and passed on cosmic power. The palaces of the city, and especially the administrative palace – always adjacent to the main temple – mediated that power, organizing it so that it branched out along the appropriate channels into the social and natural world.”*²⁶

Numerous examples and studies have illustrated the close connection between temple and palace in Ancient Egypt.²⁷ The actual vicinity and conceptual closeness of palace and temple can also be observed in the so-called Nubian temple towns.²⁸ CAROLA VOGEL was able to reveal some misunderstandings and highlighted problems in assigning whether an unusual building can be interpreted as a “commander’s house” or as a “temple” in the Middle Kingdom Nubian fortresses.²⁹

Recently, Egyptian palaces and problems of their interpretation have been the subject of two Master theses: DAGMAR FUCHS focussed in particular on the relation between palaces and temples³⁰ and JÖDIS VIETH on the contextual setting of palaces, terminological difficulties and the current state-of-the-art.³¹

¹⁰ Cf. MORRIS 2005, 325.

¹¹ KEMP 1972a, 654. See MORRIS 2005, 326.

¹² See KEMP 1972a.

¹³ Working title: “Siedlungsstrukturen in Nubien – Konstrukt oder Realität? Die sogenannten Tempelstädte des Neuen Reiches (ca. 1550–1069 v. Chr.)”; see <http://acrossborders.ocaw.ac.at/the-so-called-temple-towns-of-nubia-in-the-new-kingdom/> (posted on Oct. 28, 2013). See also BUDKA 2013; BUDKA 2014; BUDKA 2015a; BUDKA 2016.

¹⁴ This unpublished PhD thesis is mentioned by VALBELLE 2012, 451, n. 26; for the current project: SOMAGLINO in preparation.

¹⁵ MORRIS 2005, 809–814.

¹⁶ MORRIS 2005, 213, 331.

¹⁷ Cf. MORRIS 2005, 4–5.

¹⁸ MÜLLER 2013, 39. For *mnnw* as administrative unit in Middle Kingdom Nubia see VOGEL 2004, 21–22.

¹⁹ VERCOUTTER 1956, 75; DAVIES 2014, 7–9.

²⁰ MORRIS 2005, 81.

²¹ BUDKA and DOYEN 2013, 181–182; BUDKA 2016.

²² As proposed by GABOLDE 2011–2012, 135–137.

²³ BUDKA 2016.

²⁴ SPENCER 2014a; SPENCER 2014b.

²⁵ SPENCER 2014a.

²⁶ O’CONNOR 1993, 582.

²⁷ Cf., e.g., ASSMANN 1972; BIETAK 2005; LACOVARA 2009.

²⁸ Cf. FUCHS 2009, 79.

²⁹ VOGEL 2004, 128–131; VOGEL 2010, 423–425; VOGEL 2012, 153.

³⁰ FUCHS 2009.

³¹ VIETH 2012.

This paper intends to show that the state of research regarding the inner structure and layout of Nubian temple towns is still too insufficient for a conclusive analysis. As only a small percentage of all religious buildings and temples are currently known, it seems premature to propose standardised rules for the relation between temple and palace in New Kingdom Nubia. However, parallels between various sites are striking as are local peculiarities, especially references to the specific topography. Sai Island and the ongoing work at Amara West show that a detailed, diachronic approach is necessary to contextualise the large buildings that seem to have functioned as administrative and representative units in the New Kingdom walled towns.

1.2 Evidence for “palaces” in Nubian temple towns

A close understanding of the layout and organisation of temple towns in Upper Nubia is hindered by the fact that no site of the 18th Dynasty has so far been completely excavated. The key sites Sesebi³² and Sai³³ are only partially explored and the town of Soleb³⁴ is almost unknown, as it is the case with Kawa, except for its temple.³⁵ Work in the settlement of Tombois has just begun³⁶ and ongoing research at Dukki Gel³⁷ will provide more answers in the near future. One of the most important Egyptian sites in Kush, the walled settlement at the Gebel Barkal with the Egyptian name *mnnw Sm3-h3stwj*,³⁸ remains still undiscovered.³⁹ Thutmose III built a temple there and the major function of the site is in general assumed to have been connected with trade and cult.⁴⁰

In view of the limited data and restricted knowledge of the New Kingdom sites, it seems legitimate to take the better preserved predecessors of the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period into account. However, a closer look at the

mnnw of these periods illustrates a completely different character than the fortified towns of the New Kingdom exemplify.⁴¹ This is mostly due to the diverse political and historical situation: by the mid-18th Dynasty the kingdom of Kerma was defeated and the walled towns did not hold a real military character, contrasting to the earlier cataract fortresses.⁴² The New Kingdom towns are the materialisation of the successfully installed Egyptian administration in Nubia with a special focus on the exploitation of raw materials (primarily gold and hard stone), craftsmanship and people. A big difference can further be noted between the 18th Dynasty and the Ramesside era,⁴³ therefore it is not only necessary to make a regional distinction (Lower vs. Upper Nubia), but also a chronological division for a general assessment of the period of the New Kingdom.⁴⁴

Despite of these conceptual differences between Middle Kingdom fortresses and New Kingdom fortified towns, both types of walled settlements feature a special building within their layout. This unit is singular regarding its spacious architecture and size and is most often situated in a corner of the site, frequently very close to the temple and with direct access to the parapets.⁴⁵ Such extravagant structures, termed by VOGEL as “Luxus-Architektur,”⁴⁶ which are much larger in size than other domestic buildings have been interpreted as “commander’s house.”⁴⁷ They are different from other houses and do not seem to hold a sacral function.⁴⁸ In the Middle Kingdom fortresses, their strategic position and especially their direct access to the fortifications are strongly in favour of a military function.⁴⁹ Similarly to the cataract fortresses of the 12th Dynasty, representative buildings of a very large size are present in the newly built fortified

³² SPENCE and ROSE 2009; SPENCE, ROSE *et al.* 2011; MORKOT 2012; VOGEL 2013, 81–83 with fig. 6.

³³ BUDKA and DOYEN 2013; BUDKA 2013; BUDKA 2014.

³⁴ See CAVALLIER 2014.

³⁵ MORRIS 2005, 319; MORKOT 2012a.

³⁶ For the site in general and its importance in the New Kingdom see SMITH 2003, 86–94, 134–137; YELLIN 2012; SMITH and BUZON 2014, 432.

³⁷ BONNET 2012.

³⁸ MÜLLER 2013, 96, tab. 2.1.

³⁹ Cf. MORRIS 2005, 206 and 652, n. 889.

⁴⁰ Morkot recently argued that this site was “more directly controlled by the Kushite elite” (MORKOT 2013, 917) than other town sites – an interpretation which cannot be confirmed at present due to missing evidence.

⁴¹ Cf. VOGEL 2004, 61–90 and *passim*; VOGEL 2013, 81.

⁴² Also exemplified by the fact that New Kingdom occupation composed as “suburbs” is often traceable outside of the walled area (KEMP 1978, 23) – both at old Middle Kingdom sites like Quban (SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH 1941, 192, n. 4) and at newly founded sites like Amara West (SPENCER 2009; SPENCER 2014b, 457–458, pl. 1 and VOGEL 2013, 85). Cf. furthermore the so-called campaign palaces, see below.

⁴³ Cf. TOROK 2009, 182–207.

⁴⁴ Cf. MORRIS 2005, *passim*.

⁴⁵ Cf. VOGEL 2012, 153.

⁴⁶ VOGEL 2012.

⁴⁷ BIETAK 1984, 1247; VOGEL 2010; VOGEL 2012.

⁴⁸ I am well aware of the thin line between sacred and secular as outlined, e.g., by O’CONNOR 1993.

⁴⁹ VOGEL 2012, 153.

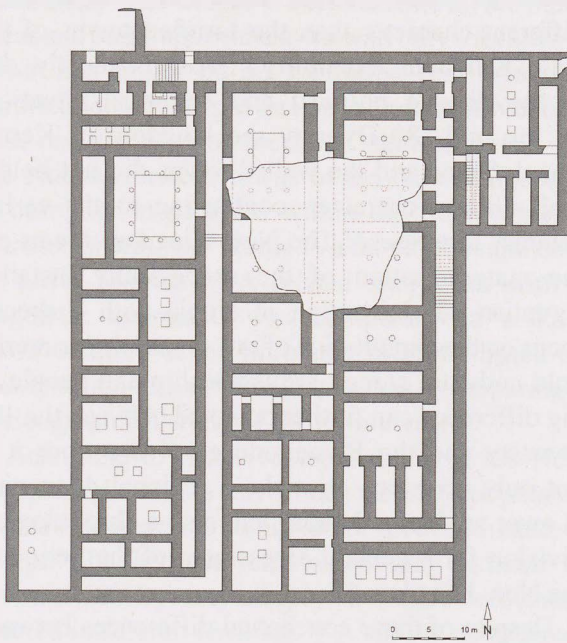


Fig. 2a Ground plan of the campaign palace at Uronarti (illustration by Ingrid Adenstedt after REISNER, WHEELER and DUNHAM 1967, map VI)

