Aphrodite Pandemos at Naukratis

Andrew Scholtz

From Naukratis, the Greek emporion in the Nile Delta,¹ comes a little-noticed trio of dedicatory inscriptions showing the name “Pandemos” in the dative case.² Two of these were brought to light by Ernest Gardner while excavating the temenos of Aphrodite during the second season of digging (1885/6) at the site:³

Πανδῆμος
(Ionian cup ostrakon, inscription incised, Naukr. II 66 no. 818 and plate 21)

Π[Π]ανδῆμος
(Ionian cup sherd, inscription incised, Naukr. II p. 66 no. 821)

When in 1898 digging resumed under D. G. Hogarth, a third dedication was found, this time, in an area—one evidently given over to Aphrodite—within a building Hogarth identified as the Hellenion (cf. Hdt. 2.178.2–3), in the northeast corner of the excavations:⁴


²Outside of excavation reports and the like, occasionally cited, though without comment (e.g., Möller 162 n.595).


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[Ἀφροδίτη Πανδήμη]

(Attic rf volute-krater, London BM 1900.2–14.6, inscription incised, text as in Johnston case 1 no. 40, Möller 237 no. 22. τη : Πανδήμη[ω] in Venit 484–485 no. C5 and plate 244; Hogarth 56 no. 107 and plate 4)

For all three inscriptions, a late archaic, possibly very early classical date is reasonably secure. We are, then, dealing with the earliest attested instances of the epithet—instances seemingly uninfluenced by Athens, home to a Pandemos whom scholars often treat as paradigmatic for Aphrodite as sponsor of civic unity at poleis throughout the Greek world. Yet context suggests that this model will not work for Naukratis, a locale, as we shall see, more congenial to Pandemos in a non-civic, “general-access” capacity with respect to her clientele and her connection to economic activity at the site.

Civic Pandemos?

We surmise from the shared formulary, yet varied find-context and character of these dedications (an unevenly incised ostrakon, a fairly typical Ionian cup dedication, a fine Attic vase), that the epithet in question, the only one attested for Aphrodite at the site, had achieved some degree of currency

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7 The next attestations are early- to mid-fourth century: Pl. Symp. 1800–181C; Xen. Symp. 8.9–10; SEG XXXVI 1039 (Ionian Erythrae).

8 Little indication of Athenian involvement at early Naukratis: Möller 47, 125.

there by the later archaic period. As for the role played at Naukratis by an Aphrodite so designated, we need to bear in mind the situation in which she would have found herself, a situation offering scant indication of laws, coinage, assemblies, military—the usual concomitants of Greek statehood. Nor can political autonomy be confirmed for the *emporion* until, at the earliest, the late fourth century B.C.E. Though Herodotus calls it a πόλις (2.178.1), that term is also used by him for various other Egyptian towns and urban centers subservient to royal authority, and lacking civic identity as the Greeks would have understood it. Indeed, the Stela of Nektanebis I (380 B.C.E.) suggests that Pharaonic overlordship, *status quo* for the early fourth century, had already had a long history at the site. Thus the “political” context will be difficult to reconcile with explanations like the following:

Both names of Aphrodite [*viz.*, Ourania and Pandemos] are old and widespread cult epithets, but the original meanings were quite different. The heavenly one is the Phoenician Queen of Heaven, and *Pandemos* is literally the one who embraces the whole people as the common bond and fellow feeling necessary for the existence of any state.

This civic-integrative explanation of Aphrodite Pandemos (*i.e.*, as sponsor of synoecism and/or political cohesion), and

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9 Cf. Hogarth 56 on no. 107.


12 For the Stela, see Möller 207–208; M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (Berkeley 1980) III 86–89.

the etymology on which that explanation is based (πᾶς “all/whole/every” + δῆμος “body politic/deme”), present obvious attractions and can even seem to capture the epithet’s essence; it has often been adduced with reference to Pandemos’ cult at Athens and elsewhere. Yet in the absence of a formally constituted demos, any narrowly civic reading of the epithet proves less than satisfactory.

Commonality

If context is to serve as any sort of guide, the place to begin is Herodotus (2.178.1–3):

Amasis, having become friendly to the Greeks, showed it in various ways to certain of them. In particular, he granted Naukratis as a polis to settle for those who came to Egypt. But to those of them who sailed but did not wish to settle there, he granted land for the establishment of altars and temenē to the gods. (2) Now the largest, most renowned, and most used temenos among them, the one called the Hellenion, was established by the following poleis in common: Chios, Teos, Phocaea, and Clazomenae among the Ionians; Rhodes, Cnidos, Halicarnassus, and Phaselis among the Dorians; and Mytilene alone among the Aeolians. (3) This is their temenos, and these are the poleis that provide prostatai for the emporion. All other poleis that claim a share do so though having none. Apart from that, the Aeginetans have established a temenos to Zeus under their own administration, the Samians, another one to Hera, and the Milesians, one to Apollo.

