

Report on the
23rd Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission
in Syene / Old Aswan (2022/2023)

by

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1. Introduction and Overview
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1. Introduction

The 23rd season of the joint archaeological project of the Swiss Institute for Architectural and Archaeological Research in Cairo and the Inspectorate of Antiquities of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in Aswan was carried out between November 11th, 2022 and April 16th, 2023¹.

After the construction three years ago of a large magazine in Area 2 (Birket Damas) for the study of finds of the joint mission and the implementation of additional measures to increase the security of the area in the previous season, at the request of the Architectural Department of the local Inspectorate of Antiquities, the southern perimeter wall was additionally reinforced with

¹ We are grateful to the Ministry of Tourism and 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 C. VON PILGRIM, in close cooperation with ABDELMONEIM SAID MAHMOUD. The fieldwork was directed by W. MÜLLER. Team members were the archaeologists M. HEPA, L. KURMANN, L. REMBART and C. THIRY, the photographers N. GAIL and J. KREUZER, and the anthropologists J. NOVÁČEK and K. SCHEELLEN-NOVÁČEK. Egyptian members of the mission were the Inspectors of Antiquities SAID AHMED ALI EL-RAWI, HALA MOHAMED and MOHAMED ABDEL BASET for excavation and FATHIA AHMED EL-HEFNY and ZENAB FOAD AHMED in the magazine. - We are much indebted to P. ROSE for correcting the English of this report. Mistakes are of course entirely our own.

massive concrete pillars last season. Particular efforts have since been directed towards the still-awaited connection of the magazine to the local electricity grid in order to make all rooms fully operational. While we succeeded in obtaining a proper water connection with a meter from the local authorities this season, the magazine has yet to be connected to the electricity grid, despite the submission of all the necessary documents.

Nevertheless, great efforts were made to prepare the transfer of the finds temporarily stored in an old and unsuitable magazine in Jebel Shisha to the new magazine in Area 2. In this context, all the sacks with finds stored there were examined, inventoried and then repacked. Most of them are collections of pottery sherds, which are of crucial importance for the further analysis and publication of the previous excavations of the joint mission. The transfer of the finds to the new storage facility in Area 2 is planned for the coming campaign.

At the same time, the documentation of pottery sherds from various periods was continued during the campaign. Ch. Thiry continued to work on the Late Period pottery recovered from Area 3 during the 16th to 20th campaigns. He was assisted by expert in ceramics L. Bavay during a short stay.

M. Hepa studied and documented the Ptolemaic and Roman pottery from Area 95.

L. Rembart completed the processing of the Ptolemaic pottery from a residential area in the south-eastern corner of the ancient city (Area 2) and assisted with its photographic documentation.

After an old house was demolished a few years ago to the west of the Isis Temple in the district of el-Koka, it was predictable that an archaeological investigation would first be necessary when excavating the construction pit for a new building. This is because the site (Area 96) is in the immediate vicinity of one of the largest and most significant emergency excavations ever carried out in the city (Area 15). It was therefore to be expected that supplementary findings and further insight into this urban area would be obtained in the neighbouring area. Thanks to the efforts of the Inspectorate of Antiquities, it was possible to intervene successfully at the beginning of the construction work in July 2022 and for the Egyptian staff of the joint mission to carry out an emergency excavation before the ancient layers were destroyed. An outstanding result of the excavations was the continuation of a paved road in the pavement of which a large number of unfinished stelae were laid. It is possible from this that a production site for stelae may have been located nearby.

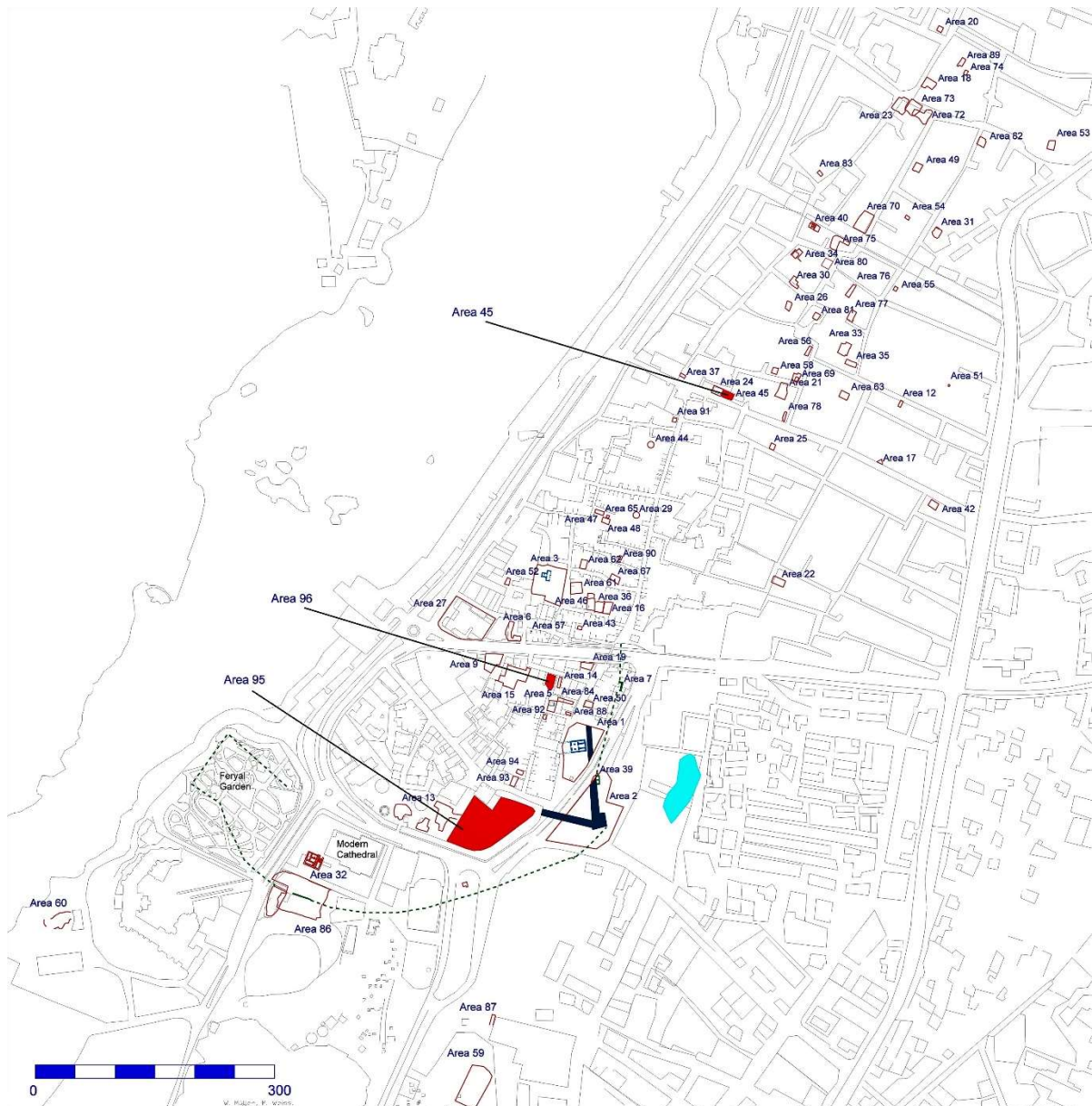


Fig. 1: Map of Aswan with areas excavated by the Swiss-Egyptian Joint Mission at Old Aswan.

2. A rescue excavation in the centre of Graeco-Roman Syene (Area 96)

Area 96² (Figs. 1, 2 and 3) is situated just 20m to the east of Area 15³ and is a direct neighbour of Area 14.⁴ To the south-east, at a distance of just 16m, lies the “Roman Shrine”, an archaeological landmark in ancient Syene.⁵ As all these areas contributed considerably to our

² Work in the area lasted from July 22nd until October 10th, 2023. It was directed by Mohammed Abdel Baset, Hala Mohamed and Said El-Rawy and assisted by Abed Ahmed Ali. Report and publication are in preparation. Here, only a preliminary summary will be provided.

³ W. MÜLLER, in C. VON PILGRIM et al., '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*), pp. 314-338.

⁴ K.-C. BRUHN, in '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*), pp. 270-272.

⁵ A. KELANY/K.-C. BRUHN, in 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*), pp. 136-139.

understanding of the ancient town, it was clear from the beginning that work in this new site would help to complete the picture and test earlier assumptions.

The excavated area covered ca. 200sqm, slightly above average for rescue excavations in Aswan. Pottery and coins have not yet been studied.



Fig. 2: Area 96: Overview from the north-east.

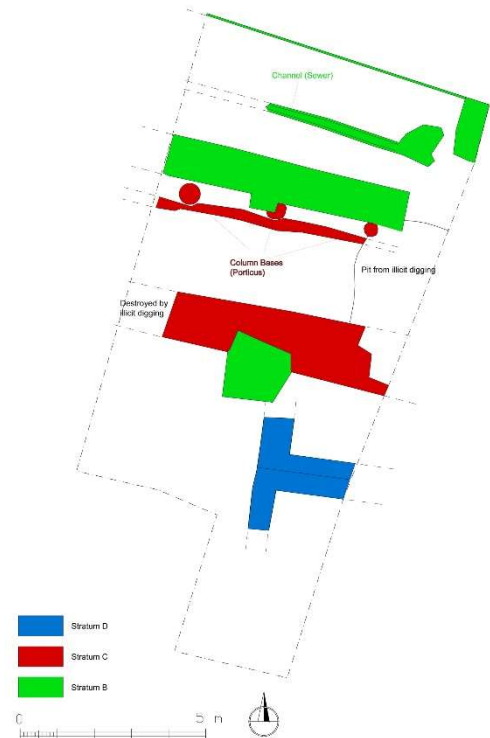


Fig. 3: Plan of Area 96.

Strata D- E: Late Period and Ptolemaic structures

The earliest remains were only encountered in a deep trench in the north-east of the site. There, parts of a battery of ovens were documented. Similar installations were found in Areas 15 and 2 (Fig. 4).⁶ Such structures are often part of the inventory of courtyards. Some walls of probably Ptolemaic date were encountered in the same trench and in the northern part where they were mostly destroyed by a modern sanitary pit.

The orientation of the walls of Stratum D differed significantly from those of Stratum E. Due to their fragmentary state, these walls could not be put into a meaningful architectural context.

⁶ W. MÜLLER, in C. VON PILGRIM/W. MÜLLER, 'Report on the 14th Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2013/14), *ASAE* forthcoming (http://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report_2014th_Season_2013_2014.pdf) (henceforth quoted as *Fourteenth Season*), p. 10, fig. 10.



Fig. 4: Detail of structures dating to Strata D and E from the north.

This densely built-up area was limited towards the north by the corner of a 2.5-brick-wide east-west with a one-brick-wide north-south mud brick wall (Figs. 4 and 6). The severely damaged wall (less than two courses of mud bricks were preserved) was the only architectural structure dating to Stratum D found in the north-eastern trench. The absence of any installations to the north of this wall seems to be evidence of a street. The northern limit of the street was covered by the modern street at a distance of ca.5.80m.



Fig. 5: Area 96: Overview of Strata B and C from the east.



Fig. 6: Detail of pit under the paved street from the south-east with structures dating to Stratum E in the foreground.



Fig. 7: Area 96: *Porticus* from the west.

Stratum C: The centre of Late Antique Syene

At the beginning of Stratum C (Figs. 3 and 5), a massive east-west wall was constructed (W96-5) in the approximate centre of the area. It was 1.40 – 1.60m wide. The lowest course of the mudbrick wall was preserved on top of a massive foundation mostly consisting of broken sandstone and granite. It reused and partly replaced an earlier wall in the same position dating to Stratum D.

Probably at the same time, a circular vertically sided pit ca. 1.40m deep was dug in the north-western corner of the excavated area. Its diameter was ca. 1m. Very similar pits were encountered in Area 15 and interpreted there as tree pits.⁷ The predominantly sandy infill in both areas seems to contradict such an interpretation but in Area 15 remains of roots were found inside one of the pits.

Soon afterwards, the street was widened and upgraded. It was paved with sandstone slabs (Figs. 3 and 5). The northern limit of the more than 6.20m wide east-west road was outside the investigated area. This is much wider than even the main streets in ancient Syene. The building to the south of the street was mostly destroyed but it showed the most elaborate *porticus* yet found

⁷ W. MÜLLER, in *Report on the 5th and 6th Season*, p. 336 and fig. 8. *Idem*, 'Domestic Structures in Graeco-Roman Syene (Modern Aswan)', in S. LADSTÄTTER, V. SCHEIBELREITER (eds.), *Städtisches Wohnen im östlichen Mittelmeerraum 4. Jh. v. Chr. – 1. Jh. n. Chr.*, DÖAW 397 = AF 18 (Vienna 2010), p. 437.

in Aswan (Figs. 5, 7 and 8). The *porticus* was situated slightly to the south of an earlier wall, the southern limit of the street of Stratum D. Three Ionian column bases were still *in situ* at a distance of ca. 2.5m from the partly preserved southern wall of the house. They were arranged at irregular intervals of 1.80 – 2.20m. Two of the bases were made of rose granite, the easternmost one of grano-diorite. The bases were of similar shape and dimensions but definitely reused.⁸ At a later time, a narrow stone wall was constructed. It abutted the *porticus* in the south. The function of this wall is unclear. Rather than a barrier wall that would have closed the *porticus*, it more probably constitutes a low, makeshift and threshold-like construction that protected the interior of the house from the dirt of the street.



Fig. 8: Area 96: Detail of *porticus*. Ionian base of grano-diorite in its stratigraphical context.