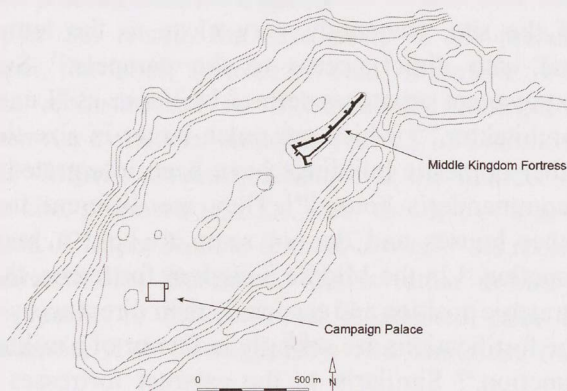


Fig. 2b Location of the campaign palace at Uronarti (illustration by Ingrid Adenstedt after KEMP 2006, 242, fig. 89)

towns of the 18th Dynasty.⁵⁰ One could assume that the highest official of the Nubian administration, the viceroy of Kush (see below, 2.), stayed there on a temporary basis, being on inspection tour or supervising building activities. In addition, it is also possible that such a building served as residence for the local representative of the viceroy, possibly the mayor of the town or the *jdnw* of Kush as it is attested for Amara West (see below, 2.). All in all, there seems to be the practical need for an official, representative building within a town distinct from

domestic quarters for the “ordinary” occupants. However, it has to be stressed that there is still little information about the social stratification of Egyptian temple towns in Nubia. The population of these sites seems much more complex than in the Middle Kingdom fortresses and includes also women, families and Egyptianised Nubians.⁵¹ Consequently, this paper is not a concise assessment, but rather the attempt to summarise the current state of knowledge deriving both from recent fieldwork and epigraphic sources and to highlight potential areas of future research.

1.3 Evidence for so-called campaign palaces outside of fortified towns

In addition to the so-called palaces within the *mnw*-towns in Nubia, campaign palaces outside of the walled areas have been identified at Uronarti and Kor.⁵² No ancient Egyptian label has survived for these buildings and their dating is debatable. The large-sized extra-muros complex at Uronarti (Fig. 2a), situated at the southern end of the island and aligned to the north (Fig. 2b), was presumably built during the reign of Thutmose III and could as such illustrate Pharaonic dominance after the Egyptian victory against Kerma.⁵³ However, the building with several rooms including pillared and columned halls reminds of the elite houses at Kahun, suggesting an origin in the 12th Dynasty.⁵⁴ Similar observations are probable for what is left of the large complex at Kor, but the current state of documentation at both sites does not allow a detailed assessment and secure dating.

At present, a summarising explanation of the so-called campaign palaces is therefore not possible. Other than the so-called governor’s palaces, they are larger in scale and seem to comprise administrative, ceremonial and domestic units.⁵⁵ Parallels to Egyptian palaces like the one at Bubastis (see BIETAK/LANGE-ATHINODOROU in this volume), suggest that these complexes might have been designed to house the king and/or highest military officials on a temporary basis.⁵⁶ A number of open questions are related to them, especially as long as

⁵¹ Cf. VOGEL 2013, 81.

⁵² REISNER 1955, 26; REISNER, WHEELER and DUNHAM 1967, maps II and VI; KEMP 1989, 178–179, with fig. 64 (with literature) = KEMP 2006, 241–242, fig. 89; MORRIS 2005, 187; FUCHS 2009, 71–72; LACOVARA 2009, 107–108.

⁵³ MORRIS 2005, 187.

⁵⁴ See FUCHS 2009, 71–72 with fig. 112. Cf. also LACOVARA 2009, 107–108.

⁵⁵ FUCHS 2009, 72.

⁵⁶ Cf. KEMP 2006, 241.

⁵⁰ Cf. VOGEL 2010, 421–430.

their date remains uncertain. In the following, the focus will therefore be on the intra-muros palatial buildings attested at several sites in Nubia which are clearly dateable to the New Kingdom.

2. Background: outline of the Egyptian administration in Nubia

The basic outline of the Egyptian administration in Nubia is well understood and has been discussed by several scholars.⁵⁷ In the context of the present paper, the key positions within this administration are of interest: officials who must have had some special kind of residence and are consequently likely candidates as occupants of the so-called governor's residences.

The most important person at the top of this administrative system was without doubt the viceroy of Kush (king's son of Kush, *sꜣ-nswt n Kꜣš*). The title "king's son" seems to go back to earlier models in the Second Intermediate Period, when it was used for military commanders of the troops.⁵⁸ The exact heading in the New Kingdom is "king's son of the southern foreign lands/king's son" and "overseer of the southern lands" and, from Thutmose IV onwards, "king's son of Kush."⁵⁹

Prior to Thutmose III, the viceroy was engaged with the supervision of Lower Nubia (*Wꜣwꜣ.t*) only. From the reign of Thutmose III onwards, relevant evidence also comes from several places in Upper Nubia (*Kꜣš*). This is most probably connected with the defeat of Kerma and a corresponding expansion of Egyptian power.⁶⁰

Among the major tasks of the viceroy of Kush is the supervision of building activities.⁶¹ At Sai this is clearly illustrated by the texts referring to viceroy Nehy setting up a temple in the name of Thutmose III (see below).⁶² It is still unclear and debated whether (and if for how long) the viceroys themselves actually stayed in Nubia for these supervisions and other tasks. I personally believe that the large amount of documents left by viceroys in Lower and Upper Nubia, especially rock inscriptions, stelae and statues, can be connected with the actual presence of the officials – the viceroy of Kush was on certain occasions present and passed his orders face-to-face to his inferiors. Therefore buildings

within the Egyptian sites suitable for the highest official of the Nubian administration to reside there on a temporary basis are mandatory.

From the mid-18th Dynasty onwards, a new office, the deputy of the viceroy, is attested.⁶³ This position was soon being divided according to Lower and Upper Nubia, thus there was the *jdwn n Kꜣš* for the southern area and the *jdwn n Wꜣwꜣ.t* for the northern region.⁶⁴ The fact that two deputies of the viceroy were responsible for Lower and Upper Nubia might indicate that the viceroy himself was mainly residing in Egypt proper and that he could rely on loyal representatives in Nubia whom he visited on inspection tours and other occasions.⁶⁵ However, the deputies could also simply illustrate the increased administrative efforts connected with Nubia and especially the gold of Kush and the so-called tributes during the second half of the 18th Dynasty.⁶⁶

Apart from the highest representatives of the Egyptian administration like viceroys and *jdwns*, the local officials on the regional level are poorly understood. Mayors are known for Sai, Buhen, Elephantine and other Egyptian sites (see below, 2.1).⁶⁷ MÜLLER proposed that at the beginning of the 18th Dynasty the mayors were Egyptians who returned to Egypt after their mission in Nubia.⁶⁸ By the mid-18th Dynasty, holders of the title mayor are known to have been buried in Lower and Upper Nubia⁶⁹ – making it likely that they were sometimes Egyptians who decided to stay away from home. More often the mayors presumably have been Egyptianised Nubians who were working as "Egyptian" officials in the Egyptian sites and whose indigenous origin is hard to grasp.⁷⁰

⁶³ Cf. TÖRÖK 2009, 180.

⁶⁴ MORKOT 2013, 925–926 (system established during the time of Amenhotep II to Thutmose IV). Cf. also BUDKA 2001, 72 for sources of the *jdwn n Kꜣš* from Nubian temple towns.

⁶⁵ Who might have been appointed within the indigenous elite and in Nubia only, as MORKOT 2013, 936–937 has suggested.

⁶⁶ For the importance of gold and other products for Egypt see: MÜLLER 2013, 74–79 and passim. For gold in Nubia in general see KLEMM and KLEMM 2013.

⁶⁷ Cf. MÜLLER 2013, 48 and 206–212.

⁶⁸ See MÜLLER 2013, 48, tab. 2.5.2 no. 16; BUDKA 2015a.

⁶⁹ Especially at Aniba and Solch; see also the recent assessment for Sai: MINAULT-GOUT and THILL 2012, 413–418.

⁷⁰ MÜLLER 2013, 48.

⁵⁷ See MÜLLER 2013, passim; cf. also GNIRS 2013, 676–686; MORKOT 2013, 911–963 and ZIBELIUS-CHEN 2013, 135–155.

⁵⁸ Cf. MÜLLER 2013, 31.

⁵⁹ MORKOT 2013, 925 with n. 39.

⁶⁰ Cf. MORKOT 2013, 912–915.

⁶¹ MÜLLER 2013, 18–22; ZIBELIUS-CHEN 2013, 140–146.

⁶² Cf. GEUS 2004.

