Report on the

24th Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission

in Syene / Old Aswan (2024)

by

Cornelius von Pilgrim, Wolfgang Müller, Jan Nováček and Kristina Scheelen-Nováček

1. Introduction: The current status of site management

The 24th season of the joint archaeological project of the Swiss Institute for Architectural and Archaeological Research in Cairo and the Inspectorate of Antiquities of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in Aswan should have started in October 2023 but was delayed due to the lack of authorisation from the relevant security authorities. The necessary permission was not received until December 2023, and so work in Aswan was finally carried out between January 20th and April 9th, 2024[1].

After the construction four years ago of a large magazine in Area 2 (Birket Damas) for the study of the finds of the joint mission and the implementation of additional measures to increase the security of the area in the previous seasons (Fig. 1), it was intended to finally put the magazine and the study rooms included into operation at the beginning of the season. It is all the more desirable to return the finds and pottery sherds temporarily stored in an old storage facility south of Aswan at Gebel Shisha to the new magazine in Aswan as soon as possible, as the Gebel el-Shisha facility is not only full of vermin, but it is also in a very precarious state of repair.

[1] We are grateful to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the members of the Permanent Committee for granting permission to continue the Joint Mission in Aswan. We appreciate very much the fruitful cooperation with our colleagues of the Aswan Inspectorate in this joint mission. The mission was directed by C. VON PILGRIM, in close cooperation with ABDELMONEIM SAID MAHMOUD. The fieldwork was directed by W. MÜLLER. Team members were the archaeologists C. RAC (Tübingen), D. REBER (Basel) and C. THIRY (Lyon), the anthropologists J. NOVÁČEK and K. SCHEELEN-NOVÁČEK (Weimar) and the papyrologist S. TORALLAS TOVAR (Chicago). Assigned inspectors of the mission were SHAIMAA AWAD ALLAH SELEM MORSE and HAYTAM MOHAMED ABDEL METAL AFIFI for the excavation and RASHA BEDAWY ELTAYB and FATHIA AHMED EL-HEFNY in the magazines. - We are much indebted to P. ROSE for correcting the English of this report. Mistakes are of course entirely our own.

Fig. 1: Overview of the southern part of Area 2 with magazine (left), town wall/Late Period fortress (right), and storage area with spoliae and stone artifacts in the centre.

However, the magazine has not yet been put into operation this season, as it has still not been connected to the local power grid. The two rooms for one guard each from the Inspectorate of Antiquities and the Antiquities Police are also still unoccupied. All the necessary paperwork was submitted some time ago and is currently still with the relevant authorities in the governorate.

The decision to build a storehouse with study rooms in Area 2 was closely linked to the concept of using the remaining open spaces in this area to assemble all the architectural elements and larger stone artefacts that have been found in the city of Aswan in recent decades. Several hundred artefacts have already been moved there from the nearby Isis Temple area and from the storage area in Talaina near the reservoir in recent campaigns. Smaller decorated temple blocks and stone artefacts such as oil mills, grinding stones and unfinished stone bowls in various states already occupy the narrow strip directly in front of the magazine, where they are arranged according to object groups ready for further study (Fig. 1). A large number of rock inscriptions extracted in the urban area during rescue excavations and large architectural elements such as columns, capitals, column bases and other large stone blocks were gathered in the northern half of the area, outside the ancient fortress wall (Fig. 2). A large number of other

granite columns and other components are currently still in Talaina. Following a request from the Inspectorate and the corresponding decision by the Permanent Committee, they should also have been transferred to Area 2 this season. In February, however, the mission was informed by the Chief Inspector of Aswan that a decision had been made to build another storehouse for the archaeological missions working on the West Bank of Aswan in the existing open space of Area 2. This would mean that there would no longer be any space for the large number of existing stone artefacts from Aswan nor for all those that are found during future excavations, emergency excavations or construction work in the city. The transfer of large-format components from Talaina to Aswan in Area 2, which would have involved a great deal of effort, therefore has had to be postponed until a final decision had been made on this issue.

However, it would be desirable to stick to the previous concept of creating a central storage location for all finds from the city area of Old Aswan and to avoid the risk of mixing finds from different sites in the region around Aswan.

Fig. 2: Overview of northern part of Area 2 with the block yard of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission at Old Aswan.

Thus in recent years the mission was mainly occupied with additional construction work in Area 2 – for the latest works see chapter 4 at the end of this report. This season, however, the excavations in the area of the small Khnum temple of Domitian (Area 3), which had been interrupted since 2020, were resumed. Even though half of the temple fell victim to massive stone theft in the early 19th century, the still-standing pronaos of the temple is a highlight in the archaeological landscape of Aswan. The aim of the remaining excavations is to document

medieval additions and gradually expose the temple in its contemporary building context. As the temple was originally located on a slope and this slope was later further excavated, the prerequisite for all further site management measures is a significant raising of the terrain to the west of the temple. This will be achieved in the coming work campaigns with the debris from the current excavations. Consolidation of the enclosure walls and the construction of a massive retaining wall in the east of the site were already carried out a few years ago.

In the meantime, the local Inspectorate of Antiquities obtained permission to build a guard's hut on the *western* limit of this area. Subsequently, after the end of the working season, the Inspectorate asked the Swiss Institute to build this as soon as possible. The Swiss Institute will support this project in the forthcoming season. However, the only possible place to build a guard's hut, before the site to the west of the temple is filled in during further excavations, is on the *southern* enclosure wall of the site. It would also have the advantage of being in the immediate vicinity of the entrance to the site (cf. Fig. 3). On the western edge of the area, a guard room would be several metres lower than the temple foundation and would have no view of the entrance to the site.

Besides the excavations, the documentation of pottery sherds and skeletal remains was continued during the campaign. Ch. Thiry completed the documentation of the Late Period pottery recovered from Area 3 during the 16th to 20th seasons, and J. Novacek and K. Scheelen-Novacek continued the evaluation of skeletal remains from a previous rescue excavation in Old Aswan (Area 45).

Fig. 3: Area 3: excavated areas and proposed location of the guardhouse.

2. Area 3

Area 3 (Figs. 3 and 4) is one of three protected areas within the concession of the Swiss-Egyptian Joint Mission at Old Aswan. Once the archaeological work in Area 2 was finished and the Temple of Isis was opened to the public, it was decided together with the Aswan Inspectorate to initialize steps to prepare a site management plan so that Area 3 can hopefully be opened to the public in the future. It was the goal of the work of this season to free the main monument of the area, the so-called "Temple of Domitian", of medieval walls and other installations that covered parts of the facade of the Pronaos and to show the temple in its original context.[2]

The temple is the only major monument of antiquity mentioned by early travellers within the town area of Aswan.[3] It was easily accessible as the southern part of the town was already abandoned.[4] The idea that the temple was the location of the well that Eratosthenes used

[2] After some cleaning work conducted under the direction of CORNELIUS VON PILGRIM in November 2023, the excavation started January 30th and lasted until April 8th, 2024.
[3] *Cf.* C. VON PILGRIM et al., 'The Town of Syene. Preliminary Report on the 1st and 2nd Season in Aswan', *MDAIK* 60 (2004), p. 122 for a summary and references.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 120. C. VON PILGRIM/W. MÜLLER, 'Report on the 14th Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan, *ASAE*; *forthcoming* (https://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report 14th Season 2013_2014.pdf henceforth cited as *14th Season*), p. 18. W. MÜLLER/M. DE DAPPER, 'The Urban Landscape of Aswan (Egypt) Since the Predynastic Period: A Geoarchaeological Approach', in Y.

for his calculation of the circumference of the Earth led to illicit excavations here.[5] These and other activities caused considerable damage to the temple.[6] Between the middle of the 18th century, when POCOCKE visited Aswan,[7] and the arrival of the Napoleonic expedition at the end of the same century,[8] the temple had already lost some of its substance. While the temple had survived antiquity and the medieval period mostly undamaged, it was dismantled to its current condition in 1822.[9]

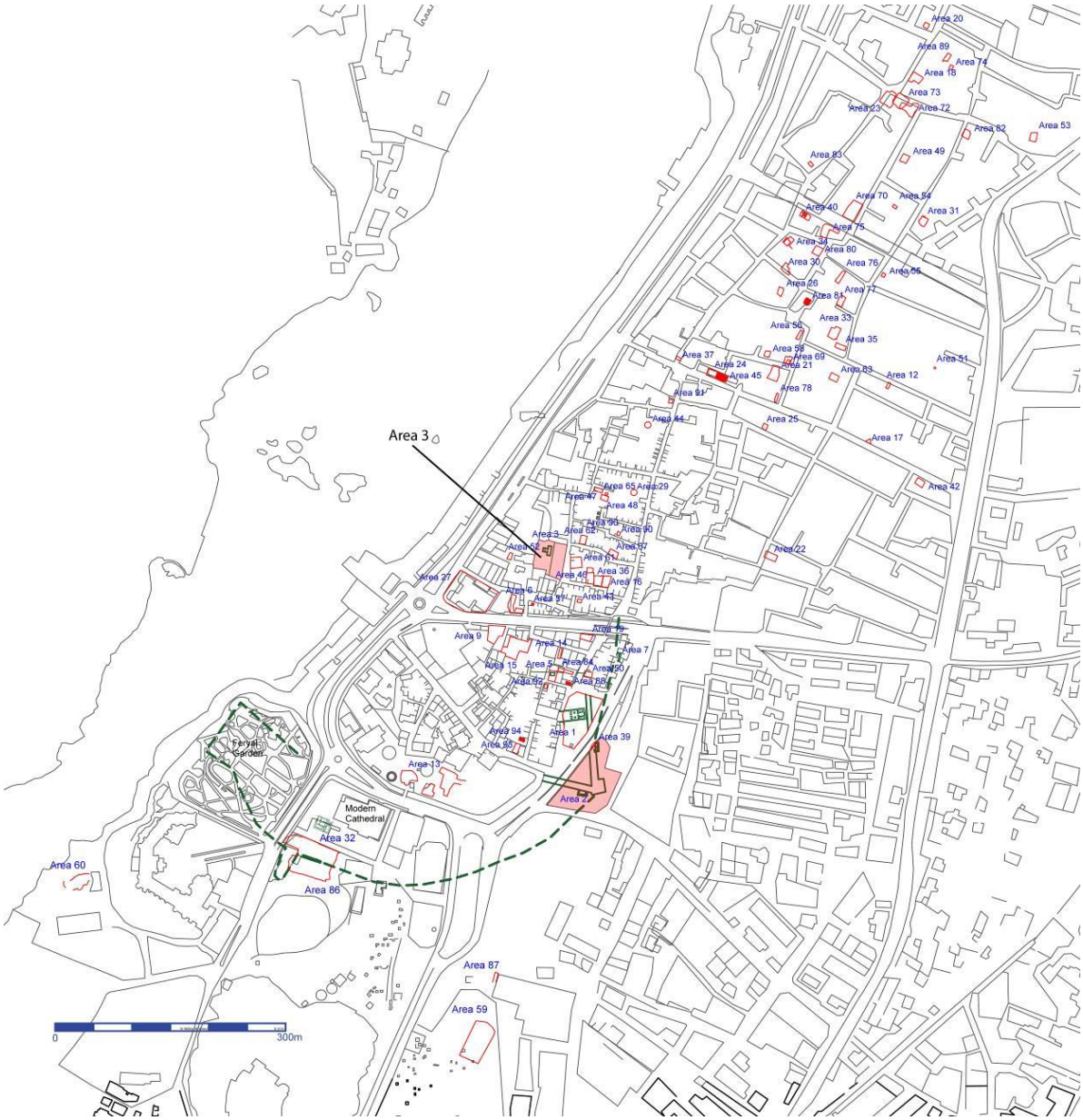

Fig. 4: Map of Aswan with investigated areas.

