

Report on the
16th Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission
in Syene / Old Aswan (2015/2016)

by

Cornelius von Pilgrim, Mariola Hepa, Wolfgang Müller and Stefan Pfeiffer

1. Introduction and Overview
2. The development of a Late Period town quarter of Syene (Area 3)
3. Roman burials and Pharaonic structures (Area 89)
4. A Late Antique house at the highest point of Old Aswan (Area 90)
5. A prominent medieval building and Pharaonic remains (Area 91)
6. Houses from the Early Roman Imperial period (Area 92)
7. A Greek inscription found in Area 91
8. Selected pottery assemblages and the date of the Animal Necropolis in Area 2 (Birket Damas)

1. Introduction and Overview

The 16th season of the joint archaeological project of the Swiss Institute of Architectural and Archaeological Research Cairo and the Aswan Inspectorate of the Ministry of State for Antiquities in Syene/Old Aswan was carried out between October 07th, 2015 and April 14th, 2016¹.

¹ We are grateful to the Ministry of State for Antiquities and the members of the Permanent Committee for granting permission to undertake the Joint Mission in Aswan. We appreciate very much the fruitful cooperation with our colleagues of the Aswan Inspectorate in this joint mission. The mission was directed by CORNELIUS VON PILGRIM, in close cooperation with NASR SALAMA. The fieldwork was directed by WOLFGANG MÜLLER. Team members were the Egyptologists U. MATIC and MARCUS MÜLLER, the archaeologists M. HEPA, T. JÜRGENS, L. KREUZBURG and G. WILLIAMS, the epigrapher S. PFEIFFER, the photographer A. KRAUSE, the palaeobotanist U. THANHEISER, the paleo-zoologist U. MUTZE, the anthropologists J. NOVACEK and K. SCHEELEN, and the conservator E. PEINTNER. Assigned inspectors and further member of the mission were ALIYAA ABDEL MONSEF HASSAN, MOHAMED ABDEL RAZIQ MOHAMED ALI, OMNIA MOHAMED ABDALLAH, ZAINAB ABBAS MOHAMED, HANY SALAH MAHMUD MANSUR, SAID AHMED ALI EL-RAWI, AMIRA MOHAMED SADIK GHAD EL-RAB, and GALAL ABDEEN SIAM HASSAN. - We are much indebted to PAMELA ROSE for correcting the English of this report. All Web-Addresses mentioned in the report were last accessed in June 2016.

Archaeological Work (Fig. 1)

Since the major project for reuniting the protected antiquities areas 1 and 2, which includes a comprehensive site management plan for this central archaeological zone and the construction of new working and storage facilities, is still on hold, the mission remains in urgent need of appropriate storage facilities. Bones and pottery sherds from all salvage excavations of the past 16 years are currently stored in the Isis Temple, impeding not only the accessibility of the temple but also hindering any proper work with the material. To put an end to this untenable situation it was suggested that we build a new storage facility reserved exclusively for bones and pottery sherds next to the German Hospital in Area 3. This area is particularly suitable for such a construction, as the area between the temple of Domitian and the neighbouring hospital forms a considerable slope and has had to be filled up in order to support the foundations of the temple. Rather than backfilling, however, a solid subterranean construction would not only stabilize the steep slope towards the west but could be easily used for storage purposes without spoiling the site.

A precondition for any construction, however, was a thorough investigation of the site which was still covered by several meters of modern debris. Although a small excavating machine was used, the cleaning of the site lasted from December 8th 2015 until the end of January 2016. Subsequent excavations revealed a sequence of significant structures dating from the Ptolemaic period down to the Persian period. The oldest occupation is built on accumulations of river sand, adding further data to the reconstruction of the ancient topography and its changes over time.

The systematic survey of current construction sites continued during the whole season. Comprehensive salvage excavations were conducted in four areas in Old Aswan, in the districts of Koka, Shuna and Shawarbi (Fig. 1).²

² Cf. for publications on earlier seasons: C. VON PILGRIM ET AL., 'The Town of Syene. Preliminary Report on the 1st and 2nd Season in Aswan', *MDAIK* 60 (2004), pp. 119-148 (henceforth quoted as: *1st Report*). *Idem*, 'The Town of Syene. Preliminary Report on the 3rd and 4th Season in Aswan', *MDAIK* 62 (2006), pp. 215-277 (henceforth quoted as: *2nd Report*). *Idem*, 'The Town of Syene. Report on the 5th and 6th Season in Aswan', *MDAIK* 64 (2008), pp. 305-356 (henceforth quoted as: *Report on the 5th and 6th Season*). *Idem*, 'The Town of Syene. Report on the 7th Season in Aswan', *MDAIK* 66 (2010), pp. 179-223 (henceforth quoted as: *Report on the 7th Season*). C. VON PILGRIM ET AL., 'The Town of Syene. Report on the 8th Season in Aswan', *MDAIK* 67 (2011), p. 157-161 (henceforth quoted as *Report on the 8th Season*). C. VON PILGRIM/W. MÜLLER, 'Report on the Ninth Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2008/2009)', *ASAE*, forthcoming (http://www.swissinst.ch/downloads/Report_9th_Season_2008-2009.pdf) (henceforth quoted as: *9th Season*). *Idem*, 'Report on the Tenth Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan', *ASAE*, forthcoming ([http://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report_on_the_Tenth_Season_of_the_Joint_Swiss_Egyptian_Mission_in_Syene_Old_Aswan_\(2009_2010\).pdf](http://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report_on_the_Tenth_Season_of_the_Joint_Swiss_Egyptian_Mission_in_Syene_Old_Aswan_(2009_2010).pdf)) (henceforth quoted as: *Tenth Season*). *Idem*, 'Report on the Eleventh Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2010/2011)', *ASAE*, forthcoming ([http://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report_on_the_Eleventh_Season_of_the_Joint_Swiss_Egyptian_Mission_in_Syene_Old_Aswan_\(2010_2011\).pdf](http://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report_on_the_Eleventh_Season_of_the_Joint_Swiss_Egyptian_Mission_in_Syene_Old_Aswan_(2010_2011).pdf)) (henceforth quoted as: *Eleventh Season*). C. VON PILGRIM ET AL., 'Report on the Twelfth Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2011/2012)', *ASAE*, forthcoming (http://www.swissinst.ch/downloads/SwissInst_Report_Aswan_2012.pdf) (henceforth quoted as: *Twelfth Season*). C. VON PILGRIM/W. MÜLLER, 'Report on the 13th Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2012/2013)', *ASAE*, forthcoming (http://swissinst.ch/downloads/SwissInst_Report_Aswan_2013.pdf) (henceforth quoted as *Thirteenth Season*), *idem*, 'Report on the 14th Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2013/2014)', *ASAE*, forthcoming (http://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report_2014th_Season

The northernmost site (Area 89) revealed an additional sector of a late Middle Kingdom workmen's village. It was covered by tombs of the late Roman period which at present indicate the northernmost extension of Roman cemeteries. A similar stratigraphic discontinuity was met in Area 91. There, walls of the Middle Kingdom - encountered on a very limited scale at the bottom of two deep sondages - were covered by a layer deposited not before the Ptolemaic Period. The most impressive structure in that area, however, is a well-preserved wall of a monumental building of the late Fatimid Period.

Besides the fieldwork, anthropological and palaeo-zoological studies were continued, and also the documentation of pottery. The latter focused on well-stratified assemblages of medieval pottery from various key sites and were recorded in the framework of a broader study conducted by G. Williams.

The analysis of the skeletons from the animal cemetery in Area 2 was continued by the palaeo-zoologists U. MUTZE, and the analysis of human skeletal remains was carried on by J. NOVACEK and K. SCHEELEN.

During the whole field season the mission conducted an archaeological training programme for members of the local inspectorate of the MSA.³

2. The development of a Late Period town quarter of Syene (Area 3)

Area 3, as one of only 4 protected areas within Old Aswan, lies at the core of the work of the Swiss-Egyptian Mission at Aswan (Fig. 1). The completely abandoned and unprotected site was cleaned from 2001 to 2003. Then the "Temple of Domitian" and its surroundings were cleared of modern waste that had accumulated up to the level of the top of the temple's columns.⁴ At the eastern limit of the site an extensive safety margin of several metres was left in order to protect the road that runs further to the east of the area at a level of more than six metres above that of the temple and the medieval remains around it. When the slope to the east of the site collapsed due to a broken sewer and water flooded the area, a massive retaining wall was erected by the mission in autumn 2014.⁵ The work of season 16 concentrated on the western part of the area, where a storage facility for the material now stored in the Temple of Isis will be constructed in the near future.

[2013_2014.pdf](#)) (henceforth quoted as *Fourteenth Season*). C. VON PILGRIM ET AL., 'Report on the Fifteenth Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2014/2015), *ASAE*, forthcoming (http://swissinst.ch/downloads/Swiss_Institute_2014_2015.pdf) (henceforth quoted as *Fifteenth Season*).

³ Participants of the Field School were OMAIMA HELMY ABAS IBRAHIM and EMAN ABU ELHEGAG IBRAHIM KALIFA.

⁴ *1st Report*, p. 124. *2nd Report*, p. 251-253.

⁵ Cf. *Fourteenth Season*, p. 4 and p. 12-21. The labelling system for strata and archaeological features respects and follows the nomenclature of Season 14.

As a first step, up to three metres of modern waste was removed.⁶ As a consequence of the construction of the Germania hospital in the early twentieth century, the partial dismantling of the Temple of Domitian in the first half of the 19th century and the construction of the Grand Hotel in the late 19th century, all Islamic and most of the Roman layers were destroyed in the western part of Area 3. Thus the first preserved archaeologically relevant structures were found at a level 4.25m deeper than the floor of the “Temple of Domitian” (Fig. 2). This situation is especially problematic as the – already partly exposed – foundation of the western wall of the temple looms more than two metres above the aforementioned structures, only protected from immediate collapse by one metre of material. The projected building will, besides its primary function as a storage facility, be constructed in such a way that the ancient remains to the east of it are supported. The work of this season focussed on an area measuring 17 x 8m in the south-western part of the site, where the foundation pit for the southern part of the storage facility was investigated archaeologically. As the subterranean facility will be a modular construction, the southern part will be finished and fully operational before the investigation of the northern part commences in spring 2017.

Stratum N

The buildings of Stratum N were erected on layers of Pharaonic quarry debris and fluvial sediments. The surface of the bedrock sloped up from north to south. Big granite boulders were scattered over the area. Only in the southern half of the excavated area were walls of Stratum N preserved. They were severely damaged in the southern part and completely destroyed in the northern part by fluvial activity. Two houses could be discerned (Figs. 3 and 4).

House 15

Less than 1m of the north-south extension of House 15 lay within the excavated area. The house covered the complete width of the excavated area. Room 2 showed a width of 2.8m. The rooms were filled with layers of fluvial sand and mud-brick debris resting on the original mud floors. As only a few floors were detected in the rooms, the house was not in use for very long.

House 14

The northern wall of House 15 abutted the southern wall of House 14. The house did not cover the whole east-west width of the excavated area but ended ca. 2.8m from its western limit. The northern part of the building was destroyed by a flood. Eight rooms of the house were investigated. Of these rooms, only those in the better preserved southern part showed functional indicators. A staircase was situated in Rooms 5, 4 and 7. It was entered via a non-closable door from Room 6 and started in Room 5 (Fig. 5). The stairs in Room 5/6 and Room 7 rested on a solid filling of mud-brick debris and

⁶ The cleaning work started at the beginning of December 2015 and was conducted under the supervision of ABED AHMED ALI. The archaeological work began on February 2nd and lasted until April 14th, 2016.

mud mortar. Six steps of the staircase were preserved. In Room 8 an oven was installed at least at the end of the room's use (Fig. 6). The oven showed a diameter of ca. 80cm and was preserved to a height of 40cm. It was fired from the north via an elaborately-constructed opening measuring 30cm in width. The oven was most probably used for baking bread. The oven constitutes a clear exception to the usual ovens in Late Period Aswan which are mostly cylindrical *tannour* ovens.⁷ The construction of the oven in Room 8 is significantly more elaborate, with its wide mouth and mud brick structure.⁸ It could not be determined whether it was isolated or was part of a battery. Of the northern rooms, only Room 2 was completely within the excavated area. It was entered from the north via a (later walled-up) door next to its north-western corner. All walls were coated in thick layers of mud plaster. While they were preserved to a level of up to 1.5m in the south, only few layers of bricks survived the flood in the north. The house was rather large with a north-south extension of 5.20+x m and an east-west extension of 8.30+x m.

The dating of Stratum N depends completely on the analysis of the pottery that has yet to be studied in detail. A first glimpse at the material however shows that a Persian or, at the earliest, Saite date is most probable. Stratum N is thus contemporary with Stratum K in Area 15.⁹ While the high ground-water table made any further investigation impossible there, Area 3 provided the opportunity to study this period in more detail.

Stratum M

The only architectural structure preserved from Stratum M was a banked mud-brick wall running in an approximate north-west – south-easterly direction that clearly differed from the orientation of Houses 14 and 15 (Figs. 4, 7 and 8). The wall ran into the western section and showed a corner towards the east at its southern end at the eastern section. The wall, made of large very silty mud bricks (more the 40cm long), was preserved to a height of nearly 1m. Like the houses of Stratum N, it was destroyed by water. The wall cut into the ruins of the preceding stratum and was constructed in such a way that granite boulders in its way were included in the fabric of the wall. The wall rested on the above-mentioned layer of granite chips, quarry debris, and in some places directly on the saprolithic bedrock. The wall was slightly curved and banked at an angle of approximately 70°. At the end of its use, river sediment covered the remains of the wall and filled the area to the east of it. The fluvial material mostly consisted of sand and some washed-in remains of mud bricks.

Stratum L

⁷ W. MÜLLER, in *Report on the 5th and 6th Season*, p. 317, n. 28. For a recent discussion of the type cf. S. MARCHI, *L'habitat dans les forteresses de Migdol (Tell el-Herr)*, (Paris, 2014), p. 63-66..

⁸ The oven resembles the 'foyers sur massif' at Tell el-Herr (MARCHI, *L'Habitat dans les forteresses de Migdol*, p. 67-68).

⁹ MÜLLER, in *Report on the 5th and 6th Season*, p. 314-315.

The buildings of Stratum L were erected on top of the fluvial sediment covering the remains of Strata N and M. The houses were built on top of, but still following, the orientation of the preceding Stratum M. A north-south street came into existence with House 9 to its west and the north-western and south-eastern corners of two houses to its east that were mostly covered by the eastern section of the excavated area (Fig. 9). The two houses differed slightly in orientation and were not aligned precisely to each other, with the northern house protruding slightly towards the west. The street was rather wide by Aswan standards (2.5m).

Stratum L/4

In Stratum L/4, the first phase of House 9 was constructed in the northern part of the excavated area. The eastern and southern limits of the building were already defined by that time. Contemporaneous to House 9 was a much smaller building to its south - House 13 - and the two buildings at the eastern limit of the excavated area.

House 9 (Figs. 9 and 10)

Only the southern and eastern limits of the house, 8.5m of its north-south and 7m of its east-west extension, were within the excavated area. Whether the southern face of a wall in the north-western corner of the sounding marks the northern limit of the building will become clear when the northern part of the foundation pit is excavated in the near future. The eastern and southern limits remained the same throughout the long use of House 9. The internal organization of the building was partly obscured as only traces of the walls of this earliest phase could be recorded due to destruction that was connected to later changes in the ground plan. The rooms did not show any clear functional indicators. Five rooms of different sizes were documented. Room 6/7 measured 2.3m x 1.3m and was entered via a door at the western end of its northern wall. The room to its west showed no clear western limit as its northern and southern walls ran against a sandy slope. Most probably the former western wall of the room was destroyed by later construction activity and situated to the east of the sandy slope, so the dimensions of the room may be similar to the one to the east of it. Of two slightly larger rooms in the centre of the house, Room 5 showed a connecting door towards the north. A large room measuring 3m x 4.5+x m situated at the northern end of the house most probably constituted a courtyard (Room 1/4).

House 13

The building measured 3.30 x 2.8m and abutted the southern wall of House 9. It was much smaller and simpler in design than House 9. The house comprised two rooms that were separated by a north-south wall. Rooms 1 and 2 were connected by a door with a sandstone threshold. Another door led to the street running to the east of House 9. Both doors showed stone thresholds. In the south-

eastern and south-western corners of the room a sequence of several small (diameter 20 – 50cm) bread-ovens and a vessel with perforated bottom buried upright were found (Fig. 11).

Stratum L/3

House 9

During Stratum L/3 considerable changes took place. With the construction of Wall W3-434, House 9 was divided into two units. The width of the wall (70cm) seems to imply that both units were houses in their own right. The dimensions of the eastern unit were 4.70 x ca. 9m (Figs. 12 and 13). Of the western unit, two rooms were within the excavated area, with Room 2 in the north and Room 3 to the south of it (Fig. 14). Only a sandstone threshold remained of a door connecting Rooms 2 and 3. It was laid at the time of construction of W3-434 and was anchored in the wall. The western wall of Room 3 was very narrow (half a brick wide) and built against a slope consisting of fluvial sand and debris of earlier strata. The dimensions of Room 3 were only 1.20 x 1.60m. The western wall of Room 2, situated to the north of Room 3 lay outside the excavated area. As was the case in Stratum L/4, Room 2 extended much farther to the west than Room 3. A possible reason may be that a building sat on top of the sandy slope to the south-west of House 9. Probably due to the problematic western wall of Room 3, a small additional mud-brick wall was erected against the southern wall of the house later during Stratum L/2c.

