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## Naukratis: Greeks in Egypt

Alexandra Villing, Marianne Bergeron,  
Giorgos Bourogiannis, Alan Johnston,  
François Leclère, Aurélia Masson and  
Ross Thomas

With Daniel von Recklinghausen, Jeffrey Spencer,  
Valerie Smallwood, Virginia Webb and  
Susan Woodford

<http://www.britishmuseum.org/naukratis>

## Stone and terracotta figures – an introduction

Ross Iain Thomas



# 1. The figurines from Naukratis



Figure 1 Limestone figure of man wearing long dress, tasselled mantle and conical cap with cheek-guards, c. 620–575 BC. Petrie Museum, London, UC16472. Photograph © Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, UCL. Photographer François Leclère, British Museum

The stone and terracotta figurines from Naukratis are a large and varied group of finds, although they remain poorly understood.<sup>1</sup> Comprising nearly 1,800 terracotta figures, figure vessels, models and coffin-fittings as well as over 400 stone figures, they cover all periods of the site's history across the Saite, Achaemenid, Ptolemaic and Roman periods. This is the first attempt to assess and examine, in the vast majority of cases first hand, all the figures from Naukratis. This chapter provides a general introduction and summary of the patterns present within this large and diverse assemblage, discussed in more detail in individual chapters on [Late Period Egyptian figures](#), [Cypriot terracotta and stone figures](#), [Greek figures](#) and [Ptolemaic and Roman figures, models and coffin-fittings](#).

The figures from Naukratis comprise both locally made and imported examples from the Eastern Mediterranean, notably East Greece, Cyprus and to a lesser degree mainland Greece and the Levant. Figures have been found in a variety of different contexts at Naukratis. Their presence in workshops, houses, sanctuaries and cemeteries represents a variety of human activities connected to the making, use and deposition of figures in ancient Naukratis. For this reason they offer great potential for shedding light on the site, its population and its position at the crossroads of ancient cultures. Each individual figurine can yield valuable information about its production and consumption, its role in religious or magical-medical rites, its movements in the context of trade patterns and its function as a marker of identity, status and ethnicity. If placed in a wider context and considered as a group, figurines may reveal developments in the political or economic situation of Naukratis and the impact such factors had on the changing urban demography.



Figure 2 East Greek figure alabastron representing an actor, c. 595–550 BC. British Museum, 1888.0601.660

Recent studies of figurines from Naukratis have concentrated especially on Cypriot stone sculpture (Fig. 1),<sup>2</sup> while local Egyptian as well as Greek (including East Greek, Fig. 2) and local terracotta figurines have been largely ignored. These examples, in addition to the assemblage as a whole, require systematic analysis utilizing the growing recent literature on the subject. It is only now that this can be attempted without being hindered by the poor state of publication and limited access to the material. Amelia Edwards was the first to publish in 1885 a short article on 'the terracottas of Naukratis' (in which she includes stone and faience pieces) that had just been excavated at the site by Flinders Petrie. In it she states that the pieces would now 'be distributed among various museums, and, scattered far and wide.... never again will it be possible to compare them one with another, except in photographs or engravings' (Edwards 1885, 262). By reassembling all extant finds from this dispersed assemblage in the virtual space of an online catalogue alongside extensive documentation based on first-hand study, the present publication comes as close as possible to proving her wrong. In-depth research makes it possible once more to compare and analyze the material in its entirety and in its various find contexts. For each group, stylistic and technological features have

<sup>1</sup> All images in this chapter, unless otherwise indicated, are © Trustees of the British Museum.

<sup>2</sup> Hermary 2001; Fourrier 2001; Nick 2001b; Jenkins 2001, 166–73; Nick 2006; Höckmann 2007.



