

Panopolis: An Overview

Akhmim is a town-site on the east bank of the Nile, opposite modern Sohag. The town lies about 450km. south of Cairo and 200km. north of Luxor¹. At Akhmim, the Nile makes a deep bend, flowing northeast to southwest. It lies north of the river at the southern edge of a fertile plain that is roughly 20 km.², which is bordered on the east and northeast by high limestone ridges, stretching from the river to the Arabian Plateau². By the 19th century, Akhmim was situated along one of the pilgrimage routes to Mecca.

Since the Pharaonic Period, ancient Akhmim was the capital of the ninth nome of Upper Egypt, known as *Mnw*, or the Panopolite nome³. Akhmim itself was called *hntj-Mnw* and *Ipw*⁴, while the town and its necropolis were named *Snw-t* or *Snt*⁵. In the Graeco-Roman Period, it was named *Χεμμισ*, ‘Chemmis’⁶, or *Χεμμω*, ‘Chemmw’⁷. It was known by the Greeks as *Πανῶν πόλις*, *Πανὸς πόλις*, and ‘Panopolis’, the city of the god Pan. Pan was the god of wilderness, and had a strong phallic aspect, being eventually assimilated with the god Min⁷. Later,

ϣMIN, *shmin*, and *khmin* became the Coptic names for Akhmim⁸.

The Panopolite nome extends along both the east and the west banks of a bend in the Nile, and is known for its agricultural productivity. Both sides of the river are dominated by their own distinct cluster of villages, sanctuaries, and cemeteries. The metropolis of Panopolis was the most important city on the east side; it played a distinct historical and cultural role during the Graeco-Roman Period of Egypt. Athribis, which was also known as *Hwt-t3-Rpj.t*, *Τριφ(ε)ιον*, *Τριφ(ε)ιον*/ Triphion, *atripe* (in Coptic), Sheikh-Hamad (modern), and Wannina al-Gharbiya (modern) was the most important village in the Phenebythis toparchy on the west bank, lying 7km. southwest of Sohag⁹. Min was the primary god of the district, known from the New Kingdom to the Ptolemaic Period as *ϥnt Snw-t*, and holding the epithet *Nb-Snw-t*, or ‘the Lord of *Senwt*’¹⁰. He was worshipped as part of

¹ I. Kaplan, *Grabmalerei und Grabreliefs der Römerzeit, Wedisel Wirkungen Zwischen der Ägyptischen und Griechisch-Alexandrinischen Kunst*, BzÄ 16 (Wien 1999), 166.; S. McNally and I. Schrank, *Excavations in Akhmim, Egypt, Continuity and Change in City Life from Late Antiquity to the Present, First Report, BAR Publishing 590* (Oxford 1993), 1.

² McNally and Schrank, *Excavations in Akhmim*, 1. Kuhlmann links the fertility of this plain in part to the directions in which flood waters would spread over it. He indicates how the distinguished geographical position of Akhmim, as a fertilized agricultural land, includes a river bend that creates humidity, K. Kuhlmann, *Materialien zur Archäologie und Geschichte des Raumes von Achmim*, SDAIK 11 (Mainz 1983), 4.

³ W. Helck, *Die altägyptische Gaue* (Wiesbaden 1974), 93–95.; I. Shaw and P. Nicholson, *British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt* (Cairo 2001), 21.; A. Barakat, *Notes of the Ancient Akhmim*, ASAE 66 (1987), 155.

⁴ H. Kees, ‘Die Schlangensteine und Ihre Beziehungen zu den Reich Seeiligtumern’, ZÄS 57 (1922), 128. An inscription in the Temple of Min at El-Salamuni, which dates to the reign of Eje (ca. 1300 BC), still refers to Ipu and Khent-Min as two separate cities, H. Kees, ‘Das Felsheiligtum des Min bei Achmim’, *Rec.Trav.* 36, (1914), fig III; K. Kuhlmann, ‘Der Felstempel des Eje bei Achmim’, *MDAIK* 35 (1979), 178.

⁵ Barakat, *ASAE* 66, 155. Akhmim and Coptos, and to a lesser extent, Dendera and Edfu, were the main cult centres of Min. Min was called the ‘Lord of Ipu, who presides at *Senut*, who resides in Dendera’. He was also known as ‘Min, Lord of Koptos, Lord of Ipu, Lord of *Senut*, the Great God who resides in Edfu’, as seen in C. Bleeker, *Die Geburt eines Gottes, eine Studie über den ägyptischen Gott Min und sein Fest*, Studies in the History of Religions: suppl. to no. 3 (Leiden 1966), 26–33, 34–40.

