

GREEKS IN PTOLEMAIC EGYPT: INTER-CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN NAUKRATIS

by

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GREEKS IN PTOLEMAIC EGYPT: INTER-CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN NAUKRATIS

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This study analyzes the interactions between Greek colonists and native Egyptians at the site of Naukratis through the material remains found there. Initial excavations by Petrie and Gardener are discussed as well as recent ones by Coulson and Leonard. This study aims to understand any change in material use of household goods by the Egyptians and Greeks living in the city by comparing them to a paradigm of typical Egyptian goods at the time.

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INTRODUCTION

Cultures in contact usually affect each other, even in miniscule ways. This becomes more overtly true when one culture conquers and colonizes another. After the Macedonian conquest of Egypt in 332 B.C.E. by Alexander the Great, many Egyptians were relieved to be “free” of the previous Persian power in the country (Grant 1982). In 331 B.C.E., the creation of a new capital, Alexandria in the Nile Delta changed the dynamic for Greek colonies and the entire Egyptian nation (Leonard 1997). However, once Alexander died his former general Ptolemy I Soter established himself as pharaoh in 305 B.C.E. (Grant 1982). The Egyptians were now under a Hellenized rule. After the commotion of smaller wars between neighboring empires had settled, Egypt was free to establish one of the largest agricultural and shipping trades in the Mediterranean (Grant 1982).

Researchers within the last two hundred years had focused on temples and palaces and until recently almost ignored the Greek timeframe of Egyptian life. The houses of ordinary people were forgotten, and they could prove the most valuable in the search for an understanding about normal life in this period. New excavations are being conducted and theoretical frameworks devised to account for the evidence shown in the archaeological record for average people living under occupation. The issue that needs to be addressed is: to what extent is the average Egyptian being oppressed or coerced into a Greek lifestyle and how are the Egyptians maintaining their previous lifestyle? Excavators can see evidence of occupied or colonized cultures but care must be taken when analyzing material goods of this fashion. Research must

account for foreign goods being used by the native group in a fashion natural to them but different from the designed intent of the occupiers.

Studying sites in northern Egypt has been difficult due to erosion by the Nile, development by current inhabitants, and *sebakh* digging (Bailey 1999). *Sebakh* is the rich material on top of the soil that many local farmers use to fertilize their crops. However, they sometimes remove it from what many consider to be important archaeological sites and disturb the context of the data. Some excavations have focused on more elite properties or religious settings and data from early archaeological excavations can be biased. What data exists must be analyzed and a proper theory deduced from it. Attitudes toward the Greek rulers and the system devised by time should be divined from changes in household goods, building structure, and other aspects of daily life that would have been affected by colonization. A rough idea of what the “normal” Egyptian thought about his/her life can be extrapolated from what objects one used, how one dressed, and so on. This study attempts to discover the level to which the Greeks and Egyptians affected each through qualitative analysis of household goods from excavations at Naukratis.

THE CONDITIONS LEADING TO GREEK INFLUENCE ON EGYPT

Creation of a Ptolemaic State

Although Greek citizens had been allowed to colonize small areas of Egypt previously, the large breakthrough for Greek culture was the conquest of Alexander of Macedon. The legendary leader swept through Egypt and ousted the Persian occupiers, “liberating” the natives from their previous rulers (Rowlandson 2003). The region was officially under his rule by the fall of 332

B.C.E. and Greek influence spread to Central and Upper Egypt by the mid 200s (Thompson 2003). After Alexander's untimely death and several small despot wars, Ptolemy I established himself as ruler of the nation in 305 B.C.E. His task was to make a sustainable empire (Grant 1982). Having pushed everyone out of power, Ptolemy wanted to ensure a stable future for his new domain. This was done by a combination of old Persian and Egyptian techniques with those of the new Greek and Macedonian ruling class. *Kleruch* was a system of soldiers paid with land or other benefits to work for the empire whenever they were needed (Baker 2003). This significantly increased Egypt's military resources and made defense of their empire possible. Despite Ptolemy's efforts, it took time for the full impact of Greek rule to spread throughout Egypt. Documents in the form of notes and transcripts on papyri scrolls indicate that many of the previous Greek colonies, such as Naukratis, and other areas of influence had laws independent from that of the capital (Rowlandson 1998). Egyptians still acted as they had before, in some ways drastically different from the new social constructs of the Greeks. Records of no-fault divorce agreements, women becoming legal guardians of children, and the arrangement of property to two women after a husband's death were fairly common Egyptian practices that would not have been acceptable in mainland Greek city-states (Rowlandson 1998). A certain balance between Greek and Egyptian ideals needed to be determined.

Greek rulers tried to keep themselves authentic while still maintaining the respect of the Egyptian people. They adapted native religious traditions, portrayed themselves as pharaohs, and although few ever learned Egyptian, they established a class of educated Greek and Egyptian bureaucrats to maintain order in the nation (Gates 2003). Since Alexandria was the new capital of the Ptolemaic Empire, many of the cities in the Delta were affected more heavily by Greek influences than those farther up the Nile. By the beginning of Ptolemy II's rule many ethnic

Greeks from around the Mediterranean flooded the streets of Alexandria, overshadowing Naukratis and other towns in the Delta (Tomlinson 2007).

