

### 3. Excavations of the painted shrine and other buildings in Area A

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Area A was the designation given to a group of buildings (Figure 3.1) towards the southern margins of the lower town where the mound appears to tail off into the surrounding plain. Although Kushite occupation is visible on the surface for several hundreds of metres further south no buildings have been observed south of those described below.

A short time before excavation began in Area A small scale disturbance of the site occurred with shallow pits being excavated particularly in the corner of rooms of Building A1. During these activities fragments of a ceramic statue were unearthed and were strewn across the surface. Excavations began in this area in December 1997 with further work in January to March 2000 and in the winters of 2001-2, 2007-8 and 2008-9. Excavation included the whole of Buildings A1 and A2 and the street between them. The part of Building A3 to the east was also excavated. To the east of Building A1 an area was investigated down to the level contemporary with the building's construction. Limited excavation was conducted elsewhere to the east, south and west of Building A1 and no excavation beyond the clearance of the very uppermost sand layers was attempted to the north of Building A2 and to the east of Building A3.

Over 60% of the area excavated what appeared to be the natural was reached and the excavations were terminated. In the area of Building A1 excavation was not carried below the construction levels of that building as, owing to the serious conservation problems associated with the *in situ* wall paintings it was necessary to backfill that building as soon as possible.

All major structural elements were left in place making the relationship of deposits in and beneath the rooms of Buildings A2-A6 often difficult to ascertain. No surfaces were distinctive enough to allow them to be identified where the direct connection was masked by later walls. An attempt has been made to relate such surfaces using their absolute level above the site datum. A similar problem was noted with structural elements pre-dating Building A2 as for example the Building A3/A4 wall observed beneath Building A2, room IV which does not appear on the other side of the A2 wall. Notwithstanding these problems four distinct periods of occupation were noted

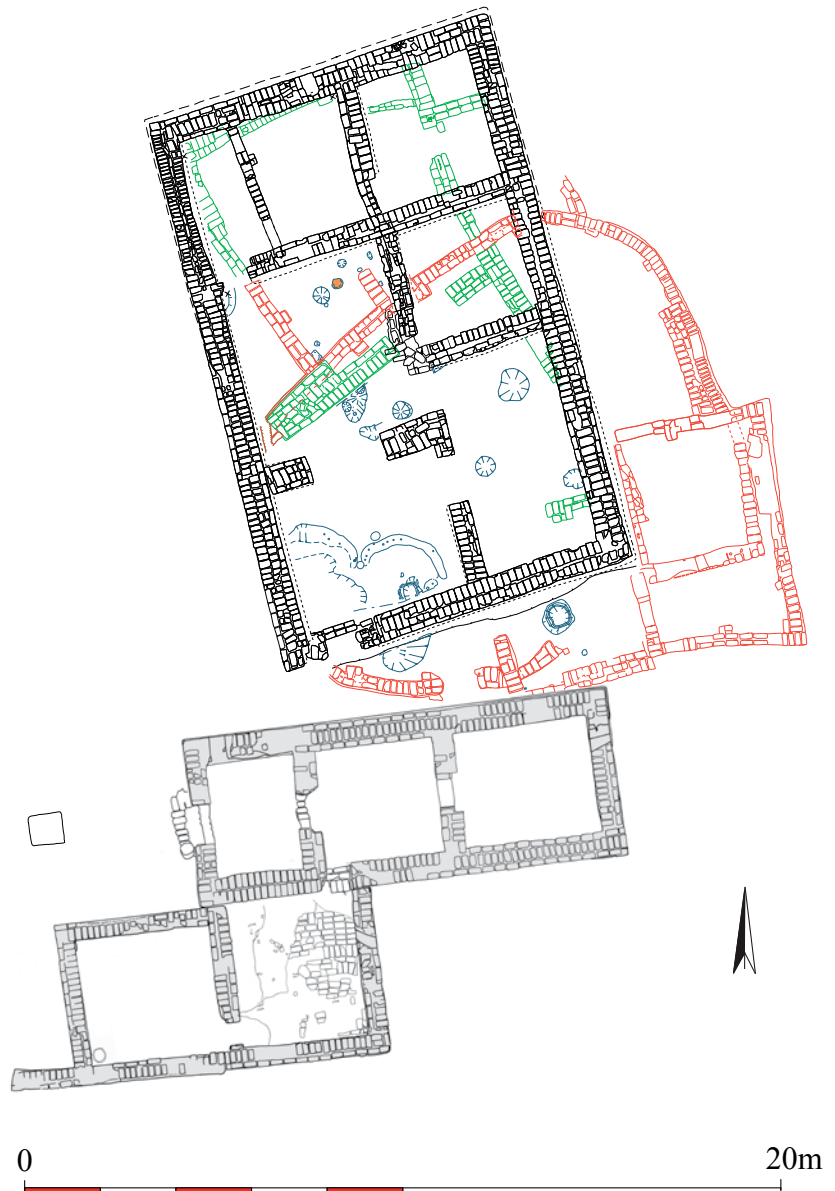


Figure 3.1. Area A, buildings of all periods (scale 1:200).

but the more detailed phasing may associate features and surfaces which while broadly contemporary may not have actually been in use at the same time.

Four distinct periods of occupation were noted.

#### Period 1

##### *Phase 1*

In a number of places excavation was carried down to what was assumed to be the natural. At the southern end of the later Building A2, Room I an area of 4 x 1m was excavated below the level of the earliest Building A3 floor



Plate 3.1. The earliest feature excavated in Area A, the ceramic oven (AC5)180 – scale bar 500mm.

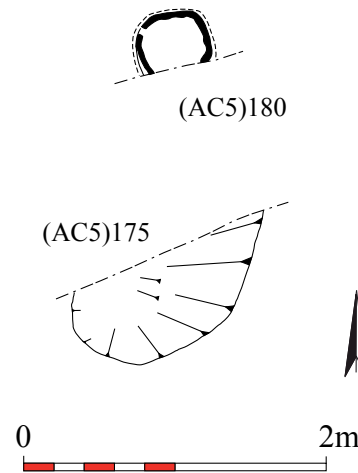


Figure 3.2 . Area A, Period 1, oven and pit of various phases (scale 1:50).



Plate 3.2. The ceramic oven (AC5)180 and occupation deposits below the level of Building A2's walls – scale bar 2m.

to a depth of between 40.46m and 40.49m OSD, that is about 1.7m below the lowest course of the south wall of Building A2. Set 40mm into this deposit was a circular, frustum-shaped, ceramic oven, (AC5)180, 510mm in diameter (Figure 3.2, Plates 3.1 and 3.2). It survived to a height of 370mm and was filled with 30mm of ash and sand and then 150mm of loose sand with pot and ash before going out of use.

Another sondage 1m wide was cut roughly east-west right across the central part of Building A2, Room II to a depth of approximately 500mm below surface (AC5)167. The upper coarse sand deposit contained a few sherds of pottery and charcoal flecks, the lowest reached was sterile silty sand.

In the street between later buildings A1 and A2 the unexcavated silt at between 41.01m and 41.08m OSD was sealed by two largely clean sandy deposits but with a few flecks of charcoal and a very small amount of pottery. The uppermost was cut by a shallow depression/pit

[(AC5)175], possibly oval but much of it was inaccessible beneath later walls. What was visible was 1.5 x 0.7+m in size and 120mm deep and was filled with ashy sandy silt with a fair amount of pottery and charcoal deposited in a number of shallow layers and capped by a layer of white lime [sample <43>]. The whole area was sealed by a sand and silt layer (AD5)172.

In the area of later Building A3 room II the northern part was excavated to the natural at a maximum depth of 41.31m OSD.

### Phase 2

The oven was abutted by generally clean deposits of sand up to surface (AC5)116 which did however, to the south west, contain a lens up to

160mm thick of burning of at least 1.3 x 1.1m in extent.

Cut into this surface, the level on which the walls of Building A3 were constructed were two very shallow curved gulleys (Figure 3.3, Plate 3.3). Although these and

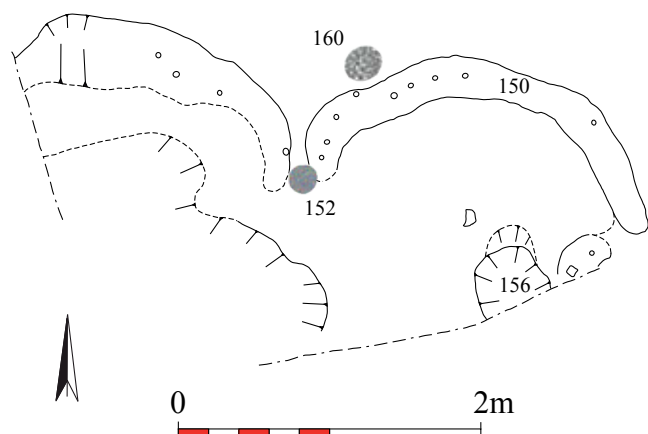


Figure 3.3. Area A, Period 1.2 gulleys in surface (AC5)116 (scale 1:50).



Plate 3.3. The shallow gulley (AC5)150 in surface (AC5)116 looking west – scale bar 2m.

other features at this level (Figure 3.4) are considered as pre-Building A3 they could relate to its primary phases. The eastern was 2.3m in length, a maximum of 250mm wide and 30mm deep. In the bottom was a row of what might be very small stake-holes each about 25mm in diameter and up to 35mm deep. The other feature was more irregular and extended out of the excavation area. To the south was a pit [(AC5)156] 450mm wide directly over the site of the much earlier oven and filled with ashy material. As with the oven in the ‘street’ this suggests that the oven remained in use for a long period as deposits built up around it. This pit may have been the result of removing the upper part of the oven. There were also two small hearths in this area [(AC5)152,160] the former



Plate 3.4. Period 1.2. Pits (AD5)305 and 307 cutting surface 308 – scale bar 1m.

60mm across. In the northern part of the later Building A2, Room III was a pit [(AD5)314] 450mm in diameter filled with ash, cutting into the generally clean sand layers. A similar pit was (AD5)307 473 x 446mm in size and had been used as a hearth (Plate 3.4). Pit (AD5)305 was partly obscured by a Building A4 wall. It may have been oval with minimum dimensions of 1.2 x 0.6m and was 120mm deep. Within it was a deeper oval depression and a 78mm diameter post-hole. Further to the east were three pits; (AC5)147 was very similar to (AD5)307 and 314, (AC5)149 was a little larger at 940 x 800mm and at 70mm a little shallower, while (AC5)142 was more ir-



Plate 3.5. Period 1.2. Pit (AC5)142 with fills 141 and 140 cutting surface 144 – scale bar 500mm.

regular in shape. The latter contained a distinct lower fill of charcoal covered in clean sand (Plate 3.5). It had not been used as a hearth. Pits (AC5)147 and 149 contained ashy fills. Also cutting the same surface was a stake-hole 80mm in diameter.

Into surface (AD5)172 noted under Phase 1 above was set another cylindrical ceramic oven [(AC5)130] 620-680mm in diameter within a shallow pit. It survived to its full height of 680mm. Although the primary fill was up to 20mm of ashy material with charcoal there was no discolouration of the sand against its exterior.<sup>1</sup>

TABLE 3.1. PHASE 3 HEARTHES.

	L	W	Depth	Fill
(AC5)135	900mm	860mm	-	
(AC5)136	210+mm	170+mm	70mm	ash, silt, charcoal
(AD5)301	280mm	?	?	ash
(AD5)303	450+mm	380mm	?	ash, sand

### Phase 3

In the areas of Building A2 rooms II and III after a build-up of between 200mm and 40mm of sand were three pits which were only partly visible extending under the lines

<sup>1</sup> Such ovens are well represented in Kushite contexts, examples are known from the Kushite houses in Area B as well as from Dokki Gel 55km to the north and site H25 34km to the south (Bonnet 2005, vi; Welsby 2001, 54).



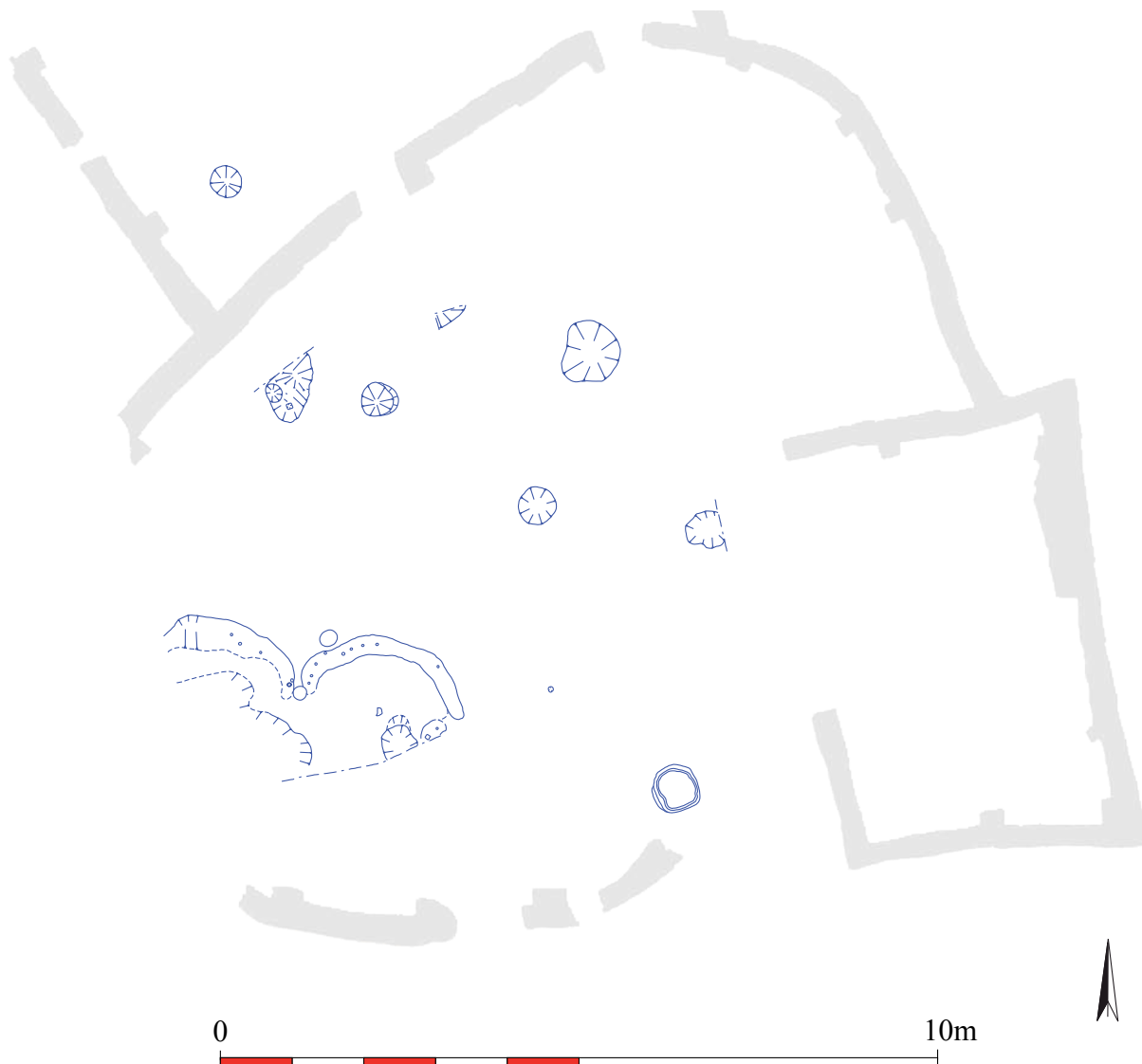


Figure 3.4. Area A, Period 1.2, features. Walls in grey indicate the location of the later Building A3 (scale 1:100).

of Building A2 walls. All appear to have been hearths. Another hearth sits on the contemporary surface.

Oven (AC5)130 (Plate 3.6) must have remained a prominent feature in this area over a long time as the sand



Plate 3.6. The ceramic oven (AC5)130 – scale bar 500mm.

gradually built up against its exterior. As in its primary phase there was no evidence for the burning within it discolouring the surrounding sand deposits. It was filled with ashy sandy silt with bone, lots of pottery and four mud bungs. The deposits against it [(AC5)170,163] were of sand with some charcoal flecks. Sat on the surface of (AC5)163 was a complete pottery vessel filled with fine sand and a few substantial pieces of bone, against which was deposited (AC5)162 on the surface of which at the west end of the ‘Street’ was a substantial deposit of mud-brick rubble up to 220mm thick. Both were sealed by another sand deposit with a firm surface [(AC5)158]. In turn this was sealed by (AC5)145 a similar surface but with occasional pieces of mud-brick rubble within it and flecks of charcoal. All these sandy deposits are probably multiple very thin surface however, whether each was laid by the occupants of the area or they were naturally forming deposits is impossible to tell – they were probably a combination of both. The primary walls of Building A3 were constructed on this surface.

Uncertain phase – In the area of later Building A3, room I on a surface at a level of approximately 41.98m OSD was a hearth set into a shallow depression 370 x 320mm



in size and 30mm deep. Resting on the contemporary sand surface was what might be a post-pad made from bricks and pottery.

## Period 2 – Building A6

The earliest structural remains was a single length of wall [(AC6)74] running north-south (Figure 3.5) which survived to a maximum height of three courses, 340mm. It was constructed of bricks 200 x 150 x 100mm in size. This is all the remains of what was designated Building A6. After some rubble from its collapse accumulated on the floor surface a buttress was built against its eastern face. Resting on the surface above was an extension of this buttress. The relationship of this wall to other early but non-structural elements on the site is uncertain. However taking into account the absolute levels the oven (AC5)130 was set into a surface almost exactly at the same level as that on which the wall was built suggesting that they may be contemporary. Two further ‘surfaces’ formed before the start of Period 3.

## Period 3 – Building A5

Two new walls were constructed one of which appears to abut wall (AC6)74 delimiting a probably rectilinear space 2.93m wide by at least 3.44m, designated Building A5 (Figure 3.5, Plate 3.7). The walls were built from bricks 340 x 170mm in size and were one header thick. There may have been a doorway in the south wall 1.1m wide. After a build-up of 200mm of sandy silt with mud-brick fragments within it a stone pivot slab (Plate 3.8) was placed at the north end of the Period 2 wall, a



Plate 3.7. Building A5. The east and south walls (AC5)68 are clearly visible while wall (AC6)74 to the west is much less so – scale bar 2m.



Plate 3.8. Building A5. The pivot stone and mud-brick fragments in the doorway – scale bar 500mm.

