Mediterranean Encounters: Greeks, Carians, and Egyptians in the First Millennium BC

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The Late Bronze Age was a time of vibrant contact and exchange between Egypt and the world of Mycenaean Greece. The collapse of the Aegean palace societies in the twelfth and eleventh centuries BC and Egypt’s political fragmentation after the end of the New Kingdom (ca. 1550–1069 BC) brought an end to nearly all direct interaction between the two regions. Centuries later, as part of wider power realignments in the ancient world, a new pharaonic dynasty once more united Egypt under its rule and forged links with emerging Greek city-states. The seventh century BC marks the start of what the historian Joseph Manning has termed “the Greek millennium” of Egyptian history, arguing that when Egypt fell under Greek rule with Alexander the Great’s conquest in 332 BC, it was merely “the *consummation* and not the *beginning* of a long process of understanding and accommodation” between Egypt and Greece.[[1]](#endnote-2)

In the discussion that follows, I use three case studies to examine what exactly “understanding and accommodation” entailed. They will take us from sixth-century BC cosmopolitan Memphis, with its international population including Greeks and Carians, down the Nile to the Egyptian-Greek trading port of Naukratis, and further to Alexandria, on the Mediterranean shore, newly founded at the beginning of the Hellenistic period. Drawing on new insights from recently uncovered or reevaluated archaeological evidence, all three case studies focus on the agents and contexts of cultural contact—that is, people, their actions, and their motivations.

Over the centuries the framework for this contact was subject to fundamental change. Rule and conquest stood only at the very end. Instead, as in the Bronze Age, it was traders and mercenaries who moved between Egypt and the Greek world, the commerce of goods and labor driving intercultural exchange. Greeks had already begun to reengage in contact with peoples along the Mediterranean shores for trade and settlement by the eighth century BC. This at first largely excluded Egypt, whose Mediterranean trade at the time concentrated largely on the Levant. Egyptians, too, however, had closely experienced the foreign by this period, being ruled first by Libyan and then by Nubian dynasties and finally (664 BC) by a local dynasty established, however, by Assyria following its conquest of Egypt. When the pharaohs of this 26th (Saite) Dynasty (ca. 664‒526 BC) finally renewed intensive contact with the Mediterranean world, partly it seems in a bid to shake off Assyrian rule, numerous Greeks, Carians, and other foreigners came to Egypt as mercenaries or traders.Texts, archaeology, and epigraphy suggest that relations were not entirely unproblematic, and integration coexisted with segregation.[[2]](#endnote-3) Foreigners served in a separate part of the army, might occupy their own town quarters, or were barred from certain religious spaces, but they also practiced intermarriage, and some rose to positions of prestige and importance.[[3]](#endnote-4)

Close contact and exchange persisted throughout times of political change. Egypt’s conquest by the Persian king Cambyses II (526 BC) ushered in two long periods of Achaemenid rule (526–404 and 343–332 BC), during which trade (not least of highly desirable Egyptian grain) flourished and we hear of occasional military alliances. Following Alexander’s conquest, finally, the Ptolemaic period (332–30 BC) for the first time saw a Greek dynasty rule Egypt as pharaohs. For much of the history of Egyptian-Greek interaction then, commercial transactions, military assistance, and strategic alliances were based largely on equality and reciprocity. Thus pharaohs hired Greek mercenaries to help defend Egypt’s borders and to establish or secure a ruler’s power internally and benefited from foreign traders’ wide commercial networks, while traders in turn received privileged access to Egyptian commodities (and thus financial and social gain), and mercenaries (or at least their leaders) might obtain rich rewards for their services. Nonetheless, as much of the direct interaction, especially in the early years, took place on Egyptian soil, it was Egyptians, as well as the Egyptian administrative and cultural context, that dominated relations. This was true especially in the case of mercenaries in the pay of the pharaoh; Greek traders enjoyed a certain autonomy in the port city of Naukratis, on land granted to them by the pharaoh. It was only once Macedonian and Ptolemaic rule had been established that the power balance shifted substantially, with a Greek-dominated administration, Greek language, and other Greek cultural elements gaining prominence.

This evolving dynamic is reflected in the nature of contact and exchange yet is counterbalanced by a continuum of interactions on in a local scale and in daily life. Thus the case studies considered here repeatedly underscore the key role played by religion in mediating encounters. They also suggest that across time a wide range of social groups—including mercenaries, craftsmen, and, importantly, women—were carriers and active agents in the transfer of cultural knowledge. It is this aspect in particular that I want to emphasize, adjusting a picture that frequently takes for granted the prominent role of (male) elites in cross-cultural exchange.

1. Piabrm’s Stela: Carians at Memphis

Memphis—the ancient capital city of Egypt, situated at the apex of the Nile Delta—had long been a center of trade and exchange within Egypt and was frequented also by foreigners. In the Late Period and Ptolemaic period its population included Phoenicians, Greeks (Hellenomemphites), Carians (Caromemphites), Syrians, Persians, and Jews, many probably originally garrisoned as mercenaries there, such as the Greeks and Carians said to have been installed by the pharaoh Ahmose (Amasis) II (r. ca. 570–527 BC).[[4]](#endnote-5)

The most intriguing evidence left behind by these immigrants is a series of tombstones. Most of them were found in the Sacred Animal Necropolis of Saqqara, one of the burial grounds of the city of Memphis. While they had been reused in Hellenistic times, they must originally have come from substantial cemeteries that contained tombs of Persians, Phoenicians, Aramaeans, Greeks, and especially Carians. Burial in the area of the Serapeum, where generations of holy Apis bulls were buried, seems to have been popular with foreigners and Egyptians alike seeking the particular protection of Apis, the herald, emanation, or embodiment of the god Ptah of Memphis, who became Osiris-Apis after his death. Part of the wider cult of Osiris, god of the underworld, and his wife and sister, Isis, Apis was a particular patron god for soldiers of Memphis and was clearly prominent also among resident foreigners and their families.[[5]](#endnote-6)

Many examples of these Memphite stelae, notably early ones, tend to be plain or follow the early Egyptian “false door” model, no longer popular with Egyptians themselves in this period. More than a dozen stelae, mostly of the late sixth century BC, feature carved images, sometimes in several registers and often combining foreign and Egyptian elements.[[6]](#endnote-7) Many of the stelae belonged to Carians, indigenous to the wider region around Halikarnassos and the hinterland of southern Ionia. Renowned as warriors and sailors, Carians were close neighbors of the Ionian Greeks. With Greek settlements in western Anatolia having violently encroached on Carian territory, relations were not always peaceful; nonetheless, there were mixed populations and intensive cultural and artistic exchange.[[7]](#endnote-8) The material culture of the Carians in Egypt confirms a high degree of shared cultural practice and visual language with Ionians but also close exchange with Egyptian (and possibly other foreign) cultures, including, as attested by the inscriptions, intermarriage.[[8]](#endnote-9) One of the most splendid examples of the Caro-Memphite tombstones, today in the British Museum, London, is the stela of a Carian woman, Piabrm, dating to the late sixth century BC (fig. 2.1).[[9]](#endnote-10)

The overall shape of the round-topped stela is Egyptian, as is its decoration in low relief with incised outlines, even if the engraving is shallower than what is common for Egyptian stelae from the Memphis region.[[10]](#endnote-11) An inscription in Carian script (insofar as it can be read at present) names the deceased as Piabrm, daughter of Usold, with a toponym that most likely designates Usold’s hometown as the Carian city of Mylasa.[[11]](#endnote-12) Uniquely among the Caro-Memphite stelae, it names a woman as the deceased. (Even though other stelae represent a woman on the bier, they nonetheless name a man as the deceased.) The stela’s decoration consists of an Egyptian winged sun disc with two uraei above three figured registers, one fundamentally in Greek style, the other two Egyptian. In the lowest register the deceased Piabrm is shown on a funerary bed, surrounded by mourners (that is, in the *prothesis*, the first stage in a traditional Greek burial rite). The way the scene is rendered broadly follows (Ionian) Greek iconographic and stylistic conventions, in keeping with the art of Mylasa, which is closely related to that of neighboring Ionia.[[12]](#endnote-13) The top image, following a standard Egyptian format, shows a man (Usold or a servant?) worshipping the enthroned god Osiris, accompanied by Isis, Osiris’s wife and sister. In the central register, again Egyptian, the ibis-headed god Thoth approaches the sacred Apis bull, who is protected by winged Isis, standing behind.

Besides the figures’ outlines being incised in low relief, its excavators observed faint traces of paint on the stela: red on the cloth of the bier and in a few other places; some black on the faces, indicating the outlines of large eyes; and some faint traces of yellow. They assumed, however, that “the small scale doubtless also limited the amount of detail that could be shown.”[[13]](#endnote-14) Scientific examination carried out by Joanne Dyer of the British Museum’s Department of Scientific Research now confirms that the stela was indeed originally stunningly colorful. What is more, the multispectral images acquired under different illumination conditions bring to light patterns that go well beyond what is indicated by the incised outlines, revealing a wealth of details hidden until now.[[14]](#endnote-15) Even if their precise coloring could not always be identified—in the images color differences are rendered as shades of gray, with actual color information relying on scarce microscopic pigment traces and chemical data—this research for the first time conveys a far more complete idea of what the stela once looked like. The reconstruction drawings included here present a preliminary result of this work (fig. 2.2).[[15]](#endnote-16) They show the observed patterns and areas where substantial color traces can be clearly identified, complemented by more hypothetical color reconstructions in areas where little or no pigment data was available, but where reasonable guesses could be made based on comparative data, primarily from other Egyptian painted stelae. Of course, any such reconstruction will inevitably misrepresent actual color hues and subtleties of shading, and currently ongoing scientific investigations will further modify the present picture.[[16]](#endnote-17) The rich information already available today, however, provides vital new insights into the stela as a product and carrier of diverse cultural traditions.