Excavations in the Delta

Naukratis, a once prominent colony in the western Nile Delta, is now the site of several small villages, such as Kom Ge'if and Kom Hadid (Coulson and Leonard 1979). The site was initially excavated by Sir W.M. Flinders Petrie near the end of the nineteenth century. Later excavations by Hogarth, Gardner, and others have disputed some of his claims such as the date of the foundation of the city and the purpose/existence of the "Great Temenos," a large, open-air courtyard found at the site (James 2003). Although many archaeologists and Egyptologists of this period were more interested in finding inscriptions and recovering complete museum grade objects for their financial backers, Petrie seems to have done a decent job at recovering household goods that would have been used daily by the citizens of Naukratis. Greek objects such as pottery, lamps, and figurines are featured in his report (Petrie 1886).

Since it was on a branch of the Nile and just south of Alexandria, Naukratis was a prime site for a trading post and was one of the first Greek ones allowed on Egyptian soil (Coulson and Leonard 1979). Houses, a large building, possibly a storehouse or community center, and several temples were identified. Some argue that artifacts found in the city suggest a more metropolitan and diverse settlement than had originally been thought (James 2003).

Unfortunately, even in Petrie's day *sebakhin* had removed large sections of soil for fertilizer and caused damage to the archaeological context in parts of the site (Coulson and Leonard 1982). Petrie's own excavation along with the naturally rising ground water of the Delta and heavy rains caused a lake to develop over the last century. This can be seen in Figure

1, an aerial photograph of the site taken by members of the Naukratis Project in the early 1980s. Artifacts can still be found on the shores of the lake but further excavation in Petrie's areas is impossible.



Figure 1. Aerial photograph of Naukratis site in 1980-1 season. (Coulson and Leonard 1982:Figure 1)

Recent excavations by the Naukratis Project, starting in 1979 and continuing sporadically until this writing, have proven fruitful (Coulson and Leonard 1982). A survey of the previous excavations, assessment of damage, and descriptions of the recent development by locals were the first steps of the team's plan to excavate the site. They extended the scope of their research around the site of Naukratis (Kom Ge'if) to include sites near modern villages such as Kom Firin and Kom Hadid.

One problem with excavating in the Delta, besides the large quantities of water is the issue of *sebakh* digging. Bailey notes the issues that many archaeologists face when interacting with local farmers (1999). Although a lot of modern inhabitants of Egypt want to facilitate archaeologists learning about the past, they also want to make a living and feed their families. *Sebakh* digging is the process of digging and filtering soil away from the Nile and moving it to be used as fertilizer on the alluvial plane. Unfortunately, this leaves many sherds and other artifacts on the surface, disturbing stratigraphy and exposing the remains to harmful natural elements. Disruptive factors such as this must be taken into account when excavating a site in this region and when analyzing data from said sites.

METHODOLOGY

To understand a change in behavior in the past one must study the material culture left behind. Normal household goods such as eating and drinking vessels as well as votive goods were used every day and could be helpful when trying to analyze the habits of a citizen in Naukratis. Some propose that Naukratis had individual districts or neighborhoods for different ethnicities to live within. If one can establish where a Greek residence was, a researcher might be able to study a

shift in material culture. This could be a Greek bureaucrat or scribe adopting more Egyptian practices such as owning native pottery, and therefore changing habits at home or at work. It is possible that this person was hardly affected by daily interaction with Egyptian citizens as well. These statements could be true for the average native citizen being influenced by a large import of Greek goods. This study aims to describe qualitative differences between goods found in the site of Naukratis and their implications for possible attitude changes of the people using them.

Since most of the excavations done on the ancient city of Naukratis were executed by researchers in the late nineteenth century this study will focus on the more recent Naukratis Project. Many important goods were lost due to manner of previous excavations and the drive to secure whole pieces, especially those with inscriptions. And although much of the ancient city seems to be lost under modern habitation the team found what looks to be an ethnic Greek portion of the site. Andrea Berlin helped Leonard and Coulson analyze the ceramics that were found at the site and therefore her expertise will be used for determining style of artifacts believed to be typical of the time period. Previous research done by scholars of the southeast Mediterranean will be used to determine if any goods found in Naukratis are likely Egyptian or foreign. Many of the objects already found at the site have been identified as Hellenistic in nature and contributions to these analyses will be supplied here.

Hellenistic pottery is iconic and identifiable. Some objects such as thick rim saucers and Greek-style terracotta objects are uncharacteristic of Egyptian households prior to Hellenistic rule. Because excavation data before the recent projects is unreliable and the conditions of site today are unfavorable, an analysis of style is preferred over statistical testing. A study of the characteristics of these objects should attest to the degree to which Greeks living in the city surrounded by a very different culture were influenced.