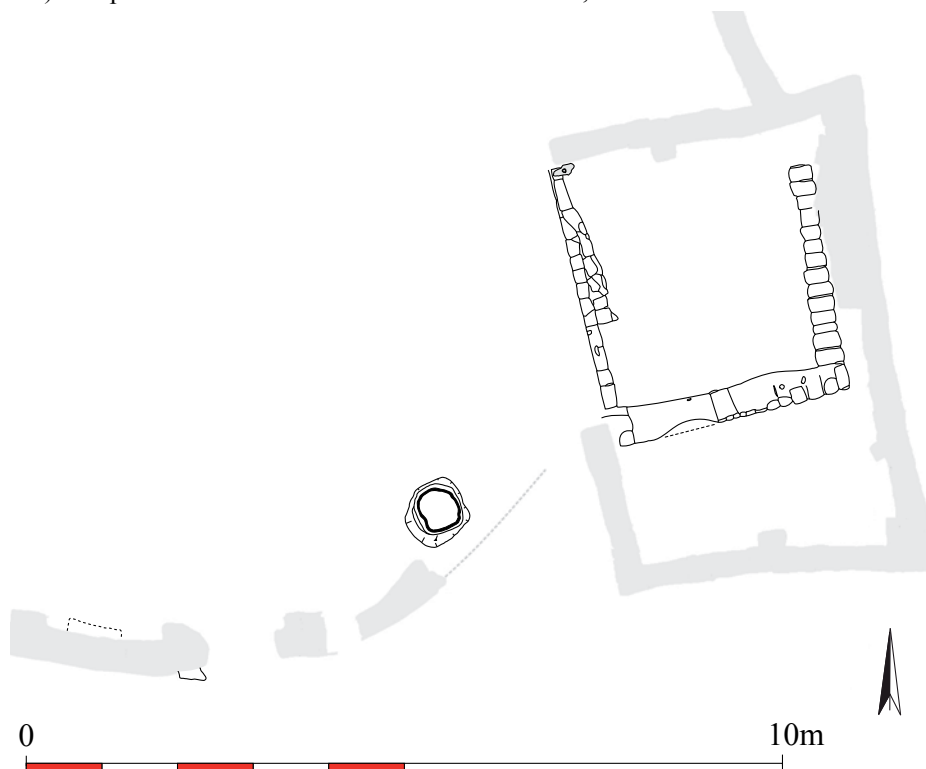


Figure 3.5. Area A, Period 2, wall (AC6)74 of Building A6 and walls of Building A5. The ceramic oven may date to this period. Walls in grey indicate the location of the later Building A3 (scale 1:100).

doorway being created.

Other early structural remains were noted in the north-eastern part of the later A3-G. Here the later Building A3 north-south wall cut through a deposit of mud-brick rubble (AD5)226 (Plate 3.9) and a little to the north at a stratigraphically slightly earlier date were the remains of rubble or just possibly a very poorly constructed east-west wall. Also predating the Building A3 walls in this area was a deposit [(AD5)232] of pottery including one complete beaker and large sherds, animal bone and mud-brick fragments (Plate 3.10).



*Plate 3.9. Mud-brick rubble predating the construction of Building A3 – scale bar 2m.*



*Plate 3.10. Deposit [(AD5)232] of pottery including one complete beaker and large sherds, animal bone and mud-brick fragments – scale bar 500mm.*

## Period 4 – Building A3

### *Phase I*

During the construction of the Period 4 building designated Building A3 the earlier walls were demolished down to below floor level but survived a little better where the east wall ran under later wall (AC6)35. Building A3 extended out of the excavation area to the west and perhaps also to the north (Figure 3.6). Its walls were constructed from mud bricks 330 x 150 x 90mm in size arranged in alternating courses of one header and two stretchers and thus having a thickness of 350mm. Spaced at intervals along the walls on one face, for external walls these were on the inner face, were small buttresses two bricks wide bonded into the wall and extending to the full height of the surviving walls, a maximum of 1.31m (Plates 3.11 and 3.12). The faces of the walls were rendered in a fine mud plaster. Most of the walls of the building are curvilinear but the south-eastern part has straight walls, and the south-



*Plate 3.11. Building A3. The highest surviving section of wall with the Phase II buttress inserted against the inner face of the east wall – scale bar 2m.*



*Plate 3.12. Building A3. Section of wall with internal buttresses. Note remnants of what may be a fragment of walling [(AC5)164] contemporary with Buildings A5 or A6 – scale bar 1.5m.*

east corner is a right angle. On its north side a curvilinear wall extends out of the excavation area while to the west straight sections of wall disappear under the walls of the later Building A2 but do not appear on the other side of those later walls. The northern part of the wall between rooms A3-4 and A3-6 [(AD5)228] only remained as a single course of bricks set on edge (Plate 3.13) with a construction trench edge visible along its western side.

The north-south wall (AD5)234 between rooms A3-2 and A3-3 was terraced into the slope down from east to west to a depth of 90mm. Only one doorway was found, possibly leading through the building's south wall to the exterior (Plate 3.14). It was 940mm wide with a respond on its east side containing a stone socket on which the door would pivot.

In Room A3-3/4 was a ferruginous sandstone post-pad

270 x 250mm in size set into the primary floor surface (AD5)296. It is directly in line with and approximately 1.56m from the buttresses on the south-west wall of the room but is close to the wall between rooms A3-3 and A3-4 and 1.17m from the south-west room wall. In the south-west angle of the room a rectangular slab had been incorporated into the adjacent walls. Another sandstone post-pad 370 x 230 x 120mm in size was noted in room A3-5 roughly in line with the buttresses on the north and south walls, 2.54m to its centre from the former and 2.62m from the latter. Yet another 180 x 150 x 110mm in size was located in room A3-1, 1.37m from the buttress on the east wall of the room.

Floors of this phase were of sand, as were all floors in the buildings in Area A apart from that in room A1-I and A1-IV. The floor in room A3-5 partly consisted of the wall tops of Building A5. It was sealed by a typical floor



Plate 3.13 Building A3, wall (AD5)228 and its construction trench overlain by a later wall — scale bar 500mm.

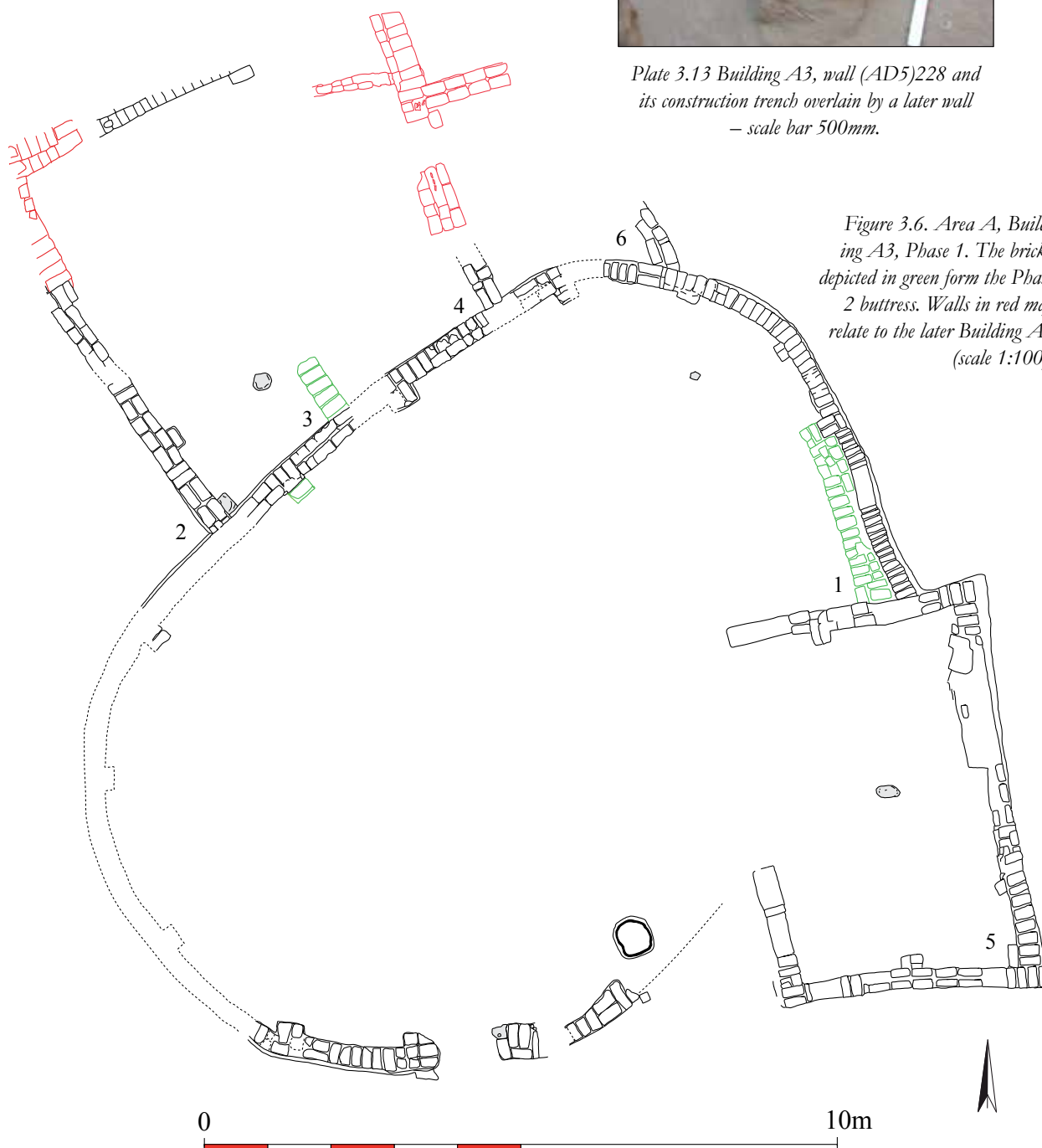


Figure 3.6. Area A, Building A3, Phase 1. The bricks depicted in green form the Phase 2 buttress. Walls in red may relate to the later Building A4 (scale 1:100).





*Plate 3.14. Building A3. Doorway through south wall of the building after removal of contemporary floor levels. The pivot stone remains in situ. The wall at 90° is part of Building A4 – scale bar 2m.*

deposit, a thick layer containing innumerable crusty sand surfaces revealed in discontinuous patches. In the north-west corner of the room it was cut by a pit over 1.05 x 1m in size and 220mm deep. It was filled with mud-brick rubble in a matrix of fine sand.

Few internal features were noted relating to this building. In Room A3-1 the oven (AC5)130 noted above which, when Building A3 was constructed protruded through its floor to a height of 260mm, presumably remained in use



*Plate 3.15. Building A3. Ceramic oven (AC5)130 in the floor level contemporary with the building – scale bar 2m.*

(Plate 3.15). Again, however, no burning associated with this use was noted within it nor any heat discolouration of the sand against its exterior.

In Room A3-2 there were no occupation deposits associated with the use of the building. A deposit of ash [(AD5)280] up to 30mm filled the room and the burning associated with it had reddened the mud bricks in the wall. The primary floor surface in room A3-3/4 [(AC5)296] was cut by two small post-holes and had two large pottery sherds on it as well as the post-pads noted above (Plate 3.16). Ash deposits extended across extensive areas in the western and central parts of Room A3-1 [(AC5)112,113,(AD5)279] and in room A3-3/4 [(AD5)272]. There is some mud-brick rubble within



*Plate 3.16. Building A3. The primary floor surface in room A3-3/4 with post-pad and pottery – scale bar 1.5m.*

this material which may relate to the destruction of the building. Within room A3-3/4 a hard sandy surface lay between the ash and the rubble which rather complicates the supposition that the burning was associated with the final destruction of the building. Within room A3-1 a hearth up against the north wall may be contemporary. It had heavily fire reddened the wall face. A hearth placed against the west face of the wall in the north-east 'corner' of room A3-4 had burnt the bricks red.

### *Phase II*

On the eastern side of room A3-1 a massive buttress 2.9 x 0.45m in size and still standing to a height of 1.21m (Plate 3.11) was built against the inner face of the wall. It rested on a surface on average 100mm thick formed of mud-brick rubble in a sandy-silt matrix [(AD6)14]. This buttress was presumably required to combat pressure from wind-blown sand building up on the exterior of the wall. The same situation developed in the room to the south where the central section of the east wall bowed inwards and had partially collapsed. The central section of the north-west wall of room A3-1 had begun to lean well to the south before a buttress built of bricks 350 x 160 x 90mm in size was built against it. Room A3-3/4 was partitioned, a wall a single header (390 x 160 x 90mm) in thickness extended northwards for a distance of 830mm.

### *Uncertain phase*

In the central part of room A3-1 was evidence for intensive activity which could not be assigned to any particular phase. On the primary surface was a maximum of 20mm of sandy silt with charcoal and some ash sealed by up to 200mm of sandy silt with small concentrations of mud-brick rubble. In turn sealed by a loose sandy silt deposit, this layer was cut by two hearths 350mm and 300mm in diameter and 300mm and 50mm deep respectively. The next sandy-silt deposit was cut by three hearths (ø 320mm, depth 20mm; ø 250mm, depth 35mm; ø 200mm, depth 250mm). The last surface relating to this building, sandy silt with some mud-brick tumble particularly towards



Plate 3.17. Building A3. The latest floor surface in room A3-3  
— scale bar 1.5m.

the east has two hearths on its surface (ø 735mm, depth 60mm; 900 x 820mm, depth 30mm).

In room A3-3 and extending to the south on the other side of the wall into room A3-1 the latest surface was a large ashy deposit which includes some burnt mud bricks (Plate 3.17). This is thickest against the walls and fades out rapidly away from them. It formed the surface during the construction phase of Building A4.

## Period 5 – Building A4

### *Phase 1*

It is clear that when Building A4 was constructed the walls of Building A3 were still standing. Where appropriate to meet their needs the builders retained the A3 walls but where not required they were demolished down to the

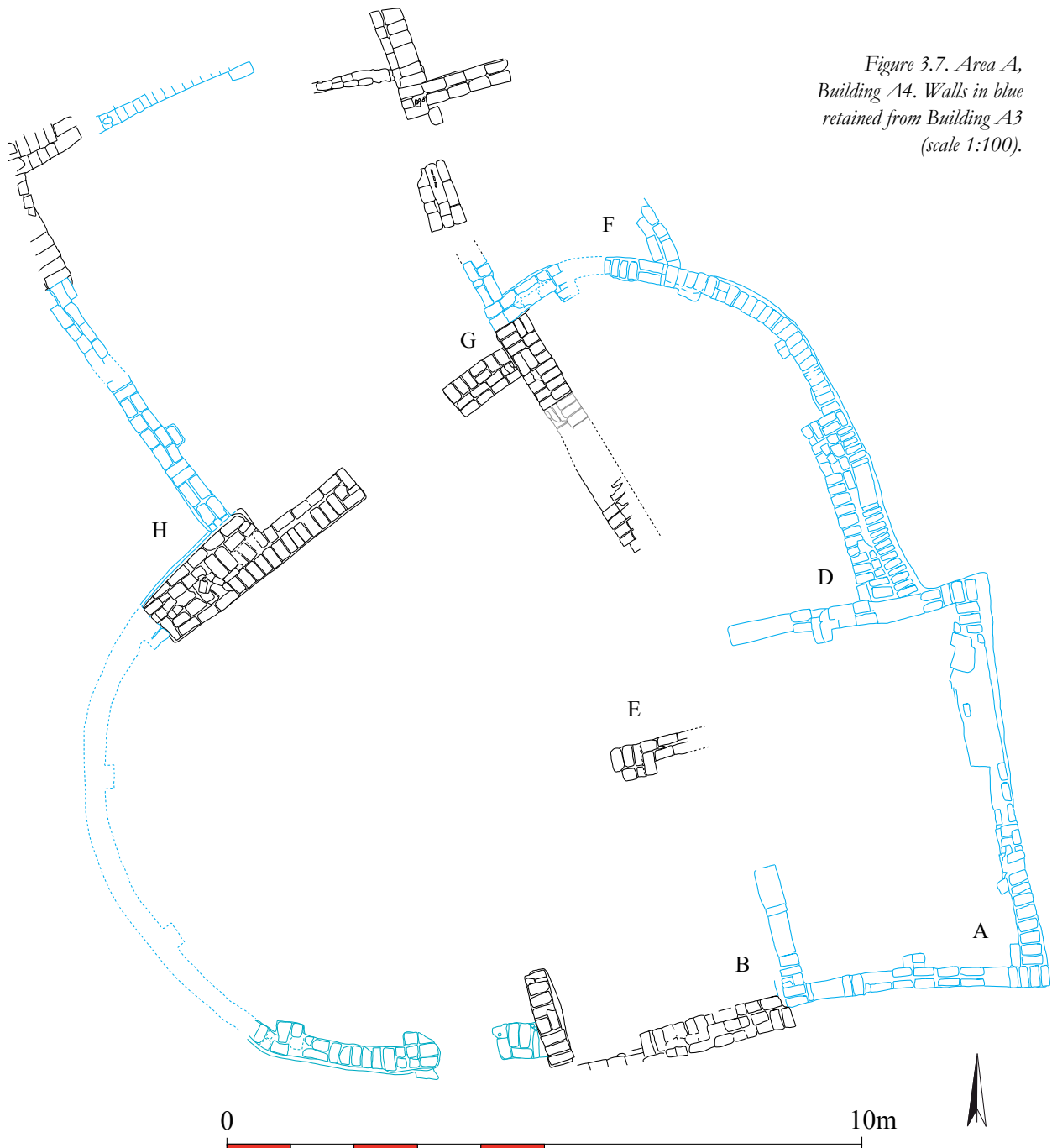


Figure 3.7. Area A,  
Building A4. Walls in blue  
retained from Building A3  
(scale 1:100).



Plate 3.18. Building A4. Wall 209 is a new build while wall 234 is retained from Building A3. The earlier building's wall 275 has been demolished to floor level, wall 261 has been partly demolished and partly incorporated into the new structure (all numbers in area (AD5)) – scale bar 2m.

new floor levels (Plate 3.18). The building may have extended much further to the north than its predecessor, its walls extending beyond the excavation area (Figure 3.7). The walls of Building A4, constructed of mud bricks of a range of sizes ((AD5)172 and 173 320 x 160-150 x 90mm; (AD5)209 360 x 160 x 100mm; (AC5)69 300 x 170 x ?mm), varied in build and thickness. The thinner walls had alternating courses generally one header or two rows of stretchers and attained a thickness of 340mm. The



Plate 3.19. Building A4. Doorway between rooms A4-F and A4-G – scale bar 2m.

thicker walls had courses of one header and one stretcher and were 550mm thick. Part of the wall between rooms A4-E and A4-H was much thicker where it incorporated part of the A3 wall. The south-eastern part of the earlier building was extensively remodelled. The central part of the south wall was demolished down to its lowest course and a new straight south wall was then extended from the corner of the earlier room A3-5 to the west to link up with the curvilinear earlier wall which, along with the doorway, remained in use westwards from this point. The doorway in the respond on its east side was provided with a stone socket on which the door would pivot. Another doorway 750mm wide gave access from rooms A4-F to

A4-G with a stone pivot 280 x 190 x 160mm in size on its north side indicating that the door opened into the eastern room (Plate 3.19). The pivot was 70mm in diameter, the hole was 30mm deep. Between rooms A4-E and A4-G was an opening 1.98m wide. The absence of responds to either side suggests that no doors had been provided. The doorway between rooms A4-D and A4-E differed from the others in having the lowermost two courses of the wall carried across the opening forming a threshold, a feature it has in common with the doorways of Building A2.

