THE PTOLEMAIC–ROMAN CEMETERY
AT THE QUESNA ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREA*

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The 2007 season of the Minufiyeh Archaeological Survey commenced with a topographic survey at Quesna, and continued with the opening of two test trenches to evaluate the results of a magnetometry survey undertaken in 2006. These renewed investigations in 2007 were situated to the west of the mausoleum, and revealed burials of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods; these included simple pit burials, mud-brick burials, and ceramic coffins. The second trench was aimed at better understanding a rectangular structure adjoining the falcon necropolis in the west, and was successful in locating a multi-room mud-brick building with internal and external walls defined. The initial interpretation of this structure is that it served as an entrance building, originally with vaulted ceilings, which led beneath the ancient ground level and, it might be assumed, into the corridors of the falcon necropolis.

The Minufiyeh Archaeological Survey began in 2005 with the aim of establishing the chronological and spatial distribution of archaeological sites in this central Delta province throughout antiquity. One of the foci within the survey is to understand the regional context within which the SCA-registered site of Quesna functioned. The 2007 season (19 March–12 May) comprised exploratory test trenches and a topographic survey at Quesna, and the continuation of the ground survey, including drill-core and topographic survey at Kom el Ahmar, Minuf. The 2008 season (26 March–17 May) consisted of the reopening of the test trench in the cemetery at Quesna, the ground survey (including drill coring) around the Quesna gezina, and a resistivity survey at Kom el Ahmar.

One of the key ancient features in the area is a brick-built mausoleum, discovered during sand clearance in the area during the 1980s and excavated by the Supreme Council of Antiquities in the 1990s.† During the 2006 season of the current project, geophysical survey using a fluxgate magnetometer§ clarified the extent and distribution

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of subsurface remains across the Quesna gezina. The archaeological remains proved to be largely clustered on the western side of the gezina and, taking into consideration the nature of the material excavated by the SCA, the results of the geophysical survey have been interpreted to indicate that the brick-built mausoleum continued into the south-west of the site. The survey also indicated further burials (including possible ceramic coffins) within the Ptolemaic–Roman cemetery, as well as demonstrating the full extent of the sacred falcon gallery.

In figure 1, M3–5 shows the extent of the falcon gallery, with M1–2 indicating the hitherto unexpected structure to its west. M8–10 represents the known area of excavation within the Roman burial area, with the extension M13–16 from south to north suggesting the continuation of this burial area. It was with the results of this geophysical survey in mind that the locations for the exploratory trenches for the 2007 season were selected. The trenches were chosen specifically in order to explore the type of structure attached to the western end of the falcon gallery and to assess the relationship between the Roman cemetery and the brick-built mausoleum, both excavated by the SCA in the 1990s. The trenches are indicated in figure 1 by the small rectangles visible, for the falcon gallery, cutting the northern and southern (the latter opened in 2007) walls of the structure marked M1 and M2, and, for the cemetery, the rectangle above M13 (opened in 2007), and above and to the east of M15.

Prior to the opening of the trenches, a topographic survey of the gezina was carried out to record: a) its shape today, which is both the result of forces of nature and human manipulation; b) the location of the excavation trenches of the SCA; and c) the position of the 2007–8 seasons’ exploratory trenches (figs 1 and 2). Notably, the survey map of the mausoleum (fig. 2) revealed that the northernmost part of the structure is oriented slightly more towards the east than the remainder of the building; this might serve to suggest that the mausoleum was constructed in stages, and it also highlights the fact that the units within the mausoleum have no interlinking passageways. The northernmost extent of the mausoleum has only been partially excavated by the SCA, with the remainder lying beneath the sand. This report will focus on the results of excavations in Trench 1, with a second season of test trenches within the falcon gallery expected in the 2010 season.

The Ptolemaic and Roman Cemetery

Trench 1 was positioned c.10 m to the west of the mausoleum (see fig. 1), to investigate whether the mausoleum continues to run west and to ascertain how the burials within the trench related to the more northerly Roman coffin burials (SCA excavations), both in terms of their horizontal/vertical social position and also with regard to the diversity of health and demographic scope. It was hoped that the trench would reveal further information as to the scope of the population buried at Quesna. It is known,
Fig. 1. Interpretative plan of the 2006 geophysical survey overlaying the topographic map of 2007.
from inscriptions found on sarcophagi from the mausoleum, that a number of elite inhabitants of nearby Tell Atrib (ancient Athribis) were buried high up on the Quesna gezira. However, it is not known how widely the gezira served both as a burial area and as a place of sacred activity in antiquity. It is important to note that today this elevated gezira has a commanding position above the surrounding landscape, with views only interrupted by modern vegetation. Tell Atrib, located in the modern city

Fig. 2. Mausoleum as surveyed in 2007.

5 Goma’a and Hegazy, Athribis, 52–80.
of Benha, is only approximately 7 km from Quesna and it might be postulated that the *gezina* was visible from Atrribis within the ancient landscape. The original *gezina* was certainly far more extensive than that which remains today. Within recent memory of those living in the area, the slope of the *gezina* in the south has changed from a gentle gradient sloping c.2 km towards the modern road, which meets the north-bound section of the Cairo–Alexandria agricultural road, to an abrupt vertical drop down to the cultivated fields directly below the archaeological area.

The test trenches
An arbitrary grid has been established at Quesna, until the local benchmark can be established. The arbitrary coordinates of the south-west corner peg of Trench 1 are 29°22' N 19°47' E. The depths below surface have been reduced from the daily arbitrary heights taken using a Leica TCR 307 total station. The following abbreviations are used: Gr. (Grave), B. (Burial). The grave numbers were issued from number 1000 onwards to avoid overlapping with the burial register of the SCA.

Summary of Trench 1
At the end of the 2008 season at Quesna, a total of 35 individuals from 24 graves had been recovered from Trench 1 (10 m north–south × 6 m east–west). These included five individuals buried within ceramic coffins, uncovered in 2007 and excavated in 2008. Additionally, two simple single mud-brick graves were revealed, as well as a larger mud-brick grave containing a total of six individuals. The majority of the burials, however, were interred in simple pit graves dug directly into the sand. As a result, it proved difficult to discern grave cuts.