Figure 3 Plaster mould of ithyphallic Harpokrates with an Egyptian amphora, c. 500–250 BC. British Museum, 1886,0401.1541



Figure 4 Terracotta protome of a woman in East Greek style, of local Naukratite Nile silt fabric. Found in the Hellenion, 'precinct 14, under the wall of second temple', c. 480–350 BC. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1896-1908-G.85. Photograph © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford



Figure 5 Terracotta mould for the production of terracotta figurines of an actor, c. 300–100 BC. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1896-1908-E.4805. Photograph © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. Photography by British Museum staff

been examined, contextual information has been gathered and assessed and parallels especially from dated excavated contexts have been considered. On this basis it has been possible to reach new and robust conclusions about each group and its significance in the wider context of the history of Naukratis, its population and its position within the wider context of the Egyptian and Mediterranean worlds.

Figurines in terracotta and stone are treated together here as they share many common features of style, subject, use and chronological development and cannot be understood in isolation.<sup>3</sup> Relevant parallels in plaster, faience and wood are also included in the discussion. Special attention is paid throughout to the techniques and technology employed by craftsmen in the creation of the figurines, an important aspect that remains poorly understood to date despite its crucial relevance for questions of dating and workshop attributions.<sup>4</sup> The investigation of these techniques is particularly promising at sites such as Naukratis, where we can expect technology and ideas to have been transferred between people from different regions.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Workshops, materials and technology

Figurines reached Naukratis from Cyprus, East Greece, mainland Greece and the Levant, but the majority of terracotta figures found at the site were made in Lower Egypt, probably at Naukratis itself. Almost all Egyptian terracottas found at Naukratis are made from fabrics that are characteristic of the western Nile Delta. However, it remains difficult at present, even with scientific methods such as thin section analysis or Neutron Activation Analysis, to distinguish securely between Naukratis production and that of neighbouring sites in the Nile Delta (for a discussion of this topic see the chapter on **Locally produced Greek pottery**). For this reason, hand-made figures, each a unique object, are impossible to identify as Naukratite, even when many examples share features so similar as to suggest that they were produced by the same hand.

Things become easier when considering mould-made figures. Almost all Egyptian mould-made figures found at Naukratis were probably made there. We know this because we have a number of fragments of moulds preserved that were used in the production of plaque figures (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1896-1908-E.4802) as well as mould-made solid figures (British Museum, 1886,0401.1541, Fig. 3), dating from the 5th or 4th centuries BC. There are many other types from the 5th, 4th and possibly 6th century BC that are likely to have been produced at Naukratis, either because they were found only at Naukratis, come from the same mould series or emulate East Greek forms or styles in a way not seen elsewhere in Egypt prior to Macedonian rule, such as protomes (Fig. 4) or temple-boy figurines (Fig. 19).

<sup>3</sup> Stone and terracotta figures are distinct in use, meaning and form from larger Egyptian and Greek or Roman sculpture and sculptor's models. These are treated separately in the Naukratis catalogue.

<sup>4</sup> Burn and Higgins 2001, 18.

<sup>5</sup> Boardman 1999a, 131.



Figure 6 Alabaster 'adorant' kouros figure from the sanctuary of Aphrodite, c. 580–570 BC. British Museum, 1888,0601.14

The earliest evidence we have for actual terracotta workshops at Naukratis – including buildings, kilns, moulds (Figs 3 and 5), figures and wasters – dates to the Macedonian and Ptolemaic periods. Two workshop sites were excavated, one dating from the late 4th to the 3rd century BC<sup>6</sup> and a second from the 3rd to the 2nd century BC.<sup>7</sup> We do not know if these two locations are also where earlier terracotta manufacture took place. It is possible that these were new workshops as they used techniques and technologies to produce figures in a style not previously seen in Naukratis and would have required different materials, expertise and infrastructure from that used before.

As regards to stone sculptures, there is no accessible bedrock in the immediate hinterland of Naukratis, which means that either the raw materials for stone figurine production must have been brought to the town from elsewhere or the finished stone figurines were imported. For the Cypriot and Cypro-Ionian style figurines in alabaster and limestone it now seems most likely that they were made in and imported directly from Cyprus (Fig. 6).<sup>8</sup> Egyptian figurines were predominantly made of a soft white limestone, probably from the Memphite region<sup>9</sup> where figurines of this type are known to have been made. As no 'unfinished' stone figures appear to have been found at Naukratis and as the majority of examples (Fig. 7) have close parallels from the Memphite region, particularly Saqqâra, where the production of such figurines is attested,<sup>10</sup> the majority of Egyptian limestone figures were probably brought to Naukratis from there. To what extent some production could also have existed at Naukratis itself is difficult to judge.