TRISTANT/MATTHIEU GHILARDI (eds.), *Landscape Archaeology. Egypt and the Mediterranean World, BiEtud* 169 (Cairo 2018), p. 28.

[5] C. VON PILGRIM et al., *MDAIK* 60 (2004), p. 122.

[6] H. JARITZ, 'Untersuchungen zum „Tempel des Domitian" in Assuan', *MDAIK* 31 (1975), p. 242.

[7] R. POCOCKE, *A Description of the East, and some other Countries*, London 1743, p. 117 and pl. 48. Here, the Temple of Domitian is called 'observatory', a building that was supposedly built over the well of Eratosthenes.

[8] *Description I*, pl. 38, nos. 5-7.

[9] A. MARIETTE-PACHA, *Monuments divers recueillis en Égypte et en Nubie* (Paris 1869), p. 6. C. VON PILGRIM et al., *MDAIK* 60 (2004), p. 122.

Previous research

Proper scientific research on the temple started with a short description by R. ENGELBACH[10] and a first epigraphical study by C. DE WIT.[11] HORST JARITZ was the first properly to investigate and publish what was then visible of the small temple.[12] When the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission at Old Aswan started its work in 2000, most of the temple was covered with modern debris and waste (Fig. 5). The area was cleaned in 2002 and 4000m³ of waste was removed. [13]

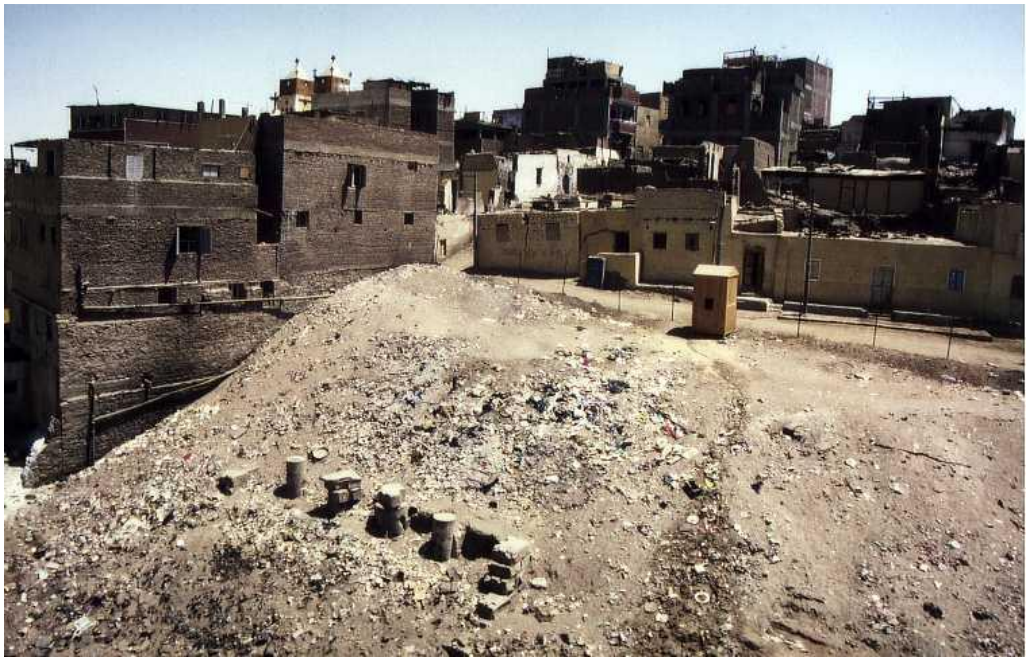

Fig. 5: Area 3 from the north before cleaning in 2001.

A short investigation in 2003 focussed on the medieval and modern remains of houses in the eastern part of the area. The work concentrated on House 1(in the south-eastern corner of the area), House 2 and House 3. House 1 was of modern date and was removed after investigation. Mostly covered by House 1, House 2 and House 3 to the north of it could be dated to the Mamluk period. Work then had to be interrupted due to urgent rescue excavations. [14]

Excavations resumed in 2014 (Figs. 3 and 6). These excavations were triggered by the construction of a massive retaining wall by the Swiss Institute. This wall had to be constructed

[10] R. ENGELBACH, 'Small Temple of Domitian at Aswan', *ASAE* 21 (1921), pp. 195 – 196.
[11] C. DE WIT, 'Inscriptions du Temple de Domitien', *CdE* 35 (1960), pp. 108-119.
[12] H. JARITZ, *MDAIK* 31 (1975), pp. 237-257. *Cf.* E. BRESCIANI, *Il Tempio Tolemaico di Isi ad Assuan, Biblioteca di Studi Antichi* 16 (Pisa 1978), pp. 13-14 for a short topographical outline and a report on previous research.
[13] C. VON PILGRIM et al., *MDAIK* 60 (2004), p. 124.
[14] C. VON PILGRIM et al., 'The Town of Syene. Report on the 3rd and 4th Season in Aswan', *MDAIK* 62 (2006), pp. 251-254.

as a support for the crumbling slope at the eastern limit of the site and the street on top of it.[15] Then, medieval remains of houses to the east of Street 7 were investigated.

Fig. 6: Map of Area 3 in the medieval period.

The earliest Stratum D was mostly covered by later structures. Only at the northern end of the excavated area were walls from this stratum preserved to considerable height (House 4).

In Stratum C, which was tentatively dated to the early Mamluk period,[16] several houses showed small rooms that were interpreted as workshops.[17]

[15] C. VON PILGRIM, in *14th Season*, pp. 3-4 and W. MÜLLER, in *14th Season*, p. 13.
[16] The medieval pottery was dated by GREGORY WILLIAMS with contributions by FELIX ARNOLD.
[17] W. MÜLLER, in *14th Season*, pp. 15-16.

The work in Season 14 gave a first glimpse of the potential of Area 3 as the only area where a larger portion of medieval Aswan is available for archaeological research and preservation.[18] The in some cases spectacular state of preservation – the walls of House 4 are partly preserved to a height of up to 4m – makes it an ideal showcase for the history of medieval Aswan.

Subsequent excavations in Seasons 16-19 (Fig. 3) were mostly focussed on the westernmost part of the area, at the bottom of a steep slope.[19] Here later layers had been removed in the late 19th and early 20th century, most probably due to the construction of the German Hospital and the former Grand Hotel, both situated just to the west of Area 3. Here, stone-chips, tools and fragments of such items, and evidence of quarrying, loading and transport of granite, were found on top of the bedrock. Pottery associated with these earliest traces of human activity dated from the Old to the New Kingdom. The most important discovery was a town quarter dating to the Late Period, erected on top of the quarry debris.

The latest structures encountered there were dated to the Ptolemaic period (Stratum J). In this context, House 20 was the most important (Figs. 7 and 31). It was constructed in the 2nd century BC and inhabited well into the Roman Imperial Period. While in the excavated area to the west of the site only few courses of mud bricks and scarce remains of floors were found, the house was preserved to a height of more than 2m under the Temple of Domitian further to the east.[20]

[18] G. WILLIAMS, *Syene VI. A Center on the Edge. Early Islamic Pottery from Aswan, BeiträgeBf* 24 (Gladbeck 2022), p. 26.

[19] C. VON PILGRIM et al., Report on the 16th Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2015/2016), *ASAE, forthcoming* (https://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report 16th season 2015_16.pdf, henceforth quoted as *16th Season*) 3-17. C. VON PILGRIM et al., 'Report on the 17th Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Old Aswan (2016/2017), *ASAE; forthcoming*, (https://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report Swiss_Egyptian Mission ASWAN 2017.pdf, henceforth quoted as *17th Season*), pp. 3-16. (https://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report Swiss_Egyptian Mission ASWAN 2018.pdf, henceforth quoted as *18th Season*), pp. 4-14. C. VON PILGRIM et al., 'Report on the 19th Season of the Swiss-Egyptian Joint Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2018/2019) (https://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report Swiss_Egyptian Mission ASWAN 2019.pdf, henceforth quoted as *19th Season*), pp. 4-14. C. VON PILGRIM et al., 'Report on the 20th Season of the Swiss-Egyptian Joint Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2019/2020) (https://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report Swiss_Egyptian Mission ASWAN 2020.pdf, henceforth quoted as *20th Season*), pp. 5-10.

[20] W. MÜLLER, in *17th Season*, p. 15.

Fig. 7: Map of Area 3 in the Ptolemaic and Roman Imperial periods.

The slope to the east of the Northern and Southern Sectors (Fig. 3) was investigated to get an uninterrupted settlement sequence from the town of the Late Period to the medieval period. In Stratum J/1 (early Roman Imperial Period), Street 1 came into existence. The east-west street to the south of House 20 was in use until the medieval period. The houses to the south of it showed a complicated settlement sequence.[21] As this is the context of the Temple of Domitian, the town quarter of Stratum J/1 will be of the utmost importance for this report.

[21] *Cf.* M. HEPA/W. MÜLLER, in *20th Season*, p. 10-29 for a recent assessment of the pottery from the slope and its stratigraphical context.

It was only in Season 20 that the area to the north of the temple was investigated. There, an east-west street (Street 5) with a sewer channel in its centre was found. This channel resembled other such installations found throughout Aswan.[22] This channel from the early medieval period was further investigated and completely excavated during this season.

