Naukratis: Greeks in Egypt

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http://www.britishmuseum.org/naukratis

Discovery and excavations: Naukratis from the 19th century until today

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1. Imagining Naukratis: Naukratis before Petrie

Long before the rediscovery of Naukratis, the site had occupied a special place in the minds of scholars and a general public alike, speaking particularly to romantic minds. In the 18th and 19th century the story of the Greek slave girl Rhodopis’s slipper, as told by Strabo (17.1.33; cf. Litinas 2005) was popularly retold and illustrated – from the anonymous tale The History and Amours of Rhodope (1780) and Angelica Kauffmann’s renderings of the story, to George Frederick Watts’s painting Rhodopis (1868) – and much discussed with regard to being the origin of the story of Cinderella. An image of Naukratis as an exotic, cosmopolitan city, where cultures mixed and mingled and where the great figures of the period discussed politics in Rhodopis’ salon, was conjured up in Georg Ebers’s novel Eine ägyptische Königstochter, first published in 1864 and hugely popular for many decades particularly in its English translation, An Egyptian Princess. While to German scholars such as Ebers himself the confederation of Greek merchants at Naukratis might recall the arrangements of the Hanseatic League, British writers tended to compare Naukratis with the British treaty ports of Hong Kong or Canton in China or with industrial centres such as Birmingham, thus mirroring their own colonial political and economic experience.

It thus hardly comes as a surprise that the rediscovery of the near mythical site ranked fairly high on the list of contemporary scholars’ priorities. Locating Naukratis, however, was not all that easy. Certainly its approximate location in the Western Nile Delta was always clear, but following the decline of the city, knowledge of its precise location had been lost. The Peutinger map – going back to late antiquity – with its schematic placement being of little help, 18th- and 19th-century scholars usually turned to literary sources for advice, notably Ptolemy, Strabo and Herodotus, while travellers in Egypt tried to see if proof on the ground could be found for the various hypotheses that had been advanced (see the overview in Bernand 1970, 615–18). Suggestions centred on locations in the vicinity of Rahmaya, Kurat, Dessuk or Sa el-Hagar, yet none of the proposed identifications ultimately proved convincing, and no scholarly consensus could be gained. Members of the Expédition Française d’Égypte even suggested that Naukratis must have been swept away by the Nile, as their efforts in finding the site remained fruitless (Bernand 1970, 616). Of course, methods were not always entirely scientific: when James Silk Buckingham visited Sa el-Hagar (now known to be the site of ancient Sais) in search of Naukratis, his hopes revolved around the local population displaying signs of being descended from Greek stock so as to add further weight to the identification (Buckingham 1845; cf. also Petrie 1886a, 1). Only one scholar, Jean-Antoine Letronne, in a commentary on

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1 Ebers 1887, 77. At the same time, Ebers also recognized similarities with ‘the Dutch factory of Desima [Dejima]’ at Nagasaki, the trading post and merchants’ settlement (at first Portuguese and then Dutch) that was the sole interface for direct trade and exchange between Japan and the outside world until the mid-19th century.

2 Rennell 1830, 530, likened Naukratis to the trading port of Canton in China and interpreted it firmly in context of British imperialism, referring also to British subjects residing in the East and the West Indies. For Flinders Petrie, in a lecture on 5 November 1885 (1886b) ‘Naukratis was the Greek Hong Kong and Birmingham in one.’
Strabo published in 1819, had actually pinpointed the site’s location correctly, by linking the modern village of el-Neqrash with the ancient Naukratis, yet his idea appears to have gone largely unnoticed. So it was left to a young, self-taught British Egyptologist, William Matthew Flinders Petrie, to chance upon the site in early 1884 and, later the same year, to positively identify it as Naukratis (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. The site of Naukratis in 1885, photographed by Flinders Petrie, Delta Series no. 323: “mounds &c from N wall of enclosure”. Photograph © Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, University College London, PMAN 2698.

2. Petrie’s discovery of Naukratis

On 23 November 1883 Flinders Petrie left the UK for Egypt, having been engaged as explorer by the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF), to excavate the ancient site of Tanis in the Egyptian Nile Delta. Petrie (Fig. 2) was 30 at the time; he had been working in Egypt of his own accord for the past three years, surveying the pyramids (Drower 1985, 27–64; Petrie 1883) driven by a passion for applying scientific techniques, notably surveying, to ancient monuments and objects ever since his teenage years (Drower 1985, 21–7; Stevenson 2012). The mission was his first formal engagement, and the beginning of what would be a most remarkable career in archaeology and Egyptology (Petrie 1891a, 1932; Drower 1985). The EEF, too, was still in its infancy, having been founded in 1882 as a private society funded by public subscriptions to promote the exploration of ancient sites in the Egyptian Nile Delta (Drower 1985, 57–8, 63, 65–6; James 1982; Spencer 2007). It was the brain-child of successful novelist, travel writer and Egyptophile Amelia Edwards and Reginald Stuart Poole,

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4 Some of the information in this section about dates and events is derived from Petrie’s diaries and journals, copies of which are held in the Griffith Institute and (for the 1884–5 season only) in the EES Archives. Scans and transcripts of these will be published soon in collaboration with the owning institutions.
Keeper of the Department of Coins and Medals in the British Museum, and connections between the EEF and the British Museum were close particularly in its early years. Besides a number of university professors and other notable figures, the EEF committee included Poole's assistant Barclay Head, as well as A. S. Murray and Charles Newton (Keeper until 1885) from the British Museum's Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities.

At the time, Egypt, still part of the Ottoman Empire, was undergoing a period of change. On a political and economic level, the French and English (and their capital) had played a dominant role in Egypt for the past century (Jasanoff 2005, 211–306; Mansell 2010, 56–90, 102–47). Both countries remained powerful influences in Egypt after the British military occupation in 1882 under Prime Minister Gladstone. This had involved fierce battles and great losses being inflicted on the city of Alexandria in particular, yet at least politically the scales now seemed tipped in Britain's favour. With Gaston Maspero, successor of Auguste Mariette, the Directorship of the Egyptian Antiquities Service remained in French hands, yet Maspero was not averse to British archaeological activity in Egypt and – after the first period of political uncertainty had passed – actively supported the EEF (Drower 1985, 57–8; cf. also Quirke 2010, 15–16, 19).

At the same time, and particularly following the opening in 1869/70 of the Suez Canal and the beginning of Cook's tours to Egypt, the country saw an influx of foreigners from wider sections of society, and the beginnings of large-scale tourism.

One of the main aims of the EEF – and of Petrie himself – was to help salvage Egyptian historical monuments from destruction. As was plain to see, they were endangered in many ways, not least by the fact that archaeological sites were systematically being eradicated by locals (sebbakhin) digging up settlement mounds to use the fertile earth (sebakhein) essentially deteriorated ancient mud-brick containing decomposed organic material) on their fields (Bailey 1999). Another main aim, of course, was to gain new knowledge about the history of humanity and in the process to enrich existing museum collections, notably in the UK, although this was, it seems, not envisaged at first. This is why fieldwork had to be

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5 As Amelia Edwards had famously observed in the account of her journey through Egypt in 1873 (Edwards 1890, 353): 'Such is the fate of every Egyptian monument, great or small. The tourist carves it all over with names and dates, and in some instances with caricatures. The student of Egyptology, by taking wet paper “squeezes,” sponges away every vestige of the original colour. The “collector” buys and carries off everything of value that he can get; and the Arab steals for him. The work of destruction, meanwhile, goes on apace. There is no one to prevent it; there is no one to discourage it. Every day, more inscriptions are mutilated – more tombs are rifled – more paintings and sculptures are defaced.' Cf. also Petrie's own reaction at the destruction of sites: Drower 1985, 43; Petrie 1885, 205: 'What has been lost in the last fifty years is grievous.'

