

## 2: Naukratis, Heracleion-Thonis and Alexandria – Remarks on the Presence and Trade Activities of Greeks in the North-West Delta from the Seventh Century BC to the End of the Fourth Century BC

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The present article examines how Greek trade in Egypt developed and the consequences that the Greek economic presence had on political and economic conditions in Egypt. I will focus especially on the Delta region and, as far as possible, on the city of Heracleion-Thonis on the Egyptian coast, discovered by Franck Goddio during underwater excavations at the end of the twentieth century. The period discussed here was an exceedingly exciting one for Egypt, as the country, forced by changes in foreign policy, reversed its isolation from the rest of the ancient world.

### 1. Preliminary remarks on the sources

Before turning to the relationship between Greeks and Egyptians in the Archaic and Classical periods, it must be noted that most of the information on the subject comes from the second book of Herodotus' *Histories*. The value of this source, written just after the mid-fifth century BC by 'The Father of History', is rather controversial. Some consider him a reliable source, while others view him solely as a storyteller, in fact, even as a 'liar'.<sup>1</sup> Thus, all interpretations of his work must be approached cautiously as they are coloured by varying judgements regarding his quality as a source.

Strabo and Diodorus are also controversial sources, but for a different reason: they wrote between 400 and 600 years after the events they reported. It must always be questioned how much true historical information can be contained in accounts written after such a long time and how much of it is simply local tradition or even erroneous information taken at face value.

The Greek literary sources are complemented, however, by epigraphic and archaeological evidence of Egyptian and Greek origin. These are so-called primary sources, which give us details without establishing a direct historical connection like the literary sources. Epigraphic and archaeological evidence, however, can be inserted into the network of events and economic history conveyed by the Greek historians. Thus, if the Egyptian textual sources and artefacts can be connected to the reports of Herodotus, Diodorus and Strabo, then a probable reconstruction of events is possible.

### 2. Greeks and Saitic Egypt

If we disregard the Minoan and Mycenaean contacts with Egypt, we can establish Greco-Egyptian relations as far back as the seventh century BC.<sup>2</sup> A Greek presence in the Delta can be established directly or indirectly for the following places: Naukratis, Kom Firin, Saïs, Athribis, Bubastis, Mendes, Tell el-Mashkuta, Daphnai and Magdolos.<sup>3</sup> In most of the reports,<sup>4</sup> Rhakotis, the settlement preceding Alexandria, is mentioned as the location of the Greeks, an assumption based on a misinterpreted and long-outdated reading of a semi-literary papyrus from the Roman period.<sup>5</sup>

*Psammetichus I (reigned 664–610 BC)*

According to the historian Diodorus writing in the first century BC, Greek trade with Egypt, indeed even a settled Greek presence in Egypt, began in an era when the country was governed by many local clan chiefs under the central rule of the Assyrian king. One of the local chiefs supported by the Assyrians was Psammetichus I, residing in Saïs in the Delta, of whom Diodorus gives the following account:

*Psammetichus of Saïs ... furnished wares for all merchants (emporoi) and especially for the Phoenicians and the Greeks; and since in this manner he disposed of the products of his own district at a profit and exchanged them for those of other peoples, he was not only possessed of great wealth (euporian) but also enjoyed friendly relations with peoples and rulers.<sup>6</sup>*

Psammetichus was thus the first to become aware of the advantages of foreign trade and thereby achieved great wealth. He declared himself independent from the Assyrians and began his military campaign against the other clan chiefs of the country; he was able to fall back on the aid of Carian and Ionian mercenaries because of the good foreign relations created through trade. With their support, the local Saitic ruler succeeded in bringing Egypt once again under a united Egyptian rule.<sup>7</sup> Thus, by at least 557 BC, he was recognised as Pharaoh in Thebes. Starting with his rule over the reunited country, the so-called Saitic period began with the 26th Dynasty

(664–525 BC). Scholars perceive this period as the last heyday of Egypt.<sup>8</sup> Of interest to us is that Greek trade and the Greek art of warfare contributed significantly towards reuniting Egypt and freeing it from Assyrian rule, although Diodorus possibly exaggerated the importance of the Greek military.

Having established his rule over a reunited Egypt, Psammetichus stationed Greek mercenaries at various strategic points in the Delta to protect the country from invasions. We thus learn from Herodotus and Diodorus that he provided a piece of land near Bubastis for the settlement of Ionian and Carian mercenaries 'with the river Nile between'; these were called 'Camps' (*stratopeda*).<sup>9</sup> Carrez-Maratray assumes that they were located near the modern site of Tell el-Shuqafiya, close to Tell el-Kebir in the region of Faqus/Qantir, called Thou or Tacasarta (*ta castra = stratopeda*) in antiquity.<sup>10</sup> An additional Greek military base, named 'Wall of the Milesians' (*milesion teichos*),<sup>11</sup> was situated at the Bolbitinic mouth of the Nile. Although previous research interprets this base as either one of the Milesian thalassocracy or as one of Strabo's fictions,<sup>12</sup> it seems more likely that the Milesians had constructed a fort on the orders of the Pharaoh to protect the coast from pirate raids by their own compatriots. This is later archaeologically documented, for instance, for Migdol at the border of Syria.<sup>13</sup>