When the pavement was dismantled at the end of the excavation, a very important discovery was made. Some of the carefully laid sandstone slabs turned out to be stelae placed face down. Twenty stelae, offering plates and their fragments could be documented (Figs. 9-12). Some of these —most probably —funerary monuments were of special interest as they depicted female musicians with their instruments.⁹

⁸ P. PENSABENE, *Elementi Architettonici di Alessandria e di altri Siti Egiziani. Repertorio D'Arte Dell'Egitto Greco-Romano Serie C/III* (Rome 1993), cat. no. 721, p. 477, plate 81.

⁹ I thank SYBILLE EMERIT for drawing my attention to this fact.



Fig. 9: Area 96: Unfinished funerary sandstone stela.



Fig. 10: Area 96: Uninscribed sandstone stela.



Fig. 11: Area 96: Fragment of Fig. sandstone stela with three female figures, two of them musicians and their instruments.

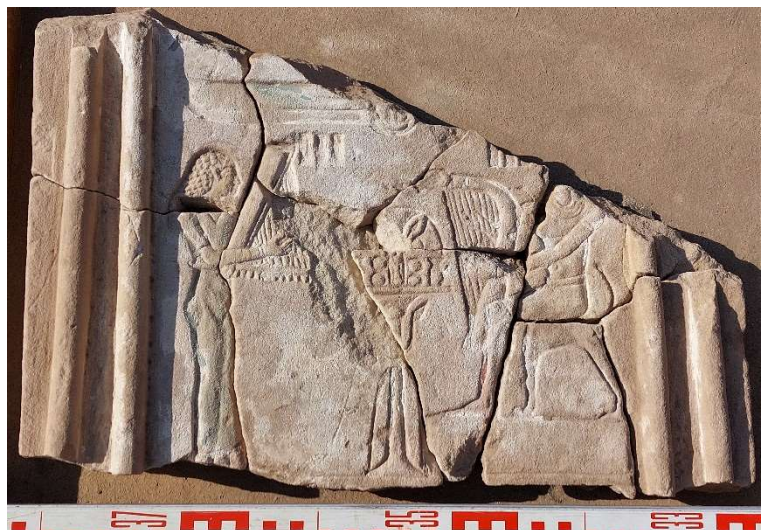


Fig. 12: Fragmented sandstone stela with two female musicians and their harps

Stratum B: Medieval remains

During Stratum B, the east-west street was still in use but narrowed to a width of ca. 4.80m, when a stone-wall was constructed at the northern limit of the site on top of the pavement of the street of Strata C and D (Figs. 3 and 5). Another stone wall at the north-eastern corner of the site further reduced the space or even bounded the street. A massive 1.10m-wide stone wall was constructed on top and slightly to the north of the *porticus* of Stratum C (Fig. 8). The eastern end of the stone wall and thus the north-eastern corner of or entrance into the building it belonged to was situated within the excavated area, ca. 1.30m from the eastern limit of the site. A small pilaster-like construction at the southern face of the wall, ca. 70cm wide and protruding ca. 35cm, probably constituted a support or hints at the location of a door and thus a north-south wall. The original surface of the street was not preserved as all structures of Stratum B cut into the loose sandy sediment that had accumulated on top of the pavement of Stratum C. Due to the bad state of preservation, no coherent picture of the house to the south of the street can be drawn here. Suffice it to say that the dimensions of its preserved northern wall are evidence of its prominence.¹⁰

A carefully constructed channel, probably a sewer, ran in the centre of the street. In the western section, remains of the sandstone-slab cover of the sewer were still preserved (Fig. 13). The 30cm-wide sewer construction was carefully made of fired bricks. Inside it was coated with a thick layer of white lime mortar. The sewer widened at its preserved eastern end where most probably a feeder channel coming from the north connected to it. The channel drained towards the west.

Similar installations are frequently found in Fatimid and Ayyubid Aswan. Main channels like the one in Area 96 ran under the streets and collected wastewater from surrounding houses and public buildings such as baths and mosques with their installations for washing before prayer.¹¹ These collector-sewers drained into seepage shafts. While no such shaft was found in Area 96, the connection of such shafts and sewers was observed in several excavations throughout the town.¹²

¹⁰ The wall is more massive than those of the most prestigious early medieval house on Elephantine Island (cf. F. ARNOLD, *Elephantine XXX. Die Nachnutzung des Chnumtempelbezirks*, AV 116 (Mainz 2003), p. 113) and only slightly narrower than the outer walls of Building 1 in Area 36 (cf. W. MÜLLER, in C. VON PILGRIM et al., 'The Town of Syene – Report on the 7th Season in Aswan', *MDAIK* 66 (2010) (henceforth quoted as *Report on the 7th Season*), p. 191).

¹¹ Regretfully, no mosques or proper baths have yet been found in Aswan. A building in Area 86 (cf. G. WILLIAMS, *Syene VI. A Center on the Edge. Early Islamic Pottery from Aswan*, *BeiträgeBf* 24 (Gladbeck 2022), pp. 24-27) was identified as a small bath. There, a reconstructed heated basin was drained via a similarly constructed channel into a vertical shaft (W. MÜLLER, in 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](http://swissinst.ch/downloads/Swiss%20Institute%202014%202015.pdf)), pp. 24-25).

¹² Cf. MÜLLER, in *Fourteenth Season*, pp. 16-17 for a sewer draining into a seepage pit and *idem*, in C. VON PILGRIM et al., 'Report on the 20th Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2019/2020)' (henceforth quoted as *20th season*), *ASAE* forthcoming, ([https://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report Swiss Egyptian Mission ASWAN 2020.pdf](https://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report%20Swiss%20Egyptian%20Mission%20ASWAN%202020.pdf)),



Fig. 13: Areal 96: Detail of early medieval channel from the north-east.

The stratigraphical, topographical, and architectural context of the discoveries in Area 96

While it is impossible properly to contextualise the earlier structures, the paved street and the building with *porticus* provided significant information concerning our understanding of the cityscape of Syene and medieval Aswan.

The paved street is a continuation of the major east-west road found in Areas 15 and 9. The discoveries in Area 14 appear less clear due to the small size of the site and the fact that it was heavily overbuilt during the Medieval and later periods. It seems, though, that the east-west road did not continue into this area.¹³ The fact that the street did not continue further east probably constitutes the reason for the widening of the road from ca. 4m in Area 15 to more than 6m in Area 96 (Fig. 14).

Of special interest is the identical stratigraphical sequence of large vertical tree-pits immediately preceding the pavement of the road in Areas 15 and 96. The pavement and other aspects of a general urban upgrade in Area 15 can be dated to the second half of the 4th century AD.¹⁴

It is remarkable that only the parts of the street in Area 15 that were paved were those flanked by important buildings. In the case of Areas 15 and 9, such buildings were the *exedrae* to the north of the street and later the church further north¹⁵ and in Area 96 it was the eminent building with its *porticus*.

p. 10 for the drainage system of a probable bath in the former “Temple of Domitian,” also in Area 3.

¹³ BRUHN, in *2nd Report*, pp.271-273, fig. 24.

¹⁴ MÜLLER, in *Report on the 5th and 6th Season*, p. 336, n. 62.

¹⁵ 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-Paris-Walpole, MA 2014), pp. 66-67.

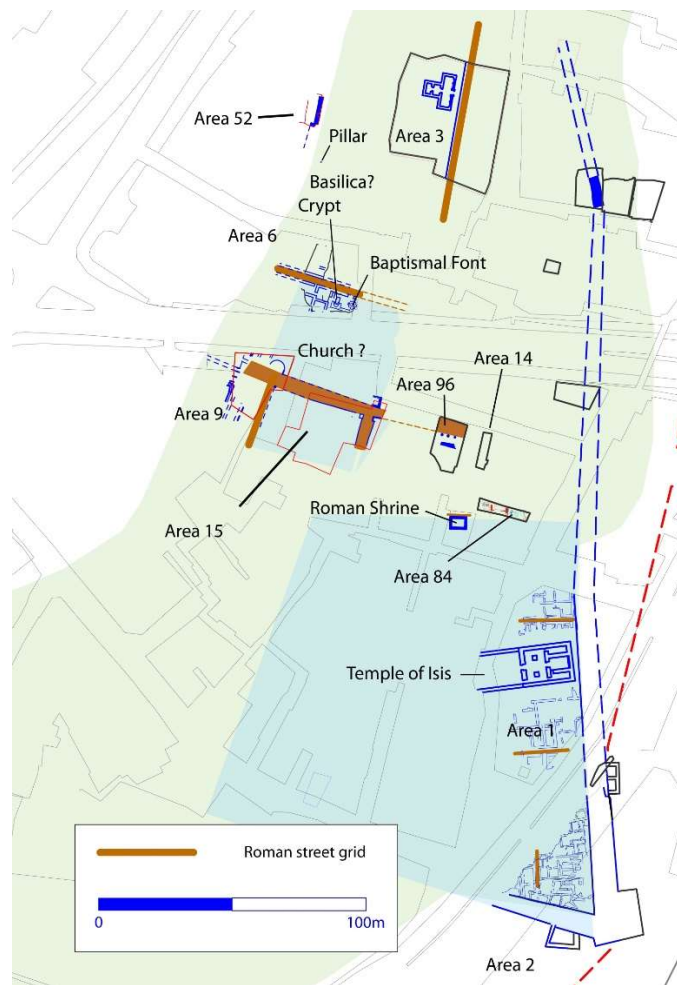


Fig. 14: Map of the centre of Late Antique Syene

Considering the date of the pavement, the reuse of significantly earlier pagan stelae and offering plates is remarkable. As no such objects were found in the pavement of the street in Area 15, it seems prudent to assume that the store of an earlier workshop in the vicinity of Area 96 was plundered during the construction process of street and *porticus*.

The medieval channel in Area 96 has no parallel in Area 15. In the latter, remains of small walls and thresholds were found on top of the Late Antique pavement, also narrowing the street considerably. A system of channels in Phase I in Area 14 was perfectly aligned with the main channel in Area 96.¹⁶ The channels in Area 14 thus represent the remains of an elaborate system of feeder channels, draining the building in Area 14 and disposing of the wastewater into the main channel in Area 96.

¹⁶ BRUHN, in *2nd Report*, p. 272. The complex drainage system seems to be too elaborate for a simple domestic structure.

Conclusion

Area 96 is a good example of how important archaeological monitoring of all construction sites in Old Aswan by the Swiss-Egyptian Joint Mission is. In the case of this excavation, both finds (especially the stelae) and results were quite spectacular. The discovery of the paved road adds important data to the compilation of the map of Late Antique Syene while parts of one of the most lavish buildings with *porticus* yet found is evidence of the splendor of the town centre during the same period. The channel is testimony to the high living standards in Aswan during its heyday in the early Medieval period.

(Wolfgang Müller, Mohamed Abdel Baset, Said El-Rawi, Hala Mohamed)

3. The anthropological investigation of human skeletal remains from Area 45

The long-term project to investigate the human skeletal remains found by the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission¹⁷ in Old Aswan continued. As in previous seasons, the team focussed on the material from the western sector of Area 45.¹⁸ There, a cemetery of the Late Antique period was investigated in a rescue excavation (Fig. 15).¹⁹ This cemetery was already known from Area 24,²⁰ located immediately to the west of Area 45. Findings from the eastern sector of Area 45 helped to establish the absolute and relative chronology of the cemetery,²¹ as a coin dated to Constantius II (337-361 AD) provided a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the vaulted chamber tombs.²² Three Coptic stelae, some of them reused in superstructures of the barely preserved latest phase of the cemetery in the seventh century or later probably belonged to the tombs in which the skeletons reported on herewere buried.²³ For palaeographical reasons, these stelae cannot predate the 6th century AD.²⁴

¹⁷ The investigation was conducted from February 2nd – March 2nd, 2023, in the magazine of the MoTA in Aswan.

¹⁸ J. NOVÁČEK/K. SCHEELEN-NOVÁČEK, in C. VON PILGRIM et al., Report on the 18th Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2017/2018), *ASAE* forthcoming (https://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report_Swiss_Egyptian_Mission_ASWAN_2018.pdf) pp. 31-33.

¹⁹ W. MÜLLER, in C. VON PILGRIM/W. MÜLLER, 'Report on the Ninth Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2008/2009)', *ASAE* forthcoming (https://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report_9th_Season_2008-2009.pdf) (henceforth quoted as *Ninth Season*), pp. 3-4.

²⁰ Cf. W. MÜLLER/F. MAHMUD EL-AMIN, in *Report on the 5th and 6th Season*, pp. 340-341 on the archaeology and M. SCHULTZ, in *Report on the 7th Season*, pp. 212-222 for the anthropological investigation.

²¹ MÜLLER, in *Ninth Season*, pp. 5-6.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 6. The coin was studied and dated by H.-C. NOESKE. I thank him for the information.

²³ 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*, CHN 76 (Leiden/Boston 2015), pp. 24-35.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27.



Fig. 15: Area 45: Overview from the south-east. Late Antique cemetery. Tomb chambers with their vaults removed.

Applied anthropological methods included the morphological estimation of age-at-death, sex²⁵ and stature,²⁶ as well as morphometric measurements²⁷ and the evaluation of individual skeletal traits.²⁸ Furthermore, possible pathological changes were observed and interpreted according to the recommendations by M. SCHULTZ,²⁹ in consideration of current literature.³⁰

²⁵ D. FEREMBACH et al., 'Recommendations for Age and Sex Diagnoses of Skeletons', *Journal of Human Evolution* 9 (1980), pp. 517–549. F. RÖSING et al., 'Recommendations for the forensic diagnosis from sex and age from skeletons', *Homo - Journal of Comparative Human Biology* 58 (2007), pp. 75–89.