6 See the note announcing the formation of the EEF in The Times of 30 March 1882: 'It must be distinctly understood that by the law of Egypt no antiquities can be removed from the country.' This perception clearly soon changed, as becomes clear e.g. in a paper read by Flinders Petrie at the second AGM of the EEF on 29 October 1884, listing among the aims of the EEF 'to obtain new and interesting results, to enrich our museums with unique and valuable objects, and to win the keys to all our existing collections, by the systematic excavation and research which will yield with certainty the knowledge of the peculiarities proper to each age and locality of which as yet we know so little' (Egypt Exploration Fund, Report of the Second Annual General Meeting & Balance Sheet, p. 10). In 1886 thirty-two rules were prepared to define the objects of the EFF and to regulate conduct of business; listed as prime objectives are to conduct excavations in Egypt to elucidate the history and arts of ancient Egypt, including in relation to Old Testament and early Greek history and that of the Coptic Church; to publish the results of the work; and to ensure the preservation of antiquities by presenting them to museums and similar public institutions: Egypt Exploration Fund,
conducted systematically and scientifically, much in the way that German Classical Archaeologists had recently begun to excavate major sites such as Olympia and Troy. The chief focus, at first at least, was not so much Egyptian history and archaeology itself, but those sites in the Nile Delta that related to biblical history and the Hebrew sojourn, as well as to Greek connections with Egypt – themes that were highly topical at the time and that appealed particularly to the Fund’s Christian, educated middle-class supporters, both in Late Victorian Britain and in the USA (Drower 1985, 65–6, 69).

In this context Naukratis – besides sites of biblical relevance such as Goshen, Pithom and Zoan (Tanis) – was clearly a priority: a high profile site, the discovery of which might not only help illuminate an obscure early period of Greek art, but also attract the attention of a wider classically minded public and scholarly community. As a notice announcing the EEF’s formation in The Times of 30 March 1882 makes clear: ‘It must not be forgotten that Naukratis, the primitive emporium in the west of the Delta, promises as ample a harvest to Hellenic archaeologists as Goshen to Semitic scholars. The period which would there be illustrated is one of the most interesting in the development of Greek art, and is at the same time one of the most obscure.’ To carry out the quest the Fund ambitiously approached an archaeologist with an impressive track record in locating and excavating ancient sites: Heinrich Schliemann. Yet in spite of Schliemann’s enthusiasm the deal fell through (Drower 1985, 66). Petrie was keen, but instead, Swiss Egyptologist Édouard Naville became the EEF’s first explorer, and was sent in search of biblical Pithom, which he believed (erroneously, as we now know) he had identified in the site of Tell el-Maskhuta (Drower 1985, 69; Vandenhous 2008–10; cf. Leclère 2008, 541 with n. 1, 546–9).

The following year, however, it was finally Flinders Petrie’s turn, and he was engaged by the EEF in addition to Naville. Not unlike Schliemann, Petrie was a self-taught enthusiast. Driven by an inexhaustible thirst for knowledge, and with a remarkable gift for understanding archaeology, his approach was perhaps more shaped by his religious upbringing, personal obsession with accurate measurements, and personal experience with fieldwork in Britain and within the archaeological circles he moved in, than by emulating prominent figures such as the pioneer of ‘scientific’ British archaeology, Augustus Henry Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers (Stevenson 2012, adjusting the picture in Trigger 2006, 290–5; Lucas 2001, 18–26; cf. also Drower 1985, 25). Petrie’s first season in Egypt in 1883/4 on behalf of the EEF was taken up by excavation at the already identified site of Tanis, but also by reconnaissance on behalf of the Fund for sites for potential future fieldwork. It was on one of these scouting trips that Petrie first became aware of the site of Naukratis, albeit without yet realizing its identity.
In late November/early December 1883, soon after his arrival in Egypt, a local Arab dealer in Giza had offered Petrie a small fragmentary alabaster figurine (Fig. 3) that piqued his curiosity, as it clearly was not Egyptian—indeed, Petrie suspected it to represent a Carian mercenary of around 600 BC, and in a letter of 1 December 1883 to R. S. Poole at the British Museum (Fig. 4) announced his intention of tracking down, in one of his exploratory trips, the site where the piece had been found: Nebei[ra][h] (EES Archive XVIf, 10, cf. also Drower 1985, 72)

On Monday 14 January 1884 the opportunity finally arose for a reconnaissance mission to Nebira. Petrie set out from Cairo, by train and foot, and two days later reached the village, from where he was led to the Tell, to be met by an overwhelming sight:

And then—oh! What a feast of pottery. The whole ground is thick with early Greek pottery, and it seemed almost a sacrifice to walk over the heaps with the fine lustrous black ware crunching under one’s boots. Pieces with fret pattern, honeysuckle pattern, heads, arms, legs of figures, horses, & such like lovely things were soon picked up; both in black figures on an orange ground, & red figures on a black ground, mostly with incised outlines. It seemed as if I was wandering in the smashings of the Museum vase-rooms. Such a half hour I never had before. (Petrie Journal 1883–4; original in the Griffith Institute, Oxford University)

Recognizing that the site was clearly an important Greek town, Petrie nevertheless failed to make the link with Naukratis. In fact, the following morning he set off for Dessuk where others had suspected Naukratis to be (Bernand 1970, 616), only to be frustrated. Puzzled and disappointed he writes ‘So where Naukratis is I don’t know’—not realizing that he had actually found Naukratis at Nebira (Petrie Journal 1883–4; cf. Drower 1985, 74). It is only later that year when Petrie, having again been engaged for the EEF in the winter of 1884/5, returned to the site that he was to discover its true identity.

3. Excavations at Naukratis: Petrie’s first season 1884/5

On 8 November 1884 Flinders Petrie set sail from Liverpool for his first season at Naukratis, financed by subscriptions to the Fund including a substantial donation by the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies; Still in a lecture on 29 October 1884 to the second Annual General Meeting of EEF, which includes a description of the newly discovered Greek site, he does not yet suggest an identification: ‘Among the sites I may mention one which is so covered with early Greek pottery that the potsherds crackle under the feet in walking over it; pottery of every date, from the prehistoric down through the Phoenician, and the black figured, to the finest period of red-figured pottery on a black ground, and on, into still later times. Beside pottery, statuettes in marble and alabaster are found, of which I obtained nine in a single visit, more or less perfect. Such is a site of the first importance for Greek archaeology, and has never before been visited by a European so far as is known.’ Egypt Exploration Fund, Report of the Second Annual General Meeting & Balance Sheet, p. 5; cf. Drower 1885, 86.
as it turned out, Petrie was to work at the site for six months, from winter through to early summer the following year. When Petrie reached Naukratis at nightfall on 1 December 1884 the sight that confronted him was a large settlement mound, or Tell, covering an area of 950x580m, surrounded by a number of small villages on all sides (Drower 1985, 87–8). The mound itself – or rather series of mounds – was already much cut about by sebbakhin. About one third of the mound had already been dug away, especially in the middle, where a crater had been dug down to the bottom of the ancient site.10 The area was ‘heaped over with the broken pottery, which has been found and cast aside by the Arabs in their removal of about thirty feet of earth, the heaps [of sherds] being from a few inches to five or six feet in depth’ (Petrie 1886a, 9). More valuable antiquities, such as the figurine sold to Petrie the year before at Giza, might have entered the antiquities market, but larger pieces of stone would also have been re-used or ended up in lime kilns.

Petrie rented rooms for himself and his collaborators (notably the recent Oxford graduate Francis Llewellyn Griffith, then 22 years old, who joined him on 11 December)11 in a partly empty large farmhouse not far from the Tell. It was there that only a few days later, on 5 December, he made the discovery that clinched the identification of the site: Petrie noticed in the gateway of the house a Greek inscription mentioning the polis of Naukratis (Fig. 5):

I almost jumped as I read
Η ΠΟΛΙΣ Η ΝΑΥΚΡΑΤ Π[…] ΧΙΟΔΩΡΟΝ ΔΩΡΙΩΝΟΣ ΦΙΛΟ[…] ΤΟΝ ΕΡΕΑΤΗΣ ΑΘΗΝΑ ΔΙΑΒΙ[…] ΣΥΙ ΡΑΦΟΦΥΛΑΚΑ ΑΡΕΘΣ ΚΑ[…] ΕΝΕΚΑΘΣ ΕΙΣ ΑΥΤΗΝ[…] So this is Naukratis! (Petrie Journal 1884–5, EES Archive XVIIId, 47, p. 30).

