

## Tell Report for the MSA, 2017.

*By Dr. James Bennett (Field Director)*



Fig.1. View of the Ptolemaic workshop in M5.2 and M5.3 looking east.

*with contributions by Skylar Joseph and Julian Hernandez*

### The Limestone Temple Foundations

#### *The 1<sup>st</sup> Century BCE Temple Destruction*

In 2009 a large limestone casemate temple foundation was identified in M5.1. The excavations this season in M6.17 demonstrated that a mudbrick building found in 2015 was constructed on the destruction deposits of the limestone temple. Below the mudbrick building were several large limestone blocks that had fallen from the adjacent limestone temple. There was also considerable limestone debris that overlay a series of small mudbrick rooms that may date to the original construction phase of the limestone temple.

Within the limestone collapse [M6.17.021] which filled one of the small mudbrick rooms was a white ground lagynos from Greece. Lagynos of this type were most popular about 150-50 BCE. Examples from Athens show this low angular form the same as the Tell Timai example but with rope handle instead of the strap handle and can be dated to 115-50 BCE. Similar examples have also been found at the Agora and can be dated to 115-86 BC. Also in the limestone collapse was an AE3 amphora which can be dated to the Late Ptolemaic and Early

Roman Period. In addition to these ceramics were two bases of Aswan Ware jugs that have a 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC date.

Therefore, the main and final collapse phase of the limestone temple in M5.1 occurred in the Late Ptolemaic or early Roman Period. In the 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC/ Early Roman Period the stone robbers cut through the earlier mudbrick wall phase to access the stone from the temple. A robbers cut is visible within the section showing that they got down to the seventh course of limestone before they stopped (Fig.2). This robbers trench also had pottery of the Late Ptolemaic Period and early Roman Period. Below the robbers trench the limestone foundations extended another course before the sand foundations.



Fig.2. The foundations of the temple showing the robbers trench and the limestone rubble layers above.

Below the limestone foundations the sand bed of the foundations was reached (Fig.3). Nothing was found within the sand foundations. The sand bed was not very deep and below this was the natural gezira, indicating that the limestone temple was the first construction in this part of the tell. The dating of the temple could not be ascertained as there were no finds or diagnostic ceramic sherds below the robbers cut within the original temple foundations, however it must have been constructed prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC.



Fig.3. The sand foundation for the limestone temple underneath the temple blocks.



## The Western Ptolemaic Enclosure Wall

The width of the western enclosure wall [K7-2.003] of the large Ptolemaic temple to the south was unable to be ascertained in the excavations this season, however a current maximum width for the wall is more than 20 m wide. Future excavations to the east will hope to define the eastern edge of the enclosure, while the western edge most likely runs underneath the modern road that borders the village of Kafr Amir to the west. A small section of the wall was removed to access the foundations of the enclosure and the date of its construction. As the wall was removed the construction technique of the wall was defined. One course of bricks showed mud bricks arranged in diagonal lines, which was a builder's technique to demarcate the upper bricks in the enclosure wall. Below the diagonal bricks a series of small layers of limestone debris was scattered over the area in order to level the course ready for the next one. There was evidence of a reed mat placed between the courses as well, based on white organic staining on the bricks in a cross hatched design. Few diagnostic ceramics were collected from within the bricks, however one incurved rim bowl fragment allowed the construction of the western wall of the temenos to be dated to the Ptolemaic Period, while no further refinement of the phase in the Ptolemaic Period can be suggested yet.



The mud bricks arranged in a diagonal orientation

## The Late Roman Burials

### *Architecture of the Burials*

Built upon the denuded remains of the western sector of the Ptolemaic enclosure wall [K7-1.019 and K7-2.003] was a series of mudbrick chambers with what appear to have vaulted ceilings. In total seven burials were identified in the upper phase of burials, with evidence that they extend to the north and west of the unit. The complex has been cut away by seabkhin digging and extensive bioturbation by animals, particularly dogs, who have

accessed the burials and burrowed into the structure. The section created by this later digging shows a multi-tiered complex, in the Egyptian mastaba style.