What strikes one most perhaps about the ancient color scheme is the way it emphasizes the stela’s overall Egyptian character. The four-colored band, hitherto entirely invisible, that frames the entire decorated area and each register was ubiquitous in ancient Egyptian art.[[17]](#endnote-18) It typically features black strokes separating larger blocks of color, which are here Egyptian blue, red, and possibly green and yellow. Numerous other elements and details of iconography, palette, and placement, too, correspond to Egyptian painterly traditions. On the Apis bull patches of light and dark convey the bull’s typical black-and-white patterning, and the rectangular rug placed on his back most likely would have been painted red.[[18]](#endnote-19) In both the top and central registers, the goddess Isis wears a long dress with shoulder straps, as is typical for her in Egyptian art (its color is not certain), and a vulture-wing headdress (blue at least in the top register). The feathers of her wings were partly painted in Egyptian blue, separated by red outlines, similar to the wings of the sun disc above. The offering table (painted in Egyptian blue) that stands before Osiris in the top register carried the typical Egyptian offerings of lotus flowers, with multispectral imaging now revealing their multicolored leaves,[[19]](#endnote-20) two very stylized representations of plucked geese, and three round bread loaves. Egyptian paintings often show such loaves as a white circle with a central yellow dot to represent the bread’s central indentation, and this seems to be the color scheme here too, even if further details are omitted.[[20]](#endnote-21)

Very similar loaves of bread, geese, and lotus flowers also appear on fragments of another Caro-Memphite stela with a similar scene of worship that also preserves several letters of a Carian inscription (fig. 2.3).[[21]](#endnote-22) Though long known, the piece has received little attention so far.[[22]](#endnote-23) For us it is of interest primarily for the fact that pigment remains show that the skin of the worshipper behind the offering table was colored reddish brown, as was standard for Egyptian male figures; we may presume that the same was the case also for the male figures on Piabrm’s stela.[[23]](#endnote-24)

Just as the paint enhanced the Egyptian appearance of Egyptian scenes, it was also used to embellish the Greek scene with further Greek details. Most striking is Piabrm’s bed, which now emerges as richly decorated with patterns representing precious inlays: one can clearly see florals, rosettes, and the image of a large cat, presumably a lion, on the bed’s side panels and large rosettes on the upper parts of the legs. Such decoration is well paralleled in Late Archaic Greek imagery, such as on a Klazomenian sarcophagus from Akanthos, as well as on actual *klinai*.[[24]](#endnote-25) Traces of decoration on the mattress suggest a painted meander pattern with red a dominant color.[[25]](#endnote-26) On the table in front of the bed, colored red, the painted vertical lines and dots marking wooden joins are well known from other Greek images, as is the carved fretwork on the table’s side.[[26]](#endnote-27) Also Piabrm’s jewelry—which includes two bracelets on the left arm, W-shaped earrings, and a large necklace with a double strand of beads and a pendant in the form of a bull’s head—all find parallels in East Greek jewelry. The oversize bull’s-head pendant, however, most likely has an Egyptian significance; it might have designated the wearer as a particular devotee (or cult servant?) of Apis or at least placed her under the special protection of Osiris-Apis for the transition to the afterlife.[[27]](#endnote-28)

Who were the craftsmen responsible for the stela? As previous scholars have observed, the stela appears to have been carved by a single hand, but several deviations from Egyptian norms suggest this hand was not well trained in Egyptian traditions of style and iconography. For example, the kilt worn by the worshipper in the top register is shorter and more tightly wrapped than the kilt of most Egyptian images.[[28]](#endnote-29) Osiris’s offering table carries the typical Late Period Memphite bread loaves, geese, and large lotus bunch, but the table is unusually plain, sturdy, and linear, and the bread loaves are not symmetrically arranged.[[29]](#endnote-30) Also unusual are the vulture wings on the shoulders and hindquarters of the Apis bull; they are common on bronze figurines but not in painted representations, and they do not appear, for example, on the Serapeum stelae.[[30]](#endnote-31) Osiris’s throne uniquely transforms the standard Egyptian angular cube design into an odd, organically rounded series of upturned *u* shapes that rise to form the throne’s back.[[31]](#endnote-32) And not only is Osiris’s flail clumsily rendered, but he grasps the *was*-scepter rather than the usual *hekat*-scepter (though it has been suggested that this particular detail, rather than being a mistake, could go back to a special royal form of Osiris particularly revered in Memphis).[[32]](#endnote-33) Most unusual of all perhaps is the figure of Thoth before the Apis bull. His appearance in the scene as such is not entirely unparalleled, as also some Egyptian stelae show him leading mortals before the gods, thus fulfilling the same role as the Greek Hermes, with whom he was equated by Greeks; his semicrouching posture of homage on our stela is, however, entirely foreign to Egyptian art.[[33]](#endnote-34)

Several figures interrupting and overlapping the register borders finally complete the catalogue of unusual features, which, when taken together, make it highly implausible for the stela to be the product of an Egyptian workshop. In contrast, it has been noted that features such as the use of a compass to draw sun discs would be commensurate with an Ionian or Carian craft tradition.[[34]](#endnote-35) Yet there are also aspects that seem unusual from a Greek perspective. The scene in the lowest register overall corresponds well to Late Archaic Greek *prothesis* scenes and displays some similarities—such as the cloth draped over the body—also with the rare *ekphora* scene on an early Klazomenian sarcophagus.[[35]](#endnote-36) Piabrm’s strangely large feet somewhat recall Egyptian mummies. The woman at the head of the bier, dressed in an Ionian *chiton* and placing her hand on the deceased’s head, is typical for such images, even if she, like other elements in the scene, also finds close parallels in Egyptian scenes of mourning, which have long been considered a source of inspiration for Greek funeral imagery. Indeed, in a similar composition on the Egyptian grave stela of the Persian Djedherbes, also from Saqqara, the same role is performed by the goddess Isis.[[36]](#endnote-37)

It is the three mourners standing behind the bier, however, that are most intriguing. The figure at the front, wearing a long dress, tears her cheek in a gesture typical of Greek female mourning in the Archaic period.[[37]](#endnote-38) Behind this figure are two others who wear slightly shorter garments, one holding a large, curved knife to the face, the other with arms raised to the head. They have generally been identified as male, as indeed the shorter dress through which the outlines of the legs are visible might suggest, and knives were generally not handled by women in Greek culture.[[38]](#endnote-39) In the only known parallel, a Caro-Egyptian stela from the Memphite necropolis of Abusir, the knife is clearly held by a man.[[39]](#endnote-40) Yet long hair in Caro-Memphite and Egyptian stelae (though not necessarily in Late Archaic Greek art) and the gesture of raising both arms to the head in Greek art would be more typical for women.[[40]](#endnote-41) Unfortunately the figures’ skin color, which might help clarify gender, cannot be deduced from the multispectral imaging.

Unusual, too, is the table in front of the bier, laden with food, including pyramidal cakes, pomegranates, and round cakes or other fruit.[[41]](#endnote-42) In Archaic or early Classical Athenian imagery such a table would be typical for a symposion of the living, but in an East Greek/Anatolian context especially, there may well have been a tradition of such tables in funerary ritual, as suggested by their regular presence in later so-called Totenmahlreliefs.[[42]](#endnote-43) On a closely related and roughly contemporary Greek-Egyptian funeral stela once in the Nahman collection, the presence of two plucked geese makes it clear that the table is thought of as similar to an Egyptian offering table.[[43]](#endnote-44)

Such complications highlight once more the limitations placed on us by the Athenian bias in our Greek evidence, but they are also instructive in themselves: the fact that few images of the *prothesis*, and indeed few grave stelae, of the period are known from East Greece or Caria shows how cultural practice might differ not only between different parts of the eastern Aegean world but also between the Carians’ homeland and their communities in Egypt.[[44]](#endnote-45) The stela’s position at the border of different cultural traditions is most clearly exemplified by the figure of the mourner holding a knife. According to Herodotus, the cutting of the forehead with a knife, manifesting intense grief, was carried out as a ritual gesture of mourning by Carians participating in the Egyptian festival of Osiris and Isis at Busiris.[[45]](#endnote-46) Recent studies by Liviu Mihail Iancu and Jay McAnally have rightly noted the uniqueness of male self-mutilation as a mourning ritual in extant Aegean and Anatolian (but not in Jewish) evidence.[[46]](#endnote-47) Iancu’s speculation about its possible adoption by Carians from West Semites among the multicultural community of Memphite mercenaries, however, seems perilously close to connecting two random dots in a field otherwise empty of evidence; for females, certainly, the violent laceration of the cheeks was well established in Archaic Greece.

With its mix of Egyptian, Ionian, Carian, and possibly other foreign elements, Piabrm’s stela thus cannot be attributed to a single craft tradition or “ethnic identity,” even if the carving betrays a hand trained in Ionian/Carian more than Egyptian conventions. How does the painted decoration fit into this picture? On the one hand, the figured decoration of Piabrm’s bier—drawn freehand without the help of incised outlines—suggests familiarity with current fashions of Late Archaic Greek *klinai* and perhaps experience with representing them. On the other hand, the overall arrangement, the addition of a striking painted frame, and the coloring of the Egyptian scenes largely conform to Egyptian conventions. This applies also to some extent to the stunning pattern of Osiris’s dress, though this, again, has some idiosyncrasies.