The Temple of Domitian[23]

The topographical setting of the temple

The temple was the only visible monument of antiquity when the Napoleonic expedition reached Aswan at the end of the 18th century. The map in the Description de l'Égypte provides an idea of the topographical setting of the monument before the natural landscape was completely covered by modern buildings.[24] The temple is situated to the west of a steep slope leading up to a granite massif.[25] It is located in the northern part of 'Syéne Antique' just to the south of the 'Construction Romaine', probably a fortification dating to Late Antiquity.[26] To the west, near the river bank, 'Colonnes de Granit' mark the possible location of several standing and collapsed columns.[27] If this building were indeed the *basilica exercitatoria* mentioned on a now-lost building inscription supposedly found on the kôm of Aswan, [28] it would be of slightly later date than the Temple of Domitian (ca. 140 AD).[29] However, a *basilica exercitatoria* is of a purely military nature, often belonging to a camp and has little in common with a civilian *basilica*, a multi-functional institution of Roman urban life.[30] The architectural elements found *in situ* and around the modern German Hospital did not belong to a simple building for military training but to a prestigious urban installation.[31] These elements are tentatively dated to the 1st

[22] W. MÜLLER, in *20th Season*, pp. 9-10.
[23] PM V, p. 223-224. D. ARNOLD, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs* (Oxford 1999), p. 262.
[24] *Description* I, pl. 31.
[25] *Cf.* MÜLLER, in TRISTANT/GHILARDI (eds.), *Landscape Archaeology,* fig. 4 for an east-west section showing the geological relief of this area based on excavations and drillings.
[26] H. JARITZ, 'Die Kirche des heiligen Psôti vor der Stadtmauer von Assuan', in P. POSENER-KRIÉGER (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar, vol. 2, BiEtud* 97 (Cairo 1985), pp. 1-19 interprets the wall as part of the Late Antique city wall of Aswan while MÜLLER, in TRISTANT/GHILARDI (eds.), *Landscape Archaeology,* pp. 24-25, figs. 12 and 13 sees it as part of a Tetrarchic fortress.
[27] *Cf. Description* I, pl. 31 for the map and pl.38, 9 for a ground plan.
[28] H. JARITZ, 'Ein Bau der Römischen Kaiserzeit in Syene', in M. KRAUSE/S. SCHATEN (eds.), *THEMELIA. Spätantike und koptologische Studien Peter Grossmann zum 65. Geburtstag gewidmet* (Wiesbaden 1998), pp. 155-165. MÜLLER, in TRISTANT/GHILARDI (eds.), *Landscape Archaeology*, p. 28.
[29] CIL III 6025 = Dessau 2615.
[30] W. ECK, '"Basilicae" und ihre epigraphischen Texte: Kommunikation nach aussen und innen', *ZPE* 206 (2018), p. 6.
[31] *Cf.* VON PILGRIM et al., *MDAIK* 62, p. 255, fig. 15 for a map with findspots of Roman classical architecture and C. VON PILGRIM/W. MÜLLER, 'Report on the Ninth Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2008/2009), pp. 22-23 with numerous new finds of such spolia from the embankment wall in Area 52.

century AD,[32] roughly contemporary with the Temple of Domitian. The temple was thus near the administrative centre of Roman Syene.[33]

Both the Temple of Domitian and the '*basilica'* on the map of the Description show an orientation that is wrong by 180 degrees.[34] Contrary to traditional Egyptian temples, the temple is not oriented towards the river (west) but towards the east. This may be due to the fact that the temple was a processional temple but is also typical of an urban Roman sanctuary that was part of the contemporary Roman town quarter (Fig. 4) and oriented according to the existing street grid.[35]

Excavations in the vicinity of Area 3 have further added to our knowledge of the natural and urban landscape around the temple. The excavations and investigations in the area of the German Hospital have already been mentioned. To the east, especially Areas 61, 62, 46 with their rich Roman stratigraphy brought further important insights into the neighbourhood of the Temple of Domitian. In Areas 61[36] and 62[37] high above the temple, houses from the Roman Imperial period were part of a prestigious quarter of the town with vistas over the River Nile and the Island of Elephantine with its monumental temple terraces. As the associated pottery provided a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the houses in Area 62 in the middle of the 1st century AD, it is conceivable that the whole quarter came into existence at the same time as or slightly earlier than the Temple of Domitian.[38]

A sandstone foundation in Area 61 was part of a massive terrace, probably with a temple on top of it. If completed, this Ptolemaic construction, probably the first temple in the area of modern Shôna, must have been a landmark of the town at the time.[39]

The dating of the temple

Besides his frequent appearances on the preserved façade of the Pronaos, the Roman Emperor Domitian (81-96 AD) is named as the donor of the temple on a (now lost) inscription

[32] JARITZ, in KRAUSE/S. SCHATEN (eds.), *THEMELIA. Spätantike und koptologische Studien Peter Grossmann zum 65. Geburtstag gewidmet,* p. 163.
[33] W. MÜLLER, 'Syene (Ancient Aswan) in the First Millennium AD', in E. R. O'CONNELL (ed.), *Egypt in the First Millennium AD. Perspectives from new fieldwork, BMPES* 2 (Leuven-Paris-Walpole 2014), pp.66-67.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 156, *idem, MDAIK* 31, p. 238. Probably, the designers of the map drew the temple as they thought it should be.
[35] *Idem*, 'Urbanism in Graeco-Roman Egypt', in M. BIETAK et al. (eds.), *Cities and Urbanism in Ancient Egypt. Papers from a Workshop in 2006 at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, DÖAWW* 60 = *UZK* 35 (Vienna 2010), p. 251.
[36] C. VON PILGRIM/W. MÜLLER, 'Report on the Tenth Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2009/2010)', *ASAE, forthcoming* (https://swissinst.ch/downloads/Report on the Tenth Season of the Joint Swiss_Egyptian Mission in Syene_Old Aswan (2009_2010).pdf, henceforth quoted as *10th Season*), pp. 15-17.
[37] M. HEPA, *Syene V. Zwei Rettungsgrabungen im Norden der Antiken Stadt (Areal 62 und 90), BeiträgeBf* 23 (Gladbeck 2021), pp. 7-72.
[38] *Ibid., p. 86.*
[39] C. VON PILGRIM et al., 'Report on the 15th Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2014/2015)', *ASAE*; *forthcoming* (https://swissinst.ch/downloads/Swiss Institute 2014_2015.pdf), pp. 11-12.

on the architrave of the *naos.*[40] The decoration of the temple was continued under Domitian's successor Nerva (96-97 AD).[41] It seems remarkable that the latter continued the work on the temple and did not remove the name of his predecessor, who became subject to *Damnatio Memoriae* after his death. As earlier sightings of cartouches of the emperor Nero are doubtful, a date to the reign of Domitian is most feasible.

Situation and condition of the temple prior to this season's work

Today, only parts of the Pronaos are preserved. Of the inner parts of the temple proper, only the foundations still exist (Figs. 8 and 31). Most of the eastern façade of the Pronaos is still standing nearly to its original height. In three places, the intercolumnar walls were broken through. The single breach in the northern part of the façade might have served as a door during the medieval reuse of the temple. The same might be true of the southern more regular breach in the southern part of the façade. In the case of the southernmost breach, the destruction might simply be due to stone robbery.

Fig. 8: Overview of the Temple of Domitian from the north.

Parts of the northern and southern walls of the Pronaos are also preserved. While the façade of the Pronaos was mostly clear of medieval walls and installations to the north of the portal, the southern part was nearly completely covered by a medieval wall that was part of the latest phase of House 32 (House 32a) (Figs. 9 and 10). An east-west wall of the same phase abutted and partly covered the northern doorjamb of the portal. Walls were built against the northern and southern walls of the Pronaos. At the southern wall, the medieval structures were preserved to considerable height.

[40] JARITZ, *MDAIK* 31, pp. 250-251.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 251.

Fig. 9: Overview of Temple of Domitian and House 32a from the east.

Fig. 10: Temple of Domitian and House 32a from the north-east.

Except for the northern part of the Pronaos, the floors inside the temple are mostly destroyed. There a carefully laid pavement of sandstone slabs still exists.[42] Inside the temple, two east-west walls consisting of sandstone and lime mortar were constructed on top of the

[42] The situation in the 1970s as described by JARITZ, *MDAIK* 31, pp. 242-246 was more or less the same as today. Some details like the sandstone pavement were not visible at the time (*cf. ibid.,* p. 249).

pavement in the medieval period. Today, only scarce remains of these walls abutting the inner doorjambs of the portal are preserved.[43]

The area to the east of the eastern façade of the Pronaos was completely covered by House 32. Thus, no contemporary surface outside the temple was visible.

The Temple of Domitian after this season's work

The façade of the Pronaos cleared of later additions.

After the removal of the walls of House 32a, the complete façade of the Pronaos became visible. The façade showed four columns with intercolumnar walls and a well-preserved portal. The newly discovered southern half of the front of the temple shows a significantly higher degree of completion than the northern half as the cornices, freezes as well as other decorative elements were fully executed (Figs. 11 and 12).[44]

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 243.
[44] *Cf. ibid.*, p. 247 for the northern half of the façade.

Fig.12: Orthomosaic from a 3D SfM model by Carmen Rac.

At the southern end of the façade, two registers of sunk reliefs are preserved (Figs. 12 and 13). In the top register, the emperor stands on a *pt* sign and looks towards the north. He wears an *Atef*-crown and presents a small bowl with a miniature Maat-figure in it. The god who is addressed is lost. In the lower, better preserved, register, the standing emperor looks towards the north and wears the White Upper Egyptian crown. He presents what looks like the hieroglyph for *sm* (land)[45] to the god Khnum. The god stands in front of the other gods of the triad of Elephantine, Satet and Anuket. Of these goddesses, only the legs of the first goddess are preserved. The figures stand on a tripartite baseline. The lower second register and the undecorated soubassement are covered with gouges.[46]

Fig. 13: Detail of the southern part of the facade of the Pronaos from the east.

This scene has its equivalent at the northern end of the façade (Figs. 15 and 16). There, in the uppermost preserved register, the emperor stands looking towards the north and libates

[45] GARDINER, M20.
[46] *Cf.* J. H. F. DIJKSTRA, *Syene I. The Figural and Textual Graffiti from the Temple of Isis at Aswan*, *BeiträgeBf* 18 (Darmstadt/Mainz 2012), p. 37 for an explanation of the term.

from a *hs*-vase onto a small offering table. Again, he wears the Atef-crown. He stands on a *pt*-sign. In the lower register, the emperor stands at the northern end of the façade and looks towards the south. This time, he wears the Red Crown, standing for Lower Egypt. Again, he presents a *sm*-sign to the gods of the First Cataract. Here, two gods are preserved, Khnum in front, followed by Anuket. Satet is mostly destroyed by gouges and only her was-sceptre is preserved. The prominent position and size of Anuket is remarkable in this composition. The missing goddesses on the southern end of the façade probably were arranged in the same way.