	
<p>View of the burials after excavation</p>	<p>The western face of the burial monument showing the different levels of internments. The western part of the enclosure wall is shown in the forefront.</p>

## Burial Types

### ***Type 1. Brick Lined Burial.***

Type 1 burials had red brick lining the burial (Fig.4). This consisted of a red brick floor, one brick thick, with one course of red bricks around the outside, and then mud brick was built on top of the red brick, and then would have been covered over with a mudbrick surface. Two burials of this type were identified. Both were disturbed and cut away, with no evidence of human bone left in them. In the brick lined burial an iron nail was found which may suggest that wooden coffins were inserted into the brick lined burials.





Fig.4. Type 1: Red brick lined burials.

### ***Type 2. Simple Pit Burial***

Simple pit burials with mudbrick around them was the most common form of burial in K7.1. (Fig.5.) They were separated from the surrounding burials with only very thin walls, one brick thick. Organic staining over the mud brick lining of the burial would suggest some form of simple reed mat was laid over the bodies. None of the burials (including Type 1 burials) had any associated grave goods with them, however the ubiquitous nature of the same amphora types and vessels in the disturbed upper layers may be indicative that these were the grave goods themselves, and have since been disturbed as many of the burials are located so close to the surface.



Fig. 5. Type 2: Mudbrick pit burials.

## Dating the Late Roman Burials

In each of the fills of the burials the same ceramic deposit types were identified for each. They consisted of fragmentary complete amphora. The most ubiquitous amphora type found across the area were Late Roman Amphora 4, which can be dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Also in the pottery assemblage were late Roman Amphora 1 with small nipple bases and can dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE.

Several poorly preserved small Late Roman bronze coins were found in the burials, while beneath the mudbrick cover of [Burial 1] [K7.1.004] was found a small bronze coin. The coin itself was heavily degraded however the shape and size of the coin suggested it to be a Byzantine coin, which corresponds with the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC dating of the pottery.

## The Osteoarchaeological Report on the Burials in K7.1

*By Skylar Joseph*

### *Burial 1, K7-1.004*

The skeletal remains from this burial consisted of a fragmented partial skeleton in poor condition (Fig. 6). The remains were determined to be male, based upon the measurement of the maximum femoral head diameter. Age was assessed through analysis of the sternal end of the ribs, and indicate an age of at least 45 years in males. A small amount of osteoarthritic change is notable on the vertebral fragments. Overall the skeleton has been badly damaged through a combination of acidic soil erosion and plant growth through the bones.

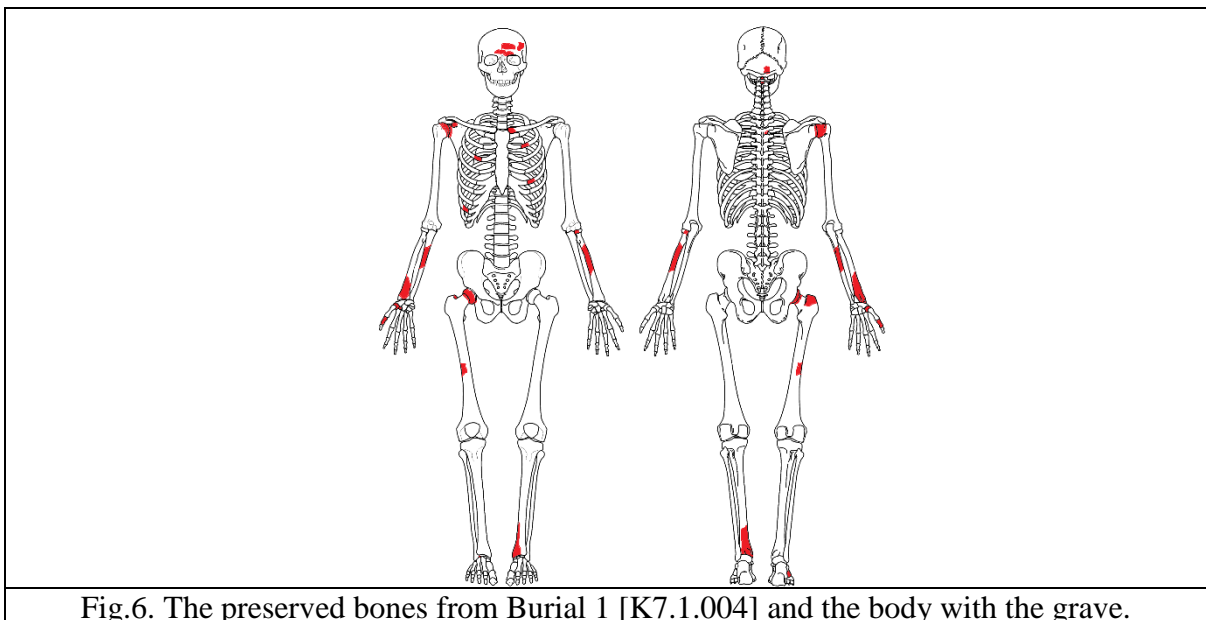


Fig.6. The preserved bones from Burial 1 [K7.1.004] and the body with the grave.