### 3. Context and use



Figure 7 Limestone figure of ithyphallic Harpokrates with drum, c. 400–200 BC, possibly made in Saqqâra. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, E.131.1914. Photograph © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Photography by British Museum staff

The archaeological contexts recorded by the various excavators inform our understanding of the production and consumption, use and deposition of figures in Naukratis. They also illuminate our understanding of the use-life of figures in Naukratis and how this varied between different types of figures. From a perspective of the ancient consumer, figurines could fulfil a range of functions: as votive offerings or protective amulets, in domestic shrines or sanctuaries, as decorative ornaments or as ingredients in 'magic' or magical-medical rites, blessing and prayers. Moreover, figurines could also play an important economic role as part of a site's industrial output. Produced in large numbers, they perhaps sustained seasonal pilgrimage economies.

Over time, the techniques used to make figurines changed, as did the subject matter depicted and the way in which the figurines were used. Such developments represent both innovations by producers, driven at least partly by changing demands, as well as evolving frameworks of consumption. In this way figurines are also a good indicator, or measure, of continuity and change in religious practice, both Greek and Egyptian, albeit

<sup>6</sup> Hogarth 1898–9, 41; Gutch 1898–9, 70–1; Edgar 1905, 121, 'Site 38'.

<sup>7</sup> Petrie 1886a, 45, 'Site 95'; Bailey 2008, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Jenkins 2001; Höckmann 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Klemm and Klemm 2008, 40.

<sup>10</sup> Martin 1981, 27–89; Quibell 1907, 13, pl. 30.5; Jeffreys *et al.* 1988, 33–63.



Figure 8 Terracotta hand-made rider figure, probably made in Salamis, found in the sanctuary of Aphrodite, c. 600–525 BC. British Museum, 1911.0606.1

on a small scale. Affording a higher level of chronological, social and spatial resolution than many other types of evidence (such as textual sources), they complement other groups of ‘artefacts of devotion’ (such as, for example, Egyptian **Bronze votive offerings** or various kinds of pottery) and provide a unique insight into the lived religious experience of the inhabitants and visitors of Naukratis, especially on a more modest scale.

Although the methods used by Petrie, Gardner and Hogarth to excavate Naukratis were quite advanced for the late 19th and early 20th century, the sheer scale of the excavation and the difficult circumstances under which work was conducted means that precise contextual information was often not recorded (see the chapters on **Discovery and excavations** and **Reconstructing an excavation**). Many figures were also acquired by the excavators from the *sebbakhin*, local farmers digging up the settlement mound for fertile earth. Nevertheless, thanks to the early excavators’ interest in the terracotta figurines, even the smallest fragments found were saved and often recorded with better contextual information than was usual for the period. Some figurines are labelled, registered, published or recorded in diaries, lists or letters as coming from specific locations, such as the Greek sanctuaries, workshops, wells, the settlement or the cemetery. Careful analysis of the artefacts themselves and any markings on them, of publications, notebooks and excavation diaries as well as academic and popular publications<sup>11</sup> have thus frequently supplied valuable additional contextual information for excavated and acquired objects, particularly the more distinctive figurines. In addition, the American stratigraphic excavations and survey, the Supreme Council of Antiquities fieldwork as well as our own recent fieldwork provide further data that helps to assess earlier finds and refine their findspots.<sup>12</sup>



Figure 9 East Greek Classical terracotta protome of a woman, c. 450–350 BC. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, GR.3.1898. Photograph © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Photography by British Museum staff

