mea carmina, Sexte,
gramericanis placeant, ut sine grammaticis

(10, 21, 5–6). It is a pity that G. was not able to do his author more justice. The inexorable demands of the doctoral thesis are partly to blame, but the possibility of transcending these has been demonstrated by Henriksen’s commentary on Book 9.

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The Greeks of the Archaic period were heavily indebted to the great cultures of Egypt and the Near East. Al Mina in North Syria and Naukratis in the Egyptian Delta have in common that they were important gateways for cultural and economic exchanges. What these two important sites also share is a rather unfortunate excavation history. Both were investigated by archaeologists of renown but at a relatively early stage of archaeological research: Naukratis was excavated between 1884 and 1904 by Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie, E. A. Gardner and D. G. Hogarth, successively, and Al Mina was dug in 1936/37 by Sir Leonard Woolley. Both sites were published soon after excavation, but in a way that is tantalizingly scanty according to modern standards. Stratigraphical information was not properly recorded, hampering – inter alia – the establishment of a detailed, absolute chronology. The focus of preservation and publication was on imported Greek finewares, at the expense of other categories of finds. Material from both sites has since become dispersed over museum and university collections throughout the world, and much of it still awaits publication. All this has complicated tremendously the study of both sites, although this has not prevented later scholars from reinvestigating the excavation reports and archaeological material. 1 This applies especially to Al Mina, which has been the subject of a long-running debate centred on the nature of the site and its supposedly Greek origins. 2 In comparison to the importance attributed to Al Mina and Greek interactions with the Levant, the true significance of Naukratis and the Egyptian connection has remained somewhat underexposed. This situation, however, has now changed. One important contribution is a series of surveys and excavations of Naukratis and its environs between 1977 and 1983 by W. D. E. Coulson, A. Leonard and others. 3 Another significant contribution is A. Möller’s recent monograph – the subject of this review.

M.’s book is the translated and revised version of her doctoral thesis submitted at the Freie Universität Berlin in 1990. It focuses on Naukratis but, as the subtitle

indicates, the broader scope of the book is Greek trade during the 7th and 6th centuries BC.

In her introduction (Ch. 1), M. explicates the starting-points of her research and methodology. She wishes to direct attention to the Egyptian context of Naukratis, away from the exclusive context of Greek colonization. She firmly sides with Karl Polanyi’s inductive methods and his substantivist approach to the study of the economy in pre-industrialized societies. More in particular, she adopts Polanyi’s model of the port of trade as the guideline for her research. Polanyi built this model, as he did his other economic theories, by collecting data from different cultures and singling out the core components that are central to this institution. M. stresses that this kind of modelling has much in common with Max Weber’s ‘Idealtypus’ and can be used accordingly. What M., then, intends to do in the course of her study is to define on what points Naukratis corresponds to the ideal-type and on what points it differs from it.

In Ch. 2 she sets out how exactly the port of trade can be defined. It is essentially a neutral checkpoint, often located on the margin of a controlled territory. The controlling state provides a safe place for traders to do their business, thus allowing it to regulate prices and levy taxes. But perhaps most importantly, such a place serves as a means to separate external long-distance trade from local exchange, and to prevent foreign elements from penetrating the hinterland. The long-distance exchanges are generally in the form of administered or treaty trade. This means that the government supervises the channels along which trade proceeds, fixes the quantities of goods that are exchanged and what is required in return, and so on. Through the port of trade the ruling elite can control the income of prestige items, whereas for the foreign traders it is the only locus where they can acquire goods that are collected and redistributed by the state, such as grain, slaves and metals.