### *Burial 2, [K7.1-006, 0016, and 0017]*

Burial 2 consist of a fragmented partial skeleton in poor condition (Fig.7). The remains were determined to be probable male, based upon the measurement of the maximum femoral head diameter. Age was assessed through analysis of the sternal end of the ribs, and indicate an age

of between 27 to 48 years in males. A small amount of osteoarthritic change is notable on the vertebral fragments. A fully healed, complete antemortem fracture to the distal radius is present. Overall the skeleton has been badly damaged through a combination of acidic soil erosion and plant growth through the bones.



Fig.7. The body of the male within the mudbrick lined pit from Burial 2.

### The Northern Enclosure Wall

A large section of the northern sector of the enclosure wall was identified this season in L5.5. The enclosure had been severely mined away by sebakh farmers (Fig.8). The width of the enclosure wall was 10m. The north west and north-east corners of the enclosure wall have not yet been found, however the current length of the northern part of the temenos is over 110m long from east to west.

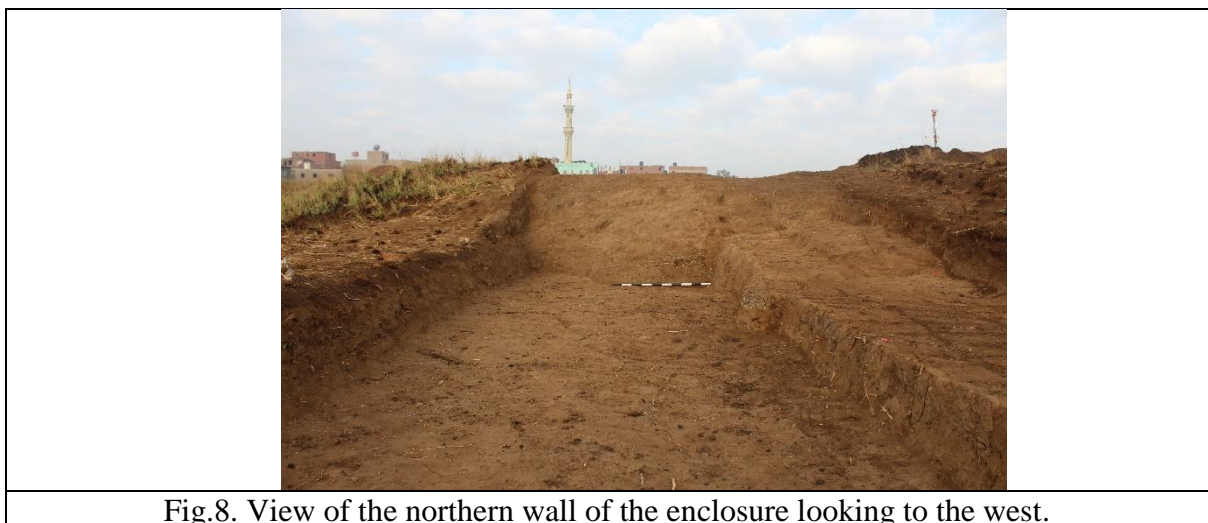


Fig.8. View of the northern wall of the enclosure looking to the west.

## The Ptolemaic Workshop

### Phase 1: The Large Pit.

Phase 1 consisted of a large pit into which large amounts of burnt material was thrown, including red brick. (Fig.8). This does not appear to have been conducted in a single event based on the many thin layers of burning evident in the sections. The pottery from this pit phase [M5.2.022, M5.2.023] would suggest a mid-2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC date.



Fig.8. The pit underneath the Ptolemaic workshop.