Viceroy and deputies on Sai Island

No viceroys are attested at Sai Island during the early 18th Dynasty prior to Thutmose III, supporting the assessment that during this era the Egyptian control and administration were still limited and mostly restricted to Lower Nubia.⁷¹ The first viceroy who is well attested on Sai Island is Nehy. Thanks to monuments left in Egypt and Nubia his long lasting career during the reign of Thutmose III is traceable.⁷² Usersatet, viceroy under Amenhotep II, has also left some statues, stelae and architectural pieces on Sai.⁷³

Traces of Ramesside viceroys have survived on Sai as well, but the exact context remains vague: by then, the major administrative centre of the area was Amara West⁷⁴ and no proper architecture was until now exposed within the town area of Sai.⁷⁵ Finds like door lintels, stelae and scarabs from both the town and the cemetery attest among others the *jdwns* Hornakht (Ramesses II)⁷⁶ and Usermaatrenakht (Ramesses IX)⁷⁷ as well as the viceroy Ramsesnakht (Ramesses IX).⁷⁸

Mayors and local governors

Another possible occupant of the “governor’s palaces” discussed in this paper is the *ḥ3tj-ꜥ* (mayor) of a town.⁷⁹ Mayors are for example attested for Sai, Soleb, Buhen and Faras, primarily by stelae and statues – thus texts and respectively representations from mostly funerary contexts. Especially well known is a scene of Nubian officials in the tomb of viceroy Huy, including a number of *ḥ3tj-ꜥ*s from different sites.⁸⁰ The title “overseer of the towns of Kush”⁸¹ suggests a specific hierarchy for these officials, which still remains uncertain. As it

was suggested by KEMP for the general group of Egyptian mayors, it seems likely that mayors of Egyptian towns in Nubia “acted as a buffer between the external demands of the state and the wellbeing of the local community of which they were the symbolic head.”⁸² In Egypt, the king’s chief representative was the vizier,⁸³ in Nubia the mayors would have turned directly to the viceroy. Installing loyal, Egyptianised people of Nubian origin in this position would, therefore, facilitate good relations between the local communities and the Egyptian representatives.

At present, there is no *in situ* evidence for a mayor within the temple town of Sai. The statue of the *ḥ3tj-ꜥ n Š3ꜥ.t* during the time of Thutmose III, Jahmes, was found at Thebes and is now kept at Bologna.⁸⁴ Two objects from the New Kingdom cemetery SAC 5 (see Fig. 3), recently published by MINAULT-GOUT and THILL, attest officials with the title *ḥ3tj-ꜥ*. They are coming from tomb 5, datable to the mid to late 18th Dynasty and equipped with a number of high quality items. Both objects, a shabti and a heart scarab, are perfectly Egyptian in style,⁸⁵ but the individuals behind the Egyptian names and titles might still be of Nubian descent.⁸⁶

Besides the mayors, the so-called *wꜥ:w* – Nubian chieftains, holding this Egyptian title and integrated in the Egyptian administration – played a role in Egyptian towns at the local level.⁸⁷ The famous scene in the tomb of Huy at Thebes depicts both *wꜥ:w* of Wawat and *wꜥ:w* of Kush on the occasion of the *inw*-presentation to the viceroy.⁸⁸ Hekanefer is the best-attested of all *wꜥ:w*, having left an Egyptian-style tomb, funerary equipment and various graffiti.⁸⁹ MORKOT recently argued that Kushite princes like Hekanefer held a major influence in Nubia, especially in the area between the Third and Fourth Cataract.⁹⁰ They have been an integral part of the Egyptian administration system in Nubia, but we

⁷¹ BUDKA 2015a.

⁷² See LEBLANC 2009, 241–251. Florence Thill is currently investigating the complete set of data for Nehy on Sai Island; see THILL 2011–2012 and THILL in press. Cf. also BUDKA 2001, 114–115; MORKOT 2013, 928.

⁷³ For a stela by Usersatet found at Amara West see SHAW 2008, 59 with references. For several statues of this viceroy from Sai (as part of a cache) see DAVIES 2009, 30–31, nos. 1 and 2; GABOLDE 2011–2012, 234 and especially DAVIES 2016.

⁷⁴ For recent work at Amara West see SPENCER 2009, 47–61; SPENCER 2014a; SPENCER 2014b.

⁷⁵ Cf. BUDKA and DOYEN 2013, 182.

⁷⁶ BUDKA 2001, 211–212; BUDKA 2015b (for new finds in the cemetery SAC5).

⁷⁷ BUDKA 2001, 212.

⁷⁸ MINAULT-GOUT and THILL 2012, 413–414.

⁷⁹ MÜLLER 2013, 46–49.

⁸⁰ O’CONNOR 1983, 183–278.

⁸¹ MORKOT 2013, 925.

⁸² KEMP 2006, 282.

⁸³ See KEMP 2006, 282.

⁸⁴ Cf. DEVAUCHELLE and DOYEN 2009, 34, no. 4, n. 10; MÜLLER 2013, 48, Tab. 2.5.2, no. 16.

⁸⁵ MINAULT-GOUT and THILL 2012, 180–183, 408, 414.

⁸⁶ MINAULT-GOUT and THILL 2012, 413–414. Compare especially important results on the biological and ethnic identity of people buried in the cemetery at Tombos attesting a complex mixture of Egyptians and Nubians; see, e.g., BUZON 2008, 165–182. See also SMITH 2014 and SPENCER 2014a.

⁸⁷ MORKOT 2013, 944–950.

⁸⁸ O’CONNOR 1983, 261, fig. 3.20. Cf. MORKOT 2013, 947.

⁸⁹ MORKOT 2013, 947.

⁹⁰ MORKOT 2013, 944–950.

are still far away from understanding all the details. Therefore, their way of housing is still unclear: had they been settled and integrated within the walled Egyptian towns as the case of Hekanefer would suggest? Or can we connect with these indigenous elements the settlements outside of the enclosures, which are known at several sites and still remain to be uncovered at others?⁹¹

2.1 Administrative centres in Nubia

In general, there is no agreement and no clarity about the place of residence of the viceroy of Kush, especially during the 18th Dynasty. Several sites have been named in this respect: Buhen,⁹² Aniba,⁹³ Napata⁹⁴ and Wadi es-Sebua.⁹⁵ It seems most likely that the viceroy stayed primarily in Egypt/Thebes, but details are far from being understood.⁹⁶ Following MORKOT, changes during the era of the New Kingdom are to be expected (see above).⁹⁷ Indirect evidence is the existence of two headquarters for the *jdhw n K3š/W3w3.t* from the late 18th Dynasty onwards: at Soleb (followed in Ramesside times by Amara West⁹⁸) and Aniba.⁹⁹ The latter is known as important administrative centre in Lower Nubia already at the beginning of the New Kingdom.¹⁰⁰

The island of Sai, as strategic “bridgehead”¹⁰¹ into the realm of the Kerma ruler and favourable occupation site throughout the ages, is one of the possible administrative centres of Upper Nubia prior to Soleb.¹⁰² In general, Sai gained importance during the mid-18th Dynasty, especially in Thutmoside times.¹⁰³ The rich evidence of the viceroys Nehy and Usersatet from Sai has led FLORENCE THILL and LUC GABOLDE to propose a residence of these viceroys at the island.¹⁰⁴ This is indeed a quite likely

⁹¹ No extra-muros settlement has yet been identified at Sai. The settlement area outside of the town enclosure at Amara West is currently under investigation; see above, n. 42.

⁹² As suggested by H.S. Smith, see MORKOT 2013, 928–929.

⁹³ VERCOUTTER 1986, 12 with further literature.

⁹⁴ See most recently strongly against such an interpretation: MORKOT 2013, 917.

⁹⁵ GUNDLACH 2006.

⁹⁶ See TOROK 2009, 178.

⁹⁷ MORKOT 2013, 928.

⁹⁸ SPENCER 1998; see now the recent work by N. SPENCER and his team; e.g. as summarised by SPENCER 2014a and 2014b.

⁹⁹ Cf. TOROK 2009, 180.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. THILL in press.

¹⁰¹ DAVIES 2005, 51.

¹⁰² GEUS 2004; BUDKA 2015a.

¹⁰³ MINAULT-GOUT and THILL 2012, 413–418 and passim; BUDKA 2013, 78–87.

¹⁰⁴ MINAULT and THILL 2012, 418; GABOLDE 2011–12, 137.



Fig. 3 Sai Island with location of the Pharaonic town SAVI on its eastern side (© AcrossBorders 2014)

assumption and with the large so-called governor’s residence, SAF2 (see below), there seems to be a candidate suitable for housing the highest official of the Egyptian administration on a temporary basis.¹⁰⁵ However, since *in situ* evidence is still missing this has to be regarded as tentative interpretation.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Cf. the *in situ* Ramesside evidence from Amara West for the *jdhw n K3š*; SPENCER 1997, 164, pl. 117.

¹⁰⁶ One door jamb with the titles and name of Nehy was found *in situ*, but within the magazine area towards the west; see VERCOUTTER 1958, 153–155, fig. 7; BUDKA 2001, 115, cat. 18.