Psammetichus not only established the Greek military in the country but also, according to Diodorus, generously sponsored Greeks and other foreigners in matters of trade after his assumption of power:

*He also regularly treated with kindness any foreigners who sojourned in Egypt of their own free will ...; and, speaking generally, he was the first Egyptian king to open to other nations the trading-places (emporion) throughout the rest of Egypt and to offer a large measure of security to strangers from across the seas. For his predecessors in power had consistently closed Egypt to strangers (abatou epoion tois xenois), either killing or enslaving any who touched its shores.*<sup>14</sup>

We see that in the Greek tradition it was Psammetichus who opened up Egypt, which had hitherto been barred from foreign trade.<sup>15</sup> The expression used by Diodorus in this case, 'rest of Egypt' (*tên allên choron*), may be explained as follows: trade had been possible only in the original sphere of power of the clan chief Psammetichus and was expanded after he gained exclusive control over all of Egypt, after which it became possible for Greeks to establish trading stations (*emporion*) all over Egypt.

Scholars dispute the information Diodorus gives in his report, as no archaeological evidence supports the existence of such trading stations.<sup>16</sup> This argument is not particularly convincing, however, as with the exception of imported goods, no archaeological evidence of actual

Greeks residing in Saïtic Egypt has been found. Therefore, for the time being at least, it is suggested that we should take Diodorus literally, and suggest that because the country was not open to Greek trade for very long, the Greeks had little time to create any lasting evidence of their presence. Potentially the first Greek trader known to us by name is the Samian 'pirate' Kolaios, incidentally mentioned by Herodotus,<sup>17</sup> whose journey Boardman dates to the year 638 BC.<sup>18</sup>

### *Amasis (570–526 BC)*

About 40 years after the reign of Psammetichus I, one of his successors, the usurper Amasis, reorganised Egyptian trade with the Greeks. His goal was to place Greek economic activity under state control by concentrating their economic presence in one place. For this purpose he selected, as we learn from Herodotus, the town of Naukratis, located on the Canopic branch of the Nile in the western Nile Delta.<sup>19</sup> As indicated by archaeological finds,<sup>20</sup> Greeks lived there as early as the seventh century BC. Therefore the archaeological evidence theoretically contradicts Herodotus. This problem can be eliminated, however, by viewing Herodotus' information as a description of a new organisation associated with an upswing in Naukratis, as Vittmann emphasises.<sup>21</sup> Thus, Naukratis must have already been of great significance for trade policy at the time of Psammetichus.

Herodotus, who is the most important source for Naukratis because he is the most detailed, reports the following on its establishment as the only Greek *emporion* in Egypt:<sup>22</sup> the Pharaoh Amasis, whom he calls *philhellene*, gave the *polis* Naukratis to those Greeks who wanted to live in Egypt, as their residence; but to those Greeks who only wanted to trade (*nautillomenoisi*), he gave certain places (*chorous*), doubtless located in Naukratis as well, where they could erect their sanctuaries for the gods. The most important sanctuary was the so-called Hellenion, founded by Ionian (Chios, Teos, Phocaea, Clazomenae), Dorian (Rhodes, Knidos, Halicarnassos, Phaselis), and Aeolian (Mytilene) Greeks. The Hellenion, from which there are confirmed archaeological remains, can in fact be dated to the time of Amasis in its earliest construction phase.<sup>23</sup> Herodotus reports an additional sacred precinct of Zeus established by the Aeginetans (a possible parallel to the excavated Dioskouri temple), the precinct of Hera established by the Samians and that of Apollo established by the Milesians.<sup>24</sup>

The Greek settlers, the majority of whom were probably most active as craftsmen, were not responsible for the administration of the Greek *emporion*. Instead, the traders themselves were, for Herodotus explains that the Greek towns of Asia Minor, which made up the Hellenion, nominated the supervisors of the port (*prostatas tou emporiou*). As Möller demonstrates,<sup>25</sup> Naukratis was,

however, not at all a Greek colony with a *polis*-constitution, but a trading settlement described as a 'port of trade' in the Polanyi tradition of economic theory.

In contrast to this extraordinary position of Naukratis in the Saitic period, according to Herodotus, it has recently been stated that all wares coming from the sea to Egypt were taxed in Heracleion-Thonis, which furthermore would have been the trading port of Egypt since the 26th Dynasty.<sup>26</sup> Because imported Greek amphorae from the site date from the seventh and sixth centuries BC, it has also been postulated that Greeks from Asia Minor founded Heracleion-Thonis.<sup>27</sup>

The main clue for this assumption is the title of a Saitic *fonctionnaire* called 'Overseer at the door of the foreign peoples of the Mediterranean', as translated by Yoyotte. He assumes that the official had his post at Heracleion-Thonis.<sup>28</sup> There is, however, also no problem with following Vittmann, who translates the title 'Overseer of the doors (= frontiers) of the foreign lands of the Mediterranean', and states that the Greek supervisors of the port of Naukratis were under the control of this official.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, this title offers no clear evidence for the function of Heracleion-Thonis as a trading port in Saitic times.