⁶ A. Schweitzer, ‘L’évolution stylistique et iconographique des parures de cartonnage d’Akhmim du début de l’époque ptolémaïque à l’époque romaine’, *BIFAO* 62 (1964), 325–52. There is another place called ‘Chemmis’ in the Delta, which is the site of the contest between Horus and Seth, J. Zandee, ‘A Site of Conflict between Horus and Seth’, in P. Prior (ed.), *Exorbe Religionum Studia Geo widengren* (Leiden 1972), 32–33.

⁷ P. Borgeaud, *Recherches sur le dieu Pan, Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana 17* (Geneva 1979). Pan is usually depicted as a hybrid creature with the upper body of a man, a grotesquely leering face, long horns, pointed ears, and the lower body of a goat. He typically grasps a shepherd’s flute and staff as his main attributes. For more information on the combination between Min and Pan, see H. Cuvigny, ‘Le Crepuscule d’un Dieu, le

Declin du Culte de Pan dans le Desert Oriental’, *BIFAO* 97 (1997), 139–48.; S. Emmel, ‘Ithyphallic Gods and Undetected Ligatures, Pan is not ‘Ours’; he is Min (Rectification of a Misreading in a Work of Shenoute)’, *GM* 141 (1994), 43–46. A papyrus from the late second century refers to a priest of Pan who is serving in a temple in Panopolis, *CPR* XVIII, 3,1.6. Pan nevertheless has a clear Egyptian character; he appears as a guard of the desert in Ptolemaic and early Roman dedications in the quarries of Gebel El-Haridi, Gebel Toukh, Mons Claudianus, and Mons Porphyrites. In a dedication to Pan and Serapis in Mons Porphyrites, Pan is depicted in an ithyphallic style similar to that of the Egyptian god Min, V. Maxfield, ‘Stone Quarrying in the Eastern Desert with Particular Reference to Mons Claudianus and Mons Porphyrites’, in J. Mattingly and J. Salmon (eds.), *Economies Beyond Agriculture in the Classical World, Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society* 9 (London, New York 2001), 143–70. Many dedications that were made for Pan *Aerobates* ‘who walks in the mountains’, and Pan *euodos* ‘of the good road’, were discovered in the Wadi bir El-Ain (the ‘Valley of the Magic Spring’), located east of El-Hawawish, *I. Pan* 1a.; A. Bernand, *Pan du désert* (Leiden 1977), 1–11. On Pan’s epithets, see Bernand, *Pan du désert*, 276–77.

⁸ Kees, ZÄS 57, 128.; Kuhlmann, *SDAIK* 11, 9–13.; J. Karig, ‘Akhmim’, *LÄ I*, cols. 54–55.; H. Bonnet, ‘Panopolis’, *RÄRG* (1952), 580.

⁹ The Panopolite nome is bordered by the Antaiopolite nome to the north and the Thinite nome to the south. Its northern borders are El-Khazindariya on the east bank and Tahta (ancient Toeto) on the west bank, while its southern west-bank border is El Manschah (ancient Ptolemais Hermiou), extending along the east bank as far south as Kainopolis (Qena). Beyond this, the nome bordered the Coptite nome, C. Kirby, ‘Preliminary Report of the First Season of Work at Gebel El-Haridi 1991–1992’, *JEA* 78 (1992), 21.; C. Kirby and S. Orel, ‘From Cave to Monastery, Transformations at the Nome Frontier of Gebel El-Haridi in Upper Egypt’, in R. Mathisen and H. Sivan (eds.), *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot 1996), 203. From looking at the Sesostris I chapel at Karnak, it is estimated that the Panopolite nome covered about 44km., and measured about 525 km.², which is somewhat equal to the neighbouring Antaiopolite and Thinite nomes, and a little smaller than the Oxyrhynchite nome. It is twice as small as the Hermopolite nome, R. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton 1993), 334.

