

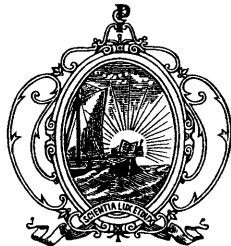
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EGYPTIAN RELIGION
THE LAST THOUSAND YEARS

PART II

Studies Dedicated to the Memory of
Jan Quaegebeur

Willy Clarysse
Antoon Schoors
and Harco Willems
(eds.)



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CULTS AND NAMES OF PTOLEMAIS IN UPPER EGYPT

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It is a commonplace that the Ptolemaic government of Hellenistic Egypt was unusual, perhaps unique, among the successor kingdoms in not founding Greek cities, with a single exception¹. As a result, Egypt had only three Greek cities until the foundation of Antinoopolis by Hadrian: Naukratis, an archaic foundation; Alexandria, the greatest of the cities founded by Alexander the Great; and Ptolemais in Upper Egypt, or Ptolemais Hermiou, a foundation of Ptolemy I². Of these, the last is certainly the least well known. It last received monographic treatment in 1910, and its article in Pauly-Wissowa barely occupies a single column³. The site (modern el-Menschiyeh, on the left bank of the Nile between Girgeh and Sohag) has never been excavated, although its quarries received some attention in the last century⁴. And yet it was, according to Strabo (17.1.42, 813), the largest city of Upper Egypt and not smaller than Memphis, Egypt's second city (μεγίστη τῶν ἐν Θηβαίδι καὶ οὐκ ἐλάττων Μέμφεως). Any increase in our knowledge of Ptolemais is therefore welcome.

Such a source of information, I believe, is *P.Oxy.* VI 984, a census-derived register described by Grenfell and Hunt in 1908 but never hitherto published. The register stands on the recto of a roll which, after some damage, became part of a patched-up roll and was then turned over to copy Pindar's *Paeans*. It was the literary text that caught Grenfell and Hunt's attention, being published as *P.Oxy.* V 841⁵. Grenfell and Hunt

¹ E.g. Cl. PRÉAUX, *Le monde hellénistique* 2, Paris 1978, p. 407.

² Ptolemy, *Geography* 4.5.66 is the source for the nickname Ἑρμείου; it is not known why the city acquired that name. Presumably Ἑρμείου is simply iotacism for Ἑρμίου, "of Hermias". It is also Ptolemy who tells us that Ptolemais became the metropolis of the Thinite nome.

³ G. PLAUMANN, *Ptolemais in Ober-Ägypten*, Leipzig 1910; W. HELCK in *RE* 23 (1957), col. 1868-69.

⁴ For the quarries at Gebel Toukh, on the other side of the river about 10 km from el-Menschiyeh, see J. DE MORGAN, U. BOURIANT and G. LEGRAIN, *Note sur les carrières antiques de Ptolémaïs (Menchiyèh)*, in *MIFAO* 8 (1894), p. 353-79. The oldest inscription found came from year 16 of Nectanebo II.

⁵ It was part of a trove of literary rolls, probably part of a scholar's library, discovered on 13 January 1906: Egypt Exploration Fund, *Archaeological Reports* 14 (1905-6), p. 10.

gave some sample entries from the census-derived register, along with a list of personal names that struck them as rare or unique in the Oxyrhynchos papyri. Their instincts in this regard were sound — the names in question remain after ninety years as rare in the Oxyrhynchite as they were then —, but they did not pursue the matter. In a forthcoming volume written in collaboration with Bruce Frier and Ian Rutherford, I shall publish the text of the census register. There the reader will find the detailed arguments for the position that the papyrus must originate elsewhere than at Oxyrhynchos, contain a register drawn up in 91/2 from declarations for the census of 89/90, and have been reused subsequently for writing the poetry of Pindar, whether through sale of the original roll as scrap or (I believe more likely) through its being brought back to Oxyrhynchos as part of the papers of an official such as the strategos⁶.