In Ch. 3, M. describes the socio-economic and political organization of Egypt under the Saite pharaohs, relying mainly on information from Herodotus’ ‘Histories’, but also on supposed analogies with better known periods, such as the Middle and New Kingdom. M. believes that Egypt of the 26th Dynasty still had a redistributive system controlled by the pharaohs, who also administered external trade by means of agents. On the one hand, Naukratis was located at some distance from their capital Sais, on the Canopic branch of the Nile, while on the other hand, it was under the direct control of the pharaohs and was firmly embedded in Egypt’s redistributive system. M. concludes that these are the preconditions that according to Polanyi’s model would be necessary to host a port of trade at Naukratis. M. suggests that the pharaohs established this port of trade to encourage gift-exchange and passive trade, since in this period they had limited possibilities to acquire goods by alternative means, such as military expeditions.

The Greek counterpart in the Greek-Egyptian relationships is dealt with in Ch. 4, which includes a detailed discussion of the significance and status of trade, traders, markets and ἱμάρχης, including an overview of the recent debate on the long-distance trade of Greek painted pottery (pp. 43–8). On the whole, M. is inclined to attribute only limited importance to market elements, such as supply-and-demand price mechanisms and professional traders practising trade on a full-time basis. Although reciprocal gift-giving remained important, she observes an increase in long-distance exchanges during the 7th and 6th centuries, which led to a certain professionalization of trade and the development of ἱμάρχης as the locus of regular exchange on an institutionalized basis. As a rare example of administered trade on the Greek side, she mentions the importing of grain by commissioned agents acting on behalf of the polis. She argues that half of the poles that Herodotus mentions to have founded sanctuaries at Naukratis were potentially interested in Egyptian grain, either because of a shortage of land or as a result of agricultural specialization.

Ch. 5, which deals with the archaeological material from Naukratis, is the book’s most substantial chapter. After describing the topography and summarizing scholarly discussions on specific aspects of the sanctuaries (layout, architectural details, chronology, etc.), M. arrives at two important conclusions: first, that Naukratis was Greek from the earliest
levels onwards (last quarter of the 7th century), and secondly, that the site comprised an accumulation of temples and temples, as well as some workshops, but no signs of contemporary public buildings or domestic quarters. This would indicate that Naukratis was not a polis but an ἀμφότερος, that is, "a purely Greek empóron, the assumption of an Egyptian quarter being based on misinterpretation" (pp. 118–9, stressed again on p. 203). M. then gives an elaborate discussion of decorated pottery and small finds from Naukratis, focusing on the origin and chronology of various regional pottery styles and inscriptions on some of these bases.

The apothecosis comes in Ch. 6, in which the archaeological and written evidence is interpreted in relation to Polanyi’s ideal-model, and Naukratis is definitively raised to the rank of port of trade. M. concludes that Herodotus was confused about attributing the establishment of Naukratis to the ἀμφότερος pharaoh Amasis. Since the earliest archaeological evidence dates to the late 7th century, it is more likely that it had been Psammetichus I who granted land to Greek mercenaries, on whom he had relied while setting himself up as a ruler. The establishment of the Hellenion just after 570 BC, however, can be connected with Amasis. M. suggests that he was responsible for the reorganization of Naukratis, which included the installation of the ἄρχοντα – officials representing the Greeks to the pharaoh – and the collection of taxes by Egyptian officials. According to Herodotus, Amasis granted Naukratis to the Greeks, to be the only ἀμφότερος in Egypt. The uniqueness of this ἀμφότερος is understood by Herodotus and by many modern scholars as one of Amasis’ favours in honour of the Greeks. However, M. points out that the identification of Naukratis as a port of trade means that we have to view its ‘raison d’être’ from an Egyptian perspective: Egypt was the controlling power that wished to restrict foreigners’ access to the country and thereby protect it from foreign influence. These restrictions probably also simplified the collection of custom duties and taxes, such as those recorded on the stele of Nektanebo I (380 BC) found at Naukratis. Naukratis served as a device of Egyptian external trade, which is why the Greeks became Egypt’s external traders. For the Greeks, on the other hand, this port of trade was their only opportunity to gain access to grain, which was centrally collected and administered by the pharaoh’s officials.