Of the excavated burials from 2007–8, 26 individuals were oriented east–west, and all but one (B.29) had their heads to the west. The five ceramic coffin burials (B.33–37) were oriented east–west; all with the heads to the west. The mud-brick coffin burial (B.5) was of the same orientation, although the mud-brick coffin burial excavated in 2007 (B.6) was oriented north–south, with the head to the north. The remaining eight individuals were oriented north–south; seven of these with the head to the north, and only one with the head to the south. Since a number of these north–south burials are cut by the east–west burials, the north–south burials appear to date earlier than the east–west burials. This is in keeping with the transition from Late Period to Ptolemaic and Roman burial practices.

A total of 21 individuals (60%) displayed evidence of mummification, either in the form of black or brown possibly resinous materials in the mouth, throat, hand, abdominal, pelvic, and thoracic regions. Remnants of textile were also found adhering to long bones on a number of these individuals and, in one case, on the skull. Samples of these materials were taken when sufficient quantities occurred. In the case of one juvenile burial, the body was packed with greyish-brown mud. The remaining 14 individuals (40%) may originally have been prepared for mummification but no longer preserve any traces of it. Herodotus records that there were three methods of mummification used, and that the extent of mummification depended upon the wealth of the individual. He notes that only the most expensive of the options included wrapping.6

Due to their close proximity to the modern surface, the majority of the skeletal remains recovered from Trench 1 were in extremely poor condition. Just below the surface, the sandy matrix retains moisture; as a consequence, when initially exposed, the damp bones dry rapidly in the sun and begin to deteriorate. Two types of consolidation agents, Primal (AC-33) and Paraloid B-72 in acetone, were employed in cases where specific bones needed to be removed whole (e.g. skulls and pelvices). Although Paraloid B-72 is a stronger and better consolidant, its low Tg—glass transition temperature—(40°C) makes it more difficult to work with in Egypt.

Whenever Paraloid was applied, it was applied in the afternoon and was not left exposed to direct sunlight, which could cause problems with the Paraloid and, in consequence, to the bone. Additionally, Paraloid B-72 could not be used on wet or damp bones, whereas Primal allows for consolidation on both damp and dry bones. However, one of the disadvantages of Primal is its molecular structure which can be too large to penetrate the bone properly, leading to the formation of a superficial film on the surface. Another disadvantage is that it is not as strong a consolidant as Paraloid and, therefore, consolidation may often be unsuccessful. During the 2008 season, a number of bones were also consolidated using the acrylic emulsion Lascaux 360. This consolidation was predominantly carried out on skulls, some long bones and pelvises.

Fig. 3. Plan of burials and coffins within Trench 1 (all levels).
Because of the generally poor preservation of the skeletal material, assigning individuals to precise age and sex categories proved to be extremely difficult. Assessment of sex, where possible, was largely conducted in the field upon initial exposure of the remains. Observations of skeletal pathology were also hampered by the poor condition of the bones.

In terms of demographic distribution, 29 individuals (83%) are adults (all epiphyses fused), while only six individuals (17%) are juveniles. Of these subadults, three are children (B.4, B.17, and B.36) and the remaining three are adolescents (B.10, B.21, and B.26). No remains of infants or very young children were found this season. Fourteen females and ten males were identified among the adults. The remainder could not be assigned a sex.

Grave and burial descriptions

Grave 1000
Burial 1 (length: 155 cm; width: 30 cm; depth below surface: 41 cm): Gr.1000 is a simple pit grave dug directly into the sand. It contained the poorly preserved skeleton of an adult (possible male). The body is in an extended supine position, oriented north–south, with the head to the north, and the right arm crossed over the left arm on top of the chest. No pathologies were observable. Evidence for mummification in the form of black, possibly resinous, material was observed on the ventral surface of the cervical (neck) vertebrae, as well as in the thorax and abdominal region. The burial appears to have been disturbed at the left shoulder by Gr.1001 B.2. Parts of the maxillae and the entire mandible are missing post-mortem, and the left humerus has been disarticulated from the scapula.

Grave 1001
Burial 2 (length: unknown since the lower body extended into the eastern baulk; width: 38 cm; depth below surface: 8.9 cm): Gr.1001 is a simple pit grave dug directly into the sand, and located very close to the surface. It contained the poorly preserved skeleton of an adult (possible male). The body is in an extended supine position, oriented east–west, with the head to the west, and the arms are extended along the sides of the body. No evidence of mummification or pathologies was observable. The interment of this individual appears to have disturbed the upper body of Gr.1000 B.1.

Grave 1002
Burial 3 (length: 125 cm; width: 25 cm; depth below surface: 10 cm): Gr.1002 is a simple pit grave dug directly into the sand, containing the very poorly preserved partial skeleton of an adult (possible female). The body is oriented north–south, with the head to the north, and the left arm is crossed over the right arm on the chest. The skull, right tibia, and both feet are missing post-mortem. Black resinous material was recovered from the throat region, and a brownish organic material (possibly soft tissue) was collected from the lower pelvic region. It is possible that this grave was disturbed by the interment of Gr.1000 B.1, as the head of B.1 is immediately south of the lower legs of B.3. No evidence of pathology was observable.

Grave 1003
Burial 4 (length: 95 cm; width: 23 cm; depth below surface: 4 cm): Gr.1003 is a simple pit grave dug directly into the sand, containing the very poorly preserved skeleton of a child. Due to its proximity to the surface, the skull was badly crushed and largely missing, as were the bones of the feet. The body is oriented east–west, with the head to the west, and the arms were placed along the sides of the body with the hands at the hips. No evidence of mummification or pathology was observed.

Grave 1004
Burial 5 (length: 121 cm, with lower limbs missing; width: 27 cm; depth below surface: 25.5 cm): Gr.1004 is a rectangular mud-brick lined grave oriented east–west, with the head of the skeleton to the west. The burial was of an adult female. The pit for the grave was lined with three courses of dry-laid mud bricks along the long axis of the skeleton. The bricks were
possibly placed following the burial of the individual, because the lowest course of bricks was laid above the arms and legs. The grave was capped with a single course of mud bricks, sealing the skeleton completely, except at the head and foot end. The lower legs and feet were missing due to a disturbance at the east end of the grave. The right arm was crossed over the left on top of the chest, with the hands resting on the humeri. The bones were in very poor condition, with evidence for mumification in the form of textile remnants and black/resinous material in both the pelvic and abdominal regions. The estimate of the age of the female at 50+ years (Phase 7–8) was based upon the auricular surface development of the ilium, and the fact that the mandible and maxillae are completely edentulous (without teeth). The cortical bone of the limbs is extremely thin, and the bones in general are lightweight, probably due to osteoporosis. The bodies of the cervical (neck) vertebrae show lipping and resorptive activity on the disc surfaces and articular facets.