¹⁰ The god Min is called the ‘Lord of Ipu, who presides at *Senut*, who resides in Dendera’. He is also called ‘Min, Lord of Koptos, Lord of Ipu, Lord of *Senut*, the Great God who resides in Edfu’, S. Aufrère, ‘Religious Aspects of the Mine in the Eastern Desert in Ptolemaic and Roman Times (=Autour de l’Univers minéral VIII)’, in O. Kaper (ed.), *Life on the Fringe, Living in the Southern Egyptian Deserts During the*

a triad with his consort *T3-Rpj.t*, ('Repit' or 'Triphis' in Greek)¹¹, and his child Kolanthes, who was originally a form of Horus Harsiesis ('Horus, son of Isis', Harendotes, or Horus, who Protects his Father')¹². The cult of Min-Triphis-Kolanthes was concentrated at Panopolis and Athribis and spread to the neighbouring nomes¹³. The goddess Wadjet is also widely depicted in the El-Salamuni tombs, and she had a special local cult centre in Akhmim. For instance, the high priest Hormaacheru was called *Hm-ntr w3Di.t*, and served as a priest of Wadjet in the rock temple of Ay in El-Salamuni¹⁴. Furthermore, another local deity known as 'Thmesios' ('the midwife')¹⁵, served as one of Min's consorts, as a goddess of birth. Bompae was her main local cult centre.

Four main temples are known in the Panopolite nome from the Graeco-Roman Period and are mainly dedicated to the triad. Two temples were erected on each river bank. The ruined temples of Ptolemy IX (Physkon), and the temple of Ptolemy XII (Auletes) have been excavated in Athribis¹⁶,

Roman and Early Byzantine Periods, Proceedings of a Colloquium Held on the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Nederlands Institute for Archaeology and Arabic Studies in Cairo, 9–12 December 1996 (Leiden 1998), 7.

¹¹ On the cult of Triphis, see H. Gauthier, 'La déesse Triphis', *BFAO* 3 (1903), 165–81. The cult of Triphis continued into the fourth century; the title 'Priestess of Triphion' is mentioned in the private letter P. Fouad. 80, written in 332 AD. Furthermore, the name of a priestess (probably of Triphis) called 'Besous' is mentioned in a lawsuit, J. Beaucamp, *Le statut de la femme à Byzance (4e–7e siècle), II. Les pratiques sociales, Travaux et Mémoires du Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, Monographies* 6 (Paris 1992), 6.

¹² H. Kees, *Der Götterglaube im alten Ägypten, Mitteilungen der vorderasiatischen ägyptischen Gesellschaft, E.V.* 45 (Leipzig 1941), 199–200.; A. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica II* (London 1968), 41. A royal inscription in Gebel El-Haridi commemorates the opening of the quarry by Ptolemy XIII (71/70 BC), showing him offering to the Panopolite pantheon of Min, Horus, Isis, Horus the Younger, and Triphis, Kirby and Orel, 'From Cave to Monastery', 203. Kolanthes is usually shown wearing a *pschent*, as well as a mantle and whip. As a child-god, he is often shown seated on a lotus similar to Harpocrates, M. Ryhiner, *L'offrande du Lotus dans les temples égyptiens de l'époque tardive, Rites égyptiens* 6 (Brussels 1986).

¹³ Kolanthes is first attested in Panopolis from the second century BC, L. Kákosy, 'Probleme der Religion in römischerzeitlichen Ägypten', *ANRW* II, 18.5 (Berlin, New York 1995), 2987. The number of names of Kolanthes in the onomastics of Panopolis is striking, and even more bear the names of Min and Triphis. On the cult of Kolanthes, see C. Leitz, 'Ein Hymnus an den Kindgott Kolanthes in Athribis', in S. Lippert, M. Schentuleit, and M. Stadler (eds.), *Sapientia Felicitas, Festschrift für Günter Vittmann zu seinem 64. Geburtstag am 29. Februar 2016, CENiM* 14 (Montpellier 2016), 325–41. A Demotic inscription in the quarry of Gebel Toukh mentions the triad together with Harnebeschinis, another important god of the Panopolite region, W. Spiegelberg, 'Miscellen, Der Gott Kolanthes', *ZAS* 58 (1923), 155–56.; F. Bilabel, 'Der Gott Kolanthes', *APF* 8 (1927), 62. The triad(?) may also be mentioned in a Greek dedication of 138/7 BC from Ptolemais, south of Athribis, *SB III*, 6184, l.9.