All that day “Naukratis” rang in my mind, and I sprang over the mounds with that splendid exultation of a new discovery long wished for and well found (Petrie 1891a, 38).

Over the following months excavations on the mound progressed, albeit not without difficulty. Perhaps the greatest obstacle was that they happened in constant competition with the sebbakhin, who still continued working their way through the mound. As they could not be prevented from working, Petrie realized that it was better to enlist them as helpers rather than to compete: his strategy was to encourage them to come to him with any archaeological finds they made and to pay them market value – undoubtedly a wise approach that was later also adopted by Hogarth (on Petrie’s and Gardner’s methods, see Gardner 1888, 10–11, 16–19). In addition to securing interesting finds for the excavators and ensuring that their provenance was at least approximately known, it also enabled the

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10 Petrie 1886a, 9. On sebakh and the sebakh ‘industry’ during its heyday between 1830 and 1930, see Bailey 1999. Often railways were used to move and distribute the thousands of cubic meters of soil that were removed from ancient sites, mostly for agricultural purposes but also for other ends, such as the production of saltpetre/gunpowder or fired bricks.

11 Later Professor of Egyptology at the University of Oxford, see Toynbee and Major 2004.
excavators to keep an eye out for potentially interesting findspots across the whole Tell, and to gain knowledge of a wider area than they themselves would have been able to excavate. The arrangement does, however, also mean that many objects from the early seasons at Naukratis are not as well provenanced as one might wish.

Excavations revealed large parts of the town: in the northern and central part of the site, a temenos of the Dioskouroi, a temenos of Apollo (Fig. 6), a large precinct that Petrie at first believed to be the palaestra (but that was later identified by Gardner as the temenos of Hera), a temenos of Aphrodite and the ‘faience factory’ just outside it. In the south there was a huge open air structure (commonly called the ‘Great Temenos’), surrounded by a massive mud-brick wall, only small parts of which were still standing by the time Petrie arrived at the site, and containing mud-brick structures. Petrie identified the Great Temenos first as a fort and then as the Greek sanctuary and administrative centre, the Hellenion; the largest of the internal buildings, a square casemate structure, he suspected to be the sanctuary’s monumental altar. The houses in the town were not excavated by Petrie himself, but dug up by the sebbakhin, even though Petrie followed their progress keenly, identifying and mapping streets and areas of craftsmen’s workshops – such as copper and silver workers, potters and iron mongers – as well as noting individual deposits in certain houses.

As was common at the time, fieldwork was done on a large scale, with up to 200 workmen turning over the soil every day (on Petrie’s local workforce, see Quirke 2010). Without a true stratigraphic record, proper maps and find recordings, the early excavations at Naukratis cannot be compared with modern excavations. Supervision of the large numbers of workers was by necessity patchy and the practice of payment not only for time worked but also for piecework, while economical, could by Gardner’s own admission encourage careless work (Gardner 1888, 17). Yet such circumstances were not unusual by the standards of the day and Petrie’s instinct for what could be important and his ‘scientific’ approach nevertheless reveal themselves in many aspects. Most notable is, perhaps, his very wide spectrum of interest, covering not only the major monuments, such as monumental inscriptions and sculpture which had hitherto dominated Egyptologists’ interest, but the site’s overall layout, chronological range and, in particular, the full range of material culture – especially pottery. In developing the idea of pottery as a ‘key fossil’ for dating a site Petrie may have been influenced by Pitt-Rivers, but he was certainly also guided by the likes of Samuel Birch, Keeper of the Department of Oriental Antiquities at the British Museum until 1885, who already in 1880 had asked Petrie to bring back Egyptian pottery for the

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12 Petrie Journal 1884–5, EES Archive XVIIIa, 47, p. 57: ‘The Greeks had no camp here as far as we know, & I am certain this is not Roman by the bricks; the citadel (as I thought it) is too small for a fort (about 40 [feet] X 50); whereas the special thing at Naukratis was the great altar dedicated to all the gods by the states of Greece in the Panhellenion. Here then we were standing on the great altar, looking over the temenos of the Hellenion; the temple ruined & buried & the peribolus carried off for earth. The men seeing us looking about told me without any questioning that there were four great walls all around that, within their memory, walls over 20 feet high, by the mound to which they compared them.

13 Petrie reports worse from excavations conducted for Auguste Mariette, whose corrupt overseers of work at badly supervised sites supposedly bought up objects from dealers in Cairo to supplement the ‘finds’ from the site, thus casting doubt over the provenance and genuineness of some objects in the Cairo (Bulak) museum: Drower 1985, 82–3.
Museum along with a record of its contextual information, so as to help to establish its dating (Drower 1985, 43).

A passage from Petrie’s Journal of 1884–5 illustrates the approach taken to achieve a ‘stratified’ series of pottery types:

*We have begun a very careful stratigraphical working: selecting a pile of earth that the sebach diggers had left, as we could see its construction, that it was not part of a house, nor a rubbish hole, but had good flat strata from top to bottom, & had a fair quantity of pottery in it, & some burnt layers, & also that it reached up to the latest Greek times, we have begun to cut it down in thin layers. Nothing is removed unless one of us is there, & every fragment that is not duplicated is marked at once with the level below the zero of levelling. […] Thus we shall have a large quantity of every sort of pottery (perhaps about 1 or 2 cwt) ranging from about 100 to 700 BC all exactly in order for a reference series.*

Of course, this does not amount to a stratigraphical excavation by modern standards. The main aim here was clearly to extract dated sequences of pottery and to establish contemporaneity of different kinds of finds (a desire that later, in 1901, led to Petrie developing the seriation method at Diospolis Parva: Trigger 2006, 294–5). Petrie was clearly aware of the importance of observing layers also more generally and tried to record their depth ‘objectively’ (hence his numerous measurements of the depths of finds and layers, aided by his early training in and passion for measuring and surveying: Drower 1985, 24), but he did not map them systematically in measured sections (which the nature of the site and excavation methods would at any rate have made virtually impossible). Still, a schematic diagram of the strata in the temenos of Apollo was included in the final publication of the season, Naukratis Part I (Fig. 7: Petrie 1886a, pl. 44) – a rarity for any excavation at the time and certainly a novelty in Egypt. It was followed by two schematic sections through the Aphrodite temenos published by Gardner in the second season (Gardner 1888, pl. 3). While certainly useful, such diagrams of course need to be treated very cautiously as evidence for modern reconstructions of the site’s stratigraphy, such as that attempted for the Apollo sanctuary by Gjerstad (Gjerstad 1934, 1959; cf. Cook 1957, 227–8; Kerschner 2001, 78; Möller 2000a, 91).

As has been mentioned earlier, the spectrum of finds today preserved from the excavations by Petrie, Gardner and Hogarth is much skewed, and much of this is the result of the find selection strategies of these early

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14 Petrie Journal 1884–5, EES Archive XVIIIb, 47, pp. 119–20. Cf. also a letter by Petrie to Poole on 28 Feb 1885 (EES Archive XVIIb, 70, p. 1): ‘I send now a complete account of what can be safely attributed to one period in the scarab stratum. Unhappily I was in bed most of the time they were at work there, & they were not kept strictly enough to removing surface rubbish before clearing the early strata. I have therefore gone carefully over the whole lot, & only kept such pieces of pottery as have still sticking to them the peculiar yellow hard earth of the stratum; as surface pottery is always cleared by wind & rain. I have no doubt of the age of all that I have here put down. What I much wish is that the scarab types should be compared with those found in Greek sites, Rhodes (Camirus especially) &c to see if such scarabs came from this factory; & that the classes of Greek pottery here described should be considered, & the light their contemporaneous occurrence here gives us, should be duly weighed.’