**Mud-brick coffin** (length: 129 cm (top); width: at west end 39 cm; at east end 27 cm; height: 31 cm): This is a protruding brick-lined burial in the south-east corner of the trench, the western end of which is missing, revealing the skull. The coffin is anthropoid in shape, and its top was constructed from a row of seven headers; the coffin is three courses of bricks high. The size of each of these bricks is 9 cm (height) × 19 cm (width) × 37 cm (length); the bricks were extremely friable, with a high sand content. Direction: west–east. See fig. 4.

**Grave 1005**

**Burial 6** (length: 136 cm; width: 27 cm; depth below surface: 36.1 cm): Gr.1005 is a coffin-shaped mud-brick lined grave oriented north–south, with the head of the skeleton to the north. The grave was constructed with two courses of mud bricks tracing the outline of the body, which was laid directly onto the sand. A third course capped the grave, sealing the body within. As a result of the protection afforded by mud brick, the bones were fairly well-preserved. The extended supine skeleton, with arms crossed (right over left) over the chest,

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belonged to an older adult female who was completely edentulous (fig. 6) An age assessment of 45–60 years was determined on the basis of pubic symphyseal and auricular surface development. The bones were extremely light (osteoporotic), especially that of the pelvis, femoral heads, and feet. Arthritic changes in the cervical vertebrae were observable in the form of marginal resorption on the disc surface of the vertebral bodies, and lipping of the superior and inferior articular facets. Extensive evidence for mummification was observed in the form of black resinous material in the throat, thorax, and abdominal regions. Lastly, an additional adult mandible, well-bleached due to previous surface exposure, was recovered in the fill within the mud-brick grave on top of the lower legs of B.6.

*Mud-brick coffin* (length: 175 cm (top); width: 54 cm (top); height: 23 cm): The coffin has an anthropoid lining shape and is three courses high, with its top sealed by an upper course of nine headers. The coffin is constructed of bricks sized 8 cm (height) × 15 cm (width) × 29 cm (length). The bricks were of high mud and low sand content, and were not highly friable. Direction: north–south. See figs 5 and 6.

**Grave 1006**

*Burial 7* (length: 155 cm; width: 28 cm; depth below surface: 10 cm): Gr.1006 is a simple pit grave dug directly into the sand. It contained the extremely poorly preserved extended supine skeleton of an adult individual (sex indeterminate), oriented east–west, with the head to the west. The arms appear to have been placed along the sides of the body, with the hands on or near the hips. No evidence for mummification or pathology was observed.

**Grave 1007**

*Burial 8* (length: 173 cm; width: 42 cm; depth below surface: 8 cm): Gr.1007 is a simple pit grave dug directly into the sand, containing the poorly preserved extended supine skeleton of an adult (sex indeterminate). The body was oriented east–west, with the head to the west. Both arms were placed along the sides of the skeleton, with the lower arms running underneath the pelvis, and the hands alongside the thighs. No evidence for mummification or pathology was observed.

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Grave 1008
Burial 9 (length: 148 cm; width: 29 cm; depth below surface: 26.4 cm): Gr.1008 is a simple pit grave dug directly into the sand. It contained the poorly preserved extended supine skeleton of an adult (possibly female). The body was oriented east–west, with the head to the west. The right arm was crossed over the left on the chest. Black resinous material was recovered from above the lumbar vertebrae and lower pelvic regions. No evidence of pathological lesions was observed.

Grave 1009
Burial 10 (length: >140 cm; width: >30 cm; depth below surface: 37.2 cm): Gr.1009 is a simple pit grave dug into the sand, containing the extended supine skeleton of a late adolescent (possibly female). An age of approximately 19–20 years can be assigned, based on epiphyseal union and dental eruption. The body was oriented east–west, with the head to the west. The right arm was placed along the right side of the body, with the hand along the thigh, and the left hand was placed over the groin. No evidence of mummification was found, and nor were any pathological lesions observed. Paraloid B-72 was used to consolidate the mandible for lifting.

Grave 1010 (multiple inhumation)
Burials 11–13 (length: (B.11) cut by Gr.1021; (B.12) 160 cm; (B.13) 140 cm; width: (B.11) 30 cm; (B.12) 31 cm; (B.13) 30 cm; depth below surface: 17.4 cm): Gr.1010 is a simple pit grave dug into the sand. It contained three extended supine adult skeletons placed close together, oriented east–west, with the heads to the west. The grave was cut at the eastern edge by Gr.1021 (Pottery Coffin 3), which has truncated the skeleton of B.11 below the knees. Gr.1010 abuts the northern wall of a large mud-brick tomb (Gr.1014) immediately to the south of this multiple inhumation.

Burial 11, the northernmost individual in the grave, is a mature adult male approximately between the ages of 40 and 45 years (based on the development of the auricular surface), with the left arm crossed over the right on the chest. Black resinous material was recovered from the abdominal region. The spinal curvature of B.11 was extremely distorted laterally, possibly as a result of scoliosis, and the neck of this individual appeared to be twisted in an
unnatural position. Primal was used to consolidate the vertebrae of B.11 and the entire spine was block lifted for further study.

Burial 12, the central individual of the grave, is a large mature adult male aged between 35 and 50 (based on the development of the pubic symphysis and auricular surface), with his right arm crossed over the left on his chest. Osteochondritis desicicans and marginal lipping of the joint capsule were observed on the capitulum of the left humerus, with concomitant lipping of the radial head. Small Schmorl's nodes were noted on the vertebral bodies of L2–L5, as well as a large Schmorl's node on the body of T9. Resorptive porosity of the bodies of C4 and C5, as well as lipping of the inferior articular facets of C5 were also noted. Extensive evidence of mummification was recovered in the form of black resinous material (possibly degraded textile) around the neck and thorax regions.

Burial 13, the southernmost individual, is that of an adult (sex indeterminate), with the arms (left over right) crossed over the chest. Hypertrophic enlargement of the diplô of the skull vault, also known as porotic hyperostosis, was observed. Black resinous material was recovered from the abdominal region. This individual was laid directly alongside the outer northern wall of mud-brick Gr.1014.