Within the rooms were several surfaces made up of sandy silts and mud brick rubble into which were set a number of hearths including hearth (AD5)95 extending under the later west wall of room A2-I. A single small post-hole [(AC5)110] 130 x 140mm in size and 80mm deep was noted close by the south wall of room A4-B. In the area of the later street the surfaces with an admixture of mud-brick rubble were more compact in room A4-B than the part of A4-E to the west suggesting the possibility that the former was an indoor space, the latter an external courtyard. On one surface in room A4-H was a bovine mandible.

## Phase II

Evidence for the later phase of the building's use was sparse having been removed in many places when the site was levelled on the construction of Building A2. Only outside the east wall of the new building were deposits left *in situ* although cut by the construction trench for the new building. In room A4-A large sections of the east wall which survived from Building A3 had collapsed with many bricks articulated with up to 18 courses being present [(AC5)14].<sup>2</sup> Together with the wall face remaining in place this indicates that the wall had a minimum height of 22 courses, approximately 2.2m. Further north the collapse seems to be more gradual with layers of mud-brick rubble [(AC5)36,34] separated by wind-blown sand [(AC5)58].

The collapse of this wall will have been the result of a build-up of wind-blown sand on its eastern side. This must have been a long term problem here which had been partly addressed with the building of the substantial buttress within room A3-1.

## Period 6

This period saw a major reorganisation of the area with the construction of two new buildings, Buildings A1 and A2 which were separated by a street between 1.43m and 3.02m in width.

### Pre-Building A1

Very little excavation was conducted below this building on account of it being necessary to backfill it as soon as possible to preserve the wall paintings. Beneath it layers of compact sand were observed containing some occupation material, in the area of Room I including charcoal and a

<sup>2</sup> Each course was of one brick 90mm thick plus the mud-mortar bonding about 10mm thick.



little animal bone as well as gravel. For possible traces of earlier walls see below. To the north the external wall of the building rested partly on the denuded walls of Building A4 (for a detailed description see above).

To the west of the building the latest pre-building deposit was (AB5)226, with a good mud surface in places, but in others hardly discernable. Visible through the surface was a deposit of mud-brick rubble and large potsherds which was not fully excavated. It was only visible over an area of 980 x 600mm.

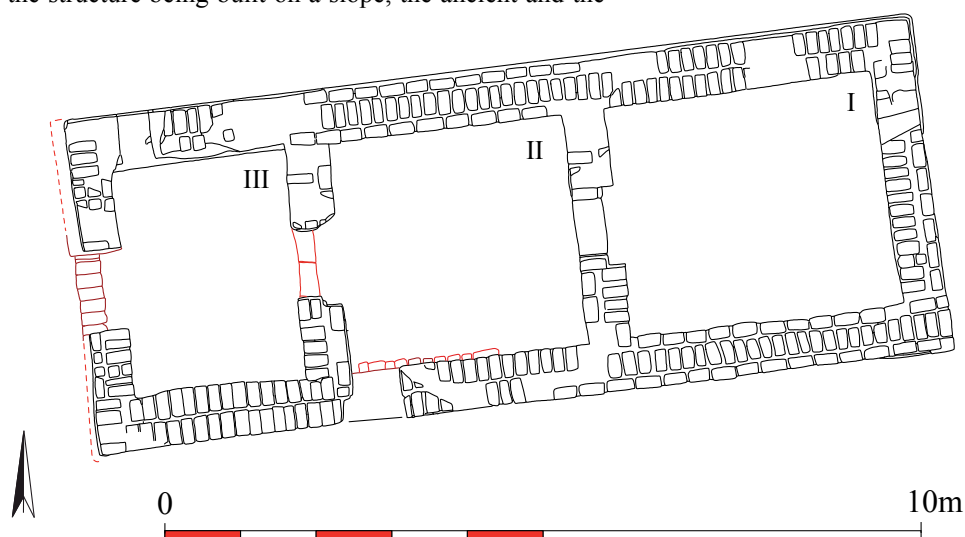
### *Building A1, phase I*

Following the demolition of Building A4 a three-roomed rectangular building aligned east-west was constructed measuring externally 11.3 x 4.55m (Figure 3.8). It was a well constructed regular structure with wall built throughout of mud bricks 280-340 x 140-180 x 80-90mm in size, containing organic material including bone, pebbles and pottery sherds, and surviving at the time of excavation to a height of 1.66m at the west end of the building where it was flush with the present ground surface. The east end of the building survived to a maximum height of 900mm. The difference in preservation is mainly the result of the structure being built on a slope, the ancient and the

the lowest course of headers extended 100mm beyond the wall face and this was surmounted by another foundation course of headers extending less from the wall face (Plate 3.20). The lower course is only to be found in the western two-thirds of the room levelling up the slope down from east to west. After the laying of these two foundation courses a deposit of silty sand and mud [(AB5)355] formed a level surface in the room and then the rest of the south



*Plate 3.20. The foundation courses of the south wall in room A1-II – scale bar 2m.*



*Figure 3.8 Building A1. Construction level (scale 1:100).*

modern ground surfaces being closer together towards the east. The thinner north-south walls (room A1-III west wall – 500mm; room A1-III/II – 600mm; room A1-II/I – 600mm; room A1-I east wall – 580mm) were built in 1½ brick construction, alternating courses of headers and stretchers being visible on each face. In the centre of the east wall on its inner face in the middle of the row of stretchers in the third course were five headers. Here and in the course below the bricks extend 40mm beyond the wall face. The north and south walls attained a width of between 700 and 740mm and were built of alternate courses of two headers and of a single header flanked to each side by a single row of stretchers. Both in central and eastern rooms in the lower courses some headers had been placed on edge perhaps to help even out the courses.

In the western section of the south wall in room A1-II

wall and the east wall of the room were built. The west wall of the building had a foundation course [(AB5)356] narrower than the superstructure. This did not extend the full length of the wall but may have served to level up the slope down from north to south (but see below). The external face of the wall was between 100mm and 210mm lower than the east wall face. The south wall was also built on a gentle slope down from east to west, the base of the wall stepping down

70mm a third of the way along the wall in room A1-III. Like the west wall of the building the wall between rooms A1-II and A1-III also had its lowest course narrower than the superstructure which overhangs it to the east. This 'course' consisted of mud bricks, mud-brick rubble, pottery and pieces of mud render. A step must have been cut in the underlying sand into which the west face of the wall was placed, the east face resting at a higher level on the undisturbed sand. The primary floor in room A1-III was at the base of this lowest course the material of which was rendered to mask the shoddy construction employed. On the inner face of the eastern wall the lowest course of headers protruded 20-30mm from the wall line and the stretchers in the lowest course of the south wall do the same. They were not covered by plaster but masked by the primary floor. A similar situation was noted in the north wall of room A1-II where the lowest courses stepped down

twice east to west. All the external and internal walls of the building were bonded.

The centrally placed doorway communicating with the exterior was originally 1.9m wide but was narrowed by 450mm on each side apparently during the construction phase but after the original jambs had been rendered and whitewashed (Plate 3.21). On the south side of the doorway the uppermost two surviving courses approximately 1.6m up the wall were added after the doorway had been narrowed. Immediately in front of the doorway was a step formed of a large mud brick (370 x 330mm) at its north end laid as a stretcher and then five headers (300

(AB5)356 but in light of the many earlier walls excavated a little to the north it is possible that these bricks bear no relation to Building A1 and the wall to which they belong was demolished at the time of its construction. The single brick running under the walls in the north-west corner of the room [(AB5)362] may be related. Two headers, 150mm wide and 80mm thick protruding from under the south wall in room A1-I [(AB6)31] may also predate the building.

Another centrally placed doorway 880mm wide (1.18m between the rebated jambs) allowed access with a step up of about 150mm into the central room, room A1-II, 3 x

3.1m in size. This has a two piece white sandstone threshold, with a total length of 1.06m and width of 280mm, constructed along with the wall's foundation and partly sealed under the superstructure. The edges of the threshold have become rounded through wear. On the south side of the doorway in the rebate was the impression of a stone, presumably the pivot. A stone of a suitable size, bearing a pivot hole in its upper surface, was found nearby reused in structure (AB5)238. In the inner corner of the rebate a plaster fillet bears wear marks from the wooden door turning on its pivot. At some time after the right-angled rebated north jamb was plastered and white-washed it was remodelled with the addition of a thick layer of mud plaster which effectively moved the timber door frame about 120mm into the room and reduced the doorway by the same



Plate 3.21. The doorway leading into the building from the west looking into room A1-III – scale bar 2m.

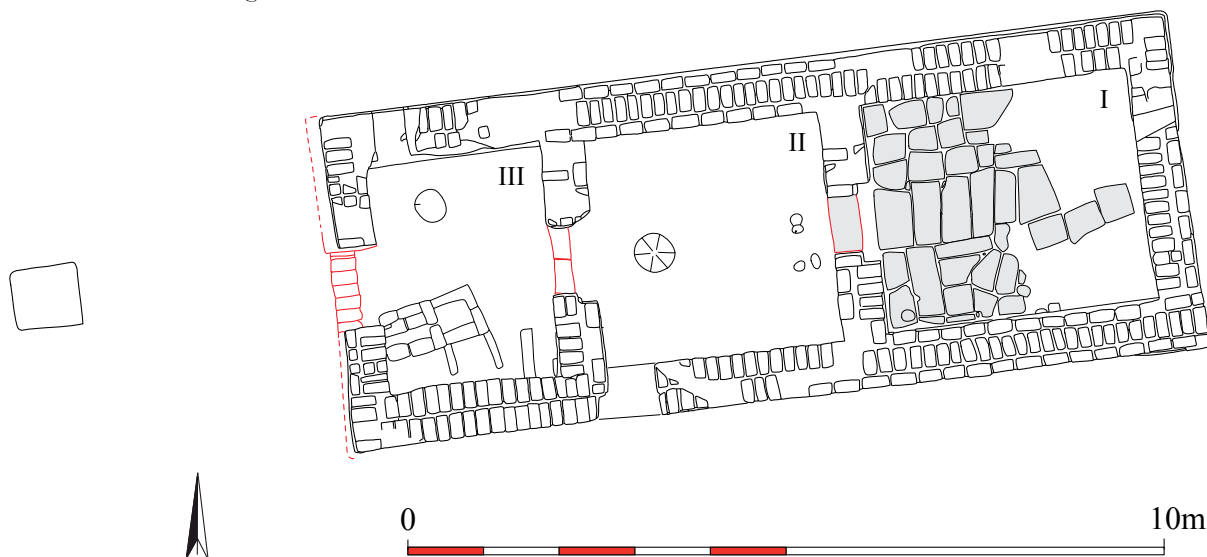


Figure 3.9. Building A1, Phase I with the mud-brick altar to the west (scale 1:100).

x 150mm). It gave access over what was interpreted as a raised mud-brick threshold, formed of a single course of headers 330 x 165 x 90mm in size, into a room with dimensions of 3.05m north-south by 2.35m east-west. The bricks of this threshold were in good condition suggesting that the building had been little used before they were covered by a small and thin patch of floor [(AB5)342] in the doorway (Plate 3.22). The threshold seems to be part of what was considered to be the foundation of the wall

amount. The impression of the door frame indicates that it was approximately 50mm thick.

A similarly placed doorway 770mm wide (1.08m between the rebated jambs) again with a step up of 170mm in height communicated with the eastern room, room A1-I, 3.45 x 3m in size. The threshold (AB5)240 was again of stone, a single slab 750mm long and 330mm wide set into the wall. The doorway had well formed rebated jambs and on the plaster render of the northern one could be seen the





*Plate 3.22. The interior of Building A1 as seen through the western doorway – scale bar 2m.*

impressions of the timber frame 85mm wide. This eastern room had a floor made of irregularly shaped and sized white sandstone blocks which stopped 110mm from the threshold (Figure 3.9). Presumably the timber doorframe occupied this space. Leading from the doorway was a line of large roughly rectangular slabs highlighting the axis while the flags to north and south were smaller and of more irregular shape. This floor was left *in situ* but where robbing activities had dislodged some of the flags it could be seen that they were very thick (up to 300mm). The flags had an irregular upper surface with rough chisel marks visible. In the south-west corner of the room one flag had a shallow circular depression in its surface. Many of the flags were partly covered in a pink mortar suggesting that they were all reused from an earlier building. Towards the centre of the room resting on the floor was the top of a white sandstone barque stand (Plate 3.23) and the two lower blocks of the stand (SF:4119) were recovered from within the disturbed rubble in the room along with fragments broken off the larger elements. In the uppermost surviving course of the east wall was a small niche, its sides with two coats of render and whitewash.

The primary floor in room A1-II [(AB5)295] sloped down slightly from east to west. Presumably of sand little of it survived. Cutting through it, on the long axis of the building but towards the western end of the room was a well cut slightly oval pit [(AB5)352] with vertical sides and a rounded bottom ( $\varnothing$  560 x 540mm, depth 350mm) (Plate 3.24). It was filled with silt containing only a few



*Plate 3.23. The top of the barque stand (SF:4119) resting on the stone flagged floor in room A1-I – scale bar 500mm.*



*Plate 3.24. The oval pit [(B5)352] in the centre of room A1-II looking west – scale bar 2m.*



fragments of pottery. In front of the doorway to room A1-I were three small post-holes/depressions (ø 160-140mm, depth 50mm, ø 190mm, depth 40mm, ø 230-150mm, depth 50mm). The function of these features which were all shallow and bowl-shaped in section is uncertain. All were filled with silt and charcoal flecks, one also had burnt mud fragments. One appears to be cut by a similar feature (ø 150-140mm, depth 40mm). In the north-west corner of the room was a hearth which had extensively burnt the adjacent walls. No ash or charcoal remained, just a dark red/brown powder over an area of 700 x 300mm on the floor surface.

In the western room the primary floor [(AB5)340] was again of compacted clay/silt and it extends through the west doorway a little to the exterior. This floor was in place when the outside of the building and the western doorway were whitewashed, by the north wall it also had flecks of blue paint on its surface. In section it appeared to be formed of innumerable very thin layers, a build-up of surfaces over time to a thickness of 10-40mm. In the north-west corner of the room cut into it or possibly through the surface above was a circular pit 250-260mm in diameter containing the base of a heavily burnt pottery vessel. This hearth seems to have remained in use for a considerable time and was periodically cleaned out, the burnt material deposited close by.

### Rendering and painting of the walls

All the walls of the building were covered in a mud plaster render. This happened on a number of occasions, in some cases the rendering and painting were not contemporary and neither occurred when the building was first constructed. For convenience all these episodes are gathered together here while other activities in the building appear in the description of the relevant phases. On the exterior north wall this has been covered in a whitewash which had been applied on many occasions, each repainting bearing testimony to the gradual build-up of wind-blown sand against the building. A similar situation can be seen on the southern section of the west wall where it is clear that whitewash continued to be applied after sand built up against the Phase III walls delimiting room A1-V (see below). The surface of the interior plaster had been covered in whitewash on which was applied the painted decoration.

In room A1-III the walls had been rendered from the level of floor (AB5)280. This surface was then covered by a deposit a maximum of 100mm thick [(AB5)277] before the walls were whitewashed for the first time. Very little painted decoration survived in the western room which had been whitewashed at least twice and on the north wall replastered and painted at least once. Very few fragments of fallen painted plaster were found within it and the condition of the wall surface made it impossible to ascertain whether one or both layers of whitewashed render had been painted. To the north and south (Plate 3.25) of the doorway into room A1-II patches of red paint could be seen but not the design they had formed a part of. Towards the east end of the south wall traces of a red painted torso and extended arm bent at the elbow



*Plate 3.25. Traces of wall paintings on the east wall of room A1-III to the south of the doorway – scale bar 1m.*

survived. On the west wall of room A1-III the whitewash was applied subsequent to the laying of floor (AB5)250.

In room A1-II the painting was much better preserved right to the top of the walls, a maximum of about 1.4m above floor level (Figure 3.10). Running around the walls delimiting the top of the white dado was a triple horizontal band consisting of a dark blue stripe, surmounted by one of red and another of dark blue, the blue stripes c. 35mm high, the red c. 40mm high, and separated by the white background. The top of the upper stripe formed the base line for the main decorative panels. Little can be seen of the painted decoration on the west wall. The primary layer of plaster with its painted surface had been covered by a second coat of plaster the painted surface (traces of red and yellow pigments are visible) in its turn covered by another coat of whitewash. On the north wall figures were preserved up to their waist. On the left (west) we have a figure of the king with red skin, a yellow tail outlined in and banded with red lines, wearing fine golden sandals and a yellow kilt processing east towards Amun. Amun is painted blue with a white tail outlined in black and banded in red and dressed in a yellow kilt, holding a blue *was* sceptre. Behind the god are two barefooted goddesses (Plate 3.26) with yellow skin and clothed in a narrow red gown with blue dots. At the ankle are wide bands outlined in red, on the left hand figure they are infilled in blue, on the other in white. They both also hold what is probably a *was* sceptre. At the east end of the scene in the corner of the room is a narrow vertical register perhaps with rectangular blocks of colour, turquoise, yellow, white and red visible between vertical bands of blue outlined in red. Traces of what may be a similar vertical register remain in the western corner. Fallen fragments from the decoration include the hand and forearm of the king who



Plate 3.26. Wall paintings of the north and east walls of room A1-II.

is offering a figure of Maat to Amun.<sup>3</sup>

On the south wall two layers of plaster are clearly visible, a thick lower layer and a finer top layer. The scene on this wall is much less well preserved partly because a later doorway has been cut through the wall. It appears to show a similar scene but behind the single goddess with blue anklets is another red skinned bare footed figure with a yellow tail very similar to the two figures on the east wall, one of which is immediately adjacent (Plate 3.27).



Plate 3.27. Wall paintings on the south and east walls of room A1-II – scale bar 1.5m.