The argument that Ptolemais was the source of the census register rests on two key points. First, twice in it a person is identified as being *πρόξενος βουλευτῶν*, “proxenos of the councillors”. From this I think it reasonable to conclude that the place in question had councillors and thus a council, and it can be shown that in the time of Domitian this was not true of Alexandria or Naukratis (see the forthcoming publication for a full argument and discussion of the possible significance of this unique phrase). Ptolemais is thus a strong candidate for place of origin. Second, the names of the persons listed are strongly characteristic of the region of Upper Egypt in which Ptolemais was located. In my approach to this question I am deeply dependent on the methods in which Jan Quaegebeur was a pioneer, and the great sadness of losing him kept deepening as I pursued the study of this papyrus and continually felt his absence. Although I am conscious of how much better this study might have been with his help, it seems entirely appropriate to dedicate it to his memory, the more so because I believe it points to a solution to a problem that Jan left unresolved in his great book on *Shai*⁷.

About the cults of Ptolemais itself, we know little from other sources. The main body of evidence has been the group of Ptolemaic inscriptions found at Menschiyeh and reproduced in Dittenberger's *Orientalis Graecae Inscriptiones Selectae*, nos. 47-52 and 103; mentioned are cults of Dionysos and Zeus, a sanctuary of Isis, and an altar to Harbaktis and Hierax, *i.e.* Horus of Bakhtis (*i.e.* Edfu)⁸ and the falcon god (Hierax =

⁶ *The Census Register P.Oxy. 984: The Reverse of Pindar's Paeans*, *Papyrologica Bruxellensia* 29, 1997.

⁷ QUAEGBEUR, *Shai*.

⁸ See J. YOYOTTE, *Bakhtis: Religion égyptienne et culture grecque à Edfou*, in P. DERCHAIN (ed.), *Religions en Égypte hellénistique et romaine*, Paris 1969, p. 127-41.

Bjk). Because *OGIS* 52, where the altar and the sanctuary of Isis are mentioned, is badly preserved, and there is a mention of Heptakomia earlier in the text, it was surmised by Calderini (below, n. 15) that the altar and sanctuary were in Heptakomia, the later Apollonos polis. This is dubious: the inscription describes the altar explicitly as τ[ὸν] ἔκτος τείχους τῆς πόλεως βωμόν, "the altar outside the wall of the city". Heptakomia certainly was not a *polis* in the Hellenistic period, and one does not look for informal terminology in a public inscription, so the reference is more likely to Ptolemais itself.

When we turn to the names in the census register, we find a number of clusters of interest (references and discussion of details will be found in the full publication):

- (1) Names derived from Wepwawet, — opener of the ways, — the jackal god of Lykopolis, who was often seen by the Greeks as a wolf (hence the Greek name for Assiut). Egyptian names from *Wp-wʃ.wt* include Ὀφιεύς, Παουφῶις, Πανφῶις, Πετουφῶις and Ταυφῶις. In addition there are wolf-names from *wnʃ*, Ποῦνσις, Σενπουῶνσις, Τοῶνσις. On the Greek side we also find Λύκος and Λυκόφρων. As well as being found in the Lykopolite (a nome not well documented in the published papyri, but cf. Psenophois and Touonsis in *P.Count.* 30.423 and 427, Ophieus in 30.415, and Lykophron in 30.43⁹), some of these names occur in the papyri from the neighbouring Heptakomia (*P.Alex.Giss.* 14-61 and *P.Brem.*) and occasionally in the Panopolite mummy labels.
- (2) Names derived from Anoubis: Παανοῦφις, Πετενοῦφις, Ταανοῦφις, Ἄνουβᾶς, Ἄνουβίων. Although the latter two Greek names are not uncommon elsewhere, the Egyptian names are rare in these forms¹⁰ and are attested mainly in the Lykopolite (*P.Count.* 30 and 31), Panopolite (*P.Achm.* 7 and 9; mummy labels) and Heptakomia. Whether this concentration points to a particular sanctuary or to a regionally popular cult, I do not know.
- (3) Names coming from members of the Panopolitan triad of Min, Kolanthos, and Triphis (Κόλανθος, Τατριφίς), and names probably referring to Min as the watchman (Ὀρσενουῦφις, Ὀρσεύτης). The first two are rarely found except in the Panopolite and Heptakomia, while Orsenouphis is more widely found.