It is clear from the multispectral images that Osiris’s dress was polychrome, with Egyptian blue the only of several pigments to be securely identifiable. It featured a rich pattern of chevrons as well as rosettes, probably arranged in three vertical panels on the dress or perhaps as a belt with rosettes above a dress with a chevron pattern. Egyptian art often depicts Osiris’s dress as plain, but there are a number of representations of him in patterned dress, mostly involving rosettes, scales, and especially diamond patterns—albeit seemingly not (at least as far as suggested by my limited survey) chevrons.[[47]](#endnote-48) Though well attested in New Kingdom art, patterned garments are especially common for Osiris and other deities in later periods, with the best parallels coming from tombs and temples of the Roman period. Female deities in painted tombs at Tuna el-Gebel, for example, wear dresses with multicolored horizontal chevrons and/or vertical patterned panels, while at Dendera, the goddess Nut is dressed in a garment with vertical chevrons and a central panel with rosettes.[[48]](#endnote-49) And even though these examples are not precise matches and are considerably later in date, individual elements such as multicolored chevrons are well attested on textiles and adornments from Tutankhamun’s tomb and in other New Kingdom art.[[49]](#endnote-50)

In Greek art, in contrast, chevrons appear to be rarer. Richly patterned, even figured, garments are of course well attested in Archaic art, with both horizontal panels and a central vertical *paryphe* common in female dress; often designs such as colorful diamond patterns also derive inspiration from foreign, including Near Eastern, traditions.[[50]](#endnote-51) Chevrons, though, seem confined to the dress of Eastern foreigners, such as Thracians and Scythians, and are often rather differently rendered.[[51]](#endnote-52) Overall, then, Osiris’s dress seems somewhat exceptional with regard to both Egyptian and Greek painterly practice; it might have been designed specifically to highlight the god’s importance, perhaps drawing on traditions from both cultures for the purpose. Interestingly in this context, the Egyptian-Aramaic stela of Akhatabu an Abba from Saqqara, dating from Year 4 of Xerxes’s reign (482 BC), also features Osiris wearing a patterned dress, though here the pattern is carved in addition to, presumably, being painted and is different in detail from our stela.[[52]](#endnote-53)

Akhatabu an Abba’s stela reminds us that Carians were not the only foreigners to have lived and died in Late Period Memphis. Indeed, it has been suggested that a workshop may have existed in Memphis that specialized in the manufacture of stelae for the city’s diverse ethnic groups.[[53]](#endnote-54) Several of the Caro-Memphite stelae certainly could have been fashioned by the same hand, but whether works such as the roughly contemporary Greek-Egyptian Nahman stela and the (somewhat later) Achaemenid-Egyptian stelae emerge from the same workshop is difficult to judge; they display similar mixtures of cultural traditions but are stylistically different. Among Carians and Ionians there was certainly a tradition of expert stone carving, and both were active as masons and sculptors abroad.[[54]](#endnote-55) One could well imagine them active at Memphis, perhaps collaborating with local craftsmen including painters. Such a multicultural environment—in which technical and cultural knowledge was shared, developed, and adapted—would have encouraged knowledge and ideas to radiate beyond the confines of Memphis, carried by migrants who returned home or moved on to other places in the Mediterranean world.[[55]](#endnote-56) Similar arguments have been made also in relation to the transmission of knowledge, technical and otherwise, by Bronze Age mercenaries, whose impact may have been felt in shipbuilding as much as in storytelling,[[56]](#endnote-57) underlining once more the fact that military mobility forms part of complex patterns of interaction that extended well beyond mere military matters.

Processes such as these are not necessarily straightforward and easy to grasp. For example, to date no monuments closely resembling the Caro-Egyptian stelae are known from outside Egypt. Nonetheless there are hints that beliefs about the afterlife and elements of funeral practice that were shared and developed in the multicultural communities of Memphis left their mark also elsewhere in Egypt and Asia Minor. The Carians’ preference for the otherwise largely obsolete Old Kingdom false-door iconography, for example, was probably rooted in a preexisting western Anatolian tradition of false doors in Carian, Lycian, and Lydian tomb monuments. Yet it is not entirely inconceivable that the motif’s enduring popularity in Asia Minor, as a symbolic threshold to the afterlife, was reinforced by Egyptian ideas;[[57]](#endnote-58) it certainly seems to have been employed also by (East) Greeks living in the Greek-Egyptian port of Naukratis in the Nile Delta.[[58]](#endnote-59) In much the same way, it has long been suspected that Egyptian ideas contributed to the growing popularity of sarcophagus burials, and inhumations in general, in many parts of the Archaic East Greek and especially Ionian world.[[59]](#endnote-60) The evidence for the cultural “bilingualism,” or indeed multilingualism, of the eastern Mediterranean peoples in the sixth century BC is certainly a powerful argument for not discounting Egypt as one of the forces that shaped ideas and technologies in the eastern Mediterranean world.

2. Isis, Osiris, and the Adonia: Greeks at Naukratis

My second case study investigates some of the agents who may have shaped and transmitted new ideas and practices at a different site, the Egyptian-Greek trading port of Naukratis. Naukratis was a key node of commercial and cultural interchange between Egypt and the (Greek) Mediterranean from the late seventh century BC onward. Excavations in the late nineteenth century here revealed a town in which Egyptians, Greeks, and other foreigners lived side by side for centuries, with rich finds coming especially from the town’s sanctuaries.[[60]](#endnote-61) The site’s cemetery, in contrast, proved a disappointment for the excavators Ernest Gardner and W. M. Flinders Petrie, yielding only minor finds of mostly Hellenistic date.[[61]](#endnote-62) The most substantial tomb monuments were found in secondary use, including a late sixth- to early fifth-century BC “false door” grave marker that remarkably fused Egyptian and Anatolian door iconography.[[62]](#endnote-63) The tombs themselves did yield some interesting finds, however, even if their significance was overlooked both by the excavators and by later scholars. Two graves in particular are of interest, both of them among the earlier, Classical burials in the cemetery.

One the tombs yielded a lamp dated to the fifth century BC, two small Attic palmette *lekythoi* of around 400 BC, and a miniature pottery bowl-cum-tray that had been placed beneath the deceased’s head (fig. 2.4).[[63]](#endnote-64) While lamps and especially *lekythoi* are standard grave offerings from the period, the tray is unusual. Gardner noted that several tombs at Naukratis contained such “curious minute saucers, sometimes with two handles,” and a similar but not identical tray is also among David Hogarth’s stray finds from Naukratis.[[64]](#endnote-65) The closest parallels I am aware of are miniature offering trays that were found in the thousands in the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at ancient Corinth. Attested from end of the sixth to the third century BC, but especially popular in the fourth, they initially featured simplified versions of three or more different vessels on the “tray,” which later developed into shallow bowls.[[65]](#endnote-66)

Although the Naukratis examples, with their single rather than triple bowl, are different from the Corinthian ones, a link with Corinthian practice might still be possible, not least as Corinthian imports, albeit limited, indicate a certain amount of contact between Naukratis and Corinth in the Classical period.[[66]](#endnote-67) The Corinthian trays are generally considered specific to the cult of Demeter and Kore, however, and unlike other types of miniature pottery, are not attested in Corinthian tombs. Conversely, the cult of Demeter is not particularly prominent in extant evidence at Naukratis, though this could merely be a result of the chance focus of excavation activity.[[67]](#endnote-68) The appearance of such trays in Naukratite tombs is thus all the more unusual and, I suggest, warrants the seeking of an explanation in the particular cultural context of Naukratis. Greeks in Egypt had long recognized their Demeter as the equivalent of Egyptian Isis, who, along with Osiris, was associated with the underworld and rebirth;[[68]](#endnote-69) the story of Demeter and Kore in some ways provided a parallel to that of Osiris and Isis. Indeed, already before the mid-sixth century BC, Ionians in Egyptian Karnak had equated the grain goddess Demeter with Isis as “mistress of vegetation,” in a sanctuary later known as the Demetrion, which also housed a cult of Osiris as “master of nourishment,” characterized by a strong focus on death and rebirth in its ritual practice.[[69]](#endnote-70) As Dorothy J. Thompson has argued, it was through its link with the doctrine of the soul’s immortality and its focus on personal well-being that the cult of Demeter, carried by women, transcended social and ethnic boundaries and became an integrative force in multicultural Ptolemaic Egypt.[[70]](#endnote-71) The finds from Naukratis suggest that it already had such a function earlier. It may well have been the influence of Egyptian beliefs that led Classical Naukratite women not only to equip their deceased with oil and light but also to place them under the particular protection of Demeter-Isis.