Summing up, one has to be cautious in assuming that Heracleion-Thonis was a port of trade from the Saitic period, because Herodotus states not only that at this time Naukratis was the *only* trading port of Egypt, but furthermore, that Greek wares could be imported into Egypt only through Naukratis. He reports, for example, that if a Greek were to inadvertently enter Egypt via a different branch of the Nile, he had to sail back to the Canopic branch or, if that was not possible, to reshipe the goods with Nile ships through the Delta to Naukratis.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, Naukratis was the trading port where the taxes were levied. The new finds at Heracleion-Thonis in my opinion do not necessarily challenge these statements by Herodotus. Certainly, Greek objects from the seventh and sixth centuries BC were found in Heracleion-Thonis as well as in other places of Egypt. This is probably because Psammetichus allowed free trade in Egypt but nothing speaks against the opinion that Naukratis was for one generation, in the time of Amasis, the only trading port of the land.

Amasis' goal must have been to place or to retain foreign trade under state control, trade probably conducted to a significant degree by the Greeks. Therefore, he maintained direct access to the import taxes from this trade.<sup>31</sup> However, as we know much too little about the economic system of Saitic Egypt – especially whether it was actually organised primarily as a redistributive system as in the preceding millennia – we should be very careful about labelling the trading port of Naukratis 'predominately a buffer between two differently organised economic forms', a buffer serving to

protect 'a normally strictly organised economic system under central control from the influences of freely operating trading'.<sup>32</sup>

With respect to Greek trade with Egypt during the Saitic period, it must be stated that, according to the Greek literary sources, economic contact had become possible only since that time. This contact furnished the financial and military resources for a reunification of the country. According to Diodorus, it brought the Greeks free access to Egypt at the same time. During the Saitic dynasty, however, the rulers no longer considered free trade by the Greeks advantageous for the country, for Amasis restricted trade with Greece to Naukratis. His goal may have been to place Greek trade under state control, thus making it easier to collect taxes. Unfortunately, we learn nothing about the traded products themselves – it may be assumed that, as in the Classical period, Greeks were interested in Egyptian papyrus, textiles and natron, while the Egyptians were possibly interested in imported Greek olive oil and wine. It cannot be documented whether, at this early period, exchanging Greek silver for Egyptian grain played a role.

### 3. Parenthetical remarks: Strabo, the Milesians and the foundation of Naukratis

Strabo offers us a 'foundation legend' for Naukratis different from that of Herodotus. According to Strabo, Naukratis was a Milesian colony:

*For in the time of Psammetichus... the Milesians, with thirty ships, put in at the Bolbitine mouth, and then, disembarking, fortified with a wall the above mentioned settlement (called Milesion Teichos); but a long time later(?)/in time(?) they sailed up into the Saitic Nome, defeated Inaros in a naval battle, and founded the polis Naukratis (polin ektisan Naukratin), not far above Schedia.*<sup>33</sup>

Strabo's text contains three problematic statements that contradict Herodotus. The first is represented by the person of Inaros, against whom the Milesians are said to have gone to war. As a man by this name does not appear in other sources of the Saitic period, scholars assume that perhaps Strabo confused him with the Inaros who fought against the Persians in Egypt in the mid-fifth century BC;<sup>34</sup> he was considered to have been the son of a Psammetichus. As Strabo recounts a battle of the Milesians against an Inaros, the man concerned could have been a Pharaoh, more precisely the son of Psammetichus I, named Necho. The confusion of Necho, the son of Psammetichus, with the Inaros of 200 years later, who was the son of a Psammetichus, too, might have been the deciding factor for the mistake.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the Milesians could have fought against Necho and then founded Naukratis.<sup>36</sup>

This is an assumption which is improbable for no other reason than that it is hard to imagine that the Greeks (with only 30 ships) in Egypt could have successfully stood up to Egyptian power.

But if Strabo actually did confuse the Inaros of the fifth century BC with a Pharaoh of the 26th Dynasty, who was a successor (son) of Psammetichus and against whom they fought victoriously, then an alternative suggestion for his identity would compare well with the report by Herodotus: the son of Psammetichus II, the Pharaoh Apries.<sup>37</sup> Apries was crushingly defeated in a battle against the usurper Amasis near Momemphis, not far from Naukratis in the Saitic district.<sup>38</sup> It may be assumed that the Milesians of *Milesion Teichos* fought alongside the Egyptians, who comprised the majority of Amasis' army, on the side of the usurper against Apries, the son of Psammetichus II. Ultimately, the information provided by Herodotus demonstrates the importance of the Greek soldiers for Amasis when he called the Greeks from the *stratopeda* to Memphis and made them his bodyguards. Nevertheless, it also must be noted that in Herodotus' narrative Apries was the one who led 30,000 Carian and Ionian mercenaries,<sup>39</sup> and, moreover, according to some researchers, that Amasis was still hostile to the Greeks at the beginning of his reign. This supposed hostility, however, cannot be substantiated.<sup>40</sup>

The second problem is the fact that scholars usually translate Strabo in such a way that the Milesians sailed 'in time' (*chrono de*) to Saïs in order to found Naukratis there. It is generally assumed that the Milesians had already left their fort again shortly after the founding of *Milesion Teichos* to fight the battle with Inaros. This may not have necessarily been the case, for the Greek *chrono de* can also be translated as 'but a long time later'. Thus, this passage could be a description of the c. 40 years between the rules of Psammetichus and Amasis.<sup>41</sup> It is consequently suggested that the Milesians, who initially protected the coast, were then called to participate in a military action in the Saitic district, where they afterwards settled with other Greeks in the pre-existing city of Naukratis. Thus, Strabo and Herodotus do not necessarily contradict each other but can be read in such a way as to complement each other.

