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Syene

**The Development of the Town from Pharaonic Times onwards
Recent Discoveries of the Swiss-Egyptian Joint Mission at Old Aswan**

Wolfgang Müller (Swiss Institute in Cairo)

Friday 10 October 2014, 6pm

Institute of Archaeology (UCL, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY), room 612



The Joint Mission of the Swiss Institute of Architectural and Archaeological Research on Ancient Egypt in Cairo and the Egyptian Ministry of State for Antiquities has been conducting urban archaeology in Aswan since 2000. Excavations at 83 sites contribute knowledge about ancient Syene and its Pharaonic predecessor.

This lecture will focus on the investigation of Area 2 in the Birket Damas quarter of modern Aswan, where the north-eastern corner of the town-wall of the Late Period is situated. The architectural remains and material found there bear witness to at least 4500 years of human activity. Highlights include a 6th Dynasty chamber tomb with undisturbed burials and a 5th century BC building with Aramaic ostraca and papyri with Achaemenid clay sealings, illustrating the unique multicultural setting of this southernmost town of the Persian empire and its close connection to the garrison on the nearby island of Elephantine. During the Ptolemaic and Early Roman periods a small sanctuary occupied the area, within whose walled precinct hundreds of animals, mostly sheep, were kept and after their demise also buried. The remains of the densely built-up city quarter of the Roman Imperial and Late Antique periods may be identified with the “Phourion” of the Paternouthis papyri archive, the most important source on Late Antique housing in Egypt.

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