No decoration remained on the west wall which retained only small patches of whitewash but that on the east wall was well preserved. Flanking the doorway through into the eastern room is a mirror image of a red-skinned

<sup>3</sup> In Figure 3.10b this has been placed in its correct spatial relationship to the lower part of the king's body based on a comparison with the very similar, but better preserved, wall painting in the sanctuary chamber of Taharqo's temple at Qasr Ibrim.

figure with a yellow tail and kilt facing towards the doorway which is framed by a vertical yellow register outlined in blue. That on the north side (Figure 3.10a, Plate 3.28) contained the lower part of an inscription in large hieroglyphs, in blue outlined in red, which reads 'Mry [Im]n-R<sup>c</sup> nb nswt t3wy di 'nh 'Beloved of [Amu]n-Ra, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, given life.' On the other side of the doorway the corresponding inscription reads 'Mry [Imn-R<sup>c</sup> hry-]ibGm-itn di 'nh 'Beloved of [Amun-Ra] who resides in Gematon, given life.' Between the figure and the inscription in both scenes is a vertical column of hieroglyphs those remaining reading [irt ?] 'bw 'Making purification'. Both inscriptions appear to end with a seated-god determinative. These texts commonly accompany images of the king pouring a libation; the stream of water extending to the base-line on each side of the doorway is part of this depiction (cf. e.g. Caminos 1998, pls 65, 66, 70).<sup>4</sup> On this wall the dado bands appear to be outlined in narrow yellow lines.

The painted decoration in the east room (Figure 3.11) is less well preserved on account of the walls being preserved to a height of only about 300mm above the top of the dado band, the floor level in the room and the dado being closer to the present day surface. The dado bands were outlined in yellow. On the west and south walls the dado bands were preserved but nothing of the scene above. The north wall has a figure of the king again with red skin, in this case a blue tail outlined in yellow and golden sandals facing a barefooted red-skinned god holding a white *was* sceptre outlined in red and with white anklets outlined in yellow. Behind him is a yellow-skinned goddess with a narrow red gown and white anklets holding a staff, perhaps another *was* sceptre. Little remains on the east wall.

Towards the centre is a red and diagonally blue banded slightly tapering object to the right of which is a large block of yellow containing some motifs outlined in red, the form of which are unclear.

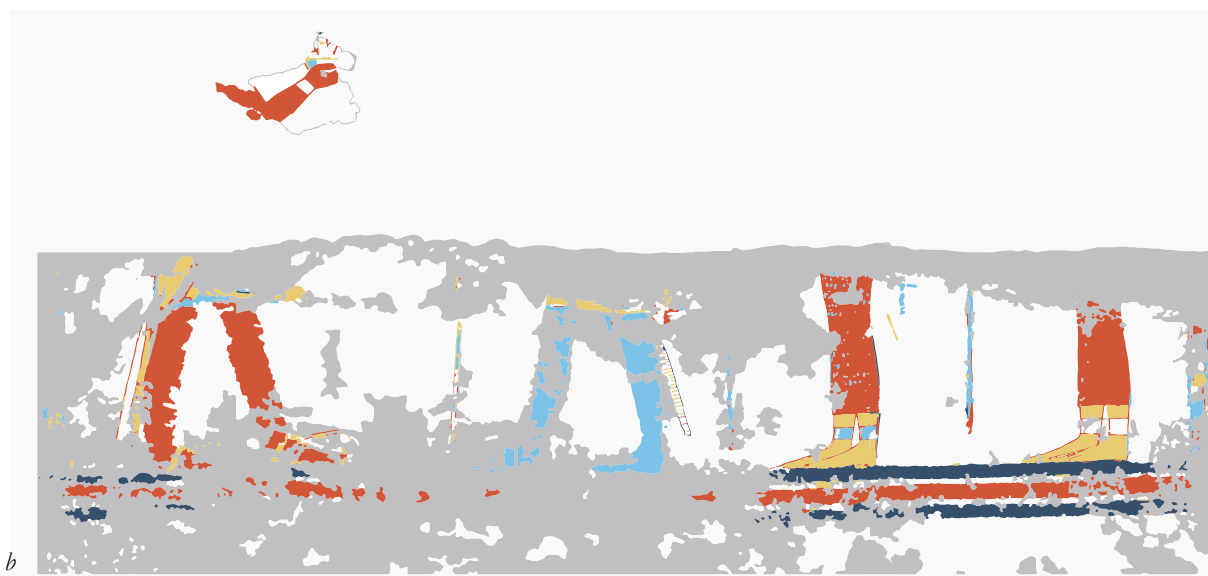
Amongst the rubble in the doorway of this room was a large piece of fallen plaster bearing a winged sun disc

<sup>4</sup> Information on this scene and translations of the inscriptions were kindly provided by Dr J. Taylor.





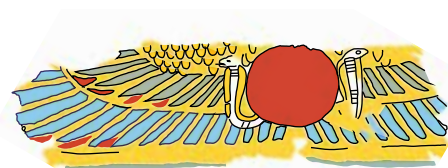
a



b



c



d

Figure 3.10. Room A1-II, painted wall plaster.  
a - east wall, b - north wall with fragment found  
amongst the rubble, c - south wall, d. plaster  
fallen from the lintel between rooms 1 and 2  
(scale a-c 1:20, d 1:10).

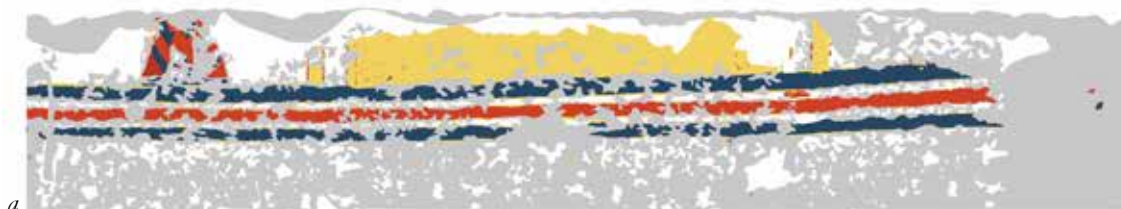
flanked by uraei which presumably had adorned the lintel. Outlined in fine black lines the sun disc is red, the wings and uraei infilled in yellow with pale blue feathers towards the lower edges of the wings.

Outside the building to the west surface (AB5)346, made up of numerous thin layers of silt/clay had traces of whitewash on many of these layers. It sloped down a little from east to west. The uppermost layer abutted the west wall of the building and was in place when it was whitewashed. It did not extend into room A1-III but overlies the threshold where an edge is visible, perhaps where it abutted a wooden door sill. It was sealed in the doorway by a patch of surface 100mm thick [(AB5)342]

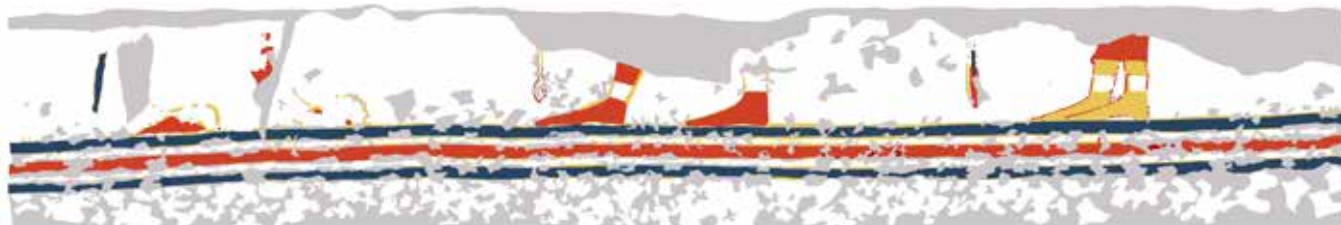
and both are sealed by wind-blown sand 500mm thick.

Like the west wall of the building and probably contemporary with its construction was an altar set on surface (AB5)226 set slightly to the north of the main axis of the structure but 3.4m to its west. It was built from mud brick, had been rendered in a fine mud plaster at least six or seven times and was whitewashed. The altar (Plate 3.29), was 940-950mm square and attained a height of 880mm. In the top was a rectangular depression 630 x 570mm in size by 200mm deep its edges formed by a single row of stretchers on all sides. The base of the depression was not plastered. It was rendered in a mud plaster which lapped onto surface (AB5)226. A short distance to the

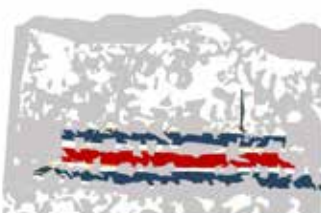




a



b



c

Figure 3.11. Room A1-1, painted wall plaster.

a - east wall,

b - north wall,

c - west wall to south of doorway  
(scale 1:20).



Plate 3.28. Building A1, room II, the painted inscription on the north side of the doorway into room A1-I – scale bar 1m.

north (850mm) was a sandstone column drum 450mm in diameter and 405mm high.

### Building A1, phase I-II

Following on from the construction of the building a number of deposits were noted connected with its use



Plate 3.29. The mud-brick altar to the west of Building A1 with the fill in its recessed top half sectioned – scale bar 500mm.

apart from in room A1-I. The later history of this room appears to differ from that of the rest of the building. While the floors and thresholds were raised in Rooms II and III the stone floor and threshold of Room I appear to have remained in use throughout the life of the building.

In room A1-II in the north-west corner was a small hearth (AB5)294. Sealing the pit and depressions cut into the primary floor were a series of deposits which appear to have been many localised repairs collectively designated (AB5)273. Between 80mm and 150mm thick these deposits were in places sandy, in others very hard with a high proportion of mud. Pottery and animal bone was scarce but a number of small finds were recovered. Adjacent to the doorway by leading into room A1-I was a deposit of ash but no evidence for burning *in situ*. It may have been swept out of room A1-I. These deposits were

sealed by a very thin skim of earth [(AB5)275].

The primary floor in room A1-III was sealed by a deposit 20-30mm thick forming surface (AB5)336 which thinned out towards the western doorway merging with sand layer (AB5)332. It had traces of whitewash on its surface. Set in this surface in the south-west corner was a spherical space 90mm in diameter which had been lined with silt on which finger impressions could be seen (Plate 3.30). A small hole in the surface gave access into the



*Plate 3.30. Building A1, room III, the pit in surface (AB5)336 – scale bar 200mm.*

void which was filled with very soft fine silt/sand with occasional charcoal flecks.

Immediately to the south of the exterior doorway resting on this surface and abutting the west wall of the room was a rectangular feature 1.2 x 0.8m in size constructed of single or double row of stretchers to the course and surviving to a height of three courses (290mm) although it had certainly been at least two courses higher originally. It appears to be a bin with two compartments, the eastern one a later addition (Plate 3.31). It was poorly constructed, was



*Plate 3.31. Building A1, room III, the mud-brick bin – scale bar 2m.*

markedly off alignment with the building, partly blocked the external doorway into the building and its position left an awkward space between it and the south-west corner of the room. Ridges of mud 120mm and 130mm thick partly delimited another rectangular space to the south. The walls of the bin were slightly overlain by the mud-brick step (AB5)246 in the doorway. Both compartments were filled with largely clean sand which did however contain one mud brick, occasional fragments of mud, pot

and charcoal. Adjacent was a length of low wall parallel to and 770mm from the east wall of the room.

The bin must have been contemporary with surface (AB5)336; when surface (AB5)280 was laid, the mud ridges had been demolished down to the level of that surface. Resting on surface (AB5)336 was a very thin (5mm) layer of dirt between it and the make-up of surface (AB5)280. This later surface which lapped up against the walls of the room and of the bin, was compacted silty clay with occasional small stones, charcoal fragments and pot sherds including a fragment from a ceramic oven. It sloped gently from the doorway, where it attained its maximum thickness of 60mm, to the east, a slope exacerbated by the several localised repairs [(AB5)318,321,323,327,330] in the western doorway. There was no threshold in this doorway at this phase the floor tailing off to the west amongst the wind-blown sand. In the east the floor abutted against the threshold and then mud plaster was added to mask the junction of the two. On the floor by the west doorway was an area of burning 480 x 270mm in size. In the northern half of the room a circular depression 400mm in diameter and 180mm deep had presumably originally contained a pottery vessel. Abutting the north and east walls was a deposit of rubble [(AB5)284] in a sandy matrix with some fragments of whitewash 1.2 x 0.6m in extent and from 20-70mm thick. Within it were about 40 mud seal impressions.

A layer of clean sand [(AB5)279] covered the northern and central part of the room sloping down from the western doorway and from the exterior of the building. It contains very occasional pieces of mud, pottery and bone. In the western part of the deposit were a number of mud seal impressions. Against the north wall it was cut by a shallow semi-circular pit 550 x 420mm in size and 130mm deep filled with sand and fragments of mud. In the north-west corner was a quadrant-shaped depression 730 x 670mm in size and 100mm deep with a rounded bottom. This was the site of intensive burning which extended up the adjacent walls to a height of about 400mm. It was filled with compacted ash, burnt sand and traces of wood under an upper fill again of ash, charcoal fragments in a matrix of sand, pieces of burnt mud including burnt mud seal impressions. A mud brick, its lower end burnt had been placed on end in the ash leaning against the wall. Levelling up the eastern part of the floor against the threshold into room A1-II was a deposit of compacted and decayed mud [(AB5)277] up to 100mm thick in the south-east corner of which were two small painted fragments of plaster with blue, yellow red and white paint. The top of the surface was at the level of the top of the room A1-III/II threshold.

Outside the building deposits of what appeared to be wind-blown sand formed against the altar. The lowest [(AB5)225] contained some pottery sherds, charcoal and burnt bone. On this against the south face of the altar was a concentration of charcoal and ash 10mm thick, presumably from the altar top but deposited while it was still hot enough to burn the mud render of the altar. The whole area was then sealed by another layer of wind-blown sand with some burnt and unburnt bone and potsherds particularly around the altar. On its surface against the south side of the altar was another deposit [(AB5)222] again hot enough



when placed there to burn the altar face. This and the surrounding surface were covered by yet another wind-blown sand layer again with finds concentrated by the altar.<sup>5</sup>

### *Building A1, phase II*

After a build-up of 90-110mm of compacted sand with mud in places in room A1-II the building was extended to the south (Figure 3.12) with the addition of a room (room A1-IV) measuring 3.31m east-west by 3.88m north-south internally, its walls abutting the south wall of the primary building and entered through a doorway 590mm in width

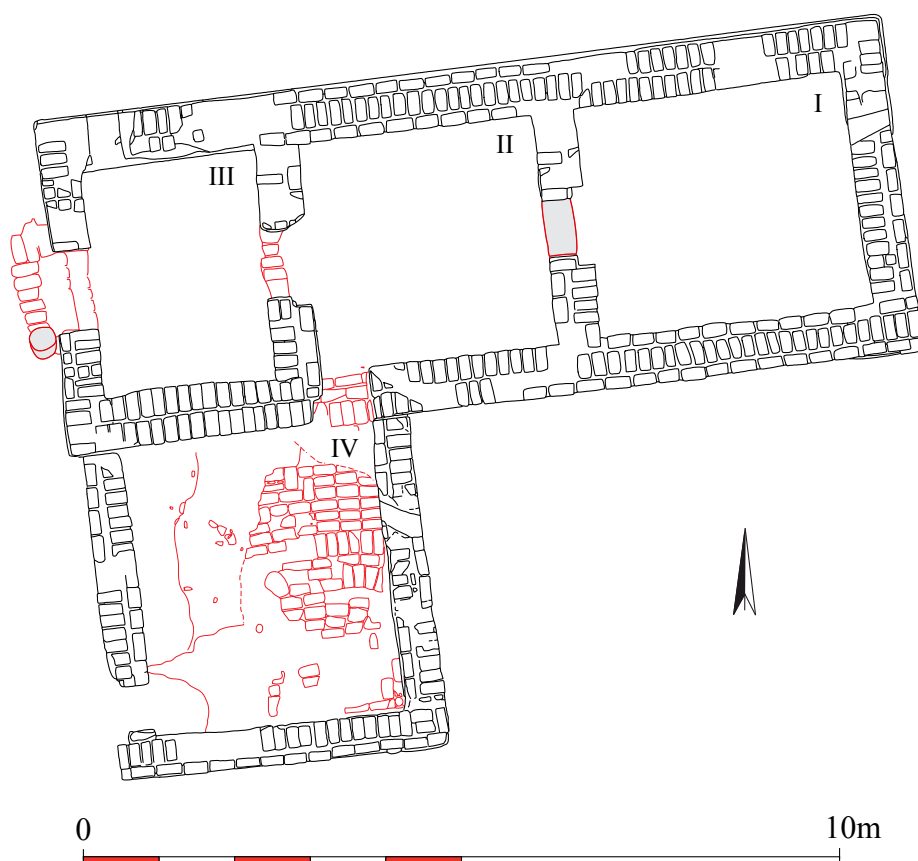


Figure 3.12. Building A1. Phase II (scale 1:100).

(860mm between the rebated jambs) cut through the west end of the south wall down to the level of the third course of the original wall. The northern face of the wall was left in place to act as the threshold 100mm high and 350mm wide while the wall to the south became a part of the brick floor. The recessed jambs were designed to take a door closing from within the room. The sides of the doorway were plastered and whitewashed. An oval pit 330 x 150mm [(AB5)313] in the west jamb rebate may have been connected with a door pivot. On the east side of the doorway was the remains of a wooden jamb 40mm wide and 80mm thick surviving to a height of 900mm. The walls of the new room were constructed of mud bricks 320-330 x 150 x 90mm in size, these containing bone, pottery, charcoal and rounded pebbles. The walls were of alternating courses of 1½ brick construction with a total width of 520mm (west wall), 530mm (east

wall) and 550mm (south wall). The rows of headers and stretchers in each course were separated by a 50mm wide band of mud mortar. The east and west walls were built on a slope, to the east of about 10°, to the west of about 5°, south to north and the courses follow this slope. The east and south walls are bonded and rendered in mud mortar. The lowest full course of the south wall was of headers widely spaced with sand between with part of an additional similar course below.

### *Building A1, phase II-III*

A new threshold [(AB5)247], approximately 70mm above the primary stone threshold, was inserted into the doorway between rooms A1-II and A1-III consisting of a single row of six headers set flush with the west face of the wall, its other face in line with the rebated door jambs. The eastern part of the floor in room A1-III was then levelled with a layer of sand abutting the new threshold. The threshold had been plastered and whitewashed, the whitewash merging into the layers of whitewash on the adjacent walls. The mortar lapped onto floor (AB5)250 in room A1-III and the threshold was abutted by floor (AB5)239 in room A1-II which was level with the tops of its bricks. The floor in room A1-III was 90-130mm lower.