What emerges from this assessment is a differentiated picture for individual areas and periods of the site that in part differs significantly from what had previously been perceived. In the important early sanctuaries of Aphrodite and Apollo, for example, the assemblage is heavily weighted towards the late 7th and 6th century BC limestone and terracotta Cypriot figures (Figs 6 and 8; see the distribution map of Cypriot figures, Fig. 10), with some later Egyptian, East Greek, mainland Greek and Hellenistic material in later layers. Late Archaic, Classical and early Hellenistic East Greek terracotta figures, particularly protomes (Fig. 9), were prevalent in the Greek shrines of the Hellenion.<sup>13</sup> Late Period and Early Ptolemaic Egyptian figures were found across the site,<sup>14</sup> though concentrated in the eastern parts of the town, near the Hellenion.<sup>15</sup> They suggest that Egyptian domestic religion was practised at least by some inhabitants of the town, casting doubts on prevalent interpretations of Naukratis as a solely Greek settlement in its earlier phases.<sup>16</sup> The unequal distribution of terracotta types is significant for understanding religious practices, ethnicity, trade, industry and settlement patterns across the site.

<sup>11</sup> Edwards 1885.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas and Villing 2013; Thomas and Villing forthcoming.

<sup>13</sup> Gutch 1898–9.

<sup>14</sup> Petrie 1886a, 44–5; Gutch 1898–9, 69–70; Edgar 1905, 127–9, 131–3.

<sup>15</sup> Petrie 1886a, 22, 40; Gutch 1898–9, 69–70, Hogarth *et. al* 1905, 129; Coulson 1996, 139–45.

<sup>16</sup> Möller 2000a, 118, on terracottas 149–50, on sculpture 154–61; contra Boardman 1999a, 131.

## 4. The changing use of figurines at Naukratis

Naukratis was visited and inhabited by people of various ethnic origins with different belief systems. The figurine assemblage reflects the range of ritual and secular activities at the site, charting religious and economic developments as well as the movement and interaction of people. The dating of some pieces will only be able to be further refined once stratified excavations provide additional data, but already clear patterns now emerge that allow us to track chronological changes in the local production and consumption of figurines.

Naukratis was a settlement created primarily for trade and there is significant evidence of this trade represented in the dedication of figurines from Cyprus, East Greece and mainland Greece in the Greek sanctuaries of Apollo, Aphrodite, Hera and the Hellenion (Fig. 10). At the same time, the figurines also point to the existence of a local population that, whilst presumably ethnically diverse, practised a form of Egyptian domestic religion.

### 4.1 Late Period Naukratis: a multicultural hub of trade

During the Late Period, nearly half of the figures that reached Naukratis came from East Greece and Cyprus. Remarkably, Cypriot figures (hand-made, wheel-made and mould-made terracotta as well as carved soft limestone and alabaster representations of devotees, kouroi, korai, deities and animals) are concentrated in the earliest periods of the site from the late 7th to 6th centuries BC. They were used primarily as votive offerings in the sanctuaries of Aphrodite and Apollo (and to a lesser extent Hera, but our evidence from this sanctuary is slim in general) and their peak coincided with an increase especially in the dedication of Chian decorated pottery vessels (see the chapter on [Chian pottery](#)).

A decline in the number of Cypriot figures (and also in the quantity of Greek pottery in general) occurred in the second half of the 6th century BC, followed by an increase in East Greek (hand-made and mould-made figure plaques, hollow figures and figure vases and protomes of devotees and deities) and to a lesser degree in mainland Greek figures (mould-made, hollow, Late Classical and early Hellenistic type figures of devotees and deities), particularly in the Hellenion area. This lasted until the early 4th century BC, when Naukratis sustained a permanent decline in imported terracotta figures and stone sculpture. Cypriot and Greek material was found concentrated in the Greek sanctuaries alongside votive pottery and other possible votive objects (such as arrowheads); finds apparently made in the town area may also have come originally from sanctuary contexts.<sup>17</sup>

With the decline in Cypriot and the increase in East Greek figurines at the end of the 6th century BC, we also start to see an increase in the number of Egyptian figures produced and used at the site. Their number continued