M. possesses an admirably clear style of writing and has used a highly impressive amount of literature (her ‘Selected Bibliography’ runs to sixteen pages). David Tandy’s recent book apparently appeared too late to be included in M.’s bibliography (updated till 1997); this is somewhat unfortunate, since Tandy also uses Polanyi’s economic theories but arrives at conclusions that are radically different from those of M. What is also very impressive is the quantity of archaeological finds that she discusses. Pottery specialists in particular will find Appendices 1–3 very useful. These contain a welcome first step towards a comprehensive catalogue of the published pottery from Naukratis, which currently is dispersed over 23 museum collections. In this connection we may also mention her pl. 8, which presents a very clarifying chronological chart of various Greek pottery styles represented at Naukratis.

It is clear that the author wishes from the outset to demonstrate that Naukratis was a port of trade. She discusses most of the extant literary and archaeological evidence about Naukratis – and does so in a careful and detailed manner – but the reader may start to feel a little uncomfortable when conclusions are drawn in the course of Ch. 6.

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It may be useful to quote M.'s final conclusions (p. 215) in full: «Thus, the picture emerging from the evidence shows Naukratis as an isolated emporion in the Western Nile Delta, given to the Greeks by the pharaoh, supervised by his officials, giving access to the centrally collected and redistributed grain and other prestige items, and which was populated by traders from many different Greek poleis and the community which built up to serve them. This emporion where two different economic systems and cultures met, we may confidently take as most closely resembling the ideal-type of the 'port of trade'».

These conclusions beg several questions. In the first place, one may wonder whether Naukratis was indeed an «isolated emporion», installed to protect Egypt’s otherwise closed society from economic, cultural and social interactions with the Greeks (cf. also p. 70). M. says that «Securing the Delta against intruders had a long tradition in Egypt» (p. 204), but it may reasonably be questioned whether this was still the case in the Saite period. M. is certainly right to conclude that Amasis wished to concentrate Greek activity at Naukratis (p. 187), with Hdt. 2.179, but – as she herself notes (pp. 33–7) – Greeks as well Karians had been living in various places outside Naukratis since the reign of Psammetichus I. Land was given to them in return for military services. Greeks could pursue a career in the Egyptian army (e.g. Hdt. 3.4), and a Greek could even be appointed governor of a city, as a certain Pedon recorded on an Egyptian block statue (c. 550–500) found near Priene (on p. 30 M. classifies this object as a ‘souvenir’, overlooking the inscription it carries and thus neglecting a rare piece of contemporary literary documentation). Apparently this Pedon moved back to Ionia, indicating that this was a period of great mobility, geographically as well socially. This and other evidence shows that the Egypt of the 26th Dynasty was not a closed or even segregated society. Greeks and Karians living in Egypt became increasingly assimilated. This is indicated by the gravestones of ‘Karomemphites’ from Karikon Teikhos at Memphis and from Abusir. Pedon’s inscription on a block statue is another example of the adoption of Egyptian customs. In this light we may also see artefacts that were produced at Naukratis and that testify to a blending of Greek and Egyptian elements. M. herself mentions Grand style Chian chalices adopting Egyptianizing polychromy (p. 136), figure vases and terracotta statuettes inspired by Egyptian models (146, 148), stone statuettes (154–61) and alabastra (163) – to which we may add terracotta bag-shaped situlae from Tell Defenneh (145–6) and a wooden pinax painted by one of the potters of the Caeretan hydria (137). There were even Egyptian elements in the design of some of the Greek temples at Naukratis, including the Hellenion (102, 106–7). The inhabitants of Naukratis used Egyptian objects (203 with n. 151) along with all kinds of faience items (113–4, 150–4). These things should probably not be interpreted just in terms of stylistic influences; rather, they represent a ‘Mischkultur’ that resulted from a process of integration, cultural cross-fertilization and religious syncretism.