RESULTS

Data from Kom Ge'if

Although the current archaeological site is defined to be from el-Barnugi in the north to Kom el-Hisin in the south, the village of Kom Ge'if was the primary target of investigation for the Naukratis Project. The site was split into seven general areas around the lake for surface collection and preliminary study. During their initial assessment the team collected samples of pottery, numbering about 150 total, 55 of which were chosen for their diagnostic qualities, and 22 of which were the most diagnostic (Coulson and Leonard 1979). Areas A through C were mainly Roman and later pottery such as African and Cypriote Red Slip ware. D and E contained Hellenistic black ware. There may be evidence of the native Egyptian settlement Hogarth discussed in his reports saying, "the southern region is reached where no one has yet found anything but Egyptian remains" (Hogarth et al 1899:41). Some of the pottery in surrounding villages shows evidence of occupation during the late New Kingdom and Saite Period, 26th Dynasty (Coulson and Leonard 1979). Late Classical style and early Hellenistic pottery such as red-figured and plain black wares were discussed within the boundaries of Naukratis as well. Figure 2 displays black-slipped pottery found during the preliminary survey. Based on the survey results, the site of Naukratis can be determined to have been occupied by native Egyptians since at least the Saite Dynasty and the presence of early Hellenistic style pottery shows a Greek presence, most likely traders, by the sixth century B.C.E.

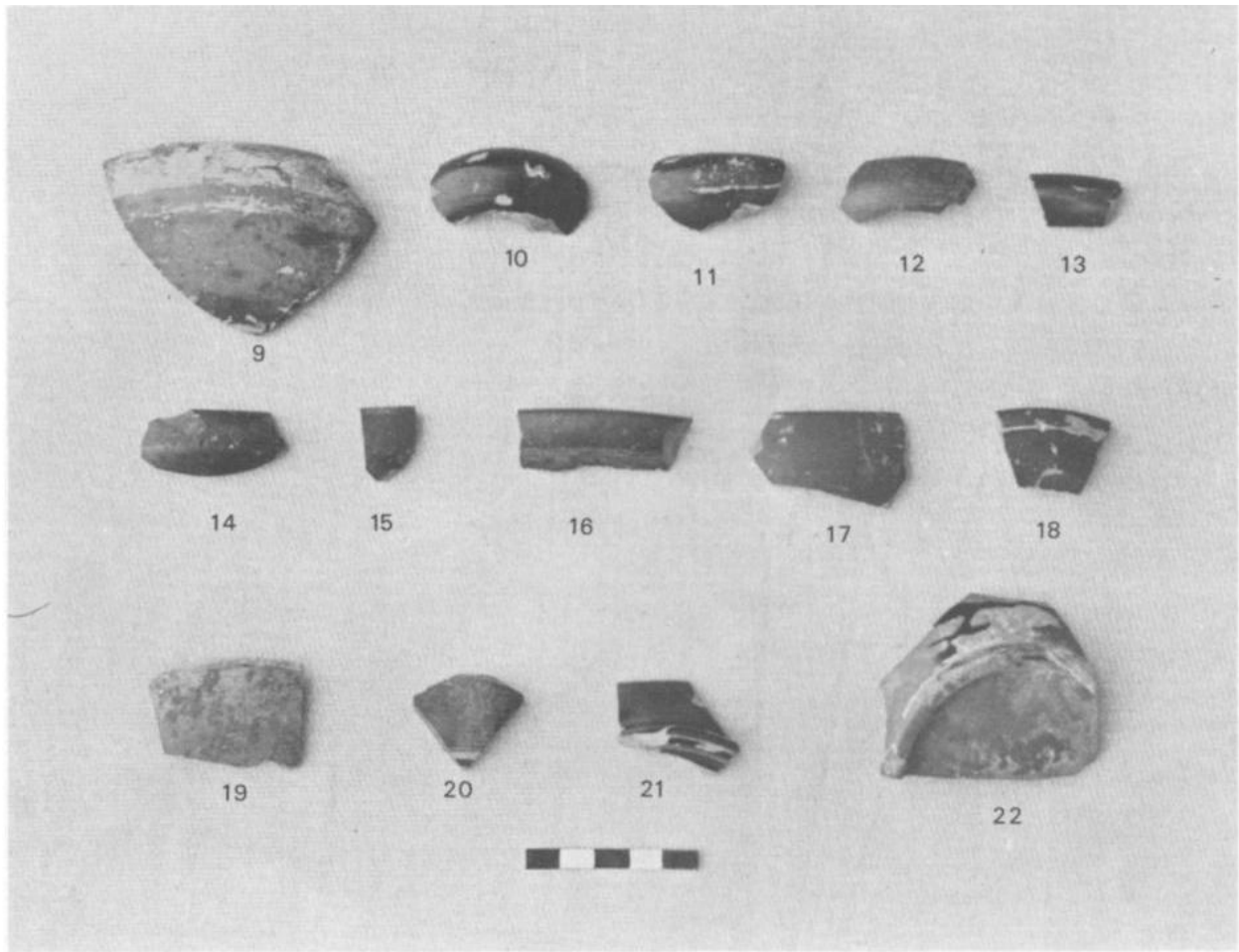


Figure 2. Hellenistic Pottery from Preliminary Survey. (Coulson and Leonard 1979:Figure 7)

Household Pottery from the South Mound

Coulson and Leonard's first full season of excavation at Naukratis was focused on addressing the issue of the "Great Temenos" on the southern end of the site. What they refer to as the "South Mound" to avoid controversy was excavated in order to discover more about the inhabitants of the port city. Although Petrie claims to have moved the graves of the modern cemetery that takes up part of the Southern Mound to do his excavation, Coulson and Leonard discovered there were far more that he did not (1982). Once they got past the Islamic burials, the Naukratis they sought unfolded. The layers of collapsed and rebuilt walls along with the pottery found near or

inside of the structures indicated that this part of the site was occupied at least through the Ptolemaic period (Figure 3).

