

The Discovery of Naukratis

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THE DISCOVERY OF NAUKRATIS.

[The Honorary Secretaries of the Egypt Exploration have handed us for publication the following summary, drawn up by Mr. Petrie, of the results of his year's excavation at Nebireh. It may serve as an acknowledgment by the Committee of the Fund of the aid already received from the Society of Hellenic Studies; and as an invitation to further co-operation in the future.—ED.]

THE season which is now drawing to a close has been one of great interest in the work here, though of an interest which would scarcely be expected, since not Egyptian but Greek antiquities claim our attention.

We have here a city founded in the seventh century B.C., or earlier, and inhabited almost entirely by Greeks from its first settlement. Among its public buildings were a temple of Apollo with temenos, dating from the earliest period; a temple of Aphrodite, also existing from archaic times; a temple of Athene; a temple of Zeus; a *palaistra*; and a great enclosure containing two remarkable blocks of buildings.

Before going further we may point out that no city historically known can accord with the remains found here—the temples, the abundance of archaic pottery, the archaic coins, and the number of Greek inscriptions—excepting Naukratis; and it is here that a decree of the city of Naukratis is found. It is true that Naukratis has been hitherto fruitlessly sought near Desuk, on the strength of a passage of Herodotus; but there exists a far more definite authority, the Peutingerian table, which gives the positions and distances of towns; on that *Naukrati* is written on a road leading to the Libyan desert, running to the west of the river, and the distance given falls

within two or three miles of this place. If any student, however, should refuse to accept this site as Naukratis, it would then be a still more interesting place to him, as it would be a parallel site to Naukratis, an important town, settled by the Greeks in their archaic age, flourishing down to Byzantine times, and yet unknown in history.

The site is about half a mile long. In the north end of the town stood the temenos and temple of Apollo; here we found fragments of nearly a hundred bowls of an early period, incised with dedicatory inscriptions to Apollo. Of the first temple a few fragments of limestone columns, encircled with an early form of the 'honeysuckle' pattern have been found; on these the pattern has hardly developed out of the lotus, from which it can be traced in every stage on the archaic pottery. The first temple was destroyed, very probably during the Persian invasions, and was succeeded by a temple of white marble, of which some fragments of capitals and mouldings remain, richly painted in red and blue. South of the temenos lay the *agora* apparently, or possibly the *palaistra*, a large area without ruins, and bounded by thick walls on the three other sides. South of this the town extended for a considerable distance; close small streets, seven or eight feet wide, running through the mass of crude brick buildings, and now traceable by the shells and bones thrown out from the houses, and the streaks of stone dust used for filling up the puddles.

The potters' quarter was on the east of the *agora*, shewn by the kilns and the heaps of burnt earth. In the body of the town, south of the potters, was the quarter of the iron-smelters; here hæmatite ore, iron slag, and quantities of chisels and tools have been found of about the sixth century, B.C. On the western side of the town was the scarab factory, containing hundreds of moulds, where glazed pottery scarabs were made for export—very probably the source of many of the scarabs found in early Greek graves. That these could not be for sale to Egyptians is proved by the inscriptions being all more or less blundered; and their age is shewn by the names of Psamtik I. and II. being found, but none of the far more celebrated Aahmes (Amasis), who granted such privileges to Naukratis; this is much as if coins of Aurelian and Carinus occurred in a find, but not one of Constantine, and we cannot attribute this factory to a later date than 590 B.C. The town is,

however, older than this, as there is a burnt stratum underlying all the southern half of the town, at two to three feet below the scarab level; probably this shews the burning of a first settlement of wattle and daub shanties of the Greek traders, in the Assyrian or Ethiopian conquests. The temple of Aphrodite was in the south-western part of the town, as a piece of a dedicated bowl of 'Phœnician-Greek' ware was found there.