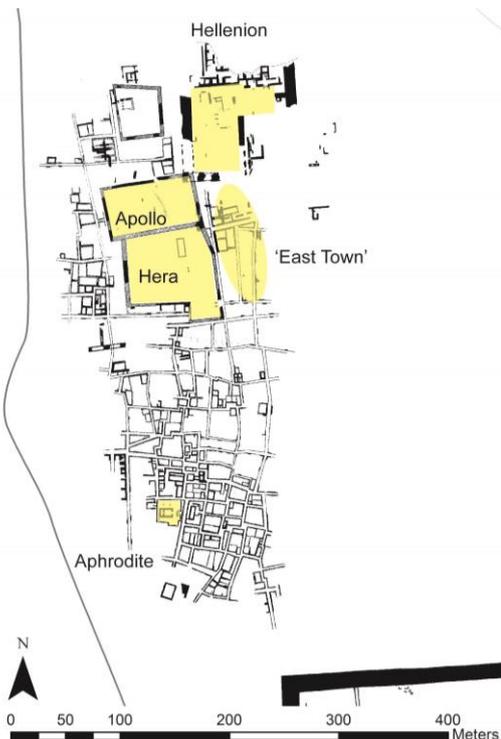


Figure 10 Distribution of Archaic Cypriot terracotta figures across Naukratis (in yellow), indicated on a composite plan of Petrie's and Hogarth's excavations

<sup>17</sup> Petrie 1886a, 12–16.

to rise and eventually eclipsed imported figures by the 4th century BC. Similarities with contemporary 4th century BC figurines from Memphis and Saqqâra and pieces brought directly from the Memphite region indicate the existence of close links between the Memphite cults (and the figurine production linked to them) and Naukratis at this time.



Figure 11 Limestone Harpokrates rider figure with Greek inscription, from the Hellenion, c. 450–350 BC. British Museum, 1900,0214.27

Egyptian figures are not well represented in the Greek temple areas, with the interesting exception of some 6th to 5th century BC examples from the Hellenion area, one of them bearing what may be a Greek votive dedication (British Museum, 1900,0214.27; Fig. 11). Some Egyptian figures derive from the vicinity of the Great Temenos, the large Egyptian sanctuary of Amun-Ra in the south of the town (Fig. 13), while many, including presumably most pieces collected from the surface or otherwise without a recorded context, come from the domestic areas of Naukratis.

Although some of the types appear specific to Naukratis, they are generally consistent with the standard range of figures found in other contemporary large Lower Egyptian temple towns. Indicative of orthodox Egyptian religious and ritual practices, their presence at Naukratis is significant in that it indicates the existence of a sizable population already following Egyptian religious practices long before the Ptolemaic period (Fig. 12).