House 10

House 13 was given up and House 10 was constructed on top of it. The eastern wall of the house was in the same place as the eastern limit of House 13. Thus, still, the eastern front of the house was not aligned to the eastern wall of House 9 (for an overview at a later stage *cf.* Fig. 15). In its earliest phase House 10 comprised 3 rooms. The northern Room 1 was subdivided into the bigger eastern Room 1b, measuring ca. 3 x 1.5m, and the smaller western Room 1a (*cf.* Fig. 24 for Room 1 during Stratum L/3). While no traces of the original western wall of House 10 were preserved due to later building activity, it seems safe to assume that, as the construction of House 10 was roughly contemporary with the changes in layout of House 9 and the construction of the western unit comprising Rooms 2 and 3, the western limit of the house was in its earliest stage similar to the situation in House 9/Room 3. The east-west extension of Room 1b could thus be approximated as 1.5m. While there were no functional indicators found in Room 1a, a massive mud-brick platform (2 x 1.30m) covering most of Room 1b was most probably part of a staircase. The steps started at the eastern end of the platform, next to the entrance, where a niche of 15cm depth and a width of 60cm marked the first step. Room 1a and 1b were connected via a door of 70cm at the southern end of the dividing wall.

Room 2 covered the whole southern half of the building. As the southern wall of the house was not completely parallel to the other walls, the width of the room changes from 1.70m in the west to nearly 2m in the east. The inner south-western corner of the room was rounded, probably following the shape of the outer corner of the house that was covered by the eastern section.

As was the case with its predecessor, the entrance into the house was from the north-south street (Fig. 16). The door remained in the same place throughout the whole use of the house. Two consecutive sandstone thresholds on top of each other are evidence of the long use of this door. The width of the door was 60cm. The pivot was situated on top of a sandstone slab to the north of and aligned with the sandstone slabs that were used as the threshold of the door. At the beginning of Stratum L/3, the threshold was at a significantly higher level than the contemporary street layers. Thus stone steps built into the stone foundation of the eastern wall of the house became necessary. Room 1 was entered via the aforementioned door and connected to the southern Room 2 via another door. Again this door showed a two-phase sandstone threshold. For both phases sandstone pivots remained in situ to the south-east of the door at different levels. As the pivots were at lower levels than their contemporary thresholds, the door opened into Room 2 and closed against the threshold (Fig. 17).

Other than House 9 with pure mud-brick walls and only occasional stones in the foundation, the lower courses of the eastern and southern walls of House 10 were made of sandstone and granite rubble. The mud-brick walls on top of this up to a 60cm-high socle were of very bad quality. The stone socle and the mud-brick portion of the walls were covered in thick layers of mud plaster.

Stratum L/2 (Figs. 18 and 19)

Houses 11 and 12

Soon after the construction work of Stratum L/3 was finished, a complete overhaul of the whole area took place. The most significant change was the construction of two massive stone structures, Houses 11 and 12. Both houses followed the orientation of Houses 9 and 10.

Only the remains of the elevated base of House 11 were preserved (Fig. 20). Its banked walls consisting of sandstone and granite rubble were built against a sandy slope. The platform, at a level of more than 1m above the foot of the base, was constructed by laying slab-shaped sandstone and granite rubble flat on top of loose sand and earlier ruins. The north-west – south-east extension of the platform was completely within the excavated area and measured 7.2m. The south-west – north-east extension was at least 5m long, and the area covered was ca. 28sqm. The bottom of the wall rose from east to west as the sandy hill sloped up towards the south-western corner of the area until it was no longer preserved at a distance of ca. 1.80m from the south-western corner of the excavation where it ran against a granite boulder.

With the exception of its western wall and a small part of the platform, the socle of House 12 was completely outside the excavated area (Fig. 21). The constructional details were exactly the same as

had been the case with House 11. Between the 6.60m long and - at its eastern end - 1.60m high banked stone wall and Houses 10 and 11, an east-west street came into existence (Street 3). As the southern walls of Houses 10 and 11 were not aligned to each other, the street was 1.50m wide between Houses 11 and 12 and up to 2m wide between Houses 10 and 12. The street layers showed the same characteristics as Street 2. The western wall of House 12 was banked more steeply than was the case with the walls of the podium of House 11. While House 11 was erected on the ruins of Stratum N, House 12 was built completely on top of the western wall of House 10 and covered the western wall of House 9/Room 3.

House 9

Stratum L/2c

As the area of the north-eastern corner of House 11 was already respected during Stratum L/3 and not covered by any part of House 9, the implications for House 9 were minor. The southern wall of Room 2 was adapted to the stone wall and a small mastaba-like structure was added at its northern face (Fig. 22). The threshold was slightly moved at its western end but the door remained in use.

In the eastern unit of House 9 (Fig. 23), a new organization of space took place. A massive (ca. 1.20m wide) east-west wall was constructed ca. 2m from the northern wall of the house. A stone platform abutted the northern and eastern walls of Room 1. The platform measured 2.70 x 1.30m (the northern and eastern limits of the platform had to be reconstructed) thus leaving only a narrow corridor (75cm wide) to the northern wall of the room and a small space to the western wall (ca. 50cm). The corridor was connected to Room 4/5 via a door at the western end of the southern wall. The door was 1m wide. A mud-brick construction at the eastern face of the western wall of the unit constituted the doorjamb. The function of the platform is difficult to determine due to its bad state of preservation, but an interpretation as a staircase seems most probable. Another possible albeit rather hypothetical interpretation would take into account the finding of a complete but smashed basin made of limestone that was scattered over Room 1. The basin's length could be reconstructed as measuring ca. 90cm. The platform and its successor might have worked as a base for the basin, as an installation allowing visitors to the house to clean themselves before continuing further.¹⁰

An elaborately-constructed threshold at the eastern end of the corridor is the only indicator of an entrance into House 9 that can be identified up to now. A granite slab was put on top of a small wall made of sandstone and granite rubble. It was constructed as a step to reach the elevated threshold of the main entrance into the house from the north-south street to the east of it that was not preserved.

¹⁰ Cf. *idem*, 'Domestic structures in Graeco-Roman Syene (Modern Aswan)', in S. LADSTÄTTER/V. SCHEIBLREITER (eds.), *Städtisches Wohnen im östlichen Mittelmeerraum 4. Jh. v. Chr. – 1. Jh. n. Chr.*, DÖAWW 397 = AF 18 (Vienna, 2010), p. 35, Fig. 4 for a (reconstructed) example from Area 15. For an example of a similar basin from Tell el-Herr cf. MARCHI, *L'Habitat dans les forteresses de Migdol*, p.81, Fig. 117e.

The floor of the large central Room 4/5 showed several small fireplaces and emplacements of unfired clay for vessels.

Room 6/7 at the southern end of the house was given up and a stone platform measuring 1.50 by 2m was constructed in its place in such a way that two small rooms came into existence to the east and west of it, the eastern Room 7 being only ca. 70cm, and the western Room 6 ca. 1m wide (*cf.* Fig. 24 for an overview of House 9 in Stratum L/2a). Small pilaster-like mud-brick constructions against the inner faces of the eastern and western walls of the unit at the northern ends of these rooms show that the rooms had clearly defined entrances, in spite of their minuscule dimensions. Of the threshold of Room 7 only the foundation, a stone wall that was a constructional part of the platform, was preserved. The northern part of Room 6 was destroyed by the Fatimid construction of Stratum D. The platform and the inner faces of the walls were coated in thick layers of mud plaster. The platforms at the southern and northern ends of House 9 show common constructional details in spite of differences in size and location. They were mainly made of sandstone and some granite rubble with occasional spoliae or reused stone-tools such as simple granite millstones and showed at least two phases of use. The southern platform may have been part of an elevated pedestal that was probably accessed via the two small rooms at its sides. It clearly was an important and especially ornate part of the building at the southern end of a spacious room or courtyard. A comparable construction of similar date but different in scale was found in Area 2.¹¹

Stratum L/2b (Fig. 25)

During Stratum L/2b the central room was subdivided into a smaller northern (Room 4, 1m wide) and larger southern room (Room 5 ca. 2m wide). The dividing wall was so badly damaged by later constructions that a door at its center seems probable but has to remain pure speculation. The main entrance into the house from Street 2 remained in use. In Room 1 a smaller mud-brick platform was put on top of the stone construction. Rooms 4 and 5 were connected via a door near the south-western corner of Room 1. A threshold made of sandstone slabs abutted the southern wall of room 4. The pivot of the door was situated on a sandstone slab at the western end of the door. To the east of the threshold, the wall was destroyed by a later door.

Stratum L/2a (Figs. 24, 26 and 27)

The spatial organization of the eastern unit of House 9 did not change significantly but the mud-brick wall that separated Rooms 4 and 5 was now replaced by a narrow mud-brick wall (30cm wide) resting on a socle of sandstone and granite rubble with some reused stone tools. The former "staircase" in the northern part was abandoned and a room of undefined function came into existence (Room 1). Functional indicators were an elaborate fireplace at its western end that had a base of reused pottery and burnt mud bricks and numerous loom-weights made of unfired clay together with other

¹¹ W. MÜLLER, in *Fourteenth Season*, p. 10-11, Fig. 11.

implements connected with weaving.¹² A two-brick-wide wall made of bad quality mud bricks and coated in thick layers of mud plaster separated Rooms 4 and 5. The two rooms were connected via a 65cm-wide door in the centre of the wall.

House 10

Stratum L/2c (Fig. 19)

With the construction of House 11, the eastern wall of its platform became the western limit of House 10. The implications concerning roofing and the use of the rooms must have been considerable. At the beginning of Stratum L/2, a battery of two ovens was constructed at the western end of Room 1a. The diameter of the ovens was ca. 50cm. Considering the numerous repairs and a large quantity of ashy layers, the ovens were in use over a long period of time (Fig. 28).

Stratum L/2b-a (Fig. 25 and 27)

At the end of phase L/2b, the wall separating Rooms 1a and b was given up and Room 1 covered the whole width of the house. A short time later the ovens were abandoned and some of the walls of the house were renewed (Fig. 15).

Stratum L/1 (Fig. 29)

Little remained of the last traceable phase of Houses 10 and 9. In some places remains of stone walls on top of the outer walls were preserved. These traces are sufficient evidence to assume that the overall organization of space remained the same throughout Stratum L.

Only in the northern part of House 9 was a more elaborate construction observed. There two narrow east-west stone walls (or foundations) flanked the base of a rectangular platform similar to the earlier abandoned one at the southern end of the house (visible on Fig. 18). The structure abutted the eastern wall of the house and showed an east-west extension of 1.90m and a north-south extension of 1.20m. It was thus orientated towards the west. The northern wall of the investigated part of House 9 was also covered by a foundation of very small granite rubble and stone chips.

Concluding remarks on Strata N - L

Stratum L shows the gradual development of a town quarter of ancient Syene. The dating of the different strata and substrata is completely dependent on the study of the pottery, as no other chronologically significant material such as seal-impressions was found. A first glimpse at the pottery clearly shows that the beginnings of Stratum L date to the Persian Period and that it runs well into

¹² Cf. MARCHI, *L'Habitat dans les forteresses de Migdol*, p 104-105 for similar objects from Tell el-Herr.

Dynasty 30, which makes it roughly contemporary with Strata J-H in Area 15 and Strata G-F in Area 2.

The character of the architecture also shows parallels to these areas of the Persian town. House 9 finds a close parallel in Building 9 of Area 15¹³ and Building 2 of Area 2¹⁴ besides other examples from nearby Elephantine¹⁵ as well as Tell el-Herr.¹⁶ Any comparison between the houses in Area 3 and buildings observed in Areas 15 and 2, however, has to take into consideration the fact that Houses 9 and 10 were not embedded in a system of surrounding courtyards as were the buildings mentioned above. They were directly connected to the urban space and not nuclei of a wide range of activities in surrounding structures that separated them from the streets.

House 10 had a far simpler ground-plan than House 9. While this type of building is well attested from Elephantine¹⁷ and Tell el-Herr¹⁸ no parallels have yet been found in Aswan.

The range of the small finds shows more similarities with Area 15 than Area 2, as a number of stone and bronze weights as well as numerous bronze arrowheads of types common in the Persian period and Dynasty 30 were found. Among these finds, an elaborate stamp¹⁹ made of bronze in the shape of Thoth in the form of an ibis accompanied by Maat sitting in front of him should be mentioned (Fig. 30).²⁰ The object was found in House 10/Room 1 on a mud floor of Stratum L/2a. This figurine and the weights are evidence of an administrative element that was less prominent in Area 2. Taking into account the locations of these areas within the town, the vicinity of the main channel of the river Nile seems to be the decisive factor to explain these peculiarities. Areas 15 and 3 are situated along or near the bank of the river and (until now hypothetical but probable) harbour installations. Here administrative and policing activity was more intensive than in parts of the town further from the river.²¹

As in Area 15, the similarity of the material culture to Tell el-Herr was apparent. A miniature *situla* (Fig. 31) made of lead with a bronze coating that was found in House 9/Room 4 in Stratum L/2a has an exact parallel in Tell el-Herr. With the one from Tell el-Herr, the find from Aswan is only the second such object ever found in a domestic context.²²

Considering all the similarities with Area 15, a most striking difference cannot be overstated: the completely different orientation. As Stratum N and all strata later than Stratum L follow the same orientation as the buildings in Area 15, a topographical reason for this peculiarity is improbable. The

¹³ W. MÜLLER, in *Report on the 5th and 6th Season*, p. 315-317 n. 28.

¹⁴ *Idem*, in *Fourteenth Season*, p. 6-7.

¹⁵ A. KREKELER, 'Stadtgrabung am Westkom von Elephantine/Wohnbauten des 1. Jahrtausends v. Chr.', in M. BIETAK (ED.), *House and Palace in Ancient Egypt*, UZK 16, DSchrÖAW 14 (Vienna 1996), p. 111 plan 9.

¹⁶ Type IV at Tell el-Herr (MARCHI, *L'habitat dans les forteresses de Migdol*, p. 41 fig. 53 and p. 199-200).

¹⁷ Cf. House Z (KREKELER, 'Stadtgrabung am Westkom', p. 111, plan 7).

¹⁸ Type II at Tell el-Herr (MARCHI, *L'habitat dans les forteresses de Migdol*, p. 40 fig. 51).

¹⁹ The stamp on the underside of the plinth was too corroded to read.

²⁰ Cf. A similar object in the Bibliotheka Alexandrina Antiquities Museum = Inv. BAAM 0622

(<http://antiquities.bibalex.org/Collection/Detail.aspx?a=622&lang=en>). H. NASR EL-DINE, 'Trois figurines d'Ibis avec Maât', *ASAE* 86 (2015), p. 321-328 on a recent discussion of the subject.

²¹ Cf. MÜLLER, in *Fifteenth Season*, p. 7 for a discussion of the differences between Areas 2 and 15.

²² MARCHI, *L'habitat dans les forteresses de Migdol*, p. 83-84 fig. 118d.

singular orientation starts with Stratum M and the construction of the banked (retaining?) wall. The wall seems to have been built against an unstable slope of loose sand and other material that was left after a massive flood event had destroyed the buildings of Stratum N. Most probably the wall was constructed in order to stabilize the banks of a new channel created by the river during the flood after the water had receded, in order to prepare the building ground for structures that were later either completely destroyed or situated to the west, outside the excavated area. The peculiar ground-plan of House 9, and more specifically the area in the south-western part of it, may give indirect evidence of such a structure. Moreover, as the wall of Stratum M was destroyed prior to the construction of Houses 9 and 13 and covered by them, such architecture on top of the sandy slope in the south-west of the area must have existed and defined the orientation of the houses of Stratum L.

Stratum K (Figs. 32 and 33)

A massive filling layer separated the remains of Stratum L from Stratum K. The filling layer elevated the floor level significantly. The infill consisted mostly of burnt mud bricks (Fig. 34). The debris did not originate from destruction, as these bricks had been exposed to heat over a long period of time. They were burned throughout, giving the impression of fired bricks. Maybe huge ovens or other industrial installations had been dismantled and used for the filling.

During Stratum K an east-west mud-brick wall sitting on a massive foundation consisting almost exclusively of granite rubble was constructed at the western limit of the excavated area. The foundation was 1m wide and sat in a foundation trench that was up to 1m deep. The mud-brick wall on top of it was in use for a long period of time and – showing several phases – preserved in the eastern section of the excavation to height of up to 2m. In the area excavated this season, to the south of the wall, no other architectural remains from Stratum K/2 were found. Layers connected to the wall were only preserved at the eastern limit of the trench. The only structure of this period in the investigated area was a small rectangular oven or fireplace constructed using mud bricks measuring 90cm x (1 + x m).

Stratum J/2 (Figs. 32 and 33)

Only the foundations of structures were preserved from this period. Most noteworthy among them was a massive foundation of granite rubble. The foundation was 1.20m wide and ran in a north-south direction ca. 3.90m from the eastern limit of the excavated area. It formed a corner towards the east 1.50m from the above-mentioned wall running at the northern limit of the trench. The foundation then ran towards the east for only one meter and ended abruptly. To the south it ended 4.70 from the southern section. Here also traces of a corner and remains of a foundation running towards the east were visible but were badly damaged. The south-western part of the trench was severely disturbed by

modern activity. Other foundations to the east of the excavated area and partly reused in Stratum J/1 were contemporaneous.

Stratum J/1 (Figs. 32 and 33)

Only some courses of mud bricks were preserved of the walls to the east of the excavated area. Two houses could be discerned with some degree of certainty. House 16 consisted of three rooms. The westernmost Room 1 was only partly preserved. Its western wall had to be reconstructed. The two eastern rooms did not show any characteristics except for traces of a vault in Room 2. Taking into consideration the fact that the walls of the room were only two layers of bricks high, the vault most probably roofed a small room that served as a substructure to the house proper. These rooms were a common feature of domestic structures in Aswan during the Ptolemaic period.²³

House 16 and the foundations of Stratum J/1 mark the southern limit of Street 1. The 1.50m-wide street existed well into the medieval period.

House 17 was the immediate neighbour of House 16 to the south. House 17 was later than House 16 with its Room 1 cutting into Room 1 of House 16. House 17/Room 1 had a square ground-plan with a width of 1.80m and contained a mud-brick pavement. The room served as a small vestibule for the house. A 60cm-wide door near its north-western corner opened towards the west, and another 90cm-wide door led to the north. The western part of the house was not preserved but the ground-plan of the house most probably followed the foundations of Stratum J/1. Rooms 2-6 of the house most probably constituted substructures, and the floor level was only preserved in Room 4 where small indentations in the mud floor may be traces of an area for the preparation of mud mortar or bricks. A wall of the same period abutted the western face of the large north-south foundation of Stratum J/2 but was mostly destroyed by later activity.