The area of the town has been dug out by the natives for nitrous earth until only the bottoms of the oldest houses remain in the greater part of it; and heaped around these mouldering walls are banks of broken pottery, including a great variety of archaic types. The so-called Phœnician-Greek is found in every variety, and passing by imperceptible stages into the ordinary Greek pottery; the egg-shell pottery painted white with orange patterns is also largely found; the geometrical patterns in red and brown are very common; and many other varieties occur which require to be compared with collections from other sites. Besides the early pottery two important classes of objects are found in the town—the weights, and the stamped amphora handles. No town in Egypt would be likely to be so rich in weights as Naukratis, a great centre of foreign trade; and no mound in Egypt has actually furnished a quarter of the number of weights that I have obtained here in only a few months. Over four hundred have been collected in this short time—a greater number than those from Egypt in all existing collections taken together. The stamped handles are also a class which will need careful study and classifying; over a thousand have been collected.

Beyond the town on the south is a great enclosure, 600 feet square, the wall fifty feet thick, and over thirty feet high. About half of the western side of this enclosure was formed by a mass of building; but it is probable that this was inserted at a later date, and that the enclosure is older. The building was founded by Ptolemy II., as under each corner of its foundations I discovered the founder's deposits of model tools and materials, together with his name—a unique group of objects of great interest in all ways. At the entrance to this building, which led into the whole enclosure, was a pylon, where two broken rams in white marble have been discovered, and a dedicatory inscription to the Theban Zeus, shewing that probably a temple of

Zeus was included in this building. Within this enclosure the greater part of the ground was open and unused, but there existed a line of small buildings along the north side of it, and two great blocks of crude brick building in the southern part; one of these consisting of passages opening into chambers has been almost entirely destroyed; of the other, consisting of deep isolated chambers, enough remains to shew its form, about 200 feet square. These chambers have no openings or connections for twelve feet from the ground; at that level there are doorways from a central passage and its branches; and the whole mass is thirty feet high. It was far more originally, as the chambers are filled with ruins of the walls. From various details, which we need not discuss here, this building and the great enclosure seem to belong to the early age of the town; later on Ptolemy II. inserted the large stone building in the gap in the great wall, perhaps where it had been ruined, and strengthened the great block of chambers by thickening the walls, and raised the floors of the chambers with stone chips: later still, in the first century, the chambers were much filled with rubbish, and the place was inhabited at the high level of the doorways only; and at last a Coptic church seems to have existed on the top, which gave place to an Arab cemetery. What the object of this building can have been is still doubtful, even after clearing out all the chambers. It may have been for store rooms; but looking to the great strength of the wall of the enclosure, I incline to suppose that that was a great temenos—probably of the Pan-Hellenic altar—within which was a treasury and storehouses; and these were so arranged that, in case of war, the temenos would be the camp, and the treasury the fort, of the Greek garrison.

Of the temple of Athene, and the *palaistra*, the sites are not yet fixed; the one is known from an inscription to a priest of Athene, who was keeper of the records, and the other from the inscription by four Greeks dedicating it to Apollo.

As I have said, a large part of the town has been carried off down to the foundations; the edges of it still remain, and further information will doubtless be forthcoming as they are gradually cleared away. What has been lost in the last fifty years is grievous; in the temenos of Apollo two inscribed marble stelæ were found a few years ago and broken up; and while I was here some—perhaps the only—remains of the columns and capitals

of the temple were found, and smashed in a couple of hours, some even before I could photograph them. All the lesser antiquities are destroyed if not saleable, and if of value are bought by travelling dealers, and retailed without any history in Cairo. No clue to the cemetery has yet been found, so we may hope that that rich field will be properly examined when discovered.

Among various antiquities which I have obtained, I may note also a large collection of incised names or monograms of owners on the bottoms of drinking cups; a series shewing every stage of the development of the crater handles with a head of Bacchus; a number of archaic statuettes in alabaster; two finds of archaic Greek tetradrachms; some fine late Egyptian bronzes; some good jewellery work of the first century, A.D.; and a large variety of terra-cotta figures and heads.

W. M. FLINDERS PETRIE.

NEBIREH, TELL EL BARUD
May 11, 1885.