The compacted mud floor, (AB5)239, in room A1-II 20-30mm thick containing large amounts of pottery sherds,

bone and charcoal. Small pieces of broken sandstone were laid in the south-east corner. This surface partly overlay the mud-brick threshold in the doorway leading through into room A1-IV. In the room A1-II floor was a circular shallow depression (330 x 300mm, 80mm deep) perhaps where a large ceramic vessel had been placed. Close by in the south-eastern quadrant of the room were several other shallow depressions ranging in size from 200 x 190mm to 80 x 70mm and from 50mm to 30mm deep. Resting on the surface and abutting the threshold into Room I was a very thin deposit of earth [(AB5)278] containing beads. This was sealed by a localised repair of the floor in front of the threshold, the step down from which may have caused the floor to deteriorate more rapidly than elsewhere in the room. The repair was of mud with a maximum thickness of 300mm.

In room A1-III the tops of the walls of the mud bin (AB5)259 were worn smooth from the time when they formed a part of surface (AB5)250, thick mud floor

<sup>5</sup> The deposits described in this paragraph date to between Phases I and III.



which only survives in patches and was absent in the western doorway. Part of the floor appears to have had a whitewashed surface and is contemporary with at least one phase of whitewashing of the east wall. In the north-west corner of the room was a bowl-shaped hearth 800 x 700mm in size and 120mm deep filled with ash and sand. In the opposite corner a pot was set into the surface.

The newly constructed room A1-IV was floored with mud bricks in its eastern half. This floor slopes down a little towards the west where it merges with a mud surface. The mud-brick section of the floor is carefully laid most bricks placed as 'stretchers' but with a row of 'headers' running east-west across the middle of the room. On both the mud brick and mud parts of the floor were many small patches of burning. Sealing these surfaces was a 80-100mm thick layer [(AB5)86] with a muddy consistency, a lot of pottery sherds and bone, small finds and seal impressions. In centre of the room was hearth (AB5)88. This surface in its turn was sealed by a rough surface [(AB5)40] composed of silty sand with small amounts of pottery sherds and bone. At this level against the walls were three hearths which had burnt the walls but were not readily visible on the floor surface. In the centre of the room at or immediately below this level was an irregular depression 570- c. 500mm in size filled with a fine brown dust – it was probably a hearth. A 150mm thick layer of sandy material containing small lumps of mud [(AB5)58/245] which formed another surface across the whole room and extended over the threshold for a short distance into room A1-II. Set into it level with the surface was a white sandstone window grille (Plate 3.32) while resting on it and leaning against the south wall were two pairs of ceramic plates (Plate 3.33) and a complete pottery cup was set in the north-west corner. Also set into this



Plate 3.32. Building A1, room IV, surface (AB5)58/245 with a white sandstone window grille set into it – scale bar 500mm.



Plate 3.33. Building A1, room IV, four ceramic plates on surface (AB5)58/245 resting against the south wall of the room – scale bar 2m.

surface was an oval wooden post (200 x 160mm, surviving height 800mm) 200mm west of the doorway into room A1-II. Its function is unclear. Contemporary with this surface an oval grinding base (160 x 150 x 60mm) was set upright and across the rebated doorjamb on the east side of the doorway into Room II and was plastered in place.

In the Phase II floor surface in room A1-II just a little south of the centre of the room was a circular bowl-shaped depression (ø 330-300mm, depth 60mm) perhaps the impression of a round-bottomed pottery vessel. In the south-eastern quadrant of the room were five roughly circular shallow depressions of uncertain function. On the floor was a very thin deposit of earth [(AB5)278] containing a number of beads by the doorway into room A1-I.

### Phase III

In this phase another room (room A1-V), 3.56 x 3.36m in size internally, was added onto the building, on the west side of room A1-IV entered by a doorway 600mm wide, with recessed jambs on its west side, cut through the south end of the earlier room's west wall, its threshold at the level of the top of the earlier wall's first course (Figure 3.13). The ends of the earlier wall are heavily plastered in mud, that to the south projecting from the wall line by 170mm and 380mm in width. In the north rebated jamb the impression of the timber door frame measured 60 x 90mm and survived to a height of 1m. The base of the north wall was 250mm above that of the phase I wall. The south wall of this new room extended 2.1m further to the west beyond its west wall, on a slightly different alignment, where it turned through 90° and continued north but only for a distance of 230mm. The north-south

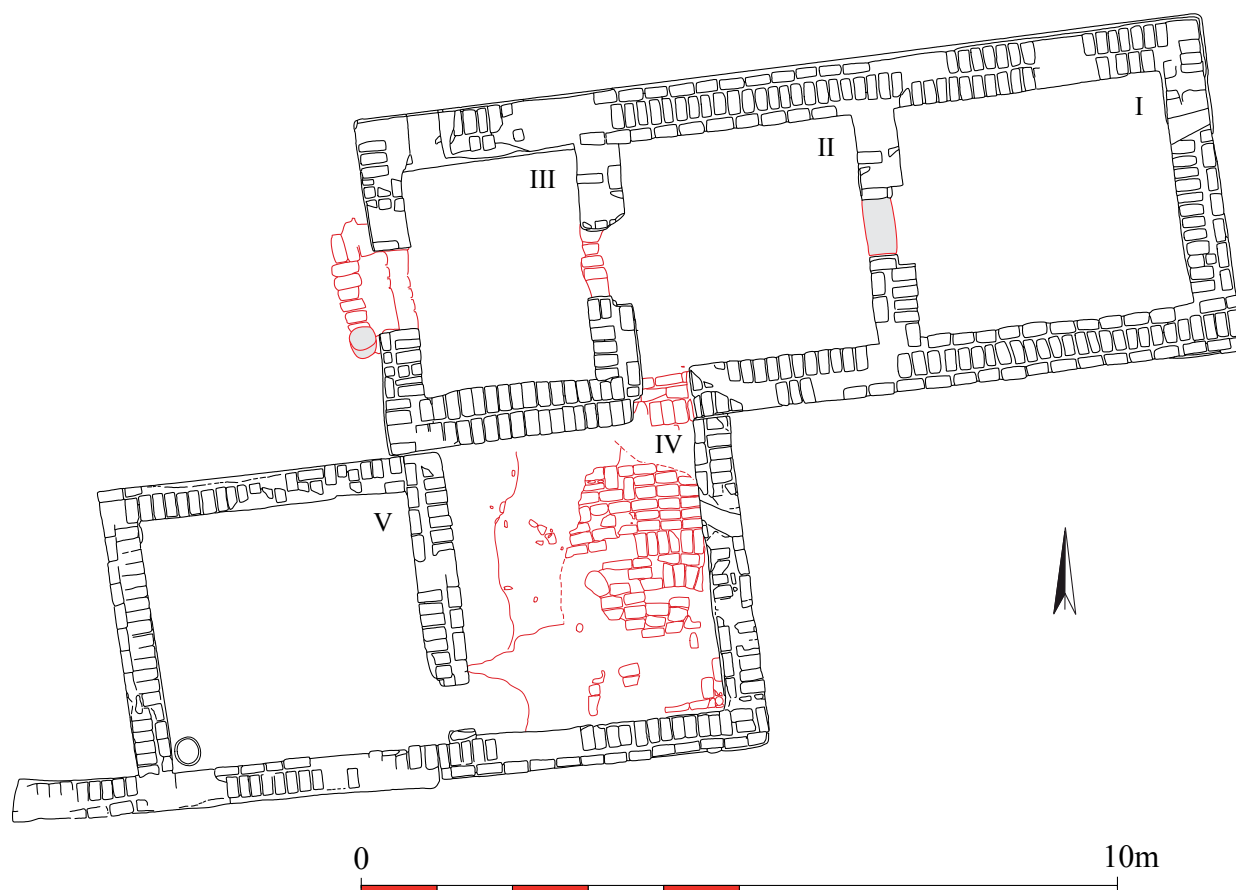


Figure 3.13. Building A1. Phase III (scale 1:100).

wall, bonded into its neighbour, only survives to a height of one course and was 530mm thick. No indication was found to suggest that this wall had ever extended further north and, therefore, it does not appear that these walls had enclosed a sixth room. The walls of room A1-V were constructed of mud bricks containing pottery, bone and charcoal inclusions, the west wall of bricks 280-320 x 140-170 x 75-90mm in size, the south wall of bricks 300 x 160 x 90mm, generally arranged in alternating courses of one header and one stretcher and attaining a width of 480-500mm. The two lowest courses of the west and north walls displayed headers on the exterior face, in the former arranged in header bond, in the latter with the bricks widely spaced with thick mud mortar between. The walls are bonded in a mud mortar up to 30mm thick horizontally and 5-10mm thick in the vertical joints. On the lowest courses of the west wall on the exterior were traces of whitewash. The two lowest courses on the north wall are much better preserved than those above suggesting that they were covered very soon after the wall's construction.

The north and south walls of the room abut the west wall of room A1-IV. The north wall is bonded into the west wall which abuts the south wall. The extension of the south wall beyond the building line is roughly keyed into the south wall of the room.

Extending across most of the room was a deposit of sand with fragments of mud and containing mud bungs [(AB5)98]. It merges with deposit (AB5)97 in the south-west corner which is presumably also pre-room A1-V. These deposits appear to pre-date the room A1-V walls

and extend to the south where they were designated (AB5)15. In the south-west corner of the room set into the pre-room deposits was a ceramic oven 350mm in diameter and 300mm high. Its lower fill resting on the bowl-shaped base was 30mm of ash and charcoal [(AB5)204], the upper fill was of sand.

The construction of room A1-V appears to be contemporary with the use of surface (AB5)96b in room A1-IV. The primary surface in the room may have been (AB5)89, a deposit of fine silty sand containing a lot of pottery, bone, mud bungs, charcoal and ash, including two small concentrations of ash against the east and west walls. These do not appear to have been hearths as there is no evidence of burning against the adjacent walls. This surface appears to be contemporary with surface (AB5)58 in room A1-IV.

### *Building A1, post-phase III*

It appears that at the time of the construction of room A1-V the ground surface by the altar outside the building had already risen by 380-420mm. Above that level the sides of the altar were given a thick mud plaster coating which was whitewashed. The last use of the altar was represented by the remains of an offering in the depression on its top consisting of a compact homogenous deposit of ash with some pottery sherds, lumps of mud, sealings and a little charcoal [(AB4)19]. Subsequently the whole altar was engulfed by drifts of wind-blown sand<sup>6</sup> ultimately

<sup>6</sup> Deposits (AB5)214, 215, 211, 208, 210.

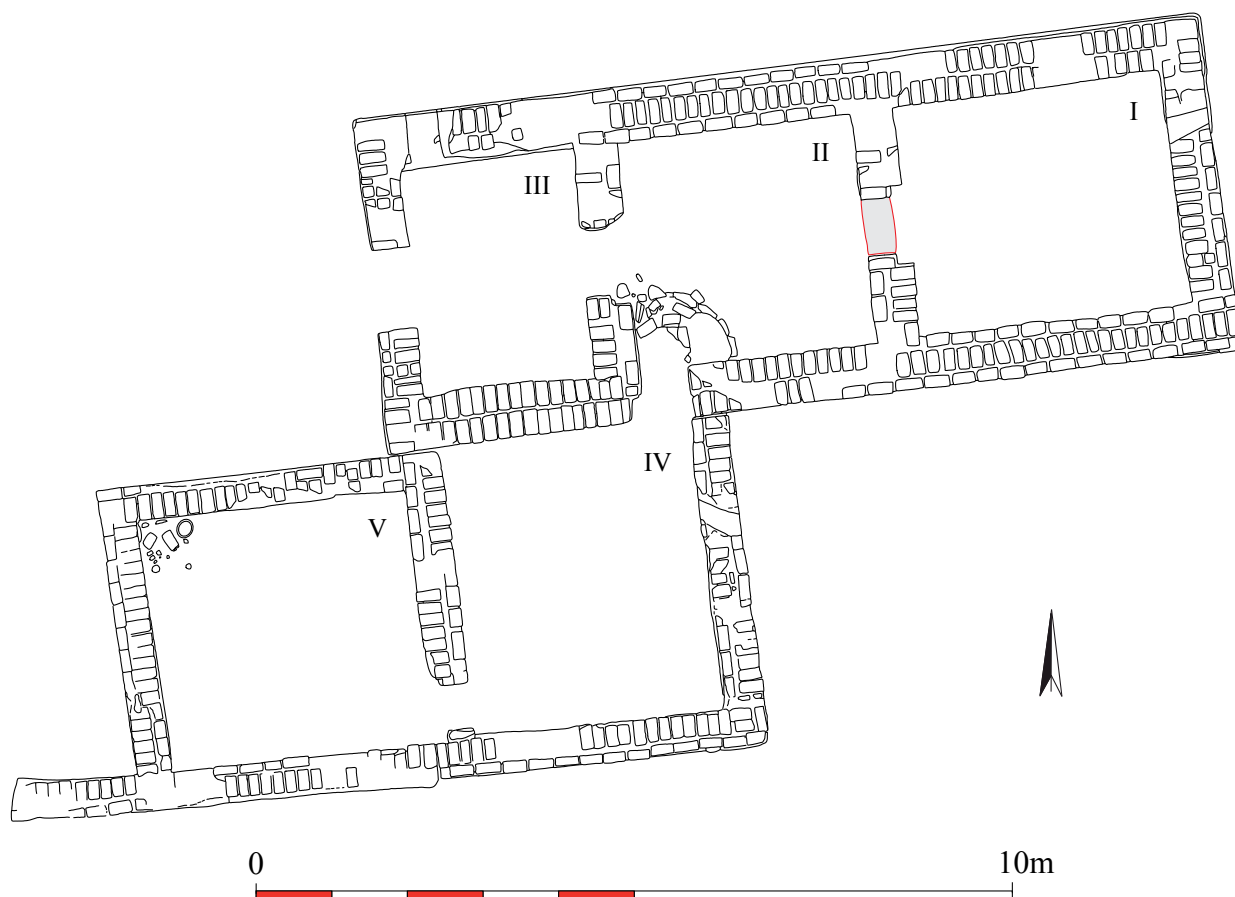


Figure 3.14. Building A1. Post-phase III (scale 1:100).

sloping steeply down from the west towards the doorway of the shrine. Within these deposits in the angle between the walls of rooms A1-I and A1-V was a deposit 70-90mm thick of very fragmentary mud-brick rubble in a sandy matrix [(AB5)212]. This was partly sealed by a rubbish deposit [(AB4)20] sloping down from west to east and abuts the walls of room A1-V. It contained a large amount of pottery, mud-brick rubble, many broken mud bungs, seal impressions and a fair amount of charcoal. Set on its surface against the wall was a hearth, a 750 x 500mm patch of ash 10mm thick. At a higher level a little to the north was another 100mm thick deposit of mud-brick rubble over an area of 850 x 760mm.

As the sand built up around the altar and while it probably remained in use the building was approached down the sloping surface of the sand with a flight of three steps (Plate 3.34) being constructed of mud brick in the doorway allowing access down approximately 500mm into room A1-III. At the southern end of the steps they incorporated the frustum-shaped stone object with a maximum diameter of 480mm and height of 320mm, which was set upside down (see SF:4120). The steps are heavily plastered and were originally whitewashed. They show much evidence for wear. The altar was finally engulfed by sand when the 50-200mm thick deposit (AB5)207 formed over the whole area investigated to the west of the building.

Limited excavations were conducted outside the building to the west of room A1-V and to the south and east of the building. Around the west side of room A1-V and to its south was a rubbish deposit overlying the sloping

surface of a sand drift against the wall of the building. This deposit [(AB4)11] of which only a part was excavated consisted mainly of mud bungs, approximately 300 were recovered, along with a large amount of pottery including some complete bread cones (Plate 3.35). Against the south wall of room A1-IV a 1m square sondage was excavated to the base of the wall, located at a depth of 1.45m below the wall top (the present day ground surface). The lowest layer was 250mm thick and of sand. It was sealed by 180mm of silty sand forming a surface on which was a sub-circular hearth. A further deposit of wind-blown sand had another hearth within it with three distinct phases of use. Interleaved with the wind-blown sand above was one layer of rubbish material, ash, silt,



Plate 3.34. Building A1, steps descending through the doorway into room III from outside the building – scale bar 500mm.





*Plate 3.35. Thick rubbish deposits containing many mud bungs to the south of Building A1, rooms V and VI – scale bar 2m.*

charcoal flecks and much pottery, bone and a few mud bungs up to 250mm thick which may have been dumped from inside room A1-V.

To the south and east of rooms A1-I and A1-II the lowest feature noted was a surface adjacent to the south wall of the building and running up to the east wall of room A1-IV. On its surface abutting the east wall of room A1-IV near its southern end was a rounded lump of mud 620 x 520mm in size and standing 180mm high. This and the surface were sealed by a rubbish deposit up to 530mm thick [(AB5)25/32] tailing off from the walls against which it abutted. To the east of room A1-I were layers of hard sand some containing a large amount of pottery, bone and charcoal fragments.

The floor of room A1-III contemporary with the construction of the steps [(AB5)250] lay approximately 25mm above the primary floor surface. On this floor was some pottery and bone, a mud brick, two blocks of sandstone and one of granite. The surface was partly sealed by a deposit of wind-blown sand only stretching a short distance into the eastern part of the room. In the eastern part of the room a thin floor surface (10mm) ran over the mud-brick threshold and merged with floor (AB5)239 in room A1-II. A deposit of wind-blown sand up to 400mm thick extended into the room from the west sloping down to the east and south but did not cover the whole of the room. It covered the two lower steps in the west doorway. Sloping down from the north walls it was sealed by fine sand and mud-brick rubble many of the bricks bearing impressions of irregularly patterned straight grooves, perhaps having been laid on top of the palm fronds of the ceiling. Thereafter wind-blown sand filled the room.

### Room A1-I

When the barque-stand was dismantled the uppermost block and many of the stone blocks removed from the floor in the north-east and south-east corners of the room came to rest directly on the stone floor (Plate 3.23). Other blocks rested on fragments of painted wall plaster. The number of blocks found in the room suggests that, although the floor had been disturbed, no blocks were removed from the building. The blocks were abutted, and the floor was covered by a layer of wind-blown sand [(AC6)16] from 10-150mm thick, at its thickest where it had drifted against the walls and the sandstone blocks. In the south-west corner of the room this wind-blown sand was covered by a thin (10-60mm thick) deposit of mud. Extending into the room through the doorway from room A1-II was a sandy deposit [(AB5)254/(AB6)21] containing a number of small finds. It was 550mm thick in the doorway but rapidly diminishing to the east indicating that room A1-II filled with sand before room A1-I. At least one of the pits dug to remove the floor blocks was sealed by (AB5)59 probably a series of deposits (max. thickness 660mm) formed from the collapse of the south wall of the building, which settled around the large stone blocks but tailed off towards the south. Some sections of mud-brick rubble were articulated. In the lowest layers particularly in the south-west corner of the room was a large amount of painted plaster, with the lowest layer face down. Thereafter the room filled with wind-blown sand (Plate 3.36), interrupted by the digging of a number of robber pits, the largest 1.75 x 1.1m in size and 250mm deep, against the east wall.