Little can be said about the buildings of Stratum J/1 due to their bad state of preservation. Suffice it to say that they very much resemble the houses of Insula 1 in Area 15 during Strata E-C, the beginning of the "urban phase" of Syene.²⁴ As was the case there, the building tradition started in Stratum E or D at the latest, and continued well into the medieval period. Stratum K would then be contemporary with Stratum F in Area 15. A clearer chronological distinction between Strata K and J will be possible after a thorough study of pottery and coins, but it seems that the houses of Stratum J/1 were in use until the very end of the Ptolemaic period.

The dating of Strata K and J into the Ptolemaic period is beyond question due to coins and pottery found in well-stratified layers at the eastern limit of the trench. A first analysis of the material suggests a date not before the 1st half of the 2nd century BC for Stratum K. As in other excavations in all parts of

²³ MÜLLER, in LADSTÄTTER/SCHIEBELREITER, *Städtisches Wohnen im östlichen Mittelmeerraum*, p. 436.

²⁴ *Loc. cit.*, p. 435-437. MÜLLER, in *Report on the 5th and 6th Season*, p. 333-356. *Idem*, 'Urbanism in Graeco-Roman Egypt', in M. BIETAK ET AL., *Cities and Urbanism in Ancient Egypt*, UZK 35 (Vienna 2010), p. 245-251.

the ancient town, a substantial gap in regular urban settlement activity between the end of the Late Period and the 2nd century BC is manifest in the archaeological record.²⁵

Stratum H (Figs. 32 and 35)

The early Roman Imperial period is of special interest as it is contemporary with the main monument of Area 3, the so-called "Temple of Domitian", a small Roman temple dedicated to Khnumu.²⁶ Regretfully all above-ground structures from this period within the investigated area were destroyed by modern activity. The only noteworthy structure was a small subterranean room situated at the western section. The 1.50m-wide structure extended 2.30m into the excavation. The western limit was outside the investigated area. The northern and southern walls were only a half-brick wide while the eastern wall was significantly wider (irregular, but in places 1.5 bricks wide). A step-like construction at the eastern end of the room may be evidence that the small cellar was entered there. The walls and floor of the room were covered in white lime plaster. The floor rested on a mud-brick pavement. The pottery found in the filling of the cellar was dated to the 1st century AD.²⁷ During the later Roman Imperial period several pits dating roughly to the 2nd century AD covered the area.

Stratum G (Fig. 32)

Of Stratum G only remains of stone foundations were preserved. A house abutted the western face of the large north-south foundation of Stratum K. While the ground-plan of the house was mostly obscure due to the bad state of preservation of the walls, it became clear that the building tradition that started with Stratum K was still followed. The northern end of the building was aligned to the northern end of the walls of Strata K and J and thus respected Street 1.

Stratum F (Figs. 32, 33 and 36)

House 8 was situated at the southern limit of the excavated area, mostly covered by the pharmacy of the "Germania" hospital. Parts of two rooms of the house were within the excavated area. The western Room 1 measured 2.20 x (1.80+x)m, the eastern Room 2 2.80 by (1.50+x)m. The walls of both rooms were only preserved to a level of ca. 10cm. They were coated in white lime plaster, as were the floors. The floor of Room 1 was constructed in an especially elaborate manner as it rested on a pavement of fired bricks. The northern and eastern wall of Room 2 showed traces of niches.

²⁵ The town area was even used for burials (MÜLLER, in *Fourteenth Season*, p. 11).

²⁶ Cf. H. JARITZ, 'Untersuchungen zum "Tempel des Domitian" in Assuan', *MDAIK* 31 (1975), p. 250-252 for a discussion of the dating of the monument. While Jaritz does not believe in a date for the monument earlier than Domitian, E. LASKOWSKA-KUSZTAL suggested in a personal communication a Neronian or even Tiberian date.

²⁷ As with all other datings of Graeco-Roman pottery I thank MARIOLA HEPA for the information.

In spite of the fact that the floors of the house are at the same level as those of the Ptolemaic period, the pottery and coins found on and under the floors give a date in the Late Antique period. The house was built into a slope mostly consisting of earlier ruins, just like the hospital at a much later time.

Stratum D (Figs. 32 and 37)

A circular shaft, most probably used for waste-water disposal, was cut into the structures of Stratum J and K. The round well-like shaft was cased with carefully-laid fired bricks. The masonry showed alternate courses of horizontally laid bricks and courses of bricks that were laid on edge. Small rectangular holes were left in the casing. These holes were aligned vertically and were arranged in pairs that were exactly opposite each other. Three pairs of such holes were documented. The difference in level between each pair was 60-80cm. As this distance is clearly too large for step holes, the holes most probably constitute remains of a scaffold or similar construction. The uppermost layers of bricks were already robbed. The shaft was documented down to the ground-water table. It did not stop at the surface of the bedrock at ca. 90.4 asl,²⁸ but continued at least 1m further. The inner diameter of the brick construction measured 60cm, the diameter of the shaft was 1.30m. The well-like installation resembles two other structures found further to the east of Area 3,²⁹ and several others throughout Aswan.³⁰ They have close parallels in Fustat and are dated roughly to the Fatimid period.³¹

Conclusion

The archaeological objective of this season, namely to investigate the pre-Roman remains in an area so rich in Islamic monuments and the location of one of only three known temples in Aswan, was achieved successfully. The town quarter was situated just ca. 30m to the east of the medieval river bank attested in Area 52.³² As it shifted from west to east over time, the bank of the river Nile must have been located even nearer to Area 3 in antiquity. The development of an important part of the town could be studied in great detail. The most remarkable feature during the Late Period was the repeated destruction by the river that reshaped the area several times and forced the reconstruction of the domestic structures, even leading to a complete change in the overall layout during Stratum L. From this stratum onwards, no further destruction by fluvial activity was recorded in spite of the fact that the floor levels were, at 92.0 – 92.2m asl, still within the reach of extremely high floods that were

²⁸ Above sea level.

²⁹ MÜLLER, in *Fourteenth Season*, p. 16.

³⁰ Cf. *idem*, in *9th Season*, p. 15 (Area 50)

³¹ W. KUBIAK/G. T. STANLON, 'Fustat Expedition: Preliminary Report, 1966', *JARCE* 10 (1973), p. 17-19.

³² MÜLLER, in *9th Season*, p. 20-23. Cf. W. MÜLLER/M DE DAPPER, 'The Urban Landscape of Aswan', in Y. TRISTANT/M. GHILARDI (eds.), *Landscape Archaeology. Egypt and the Mediterranean World*, *BiEtud* (Cairo, forthcoming), Fig. 4 for a reconstruction of the granite profile from Area 52 to Area 16.

not uncommon during the Late Period.³³ This was probably due to the construction of the town wall of Syene during the second half of the 5th century BC.³⁴ The western sector of this wall was excavated in Area 15, situated 95m to the south of Area 3.³⁵ Projecting the course of the wall from Area 15 towards the north, it would come to lie to the west of Area 3, where it would now be covered by buildings of the hospital. The lower part of this wall was entirely made of stone and was thus water resistant and a good protection if not against the humidity, then at least against the immediate force of the floods.³⁶ This would then put Stratum N into the first and Stratum L into the second half of the 5th century BC. With Stratum K and the massive infill that was deposited on top of the Late Period remains, floor levels (ca. 93.4m asl) were well out of the reach of the river even during extreme flood events.

(Wolfgang Müller)

3. Roman burials and Pharaonic structures (Area 89)

The small site was situated to the east of the main street of the modern *suq* in the immediate vicinity of Area 74 to the south-east and Area 85 to the east, at the northern limit of the area investigated by the mission up to now.³⁷

Pharaonic workshops and bakeries (Strata D and E) (Fig. 38)

Due to evidence obtained in the immediate vicinity in earlier seasons (Area 74, Area 85) it was expected that a similar sequence of building layers dating to the Old Kingdom and late Middle Kingdom would be encountered in this particular area. The limited size of the excavation, however, was further reduced by a quite recent robbery shaft in the south-eastern corner of the area and a modern circular sink tank to the north of it.

After the latter had been emptied and the sides were straightened, some bricks of a mud-brick wall and a dolerite hammer-stone beside it appeared at the bottom of the trench (Stratum E). The bricks were covered by a massive layer of clean sand mixed with some brick rubble and a few pottery sherds of the Old Kingdom. The distinctive composition of the layer leaves no doubt that it was deposited as a result of a devastating inundation of the site. Unfortunately, it was not possible to uncover the building layer

³³ S. J. SEIDLMAYER, *Historische und moderne Nilstände, ACHET A1* (Berlin 2001), p. 90 Tab. 7 gives 91.50m asl as the estimated average flood level for the Aswan region. The floors of Stratum N would thus lie just 20 – 30cm higher than the average flood. The floors of Stratum L would be at a higher level than an average flood but still within the reach of an extremely high flood that would rise to approximately 93m asl (*ibid.*, p. 101).

³⁴ MÜLLER, in *Fourteenth Season*, p. 12.

³⁵ *Idem*, in *Report on the 5th and 6th Season*, p. 317-318.

³⁶ *Idem*, in *Twelfth Season*, p. 5-7.

³⁷ Work in Area 89 started on October 7th and lasted until December 6th 2015. The site covered an area of 54sqm and was situated in 18, Sh. Saad Zaghloul. The excavation in Areas 89, 90, 91 and 92 was supervised by ALIYAA ABDEL MONSEF HASSAN, MOHAMED ABDEL RAZIQ MOHAMED ALI, OMNIA MOHAMED ABDALLAH and SAID AHMED ALI EL-RAWI.

on a larger scale since a large robbery tunnel had destroyed most of the particular layer in the adjoining area.

As with the stratigraphy known from Area 23, located about 80m to the south-west³⁸, fluvial deposits and Old Kingdom remains are covered by an occupational phase of the late Middle Kingdom (Stratum D). Unlike Area 23, however, remains were preserved at a larger scale and offered a differentiated stratigraphy consisting of three subsequent building phases (Fig. 39). The oldest phase is represented by a straight wall with a thickness of one length of brick that crosses the area from north to south. The wall was destroyed down to its lowest course and the levelled brick rubble was used as a building surface for a subsequent building phase. It consists of narrow, slightly curved walls delimiting small compartments which resemble open shelters or walled working areas rather than covered rooms or living spaces.³⁹ Only the lowest course of bricks has survived, and the bricks are of uniform quality and size.⁴⁰ The final phase shows a similar arrangement of light constructions. The walls are built using slightly larger bricks⁴¹ and are preserved to a maximum of three courses of bricks. Due to intense heat, some walls are coloured orange where large fireplaces are indicated by the accumulation of ashes. The predominant presence of cylindrical bread moulds suggests that the production of bread was one of the main tasks of this campsite. Subsequently, the ruins were covered by a massive layer of debris comprised mostly of pottery sherds and a little brick rubble. The debris possibly derives from contemporary dumps of production waste which were levelled and spread over the site only much later, when the area was again occupied by a Roman cemetery.

The late Middle Kingdom strata in Area 89 fully correspond with a contemporary sequence of ovens and walls observed in a salvage excavation (Area 74) situated about 30m further to the east.⁴² Once located close to the riverbank, during the Old Kingdom it was still within the reach of the annual flood. The same is true for another cluster of salvage excavations (Areas 23, 72 and 73) about 80m further to the south, where a very similar stratigraphy and sequence of occupation was attested in previous seasons. There, the Old Kingdom strata are clearly connected to granite working and the embarkation of roughly-shaped granite blocks, and it is most likely that the work camp of the late Middle Kingdom must be seen in the same context. It was most likely part of a vast workmen's village with various zones of activity and different types of buildings. The village obviously spread as far to the south as Area 45 and Area 91 (s.b.) where more substantial buildings for other production activities or the accommodation of personnel were located. Strikingly, in both areas the same sequence of occupation, including an hiatus before the late Middle Kingdom and an abandonment of the settlement after the 13th Dynasty, was attested.

(Cornelius von Pilgrim)

³⁸ C. VON PILGRIM, in *Report on the 5th and 6th Season*, p. 307-311.

³⁹ The structures strongly resemble the character of the contemporary „open village“ at Mirgissa which may have been a comparable workmen's camp, cf. J. VERCOUTTER, *Mirgissa I*, Paris 1970, fig. 23.

⁴⁰ 32x16x8cm.

⁴¹ 34x17x9cm

⁴² VON PILGRIM/MÜLLER, in *Twelfth Season*, p. 17-21.

Roman pit-burials (Stratum C) (Fig. 40)

It was only in the Roman period that human activity resumed in the area. It was then used as a cemetery. With one exception the earliest graves were simple pit-burials with the body positioned in a supine position with the head to the west and the feet to the east.

Among the seven tombs of Stratum C, Tomb 11 was special in many ways. It contained a terracotta coffin (Fig. 41). The coffin was 1.05m long and a maximum of 0.32m wide and thus belonged to a child. While the bottom of the coffin was well preserved, the lid was severely damaged by tomb robbers. Regretfully the central part of the lid was destroyed, leaving only the upper part of the carefully-crafted face intact. The burial was orientated in a completely different manner to all other burials in Area 89, with the head to the south and the feet to the north. Terracotta coffins have been encountered in several areas of Aswan but are not a common feature.⁴³

Tomb 10 was the second remarkable tomb belonging to this burial phase, as the grave pit was covered with stones (broken granite) after its refilling, probably both as a means of protection and as a marker for the location of the tomb. Several examples of this simple grave design were found in Area 45.⁴⁴

Late Antique chamber tombs (Stratum B) (Fig. 42)

The latest tombs showed a more elaborate design with simple mud-brick superstructures (Fig. 43). As the southernmost Tomb 1 was found empty and a most probably sepulchral mud-brick structure at the northern section (Tomb 4) could not be investigated as it was mostly outside the investigated area, the only tomb containing burials was Tomb 3, a chamber tomb with a large rectangular superstructure. This superstructure was of the common type for Late Antique burials in Aswan - a rectangular mud-brick structure, resembling a narrow platform that covered the pit - that later influenced the simpler types of tombs in the Fatimid cemetery.⁴⁵ As was the custom in Late Antique Aswan, the tomb was used over a long period of time. Originally the vaulted chamber of the tomb was divided into two smaller chambers by a central partition wall. In each chamber one individual was buried (Fig. 44). The partition wall did not reach the roof of the chamber. In the space left between the top of the wall and the vault, at least seven individuals were deposited in several phases of secondary burials. The chamber was entered from the west. The last burial in Tomb 3 was situated in a rectangular mud-brick chamber to the north of the earlier main chamber of the tomb. The northern face of this chamber was partly coated with thin white lime plaster. The fact that this

⁴³ F. MAHMOUD EL-AMIN/W. MÜLLER, in *Report on the 5th and 6th Season*, p. 343 (Area 25). W. MÜLLER, in *Report on the 8th Season*, p. 133 (Area 40). Following L. COTTELLE-MICHEL, *Les sarcophages en terre cuite* (Dijon, 2004), p. 19 the coffin belongs to Type III/b. For further examples cf. *ibid.*, p. 27-287.

⁴⁴ MÜLLER, in *9th Season*, p. 6. These tombs belonged to the earliest phase of the cemetery and were orientated in a different manner. The tomb in Area 89 seems to belong to a later, simpler type of this kind of burial that seems to start in the Ptolemaic period.

⁴⁵ *Loc. cit.*, p. 4.

unvaulted chamber was added to the superstructure of Tomb 3 is evidence that the deceased, though living at a later time, had some kind of relationship with the other inhabitants of the tomb. While more or less spacious vaulted chamber tombs made of mud brick are by far the most common type of tomb encountered in Aswan,⁴⁶ the division of the chamber into two sub-chambers was observed for the first time here, the closest parallel being Tomb 2 in Area 82.⁴⁷

The tombs found in Area 89 are the northernmost Roman burials yet attested from Aswan and are thus important evidence for the extent of the Roman cemeteries of Syene. The fact that no burials were encountered in nearby Area 74 may be due to the small size of this site. The absence of tombs in Areas 18, 72 and 73 may be due to the fact that archaeological intervention there came only after the foundation pits had been excavated.

(Wolfgang Müller)

4. A Late Antique house at the highest point of Old Aswan (Area 90) (Fig. 45)

The site covered an area of less than 20sqm and was situated 20m to the north of Area 67⁴⁸ on top of a high granite massif.⁴⁹

Only one pre-modern building phase was encountered, and was covered by modern architecture. In the small area, parts of a house were investigated (Fig. 46).

Three rooms of the house were partly within the excavated area. The eastern Room 1 measured 4.9+x m by 1+x m. Only the western wall of the room was excavated. This wall and remains of a vault on top of it were severely burned. The room was filled with a compact layer of pottery that had also been exposed to fire. This pottery was dated to the 2nd-3rd century AD and is thus older than the date of construction of the house. The ruins of the house most probably were filled with material from a nearby heap of earlier debris, probably spoil from pottery production. The original floor of the room could not be excavated due to the proximity of the eastern section.

Room 3 was situated in the south-west of the house. Here the floor of the last phase of use of the building, a mud-brick pavement, was found. Two narrow walls at its western and eastern limits most probably supported a vaulted roof. The eastern wall of Room 3 clearly showed two different building phases. While the east-west extent of the room can be given as 1.10m, it was bounded by the southern section after 1.7m. No earlier floors were detected in a deep trench within the confines of the room. The sloping granite surface was encountered 4m below the modern surface at a level of 109.1m asl.

⁴⁶ Cf. C. VON PILGRIM, in *Report on the 5th and 6th Season*, p. 338 (Area 21), *ibid.*, p. 340 (Area 24), MÜLLER, in *9th Season*, p. 4-5, J. H. F. DIJKSTRA, 'Three Christian Funerary Stelae from Aswan', in A. JIMÉNEZ-SERRANO/C. VON PILGRIM (eds.), *From the Delta to the Cataract. Studies Dedicated to Mohamed El-Bialy* (Leiden/Boston, 2015), p. 24-35 (Area 45), MÜLLER, in *9th Season*, p. 15 (Area 49).