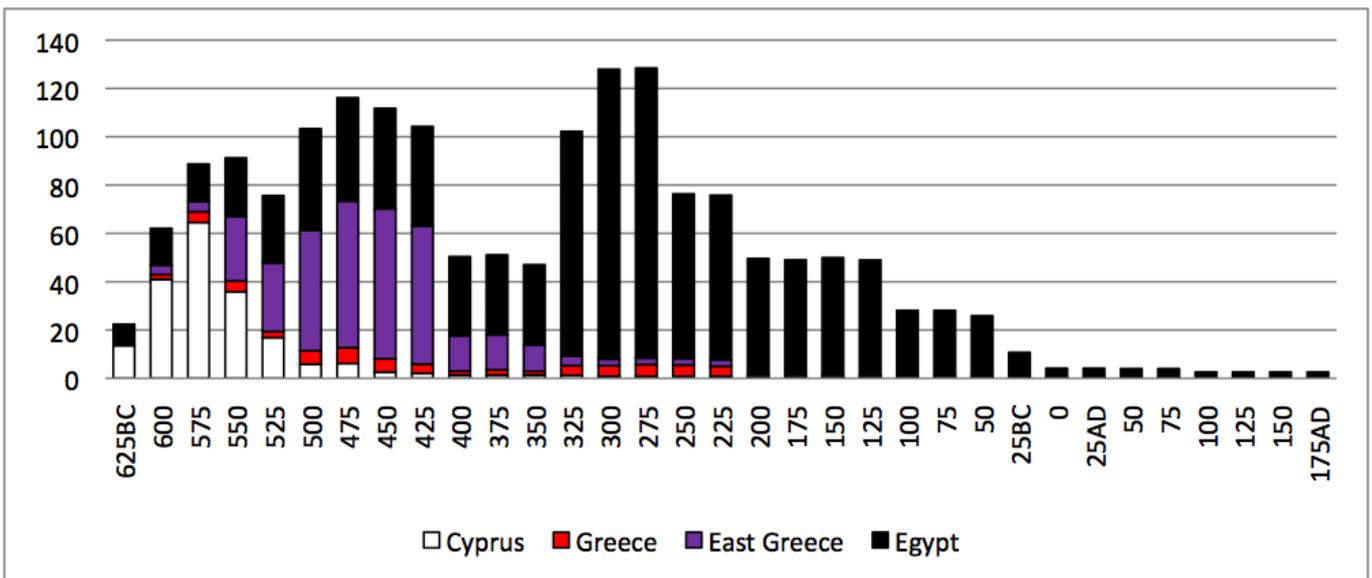


Figure 12 Distribution of stone and terracotta figures from Naukratis over time, divided by origin (25 year increments)



Figure 13. Limestone figure plaque of a pregnant woman, from the Great Temenos, 6th century BC. Egyptian Museum, Cairo, TR 20/9/27/25. Photograph © Egyptian Museum, Cairo

#### 4.2 Ptolemaic to Roman Naukratis: a regional hub of trade and industry

The volume and quality of the Ptolemaic figurines from Naukratis show that the site during this period was a major consumer of figurines and statuettes, as one would expect from a successful and busy harbour city (possibly at its largest extent in the later 4th century BC). The Ptolemaic period saw an explosion of variety and a surge in production and demand for figurines at Naukratis, including Greek-style figurines of Tanagra-style actors, women and children as well as representations of Greek deities or mythical creatures, which also appear in other media such as lamps, stoves and pottery.



Figure 14 Head of a terracotta figure of a priest or (more likely) lay follower at a festival, c. 300–100 BC. Museum of Classical Archaeology, Cambridge, NA683. Photograph © Museum of Classical Archaeology, Cambridge. Photography by British Museum staff



Figure 15 Terracotta figure of Harpokrates. c. 300–100 BC. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1888.176. Photograph © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. Photography by British Museum staff



Figure 16 Terracotta Medusa head coffin-fitting, c. 330–250 BC. British Museum, 1888,0601.128

Especially significant (as they are distinct from the figurines of earlier periods) are the numerous representations of festival-goers and priests (Fig. 14), depicted acting in rituals and processions, and distinct from the often static terracotta images of contemporary Egyptian deities. Perhaps surprisingly, representations of Greek deities are only slightly more common at Naukratis than at other Egyptian settlements. In fact, by the 3rd century BC, Naukratis had the standard range of Graeco-Egyptian figurines found at many Ptolemaic sites, notably of Egyptian deities concerned with the Egyptian household, specifically Isis-Hathor, her son Harpokrates (Fig. 15), dog Sothis and his protector Bes.<sup>18</sup>

Naukratis was also by this time a major figurine producer, with local terracotta figurine workshops supplying the vast majority of the locally consumed figurines. From the 3rd century BC onwards, one can observe new technologies being applied to local figurine production in the shape of Greek hollow vented figurine types, partly inspired by the popular ‘Tanagra’ types, which ultimately replaced figurines made in local traditions. These technological changes coincide with similar developments in other local terracotta industries, notably in the production of lamps (see the chapter on [Lamps in terracotta and bronze](#)). The massive local demand for figurines with Egyptian subjects – a fundamental trend already set during the 5th and 4th centuries BC – testifies to the continued local importance of traditional Egyptian religious ideas and festivals, yet it was now met by the local mass production of terracotta figures in the fashionable Greek style.