The second tomb of note contained a large *alabastron* and an Athenian red-figure acorn *lekythos* of the early fourth century BC (fig. 2.5).[[71]](#endnote-72) The *lekythos*, showing Eros with an incense burner on a ladder flanked by women, is one of the rare known representations relating to the Adonia, a women’s festival that was celebrated once a year and is best attested in Classical Athens.[[72]](#endnote-73) As part of the ritual, seeds (texts mention lettuce, wheat, barley, and fennel) were planted in pots called “gardens of Adonis.” Once the seeds had sprouted, they were carried to the rooftops, where they soon died in the heat. Symbolizing the death of Adonis, this was the signal for the women to lament Aphrodite’s youthful lover, who was said to share his time between the underworld and the world of the living; the gardens were then disposed of in the sea or a spring. The festival also involved dancing to the music of flute and tambourines, and it is possible that small images of Adonis were placed in the Adonis gardens.[[73]](#endnote-74) Marcel Detienne’s influential study of the Adonia has shown that it was centered on the domestic sphere, revolved around Aphrodite and the powers of seduction, counted *hetairai* among the celebrants, and involved the death of vegetation. It thus to some extent provided an antithesis to, and subversion of, key female civic roles. Recent scholarship has somewhat complicated this structural analysis, noting the existence of public processions (as in the fourth-century BC Adonia celebrated in the Piraeus, linked to Aphrodite Ourania) and arguing for a more central social position of the festival that articulated, but also subverted, key female roles in marriage and mourning.[[74]](#endnote-75)

Both the myth and the rite have a long history in the Greek world. In a passage probably from the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, Adonis is the son of Alphesiboea and Phoenix, the mythical ancestor of the Phoenicians but also the name of the Egyptian mythical bird.[[75]](#endnote-76) The earliest references to the ritual lament for Adonis’s death are found around 600 BC in a fragment by Sappho, suggesting that the Adonia was being celebrated by this time on Lesbos.[[76]](#endnote-77) Most images of the ritual come from Classical Athens and typically feature an “Adonis garden” in a broken pot, a ladder leading up to the roof, and sometimes incense burners, as on our *lekythos*, as Adonis was closely linked with myrrh, the precious incense involved in the phoenix’s rebirth and a popular scent with seductive powers.[[77]](#endnote-78)

Scholars have long noted the Adonia’s links with Near Eastern, notably Babylonian and Phoenician, ideas and practices and have argued for a transmission of the cult from the Middle East to Greece, perhaps via Cyprus.[[78]](#endnote-79) Just as striking, if not more so, however, are similarities with Egyptian ritual.[[79]](#endnote-80) This applies especially to the Adonis garden rites, which have few parallels in Near Eastern cult but are strongly reminiscent of a key element of the Osirian mysteries, the Osirian corn mummies (Osiris-vegetans). The latter were composed in molds, troughs, and frames from earth, barley, and Nile water and then watered and tended like gardens for several days until they sprouted, symbolizing the renewal of life. A second figure, Osiris Sokar, was made from earth, spices, and other precious ingredients, left in the sun to dry, and then was mummified. During the creation of the figures, which typically took place in Osiris chapels on temple roofs, mourning rituals were performed by Osiris’s sisters, Isis and Nephthys. Both figures were then buried and after a year were dug up and reburied or thrown into the temple’s sacred lake or the river.[[80]](#endnote-81) Parallels between these rites and the Adonia have long been noted, but as they are especially evident in the description in Theocritus’s *Idyll* 15 of an Adonia festival in the Alexandrian palace of Arsinoe II in 275 BC, they are generally considered late, part of the Ptolemaic policy of religious integration that linked Osiris with Adonis, as “another dying god whose chief function in ritual was to be lamented.”[[81]](#endnote-82) There are good arguments for suggesting that links between Adonis and Osiris go back much further, however, and that Ptolemaic instrumentalization represents only one stage in an intercultural dialogue that dates back to the earliest days of the Greek Adonis ritual.

To begin with, the key elements of the ritual, including the lament and the gardens, clearly predate the Ptolemaic period. Moreover, there can be no doubt that from the later seventh century BC Greek residents and visitors to Egypt would have been aware of, and perhaps participated in, Osirian festivals involving “corn mummies” in towns such as Memphis, Naukratis, Canopus, or the great Osirian shrine at Abydos.[[82]](#endnote-83) Indeed, it can be no coincidence that we first hear about the Adonia ritual on Lesbos, an island that by around 600 BC was closely involved in trade with Egypt and that our informant is Sappho.[[83]](#endnote-84) One of Sappho’s poems, only recently rediscovered, speaks of her longing for her brother Charaxos to return from a sea journey bringing riches, a trading voyage that might have involved the sale of wine in Egypt as well as visiting Naukratis, not least since Herodotus mentions Lesbians among the Greek traders represented at Naukratis.[[84]](#endnote-85) Whether Charaxos is real or, as some believe,[[85]](#endnote-86) part of a fictional cast of characters and events created by Sappho for the entertainment of symposiasts and their female companions, Lesbos’s seaborne trade with Egypt is amply borne out by archaeology, from finds of Lesbian amphorae in late seventh-sixth century BC Naukratis and elsewhere in Egypt,[[86]](#endnote-87) to sixth-century BC votive inscriptions by Mytileneans at Naukratis. Even Sappho’s references to Charaxos’s infatuation with the Naukratite *hetaira* Doricha (“she who yearns for gifts”), on whom he supposedly lavished much money, finds a plausible background in the inscriptional evidence for female dedicants in the sixth century BC (and later) sanctuary of Aphrodite at Naukratis: with names including Mikis, Archedike, and Aigyptis (“the Egyptian”), they most likely represent the town’s *hetairai*, whose fame and beauty are highlighted by Herodotus.[[87]](#endnote-88)

It is precisely women like Doricha or Aigyptis, and the elite traders and travelers who were their clients and lovers, who would have been the audience for Sappho’s poems, with their emphasis on female beauty and seductiveness, rivalry, and “lesbian” erotic.[[88]](#endnote-89) It is they also who are likely to have played a key role in adopting and adapting an Egyptian ritual centered on female love and mourning for themselves. At home in the world of Greece as well as Egypt (and perhaps the Near East), many of them were also internationally mobile, even if not always voluntarily. Herodotus tells the tale of how another supposed Naukratite *hetaira*, Rhodopis (“rosy face”), whom he and other later writers took to be identical to Sappho’s Doricha, had been brought as a slave from Thrace to Samos and thence to Naukratis, where, her freedom having been bought by Charaxos, she eventually became wealthy enough to dedicate rich offerings in Delphi.[[89]](#endnote-90) As Gregory Nagy rightly notes, while such rags-to-riches tales are hardly historical facts, they can be true, if symbolic, reflections of social realities, from the trafficking of women as slaves and prostitutes to a world characterized by geographic and social mobility.[[90]](#endnote-91) It is *hetairai*, well attested as one of the key constituencies among Adonis worshippers,[[91]](#endnote-92) but also the (Greek or Egyptian) wives or daughters of traders and mercenaries, who had the opportunity and the motivation to introduce to Greece elements of a ritual that fostered a female community that afforded them a special degree of freedom but that also coincided with the traditional female social spheres of fertility, marriage, and mourning.[[92]](#endnote-93)

Even if we cannot grasp the role of Adonis in Naukratis with any precision, there are other finds besides the Adonia *lekythos* that seem to belong in the same context. Two are related to the *iunx* (ἴυγξ), the magical wheel on a string that was said to have been invented by Aphrodite to enchant and attract lovers with its sound, including her own, Adonis.[[93]](#endnote-94) One is a fourth-century BC gilded copper ring, again found in a tomb, that shows Eros playing with a *iunx* (fig. 2.6).[[94]](#endnote-95) Another is a sixth-century BC votive inscription on a Chian chalice that can perhaps be read as Iunx, a dedication perhaps by yet another of the port’s *hetairai*—Iunx, of course, would be a highly appropriate name for someone whose business it is to charm lovers.[[95]](#endnote-96) A fourth-century BC terracotta group of Aphrodite and Eros, finally, is the most elaborate figurine to have emerged from the Naukratite cemetery.[[96]](#endnote-97)

The recurrence of the theme of love, magic, and notions of rebirth linked to Aphrodite, Adonis, and Demeter-Isis at Naukratis suggests that the port, with its central role in early Greek-Egyptian exchange, also provided fertile soil for the development of ritual practices that crossed cultural borders. Women, including *hetairai*, were prime agents in this process. The finds from Naukratis also underline that these processes were part of a long-term dialogue that involved different groups of people in different periods, with a likely focus on East Greeks in the Archaic period and mainland Greeks in the Classical. The surge in popularity, or at least visibility—not necessarily the same thing—of the Adonia in Classical Athens, of course, fundamentally reflects developments in Athenian society. Nonetheless, its wider background is formed by the fifth-century Athenian dialogue with, and *logos* about, the culture of Egypt, which included Athenian political and military ties with, and presence in, Egypt as well as the presence of Egyptians, Egyptian goods, and Egyptian cults in Athens.[[97]](#endnote-98)

That it was precisely ideas and rituals related to the cycle of life and death, mourning and rebirth, and magic that took center stage across time in this cross-cultural dialogue is hardly surprising. As is well attested in contemporary multifaith societies, crossover between communities happens most easily with regard to rites that promise to avert illness and suffering or attract wealth and good luck and that are located in the realm of more “personal” or private religion.[[98]](#endnote-99) Notions of resurrection and eternal life, and the individual empowerment that lay in the prospect of manipulating one’s own fate through ritual and magic, would have appealed to Greeks all the more as this promise came from Egypt, a long-standing purveyor of amulets and potions to protect the living and the dead.[[99]](#endnote-100) It would have been precisely the agency offered by the Adonis ritual but also by the worship of Demeter to (notably in the Greek world) marginalized social groups such as women—in their key social spheres of birth, love, and death—that created some of its appeal.

3. Cats for Arsinoe: Hellenistic Encounters

My final case study again takes its departure from Naukratis. The cultural, political, and economic transformations that affected Egypt following the conquest of Alexander the Great in 332 BC also spelled change for the international river port. While the economic and political focus now firmly shifted to the Mediterranean Sea and to Alexandria, the first half of the third century BC still saw a great flourishing and much building activity in Naukratis. Among other things the old Egyptian sanctuary of Amun-Re was enlarged and embellished, and new cults were instituted.[[100]](#endnote-101) As has been argued recently by Ross Thomas and Peter Higgs, this also included the establishment of a sanctuary of the cat goddess Bastet/Boubastis, which flourished in the early part of the third century BC and yielded an extraordinary group of sculptures depicting cats. As noted by Thomas and Higgs, while the sculptures were bought by Flinders Petrie and the Egyptian Museum in Cairo from antiquities dealers, they almost certainly were originally found at the site of Naukratis.[[101]](#endnote-102) The attractive, mostly life-size early Hellenistic cats, preserved in some twenty-two fragments, were carved from limestone or marble, partly in a lively, “naturalistic” Greek style, partly in a stiffer, less agile Egyptian tradition (fig. 2.7). Many of them, both female and male, are shown pawing birds. A limestone base for one of the cats carries the dedication ΓΑΛΑΤΕIΑ:ΘΕΥΔΟΤΟΥ ΒΟΥΒΑΣΤI (Galatea daughter of Theodotos to Boubastis), indicating that the group came from a Bubasteion, a temple of Bastet, the feline goddess who was worshipped as a terrifying avenger in the period but also and especially as a nurturing mother concerned with fertility, childbirth, and infants.