This first-hand account, though defective in some respects (we read nothing of the Aphrodision), is generally held to reflect arrangements in place from the time of Amasis (ruled 570–526) until Herodotus’ day. Noteworthy is the prominence given to polis-temenos affiliations. Thus we read of three poleis (Aegina, Samos, Miletus), each possessing its own temenos, and of nine additional poleis (Chios, Teos, Phocaea, Clazomenae, Rhodes, Cnidos, Halicarnassus, Phaselis, Mytilene) that had founded a temenos in common (κοινή), the Hellenion, control of which was, evidently, a sticking point for poleis trading at the site. Interestingly, this attention to affiliations and connections carries over into dedicatory formulae. Thus from Apollo’s temenos come several dedications (Naukr. I 60–62) carrying the epithet Milesios, attesting to that god’s specifically Milesian associations (cf. Hdt. 2.159.3, 2.178.3). From the Aphrodision comes a dedication “to the Aphrodite at Naucratis” (Ἀφροδίτη τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ, Naukr. II 64–5 no. 768), a phrase particularizing the goddess in local terms. Even the catch-all “to the gods of the Hellenes” (several examples from the Hellenion), though quite general in its field of reference, nonetheless connects divine recipients to the nationality of worshippers.

How would all of this have translated into cult praxis? While it is possible that polis-affiliated temenē imposed certain limits on “non-member” (i.e., non-citizen) participation in temple ritual, so far as we can tell, nothing seems to have deterred the faithful from leaving offerings at any sanctuary of their

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15 For the nexus of trade and cult at Naucratis, see Bowden (supra n.4) 31–36.
16 Hogarth (supra n.4) 116–117, though Bowden (supra n.4) 23–24 is skeptical as to restoration.
choosing. Still, it is likely that the single-polis foundations mentioned by Herodotus were intended to serve as “branch offices” with a special mission to minister to affiliated citizenries,\(^1\) while the Hellenion could have similarly served its affiliated cooperative much like an amphictyonic sanctuary.\(^2\)

As to Aphrodite, her special area within the Hellenion presumably fell under the purview of the prostatai, the emporion overseers Herodotus mentions.\(^3\) But her epithet also carried weight at the Aphrodision, the oldest sanctuary at the site,\(^4\) and one arguably connected to Chios from an early date.\(^5\) Yet Chios provides scant evidence for private cult, and even less for public cult, to the goddess.\(^6\) Whatever that island’s connection to the sanctuary, Aphrodite’s perceived connection to the island likely would not have been as strong as, say, Apollo’s to Miletus, or Hera’s to Samos. On the other hand, Aphrodite’s temenos was clearly popular with visitors from a number of localities,\(^7\) certain of which accorded the goddess pride of place in cult back home.\(^8\)

Indeed, at a site as involved in international seafaring and sustained, multicultural contact as was Naukratis, the possibility of a goddess possessing certain “cosmopolitan” traits, and

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\(^1\) Cf. Egyptian and Kitian temenē in the Piraeus (R. Parker, Athenian Religion [Oxford 1996] 160 and n.29); Heracles Thasios at Tyre (Hdt. 2.44.3; A. B. Lloyd, Herodotus, Book II [Leiden 1975] II 207–208); the Greek quarter (with temples) at Gravisca, port of Tarquinii (Boardman [supra n.5] 206).

\(^2\) Bowden (supra n.4) 32–33.

\(^3\) For the prostatai, see Möller 193–196.

\(^4\) Möller 104 and nn.108–109, 195; Naukr. II 38–54. The temenos can now be dated to the late seventh century.

\(^5\) Judging by the quantity and antiquity of Chiot material found there: Möller 195 and n.100; Austin (supra n.10) 25.