Grave 1011

Burial 14 (length: 131 cm; width: 30 cm (at shoulders); depth below surface: 16.3 cm): Gr.1011 is a simple pit grave containing the very poorly preserved skeleton of an adult(?) of unknown sex. The skeleton was oriented north–south, with the head to the north, and the arms crossed right over left on the chest. The burial has been cut by a later east–west grave (Gr.1012), which has removed the abdomen, pelvis and femora. No evidence of mummification or pathological lesions could be observed.

Grave 1012

Burial 33 (length: 161 cm; width: 34 cm (at pelvis); depth below surface: 21.6 cm): Gr.1012 B.33 contains the extended supine skeleton of a mature adult female, placed within a double vessel terracotta coffin (Pottery Coffin 1, see below) oriented east–west, with the head to the west. The arms were placed along the sides of the body, with the left hand on the left thigh, and the right hand on the groin. The condition of the bones and teeth is poor. Evidence for mummification occurs in the form of textile and black resinous material covering the entire body, but it is most extensive in the thorax, abdominal, and pelvic regions. Examination of age-related changes in the pubic symphysis provides a range between 26 and 70 years (Phase 4). No pathological conditions are observable.

Pottery Coffin 1 (length: east vessel 99 cm; west vessel 96.5 cm; width: east vessel at base 43 cm, at rim 62 cm, at widest point 66 cm; west vessel at base 43 cm, at rim 62 cm, at widest point 66 cm; thickness of walls: east vessel at rim 4.2 cm, body 2 cm, base 2.9 cm; west vessel at rim 3 cm, body 2.5 cm, base 3.0 cm; fabric: Nile silt, coarse ware, chaff-tempered): This is a fairly well-preserved large double vessel coffin with évasée sides (Quesna coffin type 1: double vessel type). There are rough incised lines running on the exterior below either rim, and the upper part is broken in pieces due to its close proximity to the surface. The west vessel has a ledge rim. On the interior of the vessel, finger smoothing marks run vertically in sections from the base to the rim. Direction: east–west. Leaning directly against the southern edge of the double vessel coffin, where the vessels meet, were the legs of a hollow terracotta figure of what is believed to be an Isis-Aphrodite statuette (Fig. 7). The hands are moulded and resting on the outer thighs. The legs are broken above the feet, and only the frontal parts remain.

Grave 1013

Burial 36 (length: 116 cm; width: 15 cm; depth below surface: 21.6 cm): Gr.1013 contains the extended supine skeleton of a juvenile, oriented east–west (head to the west) and covered by an upside down pottery tray coffin (Pottery Coffin 2, see below). The arms were tightly placed alongside the body, with the hands on the thighs. The bones are in poor condition. No traces of textile or black resinous material were observed, but the body appears to have been packed with a greyish-brown mud, perhaps to give the body some shape before being tightly

Fig. 7. a) and b) Terracotta figure of Isis Aphrodite.
wrapped for burial. Unusually, the articulated vertebrae of the neck (C2–C7) were found packed in the mud between the thighs, along with the left scapula and several ribs. The body must have been partially decomposed or damaged in some other way before being wrapped for internment. Based on the eruption of the dentition and epiphyseal fusion, an age of 12 years +/- 30 months can be assigned. No pathological conditions were observable.

Pottery Coffin 2 (length: 121 cm; width: at foot 48 cm; at shoulder 37 cm; depth of coffin body: 28 cm; thickness of walls: at foot 1.5 cm; body 2.5 cm; rim 3.5 cm; fabric: Nile silt, coarse ware, chaff-tempered): remains of tray-coffin of Quesna coffin type 2, fairly well-preserved. Pieces of the lid are still in place. This coffin is made of coarsely fired pottery and there are three blackened circular areas on the interior of the lid of the coffin, which may represent the parts of the coffin which rested on supports during its firing. One such burnt area was broken and mud had been placed over the hole. There is no base to the coffin beneath the burial, and the foot end is purposely open. There are two rough finger-run lines running around the exterior edge of the coffin, c.3 cm from the rim. Direction: east–west.

Grave 1014 (multiple inhumation)
Burials 26–31 (length: (B.26) skull disturbed, 150 cm; (B.27) 152 cm; (B.28) 160 cm; (B.29) 150 cm; (B.30) disturbed by later burials, 140 cm without skull; (B.31) without skull 136 cm; width: (B.26) 28 cm; (B.27) 30 cm; (B.28) 34 cm; (B.29) 40 cm; (B.30) 30 cm; (B.31) 32 cm; depth below surface: 17.4 cm): Gr.1014 is a large rectangular mud-brick grave with the long axis oriented east–west. The structure was located very close to the modern surface (the top course was exposed at the beginning of the season immediately below the modern surface), and had been robbed at some point in the past. This robbing activity had removed the roof of the grave and most of the upper courses of mud-brick (see fig. 3). The highest preserved section of the grave is the south-west corner, which is preserved to a height of four courses (probably its original height). The grave contained the extended supine burials of six adults, stacked in three layers (see figs 3, 10, 11, and 12). A thin sandy layer between

Fig. 8. Remnants of textile in Gr.1014.

Cotelle-Michel, Les sarcophages, 296–7 (type III-L3-1/3).
the bodies of B.26 and B.30/31 may represent the point when the grave was reopened for the final interment. All but one (B.29) were oriented with their heads to the west. Evidence for mummification was observed for all of the individuals within Gr.1014 in the form of blackish-brown remnants of textile adhering to various parts of the body, as well as dark resinous materials found in the thorax and abdomen of most individuals.

Additionally, a powdery white material was recovered from within the thorax of B.26. Reed matting may also have been used to wrap at least two individuals. At the eastern end of the grave, a space of c.40–50 cm was left between the feet of the bodies and the wall, which may have originally served as a storage space for pottery vessels and other grave goods, although no traces of such goods were found in situ, and these may have been despoiled during the robbery of the grave. One small Ptolemaic potsherd was found in the grave fill however, along with a second sherd which had been incised with a wedjat eye (fig. 9).