The third problem is that Strabo states that the Milesians founded the *polis* Naukratis. If Strabo had viewed Naukratis as a Greek *polis*, he would probably have used the Greek technical term *apoikia*, that is, colony, for the town. But even if Strabo assumed that the Naukratis founded by the Milesians was a Greek *polis*, he surely drew on a foundation legend invented after the fact, a legend he had heard during his visit in Egypt in the time of Augustus. In Ptolemaic and early Roman times, Naukratis was in fact the only Greek *polis* with a constitution in the country besides Alexandria and Ptolemais, and since the Ptolemaic era, the Naukratites propagated

the legend that the Milesians had founded their community.<sup>42</sup> Strabo had thus simply copied the foundation legend, whose historical core may in fact be traced back to the significant trading presence of the Milesians in Naukratis in the sixth century BC.

#### 4. Greeks in Persian Egypt and the rise of Heracleion-Thonis as a trading port (525–404 BC)

Shortly after Amasis established Naukratis as the only Greek *emporion*, conflicts arose with the Persians, whose King Cambyses integrated Egypt into his imperial federation in 525 BC. With the Persian conquest, Greek subjects of the Persian king came from Asia Minor into the land of the Nile, some of whom, 'as might be expected, joined in the campaign to make profit, and some also came to see the land itself'.<sup>43</sup> In addition, the Persians lifted the trade barriers imposed by Amasis, for we learn from Herodotus, who himself probably visited Egypt in the mid-fifth century BC,<sup>44</sup> that Greek traders (*emporoi*) were permitted to move freely in Egypt and also frequented its markets.<sup>45</sup> The following statement by Herodotus demonstrates that Naukratis was probably no longer the only Greek *port of trade*. He writes: 'In ancient times Naukratis was the only *emporion* in Egypt ... In this way Naukratis was given privileges'.<sup>46</sup> The fact that he emphasises that it was so in 'ancient times' (*to palaion*) and that Naukratis then 'was given such privileges' (*etetimêto*), leads to only one conclusion: that this was no longer the case under the reign of the Persians at the time of Herodotus.<sup>47</sup>

Just as in the Saitic period, trade seems to have remained under some state control in the Persian period, as fees were levied for foreign trade. A customs register found in Elephantine and written in Aramaic between 473 and 402 BC offers evidence for these levies.<sup>48</sup> Bookkeeping was conducted in this register on 42 incoming and departing Greek and Phoenician ships. The 36 Greek ships mentioned came from the Greek city of Phaselis. They were to pay a poll tax as well as a duty calculated according to the goods' capacity.<sup>49</sup> The duties were transferred 'to the House of the King', which could have been the King's palace in Persepolis.<sup>50</sup> We learn furthermore from this register that silver, bronze, iron, and wood counted among the imported Greek goods, but wine and oil appear most frequently, as a great interest in these goods existed in Egypt. Natron in particular counted among the exported goods; at least, that was the only traded commodity with an export duty levied on it.<sup>51</sup>

Especially interesting for us is the question of where the king collected the taxes. Older research has mostly considered Naukratis or Memphis.<sup>52</sup> Briant and Descat, however, regarded it more probable that the duty was paid at the mouth of the Canopic branch of the Nile, that is, in the Egyptian town of Henu, called Thonis or Heracleion by the Greeks.<sup>53</sup> We already learned from Herodotus that

in the Persian period Naukratis no longer had the same importance as during the time of Amasis. In fact, it seems more likely that Heracleion-Thonis had taken over the function of trading port. Briant and Descat's proposition must, however, be confirmed by evidence as it seems doubtful that Heracleion-Thonis, as they state, had already functioned as such in the previous Saïtic era.

First, it must be said for certain that the town was called Heracleion by the Greeks because they had equated the chief god of the town, Khons, with Heracles. Often Egyptian towns received their names from the chief god venerated in the particular district, such as Heliopolis for the town of the sun god Ra or Crocodilopolis for the city of the crocodile god Sobek. The 'town of Khons', however, did not receive the name Herakleopolis, as to be expected, but the Greeks simply named it Heracleion. The place-name suffix *-eion* points to the fact that the entire community was named after the local temple of Khons-Herakles: it did not indicate a location but a temple – similar to, for example, the Serapeion of Alexandria or the Asclepieion of Kos. Thus, the Greek name of the Egyptian temple became the name of a town. Perhaps for this reason, the Greeks had two names for the town on the Canopic branch of the Nile: not only Heracleion but also Thonis. The place-name Thonis is in turn, as Yoyotte demonstrated,<sup>54</sup> the hellenised form for the Egyptian place-name *Henu*, which normally received the article *Ta* and was thus pronounced Thonis. By the time of Strabo, however, the knowledge that Thonis and Heracleion were one and the same town had been lost, for he wrote in his description of the Canopic branch of the Nile: 'In ancient times, it is said, there was also a city called Thonis here', and then a bit later mentions 'after Canobus one comes to the Heracleion, which contains a temple of Heracles'.<sup>55</sup> The Egyptian place-name was thus no longer in use.