²⁶ M. TROTTER/G. C. GLEESER, 'Estimation of stature from long bones of American Whites and Negroes', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 10 (1952), pp. 463–514. M. H. RAXTER et al., 'Stature estimation in ancient Egyptians: A new technique based on anatomical reconstruction of stature', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 136 (2008), pp. 147–155.

²⁷ R. MARTIN/K. SALLER, *Lehrbuch der Anthropologie in systemischer Darstellung* (Stuttgart 1957³). S. OUSLEY/R. JANTZ, 'Ch. 15: Fordisc 3 and Statistical Methods for Estimating Sex and Ancestry', in D. DIRKMAAT (ed.), *A Companion to Forensic Anthropology* (John Wiley & Sons 2014), pp. 311–329.

²⁸ R. W. MANN et al., *Photographic Regional Atlas of Non-Metric Traits and Anatomical Variants in the Human Skeleton* (Springfield 2016).

²⁹ M. SCHULTZ, 'Paläopathologische Diagnostik', in R. KNUSSMANN (ed.), *Anthropologie: Handbuch der vergleichenden Biologie des Menschen. Vol. 1.1* (Stuttgart 1988), pp. 480–496.

³⁰ A. C. AUFDERHEIDE/C. RODRÍGUEZ-MARTÍN, *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Human Paleopathology* (Cambridge 1998). D. J. ORTNER, *Identification of Pathological Conditions in Human Skeletal Remains* (San Diego 2003²). C. S. LARSEN, *Bioarchaeology. Interpreting Behavior from the Human Skeleton* (Cambridge 2015²).

Altogether, a total of ninety individuals was investigated. The human remains had been buried in five chamber tombs.³¹ The small chambers were simple mud brick constructions with vaulted roofs. The tombs were oriented east-west and were entered via shafts at the western end. These shafts were sealed with stone slabs and allowed easy access for multiple burials. The interred bodies were positioned in a supine position with the head to the west. Up to twenty individuals were buried in such chambers. The simple mastaba-like superstructures were rarely preserved.³²

It was possible to complete the investigation of most of these grave complexes from Area 45. Among the 90 individuals investigated this season, all age-at-death categories from about 0.5 years up to more than 70 years were observed. The only individuals not represented were neonates, individuals who died during or immediately after birth. Sixteen individuals were male or probably male, another 26 were female or probably female. The sex of the remaining 48 individuals could not be assessed. Some of these skeletons were subadults without any pronounced sexual dimorphism but most were too incomplete for any reliable diagnosis.



Fig. 16: Male individual, 50-60 years (8-45-29-5/1, Individual I). Severe osteoarthritis of the Dens axis, the second cervical vertebra. Possible reason: an injury (subluxation) of the atlantoaxial joint (“neck fracture”), which is commonly fatal, but not in this case. Photo: J.

Nováček, K. Scheelen-Nováček.

³¹ Individuals from the following contexts/tombs were excavated: 8-45-6-2/3 (Tomb G), 8-45-11-5/1, 8-45-11-5/3, 8-45-11-5/5, 8-45-11-5/8, 8-45-11-5/9, 8-45-11-5/10, 8-45-11-5/11, 8-45-11-5/12, 8-45-11-5/13, 8-45-11-5/14, 8-45-11-5/15 (Tomb B), 8-45-24-5/1, 8-45-24-6/1, 8-45-24-6/2, 8-45-24-6/3 (Tomb E), 8-45-28-4, 8-45-28-4/2, 8-45-28-4/3, 8-45-28-4/4, 8-45-28-4/5, 8-45-28-4/7 (Tomb D), 8-45-29-5/1, 8-45-29-5/4 (Tomb J).

³² Cf. J. NOVÁČEK et al., ‘Roman and Late Antique Burials from the Old Town of Aswan’, *ANTHROPOLOGIE* LVII/1 (2019), pp. 4-7. The tombs follow Types 1 and 2 of Late Antique tombs.

Among identified pathological conditions were osteoarthritis (Fig. 16) as well as healed fractures, healed pleurisy and other inflammatory processes of the bony airways. Conditions affecting the oral cavity and teeth were periodontitis, caries, dental calculus, abscesses and ante-mortem tooth loss. The skeletal remains of all these individuals are highly fragmented. Partly, this fragmentation can be associated with Roman burial rites and practice, with large grave chambers for multiple burials. But also, the fact that the skeletons were recovered during a rescue excavation, under enormous time pressure, necessarily led to speed in recovery and, therefore, a fragmented and commingled state of preservation. The surfaces of the bones are generally well preserved, about 90%-70%. The inner matrix is mostly solid.

The anthropological investigation of the individuals from this large late Roman cemetery will continue during the next season.

(Jan Nováček^{33 34}, Kristina Scheelen-Nováček^{35 36})

4. **The pottery from Area 95**

The archaeology and stratigraphy of Area 95³⁷

The rescue excavation in Area 95 became necessary when the construction of the public library of Aswan started. The area was located in part of the modern town that is of the utmost archaeological interest. It is situated just to the north of the projected course of the Late Period town wall. Both Area 13 immediately to the west and Area 2, its eastern neighbour, produced rich archaeological evidence for the history and cityscape of Syene (Figs. 1 and 17). It was thus very regretful that - even with the strong support of the Aswan Inspectorate of the MoTA - the mission was only granted less than two weeks for the investigation of the huge site (more than 3000sqm). Furthermore, the excavation of the modern foundation pit to a depth of 6m below the modern surface was nearly finished when the archaeological investigation started. Thus, many archaeological remains were already destroyed and only visible in the sections. These conditions must be kept in mind when considering the pottery presented below.

³³ Department of Anthropology, Thuringia State Service for Cultural Heritage and Archaeology, Weimar.

³⁴ Institute of Anatomy and Cell Biology, University Medical Centre Göttingen.

³⁵ Institute of Anatomy and Embryology, University Medical Centre Göttingen.

³⁶ Department of Biology, University of Hildesheim.

³⁷ W. MÜLLER, in W. MÜLLER/C. VON PILGRIM, 'Report on the 22nd Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2021/2021)', *ASAE* forthcoming (https://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report_Swiss_Egyptian_Mission_ASWAN_2022.pdf) (henceforth quoted as *22nd Season*), pp. 8-19.

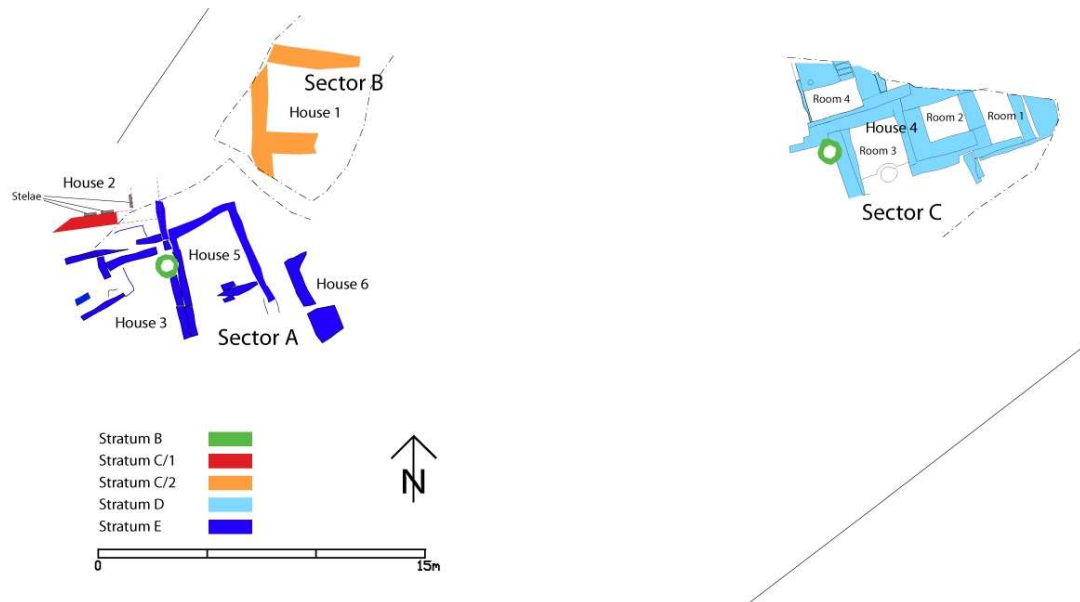


Fig. 17: Plan of Area 95.

Contexts in Sector A (Stratum E)

Houses 3, 4, 5 and 6 were located in Sector A, at the bottom of the foundation pit in the south-eastern part of the investigated area (Figs. 17, 18, 19 and 20). There, due to the limited time at the mission's disposal, only a small part of a densely built-up town quarter was excavated. The contexts come from two findspots.



Fig. 18: Area 95: Overview of Sector A. Photo: P. Mora Riudavets

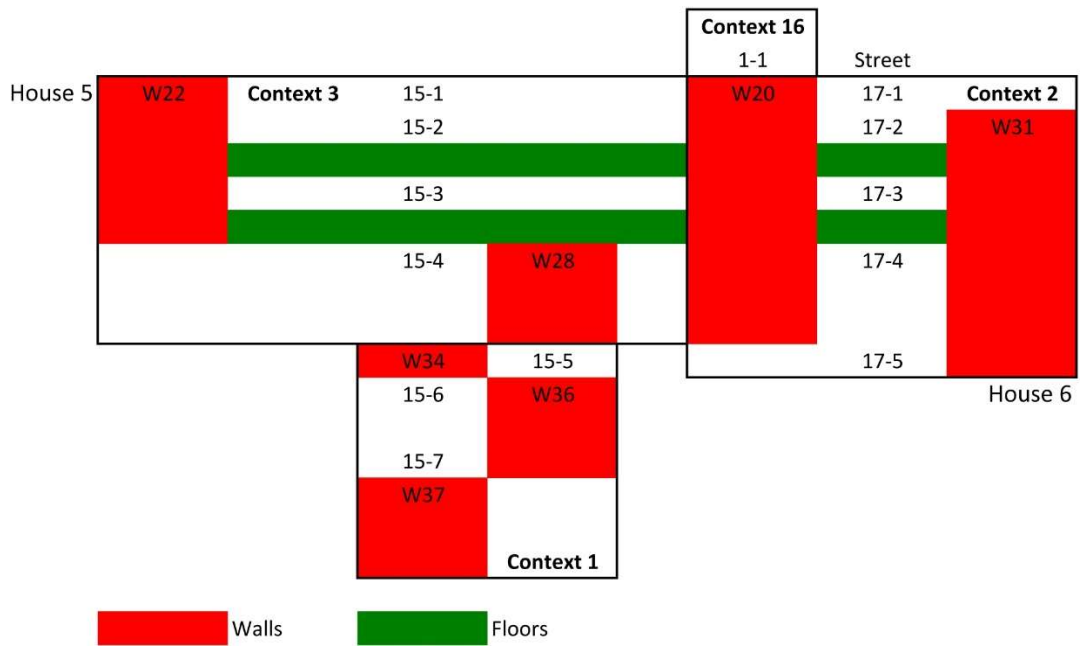


Fig. 19: Area 95: Matrix of Sector A.

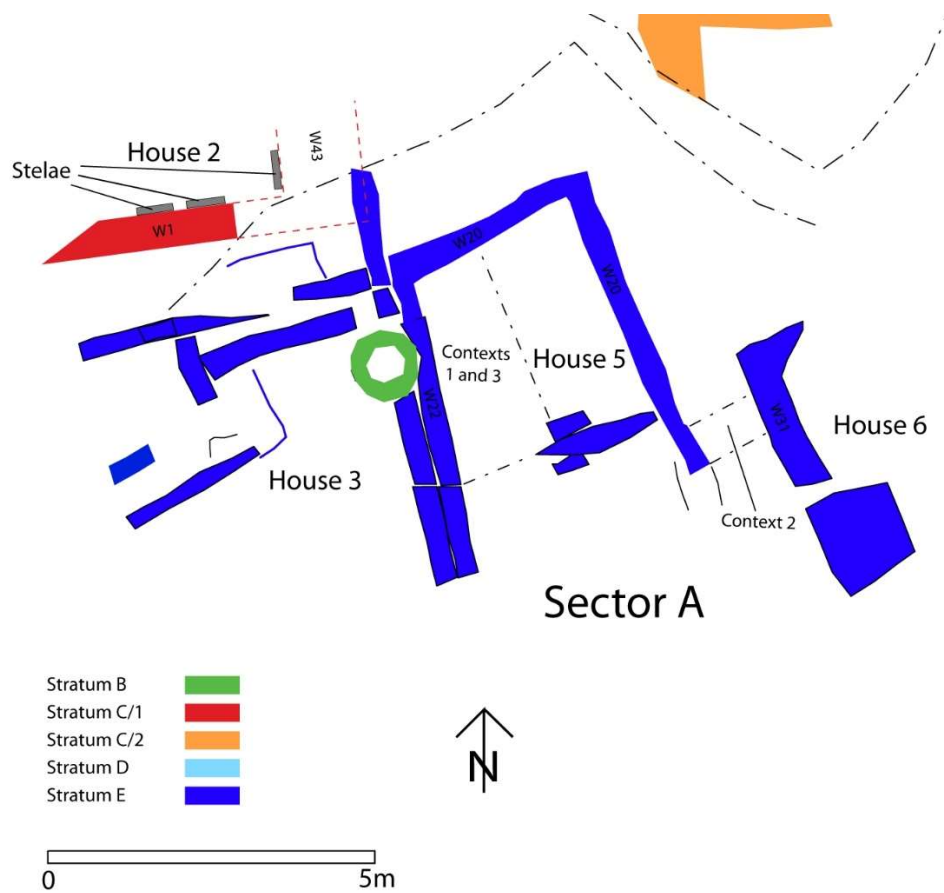


Fig. 20: Area 95: Plan of Sector A.

