Naukratis: Greeks in Egypt

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Inscriptions on Greek vases

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This chapter on vase inscriptions concerns inscriptions painted on pots as part of the decoration. It excludes the pre-firing dedicatory or owner’s inscriptions, in our case those on Chian and rarely other pottery, as well as similar inscriptions incised on vases, which are all discussed in the chapter on Ceramic inscriptions in the present catalogue; however, some fragmentary texts on Chian vases are not so readily allocated; see ‘Ceramic inscriptions’, note 1. Assured vase inscriptions from Naukratis number some 84; they fall almost entirely into three unequal groups: Corinthian kraters, Panathenaic amphorae and Attic cups or kantharoi of c. 570 to 470 BC (one later). A small residue consists of larger Attic pots, open and closed. The material is mostly published in Beazley and Payne 1929 and Payne 1931, and much is included in the Beazley Archive Database (http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/pottery/).

**Corinthian kraters**

- Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1912.33c. Payne 1931, 164, no. 18, and cat. 1190; Arena 1967, 87, no. 30; Lorber 1979, 51, no. 64; Amyx 1998, 567, no. 41; Wachter 2001, 64, COR 41. Fig. 1.

The two pieces in the British Museum have been treated recently in Johnston 2014b (the first also in the chapter on Ceramic inscriptions, 13.1). They are of interest in respectively combining painted (dipinto) and incised (graffito) labels in a komos scene – a procession of drunk revellers – and offering a glimpse of a new version of the mythical episode of the embassy of the Greek envoys to Troy, described in Homer’s *Iliad* (3.205–24) and most fully exemplified in the ex-Astarita Corinthian krater in the Vatican (most recently, Iozzo 2012, 27–40). Another unusual scene will have been on the krater in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1912.33c, preserved only as a small fragment with the name of the mythological character Φοινεύς (W)oineu[s, known best from his connection with the hunt for the boar of Kalydon.2

The two other pieces in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, have inscriptions that are regrettably too fragmentary to provide secure readings: ]μια or ]νια as a label for one of a trio of females on the handle-plate GR 31.1899, and ]οv as the ending of the name of a rider (wholly lost) on GR 30.1899.

**Panathenaic amphorae**

There are four inscribed Panathenaic amphora fragments; very few uninscribed sherds of the shape have been identified.

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1 To be added is Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, GR 66.1894 (Cook and Woodhead 1952, no. 25) where ]ιξ could be the termination of a label in the figured scene. All photographs in this chapter, unless otherwise indicated, are © Trustees of the British Museum.

2 The piece is not listed in the entry in *LIMC* VIII (1997), 91–9.
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1896-1908-G141.45 (CVA Oxford 3, pl. 2.26), has its text retrograde and therefore should be an earlier piece, and G137.7 also is probably still Archaic (CVA Oxford 3, pl. 2.27). Kionedon lettering (i.e. letters arranged vertically in a 'column') on Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1896-1908-G141.59 (CVA Oxford 3, pl. 2.29) indicates a later 4th century BC date; the letter following A is not a theta, as would appear in the basic formula; presumably it is rho (ῥο[ποντος ...), as suggested by Immerwahr 2009, no. 5870.

One can add the previously unpublished fragment Rijksmuseum, Leiden, N36 [non vidi] (Fig. 2), seemingly of late Archaic or fifth century BC date, where AN or NA is followed and preceded by part-preserved circular letters. The sequence -AN- does not appear in the standard formula, but - NA- does, twice, near the beginning and end: 'νῦν Ἀθ- ' would fit the remains of the circular letters; its positioning on other amphorae varies with respect to the column and shield, and while normally it is a little higher, and part of the capital of the column would be seen to the left, the juxtaposition as here can be paralleled.

**Other Attic large vases**

All but the last example are black-figure; the small group consists of:

- Lebes? British Museum, 1888.0601.441 (Vase B601.13.1). Beazley and Payne 1929, no. 31; ABV 80.2; Beazley Archive Database no. 300751. Πνύσις. Fig. 3.
- Large open vase, British Museum, 1888.0601.451 (Vase B601.21). Beazley Archive Database no. 9017143. xo[-]. Fig. 4.

A broad range of mythological scenes is represented here though none is unparalleled in its period. British Museum, 1888.0601.441 and 442 offers an interesting male figure, Pelagon; Bothmer (1957, 12) noted the Amazon
Lykopsis’ presence, perhaps on the other side of the vase, in later scenes, but Pelagon otherwise appears only as one of the suitors of Hippodameia (Pipili, LIMC VII [1994], 250, without mention of our vase in the catalogue). That myth might suit a nuptial lebes; compare the Bayraklı lebes probably with the marriage of Helen and Menelaos (Izmir Arch. Mus. inv. 3332; Boardman 1958–9, 154–62; Tuna-Nörling 1995, 438–9, figs 8–11; Beazley Archive Database no. 305079), but an Amazonomachy seems less relevant; not that the winning of Hippodameia was an everyday sort of event or Menelaos’ wedding a precursor of marital bliss, as Boardman notes. Discussion of the shape of the fragments is well presented by Hirayama 2010, 43–4 with note 18.