Fig. 14: View of the eastern face of the northern part of the Pronaos.

Fig. 15: Detail of the eastern face of the northern part of the Pronaos.

The intercolumnar walls between the corner and the portal of the temple were severely damaged (Fig. 16). The first and biggest breach damaged not only the intercolumnar wall but also the area to the south of it. Only at the northern end of the screen wall, at the central column, can Satet be identified. She is standing and looks towards the south. The relief is framed by an elaborate torus and crowned by a cornice with an uraeus frieze on top of it. Between the northern torus and the column, the sunk relief of a standard crowned by a lotus flower with a cobra on top of it is preserved. The cobra wears the Red Crown symbolizing Lower Egypt (Figs. 17 and 12).

Fig. 16: View of the facade of the Pronaos from the east.

Fig. 17: Column at the southern part of the facade of the Pronaos from the east.

The second intercolumnar wall of the southern half of the façade was in better condition. The breach is ca. 1.20m wide and thus shows the dimensions of a door (Figs. 12, 17 and 18). The frame is only destroyed at the top. It is constructed in the same way as the southern intercolumnar wall. The tori of the frame are again flanked by standards with crowned cobras on

top of them. As both standards are preserved here, the original composition and meaning becomes evident. The standard to the south of the frame, next to the central column, carries a lotus flower and the crown of the Cobra is the White Crown. This means that the standard to the north of the frame symbolises Lower Egypt and the one to the south of it, Upper Egypt. Again, only traces remain of the decoration of the panel within the frame. Next to the southern torus stands a male figure. Only parts of his head, his upper body and his feet are preserved. He looks towards the north and stands on top of a tripartite baseline. At the northern end of the panel stands the goddess Isis. She looks towards the south. In her case, only the crown and her left arm are preserved. This part of the panel is not only broken but also damaged by gouges.

The visible part of the central column was completely covered in three columns of hieroglyphs (Fig. 17). The inscription is crowned by a *pt* sign that is exactly aligned to the top of the uraeus-friezes on the intercolumnar walls. Most of the southern column of the southern half of the temple frontage is covered by the intercolumnar wall and the southern jamb of the portal. There is only room for one column of hieroglyphs, again crowned by a *pt*-sign. [47]

On the intercolumnar walls of the northern part of the façade of the Pronaos no traces of decoration are preserved (Fig. 14). As the cornices, tori and friezes are not complete, it seems prudent to assume that they were not decorated. All surfaces are covered with deep gouges. Short columns of hieroglyphic inscriptions probably do not belong to the original decoration. It is remarkable that these inscriptions were respected and preserved when the gouges were scratched into the surface of the façade. The central column was not inscribed like the one at the southern part of the façade. The intercolumnar wall immediately to the north of the portal shows a breach that resembles the breach in the intercolumnar wall immediately to the south of the portal. As the dimensions are similar, it is possible that a door was broken through the façade of the Pronaos here.

The portal was partly covered by later walls and only became visible completely after this season's work (Figs. 12, 18, 19, 20). All elements of the portal, which had an open lintel, were decorated. Apart from the open lintel, the portal resembles the design of the intercolumnar walls. Both doorjambs show tori that are identical to those observed on the southern part of the façade.[48] Outside the frame, at the northern and southern limit of the portal, standards that were larger in size but otherwise identical to the ones flanking the intercolumnar walls show the symbols of Upper and Lower Egypt respectively. The standard itself is green and adorned with twining in yellow.

On the southern part of the open lintel, a male figure stands and looks towards the entrance. His skin is reddish-brown, his apron yellow. As the reliefs on the lintel are severely damaged, no obvious regalia are visible. There is, however, little doubt that this figure represents the emperor. His hands are raised in adoration. Of the addressee, only the pedestal of

[47] A detailed updated epigraphic study of the Temple of Domitian will be presented at a later time.
[48] *Cf.* JARITZ, *MDAIK* 35, p. 241, Abb. 3 for a reconstruction

a throne is preserved. The gods to the north of the emperor were intentionally chiselled out. At the end of the lintel, remains of the crown of Satet are visible. It is thus most probable that, again, the emperor addresses the gods of the cataract.

The northern part of the lintel shows a similar scene. The emperor stands in front of the enthroned goddess Satet. A second enthroned goddess behind her cannot be identified due to the bad condition of the painted relief. The colour scheme is the same as that on the southern part of the lintel.

The eastern façades of both doorjambs show the same decoration. Most prominent is the second register with the standing emperor looking towards the entrance. On the southern jamb he wears the White and on the northern, the Red crown. The relief is severely damaged, but on the southern scene, the emperor seems to hold a mace.

The lowest register or soubassement was only decorated on the eastern façade of the doorjambs of the portal. It shows a customary scene. Hapi, the god of the River Nile, is depicted on the lowest register of both jambs. He looks towards the entrance (Figs. 12, 18 and 20).

Of the inner faces of the portal only the lintel is decorated. Here, the torus and cornice from the eastern façade continue. This is the only part of the preserved decoration that was executed in bas-relief.

On the northern face of the southern part of the lintel and upper doorway, the reliefs are severely damaged and parts were chiselled out intentionally. At the eastern end, two vertical cartouches of Domitian are still visible. These cartouches replace the emperor, as to their west traces of the pedestal of a throne are preserved. Further to the west, another set of two cartouches of the same emperor is all that is left of the composition.[49]

The reliefs at the southern face of the northern part of the lintel and upper doorway are much better preserved.[50] Here again two vertical cartouches of Domitian stand at the beginning of the scene to the east. The cartouches represent the emperor, who is not shown in person. To the west of the cartouches, Osiris is sits on a throne and behind him stands the goddess Isis. Further to the west, on the façade of the upper doorway, the emperor stands behind a large vertical cartouche bearing his name. He looks towards the west and offers the Red and White Crowns of Egypt to the enthroned god Horus (in front) and the enthroned goddess Neith behind him.[51]

Of all preserved decorated parts of the temple, only the portal shows traces of polychromy. The colours were painted onto a thin layer of lime plaster. This and the decorated soubassement are evidence that the portal was completed before all other parts of the façade. The fact that the preserved parts of the outer faces of the southern and northern walls of the Pronaos are still in bosses and that the inner faces of the walls of the Pronaos were carefully smoothened but not decorated proves that the temple was never completed.

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[49] DE WIT, *CdE* 35, pp.108-109.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 114, figs. 23-24 and JARITZ, *MDAIK* 31, pl. 79b.
[51] DE WIT, *CdE* 35, pp. 112-113.

Fig. 18: Detail of the façade of the Temple of Domitian with the portal.

Fig. 19: View from the east of the southern doorjamb of the portal of the Temple of Domitian with intercolumnar wall.

Fig. 20: Detail of the northern doorjamb of the portal of the Temple of Domitian from the east.

The forecourt of the Temple of Domitian

Both the temple and its architectural context were the foci of the investigation. After the documentation and removal of several phases of walls of a medieval house (House 32), the pavement of the forecourt of the temple came to light (Figs. 21 and 22). The pavement abuts the eastern face of the *Stylobate*, a kind of pedestal, on which the façade of the Pronaos and the other walls of the temple were standing.[52] The slightly uneven pavement is 30-40cm lower than the top of the *Stylobate* (ca. 98.5m asl[53]).

Fig. 21: Overview of the Temple of Domitian from the east.

[52] JARITZ, *MDAIK 35*, p. 243.
[53] Asl = above sea level. The levels follow the system of elevations used on Elephantine Island.

Fig. 22: View of the forecourt of the Temple of Domitian from the north.

Fig. 23: View of the forecourt from the south-west with damaged pavement.

The pavement consists of sandstone slabs that were carefully set. The pavement was severely damaged by numerous illicit excavations (Fig. 23). Pits, shafts, and tunnels, some of them as recent as 2011, others dating back to the medieval period, were dug in search of treasure due to the temple's visibility throughout its history.

Due to the difference in elevation (the top of the threshold lies at 98.5m asl, while the average elevation of the pavement is ca. 98.1m asl), a small staircase leads up from the pavement to the threshold of the temple (Figs. 24 and 25). No door-hinges are preserved at the threshold, but both upper door sockets, made of bronze, are still embedded in the two parts of the lintel. Two rectangular holes just behind the elevated part of the threshold show how both wings of the door were locked. At 1.70m, the stairs are exactly as wide as the portal. The ramps (each of them ca. 35cm wide) about the *Stylobat.* The staircase was constructed of three sandstone blocks. Four shallow steps flanked by two narrow ramps were carved into these blocks. The southern ramp was partly chiselled away when a wall was constructed there in the medieval period. Similarly, the northern ramp was damaged when it was partly covered by the foundation of a wall of the earliest phase of House 32 (House 32c). The steps of the staircase were heavily worn as they were in use from the construction of the temple well into the medieval period.

Fig. 24: View of the entrance into the temple with a detail of the staircase from the north.

Fig. 25: The portal of the temple from the east.

A square sandstone slab with a square hole at its centre is situated to the east of the staircase slightly to the south of the main axis (Fig. 22). As the pavement around it is mostly destroyed, this installation is difficult to interpret. Probably it served as an emplacement for a square pillar, a stela or even a small obelisk. The position just in front of the entrance seems strange. The way the block was integrated into the pavement proves that it was part of the of the original design of the forecourt.

Several small holes with a diameter of 10-15cm were drilled into the pavement. Pairs of such holes are located next to the eastern face of the *Stylobate*, 2m to the south of the staircase and inside the Pronaos at the western face of the *Stylobate,* just to the west of the northern central column. These holes showed a conical cross section and probably served as pot stands.

The eastern and southern limits of the forecourt could be ascertained. In both cases, the pavement was limited by massive (two-brick-wide) mud-brick walls. These walls were dismantled to the level of the pavement of the forecourt when House 32 was constructed. The probable entrance into the temple precinct from Street 7 was situated in the building's main axis. It was destroyed when the entrance into House 32 was constructed in exactly the same location (Fig. 26). The ground plan of the forecourt was irregular as the eastern limiting wall

had to be adapted to the predecessor of Street 7 (Figs. 7 and 27). The temple was thus integrated into the existing street grid. Stone slabs leaned against the eastern face of the southern limiting wall of the forecourt. The layers abutting these stones and the exposed parts of the wall itself are typical street layers with small fragments of pottery.[54] The northern limit of the forecourt is still covered by medieval walls and will be investigated next season.

Fig. 26: View of the main entrance into House 32 from the west.

Fig. 27: View of the forecourt from the south-east with the eastern limiting wall of the pavement.