B.26 is the uppermost skeleton within Gr.1014, and thus one of the last individuals to have been interred. This very tall individual was oriented with its head to the west, although the skull has been removed, possibly as a result of the grave having been robbed. The right arm was crossed over the left arm on the chest. Based on the development of the pubic symphysis, a Suchey-Brooks assessment of 15–24 years old (Phase 1) was assigned. However, this individual possesses numerous epiphiyses which by this age should already be fused or in the process of fusing. The epiphiyses of the hands and feet (proximal phalanges, heads of metacarpals and tarsals), as well as the individual epiphiyses of the long bones, remain completely unfused. The bodies of the sacrum, the heads of the ribs, spinous processes, and the endplates of the vertebral bodies are also unfused. In fact, the only epiphiyses that were united are the neural arches of the vertebrae and the tripartite portion of the innominate. Such observations are consistent with some form of endocrinal disruption, possibly an oestrogen deficiency. The oestrogen hormone is responsible for, among other things, maintenance of bone density and the regulation of bone growth and epiphyseal union in both males and females. More research is required before a proper identification of the condition can be made. This skeletal abnormality is identical to the one observed in B.21 (Gr.1019). Because of the extremely tall size of this individual, and the general robustness of the bones, it is assumed that this individual is male. However, certain endocrine dysfunctions may make the accurate assessment of sex difficult. The lack of a skull for this individual aggravates matters further.

The second layer of bodies consists of B.30 and B.31. B.30 is the skeleton of an adult female lying directly underneath B.26; her skull is missing, possibly also as the result of
tomb robbery. The arms of B.30 were crossed (right over left) on top of her chest. The inside of the thorax of B.30 contained a pooled, dried, resinous material coating the ribs. No pathological lesions were observed.

B.31, immediately north of B.30, is the skeleton of a large adult male, with arms crossed over the chest (right over left). The cranium of B.31 has been crushed, possibly by the robbing activity, although the mandible remained in situ. No pathological lesions were observable.

The lowest layer of bodies within Gr.1014 contained three skeletons (B.27–9). As these individuals were located at the bottom of the grave, they were not disturbed by robbing activity. B.27, the northernmost individual, is the partially disarticulated skeleton of an older adult female, whose remains appear to have been pushed up against the northern wall of Gr.1014. This may indicate that the individual was one of the first to be interred, and was moved at some later time to make room for new occupants. The arms appear to have been crossed over the chest. Traces of possible reed matting were found adhering to the dorsal surface of the sacrum. No pathological lesions could be observed.

B.28, located along the south wall of Gr.1014, is the skeleton of a young adult female with arms (left over right) crossed over the chest. No pathological lesions were observed. Paraloid B-72 was used to consolidate the skull and mandible of B.28 for lifting.

B.29, a female adult located between B.27 and B28, is the only individual oriented with its head to the east; her right arm was crossed over the left on top of her chest. Traces of possible reed matting were found over the thorax. The bones of this individual are extremely thin and poorly preserved. Pathological lesions were unobservable.

The mud-brick structure (length: 220 cm (top); width: 140 cm (top); height: 33 cm; depth below surface: 6.8 cm): A multiple/communal burial with six individuals interred, as described above and as seen in figs. 3, 10, and 11. The tomb is constructed of mud bricks laid out as headers, in a rectangular shape, four courses high. Parts of the collapsed roof are preserved in the south-west corner. The tomb had been reopened at some time, probably for an additional burial.

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![Fig. 10. Plan of Gr.1014, B.26 (uppermost layer).](image-url)
Fig. 11. Plan of part of cemetery including Gr.1014, B.27, B.28, and B.29 (middle layer).

Fig. 12. Plan of Gr.1014, B.30, and B.31 (lowest layer).
Grave 1015
Burial 15 (length: 159 cm; width: 31 cm; depth below surface: 0 cm): Gr.1015 was found eroding out of the modern surface at the north end of Trench 1. The very poorly preserved skeleton, an adult of indeterminate sex, was oriented east–west, with the head to the west. Its arms were placed along its sides with the hands on the hips. No evidence of mummification was observed and, due to its poor condition, no pathological lesions could be noted.

Grave 1016 (multiple inhumation)
Burials 16–18 (length: (B.16) 141 cm; (B.17) 117 cm; (B.18) extended into north baulk; width: (B.16) 29 cm; (B.17) 23 cm; (B.18) 26 cm; depth below surface: 13.3 cm): Gr.1016 is a simple pit grave containing three individuals (B.16–18). B.16, an adult female, and B.17, a child of nine years (+/- 3 years), were oriented east–west, with their heads to the west. B.16 has the hands crossed over the chest (left over right) and B.17 has the left arm over the chest with the right hand over the groin. B.18, an adult female, was oriented north–south (head north) and deposited perpendicularly on top of B.16 and B.17. As there was no disturbance to B.16 and 17, it is assumed that this grave represents a single burial event. The upper body of B.18 extends into the northern baulk of Trench 1 and was not excavated. No evidence for mummification was observed in either B.16 or B.17, nor were pathological lesions noted. Evidence of a crude form of mummification was observed in B.18 in the form of a clay/mud packing throughout the pelvic region and lower abdomen. Small fragments of pottery were recovered from this packing material. No pathological lesions were observed for B.18.

Grave 1017
Burial 19 (length: 163 cm; width: 28 cm; depth below surface: 36.4 cm): Gr.1017 is a simple pit grave dug into the sand containing the extended supine skeleton of a young adult male (age assessment based on dental wear). The body was oriented east–west, with the head to the west. Both arms were extended with the hands over the right hip. The body appears to have been tightly wrapped, as the rib cage is tightly compressed. It may be that the body had started to decompose before it was interred, as the right lower arm (radius and ulna) has detached from the elbow and been placed halfway up the length of the humerus. In addition, the left femoral head has been dislocated from the acetabulum. Such dislocations could only have occurred after the decaying of the ligaments and tendons, which hold the joints in place. As this is the skeleton of a young male of potentially military age, a plausible explanation is that the individual died far from home, and could not be properly mummified before being returned home for burial. There is, however, no indication of cause of death. Occlusal surface carious lesions were noted on the maxillary canine and first premolar, as well as a cemento-enamel junction carious lesion on the right maxillary lateral incisor. Primal and Paraloid B-72 were used to consolidate the skull and leg bones for lifting.

Grave 1018
Burial 20 (length: 146 cm; width: 27 cm; depth below surface: 29.1 cm): Gr.1018 is a simple pit grave dug directly into the sand. It contained the extended supine skeleton of a mature adult female. The body was oriented east–west, with the head to the west, and the arms crossed over the chest (right arm over left). No pathological lesions were observed. A sample of possible brain tissue was recovered from the endocranium. Primal was used to consolidate the skull, and Paraloid B-72 was used to consolidate the pelvis for lifting.