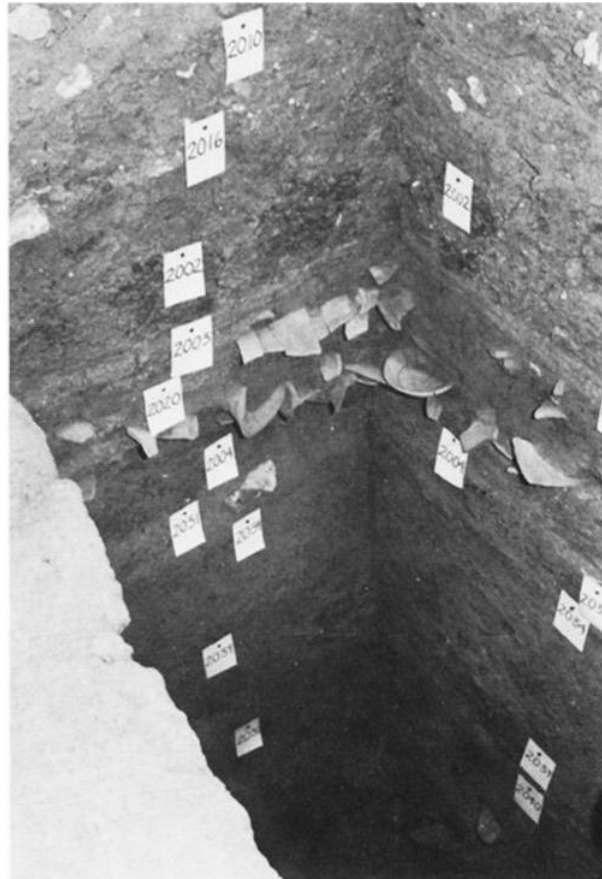


Figure 3. Stratigraphy of South Mound. (Coulson and Leonard 1982:Figure 3)

Native plain wares were prevalent as well as Greek imports. Red-slipped *skyphos*-shaped vessels, plain bowls with incurved rims, shallower bowls, and amphora handles were typical finds in this area. All of these signs, especially recovery of a Ptolemaic coin (Figure 4), indicate a continuation of the settlement from the Late Period through Ptolemaic times.

Continued seasons of excavation, on the South Mound especially, produced more material culture for analysis. These pieces of everyday life allow researchers to hypothesize about the lives of those living at Naukratis. A part of the digging was focused on the north and northwest sections of the South Mound. A system of abbreviation was created to label the area and the layer by a short letter and number code: N or NW (layer/time period followed by possible subsection). The system was devised so that as the number increases it represents a layer closer to present day soil surface, therefore more recent time period.



Figure 4. Ptolemaic coin found in South Mound. (Coulson and Leonard 1982:Figure 11)

The earliest layers investigated in this area of the site including NW2B, contained a large quantity of locally-made, utilitarian goods such as bowls, jugs, cooking pots, and handles of amphorae (Berlin 1997). Very few distinctly Hellenistic imports were discovered which may correspond to a change in trade goods for that sector of the city or Naukratis as a whole. The trend of plain, mainly locally-made ceramics with slight Greek influences but almost no original imports would continue through many layers.

A series of household assemblages were discovered in NW1C and N2B including eating and drinking saucers, cooking/serving dishes such as rim *kraters* and *dinoi*, and storage

containers like amphorae and *unguentaria* (Berlin 1997). The producers of these vessels have adapted Greek styles but are still using Delta silt and desert marl clay to make their pottery.

The composition of ceramic assemblages at the site seems to be typical of those found throughout the southeastern Mediterranean. In sections NW3A and B (late 3rd century B.C.E.) new forms of household pottery were found: a thickened-rim saucer, which will become widely used later on, and a reminiscently Greek cup featuring recurved walls and handle (Berlin 1997). Figure 5 depicts the thickened rim saucers found at Kom Ge'if and Kom Hadid.

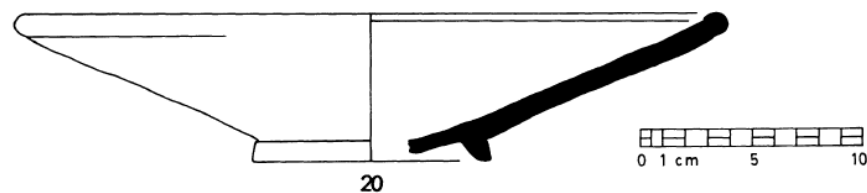


Figure 5. Thickened Rim Saucer Typical in Hellenistic World (Leonard 1998:Figure 2.1 20)

The *lagynos*, a wide-bellied, vase-like piece, and new style of amphora featuring a squared rim emerge as well. Excavation of NW4B shows that even into the second century B.C.E., people were making pots similar to other Mediterranean groups but with local Egyptian raw materials with testing of some of the clays indicating origins from as far away as the Aswan are in Upper Egypt (Berlin 1997). Many of the layers closer to the surface cannot be used to study the household assemblage because of movements in the soil from natural and human causes such as *sebakh* digging, and modern burials.