⁴⁷ MÜLLER, in *Fourteenth Season*, p. 21 and fig. 30.

⁴⁸ *Idem*, in *Thirteenth Season*, p. 19-21.

⁴⁹ Work in Area 90 started on October 17th and lasted until November 9th. The site is situated in Shôna, at the Sh. Half Maged il-Shôna.

The north-western room of the house, Room 2, showed a peculiar installation. A small *mastaba*-like mud-brick construction was set against its southern wall. The "bench" measured 1.35 x 0.6m and showed two building phases. An area of 1.70 by 2.40m of the room lay within the limits of the excavation.

A first assessment of the pottery found in layers connected to the building phase gave a *terminus post quem* in the 4th century AD for the construction of the house.

The location of the site at one of the highest spots of Old Aswan was clearly outside the area enclosed by the Late Period town wall of Aswan. As has been shown in Area 46, the former limits of the town had become too restricted for the growing population of Syene from the 2nd century BC onwards.⁵⁰

(Wolfgang Müller and Mariola Hepa)

5. A prominent medieval building and Pharaonic remains (Area 91)

The site was situated in Shôna, 50m to the south-east of Area 37 and 60m to the south-west of Area 45. The excavated area covered only 25sqm.⁵¹

Stratum D (Fig. 47)

Stratum D and earlier layers were only reached in two deep trenches at the western and northern limits of the excavation (Fig. 48). 1.5m of (probably fluvial) sandy deposits with loamy inclusions and no anthropogenic material had accumulated on top of the bedrock surface that was reached at a level of 91.9m asl. On top of a sandy layer with some pottery preliminarily dated to the Old Kingdom, Stratum D started with two mud-brick walls, one detected at the south-western corner of the site, the other near the north-eastern corner. The width of neither wall could be determined. In spite of the fact that only short sections of the east-west wall in the south (0.6m) and the north-south wall at the east section (1.3m) were investigated, both walls clearly belong to the same building-system due to their orientation. The scarce material from the only layer connected to the time of use of the walls seems to support a Middle Kingdom date for Stratum D. The walls were oriented in exactly the same way as the Middle Kingdom house excavated in Area 45.⁵² Like the situation encountered in Area 74 to the far north of Aswan, the Pharaonic material that covered the ruins of Stratum D was

⁵⁰ W. MÜLLER, 'Syene (Ancient Aswan) in the First Millennium AD', in E. R. O'CONNELL (ed.), *Egypt in the First Millennium AD: Perspectives from New Fieldwork*, *BMPES 2* (Leuven, 2014), p. 62.

⁵¹ Work in Area 91 started on November 19th and lasted until December 16th 2015.

⁵² MÜLLER, in *9th Season*, p. 7-8, W. MÜLLER/I. FORSTNER-MÜLLER, 'Function and Reuse of Pottery within a Middle Kingdom baking area in Syene/Aswan', in B. BADER/M. F. OWNBY (eds.), *Functional Aspects of Egyptian Ceramics in their Archaeological Context*, *OLA 217* (Leuven-Paris-Walpole (Ma.), 2013), p. 99-101 and fig. 2.

mixed with much later pottery.⁵³ An inscription on a funerary stela found at the bottom of the layer gave a clear *terminus post quem* for the date of the filling layer.⁵⁴

The ruins of the Pharaonic buildings were left standing for a long time until they were finally dismantled in the Ptolemaic period and filled in with material from a nearby heap of much earlier debris in order to create a flat surface. The Ptolemaic layer covering the Middle Kingdom remains contained pottery typical of the late Ptolemaic period.

Stratum C

After some time with little human activity, marked by an approximately 0.6m thick sandy layer of decidedly fluvial character that contained few pieces of pottery dating to the Roman Imperial period, a massive east-west wall was constructed. As a test trench in the northern section showed, the wall, located at the northern section of the site, was ca. 2m wide and preserved to a height of nearly 3m (Fig. 49). According to a preliminary study of the pottery⁵⁵, the wall was constructed in the Early Islamic period and remained in use until the Late Mediaeval period. During the later phase of use of the wall, another east-west wall was constructed running along the southern section of the area. This wall was constructed in a different manner with bricks of very bad quality and only 1.5 bricks wide (Fig. 50). While there were no predecessors of the wall found exactly under it, earlier walls might run further to the south outside the investigated area. The walls were exactly parallel to each other. The layers between the walls, an accumulation of industrial waste with some settlement debris, do not show the characteristics of typical street layers. The width of the "street" separating the two buildings of more than 3m would be among the wider examples of roads from medieval Aswan. The extreme width of the northern wall implies that it must have belonged to a building of some importance, probably due to its location between the southern and northern parts of the town. The layers between the walls contain material that hints at a nearby pottery production site.

Stratum B

A stone foundation situated exactly on top of the northern wall of stratum C but less wide (ca. 0.6m) and ending in a corner approximately 3m from the eastern section was contemporary with the remains of a circular mud-brick construction at the centre of the site, probably a silo with a diameter of 1.8m. Stratum B was preliminarily dated to the Ottoman period. A modern sanitary pit with a stone enclosure and covered by a vault of fired bricks was situated at the south-western corner. A deep robber's pit at the north-western corner damaged the western end of the large wall of Stratum C.

⁵³ W. MÜLLER, in *Thirteenth Season*, p. 20-21.

⁵⁴ Cf. *infra* contribution by STEFAN PFEIFFER.

⁵⁵ As with all other datings of Islamic pottery I thank GREGORY WILLIAMS for the information.

Conclusion

The results of the rescue excavation in Area 91 are of the utmost importance as, with the exception of Area 32,⁵⁶ for the first time an eminent building of the medieval town of Aswan was encountered by the Swiss-Egyptian mission. The site is situated just outside the confines of Graeco-Roman Syene. While this fact may explain the scarcity of Ptolemaic or Roman domestic structures, the absence of tombs is remarkable and relevant to the limits of the Graeco-Roman cemeteries, especially considering the findings in nearby Area 45. It has to be stressed though that both the mentioned inscription and the accompanying Ptolemaic pottery, several *unguentaria*, are indirect evidence of Ptolemaic burials in the vicinity.

The evidence of seasonal fluvial activity at the site until the medieval period is crucial for our understanding of the ancient river landscape especially, taking into account the results from nearby Area 37, where several massive layers of fluvial sediments were encountered, at a similar stratigraphic position and absolute elevation.⁵⁷

(Wolfgang Müller)

6. Houses from the Early Roman Imperial Period (Area 92) (Figs.51 and 52)

The area was situated 30m to the west of the Temple of Isis and on the same road opposite Area 5, the "Roman Shrine" (Fig. 52).⁵⁸ As security concerns due to the bad condition of neighbouring houses made wide safety margins a necessity, the archaeologically-investigated area covered just 23sqm. A system of robbery pits, one vertical shaft at the centre of the eastern section with a diameter of ca. 1m and horizontal tunnels branching off towards the north (in the direction of the Roman Shrine) and towards the east under the neighbouring house, destroyed some of the structures and stratigraphy and became additional security concerns in the course of the work.

Stratum C

Stratum C/2c

The stratum started with the construction of House 2. Only parts of one room were within the excavated area. The north-south extension of the excavated part was 3.20m, the east-west extension

⁵⁶ W. MÜLLER, in *Report on the 7th Season*, p.189-193.

⁵⁷ *Idem*, in *Report on the 8th Season*, p. 129 and 132. The level of the latest layers of river sand was at ca. 94m asl very high for the estimated average flood of the time (SEIDLMEYER, *Historische und moderne Nilstände*, p. 90 tab. 7 gives 90.5-91.03m asl for the 1st-2nd centuries AD). The sandy layers must therefore be seen as evidence of extreme flood events, an assumption that may be supported by the fact that sandy sediments like those in Areas 37 and 91 are deposits of fast-flowing water. Cf. MÜLLER/DE DAPPER, in TRISTANT/GHILARDI (eds.), *Landscape Archaeology. Egypt and the Mediterranean World*, fig. 3 for a reconstruction of the granite-profile along the Sh. Abbas Farid that runs between Areas 37 and 91.

⁵⁸ Work in the area started on January 13th and lasted until February 25th 2016.

2.40m. The western wall of the room was only a half-brick wide and abutted the northern wall of the house that was 2 bricks (ca. 70cm wide) wide. It ran 1.70 from the eastern wall of the house. The room showed a pavement of sandstone slabs. The slabs were very thin and carefully processed. Granite and different kinds of sandstone were used. The slabs were rectangular and had different dimensions.

The room was entered from the north via a door at the western end of the northern wall of the house. As the area to the north of House 2 was significantly higher than the pavement, stairs were necessary to bridge the difference in levels. While the proper threshold of the door was not preserved, the lowest step of this stair was observed. It consisted of a granite slab that abutted the southern face of the wall. A sandstone slab that was part of the pavement was not exactly aligned to the stepping stone above it, but also marks the location of the entrance. The inner face of the eastern wall of the house was covered in white lime plaster and showed a niche-like hole, 1.20m higher than floor level. It is not clear whether it constituted an intentional installation or, as its shape was rather irregular, was just evidence for some damage to the wall (Fig. 53).

Stratum C/2b

After some time of use, the layout of the room was changed significantly although the western wall of the room remained unchanged. The room was now divided into two parts by a north-south wall. The new southern wall of the room, situated at the southern section, 1.60m to the south of the northern wall, contained a door with a sandstone threshold at its western end. The dividing wall was connected to an east-west mud-brick wall at the northern end of the eastern half of the room that was constructed on top of the step of the former entrance, blocking its eastern part but leaving space for a new door to the west of it (Fig. 54). Both walls abutted the former northern wall of House 2. Another north-south wall, aligned to the dividing wall, abutted the northern face of the former northern wall of the house. It was preserved to a length of 1.50m and showed a corner towards the west at a distance of 1.10m from the northern section. The function of the two rooms in former Room 1, western Room 1a and eastern Room 1b, is unclear. As the smaller eastern room does not show any doors it most probably was not a room in its own right, but rather a storage facility or similar installation belonging to the main room.

Stratum C/2a (Fig. 55)

While the western wall was still unchanged, the northern wall was renewed and a new entrance constructed. The new door now was situated at the eastern end of the northern wall. The door was ca. 90cm wide and showed an elaborate threshold made of fired bricks at its northern end. The northern wall was considerably wider than before and now measured nearly 1m. The division of Room 1 was given up while its southern door was still in use.

Stratum C/1d (Figs. 55 and 56)

The construction of House 1 at the eastern limit of the excavated area, which left a gap of 20-30cm between Houses 1 and 2, brought about a completely new organization of space. Only the western wall of the house and 20cm of a wall abutting its eastern face were within the investigated area. Thus the existence of two rooms of the house could be verified, albeit without any further details. The western wall was a massive 70cm-wide construction with a door in its northern part. The door, situated near the north-western corner of the southern room of House 1, showed two phases with two sandstone thresholds of similar dimensions on top of each other. The door was ca. 70cm wide.

House 2 underwent significant changes. All former installations in the only room investigated were given up, as were the western and southern walls. The former door in the northern wall was walled up. A compact completely burnt mud floor covered the whole room. A new installation was constructed at the south-eastern corner of the room. There the eastern wall of House 2 was broken and a chimney-like structure was erected (Fig. 57). The construction consisted of a shaft, open towards the west and abutting the outer wall of House 1 with a small room paved with sandstone slabs limited by a low and narrow sandstone wall towards the room of House 2. The bottom of the shaft was ca. 30cm above the floor level of the room and protruded 70cm into it. The shaft was coated with carefully crafted and laid sandstone slabs. The slabs forming the back-wall of the shaft were put against the western face of the western wall of House 1. The chamber at the bottom of the shaft measured 96cm x 1.10m. The shape of the installation and the fact that the floor and walls of the room and the inner faces of the shaft showed traces of prolonged exposure to immense heat and fire led to the interpretation of the installation as an elaborate fireplace plus chimney, most probably a forge.⁵⁹

The area to the north of House 2 and to the west of House 1 now became a courtyard with several phases of use. The earliest phase of this courtyard showed a floor covered with white material, most probably compacted ash. Its western limit was outside the excavated area, its northern limit was defined by an east-west wall that abutted the western wall of House 1. The state of preservation of this wall was rather poor. Traces of a bread-oven were observed in the north-eastern corner of the courtyard.

Stratum C/1c-b

During this phase, a more-than-1m-wide north-south stone wall or foundation limited the courtyard to the west with a new bread oven in its south-eastern corner. The oven measured 90cm in diameter and partly blocked the door into House 1. Only the bottom of the oven was preserved. Sometime later, during Stratum C/1b, presumably after the end of use of the oven, the door into House 1 was renewed. The new threshold, a sandstone block, measured 75 x 22cm. The door's pivot was situated on the threshold itself, in its south-eastern corner.

Stratum C/1a

⁵⁹ Cf. A. MUTZ, *Römische Schmiedekunst, Augster Museumshefte* 1 (Augst, 1976), p. 12.

House 2 was abandoned and infilled with layers of mud brick and settlement debris. Among the debris were some remarkable architectural elements. Most noteworthy among them was the volute of an Ionian capital and the slightly damaged head of a lion that was part of the architectural décor of a prominent building, most probably a temple as two very similar heads are still visible *in situ* on the southern face of the Temple of Isis (Fig. 58).

While no more traces of regular occupation could be found in House 2, House 1 was completely remodelled when a north-south sandstone wall was constructed that abutted both the inner face of the western wall of House 1 and the northern wall of its southern room. The entrance into the house from the courtyard was now blocked. At the same time a wall was constructed at the western section that abutted the northern face of the northern wall of House 2. The wall sat on a massive foundation of reused sandstone blocks and sandstone rubble.

Concluding remarks and dating

House 2 was constructed at the beginning of the 1st century BC. It was abandoned during the Roman Imperial period and then used as a dump in Late Antiquity. Stratum C/1b was the last stratum that produced chronologically diagnostic material. All later layers were destroyed by the foundations and the sanitary pit of the modern house. A first glimpse of the material from this stratum shows that it dates to the Early Roman Imperial period. It was not possible to reach deeper layers predating Stratum C due to security issues.

Area 92 was very small but produced crucial information on the settlement history of the area around the Temple of Isis in the Roman period. It complements the findings in neighbouring Areas 88 and 84. The installations in the workshop of the blacksmith in the immediate neighbourhood of prestigious buildings⁶⁰ like the Roman Shrine or the contemporary House 5 in Area 84⁶¹ came as a surprise. The workshop is the first of its kind ever found in Syene.

(Wolfgang Müller)

7. A Greek Inscription found in Area 92 (Fig. 59)

The slab is made of local sandstone and measures 51 x 36.5 x 6.0 cm. The upper, lower and right sides have their original dimensions, the left side is broken; the original stela would have been 51 x 51 x 6 cm in size. The Greek inscription, the characters of which have an average height of 1-1.5 cm and still show traces of red paint, is on the lower right part of the slab. One would expect that there was a second inscription with the name of a second person on the missing right side of the stela. As more than 2/3 of the stela above the inscription are blank, there must have been something painted on it, but only minor traces of the white grounding of the panel are left. In total the stela resembles slabs found

⁶⁰ MÜLLER, in O'CONNELL (ed.), *Egypt in the First Millennium AD*, p. 64-66.

⁶¹ MÜLLER, in *Fifteenth Season*, p. 13-14.

in Alexandria which originally sealed a loculus. If our slab in Syene also functioned as a closing slab of a loculus, the painting may have either been a door or contained other allusions to architecture, but an underworld or landscape scene or even a representation of the two deceased may also be possible.⁶²

The inscriptions reads:

Ἀγαθόκλεια

Πολεμοκράτους

Κασσανδρίης

“Agathokleia, daughter of Polemokrates, from Kassandreia.”

Both names are too unspecific to be able to tell more about them. Another Agathokleia, for example, is known from an inscription in Philae from Ptolemaic times, in which she is the wife of a certain Ptolemy, son of Eumenes, from the Alexandrian *deme* Kastor.⁶³ Our Agathokleia is nevertheless the first person that we know in Egypt who comes from Kassandreia, the former Corinthian colony Potideia in the southern part of Chalcidice in Greece.⁶⁴ The inscription dates to the 3rd – 2nd century BC.

(Stefan Pfeiffer)

8. Selected pottery assemblages and the date of the Animal Necropolis in Area 2 (Birket Damas)

Three pottery assemblages were studied in order to give a date to the animal necropolis in Area 2. The earliest stratigraphically and quantitatively largest deposit comes from the foundation trench of Building 3 dating to Stratum F,⁶⁵ from the last architectural phase before the first animals were buried. The other contexts originate from two phases of the necropolis itself, Strata E/5-7 and Strata E/2-3, and were both localized in C2/R5, the courtyard to the west of Building 1.⁶⁶ The location was chosen due to the fact that all phases of burials were represented there.⁶⁷

The complete ensemble from all contexts features a wide spectrum of types, ranging from table-wares such as plates and bowls to domestic wares such as jars, some fragments of jugs, *kraters* and *dinoi*, cooking wares and some fragments of amphorae.

⁶² Cf. M. S. VENIT, *Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria. The Theater of the Dead* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 16–18, 36, 166; J. MCKENZIE, *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt, C. 300 BC To AD 700* (Yale, 2007), p. 71; A.-M. GUIUMIER-SORBETS ET AL., 'Le décor peint des tombes B1, B2 et B3', in J.-Y. EMPEREUR/M-D. NENNA (ed.), *Nécropolis 1, EtudAlex 5* (Cairo, 2001), p.172–179.

⁶³ I.Thèbes 314 (205–180 B.C.E).

⁶⁴ G. M. COHEN, *The Hellenistic Settlements in Europe, the Islands, and Asia Minor* (Berkeley 1995), p. 95–99.

⁶⁵ MÜLLER, in *Fifteenth Season*, p. 5-6.

⁶⁶ *Idem*, in *Thirteenth Season*, fig. 10 (Stratum E/7-8) and *ibid.*, fig. 17 (Stratum E/2).