One particular aspect of the local terracotta industry was the production of Greek-style terracotta coffin-fittings for wooden sarcophagi (most notably Medusa, Fig. 16) in the Macedonian/early Ptolemaic periods, which appear to have had a certain regional distribution.

The 4th century BC saw a marked decline in the arrival of imported figures at Naukratis, followed by the near cessation of imports around the beginning of the 3rd century BC. While several different factors must have contributed to this pattern, the evidence points to a decline in the numbers of foreign visitors to the site carrying votives for dedication to Greek gods in the local sanctuaries. At the same time representations of the already popular Egyptian deities Isis-Hathor and Harpokrates were produced in large numbers and in a greater diversity of forms. Both phenomena must be seen as part of developments in the political and economic role of Naukratis. By the mid-Ptolemaic period, Naukratis was still a busy regional, but perhaps no longer international, trading hub. The vast number of imported (particularly Rhodian) stamped Greek (and Italian) amphorae found at Naukratis is a strong indicator that the city continued to receive imported goods from the Mediterranean on a large scale (see the chapter on [Stamped amphorae](#)). However, Naukratis now presumably received imports shipped via Alexandria, rather than through direct trade with the source as it had done previously.

<sup>18</sup>Bailey 2006, 261–4; 2008, 5, 43–5, 111; Thomas 2011, 79–82; Thomas and Nicholson 2013, 201.

Figurine production and use at Naukratis continued into the Roman period, albeit in a different form and on a much reduced scale. Whilst representations of Egyptian deities, particularly Harpokrates and Isis, continued to be popular, the diversity and quantity significantly dropped after the 1st century BC and representations become increasingly stylized (Fig. 18). The local terracotta workshops at Naukratis may have already ceased production in the Augustan period as no moulds from Naukratis are known to date after the 1st century BC. Also, Roman figures of the 2nd century AD and later often utilized a Nile silt fabric different from that commonly used in the Naukratis terracotta workshops. The decline of the terracotta industry (Figs 12 and 17) in Naukratis could be taken to suggest a decline in population. However, all the other evidence from the site would refute this.<sup>19</sup> Instead, the phenomenon most likely relates to a general decline in the use of figures in Egyptian domestic religion, reflecting the overall diminishing importance, wealth and power of the Egyptian priesthood in the Roman period that is also visible in the papyrological record,<sup>20</sup> long before the rise of Christianity.

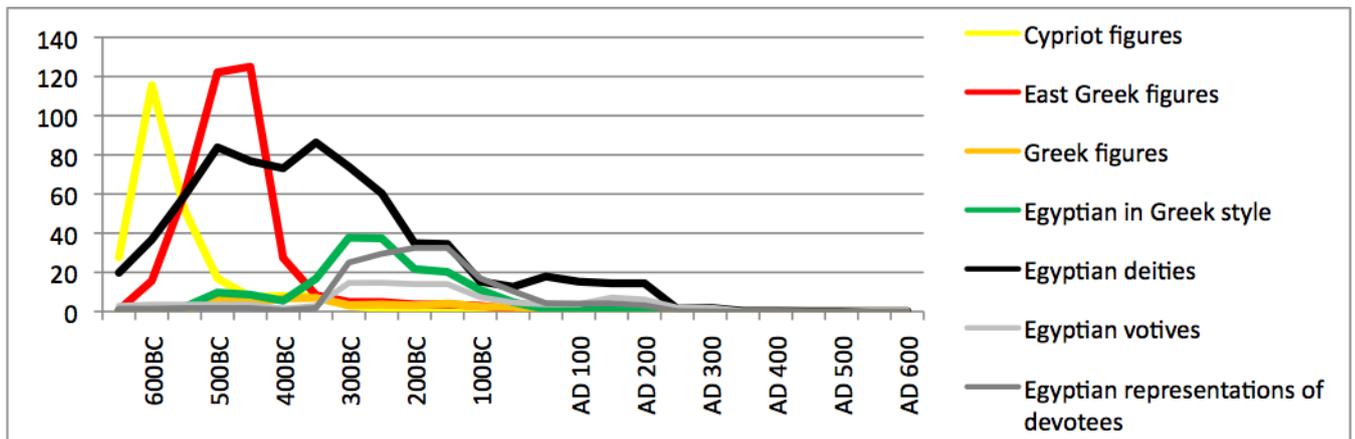


Figure 17 Distribution of figures from Naukratis by production place. Egyptian figures are subdivided into figures in a Greek style, figures representing Egyptian deities, figures of other votive offerings (objects or animals) and representations of worshippers or devotees at a festival