Findspot 22-95-15 (Contexts 1 and 3) was located in and below House 5. In a small trench, both layers connected to several phases of the house and such predating its construction were excavated.

Findspot 22-96-17 (Context 2) constituted a small trench in the narrow street between Houses 6 and 5.

Context 1 (Fig. 21)

This context comprises material earlier than House 5. It was not possible to put the walls connected to layers 22-95-15-5 and 22-95-15-7 to any meaningful architectural context.

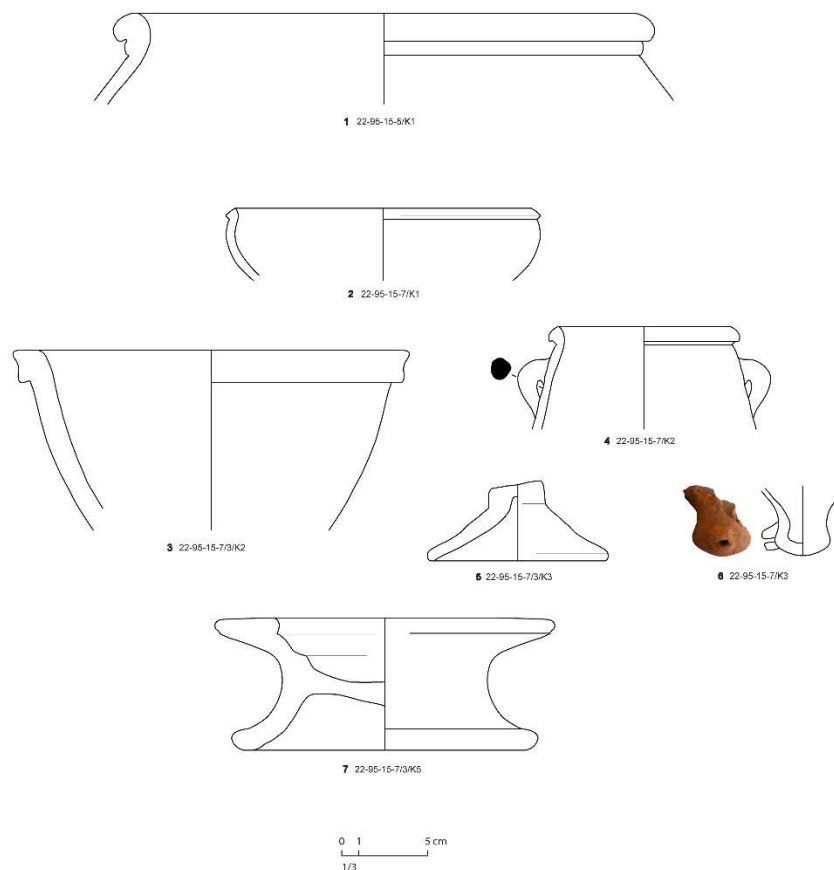


Fig. 21: Pottery from Context 1 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

1. 22-95-15-5/K1. Jar, RS³⁸, ø 28 cm. Cream slipped exterior: 5YR6/2; interior: 5YR6/2. Fabric: 5YR5/1. Dating: 5th century BC.?

Parallels: D. ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 1961.

2. 22-95-15-7/K1. Bowl, RS, ø 12 cm. Cream slipped exterior and interior: 5YR7/3. Fabric: 2.5YR6/4. Dating: 5th century BC.

Parallels: ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 2024, 2422, 2797, 2915; S. A. LAEMMEL, *Kom Tuman II. Late Period to Graeco-Roman Pottery*, Vol. II (Oxford 2021), pl. 109, 19; pl. 110, 1-2.

3. 22-95-15-7/3/K2. Bowl, RS, ø 22 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR6/6. Fabric: 2.5YR5/6. Dating: late 4th century BC.

³⁸ RS = rim sherd.

Parallels: N. HUDSON, *Preliminary Report on the Pottery at Tell Timai, BCE 24* (Cairo 2014), p. 264, Fig. 6, 28.

4. 22-95-15-7/K2. Jar, RS, ø 10 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR5/4. Fabric: 2.5YR5/4. Dating: 4th century BC.

Parallels: ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 2375, 2376.

5. 22-95-15-7/3/K3. Lid, RS, ø 12 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 5YR5/4. Fabric: 5YR5/4. Dating: 5th century BC.?

Parallels: ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 1953; LAEMMEL, *Kom Tuman II*, pl. 129, 13.

6. 22-95-15-7/K3. Spout, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR6/4. Fabric: 2.5YR6/2. Dating: 5th century BC.?

Parallels: LAEMMEL, *Kom Tuman II*, pl. 72, 10-11.

7. 22-95-15-7/3/K5. Ring-stand, RS and BS³⁹, ø 20 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 7.5YR5/4. Fabric: 7.5YR5/2. Dating: 4th century BC.

Context 2 (Fig. 22)

Only the deepest of the street layers (22-95-17-5) (Figs. 17 and 19) contained diagnostic pottery. This layer predated House 5 while House 6 was already in use. It contained pottery from the late 4th century BC.

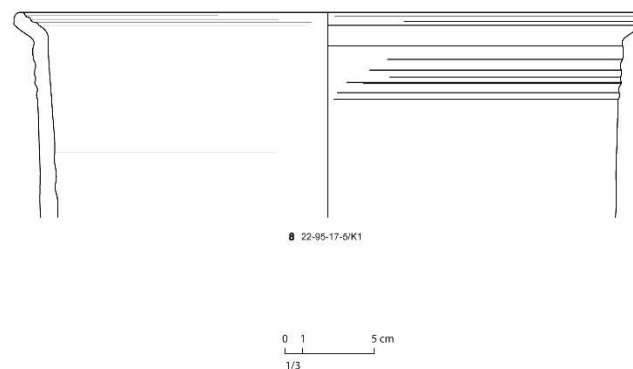


Fig. 22: Pottery from Context 2 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

8. 22-95-17-5/K1. Bowl, RS, ø 30 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR6/6. Fabric: 2.5YR5/6. Dating: 4th century BC.

Parallels: ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 2296.

Context 3 (Fig. 23)

Context 3 was situated inside House 5 and comprises the later layers of findspot 22-95-15. Floors (mud surfaces) as well as layers of loose material between them were investigated.

³⁹ BS = body sherd.

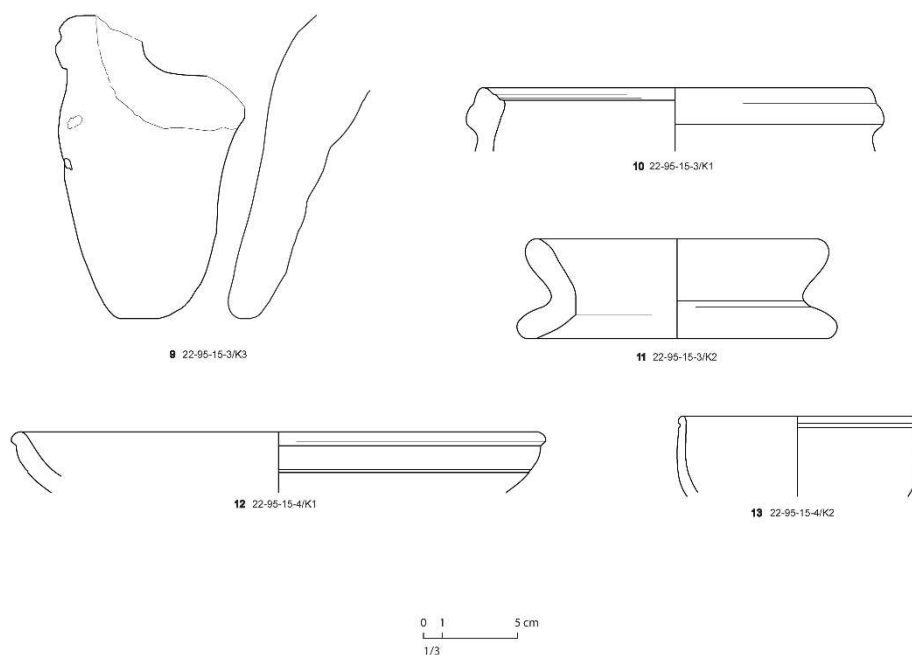


Fig. 23: Pottery from Context 3 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

9. 22-95-15-3/K3. Firedog, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR5/4. Fabric: 2.5YR5/4. Dating: 4th century BC.

Parallels: ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 2015-2016, 2544.

10. 22-95-15-3/K1. Bowl, RS, ø 25 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR6/4. Fabric: 2.5YR5/4. Dating: late 4th century BC.

Parallels: H. JACQUET-GORDON, *Karnak-Nord X. Le trésor de Thoutmosis Ier: La céramique*, *FIFAO* 65 (Cairo 2012), p. 124, Fig. 124, g-h; N. HUDSON, *Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Pottery at Tell Timai*, *BCE* 26 (Cairo 2016), p. 102, Fig. 9, 34; L. REMBART, *Die ptolemäische und römische Keramik aus den Arealen 2 und 13c. Typochronologie und weiterführende Studien*, *Syene IV* (Gladbeck 2020), p. 180, T245; G. LECUYOT, 'Les avatars du Ramesseum', in DAVID (ed.), *Céramiques ptolémaïques de la Région Thébaine. Actes de la Table Ronde de Karnak les 28 et 29 Septembre 2014*, *CCE* 10 (Cairo 2016), p. 230, Fig. 1, 11.

11. 22-95-15-3/K2. Ring-stand, RS and BS, ø 16 cm. Cream slipped exterior and interior: 7.5YR6/3. Fabric: 10R6/3. Dating: 4th century BC.

Parallels: ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 2232; P. BALLE, A. POLUDNIKIEWICZ, *Tebtynis V. La céramique des époques hellénistique et impériale; campagnes 1988-1993; production, consommation et réception dans le Fayoum meridional*, *FIFAO* 68 (Cairo 2012), p. 344, (similar) 913; S. LAEMMEL, A. SIMONY, 'Early Ptolemaic and Ptolemaic Pottery from the Tomb of Harwa (TT 37)', in DAVID (ed.), *Céramiques ptolémaïques de la Région Thébaine. Actes de la Table Ronde de Karnak les 28 et 29 Septembre 2014*, *CCE* 10 (Cairo 2016), p. 258, Fig. 21.

12. 22-95-15-4/K1. Dish, RS, ø 26 cm. Cream slipped exterior and interior: 10YR8/4. Fabric: 5YR6/3. Dating: 5th century BC or older.

Parallels: (similar) LAEMMEL, *Kom Tuman II*, pl. 86, 7.

13. 22-95-15-4/K2. Bowl, RS, ø 12 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 5YR5/4. Fabric: 5YR5/4. Dating: second half 3rd–early 2nd century BC.

Parallels: ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 2258, 2752, 2976; G. PIERRAT-BONNEFOIS, *La céramique dynastique et ptolémaïque des fouilles du Louvre à Tôd, 1989-1991*, *CCE* 6 (Cairo, 2000), Fig.

68; LECUYOT, in DAVID (ed.), *Céramiques ptolémaïques de la Région Thébaine*, p. 105, Fig. 9, 39.

Dating

Even if the very late piece (22-95-15-4/K2) is probably intrusive, other material suggests that House 5 did not exist before the early Ptolemaic period. The preliminary dating of the buildings encountered in Sector A to the Late or even Persian Period has thus to be withdrawn.⁴⁰ House 5 is contemporary with House 35 (Bauschicht 6) in Area 13c.⁴¹

Contexts in Sector C (Stratum D)

Another small area at the bottom of the modern foundation pit that could be cleaned and investigated was Sector C in the north-eastern corner of the site. There, a substantial part of a spacious house (House 4) was documented (Figs. 17, 24, 25 and 26).⁴² Three of the house's four rooms constitute substructures or shallow cellars. The house was completely levelled when a massive tower-house was constructed on top of it. The contexts comprise material from floors inside and from contemporary surfaces outside the building.

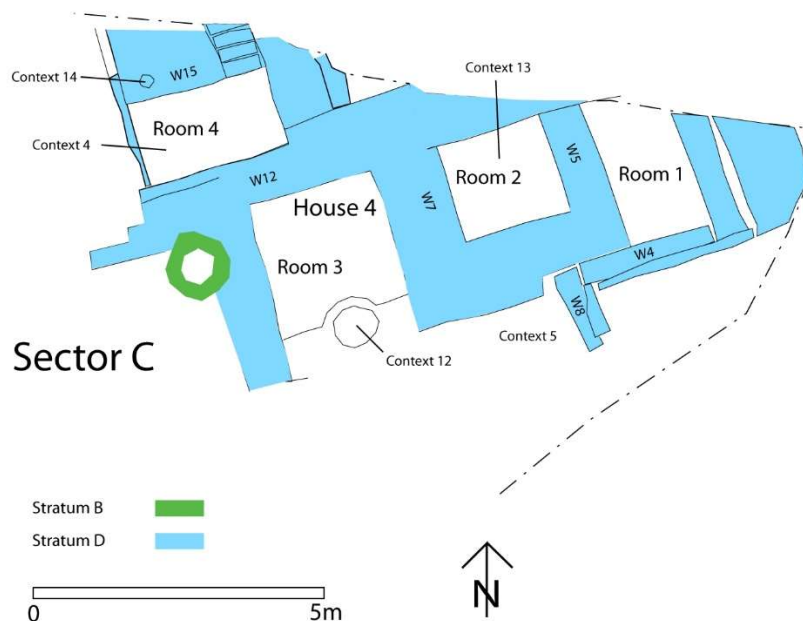


Fig. 24: Area 95: Plan of Sector C.