15 Schliemann, who had begun digging at Troy in 1871, had pioneered the stratigraphic excavation of a multi-layered tell site, while Dörpfeld refined the method in combination with a pottery sherd chronology: Trigger 2006, 290–1.
excavators. Certain categories of finds (such as anything with an inscription on it) were rated as more important than others. This affected in particular unpainted ‘coarse wares’, which must have been abundant, but only a few selected specimens were kept. Petrie’s approach (and indeed that of his peers) was not aimed at recording relative quantities of objects within the archaeological assemblage; however, great care was paid that no category of finds remained entirely undocumented. Having at least one ‘complete set’ from the assemblage, containing every type of find, even the artistically most unimpressive, and understanding their chronological sequence, was an important aim, and it was this that set him apart from most of his contemporaries.16

Certainly Petrie was in many ways an amateur, and his rather pithy style of writing with cursory references, pointing to a lack of formal academic training, did not fail to attract severe criticism from some in the academic community.17 The insufficient time for study and hasty publication – due largely to external pressures18 – certainly meant that corners were cut and that the publication seems more like a slice of bread (albeit a rich and impressive one) rather than even half a loaf (to use Petrie’s metaphor). Yet at the same time many of Petrie’s conclusions still stand, and one might argue that his different background encouraged him to take new and unconventional approaches free from traditional academic preoccupations and constraints. In fact, in many ways his approach seems more ‘scientific’, thorough and innovative than that of his peers. He certainly paid attention to finds that most of his peers would barely have noticed: an example is the collection of shells preserved today in the British Museum that are extensively (and in fact correctly) labelled and categorized in Petrie’s own handwriting (Fig. 8) – a valuable category of evidence for scholars today to understand the culinary habits and international connections of Naukratis across the ages (for the type of conclusions to be drawn, cf. e.g. Thomas 2012). Another is the almost obsessive attention paid to weights, each single one of which was kept, weighed and minutely recorded (Petrie 1886a, 69–87), continuing Petrie’s long-standing interest in ancient technology and metrology (Petrie 1877; 1926). Similarly, Petrie’s system of pottery classification was undoubtedly ‘most unconventional by today’s standard’ (Möller 2000a, 92), but today’s standards are hardly applicable to the late 19th century: as has been argued by Kerschner (Kerschner 2001, 70), his approach was pioneering in that he considered a

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16 Cf. letter by Petrie to Poole, 25 January 1885 (EES Archive XVII, 67): ‘I specially wish to bring to England all I can, for the sake of series & comparison’; letter from Petrie to Poole 28 February 1885 (EES Archive XVII, 70): ‘samples of nearly all the main varieties [of pottery] were picked out by Mr Griffith & myself from the undisturbed strata’.

17 In a review of Naukratis Part I that appeared in The Athenaeum on 9 October 1886 (p. 472), Petrie is criticized for his failure (or even inability) ‘to do work which requires careful deduction or patient research’, and is advised to undergo training in Egyptian, Greek and Roman archaeology as well as ancient languages; only the chapters written by (trained academics) Cecil Smith, Ernest Gardner and Barclay Head are considered ‘scholarly’. I am most grateful to David Gange for bringing this review to my attention.

18 As becomes clear from a letter by Petrie to Poole on 25 January 1885, on the question of whether work at Naukratis be continued or stopped (EES Archive XVII, 67): ‘Personally I may say that I should prefer to be at home, & study & arrange the pottery chronologically, according to my own conclusions on the spot, & what I shall find in strata – working, before handing it over to public inspection. This however I willingly sink, as sharing it this spring & summer will probably be good for the Fund’ as well as a letter from Petrie to Poole on 26 December 1885 (EES Archive XVII, 102): ‘As to the preface, if a majority of those you consult of the Committee think well to make the statement of haste more general, please do so at your own discretion. But I distinctly wish that some mention that I have not been able to give anything like the time I wished or intended, should be made. I think that will save the book from worse imputations of insufficient treatment.’
sherd’s clay fabric as a fundamental criterion, rather than just focusing on painting and patterns, as well as in his attempting a comprehensive classification of all pottery – painted or not – in the first place.

4. Back in the UK

The discovery of Naukratis was sensational news, even if at first only very cautiously announced by the officers of the EEF. Yet soon excitement grew. On 28 October 1885, at the third AGM of the EEF in the theatre of the Royal Institution in Albermarle Street, the EEF’s Chairman, Charles Newton – himself a distinguished Classical archaeologist – ‘called special attention to the unearthing of the unspeakably precious remains of the Graeco-Egyptian city of Naukratis by Mr Flinders Petrie in connection with the Fund’, adding that ‘here the culture of Hellas in all her youthful prime first came face to face with that of her elder Egyptian sister in the time of the Psammetichis and the other Pharaohs belonging to the Saite dynasty commemorated by Herodotus’.

Indeed, the news made something of a splash among scholars and the general public alike; articles were placed in the press, and the site soon earned a place in major scholarly monographs (P. Gardner 1892; Mallet 1893). Already back in May, while he was still at Naukratis, Petrie had written a brief article for the Journal of Hellenic Studies (Petrie 1885) and had sent home a selection of objects – including fragments of vases and figurines – in advance of the rest. They were received by Reginald Stuart Poole on 20 May 1885 and immediately put on display in the First Bronze Room of the British Museum (Fig. 9).

Soon, ‘ceramic treasures’ from Petrie’s work at Naukratis also found a permanent home in the British Museum’s First Vase Room.

From 8 August until the end of September 1885, a larger special exhibition of finds from Naukratis was put on as the EEF summer exhibition at the Archaeological Institute rooms at Oxford Mansions in London. This was only the second of what was going to be a regular annual event (and indeed a regular date in the London social calendar), instituted the year

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19 See the very hesitant words on 3 January 1885 by R. S. Poole, ‘Egypt Exploration Fund’, The Academy 27:661, p. 17. Petrie was less than pleased about Poole’s skepticism and his delaying the announcement; cf. Drower 1985, 92.
21 R. S. Poole, ‘Egypt Exploration Fund’. The Academy 27:682 (30 May 1885), p. 391. An article in The Times of 5 August 1885, p. 13, notes the ‘small collection of representative objects’ as still being on display in the First Bronze Room, though one presumes that they were eventually transferred to the exhibition at the Archaeological Institute.
22 Charles Newton in his report to the EEF AGM on 28 October 1885 refers to them as having been on exhibition in the Museum’s Vase room ‘for some months past’ already, where they were not only a valuable addition to the collection but also a feast for the eye: Egypt Exploration Fund, Report of the Third Annual General Meeting & Balance Sheet, 1885 (London 1885), p. 4; cf. also Petrie 1886b, 51. The excitement at the objects is palpable also in the edition of the British Museum guidebook published the following year, 1886, where the pottery from Naukratis, on display in Table Case A in the First Vase Room, and its importance are highlighted repeatedly: A Guide to the Exhibition Galleries of the British Museum, Bloomsbury (1886), 163, 165, 168–9. Later editions of the guide also refer to Naukratis objects on display, particularly pottery but also other objects such as Tridacna shells, scarabs and terracotta figurines, as well as to Naukratis objects in the Egyptian galleries: A Guide to the Exhibition Galleries of the British Museum (Bloomsbury) (1894), 119, 138–9, 144–5, 175, 179.
before on Petrie's own suggestion (Drower 1985, 84–5; Thornton forthcoming). For the exhibition many of the finds that Petrie had sent back from Egypt in over 70 boxes – i.e. those objects he had selected for keeping and that had not been claimed by Maspero for the Cairo museum (then at Bulak) – Petrie himself mended, mounted and labelled.23

Clearly he was keeping an eye on even the smallest details, as his letter of 10 July 1886 to Poole regarding the label paper (cf. Fig. 10) for the weights from Naukratis for the 1886 exhibition indicates:

> The smoky brown-grey of the Egyptian dep[artment]t [of the British Museum] is good for not showing dirt, but it is very ugly, & not good to show up things; the light green of the Gr[ee]k dep[artment]t is too tender a colour for London grime, & moreover kills drabs of browny-greens by being too clear a colour. What I have preferred always, & used for all our exhibitions, is the truest neutral grey that I can get, slightly blue if anything to bear getting brown with dust: this is the fairest thing to use as it does not prejudice the eye any way. I use it for all my own mounting of weights & antiquities. It is in fact simply diluted blackness, light enough to show writing & not to be too sombre, & dark enough not to dazzle the eye from any object placed on it (EES Archive XVIf, 139).