Herodotus may also indirectly provide evidence for us that Heracleion-Thonis was already of special significance. He reports that the guardian of the Canopic Nile branch near the Heracles temple, evidently the Heracleion, was called Thonis in ancient times.<sup>56</sup> With this statement, he gives us an aetiology for the Greek pronunciation of the Egyptian place-name Thonis. Herodotus thereby provides not only an explanation for the Egyptian place-name but also for the protective function of the entrance port to Egypt. It is therefore probable that as early as Herodotus' time (the mid-fifth century BC), Greek ships had to pay their taxes at the Canopic mouth of the Nile. This is now verified by the archaeological finds in the harbour of Heracleion-Thonis: the main finds of imported goods in Heracleion-Thonis date from the fifth century BC onwards.<sup>57</sup>

For the Persian era in Egypt, Descat and Briant's assumption that Heracleion-Thonis in fact was the portal to Egypt for the Greeks and had replaced Naukratis as the duty station is completely plausible. This explains as well why Diodorus cites Heracleion as Egypt's *ancient* trading

port.<sup>58</sup> Two essential developments occurred during the Persian occupation with regard to the economic contacts between Greeks and Egyptians. Firstly, it is probable that Naukratis soon lost the trade monopoly awarded first by Amasis and ceded the customs port function to Heracleion-Thonis. Secondly, it can be determined that, in contrast to the time of Amasis and also to the following period of the 30th Dynasty, Greek traders were able to trade freely in Egypt after they had paid the duty fees.

## 5. The last 60 Years of Egyptian independence (404–343 BC)

After the Egyptians had lifted the yoke of Persian domination, a period began which brought basic changes in Pharaonic economic policy, despite the renewed imitation of ancient Pharaonic traditions. A decisive factor was now added: for the first time in Egyptian history, foreign trade achieved extraordinary significance based on the fact that the indigenous Pharaohs were constantly at war with the Persians, who wanted to re-conquer the renegade province. In order to keep the enemy superpower at bay, the state had to pay mercenaries in coins minted in silver, which was not one of the country's natural resources. Therefore grain export became increasingly important in exchange for precious metals or coins. Thereby, Egypt became one of the main grain suppliers of the Greek world in the fifth century BC.<sup>59</sup>

After free trade was established under the Persian domination, the native Pharaohs sought to place trade with Greece and Ionia once again under their control. Naukratis regained importance, but now no longer as the customs port; this position continued to be held by Heracleion-Thonis, a site that now appears for the first time also in Egyptian documents. The most important evidence for the two towns is the so-called Naukratis stela, named after the settlement, where the first example of this text was discovered in 1899. A few years ago, an almost identical stela was discovered during the underwater excavations conducted by Franck Goddio on the Egyptian coast near Aboukir. Both commemorative stelae are of the same material, have the same dimensions, the same gabled top and the same inscription. Only in columns 13 and 14 do the texts differ with regard to the place where each stela was erected.<sup>60</sup> The stela found in Naukratis ends with the following statement: 'Let these things be recorded on this stela, placed in Naukratis on the bank of the Anu'. The parallel found in Heracleion-Thonis reads instead: 'Let these things be recorded on this stela, placed at the mouth of the sea of the Greeks in the city that is named Thonis from Saïs'.<sup>61</sup>

Along with an excessive eulogy to Nektanebo I, the text of the stela contains a customs regulation by the

Pharaoh issued in 380 BC, the first year of his reign. From this inscription, we receive interesting information about trade relations between Greeks and Egyptians. The most important part of the inscription, with information on customs revenues, reads:

*Let there be given one in 10 (of) gold, of silver, of timber, of worked wood, of everything coming out of the sea of the Greeks, of all the goods (or: being all the goods) that are reckoned to the king's domain in the town called Henu; and one in 10 (of) gold, of silver, of all the things that come into being in Pi-emroye, called <Nau>cratis, on the bank of Anu, that are reckoned to the king's domain, to be a divine offering for my mother Neith for all time.<sup>62</sup>*

We learn from this decree that Nektanebo I levied duty on all Greek wares that landed in Egypt and that the customs revenues were to be paid to the sanctuary of the goddess Neith in Saïs. It is disputed what exactly the 'one in 10' means. It could be that a tenth was to be paid as tax on the goods, but it seems more probable that a tenth of the state tax revenues were earmarked for the temple of Neith.<sup>63</sup> The following is significant for our discussion: on the one hand, taxes were levied on *imported goods* 'that are reckoned in the royal domain in Henu' and, on the other hand, on *locally made goods* which were made in Naukratis and 'that are reckoned to the royal domain'. That means that the import tax was levied in Heracleion-Thonis and not in Naukratis, as at the time of Amasis. Obviously, at the latest, by the time of Nektanebo, Heracleion-Thonis had replaced Naukratis as the port of trade. It is also very likely that Nektanebo continued the customs policy of the Persian authorities. In any event, Heracleion-Thonis was granted the key role for Greek trade with Egypt.