### Phase 2: The Workshop Construction

Phase 2 was the construction of a large workshop which was built directly on top of the large burning pit (Fig.9). The workshop was connected to a 5m thick wall to the south that was exposed in M6.18, and also in 2015 in M5.1 The workshop was located in M5.2 and extended into M5.3 to the east. The full eastern, northern, and western extent of the structure has not been defined. Within the workshop was a small oven made of amphora sherds. A cylindrical neck of an amphora had been used as a flue for the oven. Next to the main oven was vat oven, into which had been deposited several vessels, including a large granite plate. Many complete vessels were also found in the rooms of the workshop including a bread mould which suggests food preparation was also conducted here. A large amount of metal objects were found in the workshop including bronze or copper sheet metal offcuts, lead, and many iron fragments, which suggest metal working was also conducted.

A substantial amount of Ptolemaic bronze coinage came from this workshop, 64.4% of all the coins found this season came from the workshop, with many having identical dimensions and weights and date to the reigns of either Ptolemy IX or X. The large number of coins left



behind in the rooms of the workshop may suggest that the occupants left in a hurry. This may be supported by the large number of whole vessels left on surfaces and thrown down across the workshop, including vessels tipped into the ovens.

The pottery dating from the workshop would appear to confirm the dating of the coins to the Late Ptolemaic Period and the reigns of Ptolemy IX or X. In the upper levels of the workshop [M5.2.003] the ceramic deposits include an ESA Hemispherical Bowl Robinson Shape IX, Atalante II, Form 22, dated to ca. 75-1 BC, and an ESA incurved rim bowl, possibly from Asia Minor, (Pergamon?) dated to ca. 120 BC. The lower fills of the rooms would also appear to suggest a date of the late 2<sup>nd</sup> Century or 1<sup>st</sup> Century based on AE2 Amphora, large Ungentaria, several small juglets also found in 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC contexts here at Tell Timai and in Greece at Delos, imitation rope handles from Lagynoi (150-50 BCE) and late Ptolemaic grey-ware plates.



Fig.9. A view of the workshop looking to the east.

### Phase 3: The Destruction of the Workshop

The workshop appears to be abandoned some time after the Late Ptolemaic Period as there is no evidence of Early Roman activity. The next occupational material is in the Late Roman Period. Several Late Roman vessels have been found in the upper surface fills of the workshop including Late Roman 1 Amphora of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC. In addition to the amphora was a coin of the emperor Theodosius I dated to 383-403 CE. This would correspond with the reuse of the temenos walls to the south in K7-1 for burials in the Late Roman Period, and suggests that by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC the north west of Tell Timai had gone out of use and then was reused in the Late Roman Period for burials.

## The Osteological Report from M5.2

By Skylar Joseph

The hypothesis that the area in M5.2, like in K7.1 in the Late Roman Period was used for burials may be indicated by the presence of a human tooth which was recovered from unit M5-2.002. Upon analysis, the tooth was confirmed to be archaeological in origin based on the staining of the tooth from the surrounding soil, as well as the amount of occlusal wear present. The tooth was determined to be the right maxillary M1. Analysis of the amount of occlusal wear on the tooth suggests that it originated from an individual who was between 17-25 years old. Dental measurements (Table 1) of the tooth suggest that it likely belonged to a female, however, due to the lack of population specific data for this type of research it cannot be certain. The conclusion is that this tooth belonged to a female between the ages of 17-25 years who lived at a time contemporary with the other items recovered from this feature.

<b><u>Table 1:</u></b>		
<b><u>Measurement Name:</u></b>	<b><u>Measurement (mm):</u></b>	<b><u>Notes:</u></b>
Mesiodistal Crown Diameter	8.9	-2 SD (female); -3 SD (male)
Buccolingual Crown Diameter	10.8	-1 SD (female); -2 SD (male)
Crown Height	>5.2	Occlusal wear; measurement not usable in calculations
Mesiodistal Diameter of Cervix	7.2	-2 SD (female); -1 SD (male)
Robustness (Mesiodistal crown diameter multiplied by buccolingual crown diameter)	97.01	-2 SD (female); -3 SD (male)

## The Domestic House [M6.18]

A small domestic house was identified in M6.18 (Fig.10). The house is located between a 5m thick wall that is attached to the Ptolemaic workshop in M5.2 and the 10m thick temenos wall to the south. Its position between these two large walls and a potential walkway between the house and the 5m thick enclosure, and its proximity to the temple temenos may indicate that the occupant had some connection with the temple itself.