The rooms of the Archaeological Institute were also the place where Petrie delivered a lecture on ‘The Finding of Naukratis’ at the Institute’s Monthly Meeting on 5 November 1885 (Petrie 1886b). This was a week after the EES AGM, at which the allocation of finds to various museums had been agreed, and a week later, by 11 November, those objects assigned to the British Museum at least had been received by the new owner. This sequence of events shows that Petrie and his collaborators had good reason to be distraught at the ‘hurried pace’ of events that left time for ‘far less research than I had wished for and intended’ (Petrie 1886b, vii).

Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to assume that objects were distributed to subscribers to the Fund before they could be studied or documented (cf. Möller 2000a, 90). A certain amount of study and recording of the whole assemblage (bar the material left in Cairo) was possible even if timing was tight – that only a selection of objects was chosen for publication is a different matter and would probably have been the case even with more time available.

5. Excavations at Naukratis: Petrie’s and Gardner’s second season, 1885/6

One gets the feeling from reading Petrie’s journal that already during the first season he was growing somewhat tired of the site, and itching to move on to new ground.24

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23 Letter by Petrie to Poole, 28 August 1885 (EES Archive XVIf, 92): ‘I am getting on steadily with the weights; 171 are completely done; but 500 is a long job to weigh, make allowances on, mount & label. [...] As soon as I have finished mending up the Apollo pottery (which I have been at for 10 days there) I shall begin drawing the inscriptions on it, all actual size.’

24 Notably in the letters sent to Poole on 21 February 1885 (EES Archive XVIf, 69 and 69a).
Still, a further season at Naukratis was planned, though on the basis that a new collaborator, Ernest Arthur Gardner, a 23-year-old Cambridge graduate in Classical Archaeology, was to be trained so as to take over the dig and leave Petrie to move to the Eastern Delta, notably Tell Nebesha and Tell Dafana (Gardner 1888, 10).

Yet major discoveries were clearly still to be made (Gardner 1888, 9, 11–16). Gardner succeeded in locating the cemetery to the north of the site (Figure 11), identifying the sanctuary of Hera (Fig. 12), and discovering significant architectural remains and votive offerings in the sanctuaries of the Dioskouroi and particularly of Aphrodite. New discoveries were also made in the area of the Great Temenos, where a granite sphinx was found that must have stood along the dromos leading up to the Egyptian temple precinct. Just how enormous a number of finds was being unearthed still in the second season becomes clear from a note by Gardner relating to pottery from a single context in the sanctuary of Aphrodite: ‘I have roughly estimated the number of good fragments I have recovered from this layer at 150,000: this fact will give some notion of its richness’ (Gardner 1886b, 181). Elsewhere, he mentions that ‘sometimes perhaps as many as 5000 potsherds were found in a single day’ (Gardner 1888, 15). In fact, the numbers of sherds were so overwhelming that Gardner did not find time to sort through them all in Egypt and decided to postpone making a final selection until he was back in England, going through the contents of his roughly 80 boxes of finds only after his return to Cambridge.26

Compared to such numbers, the around 17,000 objects preserved today from the whole site (even considering that some are made up of several fragments) seem to pale into insignificance.

After fieldwork was completed, an exhibition of hundreds of finds from Dafana, Nebesha and Naukratis was once more put on at the Archaeological Institute at Oxford Mansions, from 2 to 23 September 1886, with Petrie having spent much time on study and preparations, notably sorting and cataloguing the weights, and Gardner working on the pottery.27

An article in The Times of 1 September 1886 (p. 13) notes how ‘the annual exhibition of the Egypt Exploration Fund has become a staple feature of the autumnal season’ and goes on to describe how in the large room of the Archaeological Institute ‘tables and temporary counters’ were covered with some thousand of ‘curious and beautiful things, topographically classified

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25 Later Director of the recently founded British School at Athens (1887–95) and Yates Professor of Classical Archaeology at University College, London (1896–1929); cf. Gill 2011, 33–8, 337–9. Gardner’s participation in the excavations at Naukratis was funded by a grant from the Worts Fund of the University of Cambridge: Gardner 1888, iv.

26 A vivid description of the deluge of sherds descending on the excavator is given in Gardner 1888, 15; cf. also ibid. 19–20, where he describes working on the sherds in Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and in the Fitzwilliam Museum. Clearly these premises seemed highly preferable to the basement of the British Museum, where Petrie, one presumes, did the same work the previous year: ‘If I could get a room at Cambridge, I suppose there would be no objection to my working out the pottery there in part at least. I know no space big enough in London that I could have. I do not want to live for months in the basement of the Museum, even if I could have space there’ (letter by Griffith to Poole, 21 February 1886, written from Nebireh; EES Archive XVIf, 111).

and legibly labelled; maps and plans are on the walls; the more fragile relics are in glass cases’.

The exhibition and cataloguing was followed once more by the distribution of the objects to various collections, voted on at the AGM in December 1886.

The results of the second, and final, season were published as Naukratis Part II by Gardner (and Griffith) in 1888. In it Gardner concludes that ‘it is, perhaps, improbable that any considerable results would reward an explorer who now resumed the excavations’, adding that the situation might, however, be different in a few years’ time, after the sebbakhin – who were still unabatedly digging away at the mound – had laid bare more of the settlement: ‘if then the site be revisited by some competent explorer, it may be possible to recover further vestiges of the ancient colony.’ (Gardner 1888, 75).

6. Excavations at Naukratis: the Hogarth years, 1899 and 1903

It was ten years after these lines had been published that a ‘competent explorer’ felt compelled to set off once more for the site of Naukratis: David George Hogarth. Hogarth had just been appointed as director of the British School at Athens and was an experienced excavator, having worked on Cyprus and Phylakopi on Melos as well as for the EEF, running his own excavation at Alexandria in 1895, working with Naville at Deir-el-Bahari in 1894 and with Grenfell in the Fayum in 1895–6 (Lock 1990, 178–9, 183–7). In 1898 Hogarth, upon hearing ‘that very serious encroachments were being made upon the mounds of Gai’ decided that ‘it was time to act’ and to fulfil the promise the site still held. A ‘flying visit’ to the site in December 1898 confirmed the reports and revealed that far more of the mound had been turned over since Petrie’s and Gardner’s days by the hundreds of sebbakhin that Hogarth observed were still engaged in daily digging there (Hogarth 1898/9, 26–7). Parts of the central hollow of the site was already permanently flooded, well on the way to forming the lake that today covers the central part of the excavated site (Hogarth 1898/9, 39–40).

Thus Hogarth, aged 37, set off to Naukratis in 1899 for his first season at Naukratis (Figs 13 and 15), conducted under the auspices of the British School at Athens (founded in 1886) and with funding especially from the Society of Dilettanti, as well as the Fitzwilliam and Ashmolean museums and private donors (among them also Ernest Gardner), and with the help of BSA students C. C. Edgar and C. D. Edmonds (Hogarth 1898/9; cf. Gill 2011, 46). A second season was to follow later, in 1903, supported primarily by the Craven Fund of the University of Oxford (Hogarth 1905, 105). Fieldwork was arranged much along the same lines as Petrie’s had been, engaging the collaboration of sebahk-diggers and paying full local value for finds, and employing over a hundred local workmen (as also under Petrie a mixture of men, women, boys and girls). Hogarth’s excavation method, too, appears to have been not entirely dissimilar. Like Petrie and Gardner, Hogarth was well aware of the importance of layers.
and the stratigraphic sequence was recognized, even if never systematically exploited, plotted, nor – at least in Hogarth’s case – ever graphically represented. An innovation was the use of a grid plan for the whole site (in fact, already Gardner had used a grid plan for his excavations in the cemetery, though he never published it: Gardner 1888, 26) that facilitated the locating of features.  