⁴⁰ MÜLLER, in *22nd Season*, pp. 11-12.

⁴¹ M. HEPA, *Ein griechisch-römischer Siedlungsbefund in Assuan/Ägypten. Areal 13c. Stratigraphie und Kleinfunde* (MA thesis, University of Cologne 2011), pp. 16-17. REMBART, *Syene IV*, p. 10, tabs. 8-13.

⁴² MÜLLER, in *22nd Season*, pp. 12-14.



Fig. 25: Area 95: Overview of Sector C from the north-east. Photo: P. Mora Riudavets.

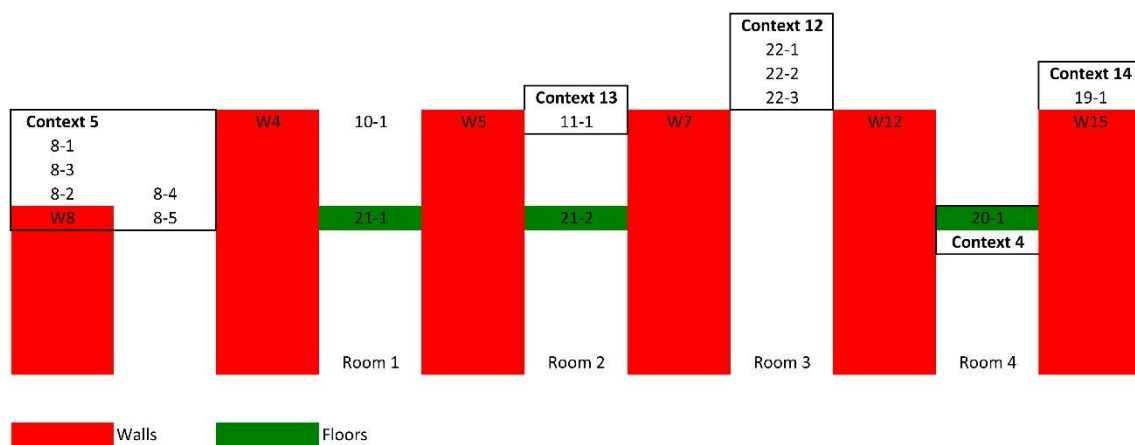


Fig. 26: Area 95: Matrix of Sector C.

Context 4 (Fig. 27)

This context includes material from findspot 22-95-20 (Figs. 25 and 26). The pottery originates from a mud floor in Room 4 of House 4. It constitutes the first phase of use of the house. The latest pottery dates to the early 1st century BC.

- 14.** 22-95-20-1/K1. ESA dish (Atlante 28), RS, ø 14 cm. Red slipped exterior and interior: 10R4/6. Fabric: 7.5YR7/4. Dating: late 2nd BC.

- 15.** 22-95-20-1/K2. Bowl, RS, ø 16 cm. Red slipped exterior: 2.5YR6/6. Interior: 7.5YR7/4. Fabric: 7.5YR7/4. Dating: 1st century BC.

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene IV*, Taf. 1, T24-25; M. HEPA, *Zwei Rettungsgrabungen im Norden der antiken Stadt (Areal 62 und 90). Keramik und Befunde*, *Syene V* (Gladbeck 2021), p. 14, Taf. 17, 14.

16. 22-95-20-1/K3. Jar, RS, ø 17 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 5YR6/4. Fabric: 5YR7/4. Dating: late 2nd century BC.

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 21, T312.

17. 22-95-20-1/K4. Pot, RS, ø 12 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR5/3. Fabric: 2.5YR5/3. Dating: 2nd century BC.

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 20, T274.

18. 22-95-20-1/1. Lamp, Exterior and interior: 10R5/6. Fabric: 2.5YR5/3. Dating: late 2nd – early 1st century BC.

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 46, T713.

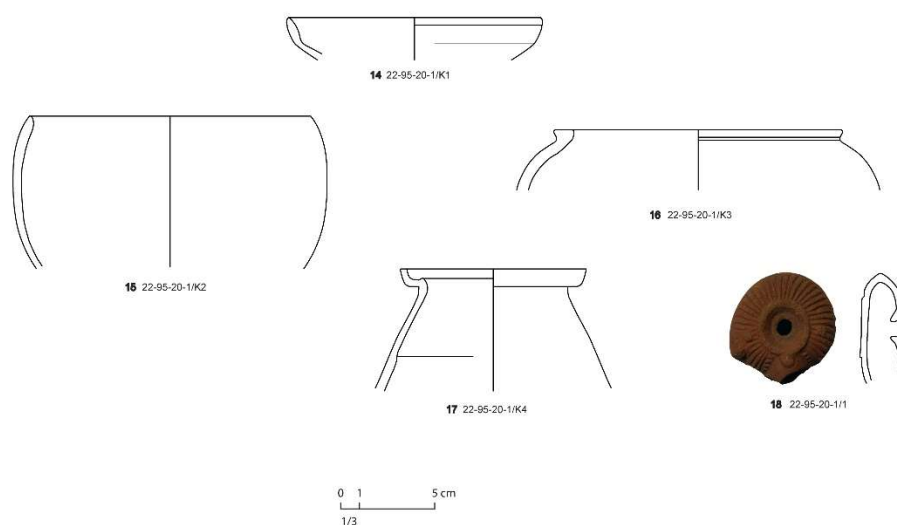


Fig. 27: Pottery from Context 4 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

Context 5 (Fig. 28)

This context, findspot 22-95-8, was located to the south of House 4. Layers 22-95-8-1 to 22-95-8-4 are contemporary with the later phase, 22-95-8-5 dates to the earliest phase of use of the house. While material from the earliest phase provides a *terminus post quem* in the 3rd century BC, the latest material from the younger layers dates to the late 1st century BC.

19. 22-95-8-5/K1. Dish, RS, ø 30 cm. Pink slipped exterior and interior: 10R4/6. Fabric: 2.5YR5/6. Dating: from 3rd century BC onwards.

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 7, T128; HEPA, *Syene* V, p. 14, Taf. 17, 13.

20. 22-95-8-2/K2. Bowl, RS and BS, ø 18 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR5/6. Fabric: 10R6/6. Dating: 2nd – late 1st century BC.

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 3, T49.

21. 22-95-8-1/K1. Bowl, RS, ø 20 cm. Red slipped exterior and interior: 2.5YR5/6. Fabric: 2.5YR5/6. Dating: from 3rd century BC onwards (very common).

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 1, T11-12.

22. 22-95-8-1/K2. Bowl, RS, ø 20 cm. Cream slipped exterior and interior: 7.5YR7/4; floral decoration exterior. Fabric: 2.5YR6/4. Dating: 1st century BC.

Parallels: (similar) REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 23, T351.

23. 22-95-8-2/K1. Torpedo jar (imported), RS, ø 12 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 5YR6/6. Fabric: 5YR6/4. Dating: 5th century BC.

Parallels: ASTON, *Elephantine XIX*, Nr. 2131; C. DEFERNEZ, *La céramique d'époque perse à Tell el-Herr* (Lille 2001), pl. 82, 235c; LAEMMEL, *Kom Tuman II*, colour pl. 50, 1-2.

24. 22-95-8-4/1/K1. Jar, RS, ø 18 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR5/6; floral decoration exterior. Fabric: 2.5YR5/7. Dating: late 1st century BC.

Parallels: (similar) REMBART, *Syene IV*, Taf. 23, T339.

25. 22-95-8-5/K2. Amphora, imitation of a Knidian mushroom-rim amphora, RS, ø 18 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 5YR6/4. Fabric: 10R6/4. Dating: 3rd century BC.

Parallels: LAEMMEL, *Kom Tuman II*, pl. 215, 9.

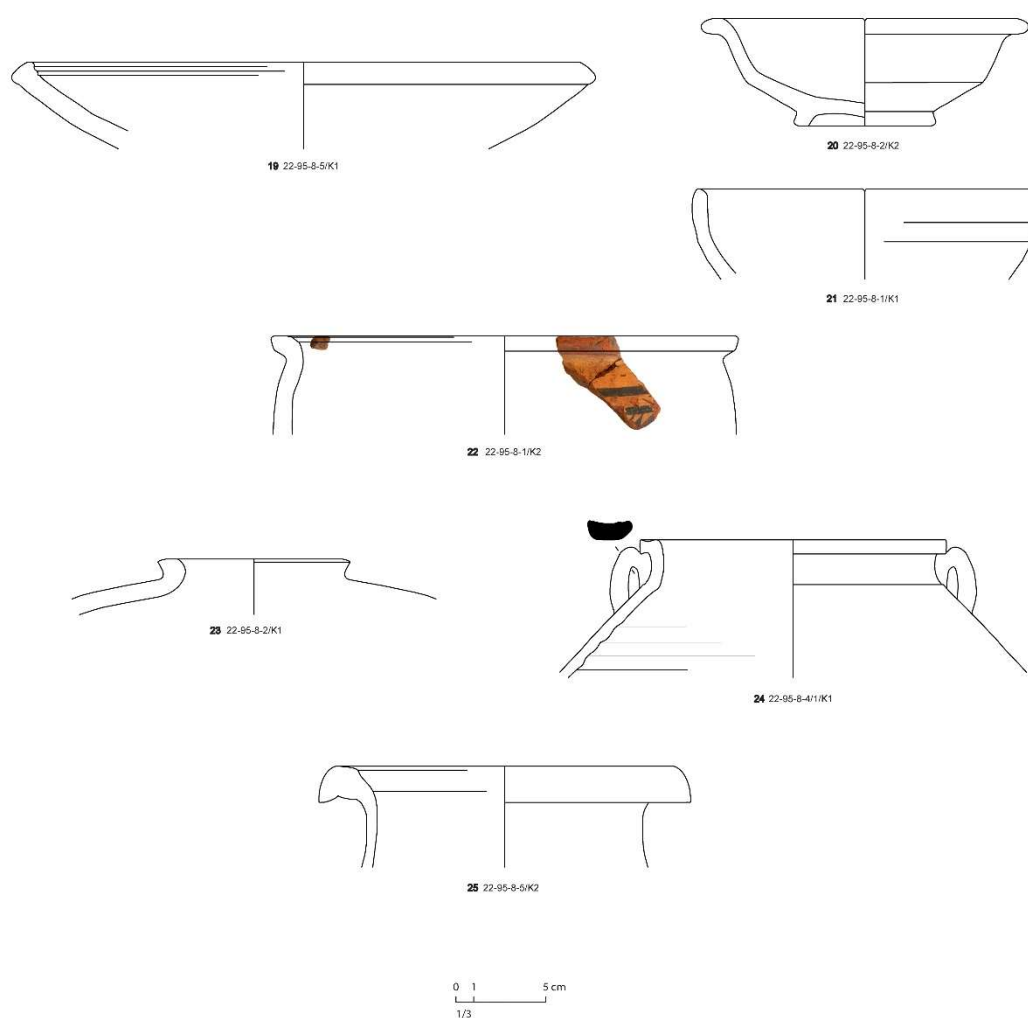


Fig. 28: Pottery from Context 5 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

Dating

According to the pottery, House 4 was constructed in the early 1st century BC and in use throughout the remainder of the late Ptolemaic period. It is thus roughly contemporary with the animal necropolis in neighbouring Area 2 and Houses 34 and 32 (Bauschicht 5) in Area 13c.⁴³

Contexts from the section to the south-west of Sector A (Strata C/2 and D)

The following contexts contain material retrieved from the section after cleaning and documentation (Figs. 20, 29 and 30). Here, the majority of the diagnostic pottery was picked from the section. Thus, the quantity of material was much lower than in the case of properly excavated trenches.

The most important structure in this part of the site was House 2. Only the mostly destroyed south-eastern corner of the latest phase of this building (House 2a) was within the excavated area but the earlier phases of the house shared the same ground plan, at least concerning their outer walls.

The following layers are contemporary with House 2b-c,⁴⁴ and an earlier house (House 7) that was destroyed when the foundation pit was dug.

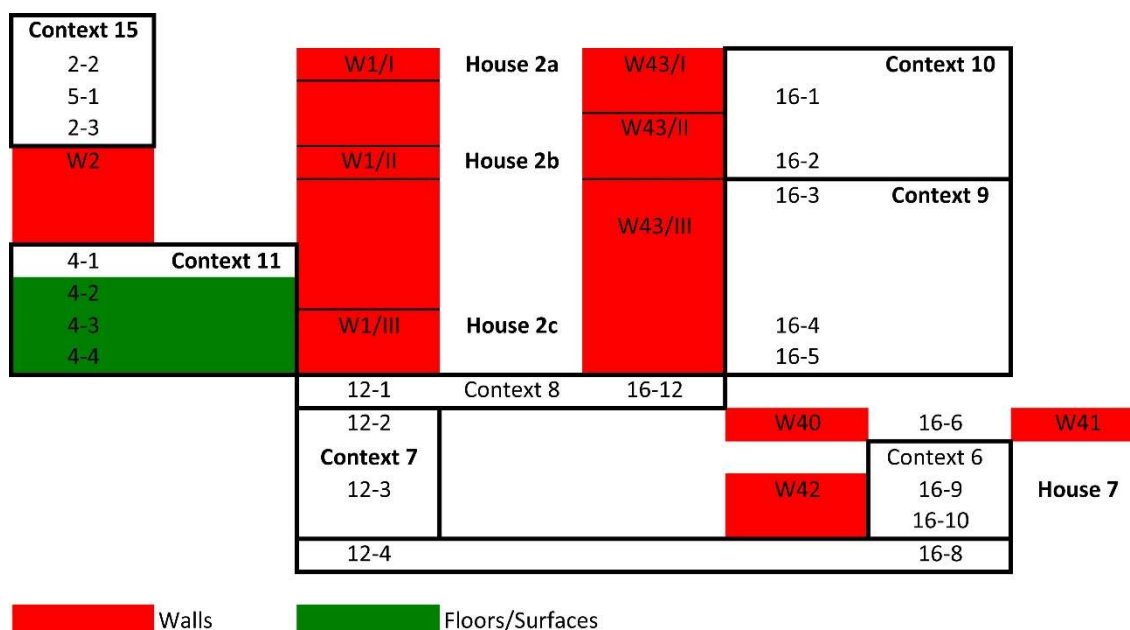


Fig. 29: Area 95: Matrix of the section to the south-west-of Sector A.