In the house there were three separate rooms in a line with evidence of a single doorway into the structure in the western most room. The house most likely extends to the west into M5.2 which was excavated in 2015. The western room in M6.18 had a limestone threshold with door jamb, showing that you accessed the house from the north and confirming the presence of a walkway between the house and the 5m enclosure to the north. No more doors

were identified into the eastern rooms. In the middle room was a small installation possibly for heating water, as it would be too small for food preparation. It was made by stacking amphora sherds one behind the other. In the same room as the installation was the lower half of a rounded based vessel that would have been either sunk into the floor or placed into a wooden stand.



Fig. 10. View of the domestic house with the 5m enclosure wall to the north.



Fig.11. Western room showing the pottery assemblage and the Lagynos

### The Date of the House

The ceramics found in the collapse of the wall [M6.18.004] that covered a large area of the unit can be dated to the Late Ptolemaic Period (Late 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC), based on the presence of AE2 Amphora and Late Ptolemaic Grey Ware. A small assemblage of personal vessels probably for use by one individual, most likely a dining set was found dumped in a small



room at the entrance of a doorway with a limestone step (Fig.11). The assemblage included a fine-ware Lagynos which can be dated securely to ca. 50 to 50 CE and a set of string cut bowls which can again be dated to the Late Ptolemaic Period. To the east of this room, another small room with a small fireplace, constructed in the same way as the oven in the Ptolemaic workshop in M5.2 with amphora sherds was found. The fill on top of the fireplace had AE3 amphora inside and dates the room to no earlier than the Late Ptolemaic Period, which is consistent with the assemblage in the small entrance room to the west. The ceramic dating therefore would be consistent with the end phase of this small house in the Late Ptolemaic Period.

## The Numismatic Report, Tell Timai 2017

By Julian Hernandez and Skylar Joseph

One hundred and sixty-three coins of various preservation qualities were found at Tell Timai in 2017. Of these coins, 5.5% were identifiable with very high confidence. 52.8% were recognized to be of fair condition, while 41.7% had very poor preservation and corrosion which prohibited any data to be recovered. Most of the coins were found in unit M5-2 which yielded 64.4% of all coins found in 2017. Many of the coins from M5-2 had nearly identical dimensions and weights. In this M5-2, two identical Ptolemy IX or X coins were discovered, both off their axis by the same degree. Of all coins, 15.9% were discovered in M5-3, a unit adjacent to the east M5-2. The remaining 19.7% of coins were discovered in M6-18, M6-19, L5-2, L6-7, and K7-1. The following is a list of the identifiable coins from Tell Timai:

1. CN 424, Bronze, M5-2.001. [SCA 289]

Theodosius I, 383-403 CE. AE 4, Obverse; Bust of the Emperor Theodosius facing to the right. The legend reads DN[**THEODO**] SIVSPFAVG. The reverse shows Victory advancing left and palm branch in hand while holding captive. [Reverse SALVS REIPUBLICAE (Salus Reipublicae), Mint either ANT (Antioch) or CONS (Constantinople).

2. CN 425, Bronze, M5-2.020, M5-2.001 [SCA 288]

Ptolemaic, Ptolemy IX or X, 116-88 BCE. Obverse relief depicts the bust of Ptolemy IX or X facing to the right with a divet in the centre of the coin. The reverse depicts the double eagles standing and facing to the left with a divet in the centre of the coin.

3. CN 426, Bronze, M6-18.009 [SCA 294]

Ptolemaic, Ptolemy IX or X, 116-88 BCE. Obverse relief depicts a bust of Ptolemy IX or X facing to the right with a divot in the centre of the coin. This bust is not as profound due to corrosion. The reverse relief depicts double eagles standing and facing to the left along with a divot in the centre of the coin.

4. CN 427, Bronze, M5-2.008 [SCA 295]

Probably Ptolemaic, most likely minted during the reign of Ptolemy IX or X, 116-88 BCE due to its dimensions and weight. The obverse relief depicts a bust facing to the right along with a divot in the centre of the coin. This bust is not as profound due to corrosion. The reverse relief depicts double eagles standing and facing to the left

along with a divot in the centre of the coin. The mint on this coin is off its axis which is unusual, and matches CN 431. Reference number for this coin is (Svornos) SV1698.