*Plate 3.36. Building A1, room I, blocks from the barque stand lying amongst the robber upcast material and wind-blown sand – scale bar 2m.*

### Room A1-II

Burning against the wall in the north-east corner of the room indicate the presence of a hearth, its base at a level of 42.57m SD.

Following the construction of the blocking wall (AB5)238 (see below) there was a hearth placed close to its base which had burnt the wall but no trace of it on a contemporary floor surface was noted. In the centre of the room was a roughly rectangular area 950 x 750mm in size and 300mm thick of fine sand [(AB5)232] with

occasional pottery sherds and one large sandstone block (425 x 190 x 100mm). Overlying floor (AB5)239, later in date than the blocking wall (AB5)238 and surrounding the sand (AB5)232 was a deposit of soft sand 400mm thick within which were large stone blocks and mud-brick fragments [(AB5)233]. Among these was a column shaft 270mm in length and 260mm in diameter at the top and 330mm diameter at the base. In the doorway between this room and Room III the deposit abuts (AB5)234 but the chronological relationship of the two is uncertain. Resting on the sand and rubble deposit along the south wall of the room and sloping down to the north and west is a deposit of mud-brick rubble and painted wall plaster and sandstone fragments in a sandy matrix [(AB5)230].

Extending throughout rooms A1-II and A1-III overlying deposits (AB5)234 and (AB5)230,232 and 233 was 950mm of wind-blown sand [(AB5)229/231] filling both rooms. It contained a small amount of mud fragments, pottery, bone and charcoal.

#### Room A1-IV

Covering surface (AB5)58 was an undulating deposit of wind-blown sand on which lay a swathe of rubble [(AB5)52/255] in the north-eastern part of the room extending from the doorway into room A1-II. It appears that it was a dump of material tossed through that doorway. The main constituent of the deposit was mud-brick rubble, both complete (300 x 200 x 100mm) and fragmentary bricks along with some pottery and occasional mud bungs. Within this deposit set face down in room A1-IV was a large fragment of a ceramic Bes statue (SF:774). In order to stop this and subsequent deposits slumping



*Plate 3.37. Building A1, room II, rough barrier constructed to hold back the fills in room IV – scale bar 1.5m.*

back into room A1-II, which must have remained in use after room A1-IV was abandoned, a structure [(AB5)238] describing an arc across the corner of room A1-II was constructed (Plate 3.37), its northern face resting on the floor (AB5)239, its southern face on the rubble. This structure approximately 500mm thick was built of mud brick, small sandstone blocks and a fragment of mud bung, liberally infilled with mud. Its north face is battered at an angle of approximately 30°. It survived to a height of 350mm, the rubble from its upper part may partly form the rubble layer (AB5)230.

Over more wind-blown sand was another deposit of

mud-brick rubble in the south-east corner of the room up to 650mm thick which appears to have been dumped into the room over its walls from outside the building and there was another deposit of similar character in the opposite corner. Both had been cut into by later robber pits. Above wind-blown sand filled the room to the modern ground level. In the sand [(AB5)45] between 20 and 400mm below the surface near the north doorway was a group of six mud bungs.

#### Room A1-V

Sealing what may have been the primary surface [(AB5)89] was a silty-sand deposit [(AB5)87] containing small lumps of mud, lots of pottery, bone and small pieces of charcoal forming a surface sloping down a little from north to south. Probably on its surface were the three hearths, (AB5)81, 83 and 85, against the north face of the south wall. It was sealed by up to 100mm of greyish-brown silt across the whole room containing much pottery including several complete vessels, a pot stand, several mud bungs, animal bone, charcoal and ash. A patch



*Plate 3.38. Building A1, room V, hearths, pots and rubble in the north-west corner – scale bar 500mm.*

of ash 500 x 320mm occupied the centre of the room and another ill-defined patch was in the south-west corner. In the northern half of the room was another sandy-silt surface on which were two hearths (Plate 3.38) against the north wall separated by a rubble deposit (AB5)38 100mm thick beneath which was the remnants of a sandy surface. In the western hearth, 600 x 500mm in size was a complete pottery vessel set 120mm into the surface, in the other which was the same size was the base of a pot set 40mm into the surface. Other rubble deposits against the west wall a maximum of 310mm thick, and against the east wall a maximum of 330mm thick appear to have been dumped into the room over its walls or had been heaped up against the walls. The latter dump contained many fragments of mud plaster on its surface.

By the north wall were small patches of flooring, of grey-brown silty sand. Above this was an extensive deposit of ash up to 100mm thick with three concentrations where hearths were placed. These had intensively burnt the adjacent wall and contained pottery sherds blackened by fire, charcoal and burnt camel dung. Thereafter the room filled with wind-blown sand interleaved with some deposits of rubble [(AB5)6, 14, 21 and 23]



### *Post-Building A1*

Running across the building at the level of the ground surface before excavation began were a number of shallow irrigation canals which had cut down into its walls to a depth of approximately 450mm. The north wall of room A1-III however was cut by a trench [AB5]236] tapering from north to south from 800-610mm with a depth of 280mm. It had been lined with sandstone and contained water-deposited silt.

In the angle of the external walls of rooms A1-II and A1-IV was a robber pit probably of very recent date, of quadrant-shape with maximum dimensions of 1.6 x 1.05m and 800mm deep. It was filled with wind-blown sand. The fragments of the statue of Beset found in this area on the surface before excavation began may have been unearthed by its digging.

### *Post-building A4/ pre-Building A2*

In the area of the later Building A2, room IV there is a hint of a phase of occupation after the demolition of Building A4 but before the construction of Building A2. A surface of mud-brick rubble and sand [(AD5)162] incorporated the uppermost courses of Building A4's walls which showed traces of wear. It was sealed by another surface upon which rested the threshold between A2's rooms III and IV. The same(?) surface [(AD5)157] extends over much of Building A2's room VII to the north.

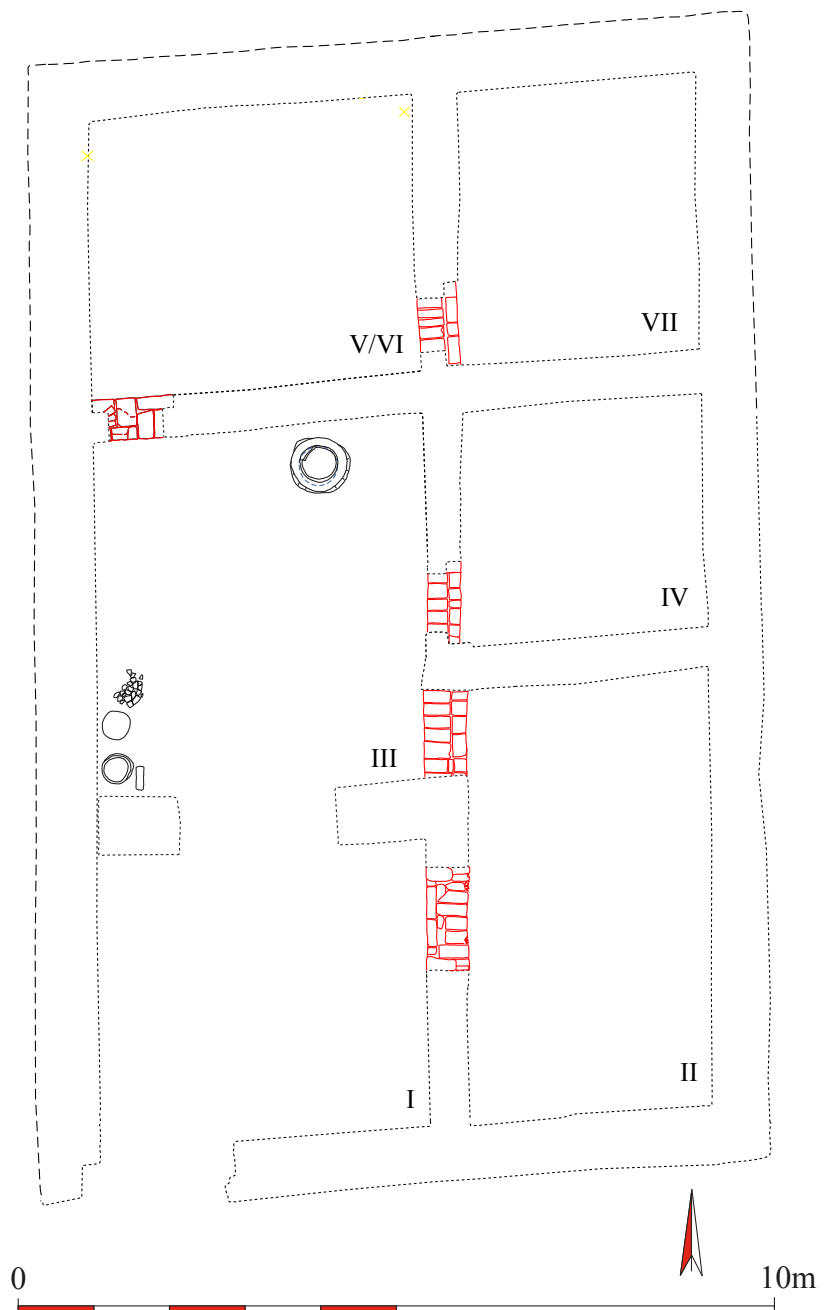


Plate 3.39. The walls of Buildings A3 and A4 demolished to make way for the east wall of Building A2 – scale bar 2m.

- ..... base of walls
- base of walls presumed (not excavated)

Figure 3.15. Building A2, phase 1 with primary thresholds visible (scale 1:100).

### *Building A2, phase 1 – construction*

This building was constructed over the remains of Buildings A3 and A4. On its eastern side the walls of the earlier buildings were well preserved but were demolished down to the base of the new building's foundations which in places rested directly on their remains (Plate 3.39). In places the walls survived to a greater height where they were incorporated into the new walls, but were demolished further within the rooms as is clearly



seen in room A2-II. Building A2 was a slightly skewed rectangle the corners deviating from a right angle by approximately 2.7°. It had external dimensions of 15.1 x 9.6m (Figure 3.15). All its walls were constructed of mud bricks most with dimensions of 330-360 x 140-170 x 80-100mm although in the west wall there were some much smaller bricks of 260 x 160 x 80mm in size. External walls were between 730-760mm thick with in many places alternate courses of two headers and one header flanked by one stretcher on each side. In some places however, parts of the wall were not as thick. In one of these there appears to have been two headers, the bricks set on edge with a stretcher on edge down the centre (Plate 3.40). In



*Plate 3.40. Building A2, two rows of headers with a row of stretchers between in the west wall – scale bar 500mm.*

another case there appears to be two headers of bricks a little shorter than the norm with a row of stretchers along the inner face. Internal walls, of alternating 1½ brick construction were thinner with some variability at between 550mm and 650mm. The wall between rooms A2-II and A2-IV for example had a wider mud-filled core than usual while that between rooms A2-I and A2-II had an upper course of two short headers. No special foundations were noted; none of the walls had the lowest course of bricks set on edge. Foundation/construction trenches were only observed on the exterior face of the south wall and associated with the wall between rooms A2-V/VI and A2-VII [(AD5)185]. Only the external faces of the south and much of the east wall were cleared, elsewhere only the upper parts of the walls on the exterior were exposed. Brick coursing was usually horizontal but partial courses of bricks set at varying angles were used for levelling as required (Plate 3.41).

The walls were best preserved in the north-western corner where they attained a height of approximately 2.05m. Visible in the uppermost courses of the wall in room A2-VII was a pair of very small slit windows with their sills 1.35m above the base of the wall. Each window was 150mm wide, separated from its neighbour by a single brick 170mm wide and surviving to their full height of about 200mm (Plate 3.42). A little further to the west in



*Plate 3.41. Building A2, the south wall with levelling courses of angled bricks – scale bar 2m.*

room A2-VI was a similar pair of windows which had at a later date been knocked into one and then later still blocked flush with the exterior face with mud bricks.

The building was entered by a doorway in its south wall towards the west end, c. 1.6m in width. This led into a large rectangular room 9.4 x 4.3-4.4m in size partly partitioned by rectangular masonry piers against its east and west walls. The southern part, 3.8m north-south, was designated room A2-I, the northern, 4.9m north-south, room A2-III. From the southern part of the room a doorway 1.36m wide gave access into room A2-II and another doorway 1.12m wide gave access from room A2-III into it. Room A2-II was rectangular 5.7m north-south by 3.2m east-west. To its north lay room A2-IV entered through a doorway from room A2-III, 776mm, wide with a rebated jamb on its north side indicating that the door opened inwards. Room A2-IV was roughly square 3.2 x 3.1m in size. A doorway 719mm wide in the north wall of room



*Plate 3.42. Building A2, the windows in the north wall of room A2-VII – scale bar 2m.*

A2-III at its eastern end allowed access into room A2-V/VI, 3.8m north-south by 4.3m east-west. The doorway had a rebated jamb on its east side indicating that the door opened inwards. A further doorway 640mm wide (1.05m behind the jambs) in its east wall (Figure 3.16)

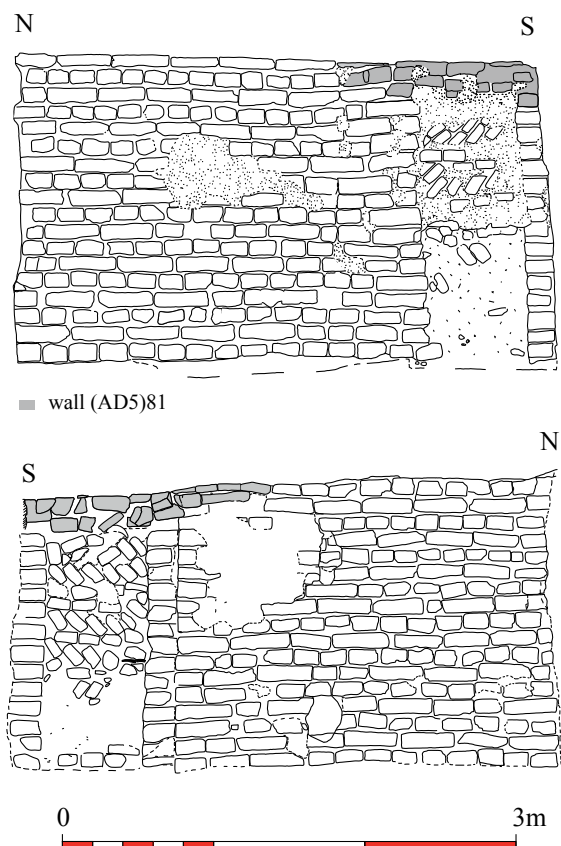


Figure 3.16. Building A2; elevations of the party wall between rooms A2-VI and A2-VII (scale 1:50).

led to room A2-VII, measuring 3.1m east-west by 3.6m north-south. This doorway preserved the socket, on its east face to the north of the door, of a timber lintel extending 200mm into the wall.

In all of the doorways except that from the street the lowest course of the walls were carried right across the opening.

### *Phase 1 – primary floors and features*

The primary floors in many of the rooms were of sand.

#### Room A2-I

A compact floor surface [(AC5)67] without any additional features (Plate 3.54).

#### Room A2-II

On the floor surface (AC5)64 by the north wall was a shallow depression, 1.52 x 0.7m in size and 50mm deep, containing a hearth [(AC5)62)] – filled mainly with ash, some charcoal, burnt bone and pottery sherds. Heat from the fire has burnt the bricks on the adjacent wall.

#### Room A2-III

The first surface [(AD5)207], appeared to be a demolition/construction level. Set on the surface was a stone

post-pad in the centre of the room and it was cut by a circular pit 690mm in diameter at the bottom, 580mm at the top and 310mm deep into which was set the ceramic oven (AD5)212. This was filled with ash and then a layer of ash, and fragments of the upper part of the oven, all sealed by another very similar oven associated with the next floor surface (AD5)198 (Plate 3.43).



Plate 3.43. Building A2; oven (AD5)212 overlain by the later oven (AD5)150 – scale bar 200mm.

#### Room A2-IV

In room A2-IV floor (AD5)151 was a smooth surface in the northern part of the room but more rubbly to the south. Although perhaps the primary surface in the room, the mud-brick threshold between rooms A2-III and A2-IV rested upon it.

#### Room A2-VII

This room had very compact floor layers of sand cut by a circular pit (ø 330mm, depth 110mm) filled with ash, sand and charcoal.

### *Phase 2*

During this phase there was a gradual build-up of deposits throughout the building although in many cases it was impossible to be certain of their contemporaneity from one room to another.

#### Room A2-I

Set centrally on the second floor in the room was a hearth, a circular area of ash and charcoal 280mm in diameter and 20mm thick. In the doorway out into the street a new threshold (AC5)56 sat on this surface, a single brick course formed of two rows of fine, pale-grey stretchers.

As the floor surfaces built-up, as detailed for room A2-III below, there were few features of interest, a high concentration of pottery and bone on surface (AC5)51 in the south-east corner and a hearth on the same surface by the west wall. The doorway into the building from the exterior was reduced in width by a wall on one side and rubble on the other to 800mm.

At the same level was an area of mud-brick rubble in the doorway leading into room A2-II. At some point thereafter a linear deposit of rubble formed across the external doorway. Deposits above contained an amount

of mud-brick rubble as well as in some cases pottery and bone suggesting that they were occupation surfaces.

#### Room A2-II

On the second floor in this room [(AC5)59] was an area of burning against the west wall. A possible hearth in the centre, set in a shallow depression, appeared to continue in use with the surface above on which rested another hearth in the south-east corner. Midway along the east wall a deposit [(AC5)57] of mud-brick rubble, a mud bung and other material sat on the floor.

#### Room A2-III

A small number of features were set on floor (AD5)198 including the threshold in the doorway leading into room A2-IV. Towards the north-east corner was a substantial oven of two phases (Figure 3.17). The earliest, (AD5)212, was noted above. It was replaced in exactly the same position by another ceramic oven (AD5)150, its sides

curving inwards towards the top. It is 600mm in diameter externally with walls 20mm thick and survived to a height of 560mm. 27mm down from the top was an 'arch'-shaped opening in one side 260mm wide by 130mm high, perhaps a flue. Packed around the outside of the oven and sealing the possible flue were mud bricks set on end and the whole was then coated in a layer of mud forming a beehive-shaped structure (Plate 3.44) with a maximum diameter of 800mm. In the south-west corner of that room were two installations, (AD5)194 and 199, the former a reused pottery vessel 400mm in diameter and 300mm high filled with sand, ash and charcoal, the latter probably a ceramic cylindrical oven 430mm in diameter. Immediately to the north was a small area, 500 x 400mm in size, paved with pot sherds to form a hearth [(AD5)197] and covered with a spread of ash and charcoal (Plate 3.45).