### 4.3 A multi-ethnic Nile Delta town

Considering the figurines from Naukratis as a whole, three observations are particularly striking.

Firstly, the assemblage, outside the Archaic Greek sanctuaries, is predominantly Egyptian in nature, suggesting the widespread practice of domestic religion of Egyptian character from the Late Period to the Roman period. The figurines thus add an additional dimension to our understanding of Egyptian religious practice at the site that complements the evidence for a major local Egyptian temple with associated rites that is reflected in inscriptional and architectural evidence (see the chapters on [Topography](#) and [The decoration of the temple of Amun](#)) as well as by the large corpus of Egyptian [Bronze votive offerings](#).

<sup>19</sup> Thomas 2014b, 202–3, fig. 13.

<sup>20</sup> Bagnall 1993, 262.



Figure 18 Terracotta figure of a beneficent daemon, c. AD 100–200. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Eg.Inv.3012. Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Photographer François Leclère, British Museum



Figure 19 Mould-made terracotta figure-plaque of an ithyphallic Harpokrates, c. 500–400 BC. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, AN1896-1908-E.4761. Photograph © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. Photography by British Museum staff

Secondly, a fundamental continuity in subject matter can be observed over the centuries in the Egyptian figurines from the site, whether locally made or brought from the Memphite region. Throughout, the figurines answer primarily domestic religious concerns of protection, fertility, family and the Nile inundation. From the 7th century BC through to the 2nd or 3rd century AD, four main types of figurine, often in identical poses with the same symbolism, can be seen: the nude standing *Hathoric* figurine (Isis–Hathor); Harpokrates (usually ithyphallic or on horseback before the Ptolemaic period); his protector Bes; and nude pregnant females, often praying. Even if we cannot be sure that the pregnant ‘fertility figures’ – also known as ‘Baubo’, ‘beneficent daemons’ and ‘orans’ figures (Fig. 18) – represent the same medical-magical rituals that were performed since Dynastic times, the continuity of forms, as with the Harpokrates and Isis-Hathor figures, is indicative of a very long-lived tradition from the Late Period through to the Byzantine period. These types are distinct in subject and practice from the imported Greek figurines, largely representations of the devotee, brought into the Greek sanctuaries. Yet at the same time there is also change of a kind that is largely paralleled elsewhere in Egypt. In particular, we see the earlier diversity of representations of various hybrid creatures, animals, female and male plaques, musicians, reclining figures and riders reduced with time to almost solely ithyphallic figures and erotic groups. The ithyphallic Harpokrates and erotic groups are mostly a Lower Egyptian phenomenon (they are known, but much less common in Upper Egypt), but no external source for their popularity (such as contact with Greece) needs to be assumed; rather, they have their roots firmly in the Egyptian religious significance of *hieros gamos*.

Thirdly, the interaction between Greeks, Cypriots, Egyptians, Phoenicians and Persians at Naukratis over the course of the 7th to 4th centuries BC also left their mark on the local terracotta production, with ‘hybrid’ style figures already being produced at Naukratis by the 6th or 5th century BC. An example is a Rhodian temple-boy figure that was used as a model for an Egyptian mould to produce ithyphallic Harpokrates figures (Fig. 19). This means that at the beginning of Macedonian rule the coroplasts of Naukratis were well placed to fulfil the growing demand for Greek-style figurines of Egyptian subject matter. Prior to the founding of Alexandria, it was at Naukratis that innovators in Egypt’s coroplast industry were based.