Grave 1019
Burial 21 (length: 146 cm; width: 27 cm; depth below surface: 48.8 cm): Gr.1019 is a simple pit grave cut directly into the sand. It contained the extended supine skeleton of a late adolescent/young adult of indeterminate sex. The body of this individual was oriented north–south, with the head to the south, and the arms alongside the body, with the hands on the thighs. The skull had been damaged and is largely missing, probably as the result of robbing activity. Based on dental eruption and attrition, an age of 16–22 years can be assigned. Assessment
of the pubic symphysis using the Todd method produces an age assessment of 18–19 years, while the Suchey-Brooks method indicates an age range of 15–24 years.

B.21 is the only individual found in Trench 1 with the head oriented to the south. It is unusual in another respect, in that the body was adorned with numerous plaster/gypsum Pharaonic amulets and plaster discs (button-shaped, roughly circular pieces that are slightly raised in the middle), which would have been wrapped into the bandages of the mummy (see fig. 13). Well-preserved fragments of blackish-brown textile still adhered to the arms, hands, and legs, as well as the abdominal and thoracic regions. The remains of a cartonnage head mask were also recovered. Primal adhesive was used to conserve the majority of the plaster amulets and cartonnage fragments before being lifted. Additionally, Paraloid B-72 was used to consolidate the pelvis for lifting.

Despite the age range generated by observation of the dentition and pelvis, as well as the general size of the skeleton itself, this individual possesses numerous epiphyses which by this biological age should already be fused or in the process of fusing. The epiphyses of the hands and feet (proximal phalanges, heads of metacarpals and tarsal), as well as those of the long bones, remain completely unfused. The sacral bodies, innominate, and the endplates of the vertebral bodies are also unfused. This possible endocrine dysfunction pathology appears identical to that observed in B.26 (Gr.1014). Further research is required, however, before a proper identification of the condition can be made. Finally, B.21 has a well-healed fracture of the right fifth metatarsal.

The following objects of plaster (most probably gypsum) were found in association with B.21 in Gr.1019 (SF = Special Finds).

- SF5: Hathor plaque
- SF6: Large scarab
- SF7: Winged bird collar/vulture plaque.
- SF8: Seated Thoth figure
- SF9: Toes (cartonnage)

Fig. 13. Scarab, winged vulture, and Hathor head in situ in Gr.1019.
SF10: Diamond/square plaque (incised amulet)  
SF11: Button-shaped plaster discs  
SF13: Large scarab of plaster  
SF14: Small scarab  
SF15: Small scarab  
SF17: Djed pillar  
SF18: Sphinx amulet  
SF19: Winged object  
SF20: Recumbent canine or feline amulet  
SF21: Disc plaque  
SF22: Fragment of Djed pillar  
SF23: Part of a bird’s wing  
SF24: Scarab, with traces of blue and yellow paint  
SF25: Mummiform figure  
SF26: Pieces associated with the funerary mask (eyes, nose, mouth, cheek, chin, beard, ears, decorative fragment with round sculpture, hair band)  
SF27: Disc  
SF28: Feline/canine  
SF29: Fragmentary baboon  
SF30: Sun disc  
SF31: Disc plaque  
SF32: Disc plaque  
SF33: Disc plaque  
SF34: Canine/feline  
SF35: Two-fingered amulet  
SF36: Winged fragment  
SF37: Finger or toe fragment  
SF38: Female human form  
SF39: Winged piece  
SF40: Fragment  
SF41: Fragment  
SF42: Fragment  
SF43: Tubular fragment  
SF44: D-shaped fragment  
SF45: Fragment, possibly winged  
SF46: Fragment  
SF47: Fragment

Conservation and storage of the plaster cartonnage in Grave 1019

The cartonnage is made of plaster and it does not have any type of cloth (e.g. linen) as support. As a result, it was exceptionally fragile and susceptible to breakage during excavation, cleaning, lifting, and transport; the pieces were therefore consolidated in situ using Primal (1:5 in distilled water), and transported to the laboratory in separate trays (all of them numbered and documented). Although in situ consolidation was adequate for the transportation of the pieces, it was not sufficient for completion of the conservation work. The fragments remained fragile and during cleaning for the removal of the sand, the existing cracks tended to open. For this reason, further consolidation with Paraloid B-72 in acetone was carried out (the concentration used was 1:10 in acetone v/v), and the broken pieces were mended using Paraloid B-72 in acetone (1:3 v/v).

One of the main problems was the difference in thickness of different pieces. It is obvious that the cartonnage around the head had been destroyed in the past, as is indicated by the fractured skull. To avoid further breakage during transport of the pieces after excavation, the larger pieces were not put together. A full support made of inert materials such as fibre-glass cloth and Paraloid B-72 is recommended for the future; this will provide the necessary
structural support and stability to the fragile fragments to be mended so that there will be no stress placed upon the actual pieces.

The larger fragments of plaster were stored in plastic boxes with acid free paper. In order to provide some kind of stability, sand in polyethylene bags was placed at the bottom of the boxes. On top of this were acid free paper cushions. Smaller fragments were wrapped in acid-free paper and placed in zip-lock polyethylene bags. All of the bags were marked for identification purposes.

**Grave 1020 (multiple inhumation)**

**Burials 22–3** (length: extending from north baulk (lower legs only) >40 cm; width: >60 cm): Gr.1020 contained two extended supine adult-sized individuals oriented north–south, with the heads to the north. Only the lower legs and ankle bones of these individuals were excavated, as the remainder of the grave extends into the northern baulk of Trench 1; therefore sex assessment was precluded. No evidence of mummification was noted, nor were pathological lesions observed. As the two individuals were located immediately next to one another at the same depth, they were assumed to be part of a single burial event.