¹⁴ Kuhlmann, *MDAIK* 35, 186.

¹⁵ Lüdd, *DNB* XIV, 1066–67.; Geens, *Panopolis, a Nome Capital in Egypt*, 316.; K. Vandorpe, 'Identity', in C. Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt* (Oxford 2012), 273.

¹⁶ Since 2003, Athribis has been the focus of a multi-disciplinary research project entitled 'Investigations Into the Archaeology, Philology, and Material and Conservation Science of the Late Ptolemaic/Early Roman Temple of Athribis in Upper Egypt'. The project is being conducted by a joint German-Egyptian team, directed by Tübingen Egyptologists, http://www.isprs.org/congresses/beijing2008/proceedings/5_pdf/117.pdf; C. Leitz, 'Le temple de Ptolemée XII à Athribis- un temple pour Min(Re) ou pour Repit', *BSFE* 172 (2008), 32–52.; id., 'Le temple d'Athribis en Haute Egypte', *Annuaire de l'Ecole pratique des hautes études, Section des sciences religieuses* 115 (2006–07), 85–91.; R. El-

while the rock-cut temple of Ay, which was later reused in the Ptolemaic Period, lies on the peak of El-Salamuni Mountain¹⁷. The second one (it is unclear which one) was the main temple of Min, and was the main building of the city. This temple is repeatedly mentioned in sources dating from ancient to medieval times, but today the only remains are the following: two colossal statues, originally of King Ay and his wife Tey (but later usurped by Ramesses II and his daughter-wife Meritamun), a gate, and some ruins of red brick buildings¹⁸.

The temple was still a centre of cultic and religious life in the Early Roman Period, as suggested by the discovery of blocks from the temple ruins mentioning Ptolemais II, IV, X¹⁹, and XII, Nero, Domitian, Trajan, and possibly Antonius Pius²⁰. During the Roman period, this temple may have allowed Panopolis to become more culturally important than places such as Koptos, where Min also had a cult centre²¹. Like most of the major temples in Roman Egypt, this temple could have fulfilled not only a traditional cultic purpose, but also political, social, and economic purposes associated with markets, banks, and guilds²². In Late Antiquity, the temple was converted into a Coptic nunnery²³. Later, the temple was dismantled to be used as building material for new mosques, schools, and houses in the modern city²⁴. The temple apparently survived in good condition until the 14th century and its

Sayed, *Zur Erforschung des Oberägyptischen Athribis, Erste Ergebnisse aus der Projektarbeit in den Jahren 2003 bis 2006, SOKAR* 13 (2006), 75.; id., 'The Temple of Min and Repit at Athribis', *EA* 32 (2008), 20–24.; R. El-Sayed and Y. El-Masry, *Athribis I, General Site Survey 2003–2007, Archaeological & Conservation Studies, the Gate of Ptolemy IX, Architecture and Inscriptions, IFAO* (Cairo 2012).; C. Leitz, D. Mendel, and Y. El-Masry, *Athribis 2, Der Tempel Ptolemaios XII, die Inschriften und Reliefs der Opfersäle, des Umgangs und der Sanktuarräume* (Cairo 2010). Other minor Graeco-Roman temples were known in the Panopolite nome, such as the temple of Pan at Plevit (modern Banawit). The remains of a Ptolemaic temple with scenes of Ptolemy XI Alexander I in Banawit are recorded in *PM V*, 5. In 2012, Rafed El-Sayed began his multi-disciplinary project titled 'The Archaeology of Religious Change: The Cultic Topography of the Akhmim District (Upper Egypt) in Late Antiquity' at the Georg August Universität Göttingen. This served as the basis for the later AIS-Min-Panos project.

¹⁷ For more information about this temple, see Kees, *Rec. Trav.* 36, 54.; Kuhlmann, *MDAIK* 35, 165–88.; id., 'Archäologische Forschungen im Raum von Achmim', *MDAIK* 38 (1982), 347–49.

¹⁸ The temple had already existed in the reign of Thutmose III, K. Baedeker, *Egypte, Manuel du Voyageur* (Leipzig 1891), 56.; Kuhlmann, *SDAIK* 11, 22–23. The statue of Meritamun is about 8m. high, and is the tallest female statue known from ancient Egypt.