Miscellaneous Household Goods in South Mound

Along with pottery inside the walled structures found in the South Mound, various objects of special interest were discovered. A portion of a terracotta bowl was unearthed. What makes this piece interesting is the depiction of the Egyptian household god Bes on the exterior (Figure 6).

Found in NW3A at locus 2019, this segment features the dwarf-like god on the upper right portion



Figure 6. Terracotta bowl fragment with Bes decoration in relief. (Leonard 1997:Plate 7.12.a+b)

Ptolemaic rulers did not interfere with Egyptian religion too much; in fact, many used it as a way to legitimize their power and seem approachable to the Egyptian citizen. But, the presence of such a standard native icon in the heart of Greek colony is unusual. Either a traditional Egyptian person lived in that home and interacted with Greeks regularly or the atmosphere of living in Ptolemaic Egypt affected an ethnic Greek.

Some faience and lithic material were found in the area of Kom Ge'if that may indicate cultural interactions. Faience objects, including pieces of figurines and plates, were found by the excavators as well as parts of lithic bowls and remnants of limestone being used as a flooring material (Leonard 1998).

Data from Kom Hadid

Kom Hadid is a nearby portion of the site believed to be once part of the larger city of Naukratis that is now a small village. Kom Hadid means “mound of iron” in Arabic and during Petrie’s excavations seemed to have slag and the evidence would suggest that it was a trash depository with a kiln or metalwork nearby (Leonard 1998). This was a very important area of excavation because it offered large quantities of artifacts and a relationship between this and the surrounding areas.

Household Pottery from Kom Hadid

The evidence found at Kom Hadid would suggest a relationship between it and Kom Ge'if. The Pottery types found at both sites were similar. Excavators noticed a significant lack of imported goods such as Gnathia wares (Berlin 1998). This is further support for the theory that Naukratis’s status and wealth decreased with the rise of Alexandria only 80 kilometers

away. Stereotypic Hellenistic pottery types were represented at Kom Hadid, such as incurved rim bowls, everted rim bowls, and thickened rim saucers. This basic setup of tableware is very common throughout the Delta and the fact that ethnic Greek inhabitants were using local materials shows the stress put on them. Figure 7 shows the incurved rim bowl, a very common Hellenistic pottery style featuring a Greek bottom edge.

Another common Hellenistic ware was the everted rim bowl. Its commonplace usage made it a typical vessel found in ethnic Greek homes throughout the Delta and Mediterranean (Leonard 1998). Figure 8 shows a diagram of several everted rim bowls. The flare body going towards the rim makes it distinct from native Egyptian vessels.

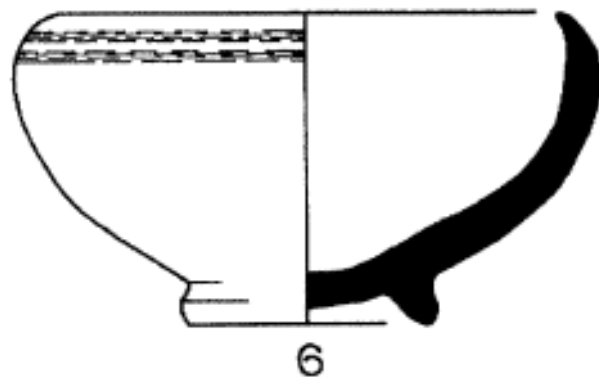


Figure 7. Incurved Rim Bowl. (Berlin 1998: Figure 2.7 6)

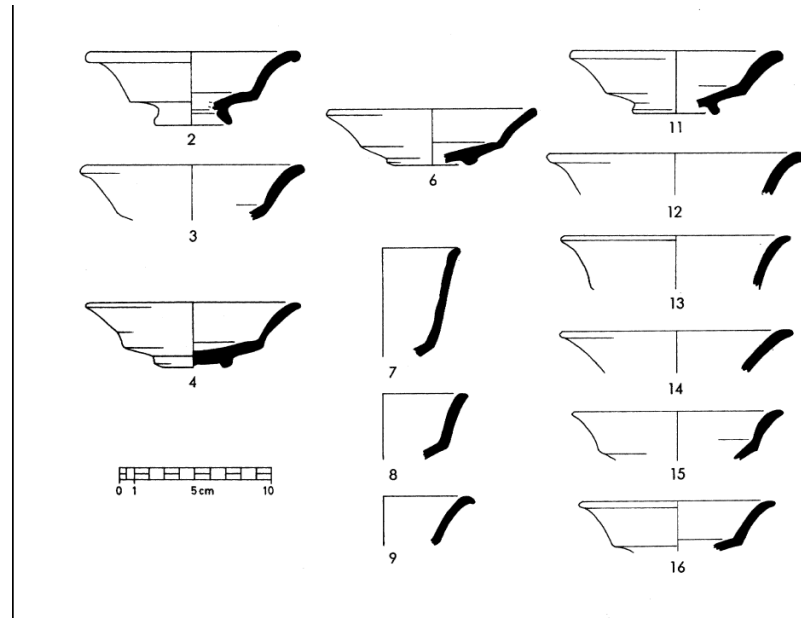


Figure 8. Everted Rim Bowls. (Berlin 1998: Figure 2.10 1-16)

Other finds at Kom Hadid included Egyptian plain rim saucers. Unlike the thickened variety common in the Hellenistic period this native Egyptian form had existed since the Middle Kingdom and remained popular through the Hellenistic era. However, this trend seemed to fade as the production of thickened rim saucers increased. The Naukratis Project reported that 82% of the saucers found at Kom Hadid were thick rimmed (Berlin 1998). Also, many of these saucers had a red-brown slip applied to them which is believed to be a replication of the Attic blackware from the upper Mediterranean.