5. CN 429, Bronze, M5-2.020 [SCA 288]

Ptolemaic, minted during the reign of Ptolemy IX or X, 116-88 BCE. The obverse relief depicts a bust of Ptolemy IX or X facing to the right along with a divot in the centre of the coin. The reverse relief depicts double eagles standing and facing to the left along with a divot in the centre of the coin.

6. CN 431, Bronze, M5-2.008 [SCA 295]

Ptolemaic, most likely minted during the reign of Ptolemy IX or X, 116-88 BCE due to its dimensions and weight. The obverse relief depicts a bust of Ptolemy IX or X facing to the right along with a divot in the centre of the coin. The reverse relief depicts double eagles standing and facing to the left along with a divot in the centre of the coin. The mint on this coin is off its axis which is unusual and matches coin number CN 427. Reference number for this coin is (Svornos) SV1698.

7. CN 432, Bronze, M5-2.001 [SCA 290]

Early Roman, Vespasian, 69 – 79 CE. The obverse relief depicts a bust of the emperor Vespasian facing to the right. The reverse relief depicts a single eagle facing to the right with wings closed.

8. CN 433, Bronze, M5-2.017 [SCA 293]

Ptolemaic, minted during the reign of Ptolemy IX or X, 116-88 BCE. The obverse relief depicts a bust of Ptolemy IX or X facing to the right along with a divot in the centre of the coin. The reverse relief depicts double eagles standing and facing to the left along with a divot in the centre of the coin.

9. CN 434, Bronze, M6-19.001 [SCA 292]

Ptolemaic, minted during the reign of Ptolemy IX or X, 116-88 BCE). The obverse relief depicts a bust of Zeus Ammon facing to the right along with a divot in the centre of the coin. The reverse relief depicts double eagles standing and facing to the left along with a divot in the centre of the coin. Reference number for this coin is (Svornos) SV1703.

### Preliminary Conclusions

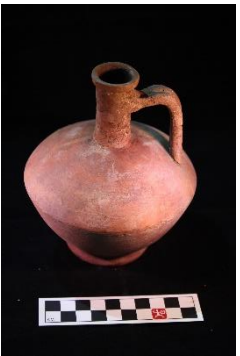

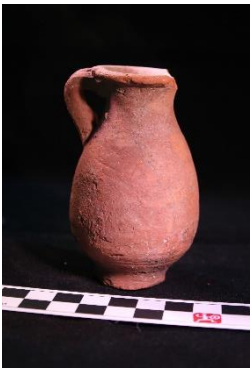



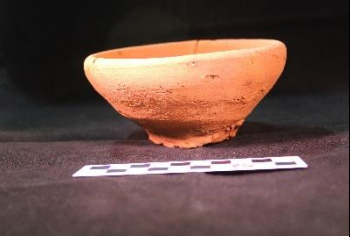

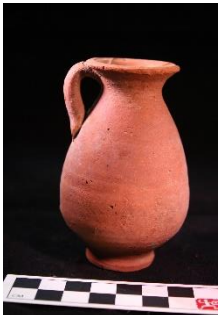



- The limestone temple foundations were constructed prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC, after which the limestone temple was destroyed.
- The western sector of the enclosure wall of the main temple was already dismantled by the Late Roman Period when the area was reused as an area for simple brick lined and mud brick pit burials
- After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC, a workshop, possibly in connection with the limestone temple was constructed during the reign of Ptolemy IX or X







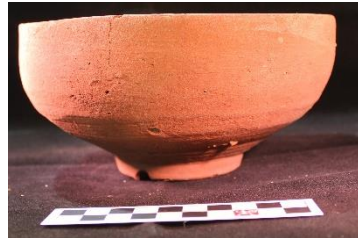


- The northern wall of the temenos is 10m thick.
- The western wall of the temenos is over 20m thick
- Between a 5m thick enclosure which connects to the workshop, and the main temple temenos a small domestic house was built at some time in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century BC, possibly in connection with the temple itself.