¹⁹ Champollion first read the name as 'Ptolemaios Philopator', but later changed the name to 'Ptolemaios Philometor X', or 'Alexander I', Kuhlmann, *SDAIK* 11, 46 no. 223.

²⁰ The history of the temple of Min between the early second century and the Early Christian Period is very vague, Kuhlmann, *SDAIK* 11, 16, 25, 45. The European travellers of the 18th and 19th centuries confirmed the existence of two ruined field temples in the *Birba* at about a 90m. distance from each other, Kuhlmann, *SDAIK* 11, 39–40, fig. 7. Both temples of Min could be Pharaonic. One is a new Ptolemaic-Roman temple.

²¹ J. Baines, 'Temples as Symbols, Guarantors and Participants in Egyptian Civilisation', in S. Quirke (ed.), *The Temple in Ancient Egypt, New Discoveries and Recent Research* (London 1997), 232.

²² On the various roles of the main temples in the Roman period, see A. Bowman, 'Public Buildings in Roman Egypt', *JRA* 5 (1992), 501–02.

²³ Z. Hawass, 'Recent Discoveries at Akhmim', *KMT* 16.1 (2005), 22.

²⁴ C. Sonnini, *Voyage dans la Haute et Basse Égypte, fait par ordre de l'ancien gouvernement III* (Paris 1880), 144.

eventual demolition in 1350 AD²⁵. Ibn-Gubair states that the sun had to rise and set again before he had finished exploring the ruins²⁶.

A canal that starts east of the temple at Athribis runs almost directly towards the temple of Min at Akhmim on the east bank²⁷, connecting the two main temples of the nome. A cult statue on a barge would sometimes be brought along the Nile in a ritual comparable to the valley festival in Thebes²⁸. The *dromos* of the Athribis temple led to a quay which connected the temple with Akhmim²⁹. Funerary hymns on the gate of the Athribis temple imply a processional event³⁰. The hymns in the Athribis temple, located at either side of the gate's front, are addressed to Min³¹, while the inner inscriptions are dedicated to Repit

alone³². Min's focal position on the gate may suggest a topographical connection with the main Akhmim temple³³.

Repit-Triphis, the consort of Min-Re, had a strong connection to the west, as the right eye of Re in her temple. She was called 'the Horus Eye in the West' of Athribis³⁴. She was associated with Aperet-Isis³⁵, who was mainly worshipped as the consort of Min on the east bank of the Panopolite nome alongside their child Harendotes, Harsiesis, or Harmuthes (Horus Iounmoutef, *Hr-iwn-mw.t=f*)³⁶. Aperet-Isis was more commonly known as the main female companion of Min on the east bank of the Panopolite nome³⁷. In Akhmim, there was a special relationship between Min and Isis³⁸. Many stelae found in El-Salamuni show Aperet-Isis following Min as his consort, described as 'the Lady of *Ipu*'³⁹. Therefore, Depauw notes that the female counterpart of Min in the Panopolite nome can be Isis, Aperet-Isis, or Triphis⁴⁰. A mortuary stela from Esna mentions that Aperet-Isis is the queen of all deities and the 'Lady of Panopolis'⁴¹. Furthermore, the appearance of the title 'Priest of the Beneficent Gods (*n3 ntr. w mnh. w*)' on an offering table strongly suggests that Akhmim housed the royal family cult of Ptolemy III and Berenike II⁴².

The papyrus known as P. Berl. Bork contains a fragmentary topographical survey of the city in the early fourth century AD, as well as a register of houses and residents from

²⁵ G. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes, A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton 1986), 124.; B. Rogers and D. Rathbone, *Egypt from Alexander to the Copts* (London 2004), 172. Sauneron describes the temple according to a translation of Ibn Gobair, which dates to the 12th century, S. Sauneron, 'Le Temple d'Akhmim describe par Ibn-Gobair', *BIFAO* 51, 123–35. On the damage of the temple, see M. Gabolde, 'La Fin du Temple d'Akhmim', *Akhmim, un tour d'horizon, Egypte, Afrique & Orient* 96 (2020), 53–64.; id., 'La Fin du Temple d'Akhmim', in M. Chauveau et al. (eds.), *Curiosité d'Égypte, entre quête de soi et découverte de l'autre, de l'Antiquité à l'époque contemporaine* (Geneva 2020), 75–104.