The extraordinary group would be unique, were it not for the recent find of a large number of related sculptures in a Boubastis sanctuary at Kom el-Dikka, in Alexandria, which dates to around 300 BC and was rebuilt under Queen Berenike II (267/266–221 BC) for her husband, Ptolemy III (r. 246–221 BC), and their children.[[102]](#endnote-103) The sanctuary yielded some 172 limestone and 384 terracotta figures of cats as well as images of children holding cats or birds, some of the cats bearing votive inscriptions by female and male dedicants with Greek names. The terracotta cats are shown crouching on a plinth, often seizing a bird, identified by the excavators as a small duck. The limestone cats sit calmly or alert or are standing; there are also large cats with kittens, as well as cats with kittens carried by children.

At first glance the sculptures from Naukratis and Alexandria might be no more than examples of offerings to the cat-goddess Bastet/Boubastis that depict the goddess’s sacred animal and alter ego in a new, Greek-inspired style, pursuing a characteristic feline pastime: catching and killing birds. The sculptures’ religious context demands deeper probing, however. The elegant style and seeming lightheartedness of the images, I contend, conceal a deeper meaning, similar to that recently demonstrated for the Hellenistic sculptural type of the “goose wrestler,” a young boy playfully fighting with a goose.[[103]](#endnote-104) The varied renderings of this theme have traditionally been seen as charming “genre” scenes typical of Hellenistic Greek art, yet in an Egyptian context the image could carry a distinct religious and political meaning. A small silver group of a boy with a goose (fig. 2.8) found at Alexandria, for instance, once featured a sidelock and crown (now lost), making it clear that it represented a child god, most likely the god Horus-the-child, also known as Harpokrates.[[104]](#endnote-105) The Nile goose he holds is not merely a plaything or pet animal but a sacrificial animal, which, as noted by Patrick Schollmeyer and Brunilde Ridgway,[[105]](#endnote-106) frequently embodied Horus’s evil adversary Seth. Such notions were prominent especially in Late Period and Ptolemaic Egyptian religion, when sacrificial animals, and especially geese and other birds, were thought to represent a god’s enemies; we see them in the sacrifices placed on offering tables, such as in the Carian stelae discussed above (see figs. 2.1–2.3).[[106]](#endnote-107) In political ideology, with the pharaoh long considered the reincarnation of Horus, their defeat and sacrifice mirrored the god defeating his enemy and thus also symbolized thepharaoh defeating the enemies of Egypt. Of course, as many scholars have noted, images like those of the boy with the goose often feature a playful interaction between boy and animal that almost seems affectionate and that appears to contradict an interpretation of a cosmic struggle.[[107]](#endnote-108) Yet a tension between religious meaning and playful form, drawing on Greek traditions of depicting children with pets, would also have been a stylistic device reflecting the sophisticated intercultural milieu of Hellenistic Alexandria..

Ubiquitous in Late Period and later Egypt, the symbolic meaning of birds as sacrificial animals would have been familiar also to Greeks from their contact with Egyptians. Indeed, that the notion was familiar to East Greeks already by around 600 BC seems indicated by a pottery *oinochoe* made in Miletos and found in a tomb on Rhodes, both places that maintained close contact with Egypt in the period (fig. 2.9).[[108]](#endnote-109) Its puzzling decoration, an image of a goose being strangled by a lion-sphinx, has meaning only when considered against a contemporary Egyptian background, with the sphinx as the embodiment of the pharaoh defeating his enemy. Beside the sphinx, its humble relative the cat, too, could take on a role as a divine avatar and a destroyer of enemies in Egypt. It is in the form of a great cat that the sun god Re, for example, slays the snake Apep in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. A similar symbolism is probably associated with images of cats chasing birds, such as those adorning the New Kingdom tomb of Nebamun and other scenes of fowling in the marshes; as noted, for instance, by Richard Parkinson and Daniel von Recklinghausen, such scenes carried strong connotations of hunting enemies, with the wild geese in the papyrus thicket embodying the enemies of Horus or the pharaoh (fig. 2.10).[[109]](#endnote-110)

Returning to our cat sculptures with this in mind, the playful scenes reveal themselves as part of a long tradition of animals as the avatars of both Egyptian gods and their enemies. As offerings to the cat goddess Bastet/Bubastis, the female cats would have embodied the goddess, with the male cats perhaps representing Horus. By extension, they also embodied the Ptolemaic queens and kings. We know that most or all of the cat sculptures from Kom el-Dikka predate the sanctuary’s rebuilding under Berenike II sometime between 246 and 222 BC, and it may be no coincidence that the Demotic dedication on one of the Naukratite cat sculptures, though much defaced, seems to record a date of 266/265 BC, shortly after the deification of Berenike’s predecessor queen, Arsinoe II. The latter was the wife and sister of Ptolemy II (r. 285–246 BC), and her cult was disseminated after her death by the king. Ptolemy I (r. 305–282 BC) and Ptolemy II, who were instrumental in the rebuilding of the sanctuary of Amun-Re at Naukratis, thus in all likelihood also played key roles in the establishment or expansion of the sanctuaries of Bastet/Boubastis at Alexandria and at Naukratis. Here Arsinoe II would have been recognized in the cat goddess, but she may also have retained elements of maritime Aphrodite and Isis, with whom she was more commonly identified.[[110]](#endnote-111) At least some of the small birds caught by the cats should be interpreted as doves, traditionally associated with Greek Aphrodite; the sacrifice of birds (*ornea*) to deified Arsinoe II is attested also in a third-century BC text on the demes of Alexandria.[[111]](#endnote-112) Similar to Arsinoe II’s Adonia, the ruler-sponsored cults of Bastet/Bubastis would have been part of a wider policy aimed at consolidating Ptolemaic rule by fostering the assimilation of Greek and Egyptian religious practices and thus co-opting the diverse communities of Hellenistic Egypt into Ptolemaic ruler cults (a policy that, coincidentally, also involved the cult of Demeter and Kore). With their curious mixture of Greek and Egyptian styles, the cats from Alexandria and Naukratis played their part in this process as unique expressions of Egyptian religious concepts by and for Greek, or indeed mixed, audiences in Egypt.[[112]](#endnote-113)

4. Cross-cultural Dialogues: The Question of Agents and Impact

The nature of the relationship between Egyptians and their neighbors along the Mediterranean’s shores has long been a matter of debate. Examining interactions between Egyptians, Greeks, and Carians across the centuries, the case studies considered here paint a picture of an ongoing dialogue that involved a wide variety of different actors, places, and processes. Sustained episodes of close contact provided a platform for the development and transfer of practices, knowledge, and ideas that radiated out from their places of origin to tangibly shape both cultures, with the sphere of religion playing a key role.

These observations have wider ramifications. Scholars such as Walter Burkert or Albert Henrichs have long argued that elements of Egyptian, notably Osirian, religion appeared in Greek religion especially from the sixth century BC onward, with Dionysos, for example, acquiring Orphic/Bacchic elements.[[113]](#endnote-114) They have pointed to the myth of Osiris and Isis closely resembling the Dionysiac/Orphic myth of Dionysos Zagreus being torn to pieces by Titans and reassembled by Rhea/Demeter, a narrative that, though securely attested only from the early Hellenistic period, likely has earlier roots.[[114]](#endnote-115) Ideas from the Egyptian Book of the Dead or related coffin spells have been recognized in Greek concepts of the afterlife from at least the early fifth century BC, and also Greek cosmogonic notions such as the separation of heaven and earth have been identified by Thomas Dousa as elaborations of Egyptian beliefs.[[115]](#endnote-116) Most recently, Jan Bremmer has proposed that the colonial milieu of southern Italy around 400 BC played a major role for the incorporation of Egyptian ideas into Orphism;[[116]](#endnote-117) many of the relevant notions, though, can be traced back already to the seventh to sixth centuries BC.[[117]](#endnote-118) The Carian and Greek engagement with Osirian religion in the sixth century BC and the successive instances of the adoption and adaptation of Osirian ritual in the Greek Adonia are further examples of such cross-cultural fertilization. They also show that this was a dynamic process that from the late seventh century BC involved multiple episodes of interaction between different people in different parts of the ancient world, at different times. It was the encounter between Egypt and the intellectually vibrant and internationally engaged cities of the East Greek and Carian world that first established a framework of intercultural “translation.”[[118]](#endnote-119) The intercultural discourse was further developed in wider Mediterranean circles—including Athenian, south Italian, and eventually Ptolemaic networks—which contributed new impulses to the ongoing evolution and transformation of cultural practices, from burial customs to religious rites.

Cultural change, notably in the Archaic Greek world, is often attributed primarily to (male) elites who had the political and economic power to fundamentally shape social practice.[[119]](#endnote-120) Yet looking at interaction through the lens of religious practice allows us to catch a glimpse also of otherwise less socially visible and marginal groups. The Greeks and Carians who arrived in Egypt from the late seventh century BC onward in all likelihood comprised a wide social spectrum, from aristocrats to slaves, and went on to occupy a variety of positions—not necessarily the same as at home—within Egyptian society and within immigrant or diaspora communities.[[120]](#endnote-121) The relics they left behind suggest that it was not only narrow powerful groups in pursuit of status and engaged in conspicuous consumption that underpinned processes of exchange, innovation, and transformation. Rather, it was men and women from across a wider spectrum—mercenaries and traders, craftsmen or translators, priestesses and *hetairai*—who were carriers of culture, who engaged in, shaped, and transferred social and cultural practices from eschatological beliefs to technological know-how.