⁹ I am indebted to Willy Clarysse for a transcript of this and *P.Count.* 31 in advance of publication, as well as for many observations on the names of *P.Oxy.* 984.

¹⁰ Πανοῦφις and Πανοῦπις with a single alpha are fairly common.

- (4) Names derived from the two brothers and the three brothers, which are to be interpreted as crocodile gods: Πανεσνεῦς, Σενπανεσνεῦς, Σενχεμσνεῦς, Τανεσνεῦς, Χεμσνεῦς, Ψενσνεῦς, Ψοσνεῦς¹¹. These are not restricted to the northern Thebaid, but they do indicate the presence of crocodile cults.
- (5) Names derived from the *hty*-demons: Πανεχάτης, Παρεχάτης, Σενπανεχάτης, Τανεχάτης, Ταρεχάτης. These are also common in papyri from the Panopolite and Heptakomia, although found elsewhere.
- (6) Τιθόης, probably the lion god Tutu (*Twtw*), very common in the Lykopolite *P.Count.* 30 and 31¹².
- (7) Horos names, including Ὡρος, Ἄρεῦς, Ἀρθώτης, Ἀριμούθης, Ἀρμιῦσις, Σενῦρις, Τααρεῦς, Ἀρποχράτης, Σαρποχράτης. Horos names in general are common throughout Egypt, but of these at least Hareus (cf. Taareus) is somewhat more distinctive; it is frequent in the Lykopolite *P.Count.* 30.
- (8) Herakles names: Ἡρακλῆς, Ἡράκλειος, Ἡρακλεόδωρος. It is unclear if the popularity of these names derives ultimately from the role of Herakles in the dynastic self-promotion of the Ptolemies, from Herakles' role as a god of the gymnasium (Hermias, Hermon, and Senhermias in the register could testify to his partner's popularity, but one is also reminded of the city's nickname of unknown origin, Πτολεμαῖς Ἐρμείου), or from an Egyptian god assimilated to Herakles. In the last of these cases one might think of Somtous, "uniter of the two lands"; although this is preeminently a Herakleopolite cult, and no Egyptian names from it occur in *P.Oxy.* 984, the name Tasemtheus occurs several times in *P.Count.* 30. There may, however, be other possibilities.

In addition, there are names derived from Bes, Isis, Shaï, Imouthes, Renenutet, Thoth, and Osiris. Most of these are commonplace throughout Egypt, but Bes and Shaï were certainly very popular in Upper Egypt. It is also worth noting that female names beginning in

¹¹ See most recently J. QUAEGBEUR, *Greco-Egyptian Double Names as a Feature of a Bi-cultural Society: The Case Ψοσνεῦς ὁ καὶ Τριάδελφος*, in J. JOHNSON (ed.), *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society*, p. 265-72, with bibliography.

¹² In some cases, Tithoes may be a rendering of *T3j-d(w)* usually transcribed as Σισοῖς, but it is usually the lion god. See H. DE MEULENAERE, *Le nom propre Σισοῖς*, *CdE* 66 (1991), p. 129-35 at 131, and see the particularly clear evidence from a dedication to Tutu, the local god of Kellis in the Dakhleh Oasis, Τιθοῆτι θεῶ Κέλλεως: O. E. KAPER – K. A. WÖRPER, *A Bronze Representing Tapsais of Kellis*, *RdE* 46 (1995), p. 107-18 at 110.

Σεϋ- ("daughter of") are very common, a distinctive feature of this region (cf. e.g. *P.Coll.Youtie* II, p. 630).

Although many specific details are discussable, the overall picture seems clear. The names are strongly related to the areas in the northern Thebaid stretching from Lykopolis to Panopolis. Unfortunately, there is almost no pre-Byzantine documentation for the Antaiopolite, a nome not created until the Roman period¹³, but otherwise the entire zone occupying the hundred kilometers to the north of Ptolemais is well represented. These names are very much those derived from cults popular in this region. The area to the south of Ptolemais, unfortunately, is far less well documented in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. Ptolemais itself served as metropolis for the Thinite nome, from which we have virtually no papyri. Nor is the lesser Diopolite nome well represented until the fourth century, when the documents from the bindings of Nag Hammadi codices come into play. By that time, the onomastic assemblage is well launched on its Christianization, but we do find in *P.Nag Hamm.* a number of names from the "brothers" cults, along with Psais (and Eudaimon), Kollouthos, and Ischyryon, all names present in the census register.