With the next floor (AD5)167 (contemporary with phase 2.1 in room A2-IV) the pot-sherd hearth went out of use as did oven (AD5)199 but this was replaced by a very

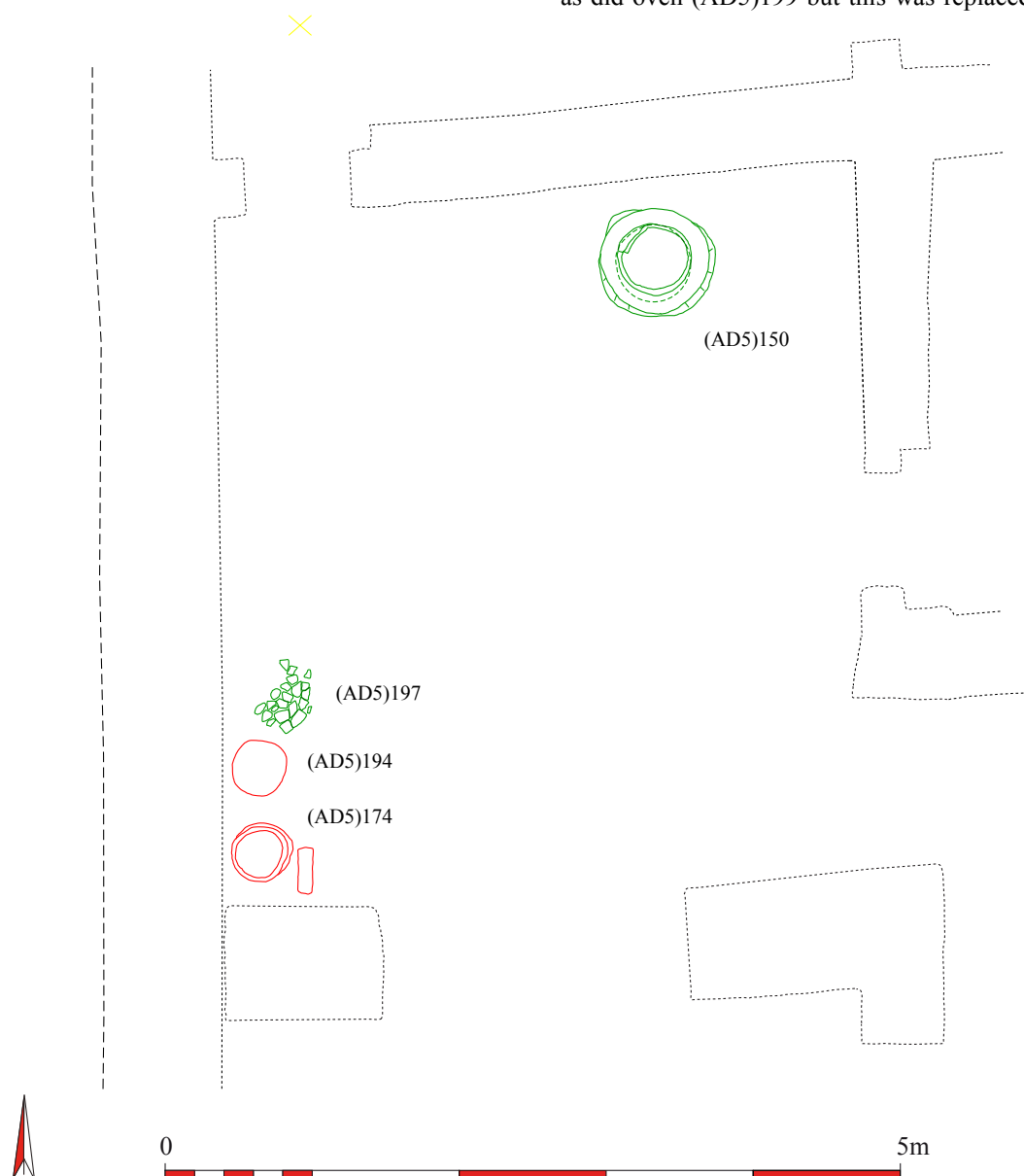


Figure 3.17. Building A2, room A2-III. Features of phase 2. The earliest features are the 'pot-sherd' hearth (AD5) 197 in the south-west corner and to the north oven (AD5)150. In the next sub-phase the hearth went out of use but ovens (AD5)174 and (AD5)194 replaced it (scale 1:50).





Plate 3.44. Oven (AD5)150 – scale bar 500mm.

similar oven (AD5)174 400mm in diameter and 160mm high set directly over it. Adjacent to it was a single mud brick 180 x 100 x 80mm. The reused pot continued to function. Ovens (AD5)150, 174 and 194 (Figure 3.16),



Plate 3.45. Ovens (AD5)197, 194 and 174 – scale bar 500mm.

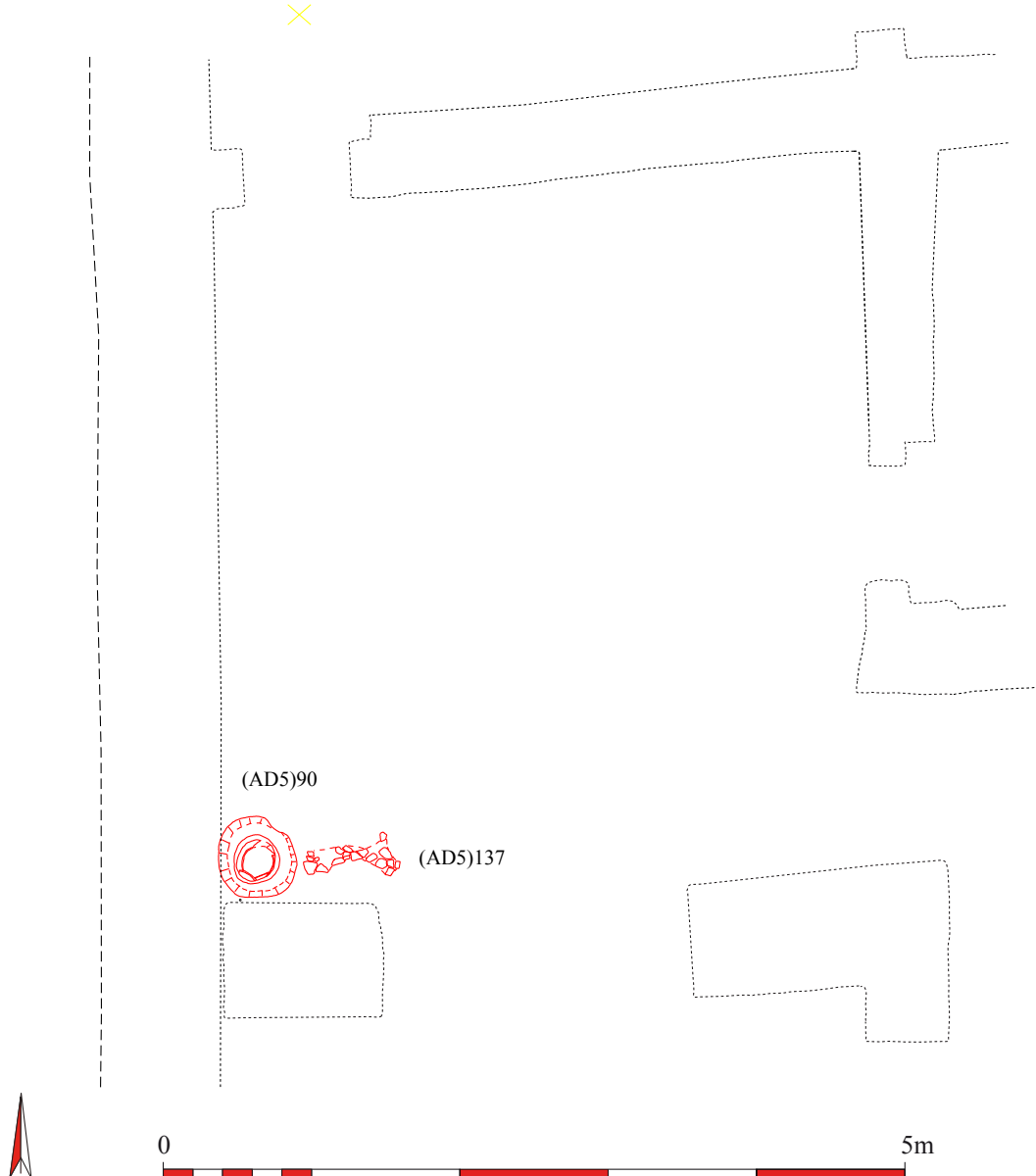


Figure 3.18. Building A2, room A2-III. Features of phase 2, oven (AD5)90 and feature (AD5)137 (scale 1:50).

remained in use for some time and ashy deposits and at least one floor surface built up around them. In the upper fill of (AD5)150 was ash and fragments of the upper part of the oven. With the laying of floor (AD5)134 these features were sealed, but another oven (AD5)90 was sat directly on top of (AD5)174, the third to occupy this site (Figure 3.18). Oven (AD5)90 was a large ceramic jar set upside-down with the bottom knocked off and an arched opening (flue) cut through the rim. The whole thing was encased in mud, had a total diameter of 480mm, an internal diameter at the base of 320mm and stood 400mm high (Plate 3.46). Adjacent to it was another pot-sherd



Plate 3.46. Building A2, room III, oven (AD5)90 – scale bar 500mm.

hearth with extensive fire damage on the wall next to it. There were two further hearths – patches of burning – in the north-east corner of the room and by the east wall.

Ash deposits built up around oven (AD5)90, at least one probably from a cleaning out of the installation, and sandy lenses with charcoal elsewhere in the room followed by another hearth towards the north-east corner. Towards the centre of the room two mud bricks were placed next to each other for some reason.

The surface above [(AD5)67] had a hearth right in the north-east corner of the room which had caused fire damage to the walls. It was also cut by the construction trench for the steps leading down into room A2-IV making it contemporary with Phase 2.4 in that room.

In the doorway between rooms A2-III and A2-V a mud-brick threshold [(AD5)51] was inserted and five mud bricks were set flat on the surface in the south-west corner of the room. With the build-up of more floors in room A2-III an additional step (AD5)44, of two courses – 380mm thick, 230mm high – was added to the flight leading down into room A2-IV. Contemporary with this were two small hearths, one against the north wall, the other in the north-west corner of the room.

#### Room A2-IV

##### *Phase 2.1 (Figure 3.19a)*

In room A2-IV a good quality mud surface [(AD5)128] was cut by a shallow circular bowl-shaped pit 45mm deep and 440mm in diameter [(AD5)147]. It was lined with pottery sherds and filled with sand (Plate 3.47). In the



Plate 3.47. Building A2, room IV, bowl-shaped pit [(AD5)147] lined with pottery sherds – scale bar 200mm.

south-west corner of the room was a quadrant-shaped area of burning. Resting on the surface adjacent to the north wall were two square mud-brick ‘pillars’ one course in height and another abuts the west wall near the doorway (Plate 3.48).



Plate 3.48. Building A2, room IV, surface (AD5)128 with mud-brick features – scale bar 2m.

##### *Phase 2.2 (Figure 3.19b)*

A build-up of mud and sand surfaces with an area of burning towards the centre of the room 340mm in diameter. As these levels accumulated the mud-brick features against the north wall began to disappear while two very similar ‘pillars’ were constructed towards the centre of the south wall and that against the west wall was heightened.

##### *Phase 2.3 (Figure 3.19c)*

Another mud surface [(AD5)102] sealing the mud features had a hearth in its centre. Mid way along each wall was a square ‘pillar’ made from two bricks. That on the south wall was three courses high and remained visible into phase 2.6.

##### *Phase 2.4 (Figure 3.19d)*

Like its predecessor, surface (AD5)88 had a centrally-placed hearth and further mud-brick features – two ‘pillars’ along the west and south walls and a square single ‘pillar’ south of centre on the east wall. For some reason

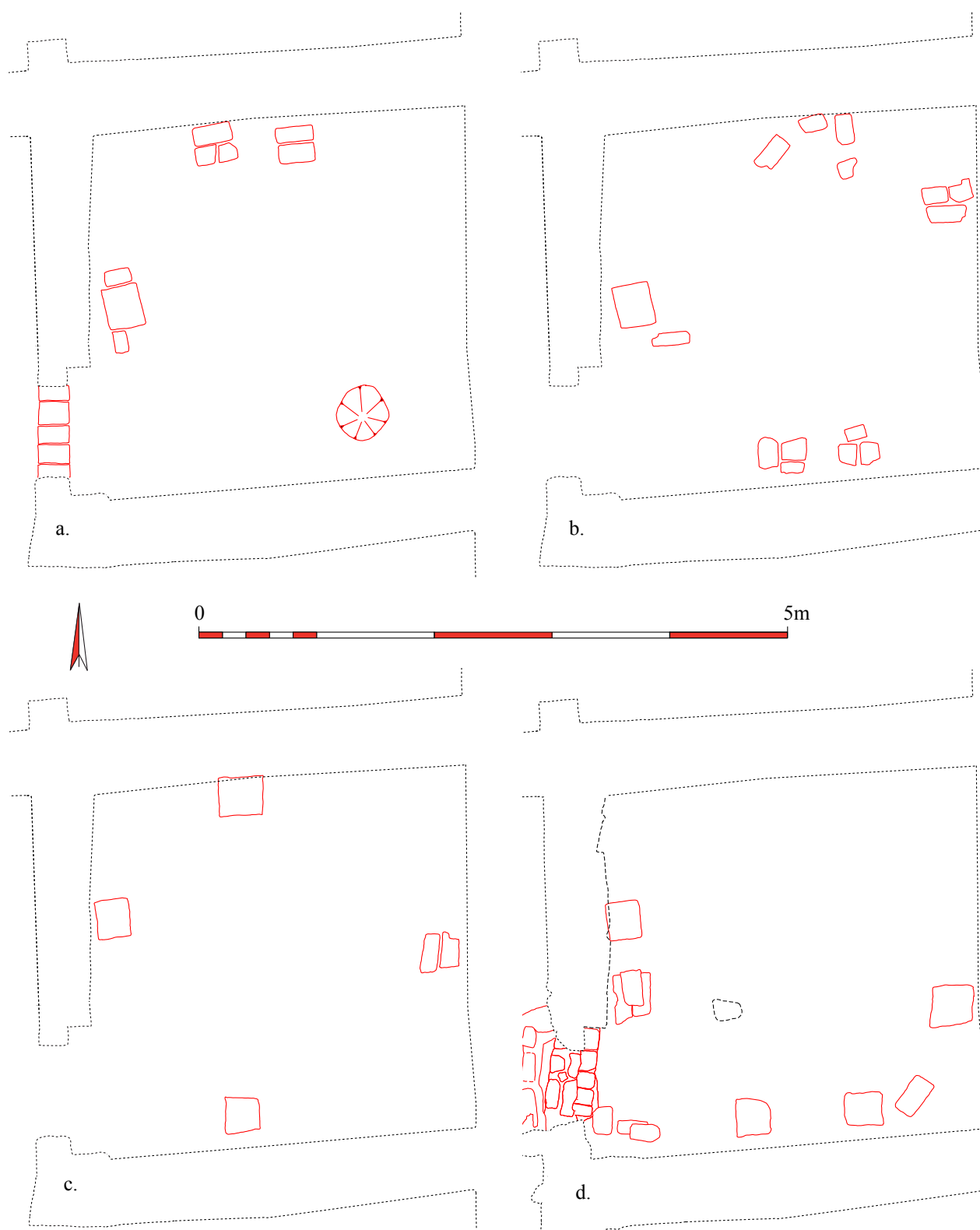


Figure 3.19. Building A2, room A2-4. Features of phase 2. a. Phase 2.1 – surface (AD5)128; b. Phase 2.2 – surface (AD5)110; c. Phase 2.3 – surface (AD5)102; d. Phase 2.4 – surface (AD5)88 (scale 1:50).

the build-up of material within room A2-IV was slower than in room A2-III and instead of levelling up the floor in the former room a flight of steps was provided. Set on this surface in the doorway was a mud-brick step projecting into the room and not parallel to the west wall face. It was overlain by a further two steps each with a riser a single brick in height and a third ‘step’ with a riser two bricks

high. These were covered by a mud-plaster render which ran onto the faces of the adjacent walls. The third ‘step’ may actually be a raised threshold or the lower courses of a blocking wall. If this is the case the steps attained a maximum height of 400mm. Contemporary with the construction of the steps the south jamb of the doorway was roughly rebuilt.



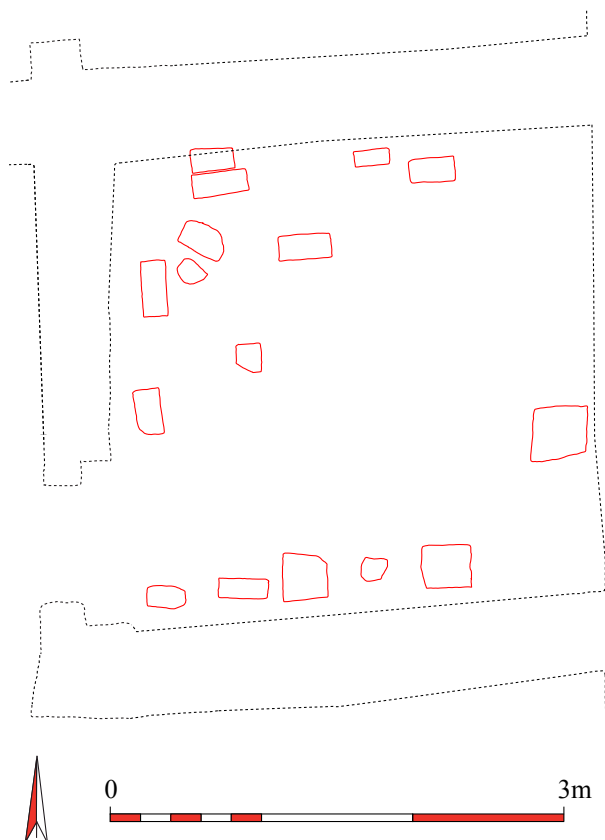


Figure 3.20. Building A2, room A2-4. Features of phase 2. Phase 2.5 – surface (AD5)59 (scale 1:50).

#### Phase 2.5 (Figure 3.20)

The steps into room A2-IV were partly covered by a deposit up to 120mm thick with a compact mud surface. Resting on this were more mud-brick features abutting the walls of the type described above, each formed of two mud bricks, two courses high and plastered. They measured 300mm square. In the north-west corner of the room was a deposit up to 150mm thick of mud-brick rubble.



Plate 3.49. Building A2, room IV, rubble (AD5)48 in the doorway leading to room III – scale bar 500mm.