The pavement consists of only one layer of sandstone slabs of different thickness and sizes. It was laid directly on top of earlier loose layers. Some parts of the pavement are constructed of sandstone chips haphazardly bonded with lime mortar. The pavement's bad condition is partly due to its poor construction. Besides the few above-mentioned functional

[54] *Cf.* S. MARTIN-KILCHER/J. WININGER, *Syene III. Untersuchungen zur Römischen Keramik und weiteren Funden aus Syene/Assuan (1-7. Jahrhundert AD), BeiträgeBf* 20, p. 67 for street-layers and *ibid.*, p. 69 Abb. 4-3 for a typical section through a street from Area 1. *Cf.* W. MÜLLER, in *18th Season*, p. 9 and *idem*, in *17th Season*, figs. 8 and 9 for an example from Street 2 in Area 3 dating to the late period.

details, only one figural graffito, a highly stylized human face, was observed on the surface of the pavement (Fig. 28).

The forecourt of the Temple of Domitian covered an area of 95sqm. It was not a major public space within Roman Syene, a town that in the Early Imperial period had surpassed Elephantine in terms of population and administrative standing. It is thus not surprising that no traces of public nor even economic life are preserved there.

Fig. 28: Graffito on the pavement of the temple forecourt.

The town quarter around the temple

The temple was constructed on top and inside the ruins of an earlier building (House 20). House 20 was begun in the first half of the 2nd century BC in Stratum J/2 and showed numerous repairs. During Stratum J/1, House 20 was abandoned, and the Temple of Domitian was built on top of its eastern part (Figs. 7 and 29).[55]

Fig. 29: Overview of the Temple of Domitian and House 20 from the west.

[55] MÜLLER, in *17th Season*, p. 15. *Cf.* for a date of Stratum J/1, see M. HEPA, in *20th Report*, pp. 18-21.

The southern wall of this building was not destroyed and in parts was even repaired when the temple was constructed. It thus covered the rough southern face of the foundation of the temple and served as terracing wall towards the contemporary surface of Street 1 to the south that was ca. two metres lower than the pavement of the forecourt. Due to a slight difference in orientation the gap between this wall and the southern wall of the temple varied in width. While the south-western corner of the Pronaos nearly touched the wall, the south-eastern corner was ca. 50cm further to the south. The resulting gap was filled with sandstone chips, probably from the part-removal of the still visible bosses. As the preserved upper level of the infill of the gap was ca. 0.5m higher than the pavement of the forecourt, the gap was walled up with sandstone rubble at its eastern end (Figs. 13, 30 and 31). Further down the slope, the distance between the southern face of the Naos and the terrace was more than 3.50m. There only the foundations of the temple are preserved, and the layer of stone chips was already removed. Thus, the larger gap between the Naos and the wall was filled with compact mud-brick debris and mud mortar. The southern limiting wall of the forecourt abutted the eastern end of the southern wall of former House 20.

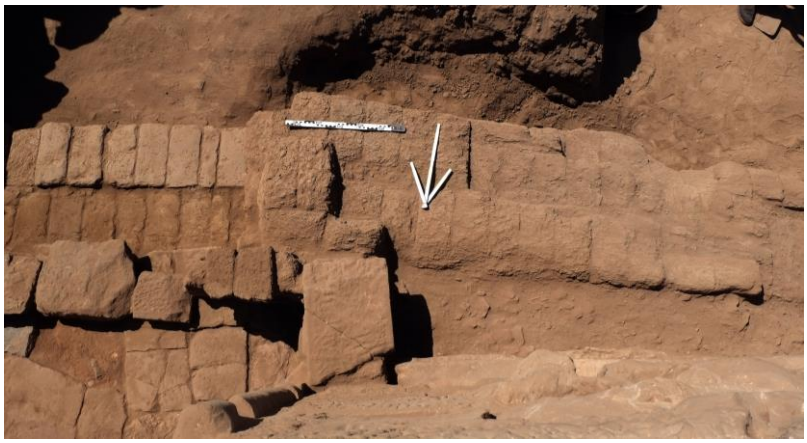

Fig. 30: Gap between the southern wall of House 20 and the southern wall of the temple.

Fig. 31: Detail of the walled-up gap at the south-eastern corner of the temple.

Street 1 came into existence to the south of House 20 during Stratum J/1 (Figs. 7 and 29), when the large open area or courtyard to the south of House 20 was overbuilt by Houses 8,16 and 17.[56] The street was ca. 2.5m wide and was in use until the medieval period, when it was blocked by House 3. Further to the east, Street 6, a narrow east-west passage between Houses 8 and 17 only existed during Stratum J/1. According to the pottery, Street 6 was in use from the Augustan period and given up in the second half of the 1st century AD.[57]

As the ground and with it the houses sloped down from Street 1 towards the south, the view of the temple from the south and probably even from the island of Elephantine must have been impressive. Contrary to prior assumptions that the temple was built against a slope, namely, that the foundations were significantly deeper at the western than at the eastern end of the temple,[58] trenches to the east of the temple, where the pavement was destroyed, showed very deep foundations. Other than the slope from south to north, the east-west slope did not exist in antiquity but is a result of building activity at the beginning of the 20th century.

Taking the results from Area 3, Area 61, 62 and 90 together, it seems that the earliest Roman houses in the region of modern Shôna were constructed shortly before or at the same time as the Temple of Domitian. This means that the construction of the temple was, if not the trigger, at least an essential part of the new urban development in this part of Syene during the Early Roman Imperial Period.

The temple of Domitian – a major monument of Roman Syene

The preserved decoration does not establish the name of the deity to whom the temple was dedicated with certainty.[59] However, the inscription on the lost architrave of the Pronaos makes it very probable that the Temple of Domitian was dedicated to Khnum and his entourage.[60]

The decoration of the Pronaos shows aspects common to all Egyptian temples. The temple is a miniature cosmos, a model of the ancient Egyptian world.[61] Its orientation and decoration are chosen very carefully to connect this model world to the topographical and geographical realities. Symbols referring to Lower Egypt (Red Crown, Papyrus) are depicted in the north, those standing for Upper Egypt (White Crown, Lotus) in the south.[62] The scenes on the reliefs of the intercolumnar walls are framed by such elements to root them in this concept of reality.

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[56] MÜLLER, in *19th Season*, pp. 11-12 and HEPA/MÜLLER, in *20th Season*, pp. 12-14.
[57] HEPA/MÜLLER, in *20th Season*, p. 19.
[58] JARITZ, *MDAIK* 31, p. 246 and p. 243, Abb. 4.
[59] DE WIT, *CdE* 35, p. 119.
[60] JARITZ, *MDAIK* 35, pp.250-251.
[61] D. ARNOLD, *Die Tempel Ägyptens. Götterwohnungen, Kultstätten, Baudenkmäler* (Zürich 1992), p. 40.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

Additionally, the Temple of Domitian is embedded in the religious or theological landscape of the First Cataract. As has been shown for the Temple of Isis in Aswan,[63] Elephantine and Syene are not only closely connected geographically and administratively throughout their history, but also theologically. The gods of Elephantine, namely the triad of Khnum, Satet and Anuket are omnipresent on the monuments of Syene. Neither god nor ruler could ignore this reality. Thus, Domitian is shown in the company of these gods on the Temple of Domitian just like Isis and the Ptolemaic kings on the temple dedicated to her.

This connection was enacted in processions that were part of the festivals of the gods of the First Cataract, when the gods left their temples on the island and travelled among other places to the east bank of the River Nile.[64]

Reuse of the temple and the medieval town quarter in Area 3

The temple remained untouched throughout the Roman period. There is no evidence of any architectural structures predating the medieval period in the temple or forecourt. Two walls inside the Pronaos that were interpreted as 'possibly Coptic'[65] are constructed in the same way as the stone walls of the medieval House 32. Contrary to the other preserved and accessible temple of ancient Syene, the Temple of Isis, no evidence of reuse as a church was found in the scant remains of the Temple of Domitian.

Wastewater disposal

The investigation of the sewer channel running under Street 5 to the north of the temple was continued.[66] The eastern end of the channel, especially its course in the area of the junction of Streets 5 and 7, was only excavated this season (Figs. 6, 21, 32, 33 and 34). There, the channel shows a sharp bend towards the north. This means that within the limits of Area 3, Street 7 contains no such channel. The conduit of the channel itself is only 20cm wide and less than 20cm high. While these dimensions must have made disposal of water, especially if mixed with other waste, difficult, numerous layers of lime plaster show that the inner coating of the channel was renewed several times, evidence of the fact that it was in use for some time.

[63] E. LASKOWSKA-KUSZTAL, 'L'Isis d'Assouan et son armée', *EtudTrav* 21 (2007).
[64] ARNOLD, in SIGL, *SDAIK* 47, pp. 155-157 and 160.
[65] JARITZ, *MDAIK* 31, p. 243.
[66] *Cf.* MÜLLER, in *19th Season*, pp. 13-14 and *idem*, in *20th Season*, p. 10 for results from previous seasons and references.

Fig. 32: Orthomosaic of the sewer channel from a 3D SfM-model by Carmen Rac.

Fig. 33: Overview of Street 5 with sewer channel from the north.

Fig. 34: View of the sewer channel and Street 5 from the west.

There is evidence for two kinds of wastewater disposal in early medieval Aswan. The more elaborate is the collecting of the wastewater in feeder channels that run into central sewers. In the case of Area 3, the central or collector sewer under Street 5 drained into the nearby River Nile. Where the river was too far away, as on the north-eastern outskirts of the town (Area 31), the sewers drained into bigger channels that drained into an unknown destination.[67]

Another, more local way of water disposal is omnipresent in Aswan. One or several houses used deep sanitary pits. These sump pits consisted of deep circular vertical shafts that were carefully lined with fired bricks. In Area 3, feeder channels draining into such a shaft were still preserved.[68] In two other cases in the same area, the upper parts of the shafts and probable feeder channels were already destroyed.[69] As all these installations are located to the south of the junction of Streets 5 and 7, it is evident that houses lacking easy access to a sewer channel depended on these deep vertical shafts (Fig. 6). If disposing of one's wastewater via a feeder channel into a central sewer was more prestigious than using the local sump pit, the presence or absence of different kinds of such installations might be important for the interpretation of the social status of neighbourhoods of medieval Aswan.

Another crucial result of the investigation of these sanitary installations is the fact that the sewer channels and sump pits are roughly contemporary and were constructed during the Fatimid and probably Ayyubid period. While it is possible that these channels and pits were in use for some time, no specialised installations for wastewater disposal are evident for the Mamluk period. The fact that both sump pits and sewer channels show a similar elaborate design all over the town seems to indicate central planning.