An observation recently made by Nathan Arrington concerning Early Iron Age burials at Lefkandi, in Greece, thus seems just as true for Late Period Egypt: “By unlinking intercultural exchange from a narrow elite, it is possible to recover multiple channels through which movement and communication occurred . . . and to restore agency to actors largely neglected from archaeological literature.”[[121]](#endnote-122) At Lefkandi, Arrington observed children and what he termed “sub-elites”; the present study has highlighted especially the agency of women, from the wives, daughters, and slaves of traders and mercenaries to the geographically (and sometimes socially) mobile *hetairai* who moved in their circles, and ultimately the women and queens of Ptolemaic Egypt. It was through them that new practices entered the social spheres in which they held key roles, such as funeral practice, love magic, or aspects of commensality and entertainment, driven by a quest for supernatural advantages or a desire for social prestige. While the role of women as mediators and cultural brokers notably in colonial situations has been noted for some time, the wider significance of women and of female mobility in cultural transmission remains underestimated.[[122]](#endnote-123) Thompson has highlighted female agency in mystery religion related to Demeter in Late Period and Ptolemaic Egypt as an integrative force, noting the power of ideas such as that of the soul’s immortality in transcending boundaries.[[123]](#endnote-124) I have argued for similar dynamics in relation to the spread of the Adonia, which proved successful perhaps precisely because it played to the key “public” social roles of women as well as promoting specifically female spaces and networks of interaction. It would have been neighborhood situations, such as existed among mixed populations at sites like Memphis or Naukratis, that especially fostered such “bottom-up” developments among a wide array of social groups. In antiquity as today, “sacred time and spaces transcend frontiers and social barriers, facilitating—and legitimating—contacts between individuals who would otherwise not meet in the public sphere.”[[124]](#endnote-125) It is these developments that provided the fertile soil on which the state-sponsored “top-down” syncretistic developments of the Hellenistic period were to flourish later on.[[125]](#endnote-126)

Notes

[unnumbered note]

I am grateful to Joanne Dyer for the detailed scientific examination of Piabrm’s stela and for allowing me to present preliminary results in this article; to Kate Morton for preparing the stela’s preliminary color reconstruction; to Alan Johnston for help and discussion during the preparation of the manuscript; to my colleagues at the British Museum for assistance with object study and photography; to the anonymous peer reviewer for helpful and constructive suggestions; and last but not least to Sara E. Cole and Jeffrey Spier for all their work on this volume and the conference on which it was based and for kind assistance in the preparation of this article.