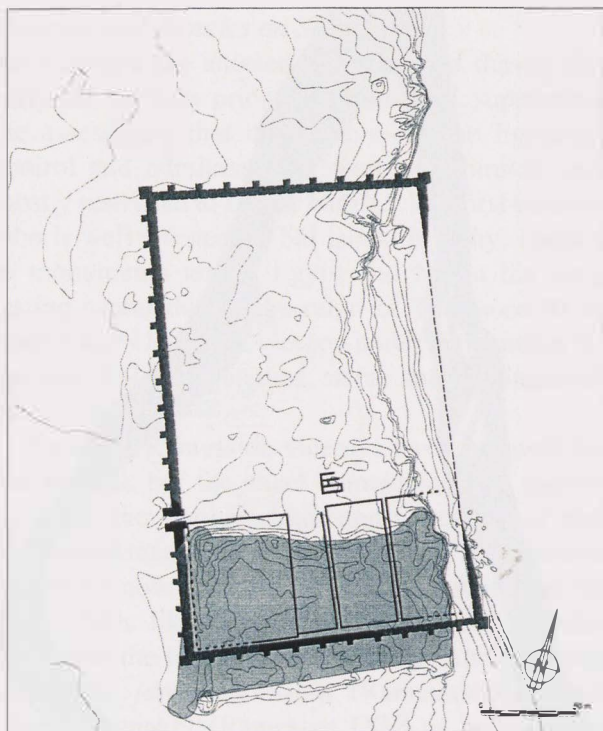


Fig. 4 Presumed outline of Pharaonic town of Sai according to Azim (after: GEUS 2004, 115)

New fieldwork of AcrossBorders, including the discovery of a large structure, Building A, supports the emerging picture of Sai as important administrative centre during the Thutmoside era.¹⁰⁷

3. Sai Island as a case study

The New Kingdom town of Sai Island (Fig. 3) between the Second and Third Cataract has the typical form of an Egyptian fortified settlement.¹⁰⁸ A substantial enclosure wall (4.26 m in width, equipped with towers and possibly a ditch at its western side) surrounds domestic and administrative buildings, large magazines and a small sandstone temple.¹⁰⁹ Former researchers have assumed that the cliff towards the Nile had collapsed since antiquity, resulting in a lost eastern part of the Pharaonic site (Fig. 4).¹¹⁰ However, recent archaeological fieldwork and a geological survey of the sandstone cliff suggest that this was not the case. The state of preservation of the 18th Dynasty remains close to the river is very poor, but there are no signs of a substantial collapsing

of the cliff.¹¹¹ The present hypothesis is that the natural landscape was incorporated into the design of the Egyptian town.¹¹² Its eastern side would have been set up directly along the ancient sandstone cliff, probably strengthening the appearance as “stronghold” for all approaching from the river. It is, however, noteworthy that the enclosure wall was not set on the island’s highest point – as excavations in 2013 and 2014 have demonstrated, the surface is sloping towards the east.¹¹³

Only selected areas of the fortified town of Sai have been excavated until now (Fig. 5).¹¹⁴ The southern part (labelled as SAV1), comprising a sandstone temple (designated as Temple A) built by Thutmose III and a residential quarter, was investigated by a French mission in the 1950s and 1970s.¹¹⁵ Temple A with Amun(-Re) as its main deity¹¹⁶ is rather small in size with a width of c. 10m.¹¹⁷ Early travellers and explorers, among them prominent ones like Frédéric Cailliaud (1821) and Richard Lepsius (1844), have reported two temples at the site: one in the middle of the “fortress”, one further north outside of the “castle” dateable to Thutmose III.¹¹⁸ Consequently, VERCOUTTER labelled the first discovered sacred building situated outside the Ottoman fortress as “Temple A”, expressing his hope that a “Temple B” still remained to be uncovered.¹¹⁹ While the present generation of French researchers consider Temple A as the only Egyptian sandstone temple of the site,¹²⁰ in my opinion the question has not yet been completely solved – too consistent are the descriptions of the

¹¹¹ Geoarchaeological observations conducted within the framework of AcrossBorders by Erich Draganits in January 2014.

¹¹² Cf. KEMP 1972a with several parallels from earlier times.

¹¹³ See BUDKA 2014, 30–31, fig. 5.

¹¹⁴ For a summary of fieldwork up to 2012 see BUDKA and DOYEN 2013, 170–182; DOYEN 2014.

¹¹⁵ AZIM 1975; VERCOUTTER 1986, 12–14. See also BUDKA and DOYEN 2013, 170.

¹¹⁶ Cf. AZIM and CARLOTTI 2011–2012, 11–65. See also THILL in press (about possible identifications of the other important god or godly aspect of the king, Horus-Ta-Sety); cf. BUDKA 2015a.

¹¹⁷ AZIM and CARLOTTI 2011–2012, pl. xv. See also MORRIS 2005, 326, n. 400 that the temple on Sai “was dwarfed in size.”

¹¹⁸ See BUDGE 1907, 461–465 (who was at the site in 1905) and the summaries by VERCOUTTER 1958; VERCOUTTER 1986, 13. The research history of Sai Island will be presented in detail within the framework of Jördis Vieth’s PhD thesis.

¹¹⁹ VERCOUTTER 1986, 13.

¹²⁰ GEUS 2004, 115; AZIM and CARLOTTI 2011–2012, 46 with n. 84.

¹⁰⁷ BUDKA 2013, 78–87; BUDKA 2014; BUDKA 2015b; BUDKA 2015c.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. KEMP 1972a, 651–656.

¹⁰⁹ AZIM 1975, 120–122; VERCOUTTER 1986; GEUS 2004, 115; DOYEN 2009; BUDKA and DOYEN 2013, 178; BUDKA 2014.

¹¹⁰ GEUS 2004, 115, fig. 89 (based on the reconstruction by AZIM 1975).

early scholars. Several parallels for temple towns with two or more temples (for example Buhen and Sesebi)¹²¹ further raise doubts about the small sized temple building on Sai being the only sanctuary.¹²²

Among the different quarters in the southern part of the town (Fig. 7), AZIM¹²³ identified a palatial or residential quarter (sector SAF2, Fig. 6) with a large columned hall of almost square outline (his measurements: 15.3 x 16.2 m) and a well-preserved and well-made mudbrick paving in the east (Fig. 9). This complex, situated east of the street NS1,¹²⁴ is of particular interest as it is regularly assumed to be the “governor’s palace.”¹²⁵

3.1 The so-called governor’s palace SAF2

The following description of SAF2 is based on the report by INGRID ADENSTEDT after an architectural survey in 2013 (Fig. 6 bottom).¹²⁶ Of important value were the published records by MICHEL AZIM (Fig. 6 top).¹²⁷ Unfortunately, only the central part of SAF2 is well preserved (Fig. 8); the northern and eastern parts are either overbuilt or destroyed and the southern part is badly preserved as well. The northernmost part is completely non-existing, but the building seemed to have at least reached to street EO1 (Fig. 6).

Especially noteworthy is the large central hall (updated measurements: 15.57 x 16.17 m)¹²⁸ with formerly six columns, whereby only two of the stone column bases (diameter of 87–89 cm) are still *in situ* (Fig. 10b).¹²⁹ Similar central halls of large building



Fig. 5 The Pharaonic town of Sai Island with excavated areas SAV1, SAV1 North, SAV1 East and SAV1 West (greyscale image of the magnetometer survey results by British School at Rome/University of Southampton), SAV1 by I. Adenstedt 2013 after AZIM 1975, © AcrossBorders 2014)

complexes are attested at other sites – column bases have been found at Amara West, building E.13.2,¹³⁰ but also at earlier fortresses in Lower Nubia. Buhen, Semna and Uronarti have yielded columned halls.¹³¹ Another parallel can be named with the fortress of Askut and its “commandant’s quarter” (Fig. 9).¹³² In Egypt proper, sites like Amarna illustrate the importance of columned halls as representative rooms in the centre of villa-sized houses.¹³³ There are, furthermore, “centre-hall houses” attested as elite dwellings at Sesebi.¹³⁴ A columned audience hall is one of the elements illustrating similarities and links between palaces, temples, the Kahun elite

¹³⁰ SPENCER 1997, 163–167 (Level Four = Seti I period); the original phase is badly preserved, but Fairman noted column bases for it (see SPENCER 1997, 163).

¹³¹ See VOGEL 2010; VOGEL 2012.

¹³² SMITH 1995, 140, fig. 6.2; FUCHS 2009, fig. 101; VOGEL 2012, 155–156.

¹³³ See ARNOLD 1989; BIETAK 1996; VON PILGRIM 1996, 211; KOLTSIDA 2007, 57–61. See also VOGEL 2004, 129 for the columned halls within Nubian “commandant’s palaces” as “Wohn- und Repräsentationsbereich.”

¹³⁴ MORRIS 2005, 338.

¹²¹ See EMERY, SMITH and MILLARD 1979, pl. 4. Noteworthy is also the extra-muros temple at Uronarti (of Middle Kingdom date): VAN SICLEN 1982, fig. 3 (= FUCHS 2009, fig. 106).

¹²² Furthermore, the large number of both royal and private stelae and statues found within the New Kingdom town seems unlikely to have been placed in the small Temple A; see below and cf. DAVIES 2016.