On the other hand, we learn that duty was levied in Naukratis on products made by Greeks in Egypt. Thus, there must have been something like a special Greek craft in Egypt.<sup>64</sup> The inscription of the stela would indicate a change in function of the town located in the western Delta to one of a production centre. The skilled production was surely conducted by those Greeks who, according to Herodotus, had settled in Naukratis. In addition, archaeological research has also been able to confirm local production by skilled Greek craftsmen.<sup>65</sup> It is difficult, however, to ascertain which goods the Greeks produced for the Egyptian or overseas markets.

To sum up, for the rule of the last native Pharaohs it can be determined that their independence from the Persians was surely dependent to some extent on foreign trade with the Greek world. In order to garner as much profit as possible from Greek trade, strict controls situated in the port of Heracleion-Thonis were indispensable. At the same time, a separate

Greek skilled craftsmanship developed in Naukratis on which the Egyptians also levied taxes.

## 6. Egypt as satrapy of Alexander the Great's empire (332–306 BC)

In 342 BC, Egypt was re-conquered by the Persians, who were only able to sustain their domination for ten years before Alexander the Great ultimately defeated their empire and took the position as successor to the Persian king. As a satrapy of a great empire, the administration and economy of Egypt did not essentially change, although Alexander did separate military and civilian powers.<sup>66</sup> The most decisive economic policy, the effect of which Alexander probably could not have foreseen, was the founding of Alexandria in the western Nile Delta. As a part of Alexander's Empire the Egyptian administration continued under the auspices of two satraps: initially, during Alexander's lifetime, under Kleomenes, a Greek born in Egypt; and, after the death of Alexander, his former general Ptolemy, who made the country the centre of his own kingdom in 306 BC.

### *The satrap Kleomenes of Naukratis*

Kleomenes was born in Naukratis, a town probably given the status of a *polis* under Alexander the Great.<sup>67</sup> Originally Kleomenes was only responsible for the tax revenues of the province but then rose quickly to become satrap of the country. Already known for financial policies deemed 'unscrupulous' even in antiquity, he acquired a decidedly bad reputation with Greeks as well as with Egyptians.<sup>68</sup> For example, he organised the grain trade as an export monopoly, thus being possibly responsible for the famine suffered by Greek cities in the years 330–315 BC. This demonstrates the 'international' importance of Egypt's foreign trade for feeding the *oikumene* and documents the impact of grain as an Egyptian export.

## 7. The satrap Ptolemy

When Ptolemy took possession of Egypt following the death of Alexander, one of his first actions was to remove his possible rival Kleomenes. Ptolemy's administration of the country – *de iure* as satrap, *de facto* as absolute autocrat – thoroughly altered social and economic conditions in Egypt. Under Ptolemy's authority, at the latest, many different people, Greeks, Macedonians, Thracians, Cilicians and numerous other foreigners, moved into the country – especially as military settlers – to begin a new life. We can now see the starting point of the development of the multi-cultural society of Greco-Roman Egypt with all of its consequences.

Of special economic and domestic interest for the early period of Ptolemy's rule is the so-called satrap stela, built into a Cairo mosque and found in 1870. Originally, the

stela had been placed in the ancient royal town of Buto on the Sebennytic branch of the Nile. Like the Naukratis stela, it was a dedication. It dates from 311 BC when the satrap endowed the temple of Buto with enormous estates in the countryside beyond Alexandria to secure the support of the native priesthood. Together with this noteworthy domestic measure by the satrap, a bit of incidental information is of interest for the present discussion. The introduction to the text reads: 'He established as his residence the city named 'the castle of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt (Beloved of Amun, Chosen by Ra)', the son of Ra (Alexandros)]' on the bank of the Great Green (= the Mediterranean) of the Greeks, whose former name was Rhakotis'.

In short, this means that Ptolemy had moved his former place of residence from Memphis to Alexandria. Thus, the fate of Heracleion-Thonis as an important Egyptian port of entry and customs centre was sealed, for Alexandria was located only 29 km away. The relocation of the royal residence, the establishment of which created a cultural and political shift in the whole country, later led to Alexandria's rise not only as the intellectual and cultural centre but also as the chief trading centre of the entire Hellenistic world. Strabo wrote as much as 300 years later that Alexandria 'is the largest trading port (*emporion*) in the world'.<sup>69</sup>

## 8. Conclusion

Before the discoveries at Heracleion-Thonis research had determined that 'Naukratis ... [was in the Archaic period] the – evidently only – contact point between two totally differently structured political and economic systems'.<sup>70</sup> Now, some scholars consider Heracleion-Thonis to be the central trading port of Egypt since Saïtic times.<sup>71</sup> In my opinion, both views are only half correct: close analysis of the sources has shown that the conditions in the period from the seventh to the fourth centuries BC, indeed, even in the Archaic period, cannot all be 'lumped together'. Rather the totally different regimes which Egypt experienced in those 300 years made completely different opportunities for economic contacts possible.