\(^6\) For the evidence, see F. Graf, Nordionische Kulte (Rome 1985) 64–67.


operating within more or less “cosmopolitan” surroundings, needs to be considered. As we shall see, Aphrodite’s presence at the emporion had much to do with seafaring. And though I would not press a reductively orientalist view of the goddess, when dealing with maritime Aphrodite in the early period, one cannot simply ignore her eastern counterparts, deities who began to enter the Greek consciousness via trade contacts and immigration, and whose maritime significance for Greeks would have been reinforced by repeated voyagings between Greek and Levantine ports. Noteworthy therefore are older finds at the site (including those connected with our goddess) which suggest a mix of influences—East Greek, Cypriot, Phoenician, Egyptian—reflecting the situation of Naukratis in relation to Mediterranean trade networks. Yet for all that, one would not assign to Phoenicians or Egyptians, or even to Cypriots, a foundational role for “the Aphrodite at Naukratis.” Even given the impact of broadly Mediterranean influences, those


influences will have been mediated by a predominantly East Greek clientele.

To connect these data to the epithet under consideration, we should bear in mind that the noun δήμος did not always carry the political force that it regularly does in classical and later Greek (senses III.–IV. in LSJ). Thus in Mycenaen, it seems to have referred to agricultural districts or the inhabitants thereof, a usage related to that of “land” or “territory” often encountered in Homer (e.g., the πῖονα δήμον Boeotians inhabit in Iliad 5.710). Yet even Herodotus, referring to the Lydian δήμος, employs the noun in a sense synonymous (more or less) with χώρη (so Grene’s translation), or else with εθνος (1.7.3). As for our epithet, Harpocratus (s.v. Πάνδημος) glosses that as πάγκοινος, “common to all,” a meaning attested for the common adjective πάνδημος in civic contexts,31 non-civic contexts,32 and even “extra-civic” contexts, where the “all” in question extends beyond the demos of any single polis.33 Interestingly, the adjective carries this last sense in at least one instance with cultic resonances (σύν "Ελλαδός ὀλβίας πάνδημος ἱκετεύει, “with the general prayers of blessed Hellas,” Philod. Scarph. 113–114; cf. Diod. 4.24.6). So too in Euripides’ Alcestis, Heracles claims to have competed in an ἄγγον πάνδημος, a “contest open to all,” even, it would seem, to outlanders like himself (1026).

For the question at hand, I would suggest that the evident concern for cultic affiliations at Naukratis, together with what

30See generally LfgrE s.v. δήμος; P. Chaniadēs, Dictionnaire étymologique I (Paris 1968) 273 s.v. δήμος.
31πάνδημος έκκλησία (“general assembly”) frequent at Roman Olbia: IosPE I 40.6–7, etc., Imperial period. Cf. Plut. Cor. 26.3; Sert. 16.5; Demetr. 38.10; aetiology (Athenian Pandemos) in Apollodorus fr. 113.
32πάνδημος begetter in Od. 18.1. Pejorative πάνδημος (“common,” “vulgar,” “indiscriminate”): Aristox. fr.124 Wehrli; Polyb. 3.20.5, 14.7.8; Plut. Mor. 96a.
33έκκλησιας δὲ πανδήμου Συρακουσίων καὶ τῶν συμμάχων γενομένης, stressing an ekklēsia including allies in Plut. Nic. 28.1 = Timaeus FGrHist 566 fr. 100.b.1. Cf. instances of πανδήμου (“en masse”) not confined to the demos of a single polis: Hdt. 8.40.2; Thuc. 2.31.1, 4.90.1, 5.37.1; Andoc. De pace 18.
could be termed the cosmopolitan character of both cult site
and cult object, created circumstances under which Aphrodite
would have been identified as “common to all” in terms of her
perceived community of devotees. Though she was but one of
several gods serving the needs of visitors and settlers, her
temenos, evidently the oldest at the site, lay alongside the
Canopic branch of the Nile near what was, arguably, the
original landing area for ships. Early on, then, she will have
carried special associations with a notably fluid and open-
ended group of potential worshippers, thus expressing what
Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood calls an “open system.”
Suggestive of cultic patterns is the story told by Athenaeus of
how the Aphrodite of Naukratis once received sacrifice and the
gift of a statuette from a merchant whose ship she had saved
(Ath. 675f–676c = Polycharmus FGrHist 640 F 1). While none of
the surviving dedications explicitly cites Aphrodite in her
otherwise well-attested role as protector of seafarers, we do
know of one statuette that was offered by its dedicator “upon
arrival in Naukratis,” and it is likely that that dedication,
along with others, will have been presented to the goddess in
gratitude for, or hopes of, a safe and successful voyage. But
the point is not that the epithet would have labeled Aphrodite
as a distinctively maritime goddess; rather, it is that the
“commonality” that is conveyed by the epithet should not be
considered apart from the economic life-blood of the emporion:
seafaring.

