



Notes on Naukratis in the Netherlands

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NOTES ON NAUKRATIS IN THE NETHERLANDS

There are some 120 sherds collected by Friedrich Wilhelm von Bissing at Naukratis now housed in the Faculty of Archaeology of the University of Leiden.¹ All but a dozen (mainly local Egyptian or black-glazed) have been published in one of the three places cited below, most fully in Prins de Jong 1925, and all are now included in the online catalogue of Naukratis finds (Villing et al. 2013–2015), but I review three inscribed sherds here, in the first case merely to underline an oddity and in two others to take matters in a more assuredly forward direction.

1. The first fragment (T.2925) has been fully published by Dunbabin and Page 1951 (also Prins de Jong 1925, 46, no. I.E.8 and pl. I.8; van de Wiel 1968, N15 and pl. 1), and regrettably cannot currently be found. However, a few details are worth rehearsing. Dunbabin considered that the fragment is from a deep bowl, or perhaps a kantharos, with a text written before firing on the inside, a text which was elegantly reconstructed by Page, who had balked at a similar exercise with the other long ceramic painted text possibly from Naukratis, now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1896-1908-G.141.1 (Page 1947). One must ask whether it would have been possible to paint the complete text inside the bowl; although Dunbabin does calculate it would have taken up only half the diameter, the difficulty of writing further into the bowl is worrying. In addition it is not easy to place the piece typologically; the interior was seemingly reserved in order for the inscription to be added, a remarkably unusual matter for which I know no parallel; the text would have been pre-ordered. The outside decoration, in red and white on red-fired glaze (Dunbabin), is not easy to discern either from the known photographs or the, perhaps understandably, hesitant description given by Dunbabin; the parallels he cites are very general. One may be tempted to consider whether the text was a re-firing on a suitably large sherd of an open vase. If and when the piece is seen again it will therefore be imperative to check at least the depth of the bowl and the character of the decoration on the exterior.

2. A little-master. The rather unpromising sherd of a band-cup, Leiden T.2947 (van de Wiel 1968, 10, N31 and pl. 2; Prins de Jong 1925, 60–61, no. 15; Heesen 2011, 325, no. 710), presents an interesting problem. There is a full range of Attic black-figure cups known from Naukratis, from the Komast group onwards, with a noteworthy bulge in the second quarter of the sixth century. The Leiden sherd presents, as so often, the signature of the potter or owner of the potter shop, though the name is regrettably largely lost; what remains is -es, with the vestige – a high placed dot – of a previous letter. That vestige is however, in view of the blank space below it, such that it can only be from an extremely restricted range of letters and consequently known potters' names; gamma (Ionic), nu, tau and upsilon are the only possibilities, and the scrap that remains point to a horizontal, not diagonal line, hence gamma or tau is to be preferred. This would suggest Glaukytes, otherwise not known at Naukratis (the vase inscriptions thence are reviewed in Johnston 2013–2015b); but there is an epigraphic problem in that Glaukytes always uses

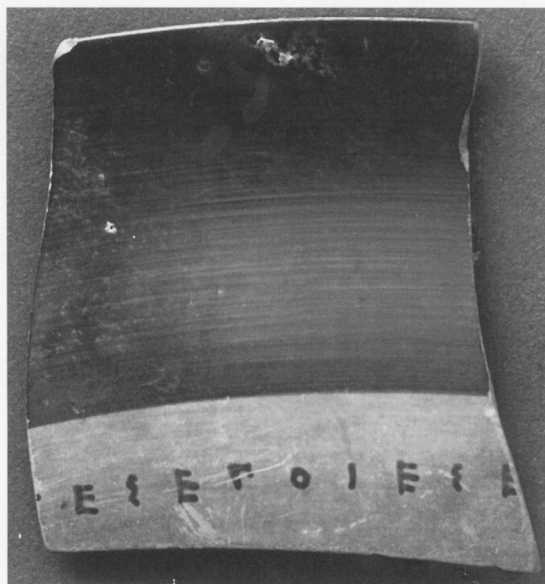


Fig. 1

¹ I am grateful to Ruurd Halbertsma for generous access given to members of the Naukratis Project to sherds and to the Faculty for permission to publish them. I do not enter here into the full history of the material, but note that it was bought by C. W. Lunsingh Scheurleer from von Bissing, and when Scheurleer's bank failed in 1932 the Allard Pierson Museum was founded to keep the collection in the Netherlands. It still retains some forty pieces said to be from Naukratis that are not ceramic.

three-, not four-bar sigma, as here (Heesen 2011, 272–3, nos 110–16, with figs 44 and 46–47). So do we have a new maker of little-master cups?