### SCA Object Inventory

255	M6.18	7	1 Redware Lagynos	Complete	142.9				119.1		ca.. 50 BCE -
256	M5.1	11	5 Dish	Complete	64.1				155.4		1st Century
257	M5.1	11	14 Juglet	Complete	83.6				37.1		1st Century
258	M5.1	11	13 Juglet	Complete	91.6				41.3		1st Century
259	M6.18	7	4 Ring Base Bowl	Complete	72.9				164.3		Late 1st
260	M6.18	7	3 String Cut Bowl	Complete	57.7				120.1		Late 1st
261	M6.18	7	2 String Cut Bowl	Complete	36.4				116.7		Late 1st
262	M5.1	10	4 String Cut Bowl	Complete	59.6				117.7		1st Century
263	M5.2	13	2 Juglet	Complete	86.7				38.8		1st Century
264	M5.2	13	1 Flaring Rim Vessel	Complete	111.9				101.5		1st Century
265	M5.2	2	8 String Cut Bowl	Complete	58.4				119.3		Late 2nd
266	M5.2	2	4 Ring Base Bowl	Complete	84.7				163.8		End 2nd - early 1st
267	M5.2	20	12 String Cut Bowl	Complete	59.1				117.5		ca.120 BCE
268	M5.2	20	5 Lid	Complete	21.1				90.4		ca. 120 BCE
269	M5.2	17	18 Measuring Cups	Complete	85.6				57.4		1st Century
270	M5.2	17	17 Measuring Cups	Complete	76				55.6		1st Century
271	M5.2	8	2 String Cut Bowl	Complete	46.6				114.2		Late 2nd to early 1st
272	M6.18	14	3 Measuring Cups	Complete	77.1				47.3		Late
273	M5.2	10	4 Ring Base Bowl	Complete	86.1				16.45		1st Century
274	M5.2	1	7 Bowl	Complete	42.1				113.7		Ptolemaic
275	M5.2	3	9 Crucible?	Complete	16.47				112.4		125/75-1
276	M6.18	13	2 Granite Pestle	Complete	133.5	92.2	86.8				ptolemaic
277	M5.3	1	1 Granite Pestle	Complete	96	69	68.3				ptolemaic
278	M6.18	13	4 Stone Smoother	Complete	104.5	80.8	35.7				Ptolemaic
279	M5.2	1	2 Stone pounder	Complete	52.9	51.1	43.9				Ptolemaic
280	M5.2	23	Green Stone Bead	Complete	7	7	4				ptolemaic
281	M5.1	10	1 Perrirhentaria Stone	Fragment	63.3	62.3	20.7				Ptolemaic
282	M5.3	3	1 Cartouche	Complete							
283	M5.2	7	1 Unfinished Statue	incomplete	159.5	87.7	118.9				ptolemaic
284	M5.2	20	15 Small black Kohl pot	incomplete	41				13		Late 2nd - early 1st
285	M6.18	13	Terracotta Lamp handle in shape of two animals end to end	incomplete	84	25	24				Late 2nd - early 1st Century BCE
286	M5.2	23	Large terracotta figurine with baboon (?) seated over the	incomplete	82	160	66				Late 2nd - early 1st Century BCE
287	M5.2	3	2 Silicified sandstone	incomplete	136	110	70				ptolemaic
288	M5.2	20 CN 425	Ptolemaic bronze, Ptolemy IX-X, Divet, Theodosius Face,	Good				21mm	7.47g		Ptolemy IX or X 383-403
289	M5.2	1 CN 424	Victory on reverse	Fair				12mm	0.82g		CE
290	M5.2	1 CN 432	Vespasian Coin Single Eagle to the left head	Fair				23.3mm	7.88g		69-79 CE
291	M5.2	8 CN 431	Ptolemaic bronze, face divet, double eagle	Good				20.7mm	7.98g		Ptolemy IX or X
292	M6.19	1 CN 434	Ptolemaic bronze, zeus ammon, divet, double	Good				18.6mm	5.04g		Ptolemy IX or X
293	M5.2	17 CN 433	Ptolemaic Bronze, Ptolemy IX-X Divet, single eagle facing left,	Good				23.7mm	7.60g		Ptolemy IX or X
294	M6.18	9 CN 426	Ptolemaic bronze, face, divet, double	Good				20.3mm	5.68g		Ptolemy IX or X
295	M5.2	8 CN 427	ptolemaic bronze, face, divet, double	Good				20.8mm	7.45g		Ptolemy IX or X
296	M5.2	20 CN 429	ptolemaic IX-X, divet,	Good				21mm	7.23g		Ptolemy IX or X











		
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282	283	284



		
285	286	287
		
288	289	290
		
291	292	293



Appendix 2: Location of Excavation Units in Grid Squares K7, M6, L5 and L6.