#### Phase 2.6

In the doorway was a deposit of mud and mud-brick rubble [(AD5)48] (Plate 3.49) which abutted the 150mm-thick sand deposits over the rest of the room which lapped

around the mud-brick features of the previous phase. Particularly towards the south-west corner of the room were substantial amounts of large pottery sherds.

#### Phase 2.7

A further deposit of sand with some patches of a mud surface extended across the room and through the doorway. It again contained large concentrations of pottery sherds along with bone.

#### Phase 2.8

After the formation of a deposit of tumble in the doorway, presumably the result of the failure of the lintel, the room filled with wind-blown sand. During this filling a deposit of mud-brick rubble, pottery and bone had been dumped into the south-west corner of the room. While the walls still stood to at least 200-300mm in height, the wind-blown sand partly overlying this rubbish deposit contained frequent pieces of bone and large pottery sherds, many almost complete vessels (Plate 3.50).



Plate 3.50. Building A2, room IV, deposit containing pottery and bone with rubble (AD5)48 beyond – scale bar 2m.

#### Room A2-V/VI

Several different floor surfaces were noted in the room. On the earliest [(AD5)190] were three complete mud bricks and some mud-brick rubble presumably associated with the construction of the building resting on the surface on which the walls of Building A2 are founded.

After a build-up of about 400mm of deposits in room A2-V/VI it was divided into two by a slightly oblique wall of a single row of headers alternating with rows of two stretchers forming a wall 280mm thick. This sat on floor surface (AD5)80/84. Towards its north end it was pierced by a doorway 520mm wide with a mud sill on the south side of which, in room A2-VI, was a small projecting buttress. On the north side of the doorway a doorjamb was constructed against the north wall of the room.

There also appears to have been a doorway at the

southern end of the wall although the observed data is very confusing. Here a very deep pit dug from the level of the seventh course of the wall has removed any possible threshold. Resting on the sand fill of the pit the doorway has been blocked by a mud-brick wall which is overbuilt by a single surviving course of a new wall; an identical

by another, a lowermost course of three headers with two stretchers above and traces of a further course. This may be contemporary with surface (AD5)152; it was covered by surface (AD5)129. A series of sand and mud floor deposits [(AD5)152, 135, 129, 124, 123, 117, 97, 92, 77, 76, 69, 61, 41, 28], in total approximately 1.3m thick,

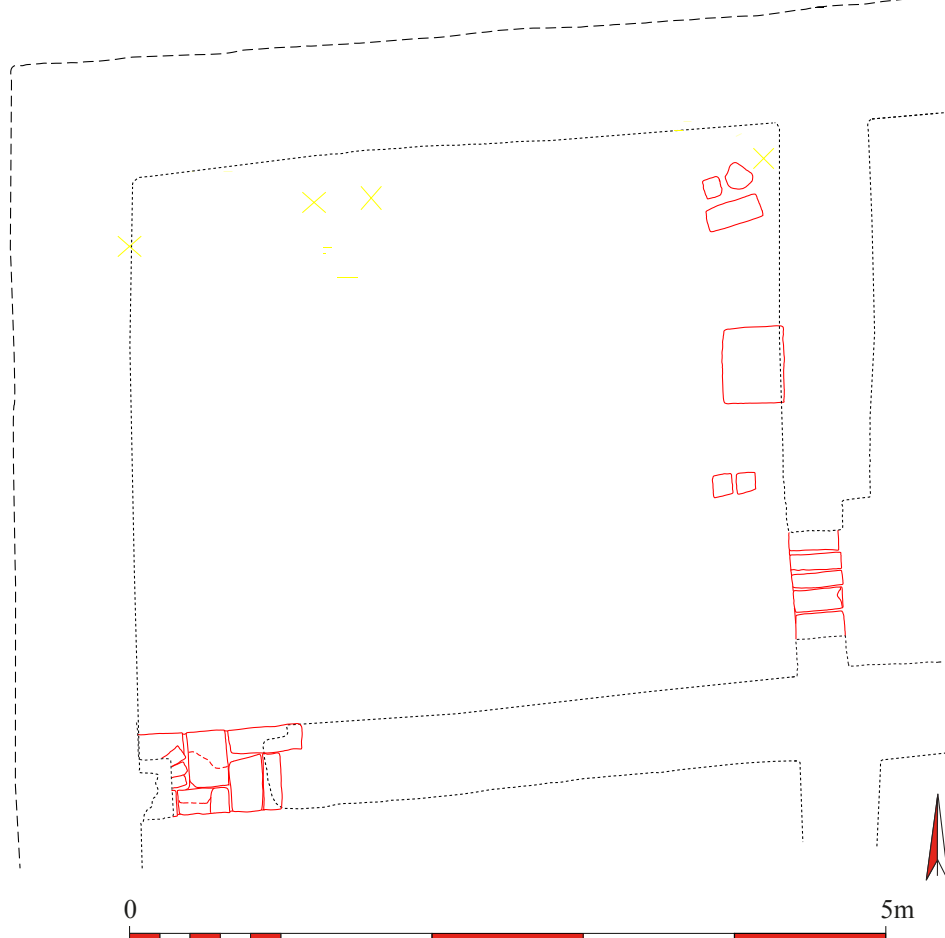


Figure 3.21 Building A2, room A2-V/VI – mud-brick features on surface (AD5)107 (scale 1:50).

situation to what is observed in the wall between rooms A2-VI and A2-VII discussed in more detail below.

Features on the following surfaces may be mentioned:

**(AD5)107** – The primary surface in room A2-VI after the construction of the partition wall which rests on it. Immediately adjacent to the buttress by the doorway is a flat stone slab and in line with it against the east wall of the room is a setting of two mud bricks plastered on the top (Figure 3.21).

**(AD5)84** – The partition wall between rooms A2-V and A2-VI rested on this surface as did a stone post-pad and a mud brick post pad against the east wall of the latter room (Figure 3.22).

**(AD5)30** – Also set on the sand fill of the pit in room A2-VI was a hearth [(AD5)32], a shallow depression lined with pottery sherds (Plate 3.51) and two ferruginous sandstone slabs laid flat.

#### Room A2-VII

Very soon after the construction of the building the threshold was covered by floor deposits but was soon replaced

with little to distinguish them. Features on the following surfaces may be mentioned:

**(AD5)152** – a single mud brick against the west wall of the room.



Plate 3.51. Building A2, room VI – the pottery sherd lined hearth (AD5)32 – scale bar 500mm.

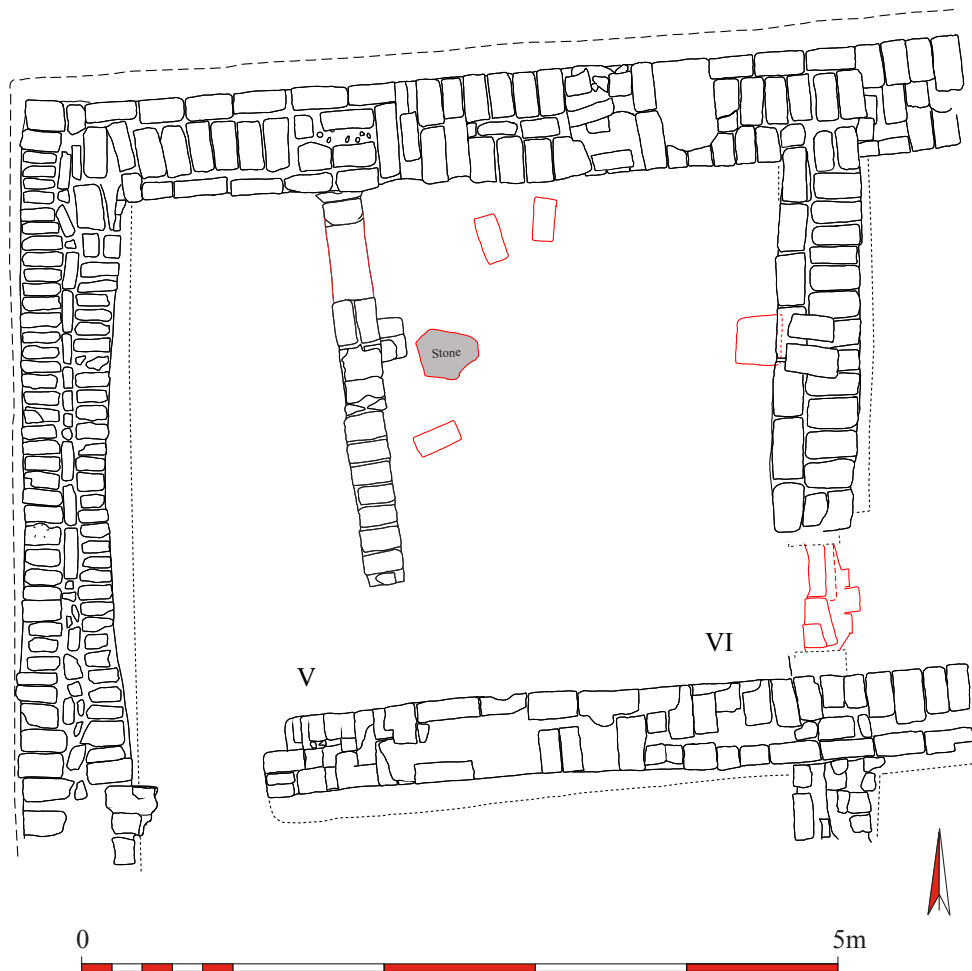


Figure 3.22. Building A2, rooms A2-V and A2-VI – mud-brick and stone features on surface (AD5)84 (scale 1:50).

**(AD5)135** – an area of burning towards its centre 530 x 380mm in extent and up to 25mm thick. Several mud bricks sat on the surface including a rough alignment of four running at right angles and partly into the doorway.

**(AD5)123** – it was probably at the time of the use of this surface that the doorway between rooms A2-VI and A2-VII was blocked at which time the doorway will only have been approximately 900mm in height. The blocking wall was crudely constructed and consisted of alternate courses of headers laid flat with headers at 45° (Figure 3.16). With the blocking of the doorway it is far from clear how the room was entered; perhaps from above via a trapdoor?

**(AD5)117** – some burnt mud bricks and fragments of a ceramic oven and similar bricks are found on (AD5)97.

**(AD5)97** – a hearth associated with grinding bases, grinders and a mud bung, and several mud bricks, two against the north wall forming a ‘pillar’ of the type seen in room A2-IV (Figure 3.23a, Plate 3.52).

**(AD5)92** – three almost complete shallow bowls set up-right in the surface and mud bricks against the east wall.

**(AD5)69** – a single row of mud bricks forming a partition extending approximately 1.3m from the west wall. Other mud bricks are on the surface to the south (Figure 3.21b).

**(AD5)41** – a large stone slab and three mud bricks, bovine skulls in the south-west corner and a hearth in the south-



Plate 3.52. Building A2, room VII – surface (AD5)97 with feature 96 and hearth 98 – scale bar 2m.

east corner, burning in the north central area and rubble on the west side.

**(AD5)28** – a hearth in the north-west corner.

The uppermost of these surfaces was sealed by wind-blown sand containing much pottery and bone as well as occasional mud bricks.

Throughout the life of the building fires were lit against the walls which have burnt the mud bricks to a bright red



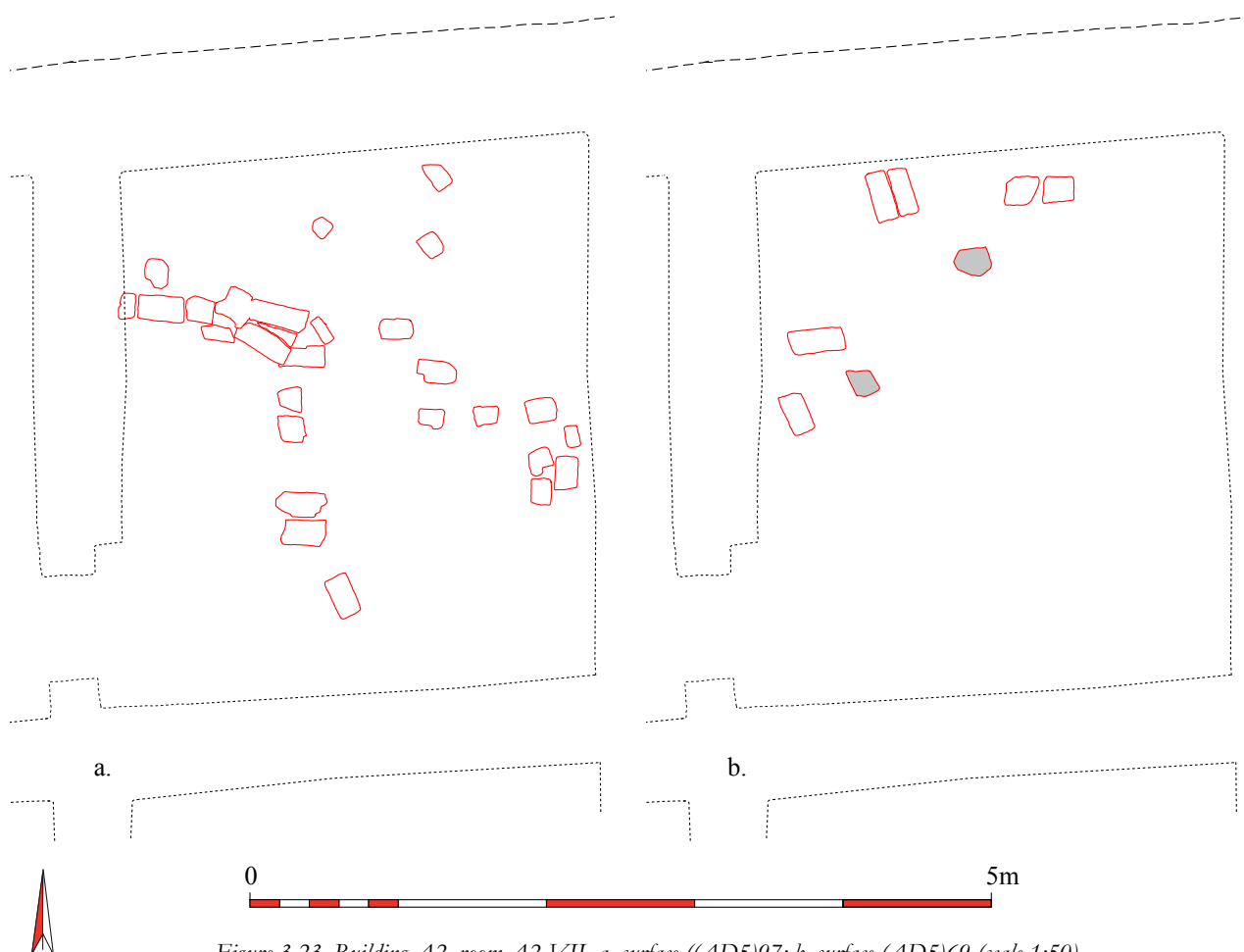


Figure 3.23. Building A2, room A2-VII. a. surface ((AD5)97; b. surface (AD5)69 (scale 1:50).

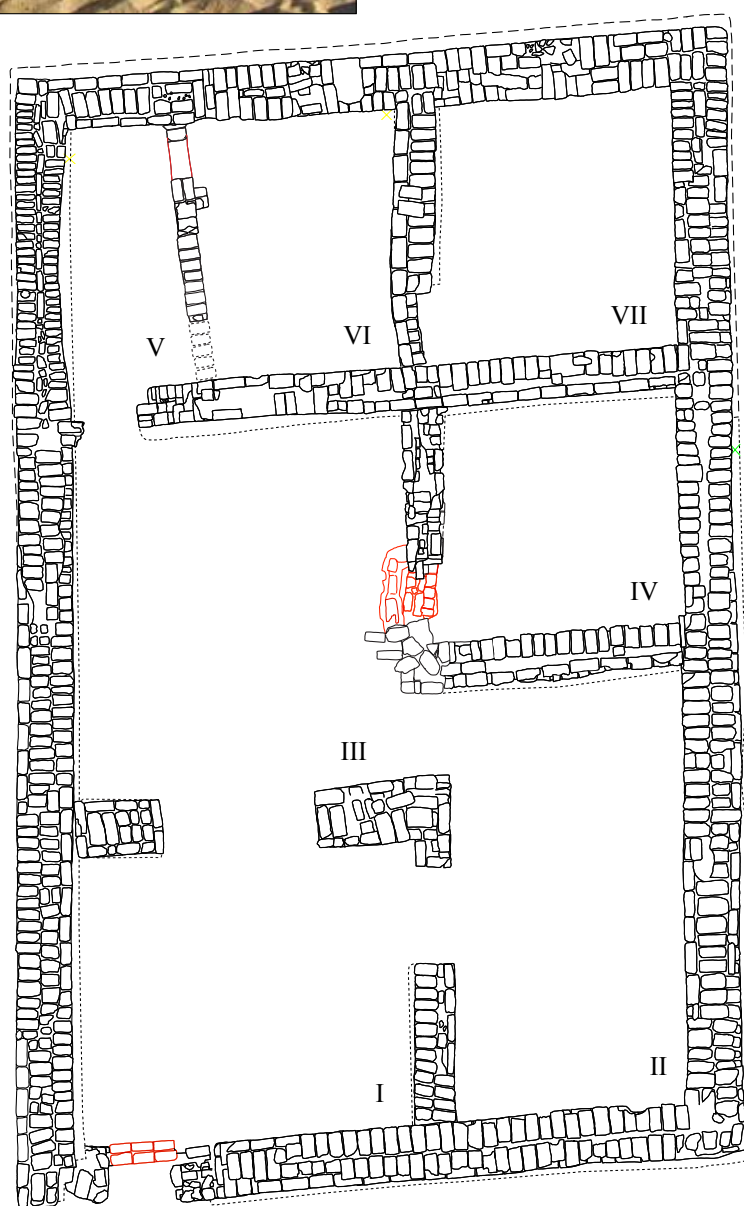
colour. This indicates that as the floor levels rose the building remained in occupation. The highest level of burning to survive was approximately 2m above the primary floor surface suggesting that by that date the roof had either been removed or the walls had been extended upwards and the roof was inserted at a higher level. A few traces of what may have been such a wall rebuild survived in the party walls between rooms A2-V and A2-VI and that between rooms A2-VI and A2-VII (see wall (AD5)81 on Figure 3.16; see also Figure 3.24). However, in both these cases this may be a localised repair of the wall over blocked doorways. Since the final abandonment of the building the rubble from its collapse along with those walls protruding above the ground surface had been totally removed by aeolian erosion. When excavation commenced the wall tops were found immediately below a very thin dusting of sand as were the latest archaeological deposits of sand, pottery and hearths.



Plate 3.53. Buildings A2-A4, rooms A2-I-III at the end of excavation.



*Plate 3.54. Building A2,  
general view looking north.*



*Figure 3.24. Building A2,  
features of the final structural  
phase (scale 1:100).*

0 10m