In spite of this Hogarth appears to have had some problems with mapping this difficult site. This is apparent from the fact that the detailed map of the north-eastern area and the main map do not correspond in all details (similar problems apply to the enclosure wall on Petrie’s plans of the Great Temenos), and that the main map is neither done to the correct scale nor quite aligned to the north.

Trenches – also used by Petrie and Hogarth, though then still a fairly recent technique in archaeology – were made in various part of the mound, but were concentrated in two areas: the north-eastern and the southern part of the site. In the north-eastern area the structures that were uncovered were complex – to say the least – and multi-period. They consisted of (apparently) an enclosure wall and several buildings and/or chambers with cult functions, in which votive offerings were found naming several individual gods (Apollo, Herakles, Zeus, Aphrodite Pandemos) as well as the ‘gods of the Hellenes’. It was these latter offerings in particular that for Hogarth – and most scholars after him – clinched the identification of the site as the Hellenion. The sanctuary area was notable also for its rich cache of Greek and Ptolemaic terracotta figurines, which far outstripped, in both number and importance, any such finds made by Petrie and Gardner (Fig. 14).

In the southern area Hogarth tried, but failed, to come to a better understanding of the structure that Petrie had originally identified as the Hellenion – i.e. the ‘Great Temenos’ – but that Hogarth now correctly interpreted as an entirely Egyptian structure. He was not sure about its function and considered a fort, a market area or a religious temenos, but thought a fort most likely, not least because of ‘the improbability that Amasis should have allowed the Greeks to settle on a site which had no Egyptian garrison’ (Hogarth 1898/9, 43, 45).

The southern part was the main focus in the second season in 1903, with a particular aim of probing for foundation deposits in the Great Temenos (Hogarth 1905, 110); sadly, no plan of this part of the excavations was ever published. One of the great difficulties that Hogarth encountered in both seasons (Fig. 15), in addition to groundwater, was the extremely chopped-up and largely dug-away nature of the site, which made it hard for him to relate what he saw on the ground with the structures Petrie had described: ‘we never arrived at absolute certainty about the location of his Temené’, he writes, lamenting that Petrie was never able to pay him a visit on site to help clear up the matter (Hogarth 1898/9, 28). Struggling to find any traces

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28 This Hogarth may have first encountered in the work of Cecil Smith at Phylakopi in 1896: Lock 1990, 187.
29 Hogarth continues: ‘The “Great Temenos” of Mr. Petrie is in all likelihood what remains of the Egyptian camp of observation, designed to watch the populous northern suburb; and is at least contemporary with the beginnings of the latter. How much earlier the Egyptian town may be, it is not possible yet to say.’
of Petrie’s Great Temenos, Hogarth ultimately even doubted it ever existed. None of his trenches revealed anything like the massive walls that should have existed in this part of the site, leading him to conclude that the southern area of the town was simply Egyptian living quarters interspersed with sanctuaries (Hogarth 1905, 111–12) – a conclusion that, while understandable, ultimately cannot convince in the face of the undoubted existence of the massive pylon and casemate building that can only have formed part of a substantial sanctuary.

An important observation made by Hogarth was nevertheless that of early Egyptian material in the southern part of the town. Here, Hogarth noted a two-feet-thick ‘burnt stratum of charcoal and ash containing no sherds but rough “kitchen” ware’ – i.e. most likely locally made undecorated pottery – and above it an undisturbed layer of the same thickness containing a little painted white-faced Naukratite pottery (such as that which lies in the bottom stratum in the north) and black-figured sherds, and abundance of fragments of figurines and amulets in the same glazed “sandy ware” as that described by Mr. Petrie (Nauk. i. p. 14) (Hogarth 1905, 107). If reliable, such a stratigraphy might suggest that an Egyptian quarter was indeed at least contemporary with, if not earlier than, the Archaic Greek presence of the site (cf. also Spencer 2011). While Hogarth never published any of the finds from these strata, a group of Late Period pottery from the area around the supposed north-west corner of the Great Temenos, was presented in a fairly brief but well-considered chapter on undecorated coarse pottery – mostly local Egyptian wares – by C. C. Edgar in Hogarth’s reports of the 1903 season (Edgar 1905, 25 fig. 5), thus confirming the presence of 6th century BC or earlier Egyptian pottery at the site.

Hogarth generally paid only little heed to the unpainted ‘coarse wares’ (Fig. 16), and his diaries palpably betray his frustration with encountering such uninteresting finds all too frequently across the site. Yet the space that is nevertheless given to the publication of undecorated local pottery (if overshadowed by the chapters by Edgar and Lorimer on the painted Greek wares of the two seasons) shows that he recognized its value as archaeological evidence at least to a certain point. His reports also stand out in the great care devoted to the terracotta figurines from the Hellenion area, which were extensively analysed (albeit with limited attention to findspots) by Clement Gutch (cf. Gill 2011, 342–3), a graduate of Cambridge University and one of the British School at Athens students in 1898–9 who had joined Hogarth at Naukratis.

Figure 16. Egyptian Late Period pottery jar from Petrie’s excavations at Naukratis, of the same type as finds made by Hogarth. British Museum, 1974,1119.1

A lack of interest judged mildly by Lock 1990, 180–1: ‘He [Hogarth] frequently came across “domestic rubbish” on his excavations and this was immediately discarded. He never questioned the nature of this material or pondered what it might show the excavator about the life of the owners of high quality artefacts or of the dwellers in the settlement that he was planning. He was, of course, not alone in this omission. It was not until 1922 and the pioneering work of Gertrude Caton-Thompson at Hemamieh in Egypt that such “domestic rubbish” was to be examined.’ Already before Caton-Thompson, Petrie had of course paid a considerable amount of attention to various kinds of ‘rubbish’.

Naukratis: Greeks in Egypt | 16

Since Hogarth left the site in 1903, only one large-scale attempt has been made at revisiting Naukratis. Between 1977 and 1983 an American mission under William Coulson and Albert Leonard Jr. conducted a large-scale field survey, limited excavations and a programme of core drillings at Naukratis (esp. Coulson 1996; Leonard 1997, 2001). Following an initial visit in the winter of 1977/8 (Leonard 1997, 20), the survey was directed by Coulson and the excavation at Kom Ge’if and Kom Hadid by Leonard. The primary objectives were the establishment of a modern typology of pottery at the site and of a stratigraphic sequence against which the results of earlier excavations at the site could be evaluated, as well as a better understanding of the wider topographical setting of the site by means of some core-drillings and, especially, a survey of all ancient sites within an approximate 30km to the north and west of Naukratis. Excavations took place in the area of the ‘Great Temenos’ in the southern part of the site (i.e. Kom Ge’if), and at a small mound to the east of the central part of the site known as Kom Hadid, which was revealed as essentially a ceramic ‘trash heap’.

This was the first time that Naukratis was subjected to what we would today consider modern methods, including stratigraphic excavations and systematic sampling strategies (described by Leonard 2001, ix–x; Coulson 1996, 5; cf. also Wilson 2012). Even if no full stratigraphic sequence covering the whole lifetime of the site could be established, the pottery from both survey and excavations – mostly Hellenistic and Roman, but also including Saite to Persian Period/Archaic and Classical (see the comments below) – provides an important counterbalance to the focus on early, painted and inscribed Greek pottery that dominated the find selection of the first four seasons at Naukratis. Catalogues of pottery and other finds (overall nearly 5,000 pieces) include drawings or photographs, fabric description and findspot information, as to be expected from a well-run modern excavation. It is in this that the most important and lasting contribution of the mission lies, providing a valuable resource not least for comparing the development of the town with other Nile Delta sites of the same period.