House 32c[70]

The forecourt and probably even the interior of the Temple of Domitian became part of House 32 at the latest from the Fatimid period onwards (the material from the earliest layers has yet to be dated). The house was part of a densely built-up quarter of the medieval town. Street 7 was located to its east and Street 5 to its north (Fig. 6). To the south, Street 1 was still at use. House 32c was constructed on top of the remains of the pavement and its delimiting wall, high above the contemporary surface of Street 1.

The ground plan of the earliest phase of House 32 (House 32c) is only partly preserved as its walls were mostly replaced in later phases. The main entrance into House 32c and all later phases was situated in the exact east-west axis of the temple and thus replaced the earlier main portal into the precinct of the Temple of Domitian (Fig. 26). From the entrance, a corridor led

[67] W. MÜLLER, in C. VON PILGRIM et al., 'The Town of Syene – Report on the 7th Season in Aswan', *MDAIK* 66 (2010), p. 184.
[68] *Idem*, in *14th Season*, p. 16 and p. 32, fig. 24.
[69] *Idem*, in *16th Season*, p. 16 and *idem*, in *18th Season*, p. 13.
[70] For the nomenclature of phases of houses *cf.* HEPA, *Syene V*, p. 4.

towards the portal of the Pronaos. This corridor (Room 4) probably was the central distributor of the house. Due to the bad state of preservation of the walls, only the remains of one door that led from Room 4 into Room 3 were observed. Rooms 1 and 2 were located to the north of the corridor.

A feeder channel from the central sewer in Street 5 led into Room 1 at its north-western corner, just where the northern wall of the house met the eastern façade of the Pronaos. The channel was carefully integrated in the northern wall and was thus constructed at the same time (Fig. 35). An installation at the north-western corner of the room was connected to this channel (Figs. 35 and 36). It consisted of a small basin that was attached to the southern face of the northern wall just on top of the conduit of the channel and had a pedestal, possibly a toilet, to the south of it. The basin was mostly destroyed and only traces of the lime mortar with which it was coated remained on the façade of the Pronaos, the northern wall and the pedestal. From these scarce remains a width of 40cm and a length of at least 90cm could be reconstructed. The depth was at least 30cm. Like the channel, the pedestal was made of fired bricks and lime mortar. It measured 90x60cm and was constructed on top of a sandstone slab. This slab, resembling the stones that were used to cover the main channel in Street 5, was put on top of the channel that ran under the pedestal. The slab was perforated. The round hole had a diameter of ca. 12cm and was open towards the south. At the southern end of the pedestal, a funnel-like recess, carefully coated with lime plaster met the hole in the slab. The pedestal was only preserved to a height of 20cm. The channel under it was 20cm wide and ca. 25cm high. It showed a steep gradient from south to north. The installation in Room 1 shows similarities to a structure of similar date observed at the southeastern corner of Area 3. There, a pillar with a side length of 70cm had a pottery vessel or pipe at its centre. The structure could not be excavated completely at the time and its function is unclear.[71] The situation in House32c/Room 1 is completely different. Here, the installation is clearly a part of the inventory of the earliest medieval phase of the house. It helps to understand the function of the system of wastewater disposal at the time and shows – whether or not it is a toilet – a very high standard of living. Considering this elaborate way of wastewater disposal, the question of how fresh water was transported to the houses seems especially important. In this context, a probable water-lifting device and water tanks observed in Area 52 are interesting.[72] From these installations, water was probably transported by water carriers or vendors to individual houses. Such a way of water distribution, well documented from medieval Cairo,[73] was not too difficult in the case of House 32 as the *saqia* and tanks at the riverbank are just 60m away.

[71] MÜLLER, in *14th Season*, p.14.
[72] *Idem*, in *9th Season* p. 21-22 and *idem*, in TRISTANT/GHILARDI (eds.), *Landscape Archaeology*, pp. 23-24 and 28.
[73] *Cf.* A. LEVANONI, ‚Water Supply in Medieval Middle Eastern Cities: The Case of Cairo', *AlMasaq* 20:2 (2008) (http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09503110802283408), pp. 179-205 and especially *ibid.*, pp. 182-183 for Fustat.

Fig. 35: Detail of the feeder channel running into House 32c/Room 1 from the north.

Fig. 36: View of the hydraulic installation in House 32c/Room1 from the south-east.

Probably due to the hydraulic installation, House32c/Room 1 had a pavement of fired bricks as a floor (Fig. 37). Room 2, lacking such an installation, showed a simple mud floor. Before these floors were constructed, ca. 5cm of windblown sand had accumulated on top of the old pavement of the forecourt of the Temple of Domitian signifying a short period of abandonment. The preserved parts of the northern wall of this phase of the house are made of stone. The eastern wall of House 32c was only preserved in Room 2. There, a mud-brick wall was resting on a massive stone socle. The southern wall of Room 2 was constructed of mud bricks with a foundation consisting of sandstone pieces and two well-preserved wooden beams. The southern wall of Room 1 was destroyed down to its foundations by a later wall. The presence of the hydraulic installation at the eastern façade of the Pronaos means that this wall was the western limit of Room 1. Considering the reconstructed façade of the Pronaos, Room1 was probably not roofed. As the breach through the intercolumnar wall cannot be dated, it is not

clear whether it constituted a door from Room 1 into the Pronaos. As the façade was covered with traces of several phases of lime-plaster, the reliefs and inscriptions were probably invisible.

Fig. 37: View of House 32c/Room 1 from the west.

The preserved part of the southern wall of Room 4 was constructed of stone and fired bricks. Of the part of House 32c south of Room 4, only the southern wall of the house was preserved. The two-bricks-wide wall again rested on a sandstone foundation. It was built on top of the earlier Roman wall that delimited the pavement of the forecourt.

House 32b

House 32b (Fig. 6), the second phase of the building, was better preserved than its predecessor. At the time of its construction, the neighbourhood was completely refurbished and received a considerable upgrade. To the north, a stone wall was constructed against the northern wall of House 32b, creating thus a more prestigious and aesthetically pleasing facade towards Street 5 (Figs. 7 and 8). The wall seems to have covered the northern face of the northern wall of the Pronaos. This also happened at the same time with the houses to the north of Street 5 and to the east of Street 7.

The ground plans of Rooms 1, 2, 3 and 4 did not change. While the main entrance into the house was still at the east of the corridor (Room 4), albeit on a significantly higher level, a new entrance came into existence from Street 7 into Room 2. Probably Room 2 was now used as a shop or workshop with no connection to the rest of the house. Similar rooms were observed

to the east of Street 7 (House 5).[74] As the level of Street 7 had risen significantly, the threshold of the door connecting Room 2 to Street 7 was at a level of 99.8m asl, 1.30m higher than the floor level of House 32c/Room 2. Thus, the room was filled with a homogenous infill consisting of mud brick and settlement debris. On top of this layer, a pavement of fired bricks and sandstone slabs was constructed. The level of this floor was at ca. 99.10m asl. Thus, a small staircase, consisting of two sandstone blocks used as stepping stones, was broken into the western face of the eastern wall of the room (Fig. 38). This floor was mostly destroyed/eroded at the time of excavation.

Fig. 38: View of the entrance into House 32b/Room 2 from the south.

Whilst a wall was built against the eastern face of the Pronaos in Room 3, no such construction was found in Room 1. Thus, the situation there did not change since House 32c. The pavement of fired bricks in House 32c/Room 1 and the hydraulic installation were probably still in use.

The new southern wall of Room 1 showed a connecting door to Room 3. The 1m-wide door comprises a massive sandstone threshold (Figs. 33 and 40). As the old pavement in Room 1 was at a significantly lower level, a step was integrated into the wall. The preserved parts of the wall are made of reused sandstone blocks, at least at the faces. Some of these blocks were inscribed or decorated and were clearly robbed from the Temple of Domitian. Traces of mud bricks belonging to the upper portion of the wall were still preserved at the eastern face of the northern jamb of the portal. The southern wall of House 32c/Room 2 remained unchanged.

[74] MÜLLER, in *14th Season*, p. 16.

Fig. 39: House 32b: Detail of door between Rooms 1 and 3. Wall with reused blocks abutting the northern doorjamb of the portal of the Pronaos.

As the two east-west walls inside the Pronaos were constructed in the same way as the southern wall of Room 1 and are aligned to the northern and southern walls of the corridor (Room 4), they probably belong to House 32b. The breach/door through the intercolumnar wall in Room 1 probably belonged to the same phase. In the case of Room 3, there is no evidence for such a scenario, as the façade was covered by an east-west wall at the time. On the other hand, only the imprint of this wall on the northern face of the southern wall of House32b was preserved. It is thus possible that one or two doors led into the Pronaos proper via the breaches. In this case, the Pronaos and probably the Naos of the Temple of Domitian were part of the ground plan of House 32b.

The eastern wall of House 32c was destroyed from the southeastern corner of Room 2 southwards and replaced with a massive stone wall. The construction of the wall is characteristic of most walls made of stone or fired bricks in House 32b and 32a. The faces of the wall consist of carefully set sandstone pieces, often slabs, while the core between them is filled with brick (fired and unfired) and stone rubble in compact mud mortar. The stones at the faces are bound with white lime mortar.

Together with the eastern wall, a new door was constructed. The level of the threshold (99.8m asl) is the same as the threshold of the door that connected Street 7 and Room 2. The material and the dimensions of the threshold, a massive block of rose granite measuring ca.

1.50m x 40cm, are similar to those of the threshold of House 32c at the same location but at a significantly lower level and reflect the continuing high status of House 32.

At the same time as the eastern wall, the southern wall of the house and the northern wall of Room 5 were renewed. The southern wall was constructed against the northern face of the southern wall of House 32c. The wall was made of mud bricks resting on a foundation of sandstone blocks that were put directly onto the pavement of the forecourt of the Temple of Domitian. The northern wall of House 32c/Room 5 was partly removed and replaced with a new wall of the same dimensions and construction as its predecessor. Both walls were interlocked with the eastern wall of the house by a special method (Fig. 40). In both cases, the stones of the eastern wall continue from the corner westwards in a stepped manner. On top of the stones, several courses of fired bricks continued these steps, and then mud bricks were put on top of them.

Fig. 40: Northern face of the southern wall of House 32b.

The southern wall of the house is 1.5 bricks wide and shows a buttress at its northern face. The small pilaster is constructed in the same way as the wall and projects ca. 0.5m at an acute angle into Room 5. This construction probably became necessary because the pavement of the forecourt of the temple, which constituted stable building ground, ended just to the east of it.

The room was most probably entered from Room 4. While no traces of a door were found, a special construction at the southern face of the northern wall of the room might constitute remains of a step leading to a door at a higher level that is now lost. The door would thus be located in the centre of the northern wall of the room.