Deciding between these options is no easy task; least likely is the use of gamma, given the lack of use of the Ionic version in Athens at this period (Immerwahr 1990, 135). The option of a new potter *ipso facto* cannot be assessed; tau as part of the name of Glaukytes is more probable, but indeed his use elsewhere of 3-bar, not 4-bar, sigma confounds the issue. The days are long gone when the issues re the two forms in pre-fifth century Greece aroused strenuous debate (e.g. Hirschfeld 1889, 461–7) though it is fair to say that the four-bar sigma is very rare in Attica at the time when this sherd was painted; on pottery Immerwahr (1990, 158) lists some five examples of the middle third of the sixth century, among which the cups of Sondros could just be said to stand out; that almost all examples appear on cups may partly be accounted for by the very fact of the frequency of texts on the shape. There may however just be a hint, little more, of Ionian connections (whether of the origin of the potters/painters or targeting of the market it would be hazardous to suggest), but the fact that cups signed by Sondros with three-bar sigma went to Naukratis does little to comfort the broad idea of accommodation to Ionian taste.

3. The significance of another sherd (T.2489) has not previously been recognised because of either the problems of type-setting or the exiguous circulation of the publications. It has been published to my knowledge thrice:

CVA Musée Scheurleer 2, IID 6, pl. 3, 5, omitting the final letter of the graffito.

Prins de Jong 1925, 53, no. 6; third letter of graffito omitted in the transcript.

van de Wiel 1968, 7, N 21, with correct rendering of the graffito.

The sherd is not problematic as a pot though not of easy taxonomy; it is from the shoulder of a closed vase of South Ionian manufacture made probably between c.625 and c.550 BC. It is decorated with a simple wavy band, not an uncommon feature of such vases, though the relatively large waves are not so readily paralleled, for example in the range of material treated by Seifert 2004 and Bujkisch 2013, most of which have the band on the neck.²

While the sherd has no close ceramic parallel from Naukratis, dedicatory graffiti on East Greek closed vases from the site are frequent. The text however is somewhat unusual. As noted above, it has been published, but only once accurately, most probably because of the difficulties (by no means fully conquered in modern IT communication) of rendering the qoppa in the short preserved text, *vac.* Νεϙω[.

There is a glazed area to the left of the sherd that should mark the boundary of the shoulder panel, with a handle just to the left. The beginning of the text is close, but not very close, to the side of the panel; its full

length can hardly be estimated; on all Naukratite comparisons it would be the start of a dedication; the other possibility, as an owner's inscription, genitive plus EIMI, is not otherwise found at this period at Naukratis (Johnston 2013–2015a, §2.2), even if it is frequent elsewhere. This may well be a reflection of the fact that the great majority of early material from the site was found in the sanctuaries. However, the spatial position does suggest a fairly short



Fig. 2a

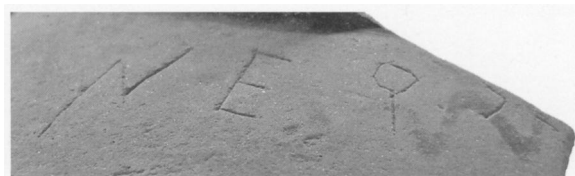


Fig. 2b

² For shoulder decoration within a marked off panel, see Bujkisch 9.54 (fragment) and 9.95 (a stamnos or jar).

text – before the second handle is reached, unless this is a hydria, which seems unlikely from the record of preserved material whether at Naukratis or more generally. I would therefore not discard the possibility that this is a rare owner's text from Archaic Naukratis.

In sum this is either a dedication, to whichever deity, most likely Apollo or Aphrodite, or an owner's mark by Neko[. It is impossible to disconnect this fragment from the Pharaoh of this name, though to assess the degree of proximity is less easy. That this is a dedication by the Pharaoh himself would be a possibility, but not one that would gain more than purely onomastic support, and an owner's mark would be far more improbable. The reasons need not be rehearsed – lack of any sort of parallel, the modest nature of the pot, the use of Greek etc. More likely this will be the work of a Greek-writing male named after the Pharaoh, to add to the range of similar figures of the same broad generation,³ Psammetichos, the short lived tyrant at Corinth, Amasis the potter at Athens, and with those parallels in mind it would be difficult to assess the social 'standing' of this Greek, or Greco-Egyptian, Neko(n), or indeed the circumstances of his naming in the political setting of the Delta c.600 to 550 BC.

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³ To which we can also add those named after Lydian dynasts, Ardys (Johnston 2013–2015a, §11.3.4) and Croesus, depicted in the famous Attic kouros of c.530 BC.