If, according to Diodorus, it was possible for traders to establish *emporion* everywhere in Egypt after Psammetichus I had opened up the country, conditions changed when Amasis set up strict centralisation of foreign trade in Naukratis. Even within the same dynastic period, trading conditions could change when there was a political break: for example, the change under Amasis, who was a usurper. The centralised approach established by Amasis prevailed for only one generation because of foreign policy conditions, for the Persian regime once again changed the situation. Herodotus reports that Greek traders were now permitted to move freely in Egypt. An Aramaic customs register indicates that all

incoming and departing ships probably had to pay duty in Heracleion-Thonis. Moreover, as early as this period, Naukratis had probably lost its brief function as the only contact point between Greece and Egypt. In the fifth century BC, Heracleion-Thonis, located directly on the sea, had taken over this position.

The complete loss of the foreign trade function for Naukratis was confirmed 100 years later by the Naukratis stela from the period of the last native rulers in the fourth century BC. It establishes that Heracleion-Thonis had now become the port for foreign trade in Egypt. However, this does not mean that Naukratis had lost all significance; rather it had become a place of skilled Greek craftsmanship in Egypt. The special status of the town can be seen primarily from the perspective of the Ptolemaic era, in which it received the constitution of a Greek *polis*, the only such town besides the two newly founded cities of Alexandria and Ptolemais.

There are two reasons why Heracleion-Thonis has played a rather insignificant role in previous research. The first is the perception of the town in the Hellenistic period, in which Heracleion-Thonis had to relinquish its function as a customs port to Alexandria. But, more important is the fact that Heracleion-Thonis today – unlike Naukratis – is completely submerged underwater. Not until the investigations by Franck Goddio and his team, with their spectacular finds, did it become evident that we should consider Heracleion-Thonis as an important place of pre-Hellenistic Greek presence in Egypt. The finds also imply that the town probably reached its zenith during the early Ptolemaic dynasty.

The question arises as to what extent Greeks influenced Egyptian trade; here as well, one must distinguish between the different regimes. Trade, principally with Greeks, enabled Psammetichus, at least according to Diodorus, to establish power over all Egypt. Probably as a sign of appreciation, the new Pharaoh permitted the Greeks to trade freely in Egypt. His successor Amasis found the uncontrolled exchange of goods unprofitable; he therefore centralised trade, primarily to collect the resulting duties.

Between the first and second Persian regimes, the Greeks again assumed an important role in the Egyptian economy, because Greek mercenaries had to be paid in silver coins, which in turn were bought with the sale of grain. As Egypt was dependent on foreign trade for its defence budget, it was forced to relinquish its self-sufficient economic system. At the same time, this led to the country's rise as a trading power in the Mediterranean. Ultimately, however, Greeks and Macedonians influenced the country's economic system when they became rulers of Egypt. Kleomenes' regime demonstrated that the ancient world was now dependent on Egyptian grain; that grain trade later created the wealth of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