In Room 5, an east-west wall ran at ca. 70cm from the northern face of the southern wall of the house. As this wall bonded with the western wall and the western wall was interlocked with the southern wall, all these constructions are contemporary. The wall was constructed the same way as the central pillar of the staircase in Room 3. In this case, several courses of mud bricks were preserved, and the stones were thus just the foundation of a mud-brick wall.

The first floor in House 32b/Room 5 was a pavement of unfired mud bricks (Fig. 41). Only half-bricks were used. Due to the bad quality of these bricks the room showed numerous consecutive floors before House 32b was given up.

Fig. 41: Mud brick pavement in House 32b/Room 5.

Room 3 was entered from Room 4 via a 1m-wide door at the northeastern corner. To the south of the entrance was the mud-brick substructure of a staircase. A massive stone wall in the centre of the room served as the central pillar of this construction. As the enclosed U-shaped staircase sloped up from the entrance at the eastern wall of Room 3, it was probably high enough at the façade of the Pronaos to allow a door through the northern breach there. At the northern end of the central column, a sandstone block served as a threshold for a door leading to the room under the western course of the stairs (Fig. 43).

Fig. 42: House 32b/Room 3: Staircase.

The earliest phase of House 3[75] abutted the southern face of the southern wall of House 32b and is thus either contemporary with or younger than the latter. Prior to the construction of House 3, several metres of densely packed mud-brick debris were deposited on top of the last street layer of Street 1. House 3 now blocked Street 1. This brought about a major change in the street grid of this part of Aswan. The downwards slope towards the south was less pronounced but still present.

House 32a

The ground plan of House 32a (Fig. 6) differed considerably from its predecessors. Now, Room 4 was reduced to the area between Rooms 2 and 5. The former western part of Room 4 became part of Room 3. This room had a pavement of reused sandstone slabs (Fig. 9). A wall, probably a threshold, separated Rooms 3 and 4. This construction was on top of the pavement and thus belonged to a later phase of House 32a. As in all other phases of the house, no floor was preserved in Room 4. However, traces of the pavement to the east of the threshold are evidence that Room 4 had the same pavement as Room 3. The two rooms were not separated by a door at the beginning of the last phase of the house.

The door into Room 1 remained the same and the portal of the temple probably still served as a door into other parts of the house, while the small staircase to the east of the portal was now completely covered with debris and the pavement overlying it.

A massive wall was built against the façade of the Pronaos in Room 3 (Fig. 10). The lower courses of this wall consisted of fired bricks, while the uppermost part was made of

[75] VON PILGRIM et al., *MDAIK* 62, p. 253.

unfired mud bricks. Again, the faces of the wall were carefully set while its core consisted of brick and stone rubble in mud mortar. The southern wall of Room 3 was built against the northern face of the southern wall of House 32b. The eastern wall of the room was partly replaced with a new wall constructed in the same way as the other walls of this phase.

A similar wall replaced the eastern wall of Room 1. Room 5 had a pavement of fired bricks (Fig. 9). A sandstone block that served as threshold on top of the northern wall marks the location of a door at the western end of the northern wall of the room. The broken sandstone block was ca. 50cm long and 17cm wide. It had a door hinge near its eastern end.

No floors or other functional indicators of this phase were found in Rooms 1 and 2. The door from Room 2 to Street 7 was given a new threshold with an elevation of 100.40m asl. This is approximately the same level as the latest threshold into House 5/Room 2. Consequently, House 32a belongs to Stratum C/3.

The medieval reuse of the Temple of Domitian and its forecourt

The dating of the phases of House 32 is difficult as the associated material culture has not yet been studied. Considering the findings of Season 14 and the levels of thresholds of neighbouring houses, House 32a probably dates to Stratum C/3 (Mamluk period, more precisely the 15th or 16th century AD). House 32b shows similarities to the houses of Stratum C/4 (Ayyubid – Early Mamluk). House 32c is connected to the sewer channel and thus belongs to Stratum D (Fatimid-Ayyubid).[76]

To connect House 32 stratigraphically to the houses at the eastern limit of the site and to gain datable material, an archaeological investigation of Street 7 is planned for next season. Further excavations in Street 1 will be necessary to get a better idea of the later history of the Temple of Domitian from the Early Imperial period to Late Antiquity, as no traces of architectural structures or other evidence of human activity from that long period of time were found in the temple precinct. The pavement of the forecourt served its function until the medieval period. It was abandoned shortly before House 32c was constructed.

Conclusion and outlook

Considering the situation of the Temple of Domitian before the start of the work of the Joint Mission (Fig. 5) and after this season's excavation (Fig. 8), it becomes evident that the preparations for proper site management and – as a final goal – the opening of Area 3 to the public are well under way. This is the result of the long and continuous commitment of the Swiss Institute for Architectural and Archaeological Research on Ancient Egypt in Cairo to

[76] MÜLLER, in *14th Season,* pp. 12-18 and *idem,* in *20th Report,* p. 10. *Cf* W. KUBIAK/T. STANLON, 'FUSTAT EXPEDITION: PRELIMINARY REPORT, 1966', *JARCE* 10 (1973), pp. 17-19 and S. PRADINES et al., 'Excavations of the Archaeological Triangle. 10 Years of Archaeological Excavations in Fatimid Cairo (2000-2009)', *Mishkah* 4 (2009), p. 195 and 198 for the dating of sewer channels and sump pits.

create special archaeological zones within the modern city. The Temple of Domitian will provide visitors to Aswan with the opportunity to experience a second well-preserved temple in Aswan besides the already opened Temple of Isis. Moreover, the medieval and Roman town quarters are both attractive and instructive. Here the temple can be presented not as an isolated monument but as part of a neighbourhood of the Roman town. The medieval quarter around the former temple, with its streets, shops and workshops will provide insights into the economic and social realities of the people living at the time. Of special importance is the elaborate system of wastewater disposal, evidence of the high standard of living in Fatimid and Ayyubid Aswan. The population of Aswan, though living at the southern border of Egypt, enjoyed the same amenities as the population of the capital further north.

(W. Müller)

3. Report of the anthropological investigation of human skeletal remains from Syene/Aswan[77]

Most of the human remains investigated this season were excavated in Area 45 where they were buried in Late Antique chamber tombs.[78] Applied methods included the morphological estimation of age-at-death, sex[79] and stature[80] as well as morphometric measurements[81] and the evaluation of individual skeletal traits.[82] Possible pathological alterations were observed and interpreted according to the recommendations of Schultz.[83] Additionally, current palaeopathological literature was consulted.[84]

[77] The investigation took place from February 21st to March 9th, 2024, in the magazines of the Inspectorate of the Ministry of State for Antiquities and Tourism of Aswan and Nubia in Aswan and in Jebel Shisha.

[78] *Cf.* J. NOVÁČEK/K. SCHEELEN- NOVÁČEK, in C. VON PILGRIM et al., 'Report on the 23rd Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2022/2023)', *ASAE, forthcoming,* pp. 12-15 for the last report on human remains and the circumstances of their discovery in Area 45.

[79] D. FEREMBACH/I. SCHWIDETZKY/M. STLOUKAL, 'Recommendations for Age and Sex Diagnoses of Skeletons', Journal of Human Evolution 9 (1980), pp. 517–549 and F. RÖSING/M. GRAW/M. MARRÉ/S. RITZ-TIMME/M. A. ROTHSCHILD/K. ROETZSCHER/A. SCHMELING/I. SCHROEDER/G.GESERICK, 'Recommendations for the forensic diagnosis from sex and age from skeletons', Homo - Journal of Comparative Human Biology 58 (2007), pp. 75-89.

[80] M. TROTTER/G. C. GLESER, 'Estimation of stature from long bones of American Whites and Negroes', American Journal of Physical Anthropology 10 (1952), pp. 463-514 and M. H. RAXTER/C. B. RUFF/A. AZAB/M. ERFAN/M. SOLIMAN/A. EL-SAWAF, 'Stature estimation in ancient Egyptians: A new technique based on anatomical reconstruction of stature', American Journal of Physical Anthropology 136 (2008), pp. 147-155.

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

[82] RW MANN/DR HUNT/S.LOZANOFF, *Photographic Regional Atlas of Non-Metric Traits and Anatomical Variants in the Human Skeleton,* (Springfield 2016).

[83] M. SCHULTZ, 'Paläopathologische Diagnostik. Anthropologie', in R. KNUSSMANN (ed.), *Handbuch der vergleichenden Biologie des Menschen. Vol. 1.1,* (Stuttgart1988), pp. 480–496.

[84] A. C. AUFDERHEIDE/ C. RODRÍGUEZ-MARTÍN, *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Human Paleopathology,* (Cambridge1998), DJ ORTNER, *Identification of Pathological Conditions in Human Skeletal Remains,* (San Diego 2003²) and CS LARSEN, *Bioarchaeology. Interpreting Behavior from the Human Skeleton.,* (Cambridge 2015²).

Altogether, 117 individuals were investigated. From the investigated skeletal remains of 90 individuals from Area 45, complexes 8-45-23, 8-45-28, 8-45-29, 8-45-30, 8-45-33 are stored in Aswan and complexes 8-45-8, 8-45-11, 8-45-13, 8-45-15, 8-45-16, 8-45-37, 8-45-38, 9-45-333, 9-45-336, 9-45-384 are stored at Jebel Shisha. Another 27 individuals currently stored at Jebel Shisha were from other areas. These include complexes 5-15-459, 6-24-39, 10-58-22, 10-58-31, 10-58-40, 10-58-70, 10-2-28, 11-2-6, 11-2-18, 11-2-31, 11-2-83, 11-2-115, 11-2-125, 12-2-26, 14-2-151, 15-61-2, 15-61-4 and 15-87-1.

With the exception of the complex 8-45-30, one of the largest grave chambers, all grave complexes from Area 45 were finished. Among these almost 120 individuals, all age-at-death categories could be observed up to over 70 years and including several individuals who died during or immediately after birth. Among the 90 individuals from Area 45, 11 were males or probably males and 12 were females or probably females. In the remaining 77 individuals, it was not possible to assess the sex. In 43 cases, the individuals were subadults and did not yet exhibit skeletal morphological traits connected to sexual dimorphism. In 34 individuals, the skeletal remains were largely incomplete, which prevented any reliable diagnosis.

Commonly, pathological conditions, such as various alterations connected to meningeal processes (Fig. 43), osteoarthritis, as well as healed fractures were observed. Furthermore, dental and oral pathologies such as periodontitis, caries, dental calculus, abscesses and ante-mortem tooth loss were frequently observed.

Fig. 43: Adult individual, 50-60 years (11-2-31-2/5, Individual II). Meningeal reaction in the frontal bone, apparently accompanied by hypervascularisation of the meninges. Probably, the condition was connected to e.g. a haemorrhage or meningitis.