¹²³ AZIM 1975, 98, pl. 4; DOYEN 2009, colour pl. 9; BUDKA and DOYEN 2012–2013, 170–171.

¹²⁴ Cf. the situation at Amara West (SPENCER 1997, 163–167) where the palace is situated directly at the west gate, north of the street, thus also in a prominent position within the network of streets.

¹²⁵ E.g. FUCHS 2009, 73.

¹²⁶ ADENSTEDT 2013.

¹²⁷ AZIM 1975, 100–109.

¹²⁸ Measurements based on the survey by Ingrid Adenstedt. The width is reconstructed, based on the assumption that the distance from the preserved western column base and the western wall equals the lost eastern measurements. Some remains of a pavement in the eastern part seem to support this reconstruction.

¹²⁹ AZIM 1975, 107–108. The number of six columns is reconstructed: based on the parallels (see below) and because of the dimensions of the hall.

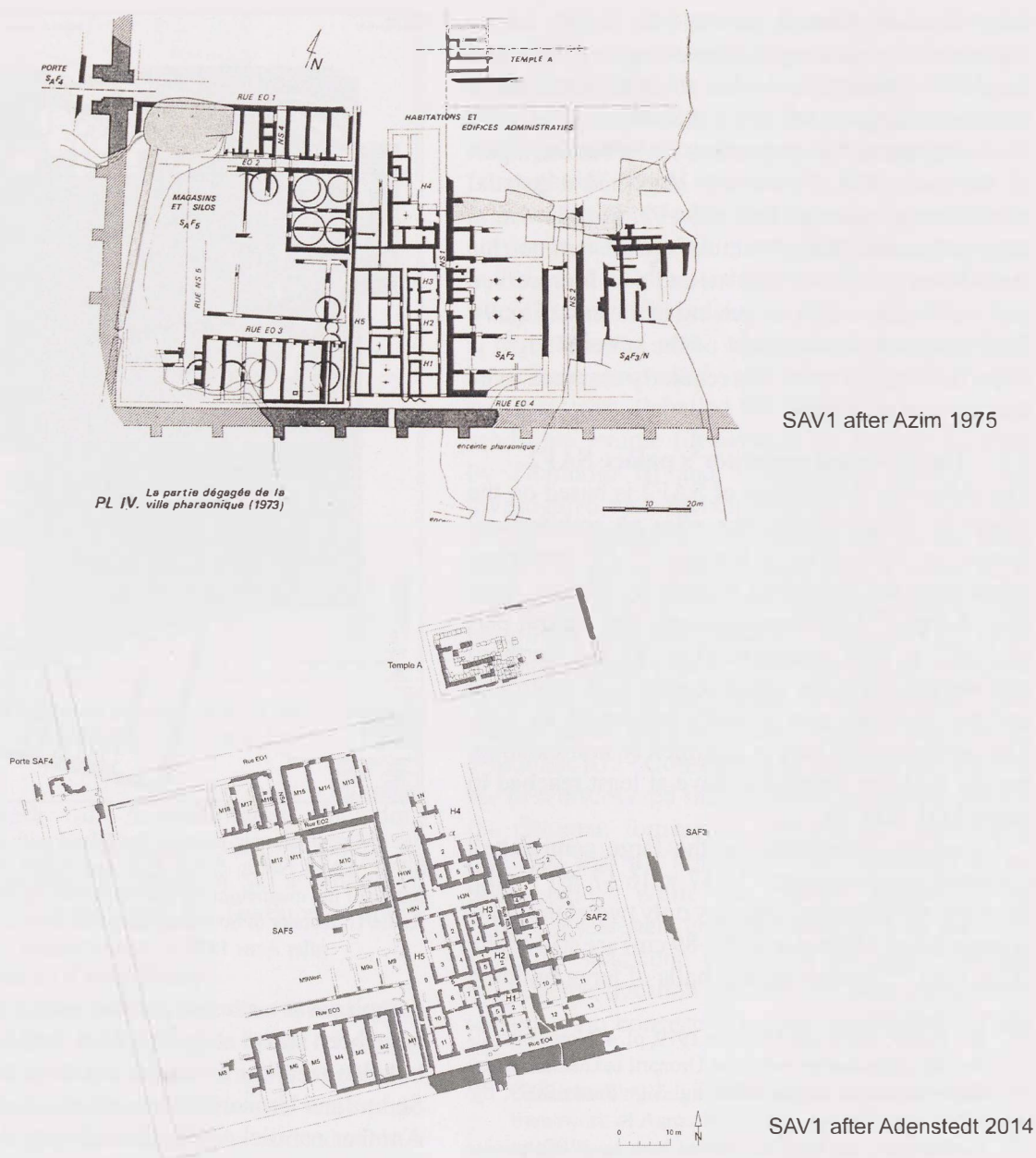


Fig. 6 Ground plan of SAV1: top AZIM 1975, pl. IV, bottom Ingrid Adenstedt (status: 2014)

houses of the Middle Kingdom and the Amarna villas.¹³⁵ Resemblances of the so-called governor's palaces in Nubian fortresses and towns and the large Kahun houses are, therefore, not surprising.¹³⁶ Even stronger links can be established for the above mentioned so-called campaign palaces (1.3).¹³⁷ Here, it is remarkable that the columned halls in the governor's palace at Buhen have axial entrances

as this is typical for representative architecture, including palaces and the Amarna villas.¹³⁸ In contrast, in SAF2 and also in the residence at Askut the access into the hall is located at one of the corners of the rooms, normally characteristic for domestic buildings and medium-sized houses.¹³⁹ Without over-interpreting this entrance situation in the case of SAF2, it seems to reflect the complex

¹³⁵ BIETAK 1996, 37; cf. FUCHS 2009, 47. For Kahun and the so-called palace there see ARNOLD 2005.

¹³⁶ Cf. VOGEL 2004, 145.

¹³⁷ Cf. FUCHS 2009, 72.

¹³⁸ Cf. VON PILGRIM 1996, 211, citing some examples and literature.

¹³⁹ VON PILGRIM 1996, 211.



Fig. 7 View of SAVI from the west (2014). Note the largely destroyed western part with many Pharaonic stone blocks (photo: Julia Budka)

function of the building that is of a representative character, but being merged with basic dwelling purposes.

Along the western side of the building SAF2 a row of smaller rooms (rooms 3–8) is situated comprising three entrance rooms towards the north-south road (NS1). One of these – the northern one (room 3) – seems to have been installed at a later date. Except for this small entrance room, no restructuring was observed by Adenstedt within the building, implying a relatively short building phase and possibly an equally restricted period of use.¹⁴⁰ Rooms 3–6 are rectangular in shape; rooms 7 and 8 are almost square. All rooms are accessible from the columned hall and rooms 3, 5 and 7 served as entrance rooms from street NS1. Room 7 is granting almost axial access from the west. All of these entrances were originally equipped with stone door frames; in rooms 3 and 7 the stone thresholds are still preserved.

Storage installations are present in the well-preserved western part of SAF2. In room 6, just south of the middle entrance from NS1, a row of bricks was observed at floor level, 0.65 m east of

the western wall. These could be the remains of a storage bin, a type of installation well attested at SAVI North and other sites.¹⁴¹ Storage facilities have been documented in the governor's palace at Amara West.¹⁴²

In room 9, the central hall of SAF2, parts of the brick floor laid into a very dense pink mortar are preserved (Figs. 10a–b).¹⁴³ Two different brick formats were used (39 x 17 cm and 33 x 15 cm) and a certain, probably decorative pattern was created which still needs to be reconstructed. Remains of a brick floor can also be found in the other larger rooms.¹⁴⁴

The brick format of the walls of SAF2 (40 x 19 x 9 cm) is markedly different from the other houses in SAVI (33 x 17 x 8 cm) and from Building A

¹⁴¹ Cf. BUDKA and DOYEN 2013, 173–175 with parallels; SPENCER 2014b, 462–463, figs. 2–3.

¹⁴² SPENCER 1997, 163. A large quantity of silos has also been discovered at other sites in the context of extraordinary buildings, e.g. within the mayoral building at South Abydos (WEGNER 2001; WEGNER 2006) and the distribution centre at Elephantine (VON PILGRIM 1996, 85–100, figs. 25–27).

¹⁴³ Cf. AZIM 1975, 108.

¹⁴⁴ See also a brick floor in the palace at Amara West, Level IV, room 17 (SPENCER 1997, 165).

¹⁴⁰ ADENSTEDT 2013. Cf. AZIM 1975, 108–109.