As regards some of the wider conclusions drawn from the fieldwork, a certain caution is, however, advisable. With fieldwork hampered by a variety of problems and misunderstandings, the results presented by the project are not straightforward. Clearly a problem was the lack of Egyptological expertise on the team, as well as the fact that the find specialists who wrote up chapters on the material from Leonard’s excavations never visited the site themselves; in the case of the pottery, Andrea Berlin had to work merely from descriptions, drawings and a few photographs.31

31 Berlin in Leonard 1997, 149 n. 1: ‘Leonard analysed the pottery in the field, as well as overseeing all drawing and restoration work. Leonard also created the original fabric typology, from which derive the field fabric readings included in the figure explanations (see Appendix). Leonard and Berlin are responsible for the layout of the figures. Berlin is responsible for the assignment of type names and general fabric designations included in the figure explanations,
As a number of reviewers noted already at the time (esp. Rathbone 1998; Gill 2003; U. Höckmann 2002; Rotroff 2003; see also Yoyotte 1991/2, 638–9: ‘table rase dogmatiquement surimposée’) and as has been confirmed by our recent re-examination of the mission’s work, errors were made in assessing both objects and structures, thus casting doubt on several of the conclusions. Particularly problematic is the lack of acknowledgement of the pre-Ptolemaic evidence – even that which was, in fact, unearthed and published by the mission itself – in conjunction with a misalignment of Petrie’s map in relation to the topography on the ground. Also the dating of the drill-cores undoubtedly needs to be revised, rather impossibly placing the Nile right across the site over the whole 1st millennium BC. Both of these assertions had far-reaching consequences for the topographical and historical assessment of Naukratis.

Since much of the central excavated area of the site was found to be covered by a lake, it was deemed impossible (rather too rashly) to recover anything from the northern, ‘Greek’, part of the site. Leonard’s fieldwork at Kom Ge’if was thus concentrated in the southern, ‘Egyptian’, part of the site, the area of the ‘South Mound’, the only still standing ‘hill’, i.e. part of the Tell, which Leonard suspected to be a last remnant of the ‘casemate building’ (Leonard 1997, 20, 28). However, as Jeffrey Spencer (2011) has recently pointed out, this was a misidentification, and two different mounds had in fact been mixed up: the mound of the casemate building – which had a cemetery on the top that Petrie arranged to relocate and that was subsequently excavated by Petrie and then dug away entirely by sebbakhin – and the mound at the south-west corner of the temenos enclosure wall, which also had a cemetery on top and still does to this day. The fact that there were once two different mounds is clear from Petrie’s journals and photographs, if less so from his publications.32

Hence, by taking the ‘enclosure-mound’ to be the ‘casemate-mound’, Leonard misaligned Petrie’s map and placed it too far south and west, thus making it virtually impossible successfully to trace and identify the structures that Petrie had found.

Describing the results from his excavations in the South Mound, Leonard states (Leonard 1997, 30, reiterated in Leonard 1999) that

_Throughout the contiguous 6m of vertical deposit in the South Mound, nothing was encountered that either pre-dated or post-dated the Ptolemaic Period. The case is further strengthened by the microsherds from Core "C" in Area 316, which added_

the identification of indicative ceramic types (from drawings and occasional color pictures), and the ceramic discussion included here. Berlin’s work is based exclusively on study of the drawings, written descriptions, and occasional color photographs/slides. The pottery remains in storage in Egypt.” See also Berlin in Leonard 2001, 48–9 nn. 14, 21, 22.

32 Hogarth, too, struggled with relating Petrie’s finds to the ground, but correctly identified the still existing cemetery (which on p. 112 he however says contained chambers) with the southwest corner of Petrie’s Great Temenos wall (Hogarth 1905, 111). Lock, in his biography, comments on the fact that Hogarth followed Petrie in privileging written accounts over maps, even though he himself experienced the difficulties associated with this practice: ‘Yet these very short-comings were evident to Hogarth himself at Naukratis in 1899. Then he found Petrie’s Naukratis memoir published in 1886 virtually useless in locating where Petrie had worked and what he had done’ (Lock 1990, 180–1).
another 4.60 m to our ‘stratigraphy’ in which nothing was noted that was demonstrably not Ptolemaic. Such artifactual evidence greatly supports the views of Hogarth (against those of Petrie and Gardner) concerning the nature and date of the architecture in the southern end of the ancient city of Naukratis.

However, as even Leonard himself acknowledges seven pages further on, the earliest layers encountered in the South Mound did indeed contain pre-Ptolemaic pottery, though this fact – while noted – was given little prominence in the published report, and few pieces of the excavated Late Dynastic pottery were properly recognized as such (cf. Spencer 2011).

In fact, as a close examination of the pottery (currently being prepared for publication) from the excavations at Kom Ge‘if (and in particular also the survey) shows in comparison with well-dated parallels from recent fieldwork, a considerable number of pieces need to be assigned different dates; this applies to Late Period through to Ptolemaic and Roman finds, but also some of the Archaic and Classical Greek pottery: Scholarship on Naukratis thus has to carefully reconsider the material presented from this fieldwork so as to assess whether in each instance it in fact bears out the conclusions drawn in print.

Most recently, the mud-brick structures and archaeological contexts encountered in at least some of the test pits dug on behalf of the Supreme Council of Antiquities by Mohamed Aly of the local Inspectorate suggests that there is still considerable potential for fieldwork at the site. The area around Naukratis has moreover been included in the survey work conducted by Penelope Wilson, as part of her ‘Sais and its Hinterland Project’, in collaboration with the Mansoura University, the preliminary results of which point to a river channel to the east of Naukratis (Shabaan El-Awady 2009; Wilson 2010, 116–18 with fig. 9.3). Covering particularly the area north-east of Naukratis, Wilson’s survey (Wilson and Grigoropoulos 2009; cf. also Trampier 2010) as well as surveys in the regions of Mareotis (Blue and Khalil 2011) and Buto (Schiestl 2010) crucially complement Coulson’s Naukratis survey to the west of Naukratis, alongside wider geomorphological studies of the Nile Delta (Cooper 2008; cf. also Bunbury and Jeffreys 2011; Bunbury 2012). This work, much of which is ongoing, has begun to lay the foundation for understanding the geomorphological and settlement patterns in the Western Nile Delta and their development over time, within which the role of Naukratis can be assessed in a wider framework.

33 In her pottery report, Berlin 1997, 140 (with pp. 150–3, figs. 6.1–2) points out that the earliest levels in the north-west area of the ‘South Mound’ contained nothing ‘demonstrably Hellenistic’; her suggested terminus ante quem for the walls in this phase is 5th/early 4th century BC, and this conclusion is accepted also by Leonard 1997, 37. Cf. Spencer 2011, 33: ‘The published description of the pottery (Berlin 1997) is quite selective in choosing “key pieces” from each group for discussion and most of the Egyptian Late Dynastic ceramics were not so selected, with the result that they have remained almost invisible.’
8. Analysing Naukratis: scholarship ‘in the library’

Not only in respect to fieldwork has Naukratis consistently played its role particularly in Classical – and less so in Egyptological – scholarly discourse of the 20th and early 21st century (brief overviews in Bernand 1970, 575–86; Leonard 1997, 17–19). It has featured especially studies on Greek pottery, with Greek archaeologists and historians being captivated by the rich body of Archaic and Classical Greek pottery from Naukratis (Fig. 17), its art historical significance and the contribution it can make to the study of Greek epigraphy, Greek trade and Greek–Egyptian relations. Thus Hugo Prinz, in his dissertation Funde aus Naukratis published in 1908, focused on pottery as an indicator of Greek trade links, as did Elinor Price in 1924 and many after her (with the modern re-evaluation by Kerschner 2001 and Schlotzhauer and Villing 2006). Another strand of debate that continues to this day is the role of the site for Greek chronology, and the question of precedence of literary sources or archaeological evidence (most recently James 2003; Schlotzhauer and Weber 2012). More recent topics that have taken centre stage are the ancient economic and political status of the site, its contribution to the development of a communal Greek identity and its position in Mediterranean networks of trade and interaction.