Attic cups and kantharoi
The cups and kantharoi number 55 black-figure, one probable bilingual and 10 red-figure, with four uncertain small open black-figured vessels. The spread is fairly even over the period between c. 570 BC and the late Archaic period, and most types of texts known from such pieces are represented. While most of the larger vases mentioned above have inscriptions naming mythological or Olympian characters, they only appear on the four kantharoi in this set:

- British Museum, 1888,0601.444 (Vase B601.14). Beazley and Payne 1929, no. 14; ABV 26.29, KX painter; Beazley Addenda 8; Beazley Archive Database no. 300307. Πάτροκλος, retrograde, with koppa.
- British Museum, 1888,0601.445 (Vase B601.16). Beazley and Payne 1929, 13; Beazley Archive Database no. 300325; Brijder 1988, 110, fig. 11a. hε[ (He[rmes]).
- Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1896-1908-G137.9. CVA Oxford 2, pl. 3.11; Beazley Archive Database no. 11860. Ζεύς.
- British Museum, 1886,0401.1258 (Vase B600.50), perhaps a kantharos. Beazley and Payne 1929, 15; Beazley Archive Database no. 15168. Πρίσμος, retrograde.

None of these present any iconographic curiosity.

The remaining pieces, cups and vessels of uncertain shape, represent common types of text on Archaic cups, signatures, bon mots, kalos names and (degrees of) nonsense. One exception is a red-figured piece by the Eretria Painter, of c. 430 BC, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1896-1908-G138.14 (Hogarth et al. 1905, pl. 7.6; CVA Oxford 1, pl. 39.5; Beazley Archive Database no. 216986), naming Ioleos in Attic dialect and mixed Attic/Ionic script. Of the signatures, only two names are fully preserved, Teisias and Sondros, while Nikosthenes and Ergotimos can be restored with confidence, Glaukytes less assuredly. Two belong to either end of the spectrum – Nikosthenes being extremely common, while Teisias (Fig. 5) is unparalleled in Attica, though it is argued that he moved to Boeotia and signed many drinking vessels made there. Ergotimos’ signature ensures that -ιας and -ας (the latter appearing on the same vase as painter) must be Kleitias, as argued by Beazley and Payne (1929, 266) and confirmed by Robertson (1951, 144; also treated by Hirayama 2010, 88–101; Beazley 3

3 For a list see Kilinski 1992, 255–6; the connection is supported by the addition of Athenaios in four of the signatures. Beazley (1935, 475) first made the connection, which he termed ‘quite uncertain’; Kilinski’s ‘no evidence supports a connection’ (254, n. 5) seems unreasonable.
(1932, 192) also pointed out that a piece on which the name of Ergotimos is part preserved (British Museum, 1900.0214.4) should be the work of one of the sons of Kleitias’ co-worker, not the man himself. The discovery of Gordion cups both at the eponymous site and at Naukratis may indicate some directed trade, and the presence of a krater by Kleitias elsewhere in Egypt (seemingly in the region of Luxor: Weber 2012, 413–14, nos L2–3) underscores that possibility.

Two pieces have an assured *kalos* inscription, one with the name ...]βις (Fig. 6) otherwise unattested; 1888,0601.437 (Vase B601.9; Smith 1888, 234, no.17; Beazley and Payne 1929, 35; Beazley Archive Database no. 306475). Another name in -ις may appear on the red-figured sherd, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, GR.138.1899 (CVA Cambridge 2, pl. 27.1). The generic ὁ ταῖς καλὸς is found on Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1896-1908-G.138.3b (Hogarth et al. 1905, pl. 7.4; CVA Oxford 1, pl. 14.27; Beazley Archive Database no. 203345), a red-figured piece by Onesimos, from the same cup as the school scene piece discussed at the end of this chapter.

Bon mots are largely restricted to χαρε καὶ πίε εὖ (‘cheers and drink well’), or rather parts thereof, and references to the cups themselves on two fragments from the same lip-cup, 1888,0601.435 and 438 (Fig. 7), with ποτερί[ον] and probably κύλικα, e.g. ‘I am a fine jar; buy this cup’ (Robertson 1951, 149). Nonsense texts vary from short snatches that could possibly be parts of ‘proper’ texts to rows of painted blobs of varying shape; of the 13 or 14, some are previously unpublished: British Museum, 1886,0401.1059 and four pieces in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

The most intriguing of the whole set is Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1896-1908-G.1000, a lip-cup fragment with part of an octopus and to its left ΠΟΛΥΠΟΣ (polypos), i.e., ‘octopus’ (Fig. 8). The piece was discussed by Beazley 1950, 311 no. 4, fig. 1, suggesting the reading of [Po]lypos and assuming that the inscription, for symmetry, must have continued to the right of the octopus, possibly with καλὸς or ἐποίεσε i.e. either a _kalos_ name or a potter’s signature. His later inclusion of a potter’s name ‘Polypos’ in ABV, 170 (followed by Immerwahr 2009, no. 5849) is perhaps excessive.

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*Four fragments surely or probably from lip-cups, AN1896-1908-G.1055, AN1912.37(d) and AN1912.37(21) and a skyphos, AN1912.37(1). I do not include examples where the ‘lettering’ is mere dots, e.g. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum AN1912.37(25) (Bothmer 1957, 64 no. 269) and 1888,0601.593c (Vase B601.32), Beazley Archive Database no. 9017144.*
though it is included, as the only example of the name, in the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* (vol. II, s.v.).

Nine of twelve red-figure kylix sherds with inscriptions are far too fragmentary for analysis (none has more than three letters preserved), though it is probable that two are part of *kalos* names. Of the rest, those with *loleos* and *ho pais kalos* are noted above; belonging to the same cup as the latter is another noteworthy piece (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1896-1908-G138.3a (Edgar 1898–9, 64–5, fig. 3; Hogarth *et al.* 1905, p. 6.5; Beazley 1948, 338; Beazley Archive Database no. 203345), with a school scene including a papyrus roll on which are written, stoichedon and boustrophedon, the words στεσιχόρον ὕμνον ὄγοισαι, (the Muses?) bringing in the (e.g. pleasure) of dance-setting songs.