Fig. 8: View of SAF2 from northwest (photo: Ingrid Adenstedt, 2013)

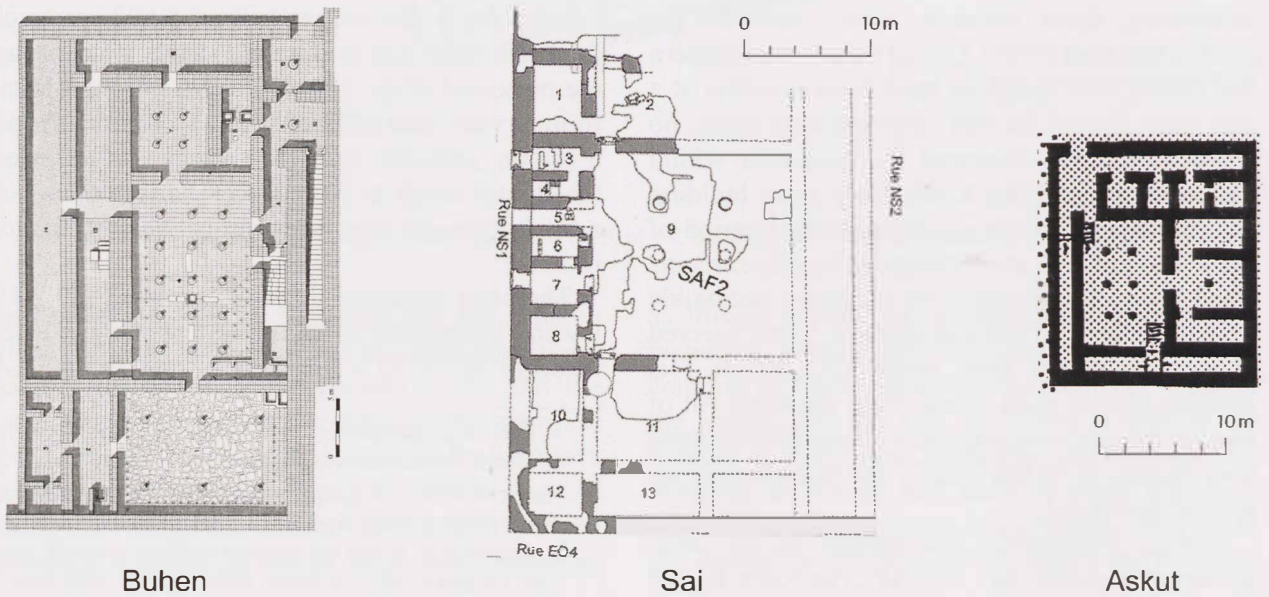


Fig. 9 Comparison of ground plans of governor's palaces at Buhen (after VOGEL 2012, fig. 2), Sai (by Adenstedt 2013) and Askut (after SMITH 1995, 140, fig. 6.2)



Fig. 10a Detail of remains of brick floor in room 9, SAF2 (photo: Ingrid Adenstedt)



Fig. 10b Part of the brick floor in room 9, with two column bases *in situ* (orthophoto by Martin Fera)

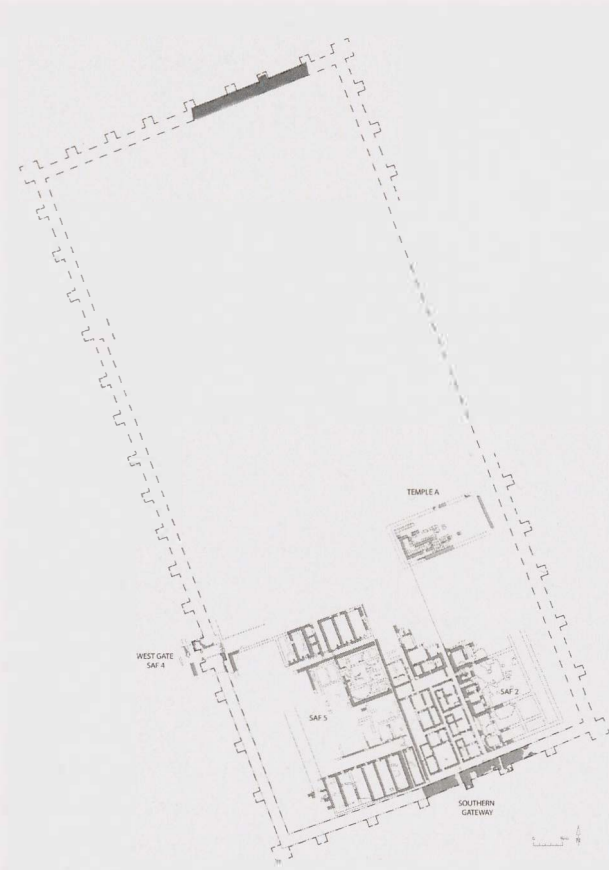


Fig. 11 Estimated extension of the New Kingdom temple town of Sai, based on status of fieldwork in 2014 with a hypothetical reconstruction of the eastern side (illustration: Elke Schuster, © AcrossBorders 2014)

in SAV1 East (34 x 17 x 9 cm; 33 x 15 x 9 cm) (see below).¹⁴⁵ The thickness of the exterior walls (1.5 m) implies a second storey.¹⁴⁶ One possibility, especially taking into account parallels from Askut and other sites,¹⁴⁷ is that a staircase to the upper floor was located in the surrounding corridor at the east side. Further towards the east, the town enclosure wall was probably situated in a close distance to SAF2 (Fig. 11).¹⁴⁸ One might even speculate that there was direct access to the enclosure wall from

the building. Its location in the southeastern corner of the town was probably a position illustrating its high status.¹⁴⁹

The prominent location of SAF2 can be further stressed by its relation to a simple gateway in the southern town enclosure: opening into street EO4, this small entrance leads directly to the southern and western façade of SAF2 (Fig. 11). The simplicity of the gateway reminds one of similar doors through enclosure walls in Middle Kingdom fortresses, interestingly connected with the stairways towards the river.¹⁵⁰ The gateway towards the river stairs in the fortified town of Askut opens at the backside of the “commandant’s quarters.”¹⁵¹ An analogous setting is imaginable for the southern entrance into the New Kingdom town of Sai, even if no walkway towards the river has so far been discovered.¹⁵²

3.2 Building A at SAV1 East

Until recently, SAF2 was regarded as a singular building unit without any parallel in the Egyptian town of Sai.¹⁵³ With new excavation work in 2013 and 2014, a comparable, but badly preserved structure was discovered in the sector SAV1 East (Fig. 12). Designated as “Building A” this is a large building complex north of Temple A of which only negative walls and remains of its foundation trenches have survived. Fieldwork is not yet completed and excavation of the building will continue in 2015.¹⁵⁴ Building A is almost in line with SAF2, situated along the eastern side of the town just above the cliff and the landing place. The floor levels have been adjusted to the topography: Building A is built in terraces with the lowest parts in the east, and much higher parts in the west.¹⁵⁵ The entrance rooms were situated along the western side and a continuation of the north-south street NS1 seems likely.

A tentative reconstruction of the so far excavated

¹⁴⁵ Cf. also varying brick formats at SAV1 North in the contemporaneous level 3: 35 x 17 x 8 cm; 36 x 18 x 10 cm; 38 x 16/18 x 8 cm; 39 x 18 x 8.5 cm (F. Doyen, personal communication).

¹⁴⁶ ADENSTEDT 2013 and personal communication. The evidence for a second storey in Egyptian domestic buildings was recently discussed by KOLTSIDA 2007, 123–135.

¹⁴⁷ See SMITH 1995, 140, fig. 6.2; cf. the headquarter at Buhen: VOGEL 2012, 154, figs. 2–3.

¹⁴⁸ Azim’s building SAF3 cannot be verified (AZIM 1975, 109–111) as 18th Dynasty in date – it is probably later; furthermore, there are new results concerning the eastern enclosure wall of the town (see BUDKA 2015b and 2015c), which would correspond to the reconstruction of SAV1 by Adenstedt (Fig. 5).

¹⁴⁹ Cf. VOGEL 2010, 423; VOGEL 2012, 152–158.

¹⁵⁰ See VOGEL 2004, 125 (citing the examples of Semna-West, Kumma and Quban); VOGEL 2010, 428.

¹⁵¹ Cf. SMITH 1995, 140, fig. 6.2.

¹⁵² This area was largely modified in Ottoman times; the southern city gate of the Ottoman fortress, including a short staircase, might rest on New Kingdom remains – especially because blocks from several periods including the New Kingdom have been reused for this gate.

¹⁵³ The large complex in the western part of SAV1 is very damaged and unclear in its ground plan; the same holds true for the structure SAF3, east of SAF2: its ground plan is unclear and it is probably of Post-New Kingdom date (see above, n. 149).

¹⁵⁴ BUDKA 2014; BUDKA 2015b; BUDKA 2015c; BUDKA 2016.

¹⁵⁵ BUDKA 2014.

southeastern part of Building A is possible (Fig. 12):¹⁵⁶ a roofed, narrow room or corridor towards the north with a mud floor; a large central courtyard (12.4 x 16.2 m) probably flanked by a lateral room or corridor towards the east. As it was suggested for SAF2, this lateral room/corridor might have once held a staircase leading to the upper floor and/or the near-by town enclosure.

Other than in SAF2, the central room of Building A is not a large columned hall with a mudbrick pavement (15.57 x 16.17 m),¹⁵⁷ but an open courtyard of slightly smaller size (12.4 x 16.2 m) with several storage installations. Similar as in SAF2, the entrance into the courtyard seems to have been at its northwestern corner.