## Notes

1. Pritchett 1993.
2. Most recently Höckmann and Vittmann 2005.
3. Vittmann 2003, 198; Haider 1996, 98–100.
4. Haider 1996, 104; Vittmann 2003, 223; for a different opinion, cf. Grimm 1999, 17.
5. von Premerstein 1939, 6–7 col. II, 16–23 with new readings of Musurillo 1961 = *P. Giss. Lit.* 4.7.
6. Diodorus, I. 66. 8.
7. cf. also Herodotus, II.152, who in contrast to Diodorus says that the Greeks came as pirates. For this period cf. Haider 1996, 95–96; Vittmann 2003, 33–35. Most recently Vittmann 2003, 203–206, on the cubic statue found in Denizli, Turkey, of an Ionian who, according to the Greek inscription, had been given a city by King Psammetichus; also Höckmann and Vittmann 2005, 100.
8. Assmann 2000, 14–17.
9. Herodotus, II.154: 'towards the sea a little below the city of Bubastis, on that which is called the Pelusian mouth of the Nile'; Diodorus, I.67.1: 'little up the Pelusica Mouth of the Nile'. The plural is used because the encampments were on both sides of the Nile; one for the Greeks and one for the Carians.
10. Carrez-Maratray 2000, 163, citing Worp 1991.
11. Strabo, XVII.1.18.
12. cf. Möller 2001, 14–15.
13. cf. Vittmann 2003, 206. Carrez-Maratray 2000, 160 is sceptical about Greek mercenaries in Egypt in the seventh century BC: 'Aucune trace de ces premiers mercenaires n'a jamais été retrouvée par l'archéologie'.
14. Diodorus, I.67.9–10.
15. cf. also Strabo, XVII.1.6; Diodorus, I.67.10; Haider 1996, 95 note 179.
16. Vittmann 2003, 214.
17. Herodotus, IV.152.
18. Boardman 1980, 114. Vittmann 2003, 209–210, views Kolaïos as an adventurer than as a professional trader; even Möller 2001, 32 considers him a pirate – neither, however, present reasons for these views.
19. With regard to dating ceramics, Bowden 1996, 28 warns: 'a lowering of the chronology of Greek pottery ... should not be ruled out altogether'.
20. Boardman 1980, 121.
21. Vittmann 2003, 214.
22. Herodotus, II.178–179.
23. Vittmann 2003, 214.
24. cf. Schlotzhauer 2006.
25. Möller 2001; Bresson 1980, 291–299.
26. Goddio and Clauss 2006, 289.
27. Goddio and Clauss 2006, 333–334.
28. Goddio and Clauss 2006, 312, citing J. Yoyotte. For this title and his functions cf. Posener 1947, 118–127, who also, with reference to the Naukratis stela, thinks that the overseer had his job in Heracleion-Thonis (126–127).
29. Vittmann 2003, 220; Tresson 1931, 132, the first translator of this title, translated 'gouverneur des portes d'entrée (d'Égypte) par terre et par mer', although there is no conjunction between the foreign land and the Mediterranean, and for this reason, the later editors translated the title as above. I think, however, that Tresson's reading is still possible, as another Saïtic functionary has only the title 'overseer of the foreign lands'; cf. Gauthier 1922, 87.
30. Herodotus, II.179; cf. Carrez-Maratray 2000, 161.
31. Möller 2001, 12.
32. Möller 2001, 12; Möller 2000, 26–32, describes the Egyptian economic system of the Saïtic period as redistributive like the system in previous periods but does not give any contemporary documentation.
33. Strabo, XVII.1.18. In the first line, this could be Psammetichus I (664–610 BC) or Psammetichus II (595–589 BC), cf. Möller 2001, 13–14. For Inaros: cf. Drijvers 1999, 17–18; Drijvers 1999, 18 note 7, surmises that the older translation in the Loeb Classical Library, 'they sailed up into the Saitic Nome, defeated the city Inaros in a naval fight and founded Naukratis' (Bowden 1996, 25, offers the same translation) is 'definitely wrong', but without any explanation; cf. also Möller 2000, 186. Yet, with no explanation as to why that translation is incorrect, it cannot be ruled out that the name of the city was Inaros.
34. Herodotus, VII.7; Thucydides, I.104.
35. Drijvers 1999, 18; Möller 2001, 16.
36. Drijvers 1999, 21.
37. cf. Herodotus, II.161.
38. Herodotus, II.163 and 169.
39. Herodotus, II.163.
40. Möller 2000, 37 and 192, citing Cook 1937, 232; Murray 1993, 234f. All ascribe a nationalistic stance to Amasis because he allegedly exploited anti-Greek feelings among the populace for his *coup d'état* against Apries. This is not a compelling argument, for how could Amasis have explained afterwards to his supporters that he had become a philhellene, had had his children taught by a Greek, and had made Greeks his bodyguards? He based his power on the Greeks. Instead, it seems that Greek soldiers played more of a negligible role in the entire conflict, one which Herodotus, himself a Greek, simply overstated.
41. Haider 2001, 198–199, is of a different opinion; he assumes that the Milesians had fought 'against a certain Inaros' as late as the time of Psammetichus.
42. Möller 2001, 17–20, with corresponding sources.
43. Herodotus, III.139.
44. cf. most recently Vittmann 2003, 225–226 for convincing arguments on the question of Herodotus having seen Egypt himself.



## 2: Remarks on the Presence and Trade Activities of Greeks in the North-West Delta

45. Herodotus mentions markets several times: II.35; 39; 138; 141; 146.
46. Herodotus, II.179.
47. cf. Briant and Descat 1998, 93; Carrez-Maratray 2000, 161.
48. Briant and Descat 1998, 59–104.
49. Briant and Descat 1998, 73–81, 86.
50. Porten and Yardeni 1993, No. C3.7, 2, 1.
51. Briant and Descat 1998, 80.
52. Bresciani 1995, 107.
53. Briant and Descat 1998, 91–92.
54. Yoyotte 1958, 428.
55. Strabo, XVII.1.16–17.
56. Herodotus, II.113. The connection of the place-name Thonis with a mythical person can also be found in slightly varied form in Strabo – in his work, however, the guard has become an Egyptian king (XVII.1.16).
57. Goddio and Clauss 2006, 98.
58. Diodorus, I.19.4.
59. Boardman 1980, 141. For the coins of pre-Hellenistic times in Egypt: Nicolet-Pierre 2005. cf. Roebuck 1950, 236–247 on trade relations between Greece and Egypt during this period; see also Möller 2000, 208–210.
60. de Meulenaere 2003, 428.
61. de Meulenaere 2003, 430 note 14; Yoyotte 2006.
62. Lichtheim 1976, 139–146, 140.
63. Lichtheim 1976, 141–142; cf. Vittmann 2003, 218–219.
64. Briant and Descat 1998, 89, with reference to Bresson 1980.
65. cf. the symposium publication Höckmann and Kreikenboom 2001.
66. cf. Arrian, *Anabasis* III.5; Burstein 1995, 48.
67. Scholl 1997.
68. cf. Arrian, *Anabasis* VII. 23. 8.
69. Strabo, XVII.798 § 13; cf. Fraser 1972, 132–188.
70. Höckmann and Kreikenboom 2001, VI.
71. Goddio and Clauss 2006; see arguments under section 2, above.

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