The presence of *terra nigra* style pottery fabric in this area is also very important. *Terra nigra*, meaning black earth, is a pottery made of gray/black paste with a gray slip applied; pieces were reduction-fired to create a darker color. Also, beveled rim saucers were found at Kom Hadid. A deeper saucer popular in the 2nd century, these are rarely found outside of Ptolemaic sites, even contemporary Egyptian ones such as Ashdod and Tarsus (Berlin 1998). Figure 9 shows these saucers in profile.

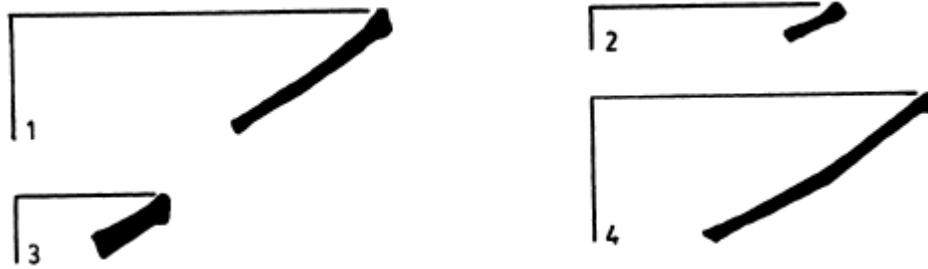


Figure 9. Beveled Rim Saucers. (Berlin 1998: 2.5 1-4)/

Cooking vessels seemed important to the average citizen. “The eleven different types found account for 26 percent of all vessels recovered,” Berlin notes (1998:31). Most of the cooking forms were Greek in style but made from local material, like most of the pottery found at Naukratis. Casseroles, shallower, open-mouthed vessels used for brazing food, were introduced to Egypt with the influx of Mediterranean travelers. Rounded cooking pots and wide stew pots were also present in great numbers. From the early Ptolemaic Period onward the number of different styles of cooking vessels increased.

Storage vessels found at Kom Hadid include many everyday forms such as *amphorae*, jugs, *kraters*, and *dinoi*. These are plain utilitarian goods and rarely have decorations beyond slips. Cooking vessels appear to be made of local raw materials and supplied by a local kiln at Kom Dahab (Berlin 1998). The cooking vessels, which were needed for making food multiple times a day, were made from local manufacturers and not imported. Casseroles and stew pots were common. Figure 10 shows the rim of one of these Hellenistic style stew pots.

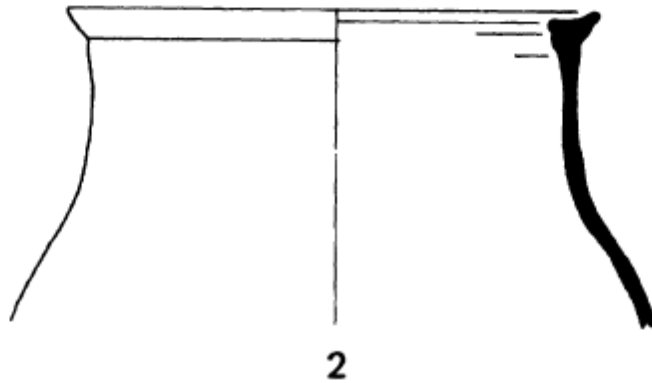


Figure 10. Rim of Ledge/Folded Lip Stew Pot. (Berlin 1998: 2.20 2)

Miscellaneous Household Goods from Kom Hadid

Terracotta objects including plaques, figurines, masks, and lamps were found at Kom Hadid (Leonard 1998). Many of these were mold-made and of decent quality. At least one of the figurines appears to be a depiction of Harpocrates, a Hellenized version of the Egyptian god Horus. Figure 11 shows him with a distinctive knot of hair on the side of his childlike head and finger/hand to his mouth. Of the other figurines found it is unsure how many are religious icons such as that of Aphrodite or if they depict average people.