The western part of Building A is still only partly excavated, but remains of schist pavements¹⁵⁸ and some bricks of interior walls indicate a series of small entrance rooms similar to the ones found at SAF2.¹⁵⁹ Whether these ‘entrance rooms’ correspond to the function of this part of the building must remain open – they might have been some kind of magazine. Parallels for such small storage rooms can be found in Middle Kingdom fortresses.¹⁶⁰ Also the room function of some of the minor rooms of SAF2 still remains unclear – the remains of a possible bin in room 6 indicate a storage function (see above).

Of particular interest within Building A is a storage installation in the courtyard (feature 15, see Fig. 12).¹⁶¹ It is half-brick thick with the inner side lined with red bricks¹⁶² and with remains of a plaster coating. Feature 15 has a minimum extension of 5.6 m west-east and 2.2 m north-south. Its western wall is set against the natural pebble in Square 4. In this area a small hole was found directly 20 cm above the mudbricks, dug into the gravel. Its diameter is roughly 18 cm and it seems to have once held

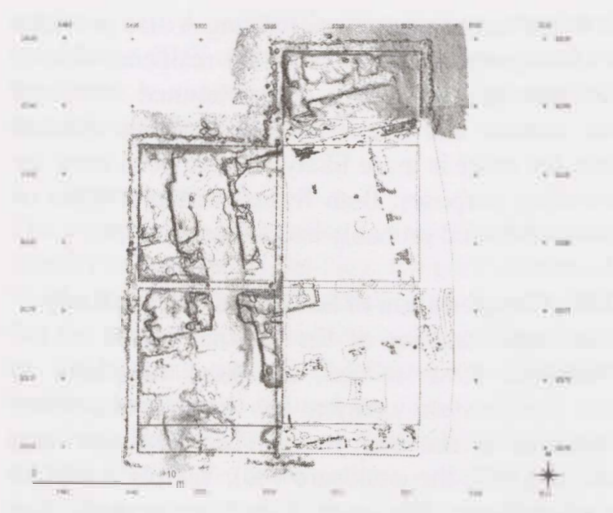


Fig. 12 Excavations squares at SAVI East with remains of Building A (combined illustration of 3D surface model (Martin Fica 2014) and ground plan of East part (Julia Budka), © AcrossBorders 2014)

a wooden beam, possibly for an entrance aid into the structure. The southern wall of feature 15 is preserved to a height of 55 cm and the bottom edge has not yet been reached; excavation will continue in the 2015 season.¹⁶³ The complete western part of the structure is still covered with very loose back filling of gravel, mudbricks and ceramics. Its former top seems to have been at the height of the floor level marked by the maximum of the natural pebble deposit towards the west.

Interestingly, the ceramics deriving from the newly exposed sections of the walls of feature 15 are all consistently mid-18th Dynasty in date. Therefore, the present working hypothesis is that feature 15 represents a rectangular cellar with a vaulted roof located below the floor level of Building A to which it was contemporaneous. Due to a number of ashy deposits, charcoal and a large number of conical bread moulds, feature 15 might have been used as a bakery or a kitchen.¹⁶⁴ Subterranean bakeries of comparable proportions, although larger in size, are known from Amarna associated with the temple complex.¹⁶⁵

Taking all of the evidence together (location, installations, finds) it is tempting to assume a connection of Building A with Temple A.¹⁶⁶ Here it

¹⁵⁶ BUDKA 2014, 32, fig. 8.

¹⁵⁷ AZIM 1975, 100–103 and cf. above.

¹⁵⁸ Schist slabs with mud plaster and traces of whitewash; see other examples on Sai in SAVI, magazine area (AZIM 1975, 112, pl. X) and also at the palace at Amara West: SPENCER 1997, 169 described schist slabs covered with mud plaster and whitewashed in E.13.2, Level II; the precise dating is dubious due to unclear stratigraphy.

¹⁵⁹ BUDKA 2013, 85, fig. 12; BUDKA 2014, 31.

¹⁶⁰ VOGEL 2010, 427.

¹⁶¹ BUDKA 2014, 31, fig. 7. For an updated report on feature 15 see now Budka 2015b.

¹⁶² The use of red bricks is unusual for the New Kingdom, but it finds a parallel in the fortress of Tell Borg: HOFFMEIER 2013, 173 (for the foundation walls of the moat). I would like to thank Neal Spencer for pointing out this comparison to me.

¹⁶³ For the results of the 2015 season and an update on feature 15 see BUDKA 2015b.

¹⁶⁴ BUDKA 2014, 31–32.

¹⁶⁵ KEMP 2012, 113, figs. 3.27–28.

¹⁶⁶ Further data for this interpretation, especially for functional aspects connected with storage and bread baking, came to light during excavations in 2014 (see BUDKA 2014) and will be published elsewhere. Cf. also BUDKA 2015b.

is important to stress that Building A also provides a close parallel to the so-called residence SAF2. Differences concerning the columned hall and the number and size of storage facilities indicate that the latter is more likely to have been used for dwelling purposes. Both feature different types of pavements and probably had a second storey.

3.3 Compendium of Sai Island as case study

Our understanding of the internal layout of the Pharaonic town of Sai, and here especially of the southeastern quarter, has been considerably modified in the last years. There are new data about SAF2, the enclosure wall, Temple A and its surroundings. The most significant aspects can be summarised as follows: (1) It is now clear that SAF2 was located in the southeastern corner of the 18th Dynasty *mnnw*, very close to the enclosure wall which was situated further towards the west (Fig. 12) as originally thought (Fig. 4, Fig. 6 top). This prominent position, with access to the wall and a direct link to a small gateway on the southern side, finds parallels at other fortresses (e.g. Askut and Buhen) and seems to correspond to its interpretation as “governor’s residence.”¹⁶⁷ (2) Temple A is flanked by the SAF2 complex in the south and the newly discovered Building A in the north. Like SAF2 Building A belongs to the major remodelling of Sai during the reign of Thutmose III. Administrative and representative aspects seem to have merged in Building A, but the focus obviously was on storage installations like the cellar feature 15. A large number of conical bread moulds suggests a close link to Temple A. (3) The better understanding of SAF2 and the new information about Building A underline the strong interconnections of sanctuaries and cultic installations with administrative and luxurious buildings of a high status value and in particular their entanglement with each other in New Kingdom temple towns. However, without additional evidence like sealings and texts, the specific function of the large-sized buildings remains hypothetical. (4) It has to be stressed that neither Temple A, nor Building A or SAF2 at Sai can presently be analysed within their original setting – too little is known about their western and eastern surroundings. The western part of SAV1 is especially poorly understood – it is this area where the well-known pillar with the building inscription by Nehy (see above)¹⁶⁸ was

found, believed to be associated with Temple A despite of the considerable distance between the find spot and the presumed original set-up.¹⁶⁹ The new reading of this building text from year 25 by VIVIAN DAVIES¹⁷⁰ indicates that also the evolution of the monument is not yet completely understood – the earliest phases of Temple A under Thutmose III might pre-date the era of Nehy as viceroy (thus before year 23).¹⁷¹ Further questions are open regarding Temple A: the original placement of a large number of statues of viceroys from a cache at Sai still needs to be explained. Although Temple A seems to be at present the first option,¹⁷² with its modest size it is not a completely convincing candidate. Another temple within the town area, in the area of the Ottoman fortress as it was described by early travellers and scholars (see above), cannot be ruled out (especially in the western area around the find spot of the pillar with Nehy’s text) and one can also speculate whether statues were set up within the so-called palace (SAF2) itself (see below, 5.). An alternative possibility could be the existence of a cult chapel dedicated by the viceroy as the ones known from Faras and Wadi es-Sebua.¹⁷³

4. Problems and open questions

The reassessment of the so-called governor’s palaces in New Kingdom walled towns in Nubia with Sai Island as a case study has highlighted their complex relationship to temples at the sites, their luxurious type of architecture visible in size and regarding the facilities as well as their emphasised location within the towns, most frequently in a corner of the site. Nevertheless, the function of specific rooms still remains open in most cases and the administrative role of the buildings can only be tentatively assessed. There are several hints to high officials like viceroys, *jdwns* and mayors, but nothing that definitely proves the identity of their past occupants.

Other than the New Kingdom Nubian fortified towns, the inner layout and functional structure of Roman fortresses is well understood. It is known that a difference was made regarding whether the commandant’s house was for representative

literature; AZIM and CARLOTTI 2011, 46, n. 84.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. GEUS 2004, 115 for the displacement of the New Kingdom architectural pieces by the Ottomans.

¹⁷⁰ DAVIES 2014, 7–9.

¹⁷¹ Contra AZIM and CARLOTTI 2011, 45–46 who associate all the four building phases under Thutmose III with viceroy Nehy.

¹⁷² See also DAVIES 2016.

¹⁷³ See BUDKA 2001, 88–89 with older literature.

¹⁶⁷ See above; cf. BIETAK 1984, 1247; BUDKA 2001, 85; FUCHS 2009; VOGEL 2012.