1. Manning 2009, 27–28. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. Vittmann 2003; Agut-Labordère 2013. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. Vittmann 2003; Vittmann 2006; see also Villing 2018a; Villing 2018b. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. Kaplan 2003; Vittmann 2003; Vittmann 2006; Schmitz 2010, 327–29; Thompson 2012; Jakobeit 2016; Colburn 2018, 83–85; on the historical background and dating of the Greek mercenaries, see also Van Wees, forthcoming. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. Höckmann 2001; Devauchelle 2010; Jurman 2010; Thompson 2012, 178–92; Höckmann and Weiss 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. Carian stelae: Kammerzell 1993; Höckmann 2001; Kammerzell 2001; Adiego 2007. Greek stelae: Gallo and Masson 1993; Colburn 2018, 84–87. Aramaic stelae: Porten and Gee 2001; Wasmuth 2010; Vittmann 2017; Wasmuth 2017; see also Vittmann 2003; Vittmann 2006. The figured registers often show the worship of Osiris, Isis, and/or the Apis bull or Egyptian embalming scenes. Foreign imagery includes the deceased on a bier or an enthroned foreign dignitary. Of five Greek-style *prothesis* scenes, one belongs to a Greek, the rest to Carians; of the latter, three combine the *prothesis* with scenes of the worship of the Apis bull and of Isis and Osiris. One stela just shows a Carian couple wearing East Greek dress. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
7. For example, Herda 2013; Rumscheid 2019. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
8. Kammerzell 2001, 238; McAnally 2016, 204; cf. Vittmann 2003; Vittmann 2006. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
9. London, British Museum EA 67235 https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y\_EA67235. The stela was excavated in 1968–69 at Saqqara, north cemetery, Baboon gallery. Published in Emery 1970; Martin and Nicholls 1978, 70–79, no. 4; Masson 1978, 22–23, no. 4; Kammerzell 1993, 139–45, no. M4; Höckmann 2001; Vittmann 2003, 170–74; G. Vittmann in Beck, Bol, and Bückling 2005, 484–85, no. 38; Adiego 2007, 44, 271–73, no. E.Me 12; A. Villing in Masson-Berghoff and Goddio 2016, 57; S. E. Cole in Spier, Potts, and Cole 2018, 92–93, no. 59. Höckmann (2001, 224) argued for a date around 540/30 BC, while Martin and Nicholls (1978, 75) had suggested a slightly later date, around 520 BC. The parallels for the decorated *klinē* of Piabrm (see note 24 below) might support the later date. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
10. Munro 1973. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
11. The identification of the toponym is not certain (an alternative site, Amyzon, had been suggested by McAnally 2016), but Mylasa (suggested by Descat 2008; cf. Adiego 2007, 227; Adiego 2013) is the most likely candidate, especially following the find of an inscribed seventh-century BC *oinochoe* at Hydai, near Mylasa, that uses an alphabet very similar to that used at Memphis: Adiego 2019, 25. Usold is taken to be Piabrm’s father by Vittmann (in Beck, Bol, and Bückling 2005, 484–85, no. 38) but as her husband by Adiego (2007, 271–73). [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
12. See Rumscheid 2019, describing the material culture of Mylasa as “almost a facet” of East Greek production. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
13. Martin and Nicholls 1978, 70, 72. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
14. Dyer and Villing, forthcoming. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
15. The reconstruction drawing was prepared by Kate Morton based on the scientific research of Joanne Dyer and archaeological research on parallels by the author, Joanne Dyer, and Kate Morton with the help of Aurélia Masson-Berghoff. Egyptian stelae of the Late Period are discussed especially in Munro 1973. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
16. The technical data and its interpretation will be discussed in more detail in the main publications of the results of this investigation: Dyer and Villing, forthcoming. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
17. Cf., for example, Munro 1973. On Egyptian color symbolism, see, for example, Baines 1985; Vos 1998; Robins 2001. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
18. See Malinine, Posener, and Vercoutter 1968; Vermaseren 1981; Vos 1998. For images featuring a red rug, compare, for example, a stela from Saqqara (Martin 1979, 54, no. 169) and a 25th–26th Dynasty coffin footboard (Strudwick and Dawson 2016, 201, no. 33). [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
19. For example, in the tomb paintings of Nebamun; see Parkinson 2008. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
20. Flecks of yellow are visible under the microscope in the central area, where multispectral images show a clear dot. For similar round bread with a central yellow dot, see, for example, the painted limestone stela of Sobekhotep, 18th Dynasty, London, British Museum, EA 1368 https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y\_EA1368. On Egyptian bread, see Wilson 1988, 13–16; see also Darby, Ghalioungui, and Grivetti 1977, 1:518–22 with fig. 12.13 (actual loaves), 523, fig. 12.14 (images of bakery). [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
21. London, British Museum, EA 67238, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA67238>, and EA 67239, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA67239>: Masson 1978, 22–23, no. 4. The fragments were found in 1968–69 in the area of the Lower Baboon gallery. Published in Masson 1978, 22–23, no. 4; Martin 1979, 54, no. 180; Davies 2006, 97, no. BCO–48. It is unclear if the stela included further registers. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
22. It is briefly noted by Kammerzell 1993, 144, 144n101, but not included in Adiego 2007. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
23. Traces of red color on male skin were also noted as preserved on another Saqqara stela with an embalming scene and an Apis bull: Martin 1979, 54, no. 169. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
24. The bed itself belongs to the *klinē* type “A,” Baughan 2013, 44–49; close parallels are the early fifth-century BC *klinai* from Duvanli and on the Polyxena sarcophagus, but the type is attested already earlier. For the Ionian sarcophagus from Akanthos, dated ca. 540–500 BC, see Kaltsas 1996–97. Compare also the animals and rosettes on Late Archaic Athenian vase images, for example, Baughan 2013, 16, fig. 3, 57, fig. 39. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
25. Martin and Nicholls 1978, 72, suggest a key pattern above and meander below, executed in gold, but no clear pattern is easily distinguishable also in multispectral imaging. Key or meander patterns often decorated the sides of mattresses in Athenian vase images; see, for example, Baughan 2013, 13, fig. 6. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
26. Compare especially the Klazomenian sarcophagus from Akanthos (Kaltsas 1996–97) and a Chalcidian black-figure cup, Würzburg L 164, of around 530 BC: BAPD no. 18504. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
27. Martin and Nicholls 1978, 72, with references; compare also the gold bull pendant from Kameiros (London, British Museum, 1860,0201.81, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G\_1860-0201-81](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA67239)). [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
28. For a short, though less tight, kilt, see, for example, Munro 1973, figs. 115, 126, 142. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
29. Martin and Nicholls 1978, 70; compare, for example, Munro 1973, plate 58. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
30. See Malinine, Posener, and Vercoutter 1968; Vermaseren 1981; compare Höckmann 2001, 225. They may represent the adornment of the young Apis bull during his introduction into the temple. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
31. For example, stelae from Memphis: Munro 1973, plates 58, 59. The design is somewhat reminiscent of some New Kingdom images, for example, in the 19th Dynasty Book of the Dead of Ani (London, British Museum, EA 10470,4, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA10470-4>). [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
32. Devauchelle 2010; Devauchelle 2012. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
33. Höckmann 2001; Kammerzell 2003, 239. Thoth leads worshippers to the gods, for example, on a stela of the Third Intermediate Period (Paris, Musée du Louvre, N3662, <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010014478>). Perhaps his prominence on the Carian stela is also linked to his nature as the divine inventor of writing and scribe of the gods, as some Caro-Memphites, at least, worked as a translators; see, for example, Höckmann 2001, plate 42.1–2; Herda 2013, 467–71. For Thoth as inventor of writing, see Plato, *Phaidros* 59 [274e]. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
34. Martin and Nicholls 1978, 70–79, 82–83; Höckmann 2001, 222–23 (“Saqqara Master”). [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
35. Klazomenian sarcophagus of the late seventh century BC: Hürmüzlü 2010, esp. 123, fig. 46. Agelarakis 2015 has put forward the hypothesis, based on the skeletal evidence, that the sarcophagus’s occupant may have been a soldier, perhaps a mercenary. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
36. Wasmuth 2017; for Egyptian elements on Greek mourning imagery, see Vermeule 1979; Marinatos and Anderson 2010, both somewhat overstating the case. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
37. Huber 2001. It may be represented also on the East Greek Polyxena sarcophagus, dating to shortly after 500 BC; on the sarcophagus, see, for example, Draycott 2018. The four mourners on Piabrm’s and other Caro-Memphite stelae correspond to the maximum number of mourners on most Athenian fifth-century BC representations of the *prothesis*; Shapiro 1991. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
38. Martin and Nicholls 1978, 73–74; Herda 2013, 445; McAnally 2016, 206–9. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
39. Martin and Nicholls 1978, 64, 73–74, plate 30. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
40. Shapiro 1991, 634–35; see also Huber 2001. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
41. Martin and Nicholls 1978, 74–75. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
42. Martin and Nicholls 1978, 77; Höckmann 2001, 221–22. For fourth-century BC Athenian funerary banquet images with similarly laden tables, see Closterman 2015. A Totenmahlrelief was also found at Naukratis: London, British Museum, 1888,0601.35, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1888-0601-35>: Gardner 1888, 22–23. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
43. Gallo and Masson 1993. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
44. A point also made by McAnally 2016, discussing Carian funerary practice in Caria and abroad. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
45. Herodotus, *Histories* 2.61. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
46. McAnally 2016; Iancu 2017. McAnally’s suggestion that the practice might be connected with the “psychological stresses involved in maintaining a Carian identity in a new environment” is hardly convincing. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
47. Examples include a painted wooden statue of Osiris from Thebes, 20th Dynasty (London, British Museum, EA 20868, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA20868>), and a painting of Osiris in the 19th Dynasty Book of the Dead of Ani (London, British Museum EA10470,4, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA10470-4>). [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
48. See Venit 2015, 109–56, esp. 117–18, figs. 4.8, 4.9 (Tuna el-Gebel House-Tomb 21), 140, fig. 4.33 (Siwa tomb of Siamun). [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
49. Among numerous examples that could be cited, some of the most stunning are painted ceiling patterns in Theban New Kingdom tombs, for example, TT31 and TT295. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
50. For example, Brinkmann, Koch-Brinkmann, and Dreyfus 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
51. See Tsiafakis 2016. Athenian art sometimes shows chevrons on domestic textiles such as cushions; see Tsiafakis 2016, 268, fig. 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
52. Vittmann 2003, 106–7, fig. 47; Wasmuth 2010, fig. 50.5. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
53. Wasmuth 2010. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
54. Herda 2013, 452–60. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
55. Among them may be mercenaries returning home, sometimes perhaps via circuitous routes, such as the “Egyptian”—that is, quite possibly Ionian or Ionian and Carian—mercenaries who, according to Xenophon (*Cyropaedia* 6.2.9, 7.1.45), supported Lydia against Persia and who are probably the same mercenaries whom Cyrus, after Kroisos’s defeat, settled at a site called Larissa, probably in Aeolia (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.1.7). [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
56. See Kelder in this volume. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
57. Roosevelt 2006. On votive doorways and a stela showing Osiris inside a doorway from Late Period Sais, see Wilson 2019. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
58. Villing 2015, 234–35. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
59. At sites such as Samos, Klazomenai, Teos, Ephesus, or Rhodes: Philipp 1981; Hitzl 1991, 27–28; Tsakos 1996, 126; Hürmüzlü 2004; Mohr 2015. For the influence of Osirian religion on Etruscan burials of the early sixth century BC, see Bubenheimer-Erhart 2004. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
60. See Villing 2013–20 and the summaries in Villing 2015; Villing 2018a, 78–80. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
61. Gardner 1988, 21–29; Villing 2015, 234–36. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
62. Villing 2015, 234–35, fig. 12.5 [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