Secondly, we may question whether it is correct to portray Naukratis as an interface where «two different economic systems and cultures met», and ask how different these economies and cultures actually were. They were at any rate highly compatible when military services were requested – services that were probably rendered partly as a fulfilment of guest-friendship obligations. Moreover, Saite pharaohs not only found peers in such powerful individuals as Polykrates the Samian tyrant, with whom they maintained diplomatic partnerships – but they also knew how to deal with Greek polis communities, by sending gifts to their sanctuaries (p. 30 n. 33, pp. 37–8). What is more, these various forms of gift-giving could even involve bulk goods, such as alum or grain, the quantities of which

2 For other examples, see Hdt. 2.154; L. H. Jeffery, The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece, Oxford 1990, 355, 318 (53).
4 Relationships with cities and countries closer to Egypt were often less amicable: in contrast to what M. believes (p. 31), almost all Saite pharaohs organized military expediions abroad (Hdt. 2.158, 159, 161, 182).
were carefully recorded (Hdt. II. 180; Plut., ‘Life of Perikles’ 37). In short, although there was no centralized, redistributive economy in Archaic Greece, economic and cultural exchanges with pharaonic Egypt were possible; moreover, the intermediation of Naukratis was not a prerequisite for these exchanges.

M. hypothesizes that Naukratis was important for the Egyptians to collect taxes and for the Greeks to purchase grain. However, Nektanebo’s stele – to which M. refers in support of this hypothesis – in fact states that taxes on Greek imports were paid not at Naukratis (Pamariti or Kratj) but in another place. In 2001 a virtually identical stele was discovered off the coast of Alexandria, thus enabling us to identify this place more securely as Honē (Thonis/Herakleion), on the Canopic branch of the Nile ‘at the entrance of the Sea of the Greeks’. The items that were imported into Egypt included gold, silver, timber, worked wood and ‘everything coming from the Sea of the Greeks’.

The Elephantine palimpsest that recounts duties collected from Ionian ships at an unnamed port in 475 BC (only briefly mentioned by M. on p. 31 n. 44, and pp. 213–4) further lists wine, oil and empty jars (cf. Hdt. 3–7), while it appears that Phoenician ships carried wine, wood, copper, iron, wool and clay. Outgoing Ionian ships exported natron, but no grain is mentioned. Grain was imported by some Greek states, but only later during the Classical period and always ad hoc, in response to a particular emergency.

As for the suggestion that Naukratis was basically a non-residential site, as M. stresses throughout Chs. 5 and 6, we may be brief. As a number of scholars have discussed – and quite convincingly, in my view – a clear distinction is made by Herodotus between the ἐπιτήρησις of Greek visitors – ‘who were going to sea and did not want to live there’ – and the polis of Naukratis, where Greek residents had settled permanently (the term polis is probably used here rather loosely, that is, not in its constitutional sense). In contrast to what M. believes (pp. 197, 202), it is possible to make a spatial distinction between sanctuaries belonging to Greek traders in the northern section of the site and those belonging to Greek residents in the south. Although the latter sanctuaries are not discussed in detail by Herodotus, one of them seems to be the sanctuary of Aphrodite – the oldest τήμνος at Naukratis – situated in what was the oldest part of the site (cf. 118). The fact that an Archaic residential quarter has not been detected is not surprising, considering the site’s excavation history (92–4).

We may dwell somewhat longer upon the background of the inhabitants of Naukratis, also since this relates directly to the interpretation of the nature of the site. According to M., the inhabitants consisted of ‘traders … and the community which built up to serve them’, that is, <етатрат and craftsmen to keep [the] infrastructure alive> (215; also 197–9). To start with ἐτατρητικοί, it is important to stress that these should not be confused with πόλις. The latter were down-market prostitutes, while ἐτατρητικοί were high-status courtesans. As both J. Davidson and L. Kurke point out, each category represented a different economy: whereas πόλις belonged to the mundane world of commodity trade and monetary transactions, ἐτατρητικοί circulated in elite circles and their favours were typically associated with the discourse of gift-giving and guest-friendship. The domain of the ἐτατρητικοί