¹⁶⁸ See VERCOUTTER 1986, 13 and DAVIES 2014, 7 with further

purposes (*principia*) or used for living (*praetorium*), thus for a purely domestic use.¹⁷⁴ Comparable detailed information is missing for the Egyptian context – from both the archaeological sources and the textual evidence. Consequently, we are still facing difficulties differentiating between a palace as dwelling place or as an administrative place. A strict division between ceremonial and domestic functions probably is unlikely to have existed in Pharaonic culture. Exceptional case studies such as the mayoral residence at South Abydos suggest that both the domestic and the official use were combined in large building complexes.¹⁷⁵ Sealings giving personal names, names of institutions, titles and more would potentially illustrate such a combined use, but are unfortunately still almost missing for Sai and other Nubian sites.¹⁷⁶ *In situ* evidence for representative door frames with the titles of *jdnw*s as discovered at Amara West¹⁷⁷ seem to confirm the assignment of the building as governor's place, but do not allow a differentiation between residence or office.¹⁷⁸ In total, it still remains uncertain whether the local administration and/or the viceroys have been living in the palatial buildings investigated in this paper, or whether these were primarily symbolic structures mirroring the Egyptian administration in Nubia.¹⁷⁹

Furthermore, for the specific case study of New Kingdom walled towns, we are facing problems in reconstructing the framework of these sites, in particular regarding the administrative patterns and the historic background. The social stratification of the respective sites is not yet fully understood and a central, still open question regards the power and identity of the *wr:w*, the local representatives. Their private houses and possible administrative places remain completely unknown.¹⁸⁰ The Egyptian type of architecture of the so-called governor's residences has led us to associate them with Egyptian officials like the viceroys, *jdnw* and the

mayor – as we are still lacking further proof and knowledge of all of the identity of the occupants of the towns in questions, it cannot be ruled out that this is a misinterpretation after all.

5. Summary

The exceptional, palace-like houses situated in the vicinity of temples in the New Kingdom towns of Nubia most probably functioned as headquarter for the local ruler or highest official. Depending on the site and specific timeframe, these palatial buildings may have housed the *jdnw n K3š*,¹⁸¹ but possibly also the viceroy of Kush and/or the local mayors (*h3tj-ḥ*). For now, nothing indicates that the indigenous *wr:w* were living or representing their office/status at such places.

For Sai as case study, it could be demonstrated that this *mnnw* was equipped under Thutmose III with an enclosure wall with towers and a main western gate, a stone temple for Amun, large magazines, administrative buildings and typical Egyptian houses. The temple is closely connected to two outstanding structures which are flanking it towards the south and north: SAF2 in the south seemingly represents a palatial building for the local elite; Building A in the north is a large complex focusing on storage and possible temple offerings like conical bread.¹⁸²

The close relationship of the “palace” and the stone temple for gods is illustrated by the evidence from Sai. Obviously, SAF2 was a more representative building, whereas the northern Building A served for the distribution and storage of offerings and goods. SAF2 might have functioned as temporary residence for the viceroy during the mid-18th Dynasty; maybe it primarily served as representative building for the local administration and officials like the mayor and the *jdnw*. Small details like the non-axial access to the main columned hall of SAF2 and storage installations indicate that in addition to its evocative character as an “Egyptian” building, it was really used for domestic purposes.

It is still an unsolved question at which site the viceroy of Kush was residing during the 18th Dynasty. I would suggest that he had official quarters at several sites and all together just stayed in Nubia on a non-permanent basis. Such a non-permanent presence of the viceroys could be related to the large number of statues and stelae dedicated

¹⁷⁴ VOGEL 2004, 128 and VOGEL 2010, 423 with further literature.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. c.g. WEGNER 2006, 31–32.

¹⁷⁶ A large number of sealings with royal names was found in feature 15 in 2015, see BUDKA 2015b, 44–45.

¹⁷⁷ FAIRMAN 1948, 9; SPENCER 1997, 164.

¹⁷⁸ The interpretation of Amara West as capital of Kush is based on the governor's palace and the residence of the *jdnw n K3š* in the town; see already FAIRMAN 1948, 11.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. VOGEL 2004, 128.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. the situation in Canaan where buildings of local commandants and vassals have remained “archaeologically invisible” (MORRIS 2005, 826). See SPENCER 2010 and SPENCER 2014b, 464–466, fig. 4, pl. 5 for possible “Nubian” architecture in the context of the town of Amara West.

¹⁸¹ As attested by the *in situ* evidence from Amara West: see FAIRMAN 1948, 9; SPENCER 1997, 164; BUDKA 2001, 87.

¹⁸² BUDKA 2015a; BUDKA 2016.

by these officials and found in the Nubian towns – providing “substitutes” because the highest official was not always present. For Sai, several dozens of statues of Nehy and Usersatet can be named.¹⁸³ The question of their original placement might be relevant for understanding SAF2: the small Amun-temple, Temple A of Sai, seems inappropriate to have housed all of these statues, most of which were found together in a cache.¹⁸⁴ It remains to be investigated whether these statues – a wide range of statue-types is attested: cuboid, stelophoros, kneeling with a libation bowl and dyads¹⁸⁵ – could have been set up in a representative place related to the office of the statues’ owners.¹⁸⁶ Is it possible that SAF2 and especially its spacious columned hall were once equipped with several statues of the viceroys, illustrating their high status, close connection to the king and gods, but also symbolising their “permanent” presence even if they were actually away from the island? In case that future research provides possible arguments for such a connection of statues with the “palace” in Nubian temple towns, this could potentially illustrate another aspect of these buildings. Eventually, it could, therefore, be relevant for palaces in other regions along the Nile valley and in Egypt proper.

As already suggested by MANFRED BIETAK,¹⁸⁷ the location of the so-called governor’s palaces seems to be one of their characteristics: similar to other Egyptian sites in Nubia, the “palace” on Sai is situated in the southeastern corner of the walled area. SAF2 was probably very close or even connected with the town enclosure in a prominent position stressing its importance and high status (Fig. 11). Other than in the Middle Kingdom fortresses, this location is not a strategic one with a real military character.

All in all, so-called palaces in Nubian temple towns illustrate that like in the Middle Kingdom there was the need for a representative building offering certain luxury to the local elite, the mayor and/or

possibly the viceroy (at least on a non-permanent basis).¹⁸⁸ Such structures probably held more than one storey and were equipped with special types of pavements. Storage facilities illustrate functional aspects of daily life in such building complexes which comprised service rooms.¹⁸⁹ Stone column bases and lintels, thresholds and door jambs in stone are all expressions of the elite status of these palatial residences.¹⁹⁰ In cases of good preservation like at Amara West, functional rooms such as bathrooms and kitchens are also attested.¹⁹¹

In conclusion, I think that the so-called governor’s palaces in New Kingdom temple towns illustrate not only a close connection to and similarities with temples and sanctuaries, but also the role of “palaces” to mediate the power and authority established by stone temples dedicated to gods.¹⁹² This task of the governor’s palaces in Nubia as intermediators – between Egypt and Nubia, the gods/the king and the officials, and the officials/administration and the local community – seems to be especially relevant in areas outside of Egypt proper, but could nevertheless enable us to comprehend more of the complex function of palatial buildings at Egyptian sites as well.

What became evident by a detailed reassessment of the so-called governor’s palaces within Egyptian temple towns in Nubia is the fact that despite of all their common characteristics (location within the town, two storeys, columned central hall etc.), a site specific approach considering the local topography (course of the Nile, elevation of the area etc.) as well as the functional aspects of the site (depending on its date of foundation, its specific situation, the local temples, the surrounding Nubian sites, the hinterland etc.) is essential for our understanding. Current and ongoing fieldwork at sites like Sesebi, Sai and Amara West have the potential to improve the present state of knowledge about daily life in temple towns in the upcoming years. These sites functioned as important “elite residential, administrative and cult centres”¹⁹³ and allow tackling the so-called Egyptian colonisation of Nubia during the New Kingdom from its economic and organisational perspective. In this respect especially the so-called

¹⁸³ DAVIES 2016.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. DAVIES 2009, 31 who considers the burial of these statues as “an official clearance of the Sai temple(s)”. DAVIES’ use of “temple(s)”, indicating the possible existence of several sanctuaries, has to be pointed out.

¹⁸⁵ DAVIES 2009, 31.

¹⁸⁶ The most common settings of these statue-types, especially of cuboids and kneeling types with attributes, are during the 18th Dynasty god’s temples, see BERNHAUER 2010, 164. It would be worth to reexamine all find spots of private statuary from the New Kingdom found in Nubia.

¹⁸⁷ BIETAK 1984, 1247.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. VOGEL 2012.

¹⁸⁹ See the abundant evidence for silos, bakeries and service rooms in the governor’s palaces at Balat: SOUKIASSIAN *et al.* 1990, 355.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. BUDKA 2001, 6 with further literature.

¹⁹¹ SPENCER 1997, 163.

¹⁹² See O’CONNOR 1993, 582.

¹⁹³ MORKOT 1995, 176.

governor's palaces provide diverse insights into aspects of the local administration and religious establishment in very specific circumstances.

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