Evaluations of the history and significance of Naukratis (in a Greek context) were published soon after the site’s discovery, first by Percy Gardner in 1892 and Dominique Mallet in 1893. Marion Smith’s article ‘Naukratis, a chapter in the history of the hellenization of Egypt’ of 1926 tries to give an overview of the site’s history, including a listing of relevant literary sources. The same, on a much larger scale, is done by André Bernand, in his important work Le Delta Égyptien d’après les textes grecs of 1970, including a comprehensive collection and analysis of modern and ancient sources on Naukratis, as well as an extensive (though, as we now know, still not complete) listing of inscriptions from the site, including those on Greek pottery. Also in John Boardman’s seminal book The Greeks Overseas, first published in 1964 and revised in 1973, 1980 and 1999, Naukratis consistently looms large. An important overview and analysis of Archaic Naukratis, primarily from a Greek perspective, was published in 2000 by Astrid Möller (Möller 2000a) and is today generally used as the standard reference work for early Naukratis. In it, Möller analyses Naukratis as a port-of-trade in the sense of Polanyi, a topic which – along with the question of the city’s status as a polis and an emporion – has been at the centre of a lively debate among Greek historians since the 1980s.34

Amongst the most recent contributions is Damien Agut-Labordère’s 2012 study of the status of Naukratis and its traders from an Egyptian point of view, arguing for a gradual ‘Egyptianisation’ of the city’s merchant elite from the 30th Dynasty onwards.

Apart from trade (not least the grain trade, ever since Roebuck 1950), a particular focus for historians over the past few decades has been the

Greek (literary) view of Egypt, notably in the writings of Herodotus, in which Naukratis plays a role, if usually on the sidelines. From Alan B. Lloyd’s extensive commentary on Herodotus’ book II (Lloyd 1975–88, vol. 1, 24–32; vol. 3, 221–31) to the works of Hartog (2001), Vasunia (2001), Harrison (2003), Moyer (2002; 2011) and Assmann (2000), scholarly discourse has revealed this view as largely constructed by Greeks for their own ends, but has also highlighted the role played by Egyptians and others as active agents in the process.

Early interest in Naukratis, however, had been dominated — at least on the part of the EEF and its excavators — by the site’s likely role as a mediator of Egyptian influence on Greek art in its ‘infancy’:

We have long known that the early Greek, when emerging from prehistoric barbarism, must have gone to school to the Delta and the Valley of the Nile, not only for his first lessons in letters and science, but also for his earliest notions of architecture and the arts. Now, however, for the first time, we are placed in possession of direct evidence of these facts. We see the process of teaching on the part of the elder nation, and of learning on the part of the younger (Edwards 1891, 31; cf. Gardner 1886, 181).

Greek pottery, notably the richly decorated ‘white faced’ ware that had been identified by Petrie as local, were vital in this respect, but also the (Cypriot) kouros figurines (see Jenkins 2001, 166 with ns. 29–30; Höckmann in Höckmann and Königs 2007, 15). Initial enthusiasm, however — particularly once the ‘white-faced Naukratian’ ware had been correctly recognized as Chian (after 1916: cf. Möller 2000a, 131 n. 317; Williams 2006) — cooled off and the role of Naukratis as a centre of close direct interaction between Greeks and Egyptians increasingly came to be questioned. Hence Marion Smith in 1927 (p. 538) concluded: ‘She [the colony of Naukratis] seems to have cared little to extend her rule over her barbarian neighbors or to mingle with them in any way other than in matters of business.’

Of late, the topic of cultural interaction has come to the fore again in the study of Naukratis. The phenomenon of cross-cultural contact and acculturation in 7th to 6th-century BC Naukratis was the focus of a project at the Johannes Gutenberg-Universität in Mainz that began in 1997, led by Ursula Höckman. It resulted in three major monographs on the Archaic Cypriot sculpture and Archaic East Greek pottery from Naukratis, one conference volume dedicated to Naukratis in its wider cross-cultural context (including also contributions by Egyptologists), as well as several articles and contributions to a major exhibition (the main publications being Höckmann and Kreikenbom 2001; Beck, Bol and Bückling 2005; Höckmann and Königs 2007; Nick 2006; Schlotzhauer and Weber forthcoming). On the initiative of the Mainz project, a large programme of scientific analysis aimed at provenancing the Greek pottery from Naukratis was conducted in collaboration with the British Museum, where since 2002 a separate project of cataloguing the British Museum’s own holdings of Greek pottery from Naukratis had been in progress; among the
A joint conference at the British Museum in 2004 examined the contribution of Naukratis to the study of East Greek pottery production, trade and exchange in the Eastern Mediterranean (Villing and Schlotzhauer 2006a).

Further areas in which Naukratis has played a role in recent Classical scholarship have included patterns of trade under Persian rule (e.g. Bresson 2000; Carrez-Maratray 2005), or the role of Naukratis as a major player in Mediterranean networks of trade and contact and a catalyst for nascent pan-Hellenic identity (Tanner 2003; U. Höckmann and Möller 2006; Demetriou 2005 and forthcoming; Malkin 2011). This sometimes touched upon questions of the town’s (Greek) cultic life and religious links, which have otherwise been considered only sporadically (cf. Schlotzhauer 2006a; Ehrhardt, Höckmann and Schlotzhauer 2008; Herda 2008). While the focus in all of this tends to be firmly on Archaic–Classical Naukratis (most works on the Ptolemaic and Roman periods in Egypt barely mention the town), a recent contribution to the rarely researched later history of the site is Bérangère Redon’s article on Naukratis in the Hellenistic to Roman periods from the perspective of the site’s self-representation, considering particularly the epigraphic evidence (Redon 2012).

In contrast to the continued attention paid to the site by Classicists, Naukratis has featured relatively little in Egyptological scholarship. It was C. C. Edgar, a Classical scholar and erstwhile collaborator of Hogarth but later active in Egyptology (Gill 2011, 149–50, 233, 328–30), who in 1922 took up an idea of Hogarth’s and conclusively argued for the identification of the ‘Great Temenos’ as an Egyptian temple (Edgar 1922). In 1951 F. W. von Bissing devoted a lengthy article to the analysis of the site’s remains, arguing for a foundation under Psamtek (Psammetichos) II (an idea taken up again recently by Agut-Labordère 2012). Individual monuments, aspects or groups of objects were occasionally published and discussed, such as in Brian Muhs’s (1994) article on the Great Temenos, Karl Jansen-Winkeln’s (1997) discussion of the inscribed base naming an Egyptian trader from Naukratis, or – bridging the gap between Greek and Egyptian – Andrée Gorton’s (1996) overview of Naukratite scarab production and distribution (a planned, more extensive, study just of the ‘scarab factory’ was never realized). Herodotus’ account of the site was commented on by Herman de Meulenaere in 1951 (who also first proposed the derivation of the Greek name of the site from the Egyptian Nokradj). A brief summary of the site is also found in Günther Vittmann’s (2003) wide-ranging study of foreigners in Late Period Egypt. The most important contribution to the study of Egyptian Naukratis was, however, undoubtedly made in the 1980s and 1990s by Jean Yoyotte, who in a series of articles gathered and discussed the most important finds and monuments relating to Egyptian Naukratis. Among other things he identified Amun-Ra of Baded as the main deity of the site’s Egyptian sanctuary (see more recently also Guermeur 2005, 126–38, 561–2 and Geissen and Weber 2006, 283–6, 287–8, on the site’s Egyptian cults), and concluded that an Egyptian presence at Nokradj must be at least concurrent with the earliest Greek presence at the site (Yoyotte 1982/3; 1991/2; 1993/4; 1994/5). Most recently, a comprehensive overview of the site – from an Egyptological
perspective though covering also the Greek aspects of the site – is included in François Leclère’s (2008, 113–58) study of the cities of the Delta in the 1st millennium BC.