**Grave 1021**

**Burial 34** (length: 92 cm (only surviving from above knees); width: 31 cm): Gr.1021 contains the extended supine skeleton of a young adult male, placed in a double vessel pottery coffin (see Pottery Coffin 3 below) oriented east–west, with the head to the west, and adorned with 17 plaster amulets (detailed below). Tiny remnants of thin gold foil were found on the fingers, the arms, and the facial region. These appear to have been applied directly to the body before the application of the textiles. The arms were placed tightly alongside the body, with the hands on the thighs. The body was probably very tightly wrapped, as may be indicated by the fact that the lower arms actually run underneath the ilia of the pelvis. The condition of the bones is relatively good in spite of the fact that the eastern pottery vessel was removed at some point in the past, with only a rim fragment remaining. The disarticulated bones of the lower limbs and feet were recovered in the region where the coffin would have been. Evidence for mummification is readily observed in the form of textile remnants and black resinous material in the thorax, abdomen, and pelvic cavity, as well as in the facial region and on limbs. Small amounts of black vitreous material, possibly bitumen or resin, were also recovered from within the thorax. Examinations of age-related changes in the pubic symphysis and auricular surface provide a range between 15–23 years (Phase 1), and 20–24 years (Phase 1), respectively. Based on observation of dental wear, an age range between 17–25 years can be provided. A pronounced curvature of the lumbar and lower thoracic vertebrae may be seen as evidence for scoliosis. No other pathological conditions were observable.

The following objects of plaster (probably gypsum) were found in association with B.34 in Gr. 1021. Some of the plaster discs may have originally been part of a cartonnage mask, possibly in relation to the fragments of gold foil and the remains of textile, bitumen, and/or resin found on the face. The scarabs were placed along the body, running towards the head, which is oriented west. The plumed crowns were placed radiating outwards from the skull (see fig. 11).

- SF08-2: Large scarab with black pigment
- SF08-3: Large scarab with traces of black pigment
- SF08-4: Disc with traces of black and yellow pigment
- SF08-5: Large scarab with traces of black and yellow pigment
- SF08-6: Disc with black and yellow pigment
- SF08-7: Fragment of small scarab with traces of black pigment
- SF08-8: Disc with a few traces of black and yellow pigment
- SF08-09: Disc with traces of black pigment and gold leaf
- SF08-10: Disc with traces of black and yellow pigment
- SF08-12: Plumed crown with solar disc, with a few traces of black pigment
SF08-13: Double plumed crown with a few traces of black pigment
SF08-14: Fragment of double plumed crown with a few traces of black and yellow-brown pigment
SF08-15: Broken double plumed crown with horns, with traces of blue and brown pigment
SF08-16: Plumed crown with solar disc with traces of blue pigment
SF08-17: Double plumed crown with traces of black pigment
SF08-18: Small scarab with black pigment
SF08-19: Fragment of (claws) of a small scarab with black pigment

Fig. 14. a) SF08-2; b) SF08-12; c) SF08-13; d) SF08-15.

Conservation and storage of the plaster cartonnage in Grave 1021

Because of the nature of the material, the pieces found were very fragile and in situ consolidation was found to be necessary in most cases prior to lifting. The consolidant used was acrylic emulsion (Lascaux 360, 3–5%). The amulets were cleaned mechanically in the laboratory and reassembled using Paraloid B-72 in acetone, Lascaux, and cellulose nitrate (UHU hart) adhesives. The labelling of the amulets was carried out on a layer of Paraloid B-72 using a permanent marker. They were packed using acid-free tissue paper.

Pottery Coffin 3 (length: 58 cm; width: at base 26 cm, at widest 45.5 cm; height: 23 cm at base; depth below surface: 6.9 cm): A large double vessel coffin excavated in the northern end of the trench during the 2007 season, and running into the eastern baulk. The remainder of the burial was excavated in 2008 and it was revealed that only a broken part of the rim of the west vessel (foot end of the coffin) remained. The eastern vessel is a fairly well-preserved coffin of the same type as that in Gr.1012 (Quesna coffin type 1, the double vessel type), with no visible decoration. The upper part is in pieces and the interior of the lower part of the vessel...
has the appearance of having been made in three parts across the width of the coffin; there are vertical finger smoothing marks within each of these three sections. Direction: east–west.

**Grave 1022**

*Burial 37* (length: 162 cm; width: 36 cm (at shoulders); depth below surface: 40.1 cm): Gr.1022 (B.37) contains the extended supine skeleton of a large adult male. The body was placed in a double vessel pottery coffin (Pottery Coffin 4, see below) with the head oriented to the west and the feet to the east. The arms were placed alongside the body with the hands on the thighs. The bones are in very poor condition. Traces of textile and black resinous material were recovered from within the mouth, and around the pelvis and hands. The sphenoid-occipital synchondrosis is completely united, which indicates an individual over the age of 25 years. Dental attrition is also consistent with an individual of between 25 and 35 years of age. Osteophytic lipping on the bodies of the lower lumbar vertebrae is observable, as well as lipping and resorption of several thoracic articular facets. A large interproximal carious lesion occurs between the lower left fourth premolar and first molar. A smaller carious lesion at the cemento-enamel junction also occurs on the upper left third molar. No other pathological conditions were observable.

*Pottery Coffin 4* (length: west vessel 96 cm; east vessel 99 cm; width: west vessel at base 47 cm, at rim 68 cm; east vessel at base 48 cm, at rim 69 cm; thickness of walls: west vessel at base 2.8 cm, body 2 cm, rim 2 cm; east vessel at base 3 cm, body 2 cm, rim 4.2 cm; fabric: Nile silt, coarse ware, chaff-tempered): A double pottery vessel coffin (Quesna coffin type 3, double vessel coffin type with additional decoration), was visible, running out of the eastern baulk in the south of the trench in 2007, and fully exposed in 2008. There are two prominent clay ridges, running along the length of both vessels, from the base to the rim. The east vessel has a ledge rim which fits into the mouth of the west vessel. On the interior of the vessel, finger-smoothing marks can clearly be seen running vertically in sections from the base to the rim, and the vessels appear to have been assembled in three sections each and smoothed together, as with Pottery Coffin 3. Direction: east–west.

**Grave 1023**

*Burial 35* (length: 155 cm; width: 25 cm; depth below surface: 42.10 cm): Gr.1023 (B.35) contains the extended supine skeleton of a mature adult female, oriented east–west (head to the west) and covered by an upside down pottery tray coffin (Pottery Coffin 5, see below), the top of which has collapsed onto the body. The right arm was crossed over the left arm on top of the chest, with the hands placed on the opposite humeri. The bones are in good condition. Small traces of textile and black resinous material were recovered in the abdominal and pelvic regions, providing evidence for a minimal attempt at mummification. Examination of the auricular surface of the pelvic ilia provides a range between 30 and 34 years of age (Phase 3) for this individual. Dental attrition is consistent with an individual between 25 and 35 years of age. No pathological conditions were observable.