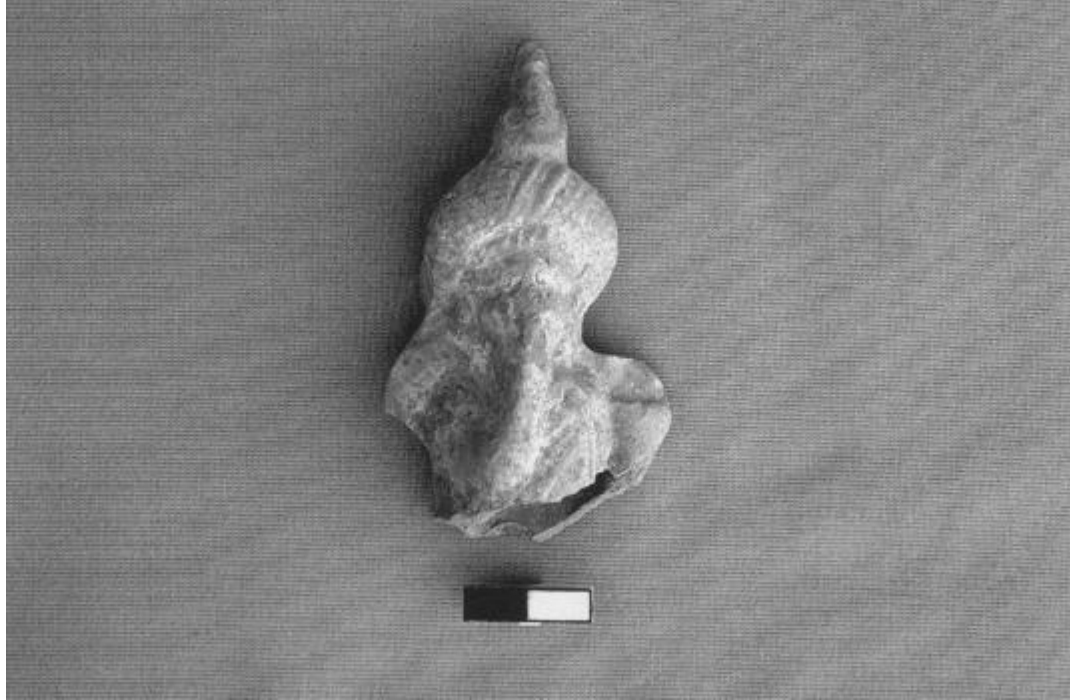


Figure 11: Terracotta Harpocrates figurine. (Leonard 1998: Plate 3.3).

Terracotta lamps used to light homes and other buildings were present at Kom Hadid. Ten pieces of lamps were found at Kom Hadid which Leonard notes is very low compared to the 280 Petrie claimed to have found (Leonard 1998, Petrie et al. 1886). Although varying in style slightly the presence of the lamps is important. Figure 12 depicts one the lamps found at Kom Hadid.

Imported *amphorae* of a seemingly Rhodian style appear in the excavations of Kom Hadid. Simple and complex rims as well as toes and handles of these foreign vessels were discovered and catalogued (Leonard 1998). Figure 13 displays some of the rim appearances for this style. The presence of foreign material into the second century B.C.E. is notable.

Evidence of faience, a form of glass-like pottery that is molded and fired creating a natural glaze, was found during the excavations at Kom Hadid. Many of the pieces were too

small to determine what form of vessel was created but they were recovered and catalogued (Leonard 1998). Leonard notes that faience had been found by Petrie during his excavations.

Other various materials such as metal, limestone, and marble were found nearby. Limestone plaster and objects made from the material have been noted previously. A piece of a small marble figurine was noted as well.



Figure 12. Terracotta Lamp from Kom Hadid. (Leonard 1998:Plate 3.18a)

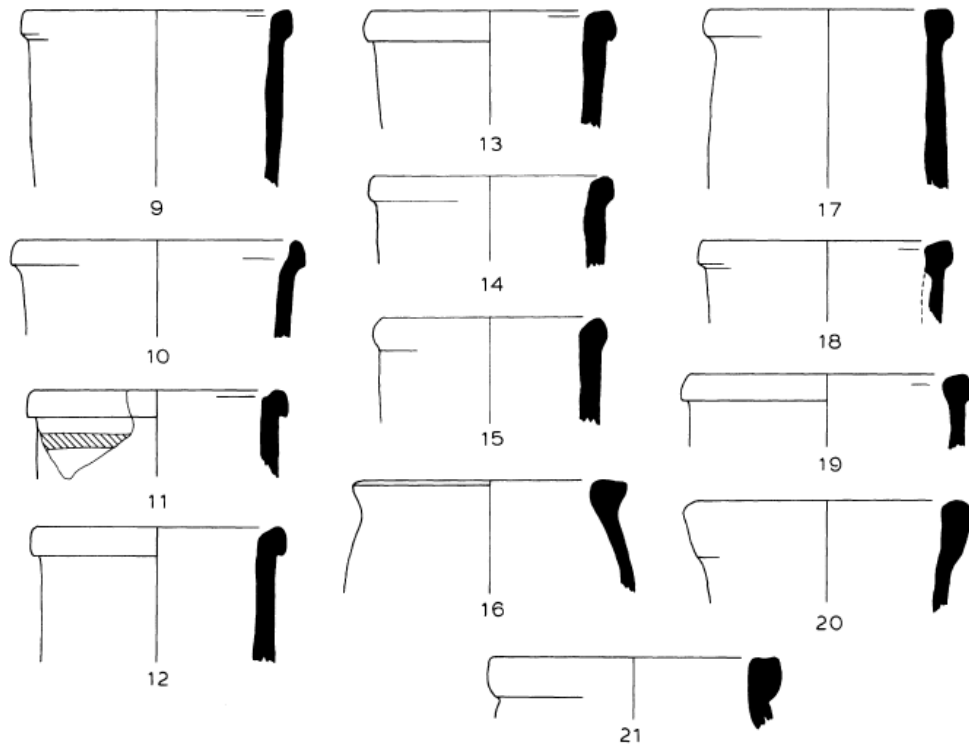


Figure 13. Rims of Imported *Amphorae* from Kom Hadid. (Leonard 1998:Figure 3.2)