⁶⁷ *Idem*, in *Fifteenth Season*, p. 9-10.

Material from the foundation trench of Building 3

The foundation pit, more precisely the section to the west of Building 3, contained some complete vessels that had been deposited at the bottom of the pit.

The bowls show vertical walls and grooved rims and were made of local marl clay (Fig. 61, 3-6).⁶⁸ Parallels from Elephantine,⁶⁹ Tebtunis⁷⁰ and Coptos⁷¹ are dated to the late 4th and 3rd century BC. In Tell el-Herr they are already represented in phase VI, which is dated from the end of the 5th to the beginning of the 4th century BC.⁷²

The other material from this context consists of fragments of *mortaria* (Fig. 60, 1) and plates with curved rim (Fig. 60, 2). Such vessels are known from Phase V in Tell el-Herr.⁷³ Some fragments belong to wide mouthed jars (Fig. 60, 7) with parallels from Elephantine.⁷⁴ The *kraters* (Fig. 60, 8) are characterized by a squared ledge rim⁷⁵ and these are also represented on Elephantine in the 4th century BC. For the handled carinated bowl (Fig. 60, 9) no matches could be found. Probably the closest parallels are the 'handled bowls' from Elephantine.⁷⁶

The animal necropolis

Material immediately predating the burials

The next pottery ensemble comes from material covering the remains of Stratum F but is cut by the earliest burial pits of the necropolis (Stratum E/7-8). The assemblage shows a large range of types. Most of the fragments could be compared with the pottery of Phase V at Tell el-Herr, like the fragments of *mortaria* (Fig. 61, 12) mentioned above and plates with everted rim (Fig. 61, 10).⁷⁷ Fragments of saucers with thickened rim (Fig. 61, 11) found parallels in Phase VI of Tell el-Herr.⁷⁸ A significant number of globular jars⁷⁹ of different types were identified, some with a thickened rim (Fig. 61, 17-18), others with a grooved rim and red polished coating (Fig. 2, 20) with parallels in

⁶⁸ Cf. PELOSCHKE'S fabric ASW-MARL_05 (L PELOSCHKE, *Cultural Transfers in Aswan (Upper Egypt). Petrographic Evidence for Ceramic Production and Exchange from the Ptolemaic to the Late Antique Period* (Vienna 2015, unpublished Dissertation), p. 128.

⁶⁹ D. ASTON, *Elephantine XIX. Pottery from the Late New Kingdom to the Early Ptolemaic Period*, AV 95 (Mainz, 1999), nr. 2578.

⁷⁰ S. MARCHAND, *La céramique de IVe siècle av. J.-C. découverte à Tebtynis*, CCE 4 (Cairo, 1996), Fig. 3.

⁷¹ S.C. HERBERT/A. BERLIN, *Excavations at Coptos (Qift) in Upper Egypt, 1987-1992*, JRA-Suppl. 53 (Dexter, 2003), Fig. 27, H1.3.

⁷² C. DEFERNEZ, *La céramique d'époque perse à Tell el-Herr*, CRIPPEL-Suppl. 5/2 (Lille, 2001), planche XIV, 34a.

⁷³ *Loc. cit.*, planche LXIII, 177a-b.

⁷⁴ ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 2130 indicates a parallel dating to the 5th and early 4th century BC in Ayn Manawir.

⁷⁵ HERBERT/BERLIN, *Excavations at Coptos (Qift) in Upper Egypt*, Fig. 45, H2.21.

⁷⁶ ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, nr. 2531.

⁷⁷ DEFERNEZ, *La céramique d'époque perse à Tell el-Herr*, planche LXIV, 181.

⁷⁸ *Loc. cit.*, planche V, 17b.

⁷⁹ ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 2396.

Elephantine, where they were categorized by ASTON as Aswan clay, uncoated ware.⁸⁰ Torpedo jars⁸¹ (Fig. 61, 19) and big two-handed storage jars⁸² (Fig. 61, 15-16) were also among the studied material. Some of the jar and jug fragments to the oasis production of the western desert, probably from Dakhleh or Kharga (Fig. 61, 21-22).⁸³ Tall stands with plain rim are found in the 'Hellenistic I' material from Coptos (Fig. 61, 23)⁸⁴ as are the *kraters* with wide ledge and short squared rims (Fig. 61, 24).⁸⁵

However, the range of amphorae, which is characterized by numerous imports from the Aegean,⁸⁶ is of particular significance for the surrounding material. Besides the amphora (Fig. 61, 25) with triangular rim from Cnidus,⁸⁷ fragments of vessels from Ephesos and Samos were part of the assemblage.⁸⁸

Material contemporary with the burials

Strata E/7-8

The ceramic material that derives directly from the animal pits and the walking levels they were dug from, especially from the oldest context of stratum E7, mostly consists of tableware, such as different types of bowls and saucers. Most of the saucers have a thickened rim (Fig. 62, 27-30) and are of a fabric, also found at Coptos.⁸⁹ Bowls with incurved rim and red slip are frequently found in the filling of the burial pits (Fig. 62, 33-37),⁹⁰ as are fragments of bowls with grooved rim and a white painted stripe inside the vessel (Fig. 62, 31) and bowls with everted rim (Fig. 62, 32). Parallels from Coptos are dated from the early 3rd to the middle of the 2nd century BC.⁹¹ The bowls with grooved rim and white painting (Fig. 62, 31) can already be found in Stratum H at Area 15 in Aswan,⁹² which is

⁸⁰ *Loc. cit.*, Nr. 2042. Cf PELOSCHEK's fabric ASW-PC_04 (PELOSCHEK, *Cultural Transfers in Aswan*, p. 100-105).

⁸¹ DEFERNEZ, *La céramique d'époque perse à Tell el-Herr*, planche LXXXIV, 243.

⁸² ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 1959; DEFERNEZ, *La céramique d'époque perse à Tell el-Herr*, planche XXX, 85.

⁸³ ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 2120; S. MARCHAND, 'Céramiques d'Égypte de la fin IV^e siècle av. J.-C. au III^e siècle av. J.-C.: entre tradition et innovation', in N. FENN/C. RÖMER-STREHL (eds.), *Networks in the Hellenistic World. According to the pottery in the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond*, BAR-IS S2539 (Oxford, 2013), p. 241-243. Concerning the fabric cf. PELOSCHEK's ASW-SHALE_02L (PELOSCHEK, *Cultural Transfers in Aswan*, p. 140, Fig. 23, f).

⁸⁴ HERBERT/BERLIN, *Excavations at Coptos (Qift) in Upper Egypt*, Fig. 29, H1.15.

⁸⁵ *Loc. cit.*, fig. 28, H1.8.

⁸⁶ Cf. PELOSCHEK's fabric ASW-IMP_04 (PELOSCHEK, *Cultural Transfers in Aswan*, p. 157).

⁸⁷ Cf. type MONAKHOV Ic (S.I. MONAKHOV, 'Towards a Typology of Knidian Amphorae of 4th-2nd c BC', in *The Bosphoran Phenomenon: Greek Culture on the Periphery of the Ancient World* (St. Petersburg, 1999), p. 161-172).

⁸⁸ Cf. PELOSCHEK fabrics ASW-IMP_02 and ASW-IMP_03 (PELOSCHEK, *Cultural Transfers in Aswan*, p. 155-156 and p. 159-160).

⁸⁹ HERBERT/BERLIN, *Excavations at Coptos (Qift) in Upper Egypt*, Fig. 29, H1.1.

⁹⁰ *Loc. cit.*, Fig. 27, H1.4-1.5.

⁹¹ *Loc. cit.*, fig. 42, H2.7, Fig. 43, H2.11.

⁹² MÜLLER, in LADSTÄTTER/ SCHEIBELREITER (eds.), *Städtisches Wohnen im östlichen Mittelmeerraum (4.Jh.v.Chr.-1.Jh.n.Chr.)*, p. 429-448.

dated on the basis of the material to the early 4th century BC.⁹³ Some fragments of bowls with direct rim and red slip (Fig. 62, 38) have parallels at Elephantine.⁹⁴ A range of cooking ware was found in Stratum E7-8. Besides the common cooking pots with angled neck (Fig. 63, 48), which are characteristic of complexes dating to the 3rd century BC,⁹⁵ cooking pots with a high neck and flattened rim (Fig. 63, 47)⁹⁶ and two different types of casseroles could be found in the filling of the animal pits. The first example shows a curved body profile with a ledge and nearly horizontal rim (Fig. 63, 49). This type was found in Stratum E-F in Area 15.⁹⁷ Other fragments show a grooved body and an angled rim with an internal lid fold (Fig. 63, 50-51).⁹⁸

Among the jars, various types could be identified. Most are early types, such as the jar with thickened and red-painted rim (Fig. 62, 41), the two-handled jars with grooved rim (Fig. 62, 39, 40) and storage jars (Fig. 62, 42) all of which are known from contexts dating to the Persian period on Elephantine.⁹⁹ The wide-mouthed jars (Fig. 62, 43) can be found in 'Hellenistic I' material from Coptos¹⁰⁰ and in layers dating to the 4th century BC from Elephantine¹⁰¹. Of the few short ringstands (Fig. 62, 46) present in the material of stratum E7, one example is presented here.¹⁰² Some fragments of big bowls show a ledge rim similar to examples from Elephantine¹⁰³ and Stratum H in Area 15.¹⁰⁴ The big bowls with direct rim are also known from Elephantine.¹⁰⁵ Among the repertoire of amphorae are not only the typical Egyptian types made of Nile clay,¹⁰⁶ which are characteristic of the early 3rd century BC (Fig. 63, 55),¹⁰⁷ but also some Aegean imports, probably from Chios (Fig. 63, 56),¹⁰⁸ which were frequently found in the material predating the necropolis discussed above, as were imports from the west, probably of Graeco-Italic production.¹⁰⁹ As the material used for the infill of the pits was taken from earlier surrounding material, the appearance of earlier shapes of jars, ringstands and the Aegean imports is not surprising.

⁹³ S. LADSTÄTTER, 'Keramische Fundkomplexe aus Areal 15, der Stadtgrabung in Syene/Aswan', in LADSTÄTTER/SCHEIBELREITER (eds.), *Städtisches Wohnen im östlichen Mittelmeerraum (4. Jh. v. Chr.-1. Jh. n. Chr.)*, p. 466, Nr. 64.

⁹⁴ ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 2123.

⁹⁵ HERBERT/BERLIN, *Excavations at Coptos (Qift) in Upper Egypt*, Fig. 28, H1.12.

⁹⁶ *Loc. cit.*, Fig. 51, H1.42.

⁹⁷ LADSTÄTTER, in LADSTÄTTER/SCHEIBELREITER (eds.), *Städtisches Wohnen im östlichen Mittelmeerraum (4. Jh. v. Chr.-1. Jh. n. Chr.)*, p. 460, Nr. 35.

⁹⁸ HERBERT/BERLIN, *Excavations at Coptos (Qift) in Upper Egypt*, Fig. 51, H2.43-44.

⁹⁹ ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 2135-2138.

¹⁰⁰ HERBERT/BERLIN, *Excavations at Coptos (Qift) in Upper Egypt*, Fig. 30, H1.16.

¹⁰¹ ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 2217.

¹⁰² *Loc. cit.*, Nr. 1956.

¹⁰³ *Loc. cit.*, Nr. 2296, 2308, 2313.

¹⁰⁴ LADSTÄTTER, in LADSTÄTTER/SCHEIBELREITER (eds.), *Städtisches Wohnen im östlichen Mittelmeerraum (4. Jh. v. Chr.-1. Jh. n. Chr.)*, p. 462, Nr. 45.

¹⁰⁵ ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 2005.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. PELOSCHKE fabric ASW-NILE_01L. (PELOSCHKE, *Cultural Transfers in Aswan*, p. 118).

¹⁰⁷ M. LAWALL, 'Egyptian and Imported Transport Amphorae', in HERBERT/BERLIN, *Excavations at Coptos (Qift) in Upper Egypt*, p. 165.

¹⁰⁸ DEFERNEZ, *La céramique d'époque perse à Tell el-Herr*, planche LXXIX, 231a; LADSTÄTTER, in LADSTÄTTER/SCHEIBELREITER (eds.), *Städtisches Wohnen im östlichen Mittelmeerraum (4. Jh. v. Chr.-1. Jh. n. Chr.)*, p. 470, Nr. 82.

¹⁰⁹ LAWALL, in HERBERT/BERLIN, *Excavations at Coptos (Qift) in Upper Egypt*, p. 77, Fig. 109

Several fragments of large storage vessels such as *dinoi*, with thickened, grooved rim¹¹⁰ (Fig. 63, 54) and of two different types of jugs (Fig. 62, 44-45) were found in the earliest burial pits dating to Stratum E/8. Both jugs show a folded rim resembling examples from Coptos.¹¹¹ One jug (Fig. 62, 45) shows a handle and a strongly profiled rim and has a parallel in Stratum D of Area 15.¹¹²

Strata E/2-3

Besides the omnipresent earlier material such as *kraters* and *dinoi* that had been displaced whenever a new pit was dug and refilled, new shapes make their appearance in Stratum E/2-3. This is especially true for the tableware. Now not only the typical Hellenistic types of bowls with incurved rim and flat saucers are found, but also Italian *sigillata* production such as a dish with everted rim (Fig. 64, 57).¹¹³ The same can be said of the cooking ware that besides earlier shapes (Fig. 64, 59-60) shows the emergence of new types. A very small cooking pot with a diameter of only 9cm with everted rim is presented as an example of Roman types of cooking ware (Fig. 64, 58) Parallels could be found with 'Roman I' material from Coptos, dated to the mid-late 1st century AD.¹¹⁴

Other new types comprise a stewpot with flanged lip and triangular rim (Fig. 64, 62)¹¹⁵ and a casserole with a grooved rim (Fig. 64, 61).¹¹⁶ Also among the jar types new shapes appear such as the big water jar with a thick knobbed rim,¹¹⁷ made of a white marl clay (Fig. 64, 63).

Conclusion

The pottery presented here gives a *terminus post quem* for the construction of Building 3 in the 4th century BC. Stratum F seems to be rather short-lived, as the material from layers immediately on top of the ruins of Building 3 does not differ significantly from the filling of its foundation trench. As the pottery from earlier layers had been displaced repeatedly during Stratum E, only more or less complete vessels, preferably from the pits themselves and thus possibly connected to the act of burial, are of chronological relevance. This material, especially the casseroles and jugs from stratum E7 can be dated to the later 2nd century BC and give a *terminus* for the beginning of the tradition of burying animals in Area 2. The material from the end of this tradition, dating to Strata E/2-3 shows strong Roman influence. The Italian *sigillata*, the cooking ware and the big jars of white marl clay provide a date range for the stratum from the late 1st century BC until the later 1st century AD or beyond, thus

¹¹⁰ HERBERT/BERLIN, *Excavations at Coptos (Qift) in Upper Egypt*, Fig. 46, H2.25.

¹¹¹ *Loc. cit.*, Fig. 28, H1.11.

¹¹² LADSTÄTTER, in LADSTÄTTER/SCHIEBELREITER (eds.), *Städtisches Wohnen im östlichen Mittelmeerraum (4. Jh. v. Chr.-1. Jh. n. Chr.)*, p. 459, Nr. 17.

¹¹³ E. ETTLINGER ET AL. (eds.), *Conspectus Formarum Terrae Sigillatae Italico Modo Confectae, Materialien zur Römisch-Germanischen Keramik* Heft 10 (Bonn, 1990), Taf. 1. Form.1.1.1.2.

¹¹⁴ HERBERT/BERLIN, *Excavations at Coptos (Qift) in Upper Egypt*, Fig. 81, R1.20.

¹¹⁵ *Loc. cit.*, Fig. 70, H3.41.

¹¹⁶ *Loc. cit.*, Fig. 87, R2.9; L. REMBART, 'Roman Influence on Pottery from the Ancient Town of Syene (Upper Egypt)', in *Rei Cretariae Romanae Fautorum Acta* 43 (2014), p. 621, Fig. 8.

¹¹⁷ HERBERT/BERLIN, *Excavations at Coptos (Qift) in Upper Egypt*, Fig. 82, R1.33.

confirming the already-published preliminary assessment for the date of the end of the animal necropolis.¹¹⁸

(Mariola Hepa)

¹¹⁸ MÜLLER, in *Thirteenth Season*, p.18-19.