63. All finds are today in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: P.5717 [= 88.819] (lamp), <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/182987>; P.5715 [=11.46019] and Eg.Inv.7528 [=P.5716; RES.87.162] (*lekythoi*), <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/409558/>; RES.87.163 [= Eg.Inv.2939; P.5718] (offering tray, marked in pencil “beneath head”), <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/344402>. Information that the objects were found together in a tomb comes from the Boston Museum’s inventories, in turn based on the EES distribution list. On the lamp and its dating, see Thomas 2013–20b, 7, fig. 17. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
64. Gardner 1888, 29. Hogarth’s tray, ca. 7 cm wide, was found in *sebakh* during the 1899 excavations and is today in Cairo Museum, JE33570 (CG26357). [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
65. Pemberton 2015. Rare elsewhere, examples from Nemea are also probably Corinthian: Pemberton 2015, 124. [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
66. Classical period Corinthian finds at Naukratis include trade amphorae, mortaria, fine ware pottery, terracotta figures, and loom weights; see Villing et al. 2013–20. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
67. The main piece of evidence is an intriguing large limestone tray (perhaps used for grinding grain?) dedicated by a certain Dionysie to Demeter, dated to the second century BC: Cairo Museum, JE33597. Its findspot also yielded numerous fragments of terracotta figurines, leading Hogarth to conjecture that the site was a sanctuary of Demeter: Hogarth et al. 1898–99, 41–42. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
68. Herodotus, *Histories* 2.59, 123, 156, 171; cf. Bonnet and Bricault 2016, 164–65. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
69. Villing, forthcoming. [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
70. Thompson 1998, esp. 705. [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
71. Gardner 1888, 27–28, grave D2: London, British Museum, 1888,0601.716 (Vase E721) https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G\_1888-0601-716; Atallah 1966, 187–88 fig. 47; Wehgartner 1992, 287–88, plate 63.1–2; Di Filippo Balestrazzi 1999, 323, fig. 18; Reitzammer 2016, fig. 10. Di Filippo Balestrazzi (1999, 321–26) cites Near Eastern parallels for the use of a ladder, while Edwards (1984, 99n50) puts forward Egyptian links. [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
72. Images related to the cult are collected in Servais-Soyez 1981; Cambitoglou 2018. [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
73. Detienne 1977; Servais-Soyez 1981; Servais-Soyez 1983; Simms 1997–98; Reitzammer 2016. For the cult of Adonis in Etruria, see Van der Meer 2012. [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
74. Reitzammer 2016; cf. Rosenzweig 2004, 91. [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
75. Hesiod fr. 106, 107 (Most). [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
76. Sappho fr. 140; see Reitzammer 2016, 12. Among later authors to refer to the ritual of the Adonia is Plato (Reitzammer 2016, 90–117). [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
77. Detienne 1977; see also Servais-Soyez 1981; Edwards 1984; Simms 1997–98; Reitzammer 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
78. The summary in Lane Fox 2009, 240–54, is one of many examples that could be cited. Much of the evidence summoned by scholars, however, is Hellenistic or later, and some of it is problematic, as pointed out, for example, by Nardelli (2017, 230–32, 250–54), especially with regard to the supposed importance of Adonis’s cult at Byblos (on which the key source is Lucian; see Lightfoot 2003, 305–28). [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
79. Egyptian links are discussed by Reed 2000; Quack 2007, 235–38, both with further literature; cf. also de Vaux 1933; Servais-Soyez 1983; Mettinger 2001, 175–79. Curiously, Lightfoot (2003, 312–13) recognizes the correspondence between the rites of Adonis and Osiris but still concludes that the Adonis gardens were “inherited by Greece from Syro-Palestine,” with reference to (largely irrelevant) biblical passages. [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
80. Waitkus 1999; Coulon 2005; Quack 2007; cf. Reed 2000, 343, on lettuce in Egyptian cult. A closely related rite involved so-called Osiris bricks, whose Osiris-shaped recesses were filled with soil, sand, cereal grains, and linen, containing the figure like a coffin: Tooley 1996; cf. also Quack 2007, 329–30. [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
81. Reed 2000, 327. Cf. Glotz 1920, who notes Adonia also in the Fayyum. The cult of Adonis at Canopus mentioned in the first century BC by Parthenius (fr. 42) might belong in the same context, as either an *interpretatio graeca* by the poet of local Osiris rites or a reference to an actual Adonis cult instituted there; cf. Reed 2000, 344. [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
82. For example, Villing 2019. [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
83. Also the frequent appearance of *hetairai* from Samos as participants in the Adonia in Classical Athenian sources may point to the cult’s East Greek derivation. [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
84. Bierl and Lardinois 2016; see also Ferrari 2014. On Charaxos and wine trade, see Strabo, *Geography* 17.1.33, 808c; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 13.596b; on Lesbians at Naukratis, see Herodotus, *Histories* 2.178–9 [↑](#endnote-ref-85)
85. For example, Lardinois 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-86)
86. Johnston 2013–20a. [↑](#endnote-ref-87)
87. Herodotus, *Histories* 2.135. Coincidentally or not, Herodotus’s list of famous Naukratite *hetairai* also features an Archidike, whom other ancient authors call Archedike, using the same spelling as the graffito. On the votive inscriptions, see Johnston 2013–20b, 43–45. [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
88. Bowie 2016. As argued by Schlesier (2014), the females mentioned in Sappho’s poems are all likely to be *hetairai*. [↑](#endnote-ref-89)
89. Herodotus, *Histories* 2.134–35. [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
90. Nagy 2015. On the legend that sprang up around the literary figure of Rhodopis/Doricha, see also Bing 2018. [↑](#endnote-ref-91)
91. Reitzammer 2016, 23, 158n79. [↑](#endnote-ref-92)
92. Reitzammer 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-93)
93. Detienne 1977, 83–90; Faraone 1993; Johnston 1995. The late fifth-century BC Athenia hydria of the Meidias Painter depicts Himeros using the *iunx* in the company of Aphrodite and Adonis. [↑](#endnote-ref-94)
94. Gardner 1888, 28: London, British Museum, 1888,0601.1; see Thomas and Acosta 2013–20, 5, fig. 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-95)
95. London, British Museum, 1924,1201.621, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1924-1201-621>; cf. Johnston 2013–20b, 44. If correctly supplemented, this would be the earliest textual evidence for the word *iunx*, otherwise attested from the time of Pindar and Aeschylus onward: Johnston 1995, 182n12. [↑](#endnote-ref-96)
96. London, British Museum, 1888,0601.125, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1888-0601-125>: Gardner 1888, 29, plate 16.18; Thomas 2013–20a, 12, fig. 28. [↑](#endnote-ref-97)
97. On relations between Athens and Egypt, see Vasunia 2001; Sofia 2016 (with Nesselrath 2017); Villing 2019, 214; cf. Moyer 2011. Some Athenians and other Greeks would have come to Egypt as soldiers during the ill-fated Egyptian expedition to assist the revolt of Inaros against the Persian occupation, which ended in defeat in 454 BC. One likely Greek soldier who died in Egypt in the (second quarter of?) the fifth century BC was Kobon, for whom his comrades erected a grave marker in the eastern Nile Delta: Wagner 1973; Hansen 1983, 1:92, no. 171. [↑](#endnote-ref-98)
98. For modern examples, see Couroucli 2012; cf. also Thompson 1998 for Greco-Roman Egypt. [↑](#endnote-ref-99)
99. Burkert 2004, 88; on the spread of “*aegyptiaca*,” see, for example, Arrington 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-100)
100. Masson-Berghoff 2019; Recklinghausen 2019. [↑](#endnote-ref-101)
101. Discussed in detail by Thomas and Higgs 2013–20, 6–27. [↑](#endnote-ref-102)
102. Abd El–Maksoud, Abd El–Fattah, and Seif El–Din 2012; Abd El–Maksoud, Abd El–Fattah, and Seif El–Din 2015; Abd El–Maksoud, Abd El–Fattah, and Seif El–Din 2018; cf. also Bergmann 2019. A Boubasteia festival is mentioned in the Canopus decree of 238 BC; see Pfeiffer 2004, 128–30. [↑](#endnote-ref-103)
103. Schollmeyer 2003; Ridgway 2006; Schollmeyer 2007; Queyrel 2014, 150–57; see also Villing 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-104)
104. London, British Museum, 1845,0705.1 (Silver 7), <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1845-0705-1>: Ridgway 2006, 645, fig. 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-105)
105. Schollmeyer 2003; Ridgway 2006; Schollmeyer 2007. [↑](#endnote-ref-106)
106. For example, Quack 2006. [↑](#endnote-ref-107)
107. Queyrel 2014, 150–57. A similar tension seems visible in a figure from Alexandria of a woman holding a goose while placing her foot on a hare (Queyrel 2014, 142, fig. 18). Both birds and hares appear to have been sacrificial animals at the Theadelpheia festival at Alexandria, part of Ptolemaic ruler cult, as well as possibly in the cult of deified Arsinoe II (Caneva 2014, 99, 99n54), and while the Egyptian desert hare often carried positive connotations, it could also be a demonic creature, representative perhaps of the desert world of Seth. [↑](#endnote-ref-108)
108. Rhodes Museum, 13452: Jacopi 1931, 336–38, fig. 372, plate VI. No other finds were recovered from the cremation containing this vase. Winkler-Horaçek (2015, 157–58 fig. 109, with further literature) rightly dismisses interpretations of the scene as humorous. A rare relief shows the pharaoh himself, Akhenaten, strangling a duck: Houlihan and Goodman 1986, 71, fig. 98. [↑](#endnote-ref-109)
109. Parkinson 2008, 132; Recklinghausen 2019, 346; cf. also Quack 2006, 75. Satirical images of cats herding water birds further underline the cat’s danger to birds. We may note in this context also the exceptional scene of a feline attacking a goose on a sixth-century BC probably Chian vessel from Naukratis, part of an unusual group of vessels with white overpainted decoration: London, British Museum 1888,0601.678.a; cf. also 1888,0601.b–e, and 1965,0930.494. Gardner 1888, 47, notes “very few” examples of this “peculiar” class of pottery in the Aphrodite sanctuary. [↑](#endnote-ref-110)
110. On the associations between Arsinoe II, Aphrodite, and Isis, see Minas-Nerpel in this volume. [↑](#endnote-ref-111)
111. *P. Oxy*. 27 2465; Trismegistos no. 62718, [www.trismegistos.org/text/62718](http://www.trismegistos.org/text/62718); on the link with Isis (and Demeter), see Schorn 2001; Caneva 2012; Caneva 2014, 99–103; cf. Villing 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-112)
112. This is also the context in which we must see a further significant find likely from Kom el-Dikka, discussed in Bergmann 2019. An early Hellenistic statue group, stylistically dated to the decades around the mid-third century BC, shows an older girl and a younger boy with a goose that combines rich allusions to Greek and Egyptian cultural traditions. Bergmann suspects the children, each wearing a Hellenistic royal diadem, or *stephane*, to be the offspring of Berenike II and Ptolemy III, and takes the “family” scene as a votive to a kourotrophic, Artemis-like Boubastis (the equation is well attested already in Herodotus’s *Histories*, for example, 2.137, and also in the sanctuary itself: Abd El-Fattah, Abd el-Maksoud, and Carrez-Maratray 2014; Abd el-Maksoud, Abd el-Fattah, and Seif el-Din 2015) that petitions for the children’s well-being; the goose in this context is the children’s pet (the option of it being a sacrificial victim is considered less likely). While I have no profound alternative interpretation to offer at present, however, it seems to me that there must be more to the unusual and complex group in terms of a religious and maybe political meaning, involving topics such as royal legitimacy and dynastic continuity. And given the centrality of the goose in the scene, there can be no doubt that it had symbolic meaning well beyond that of a coincidental pet (the complexities behind choices of sacrificial animals in Ptolemaic ruler cult are discussed, for example, by Caneva 2014, 99–103). If the girl (her dress echoing that of images of children offered to Artemis at Brauron) seems to claim the goose for herself by shielding it from the clutches of the chubby, temple boy–like boy, could we perhaps take her to represent the female of the Ptolemaic royal house, equated with the likes of Aphrodite and Isis, for whom the goose was both a sacrificial and a sacred animal (cf. Villing 2017), confronting a sibling male, equated with Horus, for whom the goose represented an adversary? Indeed, perhaps the protagonists could be seen not so much as royal children but as allusions to adult royals as child gods, perhaps even Arsinoe II and Ptolemy II. [↑](#endnote-ref-113)
113. Burkert 2004, 71–98; Henrichs 2010; Henrichs 2011; cf. Dousa 2010; Bremmer 2016, esp. 39–40. [↑](#endnote-ref-114)
114. Henrichs 2010, 98–101; Henrichs 2011. [↑](#endnote-ref-115)
115. Dousa 2010, 164; see also Bremmer 2016, 39–40 [↑](#endnote-ref-116)
116. Bremmer 2016, 41. [↑](#endnote-ref-117)
117. Burkert 2004, 88; Lieven 2016, 69. [↑](#endnote-ref-118)
118. Coulon 2013, 181. [↑](#endnote-ref-119)
119. For example, Raaflaub 2004; Bredow 2017; cf. Raaflaub 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-120)
120. On the social status of Greek and Carian immigrants to Egypt, which remains debated, see Carty 2015, 149–74; Iancu 2016; Villing 2018b. [↑](#endnote-ref-121)
121. Arrington 2015, 24. The case for the importance of women and non-elites is made also by Sacks 2017 and Murray 2018. [↑](#endnote-ref-122)
122. For example, Zurbach and Esposito 2010; on Carian women at Miletos, see also Herda 2013. [↑](#endnote-ref-123)
123. Thompson 1998. [↑](#endnote-ref-124)
124. Couroucli 2012, 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-125)
125. Of course, as pointed out by Caneva (2016), Ptolemaic religious policy, too, was never merely a top-down development but a dynamic interplay between a central power and diverse other social agents, each with their own agendas. Caneva, like many other scholars, highlights the role played in this by elites, notably priestly elites; as I hope to have shown, however, they are just one part of a more complex picture. [↑](#endnote-ref-126)