Some additional information comes from mention in the census register of two sanctuaries (ἱερά), one of Ares and one of Apollo. Both appear as part of the identification of individuals who are pastophoroi of the gods in question. The presence of pastophoroi is evidence that these are Egyptian cults, and the names of the gods thus Greek renderings. Ares was the Greek rendering for the Egyptian god Onuris (*In-hr*), according to a Leiden papyrus (see F. LI. GRIFFITH, *P.dem.Ryl.* III, p. 230 n. 14). Onuris was the tutelary divinity of Thinis, the old pharaonic capital of the nome in which Ptolemais was located and of which Ptolemais was the metropolis in the Graeco-Roman period¹⁴.

Apollo is less clear. The most common equation was with Horus, an equation certainly found at Edfu. It is attractive to suppose that the god after whom Apollonospolis/Heptakomia was named is the Apollo worshipped in the sanctuary at Ptolemais. So little is known of Heptakomia¹⁵ and in particular of its cults that it is hard to be certain. Horus, Bekis, Hierax and their derivatives are certainly found in the papyri from Heptakomia (*P.Alex.Giss.*, *P.Brem.*), although not with enormous fre-

¹³ See H. GAUTHIER, *Les nomes d'Egypte*, Cairo 1935, p. 122-24.

¹⁴ See for a general treatment of Onuris, see W. SCHENKEL, *LÄ* IV (1982), col. 573-74.

¹⁵ Identified with Kom Isfaht, on the west bank north of Aphrodito. See generally A. CALDERINI, *Dizionario geografico* I.2, Madrid 1966, p. 170-72 and *P.Brem.*, p. 9-10.

quency. And it will be noted that the characteristic Panopolite name Ἱερακαπόλλων is equated by Spiegelberg to Ἄρβῆκις, *i.e.* Apollo the hawk is Horus the hawk¹⁶. The Hierakapollon son of Apollonios of *SB I* 1265 (Bompae, Panop.) may support the hawk-Apollo link. Gauthier suggested that the Antaiopolite's northern part included the old Hierakonpolite, where the cult of Horus as victor over Seth was the main local sanctuary. These indications may point to the equation of Apollo with Horus (or more precisely, with Harbekis) in the northern Thebaid. Finally, it is worth mentioning here the appearance, as a heading in the census register (line 348), of the previously unattested term λυκαγωγῶν. A detailed discussion is given in the edition; there I argue that the term is probably to be taken to refer to persons who carry the image of the god Wepwawet in sacred processions. That would only confirm the *prima facie* conclusion from the personal names that there was a cult of this god in the city.

I have reserved until now one important group of names, those ending in -σωις, because their interpretation is less certain than that of the other theophoric names. These are Ἄρουσῶις, Ψῶις and Σενησῶις. The latter two are, respectively, clearly the definite article and Σεν- (“the daughter of”) and definite article, plus the element -σωις. What Ἄρου- represents, I cannot say. It is attractive to suppose that Ἄρ- is Horus, but without evidence for the identification of the following syllable it would be idle to claim this as more than a possibility. Jan Quaegebeur listed these names, along with several others with the same phonetic element, in *Le dieu Égyptien Shaï*, p. 257-59. The other names include Σωις, Ψωις, Τασωις, Πισωις, Παψωις, Χενψωις, Πετηψωις, Τνεφερσωις, Αμψωις, Ταμψωις, Τεμισωις and Τεμσωις. Quaegebeur's focus was on whether these were Shaï names, and could thus offer evidence for the -oi- vocalization of these names in the regions where these names are found¹⁷. He admits the possibility of being Shaï names for Chenpsois and Petepsois, but continues, “Pour d'autres noms, il faut chercher une explication différente. On pourrait penser, par exemple, à une alternance -σωις/-σως (désinence grecque -ις ou -ς): voir Τασωις vis-à-vis Τασως et Τνεφερσωις vis-à-vis de Τνεφερσως; comparer Τεφερρωις, variante

¹⁶ W. SPIEGELBERG, *Aegyptische und Griechische Eigennamen*, Leipzig 1901.