Figures

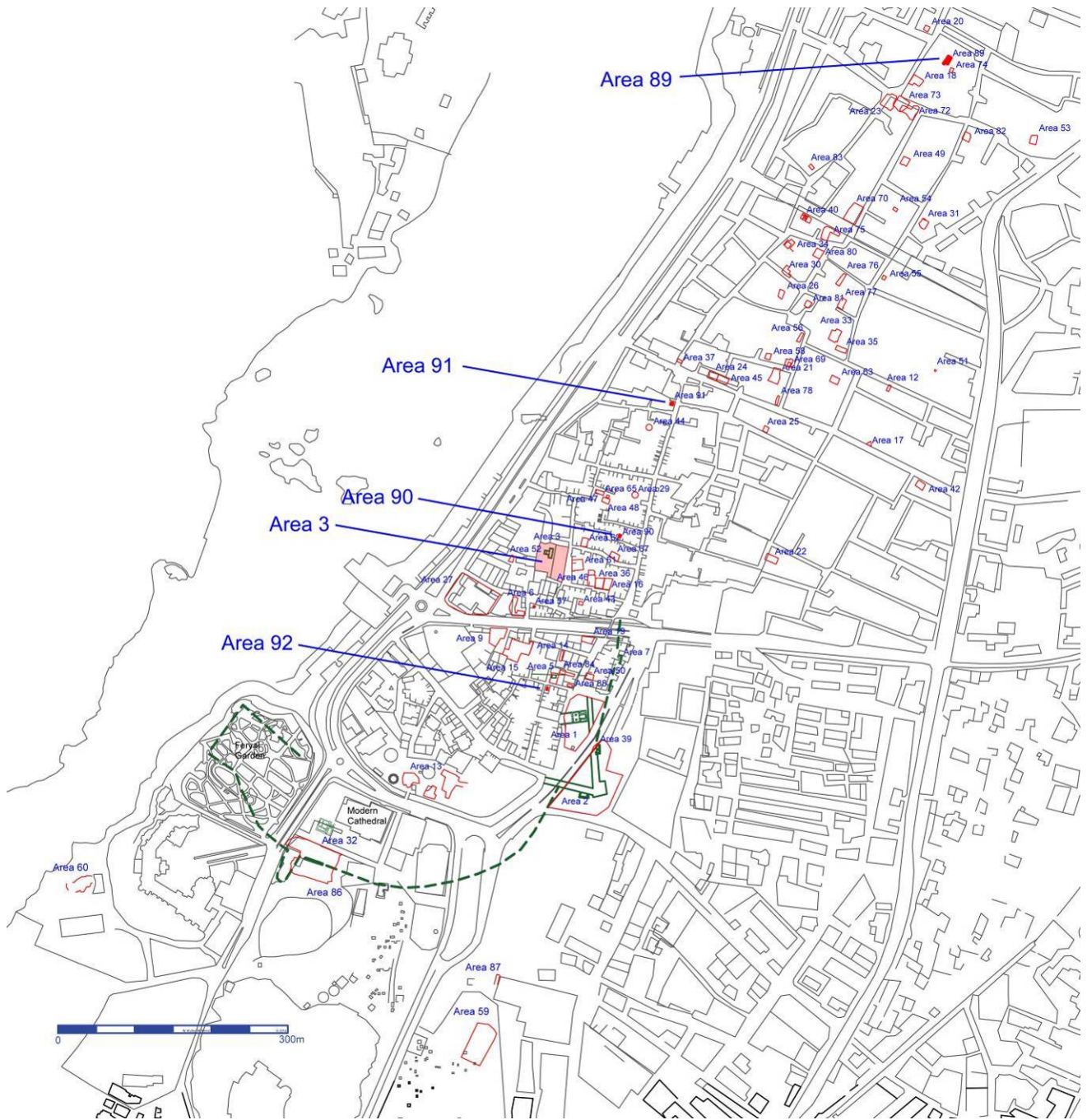


Fig. 1: Map of Aswan with investigated areas.



Fig. 2: Overview of Area 3 from the South-West with the excavation of Season 16 in the foreground.



Fig. 3: Area 3: Overview of Stratum N from the West. (Photo by Axel Krause/SIK)

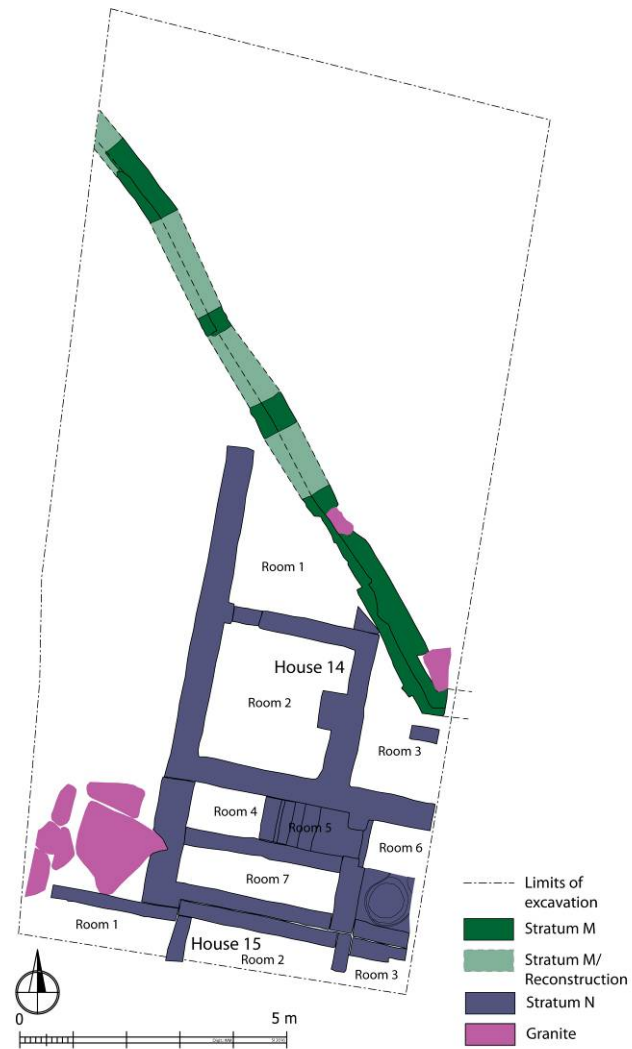


Fig. 4: Area 3: Plan of Strata M-N.



Fig. 5: Area 3: View of staircase in House 14 from the East (Photo by Axel Krause/SIK).



Fig. 7: Area 3: Overview of the retaining wall of Stratum M from the North.



Fig. 6: Area 3: Detail of oven in House 14.



Fig. 8: Area 3: Detail of the eastern face of the wall of Stratum M.



Fig. 10: Area 3: Overview of House 9 during Stratum L/4.

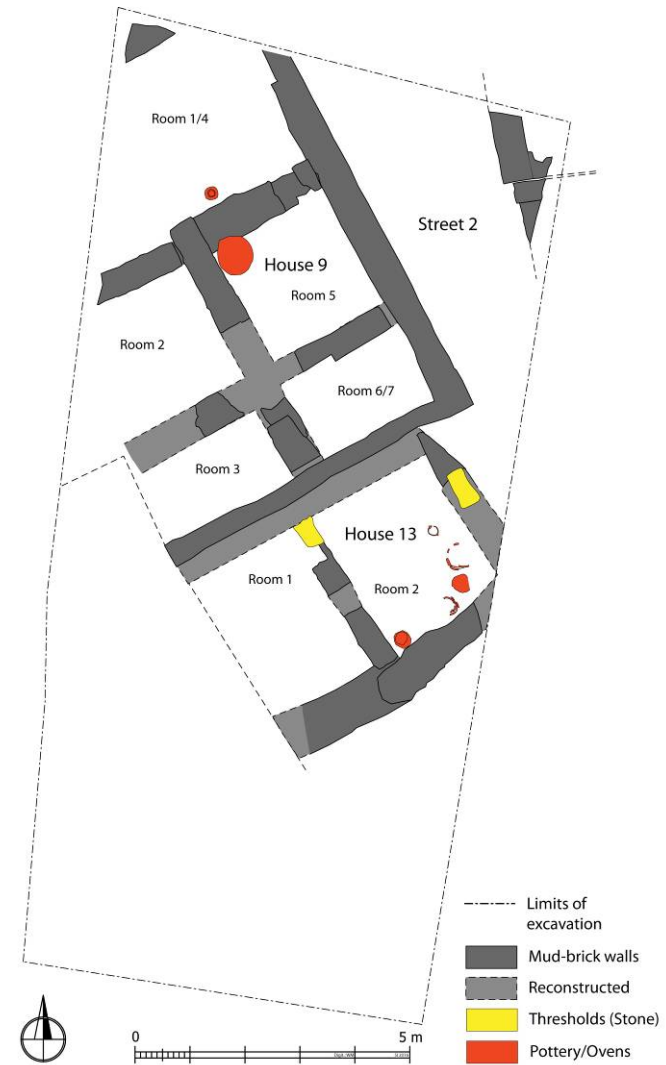


Fig. 9: Area 3: Plan of Stratum L/4.



Fig. 11: Area 3: Detail of House 13: Eastern section with two ovens and a jar.



Fig. 12: Area 3: Overview of House 9 from the W during Stratum L/3 (Photo by Axel Krause/SIK).

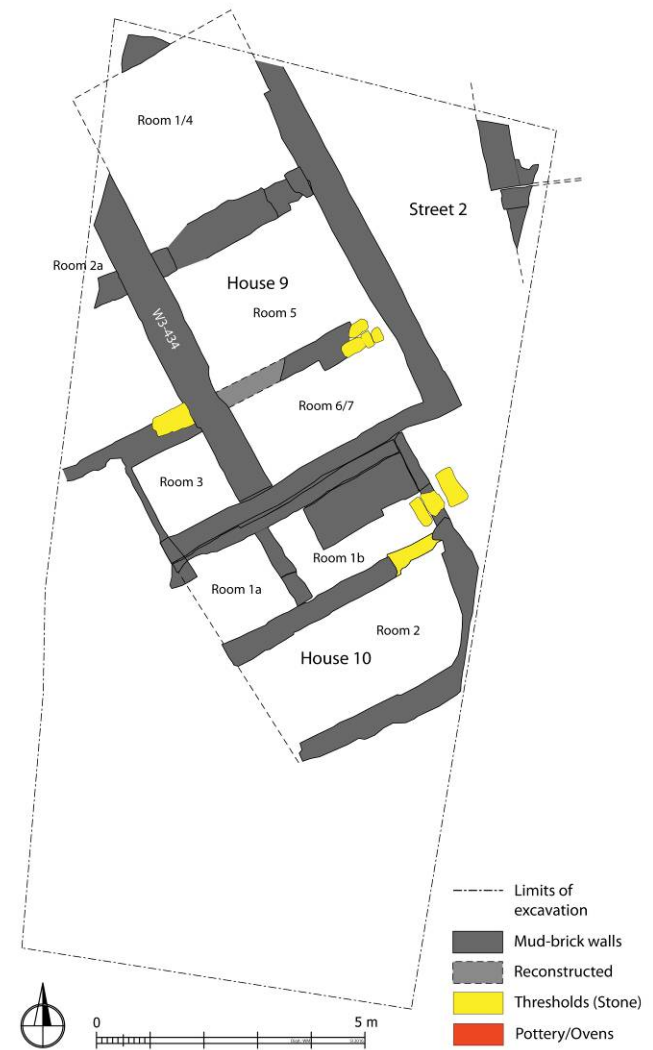


Fig. 13: Area 3: Plan of Stratum L/3.



Fig. 14: Area 3: Detail of the western unit of House 9 during Stratum L/3 (Stone threshold already removed) (Photo by Axel Krause/SIK).



Fig. 15: Area 3: House 10 from the west during Stratum L/2b.



Fig. 16: Area 3: Detail of House 10: Entrance into the house from the North-South Street.



Fig. 17: Area 3: House 10: Detail of the door connecting Rooms 1 and 2.



Fig. 18: Area 3: Overview of the area during Stratum L/2a-b from the west.

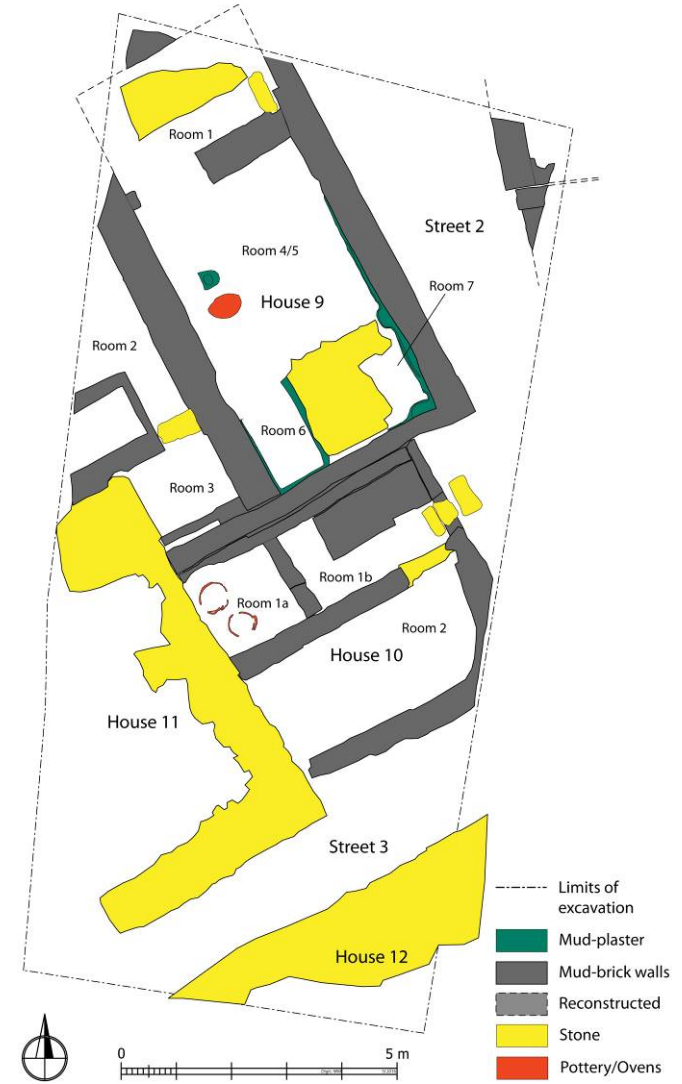


Fig. 19: Area 3: Plan of Stratum L/2c.



Fig. 20: Area 3: House 11: Overview from the east.



Fig. 21: Area 3: House 12 from the south.



Fig. 22: Area 3: Detail of House 9/Room 2.



Fig. 23: Area 3: Overview of the northern part of House 9 during Stratum L2/c.



Fig. 24: Area 3: Overview of House 9 from the west during Stratum L/2a.

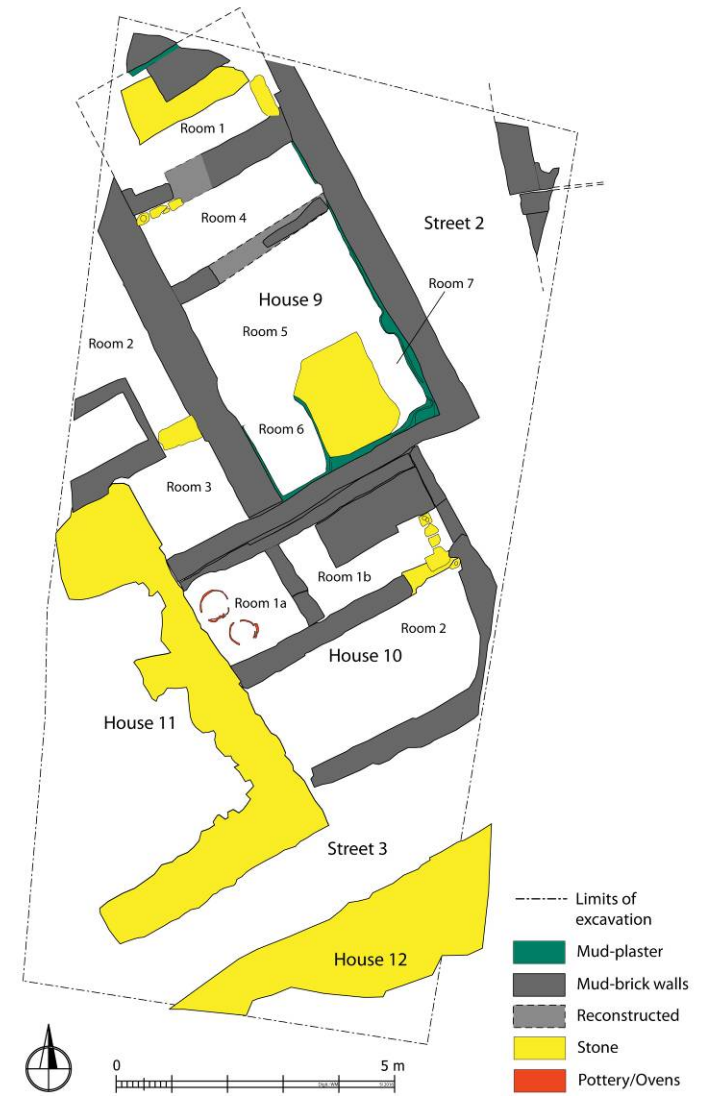


Fig. 25: Area 3: Plan of Stratum L/2b.



Fig. 26: Area 3: House 9 from the north during Stratum L/2a.



Fig. 28: Area 3: Detail of ovens in House 10/ Room 1a.



Fig. 27: Area 3: Plan of Stratum L/2a.



Fig. 29: Area 3: Plan of Stratum L/1.

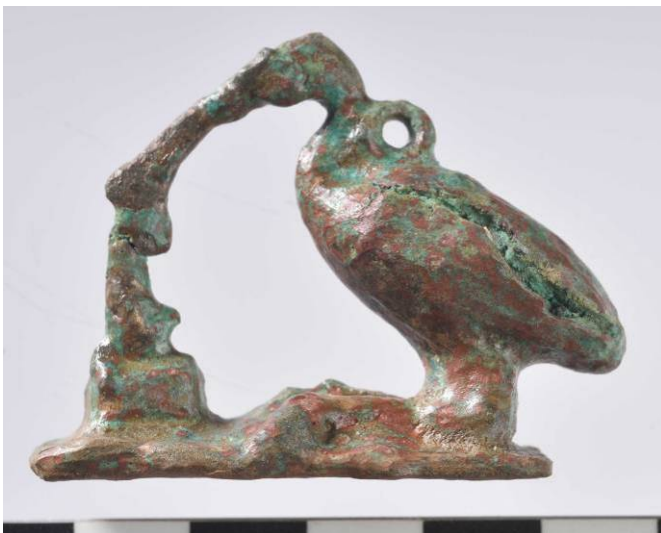


Fig. 30: Area 3: Ibis-Figurine made of bronze (16-3-103-6/1). (Photo by Axel Krause/SIK)



Fig. 31: Area 3: Miniature *situla* (16-3-185-1/2). (Photo by Axel Krause/SIK)



Fig. 32: Areal 3: Plan of Strata K-D.



Fig. 33: Area 3: Overview from the west during Strata K and J.



Fig. 34: Removal of filling-layer covering the remains of Stratum L.



Fig. 35: Area 3: Detail of plastered cellar.



Fig. 36: Area 3: House 8 from the north-west.



Fig. 37: Area 3: Detail of Fatimid shaft for water-disposal.