⁴³ HEPA, *Ein griechisch-römischer Siedlungsbefund in Assuan/Ägypten*, pp. 17-19. REMBART, *Syene IV*, pp. 10-11, tabs. 26-40.

⁴⁴ Cf. M. HEPA, *SYENE V. Zwei Rettungsgrabungen im Norden der antiken Stadt (Areal 62 und 90). Keramik und Befunde, BeiträgeBf 23* (Gladbeck 2021), p. 4 for the labelling conventions concerning phases of houses.

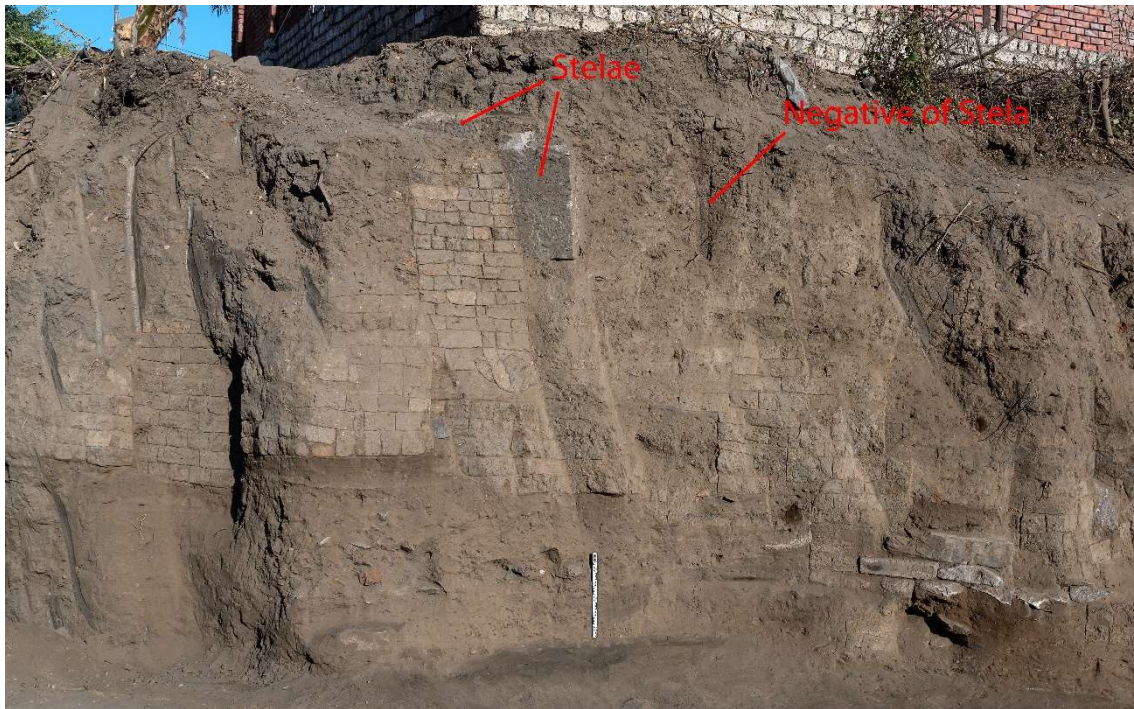


Fig. 30: Area 95: View of the section to the south-west of Sector A. Photo: P. Mora Riudavets.

Contexts connected to House 7

Although several elements of this house were visible in the section, no information concerning its design or function can be given (Fig. 31). House 7 was overbuilt by House 2c. Context 6 comprises layers inside, Context 7 those outside House 7 (Fig. 29). There are no proper floors or recognisable surfaces among these layers.



Fig. 31: Area 95: Detail of the southern-western section with House 7.

Context 6 (Fig. 32)

26. 22-95-16-10/K1. Amphora GK 703, RS, ø 11 cm. Red slipped exterior: 2.5YR6/8; interior: 2.5YR7/4. Fabric: 2.5YR7/4. Dating: early 1st century AD.

Parallels: S. MARTIN-KILCHER, J. WININGER, *Syene III. Untersuchungen zur römischen Keramik und weiteren Funden aus Syene / Assuan (1.-7. Jahrhundert AD), Grabungen 2001 – 2004, Beiträge zur Ägyptischen Bauforschung* 20 (Gladbeck 2017), Abb. 2.15, 125.

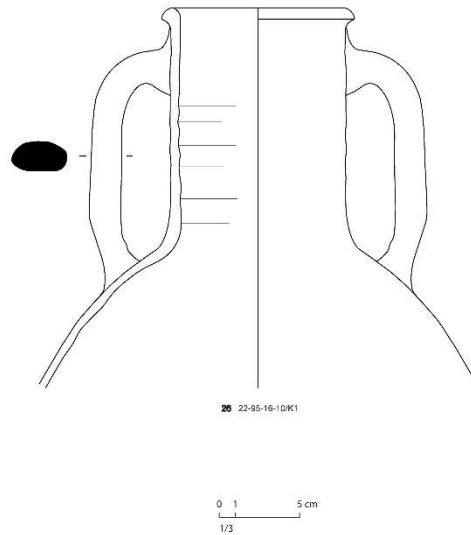


Fig. 32: Pottery from Context 6 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

Context 7 (Fig. 33)

27. 22-95-12-3/K1. Jug, RS, ø 8 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 10R7/4. Fabric: 2.5YR6/6. Dating: late 2nd century BC.

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene IV*, Taf. 20, T275.

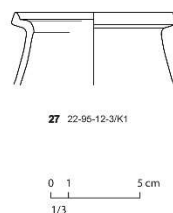


Fig. 33: Pottery from Context 7 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

Dating

Although the material basis is quite meagre, the stratigraphical position of House 7 and the pottery hint at a date for construction and use of the house towards the beginning of the Roman Imperial period. As House 4 most probably was still in use at that time, House 7 belongs to Stratum D.

Contexts connected to House 2b and c (Stratum C/2)

The following contexts are contemporary with the earlier phases of use and the construction of House 2 (Figs. 20 and 29).

Context 8 (Fig. 34)

Findspot 22-95-12-1 includes material from a pit immediately under House 2. The pit was coated with a thick layer of mud mortar and filled with mud brick debris and sandstone chips. Such pits were often used for the preparation of mud mortar or bricks (*mahmara*). Considering its stratigraphical position immediately below the southern outer wall of House 2c, it was probably connected to the construction process of the house.

In this case, the pottery was not picked from the section but comes from a small-scale excavation at the section. This context provides a *terminus ante quem* for the abandonment of House 7.

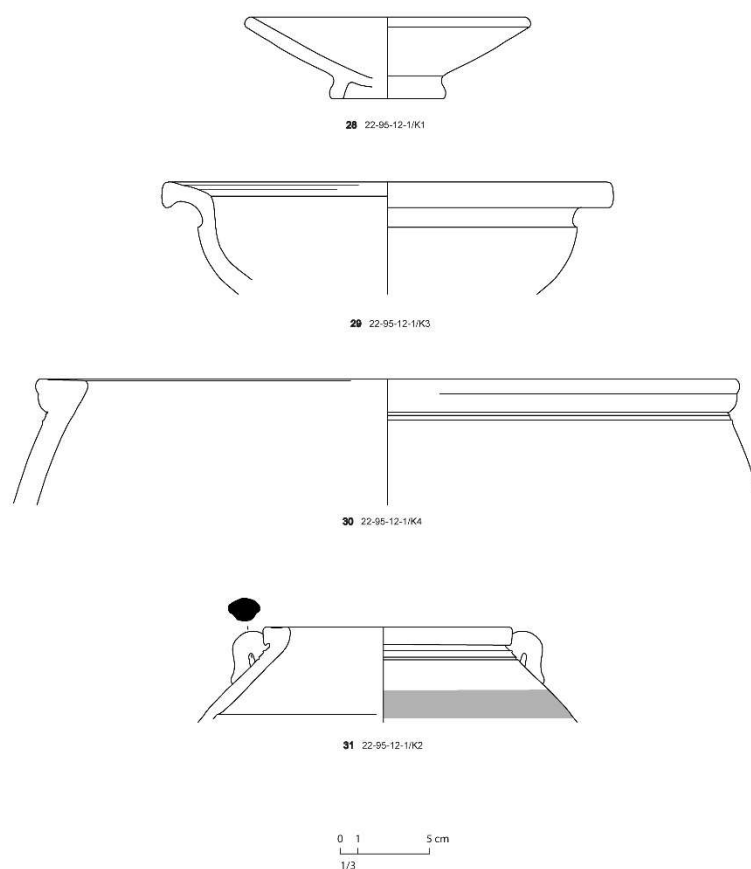


Fig. 34: Pottery from Context 8 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

28. 22-95-12-1/K1. Dish, RS and BS, ø 17 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR5/6. Fabric: 2.5YR5/8. Dating: from 3rd century BC onwards (very common).

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 6, T113.

29. 22-95-12-1/K3. Bowl, RS, ø 26 cm. Red slipped exterior and interior: 2.5YR7/6. Fabric: 2.5YR5/6. Dating: 2nd century BC.

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 15, T219.

30. 22-95-12-1/K4. Bowl, RS, ø 40 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR5/6. Fabric: 2.5YR5/6. Dating: 3rd – 2nd century BC.

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 22, T328.

31. 22-95-12-1/K2. Jar, RS, ø 12 cm. Cream slipped exterior: 2.5YR6/4; interior: 7.5YR6/3. Fabric: 2.5YR4/6. Dating: late 1st century BC.

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 21, T316.

Context 9 (Fig. 35)

The layers of this context were connected to the eastern outer wall of the earliest phase of House 2 (House 2c). The material comes from surfaces and filling layers outside the house.

32. 22-95-16-3/K1. Amphora, GK 703, BS, ø 7 cm. Red slipped exterior: 2.5YR6/6; interior: 2.5YR7/4. Fabric: 2.5YR7/4. Dating: late 1st century AD and later.

Parallels: MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 2.25, 285.

33. 22-95-16-4/1. Lamp, complete. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR6/8. Fabric: 5YR7/4. Dating: late 1st century AD.

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 47, T720; HEPA, *Syene* V, p. 34, Taf. 36, 115.

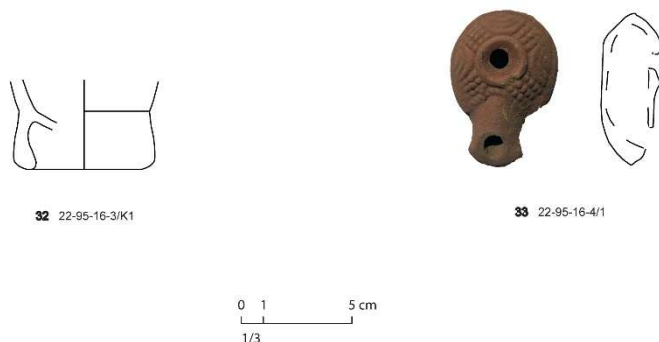


Fig. 35: Pottery from Context 9 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

Context 10 (Fig. 36)

This context comprises two layers of loose material with some settlement debris immediately on top of Context 9 outside House 2b.

34. 22-95-16-1/K1. Bowl, BS, ø 7,2 cm. Cream slipped exterior: 5YR7/6; interior: 5YR7/6. Fabric: 5YR7/6. Dating: early 2nd century AD.

Parallels: MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 7.9, GT 600b; HEPA, *Syene* V, p. 28, Taf. 31, 92.

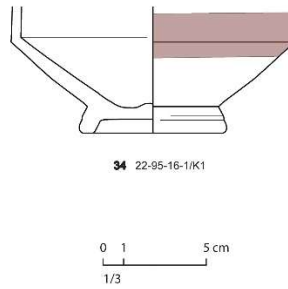


Fig. 36: Pottery from Context 10 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

Context 11 (Fig. 37)

The layers of this context were outside and connected to the southern outer wall of House 2c. All layers containing diagnostic pottery (22-95-4-3 and 22-95-4-4) come from well-defined compact mud surfaces.