*Pottery Coffin 5* (length: 175 cm; width: at east (foot) end 33 cm, at west (head) end 55 cm; depth of body: 23 cm; thickness of walls: at base 2 cm, body thickness ranges from 3–4 cm; fabric: Nile silt, coarse ware, chaff-tempered): A crude open-tray coffin found protruding from the eastern baulk of the trench (Quesna coffin type 2, the tray coffin) during 2007, and excavated in the 2008 season. The base of the coffin was uppermost and the coffin was upturned over the burial, with no lining underneath. On the interior, 2.5 cm beneath the rim, a double incised line runs all around the coffin, and also on the interior, just behind the head, an impressed circular design is apparent, the circle created by a series of small impressed finger marks. Direction: east–west.

**Grave 1024**

*Burial 24* (length: 156 cm; width: 40 cm; depth below surface: 46.6 cm): Gr.1024 is a simple pit grave dug into the sand, containing the poorly preserved extended supine skeleton of an
adult female. The body is oriented east–west, with the head to the west, and the arms are crossed over the chest (right arm over left). Large amounts of black resinous material were recovered from the neck and upper thorax region, as well as the lower abdominal region and between the femora (upper legs). Two fragments of fire-cracked sandstone(?), one within the black material between the legs, the second at the right elbow, were also recovered. No pathological lesions were observable.

Grave 1025

Burial 25 (not excavated in 2007/8): This burial, in the south-west corner of trench 1, aligned east–west, with the head to the west, was left unexcavated due to time constraints.

Grave 1026

Burial 32 (not excavated in 2007): The top of a skull, discovered in the north-east corner of Trench 1 (underneath Gr.1010), was left unexcavated due to time constraints.

The mud-brick and pottery coffins

A number of pottery coffins were discovered during the earlier SCA excavations at Quesna, all in 'Excavation field B'. They could be divided into three distinct types: the 'double-vessel coffin', 'slipper', and 'tray' coffin.11 These coffins are common in Egypt, as well as in the Near East. The coffins in 'Excavation field B' were, from contextual evidence, dated to the Roman period. They were found 25–100 cm below the surface and in general arranged in rows, facing east and west. No contents in terms of objects were noticed, only bone remains and occasional pieces of cloth.12 The dating of the grave field was provided by the additional interspersion of simple mud-brick coffins or burials in the sand. Unlike the pottery coffins, these burials contained pottery and glass. The five pottery coffins (1012, 1013, 1021, 1022, and 1023) and three mud-brick coffins (1004, 1005, and 1014) from Trench 1, as with the earlier excavations in field B, also lack associated datable finds. However, the few well-dated pottery sherds found in the fill above a number of the graves have been dated to the Ptolemaic period. Whether this suggests that the earlier burials at Quesna were made in the south, with the mausoleum containing burials of the Late Period and Ptolemaic period, moving northwards to the Roman burials of 'Excavation field B', is far from clear at present. Further investigations in this area, however, will help to determine whether there is a spatial-temporal relationship in the growth of the cemetery, or whether any intentional spatial zoning is instead based on familial groups.

Comments on other finds from Trench 1

Ceramics

All ceramics were collected during the investigations in Trench 1. The majority of the pottery was washed with tap water to remove soil/sand encrustations. The purpose of the washing was not to desalinate but solely to remove sand attached to the ceramic sherds (by brushing it off gently). The sherds were dried and separated according to the fabric. Due to the poor quality of some of the pottery, fresh breaks occurred.

The ceramics from each of the two trenches were spread out on tables in the conservation laboratory. Pieces belonging to the same objects were mended using HMG cellulose nitrate adhesive. Paraloid B-72 adhesive could not be used because of its relatively low Tg (40°C). Cellulose nitrate adhesive is more appropriate in hot climates such as that of Egypt.

A number of ceramic finds from Trench 1 were from coffins, but other types were found, although rarely in direct association with burials. Twelve imported sherds have so far been identified, and sherds of both Egyptian brown and ribbed amphorae, the former much more

common. Jar rims and bowls of a variety of types and fabrics were found, together with a base sherd of a bowl.13

Glass
Fragments of clear, pale green, and green-brown glass were collected from Trench 1, initially from the surface layer. One piece of green glass may have either been a bead or, alternatively, it is the outwards folded rim of a small vessel, of which there is another example from Trench 2.

Metal Finds
A Ptolemaic coin was found within the surface, at a depth of 10–20 cm, although not in association with a particular grave. This well-preserved copper alloy coin, by comparison with another similar coin,14 probably dates to the reign of Ptolemy X Alexander (fig. 15 and pl. IV).

Limestone
A much smaller proportion of the limestone finds originated from Trench 1 than Trench 2. One fragment was found to have some remains of relief decoration, and this may have originally been part of either a limestone statuette, or perhaps a small shrine in the vicinity of the cemetery (see fig. 16).

13 The ceramic material will be subject to a forthcoming dedicated publication.
**Concluding remarks**

The investigations in Trench 1 during the 2007 and 2008 seasons at Quesna have further broadened our knowledge of the range of burial types present within the cemetery. Contrary to the SCA results from ‘Excavation field B’, a higher percentage of burials within Trench 1 are simple pit burials, with only five ceramic coffins and three mud-brick burials having been located thus far. However, the Trench 1 results more closely resemble ‘Excavation field B’ in their striking lack of grave goods, apart from the exceptional burials in Gr.1019 and Gr.1021, with the provision of amulets and cartonnage, as well as the one incised wedjat-eye potsherd from Gr.1014. Trench 1 at Quesna has provided information on the health of 35 individuals within 24 graves, and has also informed on aspects of funerary ideology, provision for and treatment of the body, and types of grave construction. The pottery coffins add to the wider typology for the Ptolemaic and/or Roman period, and also expand our knowledge of burial types at Quesna in general. The typology of burials has further increased through the excavation of both simple mud-brick covered/walled burials and the single large mud-brick walled multiple burial. Burial orientation suggests a degree of cohesion in funerary ideology, and multiple burial may be indicative of familial groups. Analysis into funerary ritual at Quesna is ongoing.
Both sides of the Ptolemaic coin found during the clearance of the surface in Trench 1.

PTOLEMAIC–ROMAN CEMETERY