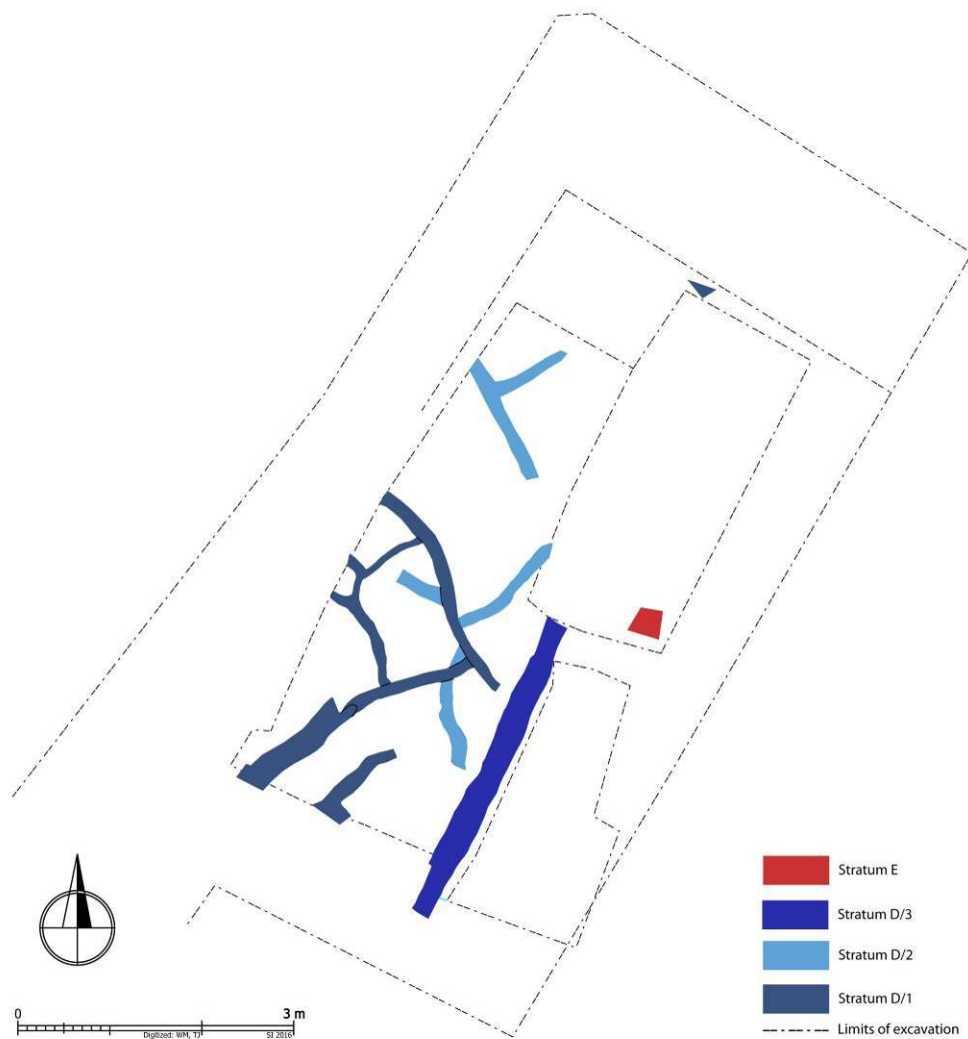


Fig. 38: Plan of Area 89 Strata D-E.



Fig. 39: Overview of Area 89 Strata D-E.

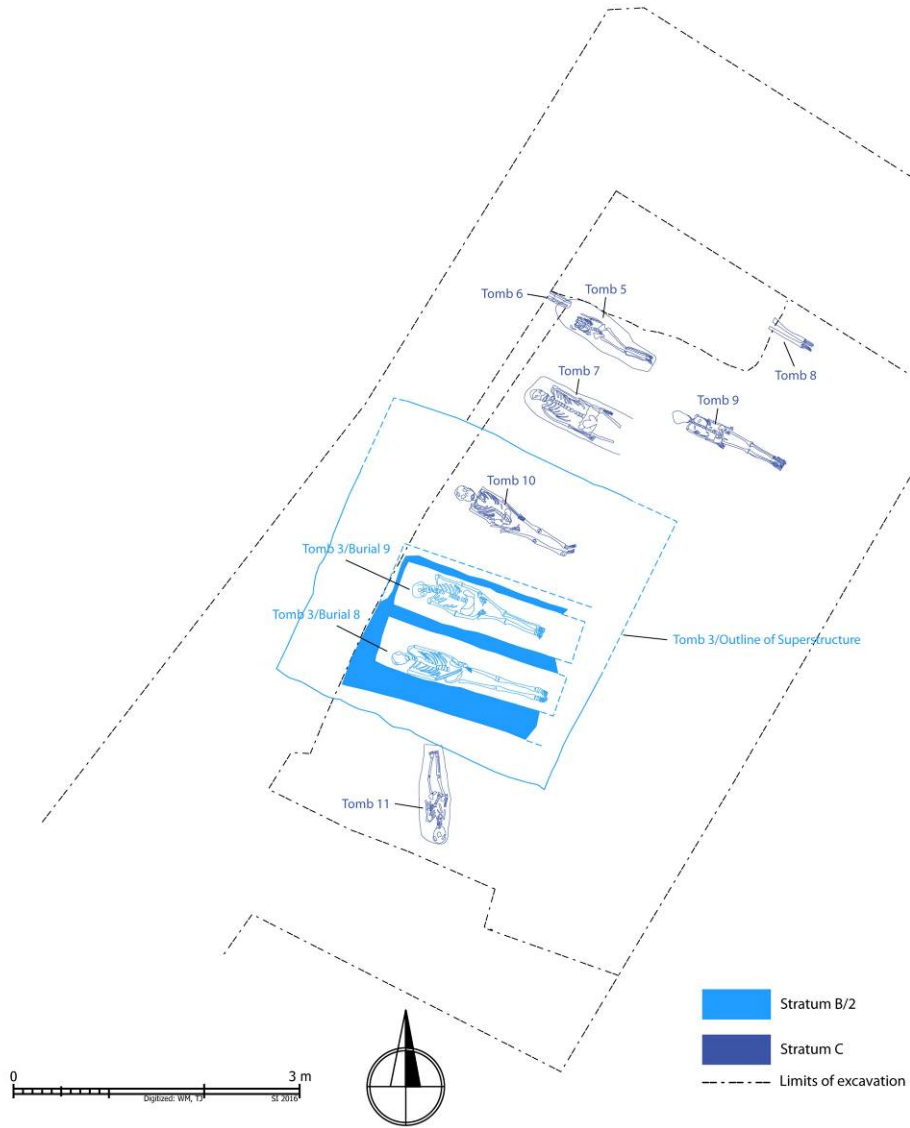


Fig. 40 Area 89: Plan of Stratum C.



Fig. 41: Area 89: Detail of Tomb 11.

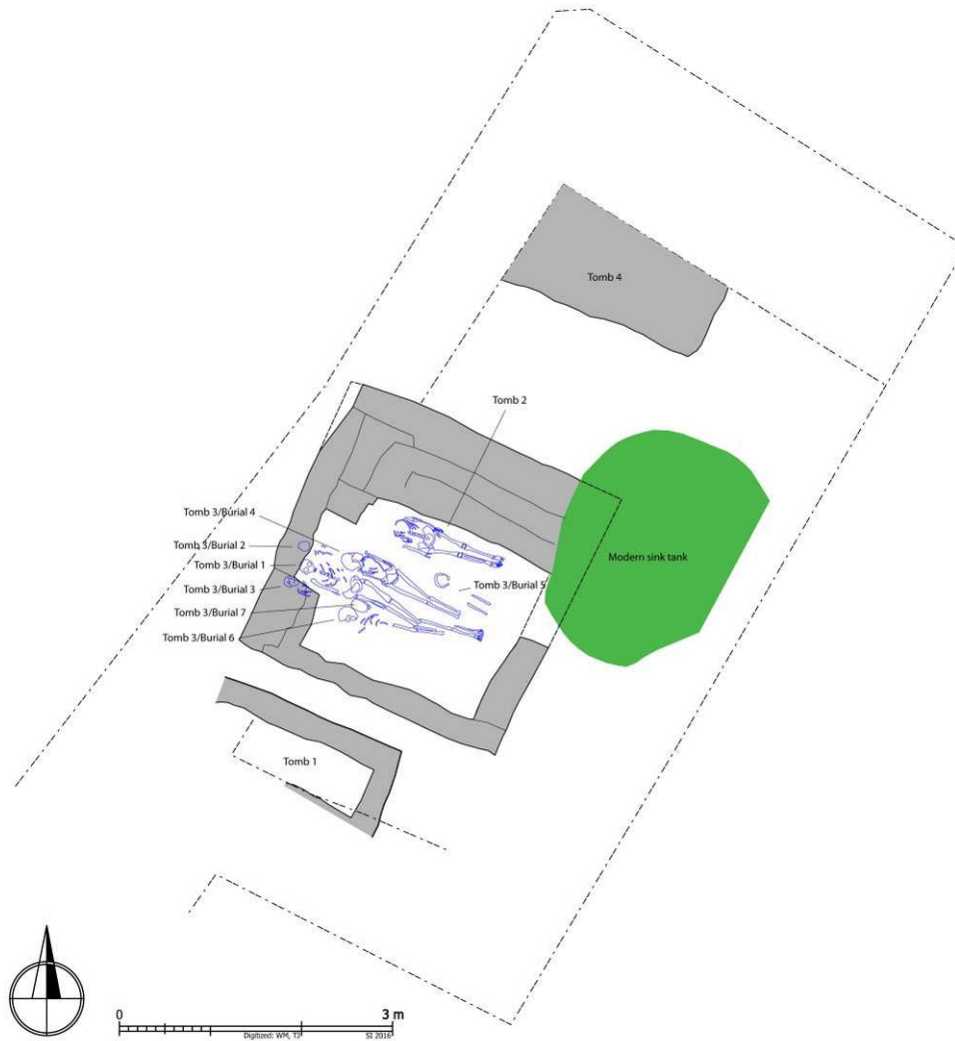


Fig. 42: Plan of Area 89 Stratum B.



Fig. 43: Overview of Area 89 Stratum B from the east.



Fig. 44: Detail of Tomb 3.



Fig. 46: Overview of Area 90 from the south-east.

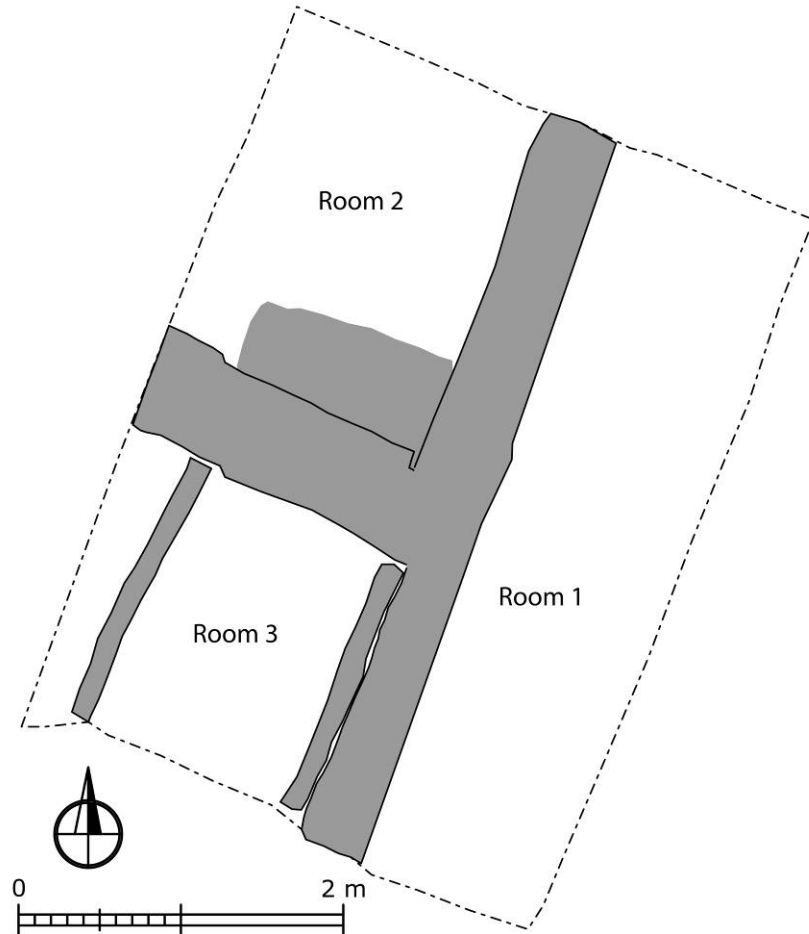


Fig. 45: Plan of Area 90.

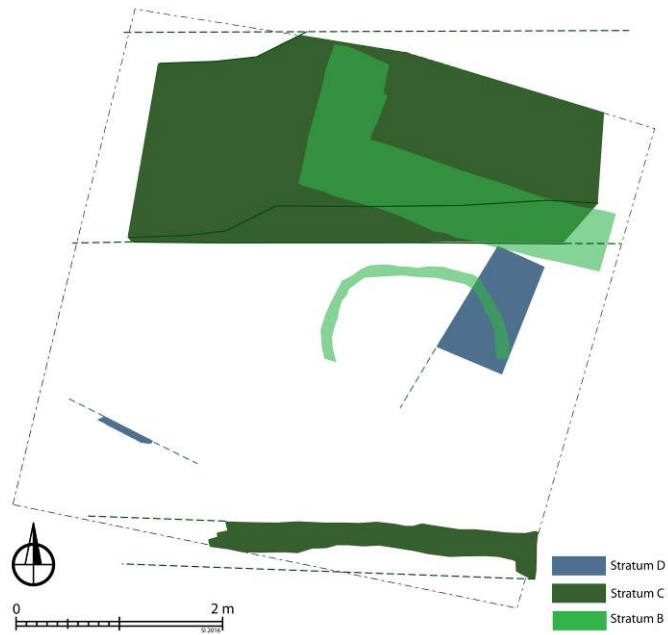


Fig. 47: Plan of Area 91.



Fig. 49: Area 91: View of wall dating to Stratum C from the south.



Fig. 48: Area 91: View of Middle Kingdom wall from the west.



Fig. 50: Overview of Area 91 from the west.



Fig. 52: Overview of Area 92 from the west.



Fig. 51: Plan of Area 92 during Strata C/2c - C/2b.



Fig. 53: Area 92: Overview of the area with door into House 2 during Stratum C/2c.

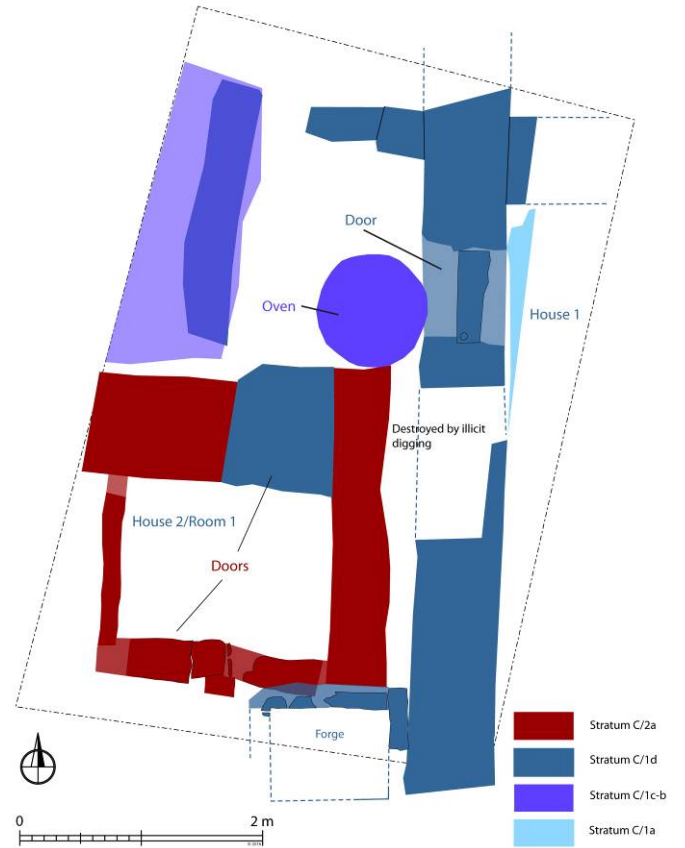


Fig. 55: Plan of Area 92 during Strata C/2a - C/1a.



Fig. 54: Area 92: Overview of Stratum C/2b.



Fig. 56: Overview of Area 92 during Stratum C/1b-c.



Fig. 58: Area 92: Head of a lion.
(16-92-3-8/2) (Photo by
Axel Krause/SIK).



Fig. 57: Area 92. Detail of forge in House 2.



Fig. 59: Area 91: Greek inscription
(16-91-6-11/1).