Fig. 44: A mixture of cremated skeletal remains of two individuals from complex 8-45-15-1. The fragments exhibit vestiges indicating that they were burned a longer time after the death of the individuals, when the bone tissue was already dried out.

Fig. 45: Glass melting on a rib fragment of a juvenile individual (8-45-13-1/1d, Individual II).

The skeletal remains of several individuals exhibited heat-induced alterations connected to cremation, which is very unusual for southern Egypt. While cremation was commonly practised during the Roman Period in Europe, there are only a few known cases from Egypt up to now. In several of these individuals, post-mortem burning of apparently dried-out bones seems likely, indicating postmortem manipulation (Fig. 44). In two individuals, glass melting was observed on some of the cremated bones (Fig. 45), indicating that the individuals were cremated along with grave goods, such as necklaces or garments decorated with glass beads.The anthropological investigation of the individuals from this large, Late Roman cemetery will continue next season.

(Jan Nováček[85,86], Kristina Scheelen-Nováček[87,88])

[85] Department of Anthropology, Thuringia State Service for Cultural Heritage and Archaeology, Weimar.

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

After the construction of the new magazine in Birket Damas (Area 2) was finished in June 2020,[89] a new gate, a small building for a guard of the Antiquities Police and a new sector of the perimeter wall in the north of the area were built, and the existing perimeter walls were repaired and massively reinforced in close consultation with the Inspectorate in the following year.[90] Additionally, the southern sector of the perimeter wall was reinforced in summer 2022.[91]

At the end of the field season in April 2023, the Architectural Department of the Inspectorate asked the Swiss Institute to also reinforce the western sector of the perimeter wall. This wall runs along the Sh. Gabbana Fatimiya. The original wall is made of sandstone and concrete in the lower and of fired bricks in the upper part. It was 3.10m high (Fig. 45). The street level is up to 5m higher than the excavated Late Period settlement enclosed by the town wall of the same date. There, the slope at the western limit of the site is very steep and prone to constant erosion due to the faulty water pipes and sewers running under the street on top of it. A massive intervention was necessary to protect both the street and the antiquities below it. After the design of the construction measures had been authorised by the responsible authorities of the local Inspectorate of Antiquities, their execution was entrusted to a local contractor.

The new construction supports the wall at a length of ca. 95m (Fig. 46). It consists of 18 pillars of varying heights (up to ca. 7m). It is made of reinforced concrete and includes a beam running on top of the wall, a strip-foundation at its foot and eighteen massive buttresses for support.[92] (Figs. 47 and 48)

^ This construction work represents another considerable contribution of the Swiss Institute for Architectural and Archaeological Research Cairo to support the Egyptian Ministry for Tourism and Antiquities and its local representatives in their efforts to protect archaeological monuments and sites in Aswan.

[86] Institute of Anatomy and Cell Biology, University Medical Centre Göttingen
[87] Federal Archaeological Office of Bremen.
[88] Department of Biology and Chemistry, University of Hildesheim.
[89] C. VON PILGRIM, in *20th Season*, p. 3.
[90] C. VON PILGRIM, in *22nd Season*, p. 4-5.
[91] W. MÜLLER, in C. VON PILGRIM et al., 'Report on the 23rd Season of the Joint Swiss-Egyptian Mission in Syene/Old Aswan (2022/2023)', *ASAE, forthcoming*, pp.36-38.
[92] Work on the construction started on July 26th and was completed on September 17th, 2023.

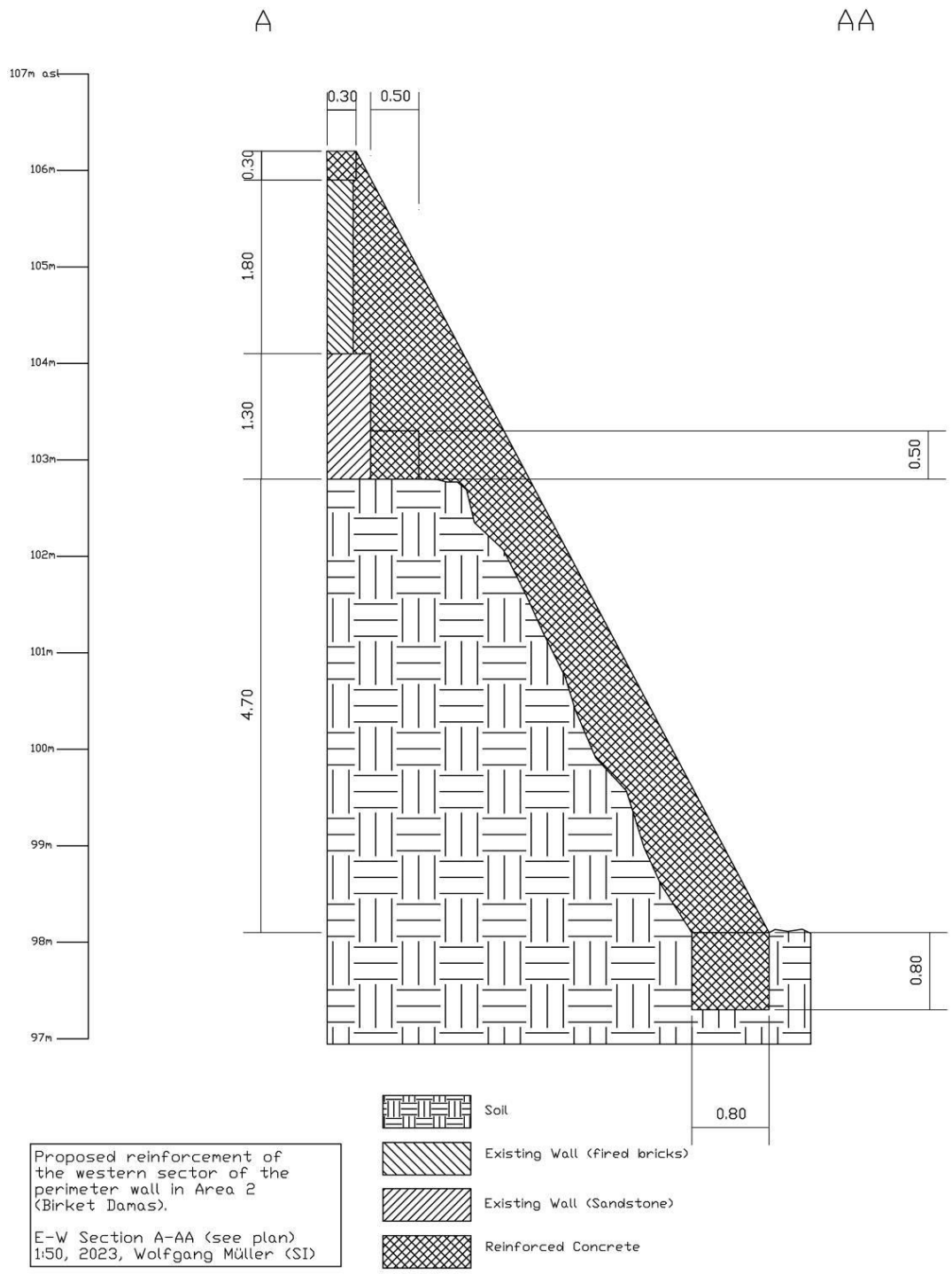

Fig. 46: Area 2: Section through a buttress (for exact location see Fig. 47)

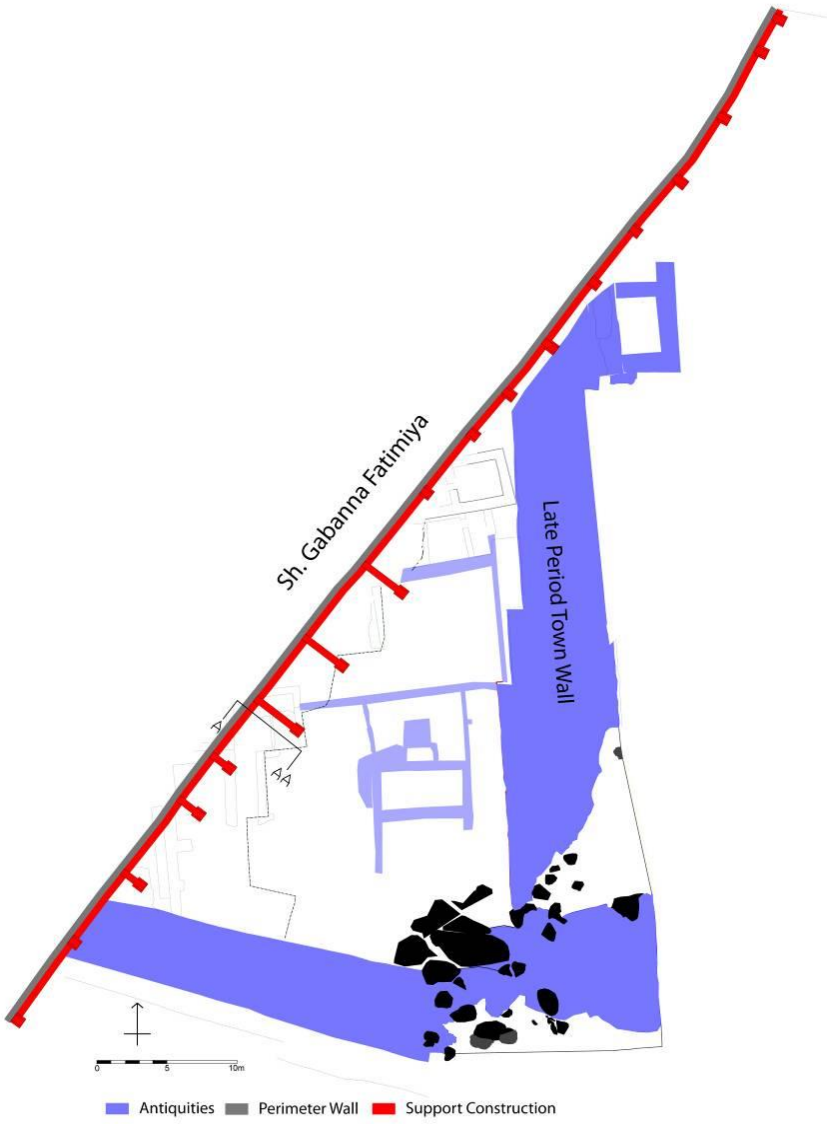

Fig. 47: Area 2: Plan of the reinforcement of the western perimeter wall.

Fig. 48: Area:2: View of the reinforcementof the western perimeter wall (northern part).

Fig. 49: Area:2: View of the reinforcement of the western perimeter wall (southern part).