¹⁷ Elsewhere (*Shaï*, p. 111, 202) Quaegebeur is at pains to show that the names Ψῶις and Ψῶις cannot be derived from a geographical name, whether Ptolemais or Sais in the Delta, for the geographical distributions of the two forms do not at all correspond to the geographical regions of these places — more nearly the opposite, in fact, for Sais is located in an /o/ area and Psoi/Ptolemais in an /a/ zone.

de Τεφερωσ et Παωσ / Παωις". With those inconclusive words he leaves this group — which in fact has nothing to do with the subject of his book — and proceeds to more general conclusions about the alternation of /a/ and /o/ in the Coptic dialects.

A more interesting case can be made, however, bringing several points to bear. First, it is known that the Egyptian name of Ptolemais was *P-šj*, which has been interpreted by Egyptologists as — house of the crocodile, — vocalized variously in the Coptic *scalae* as Ψωις and Ψοις¹⁸. That crocodile cults were locally popular is confirmed by the complex of two-brothers and three-brothers names in the census list. It is then an attractive hypothesis that -σωις in the personal names represents -š(w)j, "crocodile"¹⁹.

When we look at the occurrence of -σωις names apart from *P.Oxy.* 984, we find an interesting pattern:

- Hermopolite: Sois, Chenpsois, Petepsois (total: 4)
- Panopolite: Temisois (total: 1)
- Arsinoite: Psois, Psoios, Papsois, Tnephersois, Ampsois, Temsois (total: 10)
- Antaiopolite?: Psois (total: 1)
- Thebes: Psois (total: 1)
- Memphis: Tampsois (total: 1)
- Unknown: Papsois (total: 1)

It should be noted that the Theban example is a graffito from the Valley of the Kings, of uncertain reading²⁰; in any event it is likely to be a

¹⁸ Cf. W. HELCK, *RE* 23 (1957), col. 1868; D. KESSLER, *LÄ* IV (1982), col. 1183, citing E. AMÉLINEAU, *La géographie d'Égypte*, Paris 1893, p. 381-83. Cf. also H. KEES, *RE* 4A (1932), col. 1025. The primary evidence is cited in *Wb.* 4.65; the city's name has the crocodile determinative. A form Σωις occurs in Stephanus of Byzantium. It is also worth recalling that there was a village named Krokodilopolis, mentioned by Ptolemy as part of the Aphroditopolite nome and located by Wilcken in the vicinity of Ptolemais: see *APF* 4 (1908), p. 534-38, where he discusses *P.Lond.* III 604, a register from this village.

¹⁹ There is one significant weakness in the argument that deserves mention, namely the fact that š(w)j is not the normal word for crocodile in Egyptian, that being *msḥ*. Nor have I found any names based on š(w)j in Demotic. The crocodile determinative in the name of the city (see n. 18), however, seems to me a strong argument for the correctness of the normal interpretation of the city's Egyptian name; and the lack of surviving evidence from the immediate vicinity of Ptolemais may be sufficient explanation of the absence of Demotic attestations. But it must be admitted that š(w)j remains something of a puzzle, was perhaps a relatively late cult to develop, and may never have been very widespread.

²⁰ BAILLET, *Inscr. Syringes* 16, reads Πισω[σ]ις. His drawing (pl. 1), however, shows Πισωις; Baillet's square brackets indicate correction, not restoration.

visitor, whose origin cannot be determined and who is no evidence for usage at Thebes.

Apart from the one Memphite instance, then, we find two instances in the north Thebaid, four in the Hermopolite, and ten in the Arsinoite. Of the Hermopolite instances, one concerns a person from the unlocalizable village of Alabant(h)is²¹, one is from Hermopolis but concerns an unknown village, and two from Tenis-Hakoris. At Tenis there was a crocodile cult, a triad which included two crocodiles²². The Arsinoite was of course a center of crocodile cults. The distribution of the -σωις names, therefore, fits the pattern of known crocodile cults very well. The -σωις names in *P.Oxy.* 984, five examples of Harousois, one of Senpsois, and five of Psois, amount to more than a third of all of the -σωις names. The hypothesis that they concern the crocodile cult of Ptolemais is thus well supported by all of the evidence²³.