CONCLUSIONS

Household goods used daily by average citizens can give us insight into how they thought about certain styles by indicating what was being made when and how those trends change. The results of excavations at Naukratis, this Greek port in the Nile Delta, have been mixed. Some aspects of its material assemblage, especially those of pottery forms seem to suggest that Greeks were holding on to those styles that came from the mainland or other parts of the Greek Mediterranean. Early excavations showed the progression from Archaic, Classical and into the Hellenistic Period, leading to an abundance of Greek pottery throughout the region. However, as the excavations continued more evidence appeared to support fusion and synthesis of Greek and

Egyptian ideas, at least on the part of the Greeks. Figurines and motifs of Egyptian gods, either in their “original” forms or those adapted to be more like the Greek pantheon, are present. Local materials are used to create pottery rather than import ones from Rhodes or Athens. The cost of shipping and prevalence of good silt and marl clay may be reasons for this. Although they are using local materials they are still mainly producing Greek style goods. Flat-bottomed Egyptian saucers appear briefly in the Hellenistic period before the market is overpowered by a wave of thick rimmed Greek saucers.

The Greeks seem to have adopted, although perhaps begrudgingly, some aspects of Egyptian life. Citizens of Naukratis may have been immigrants from mainland Greece/other colonies or may have been raised within the confines of the Greek colony, but they were still influenced by Egyptian life. Having an almost independent city within another country creates a very interesting scenario that can be studied by anthropologists and archaeologists through material culture.

Household assemblages from the south mound are further evidence for a decline in imports in the region at this time. Berlin and Leonard propose that the rise of the new capital of Alexandria overshadows Naukratis, a city once known for specialized Greek imports and stop for travelers heading up the Nile (Berlin 1997). Tablewares help researchers peer into the lives of ordinary citizens. Although the variability of cooking vessel types increased at many parts of the site the material stayed the same. It is believed that the use of local silt was preferred over imports because of the lower cost and that fact that local clay made good enough cooking vessels not to bother shipping imports from Greece (Berlin 1998).

Citizens of Naukratis were attempting to follow regional trends popular throughout the region but many do not possess original imports. Terra nigra was popular in the second century

B.C.E. and has been described as an “Egyptian version of Greek black glaze” (Berlin 1998:28). It is prevalent throughout the Delta and it unclear whether there were few sites mass-producing it or an even distribution of small producers. It seems the demand by ethnic Greeks is powerful enough to influence the lives of local Egyptians into making Greek styles from nearby materials. Egyptians who can profit from the sale of popular goods would possibly have used these products as well.

Lagynos and square rim amphorae are other vessel forms used quite often around the house and their changes show a change in the Greek mindset. The three most common Hellenistic tablewares appear in Naukratis. Incurved rim bowls, everted rim bowls, and thick rim saucers show the daily use of Greek style goods by common citizens. Egyptian-style goods must have been readily available due to the proximity with Egyptian cities but people are not using these vessels. Although they cannot afford to import original Greek goods from other parts of the Mediterranean they are still trying to maintain their ethnicity.

The inhabitants obviously want to follow popular Greek trends but still maintain a connection to Egypt because they are dependent on their surroundings for their raw materials. The use of limestone plaster for flooring is a typical Egyptian practice and it interesting to find a largely Greek city adopting this practice. Ordinary aspects of life that people may take for granted are actually very important to the individual. What people use affects how they feel. If something is altered, potentially, so is their worldview.

Sources of light and worship items were needed every day to continue ordinary life at Naukratis. Lamps found in the recent excavations and in previous one have shown the sheer number of people living in the Naukratis area and the fact that people want to see at night. Local potters are creating cheap terracotta goods such a lamps and figurines for the ethnic Greeks. The

style of these objects is reflected by the demand. These common artifacts show the Greeks adapting versions of their culture such as religion to match with aspects of Egyptian life. One of many transformed deities, Harpocrates was used as the child-god version of Horus. The cheaply made figurines that were common throughout the Delta reflect that transition. People could worship from home and the statuette would be a constant reminder of their mixed identity.

A group of people who have been allowed to establish a port city and trade for several hundred years in a foreign country would be expected to change significantly. However, the ethnic Greeks seem to be continuing trends in their purchasing habits even after the expensive imports are no longer readily available. They switch to the locally made version of their beloved pottery instead of using what native Egyptians used. It has been argued that Greeks were very picky about what their pottery and “admitted Egyptian influence only selectively into their material culture” (Villing and Schlottzhauer 2006:8). This scenario may have been different if the Greeks were not allowed to found this city before the invasion of the Greek/Macedonian army. If this had been a case of colonization by a ruling group the results would be a lot closer to those of Alexandria. Naukratis is an interesting case study into the ways in which two cultures can interact and influence each other.

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