34 Möller 118.
35 Sourvinou-Inwood (supra n.17) 47–51.
36 For maritime Aphrodite, see Pirenne-Delforge (supra n.8) 433–437.
38 Naukr. II 63 no. 717, perhaps from the same Kaikos (similar writing). Cf.
Charmes’ two εἰναλαί (“ex-votos”): Naukr. II 65 nos. 776, 777.
39 Cf. Cook/Woodhead (supra n.24) 162 on such dedications “as a kind of
insurance with the gods.”
Prostitution

If, as I am arguing, the epithet “Pandemos” emphasized Aphrodite’s broad-based appeal in connection with economic activity at the site in question, then one particular arena for such activity should not be overlooked. For Naukratis was renowned for its prostitutes, whose role in the *emporion* economy is suggested by traditions concerning the celebrated Rhodopis, or Doricha, as Sappho calls her. Thracian by birth, she was herself a commodity transported by sea to Egypt (i.e., to Naukratis). We are told that Charaxus, Sappho’s brother, bought her freedom at considerable cost; Charaxus, according to Strabo, had himself sailed to Naukratis with a cargo of wine. But Rhodopis did not accompany her admirer back to Lesbos; rather, she stayed on at the *emporion* to earn a fortune.40

We should expect Rhodopis and others like her at the site to have numbered among Aphrodite’s votaries; that such was the case receives support from the archaeological material. Thus archaic and early classical finds include nude figures of Astarte-type reclining on cushions; these Astrid Möller suggests could be connected to prostitution.41 Promising as evidence is a dedication from one Iunx, plausibly employing a prostitute’s erotically inflected *nom de guerre*.42 Doris labeled her dedication *philtron* (“love potion,” so restored by Gardner, *Naukr. II* 66 no. 798);43 Archedikē, a dedicator at the Hellenion (Hogarth 56 no. 108),

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41 Möller 139 and n.392, 159 and nn.569–570.
could perhaps be the same as the famous courtesan of that name.\textsuperscript{44}

Might then the epithet under consideration have held special meaning for the local Aphrodite in connection with prostitution? While that is not immediately apparent from the physical remains, we at least note the parallel offered by literary sources—notably Plato and Xenophon—employing the epithet to evoke the element of publicity and commonality in porneia.\textsuperscript{45} Still, prostitution by no means exhausts possible resonances for a site like ours. Indeed, from Hellenistic Cos comes the intriguing example of an Aphrodita worshipped by brides and seafarers under the dual aspects of Pandamos and Pontia.\textsuperscript{46} But more than that, it remains unclear how, at a place like Naukratis, Aphrodite’s commonality would have mattered more to prostitutes than it would have, say, to merchants and ships’ captains. For we can expect that the symbiosis of prostitution and overseas trade (\textit{cf.} Rhodopis’ career) at the emporion would have made Aphrodite’s commonality there as much a matter of concern, and along similar lines, to the service sector as to harbor traffic.\textsuperscript{47}

Conclusions

Though civic readings of Aphrodite Pandemos may well suit

\textsuperscript{44} Hdt. 2.135.5, Ael. \textit{VH} 12.63, Ath. 596b–d. See Pirenne-Delforge (\textit{supra} n.8) 428–430 for Aphrodite as sponsor of prostitutes.


\textsuperscript{46} As Pontia by seafarers: Parker/Obbink (\textit{supra} n.14) 429–430; Dillon (\textit{supra} n.14); M. Segre, \textit{Iscrizioni di Cos} (Rome 1993) ED 178. Coan officials also sacrificed to Pandamos.

\textsuperscript{47} Cf. C. Reinsberg, \textit{Ehe, Hetàrentum und Knabenliebe im antiken Griechenland} (Munich 1989) 161, for the trade-Hetàrentum connection in the early period.
other sites, they cannot easily be made to fit Naukratis. Nor should we reduce Pandemos to some Panhellenic essence, for instance, by privileging civic analyses of the epithet’s semantics. Even Plato and Xenophon, however much their preoccupation with Pandemos’ sexuality suppresses her political aspects, need not have fabricated a “groundlessly” meretricious Pandemos out of whole cloth. As, e.g., claimed by Pirenne-Delforge, *Neue Pauly* I 840. For “vulgar” Pandemos as philosophical foil to Ourania, see further Pirenne-Delforge, “Epithètes cultuelles et interprétation philosophique. A propos d’Aphrodite Ourania et Pandémos à Athènes,” *AntCl* 57 (1988) 142–157. V. J. Rosivach, “Solon’s Brothels,” *LCM* 20 (1995) 2–3, proposes that meretricious Pandemos could have originated in a joke in Old Comedy.

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