Ptolemais in the late first century, then, was still the home of the crocodile cult for which it had originally been named²⁴. But it also appears to have had sanctuaries for the principal gods of all of the nearest nomes: the Panopolitan triad; the falcon god of old Hierakonpolis, popular in the Apollonopolite of Heptakomia and the Antaiopolite, Horus (as Harbekis) in various forms and referred to as Apollo; Wepwawet of Lykopolis in various guises; Onuris of Thisis. If we then add cults popular through the region but less attached to a single place, like Anoubis, Bes, Shaï, the *htj* demons, Tutu, and Renenutet, Ptolemais looks to have had a fairly full collection of cults from its region. Only Herakles, out of all the gods' names well attested in the onomastic repertory, seems at all likely to have a Hellenic origin. The relatively small proportion of Greek names in the total assemblage confirms this picture.

It goes well beyond our evidence to claim to understand just how this situation came about, but I shall conclude by offering a hypothesis.

²¹ See *BASP* 27 (1990), p. 9-10; probably it was near the region of Antinoopolis.

²² See the convincing article of M. DREW-BEAR, *La triade du rocher d'Akôris*, in N. FICK - J.-C. CARRIÈRE (edd.), *Mélanges Étienne Bernand (Ann. Lit. Univ. Besançon, 444)*, Paris 1991, p. 227-34.

²³ It should be added that although the formation of most of these names becomes transparent once an identification of -σωις is accepted, not all necessarily come from the same stem. One might therefore question whether Temsois, Ampsois, and Tampsois all actually belong to the group: Willy Clarysse suggests the commoner name for crocodile, *msh* as the source for Ampsois (without an article) and Tampsois (*Ta-msh*). Tnepersoais may well be a variant of Tnephersais (*T3-nfr-šj*).

²⁴ Even here, it is possible that influence from the surrounding region was important in the development of this cult; as Jennifer Sheridan points out to me, the nome coins of the Antaiopolite show a crocodile.

Ptolemy I may have settled a relatively small number of Macedonians and Greeks in the northern Thinite nome when he transformed the modest settlement of Psoi into a Greek city. But Ptolemais had, if we can accept Strabo's testimony, grown into a sizable city by the time of Augustus, perhaps larger than any of the nome metropoleis at the time. Such growth is more likely to have occurred by internal migration in the region than by large-scale Greek implantation, and the migrants certainly brought their cults with them just as the various groups who moved into the Arsinoite nome during the Ptolemaic period did. Ptolemais may thus have acquired a metropolitan character in the domain of religion to go with its role as a center of Ptolemaic power in Upper Egypt.

Addendum

When the publication of *P. Oxy.* 984 was about to be printed, Jean Bingen had occasion to examine the reading of *P. Brux.* I 20, line 15, a census declaration of A.D. 146 from Lykopolis, where the edition reads ἐπὶ λαύρας Λυκανῶ[...]. He established that the correct reading was λυκαγωγῶν, the term that appears in the census register as a heading, apparently of a district. The possibility that the Upper Egyptian city for which the register was drawn up was Lykopolis rather than Ptolemais should therefore be given careful consideration, particularly because of the substantial number of Lykopolite names in it.

A Lykopolitan origin would, however, have to overcome the difficulty of explaining προξενὸς βουλευτῶν. A suitable explanation may indeed be possible, but I have not been able to formulate one, and in the absence of confirming evidence it will be hard to get beyond hypothesis.

Perhaps more importantly, if the roll was drawn up in Lykopolis, it would suggest there the same kind of process I have supposed to have operated in Ptolemais, i.e., the migration of people from various neighboring nomes and the establishment of their cults in their new residence; Onuris, from Thisis, might be the most striking. And in an environment of this sort, with an anthology of local cults, there is every chance that Ptolemais also had a quarter named λυκαγωγῶν, named after that in Lykopolis. The question thus seems to me to remain open.

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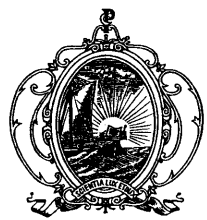
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