was not the street or the whorehouse, but the dining room, where food, wine and perfumes were consumed, games were played, and music and lyric poetry were performed. All this presupposes that there was an infrastructure at Naukratis beyond that of a simple trading place. The range and scale of this side of Naukratis can hardly be overestimated. The courtesans of Naukratis, such as Archidike and Rhodopis/Doricha, were said to be wealthier and more charming than any other, and their fame was sung in poetry all over Hellas (Hdt. 2.134–5; Strabo 27.1.53, with Sappho fr. 15 [Voigt]; Athen. 13.396b–d). Here, symptic fashions were set, such as wearing the so-called Naukratite garland, which became ‚en vogue‘ also elsewhere in the Greek world (Anakreon fr. 434 [Page], with Athen. 15.675f–676c).

Not everybody who visited Naukratis was a merchant or there to carry on mercantile business. Sappho’s brother Charaxos had plunged into the frivolous world of Naukratis, since our sources mention him in connection with Rhodopis/Doricha. He must have been a large landowner and M. identifies him justifiably as a traveller and adventurer rather than a trader (pp. 55, 56). If we turn to inscriptions on Greek pottery found at Naukratis, we find the signatures of Rhoikos – possibly the Samian architect – and Phanes, perhaps the general of the Greeks under Cambyses (175–9, with 56–7, 97, 142 etc.). Also Solon sojourned ‚on the banks of the Nile, near the Canobic shore‘ (Solon fr. 28 [West]). «Being a lover of wisdom and not an admirer of wealth», he travelled the world in search of ‘experience‘ and ‘learning‘ (Plut., ‘Life of Solon‘ 2.1–2, 26.1; cf. Hdt. 2.177) and, we may assume, foreign guest-friends (cf. Solon fr. 21 [West]). Thales, Hippokrates the mathematician and, much later, Plato also went to Egypt, the last-mentioned selling olive oil to finance his journey (Plut., ‘Life of Solon‘ 2.4). Indeed, many ‘Greeks visited Egypt out of curiosity‘ (Hdt. 3.139).

The kind of environment that Naukratis fostered means that the site should not be regarded simply as a centre of trade, industry and production, but also as an important place of consumption. M. makes the sharp observation that the Greek decorated vases which reached Naukratis were hardly distributed into the Egyptian hinterland (pp. 205–7; also 45, 54, 213). However, she does not put sufficient emphasis on the consequence of this observation, which is that the masses of Greek finewares (an estimated 150,000 fragments were found during the first two excavation campaigns alone, p. 89 n. 2) must have been consumed at Naukratis. In other words, Greek painted pottery was mainly brought to Egypt and was even produced there – think of the above Grand style Chian chalices, the most exquisite of their kind (132–3, 136–8) – to be used by the Greeks themselves (M.’s own conclusion [207] is somewhat surprising in this respect: “… the overwhelming concentration of the finds in Naukratis means that it should be regarded as the site of trading activities between Greeks and Egyptians”). The large majority of these vases are drinking vessels, suggesting that they were used for making dedications and libations as well as for ritualized feasting in a religious setting, but presumably also in more mundane contexts. From this it follows almost naturally that Naukratis was also an important consumer site of large quantities of imported wine. In short, Naukratis was not simply a whore-infested trading post, but rather the hang-out of the Archaic Greek rich and famous. In more than one respect, Egypt was also a source of what Mary Helms aptly calls «esoteric knowledge».

Far from home, in what must have been a rich and exotic environment, members of the Greek elite celebrated their exotic life-

style, sages found access to sources of age-old wisdom, and the Greeks altogether celebrated their new-found common Hellenic identity.1

Summing up, it seems that in her conclusions M. has become absorbed in identifying correspondences with Polanyi’s ideal-type, losing sight of the points on which Naukratis differs from it. What remains underexposed in her study is especially the social and cultural side of travel and exchange, which can serve as a means to acquire cultural capital. Ironically enough, the application of more recent concepts and models may show Naukratis to have been much more embedded in the social, political and cultural conditions and values of its time, and Archaic Greek trade to have been more primitive in nature than M. allows them to be in her book.

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