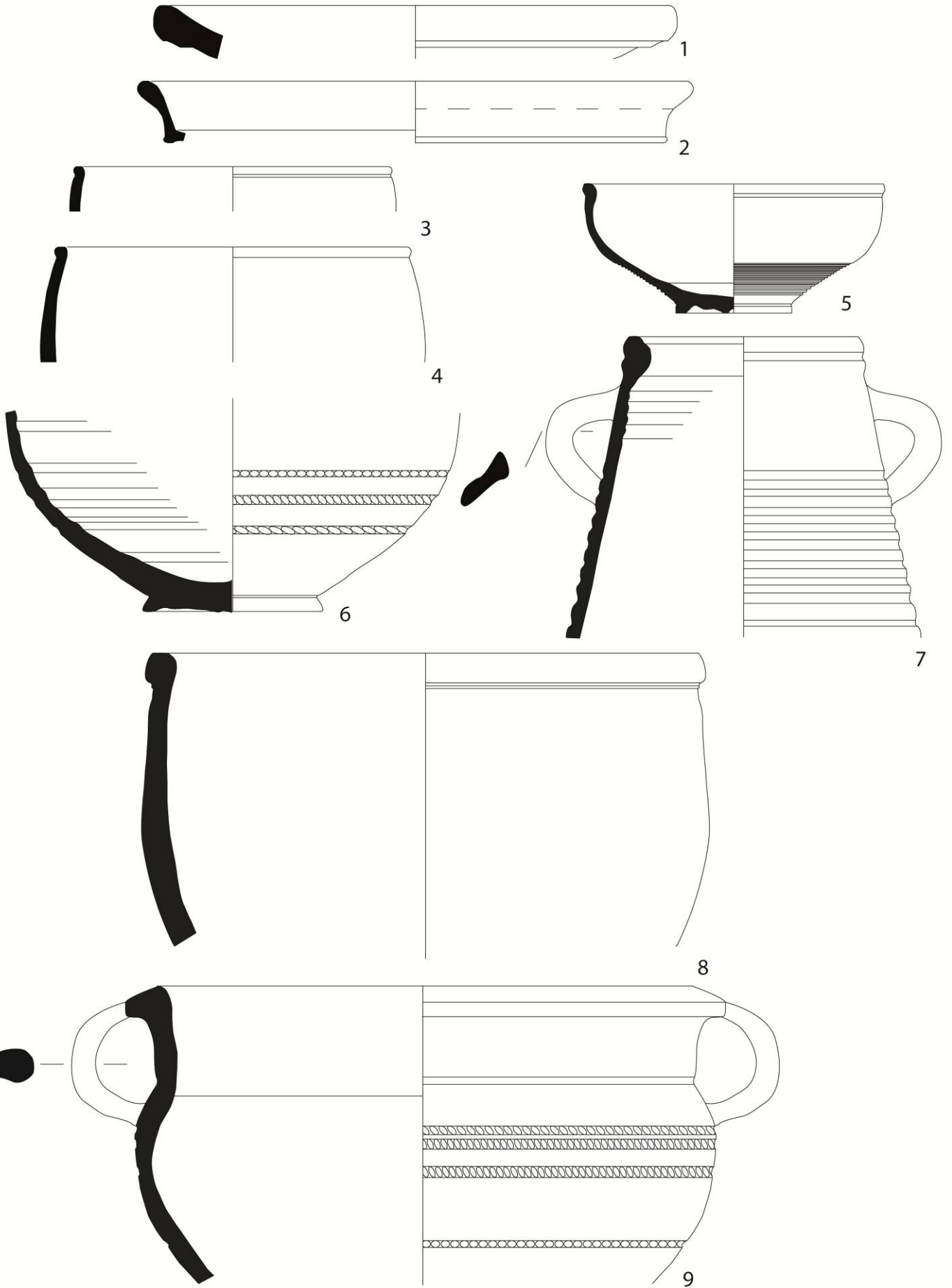


Fig. 60: Area 2: Pottery from the foundation trench of Building 3 (Scale 1:3). (Drawings by Theresa Jürgens).

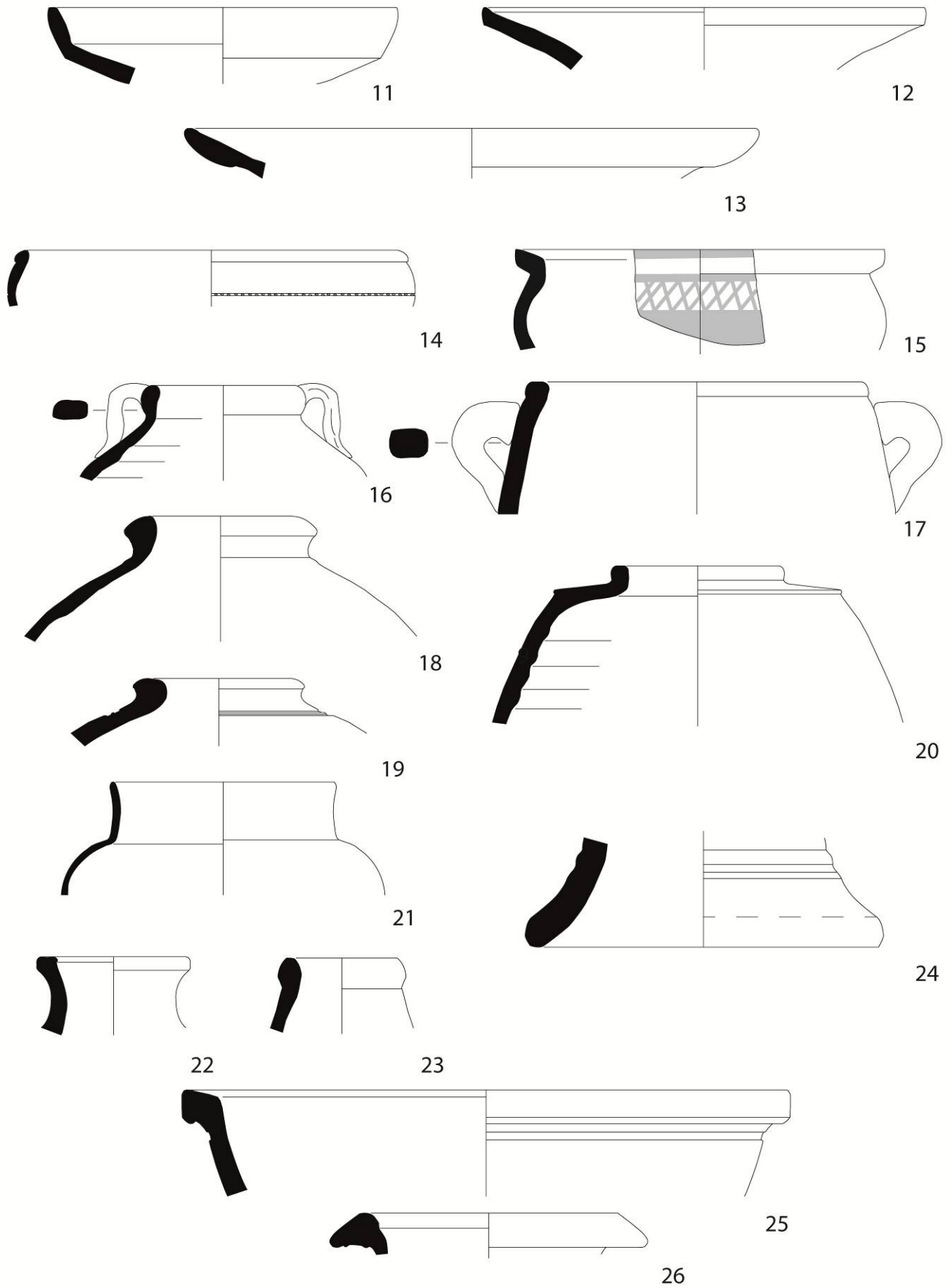


Fig. 61: Area 2: Pottery from Strata F-E. (Scale 1:3) (Drawings by Theresa Jürgens).

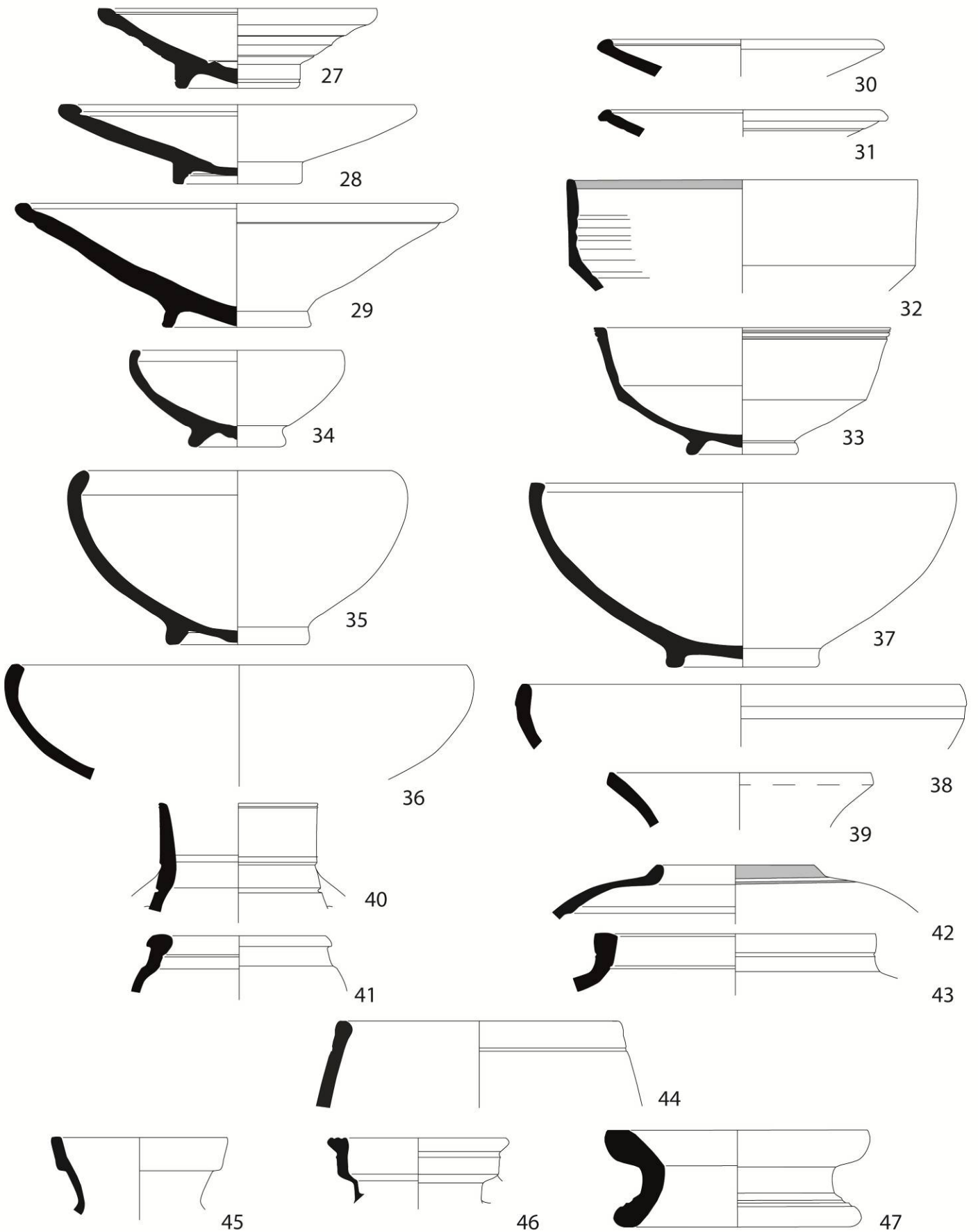


Fig. 62: Area 2: Pottery from Strata E/7-8. (Scale 1:3) (Drawings by Theresa Jürgens).

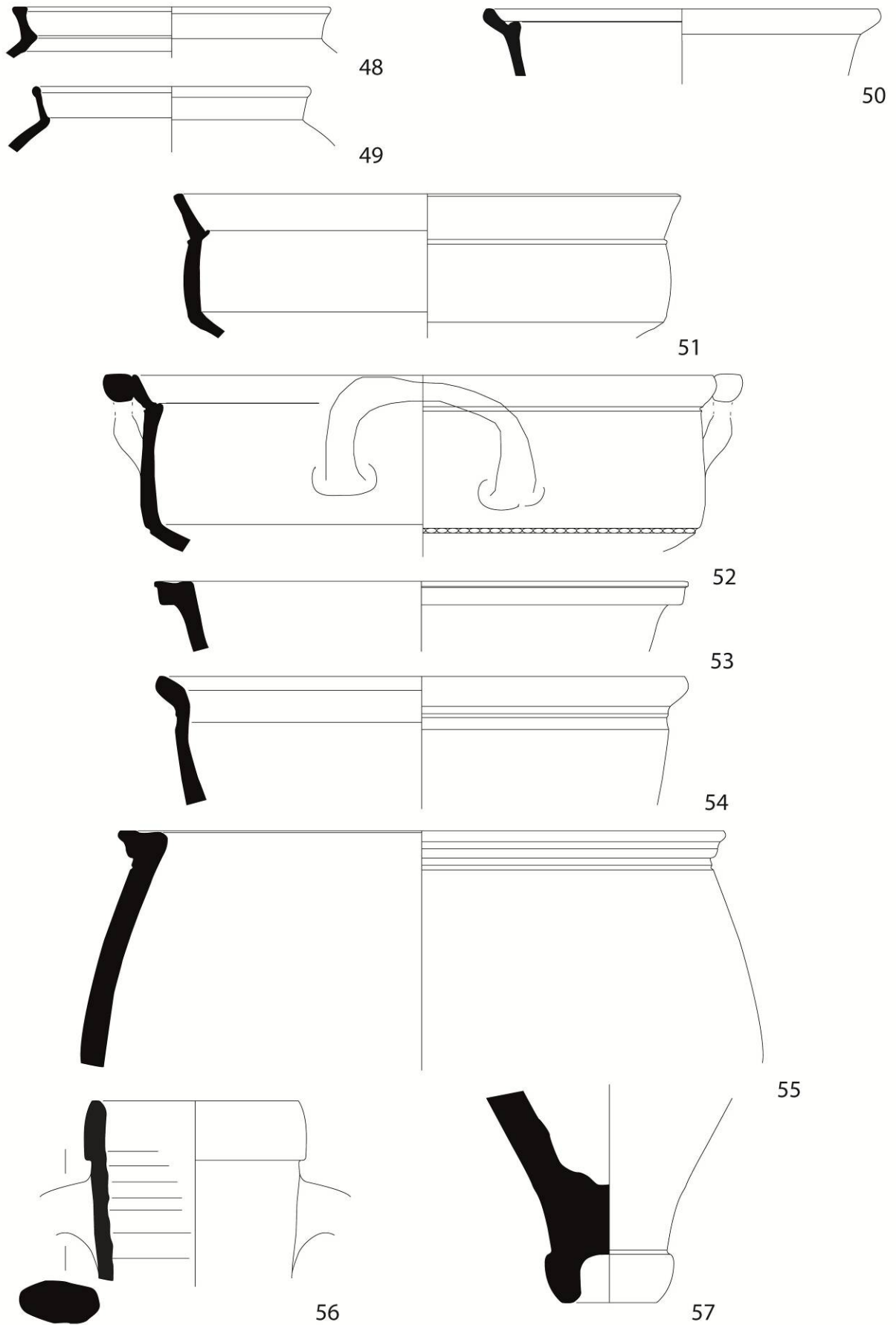


Fig. 63: Area 2: Pottery from Strata E/7-8. (Scale 1:3) (Drawings by Theresa Jürgens).

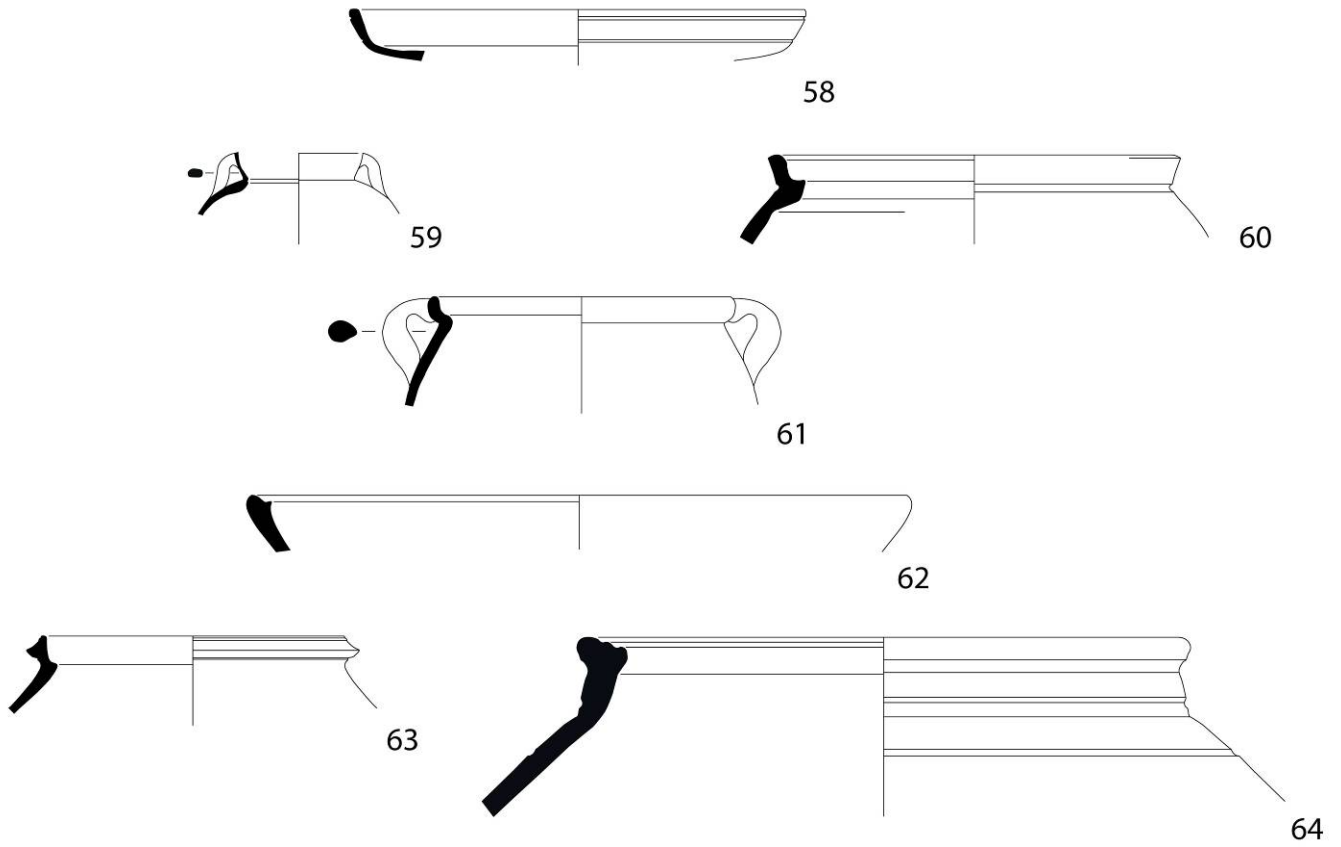


Fig. 64: Area 2: Pottery from Strata E/2-3 (Scale 1:3) (Drawings by Theresa Jürgens).