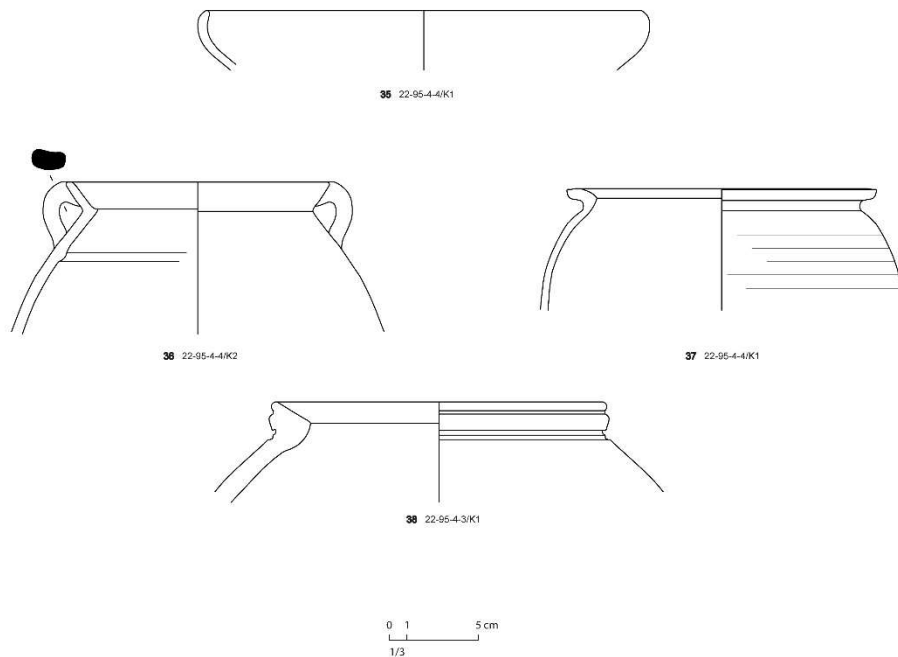


Fig. 37: Pottery from Context 11 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

35. 22-95-4-4/K1. Dish, GT 202Var., RS, ø 24 cm. Pink slipped exterior and interior: 10R5/6. Fabric: 2.5YR6/1. Dating: early 1st century AD.

Parallels: MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 2.9, 49.

36. 22-95-4-4/K2. Pot, RS, ø 18 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR5/4. Fabric: 2.5YR5/3. Dating: late 1st century AD.

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 30, T445.

37. 22-95-4-4/K1. Pot, RS, ø 20 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR5/4. Fabric: 2.5YR5/6. Dating: 1st century AD.

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 33, T483.

38. 22-95-4-3/K1. Jar, RS, ø 26 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR5/4. Fabric: 2.5YR6/1. Dating: 2nd century BC.

Parallels: REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 22, T319.

Dating

The pottery from Context 8 proves that House 2 was not constructed earlier than the late 1st century BC. Layers connected to House 2c (Contexts 9 and 11) consistently date to the late 1st century AD. House 2 was thus constructed at that time or slightly earlier. This means that House 7 only existed for a short period of time. The next phase, House 2b, cannot be as well dated due to a lack of diagnostic material. The single fragment from Context 10 is evidence of the fact that the house was repaired and partly rebuilt sometime in the 2nd century AD.

Contexts from Sector C (Stratum C-B)

Context 12 (Fig. 38)

This context comprises material from a bag-shaped storage pit that was carefully coated with a thick layer of mud plaster. This pit cut into the mud brick pavement in Room 3 of House 4 (Figs. 24 and 26).

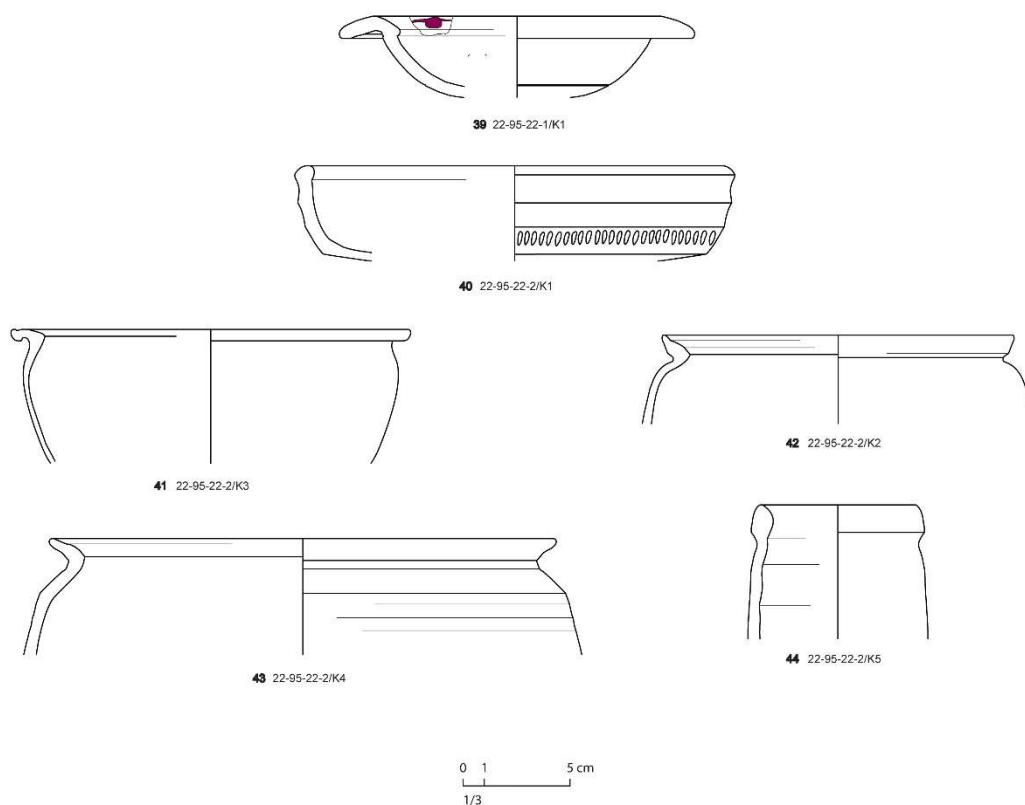


Fig. 38: Pottery from Context 12 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

39. 22-95-22-1/K1. Bowl, GT 210, RS, ø 20 cm. Red slipped exterior and interior: 10R6/4; dot decoration on the rim, exterior. Fabric: 2.5YR6/6. Dating: 3rd century AD.

Parallels: MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 4.28, 465-466; HEPA, *Syene* V, p. 32, Taf. 35, 103-105.

40. 22-95-22-2/K1. Casserole, RS, ø 24 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 10R5/3. Fabric: 2.5YR5/4. Dating: early 4th century AD.

Parallels: (similar) MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 5.39, 187.

41. 22-95-22-2/K3. Bowl, RS, ø 18 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 7.5YR7/3. Fabric: 7.5YR7/3. Dating: early 4th century AD.

Parallels: MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 4.23, 380.

42. 22-95-22-2/K2. Bowl, RS, ø 17 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR4/4. Fabric: 2.5YR5/4. Dating: late 3rd century AD.

Parallels: MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 4.18, 295.

43. 22-95-22-2/K4. Bowl, RS, ø 22 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 5YR5/4. Fabric: 5YR6/3. Dating: early 4th century AD.

Parallels: MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 4.27, 450.

44. 22-95-22-2/K5. Amphora, AE 7, RS, ø 7 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 5YR5/4. Fabric: 5YR5/3. Dating: early 4th century AD.

Parallels: MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 4.27, 455.

Context 13 (Fig. 39)

The single piece in this context comes from the infill after the abandonment of Room 2 of House 4 (Figs. 24 and 26). The loose material was located on top of the mud brick pavement of the room.

45. 22-95-11-1/K1. Pot, RS, ø 12 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR5/4. Fabric: 5YR7/4. Dating: early 4th century AD.

Parallels: MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 4.27, 451.

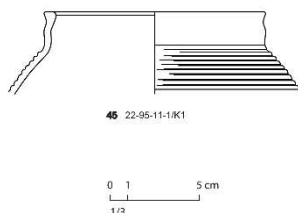


Fig. 39: Pottery from Context 13 (Drawing by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

Context 14 (Fig. 40)

This context contains pottery from a pit that cut into the northern wall of Room 4 of House 4 (Figs. 24, 26 and 41). The pit was filled with lime. Several complete or nearly complete vessels were collected from this installation that was probably connected to the construction of the tower house on top of House 2.

46. 22-95-19-1/K1. Bowl, GT 228, RS, ø 24 cm. Red slipped exterior and interior: 10R6/6. Fabric: 2.5YR7/4. Dating: late 4th century AD.

Parallels: MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 4.39, 654.

47. 22-95-19-1/K2. Pot, RS, ø 18 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR6/4. Fabric: 5YR7/4.
Dating: 1st century AD?

Parallels: (similar) REMBART, *Syene IV*, Taf. 27, T408.

48. 22-95-19-1/K3. Bowl, RS, ø 44 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 5YR6/4. Fabric: 5YR5/1.

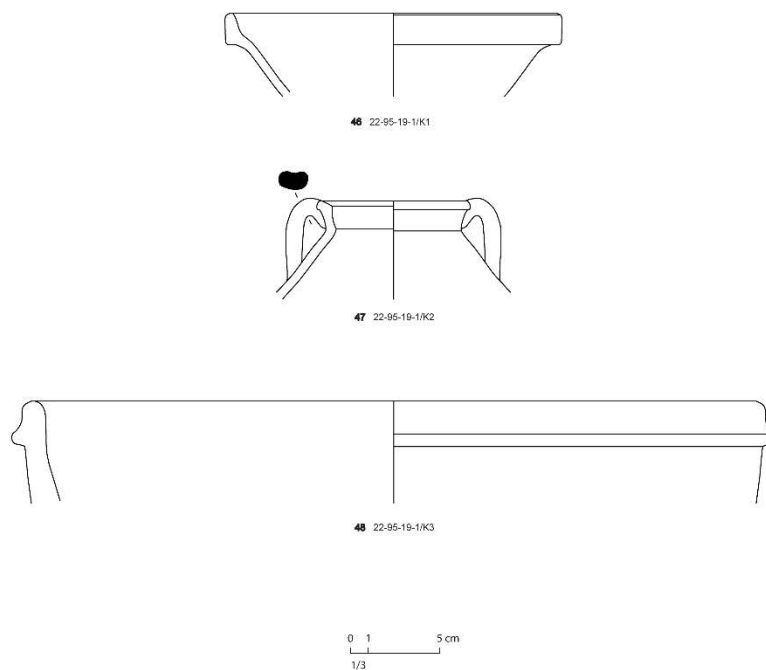


Fig. 40: Pottery from Context 14 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).



Fig. 41: Area 95: Detail of Context 14 *in situ* from the east.

Dating

The pottery from above contexts postdates House 4 and probably predates the tower house on top of it. It would thus imply the construction of the latter after the end of the 4th century AD.

Pottery connected to House 2a (Stratum C/1)⁴⁵

House 2a was the most important structure excavated in Area 95 because three sandstone slabs with reliefs showing Pharaonic gods, two of which also had Greek inscriptions, were found *in situ*, built into the mud brick walls of the severely damaged south-eastern corner of the house. The carefully positioned reliefs faced into the room (Figs. 20, 29 and 30).

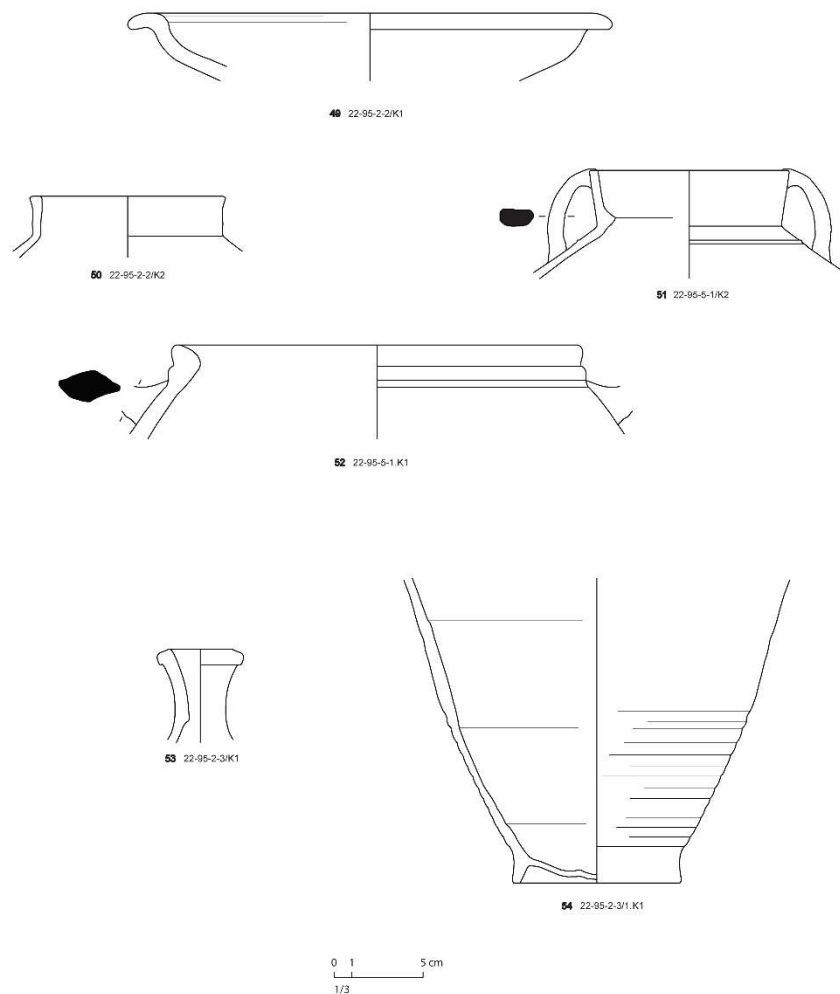


Fig. 42: Pottery from Context 15 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

Context 15 (Fig. 42)

49. 22-95-2-2/K1. Bowl, RS, ø 24 cm. Red slipped exterior and interior: 2.5YR7/6. Fabric: 2.5YR7/4. Dating: 3rd century AD.

Parallels: MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene III*, Abb. 4.28, 465-466; HEPA, *Syene V*, p. 32, Taf. 35, 103-105.

50. 22-95-2-2/K2. Pot, RS, ø 10 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR6/6. Fabric: 2.5YR6/4. Dating: late 4th century AD.

⁴⁵ MÜLLER, in *22nd Season*, pp. 15-18.

Parallels: MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 5.33, 77.

51. 22-95-5-1/K2. Pot, RS, ø 12 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 2.5YR5/6. Fabric: 2.5YR5/6. Dating: early 1st century AD.

Parallels: (similar) MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 4.18, 302; REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 27, T409.

52. 22-95-5-1/K1. Jar, RS, ø 22 cm. Cream slipped exterior: 2.5YR5/6; interior: 2.5YR5/6. Fabric: 2.5YR4/6. Dating: 3rd century BC

Parallels: (similar) REMBART, *Syene* IV, Taf. 22, T327.

53. 22-95-2-3/K1. Jug, traces of one handle, RS, ø 4,5 cm. Red slipped exterior: 2.5YR5/6; interior: 2.5YR5/6. Fabric: 2.5YR5/8.

54. 22-95-2-3/1/K1. Amphora, GK 703, BS, ø 9 cm. Cream slipped exterior: 2.5YR8/3; interior: 10R6/6. Fabric: 2.5YR6/6. Dating: 2nd century AD.

Parallels: MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 2.20, 190.

Dating

Layers 22-95-2-2 and 22-95-5-1 constitute the infill of a probable door in the eastern outer wall of House 2a and were thus deposited after the abandonment of the same. The latest pottery from this assemblage dates to the late 4th century AD. 22-95-2-3 was connected to the southern wall of the house. The latest pottery from this layer dates to the 2nd century AD, and is thus roughly contemporary with the latest pieces from Context 10 (layer 22-95-16-1). Considering the architectural sequence of House 2, it is prudent to assume a date for the construction of House 2a sometime in the late 2nd or early 3rd century AD. As the reliefs and inscriptions were preliminarily dated to the Ptolemaic period,⁴⁶ they were most probably part of the inventory of Houses 2b and c and then reused and presented in a similar way in House 2a.

Material from Sector A (Stratum B-A)

Context 16 (Figs. 19 and 43)

The material of this context was collected while cleaning the bottom of the foundation pit in Sector A. The material was probably dislocated when the foundation pit was dug out. The dates of the few diagnostic pieces support this interpretation.

55. 22-95-1-1/7/K1. Jug, RS, ø 5,8 cm. Red slipped exterior: 2.5YR6/4; interior: 7.5YR7/6. Fabric: 2.5YR7/4. Dating: 5th century AD.

56. 22-95-1-1/7/K2. Pot, RS, ø 12 cm, uncoated. Exterior and interior: 5YR5/2. Fabric: 7.5YR7/4. Dating: 4th / 5th century AD.

Parallels: MARTIN-KILCHER, WININGER, *Syene* III, Abb. 5.30, 30.

⁴⁶ We thank EWA LASKOWSKA and JITSE DIJKSTRA for this information.

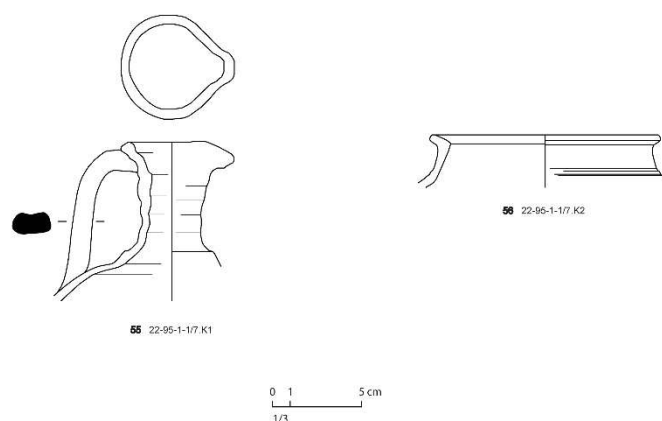


Fig. 43: Pottery from Context 16 (Drawings by L. Kurmann and M. Hepa).

Conclusion

The material presented here shows that even the data gained in short term excavations under extreme circumstances contribute considerably to our understanding of the development of Graeco-Roman Syene. The study of the material culture collected in such rescue excavations is crucial for connecting the 96 areas so far investigated, which are scattered all over the modern city of Aswan. As has been shown, it is now possible to link the sequence of the extramural settlement in Area 95 to the well-established absolute and relative chronology of nearby Area 13. Hopefully, a study of the numismatic evidence will help to produce an even clearer image, especially concerning House 2a and its reliefs.

(M. Hepa, W. Müller)

5. Reinforcement of the perimeter wall of Area 2 (Birket Damas)

After the construction of the new magazine in Birket Damas (Area 2) was finished in season 20,⁴⁷ additional construction measures were requested by the local Inspectorate of Antiquities to improve the security of the site. Accordingly, a new gate, a small building for a guard of the Antiquities Police and a new sector of the perimeter wall in the north of the area were then built, and the existing perimeter walls were repaired and massively reinforced in close consultation with the Inspectorate.⁴⁸

At the end of the season in April 2022, the Architectural Department of the Inspectorate asked the Swiss Institute for further measures and to reinforce the southern perimeter wall of the site with additional concrete pillars. The wall, made of sandstone and concrete, runs along a sloping road, at a distance of 4.50m from the magazine, which is on a level up to 4m lower. As

⁴⁷ C. VON PILGRIM, in *20th Season*, p. 3.

⁴⁸ *Idem*, in *22nd Season*, p. 4-5.

the storage of large stone artefacts was planned in this area, both the safety of the magazine and the necessity to cover as little space as possible had to be considered (Figs. 44 - 46). After the design of the construction measures had been agreed with the responsible authorities of the local Inspectorate of Antiquities, their execution was entrusted to a local contractor.

The new construction supports the wall at a length of approximately 40m and is up to 4m high. It is made of reinforced concrete and includes a beam running on top of the wall, a strip-foundation at its foot and eight massive buttresses for support.⁴⁹ This construction work represents another considerable contribution of the Swiss Institute for Architectural and Archaeological Research Cairo to support the Egyptian Ministry for Tourism and Antiquities and its local representatives in their efforts to protect archaeological monuments and sites in Aswan.

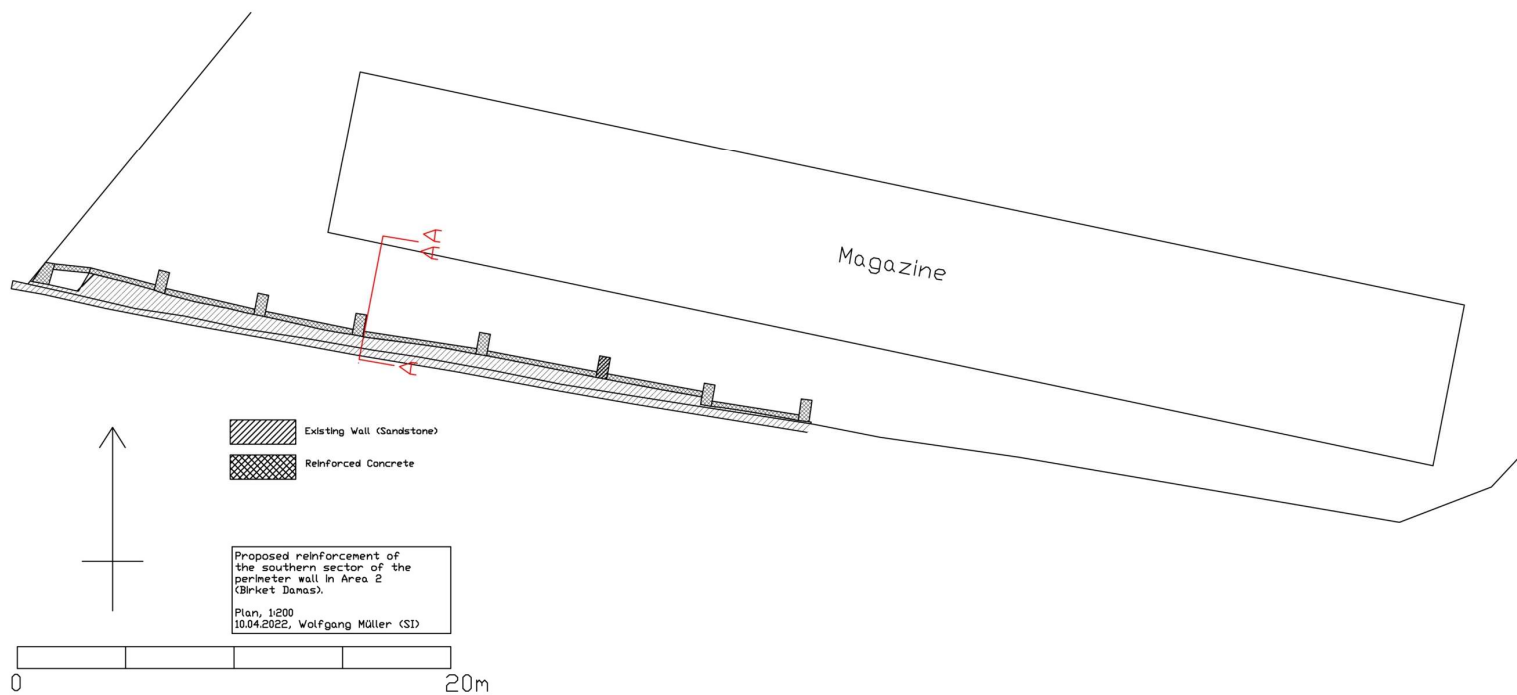


Fig. 44: Area 2: Plan of the reinforcement of the southern perimeter wall.

⁴⁹ The construction was finished on June 8th, 2022.

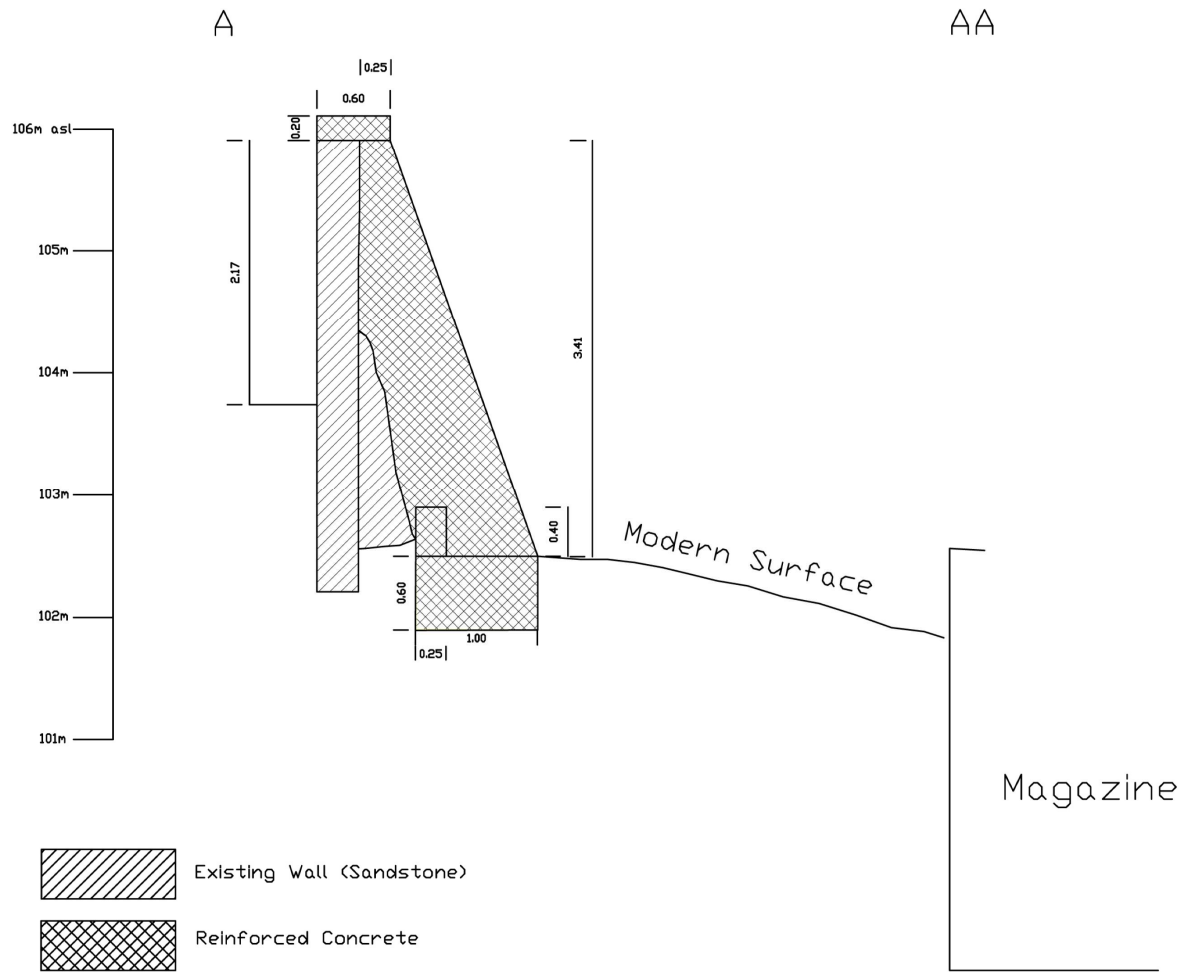


Fig. 45: Area 2: Section through the construction (for exact location see Fig. 44).



Fig 46: Area 2: Overview of the reinforced southern perimeter wall from the east.