²⁶ The *Birba* temple of Akhmim was comparable to the temples of Dendera and Philae. It was described by Herodotus, *Hdt.* II, 91. The *Birba* temple has been abundantly described in the Arabic literature from the 12th century onwards; it was regarded as equivalent to one of the seven wonders of the world. For the Arabic historians who described the temple, see Kuhlmann, *SDAIK* 11, 25–31, 32–33. The most extensive description of this *Birba* is from Ibn Gobair, who visited Egypt in 1183, giving details of its measurements and its plan, and a vivid picture of its pillars, walls, ceiling, sculptures, and paintings. According to Ibn Gubair, the enormous temple was 86.5 or 106.5m. in width and 118 or 146m. in length, Kuhlmann, *SDAIK* 11, 26 no. 109. This means it was larger than the Edfu temple (79m. x 137m.), and smaller than the temple of Karnak. The temple would have contained 40 Hathoric columns measuring 4m. in diameter and 21m. in height, with a square shape. Ibn Gobair mentions that 'the temple consisted of reception halls, small niches, entrances and exits, ramps, staircases, corridors and entrance openings, so that in its whole groups of people get lost; only by loud screaming can one lead one other's way', Sauneron, *BIFAO* 51 (1952), 123–35.; Kuhlmann, *SDAIK* 11, 33–35. Kuhlmann recorded the descriptions of modern travellers, Kuhlmann, *SDAIK* 11, 14–49. About this temple, see D. Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs* (New York, Oxford 1999), 164.; id., *Die Temple Ägyptens, Götterwohnungen, Kultstätten, Baudenkmäler* (Zürich 1992), 174–76.; A. Basilius, 'Eine Bislang Unpublizierte Priester Statuette aus Dem Ptolemäischen Panopolis', in A. Egberts, B. Muhs, and J. Van Der Vliet (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis, an Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest; Acts From an International Symposium, Held in Leiden on 16, 17, and 18 December 1998* (Leiden, 2002), 29.

²⁷ J. Kosciuk, 'The Architectural Record, General Description of the Individual Areas of the Town and their Monuments', in R. El-Sayed and Y. El-Masry (eds.), *Athribis I*, 133, fig. 2.3.24. From El-Salamuni, the limestone could be transported along canals to the downtown area of the city, Geens, 'Panopolis, a Nome Capital', 301.

²⁸ On the festival, see M. Fukaya, *The Festivals of Opet, the Valley and the New Year, Their Socio-Religious Functions*, *BAR Publishing* 28 (Oxford 2019).

²⁹ V. Altmann-Wendling, 'Of Min and Moon, Cosmological Concepts in the Temple of Athribis (Upper Egypt)', in G. Rosati and M. Guidotti (eds.), *Proceedings of the XI International Congress of Egyptologists, Florence Egyptian Museum, Florence, 23–30 August 2015* (Oxford 2017), 7.

³⁰ C. Leitz, R. El-Sayed, D. Mendel, and Y. El-Masry, 'Die Inschriften des Torbaus Ptolemaios IX', in R. El-Sayed and Y. El-Masry (eds.), *Athribis I*, ins. 2, 5–8.

³¹ Leitz et al., *Athribis I*, ins. 1, 3, 6, 8.

³² Leitz et al., *Athribis I*, ins. 4, 5, 9.

³³ Altmann-Wendling, 'Of Min and Moon' in G. Rosati and M. Guidotti (eds.), *Proceedings of the XI International Congress of Egyptologists*, 8.

³⁴ F. Petrie, *Athribis* (London 1908), pls. 17, 18, 25, 27, 31, 32. Another one of Min's consorts, named Thmesios, or 'the Midwife', was mentioned on mummy labels from Bompae as *Θμεσιος* and *Πενθεσιος*, E. Lüddeckens, H. Thissen, and W. Brunsch, *Demotisches Namenbuch*, *DNB XIV*, 1066–67.

³⁵ A. Gardiner, 'The Supposed Athribis of Upper Egypt', *JEA* 31 (1945), 109.

³⁶ M.-Th. Derchain-Urtel, 'Epigraphische Anmerkungen zu den Stelen aus Achmim', in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 84.

³⁷ M. Derchain-Urtel, *Priester im Tempel. Die Rezeption der Theologie der Tempel von Edfu und Dendera in den Privatdokumenten aus ptolemäischer Zeit*, *GOF IV.19* (Wiesbaden 1989), 103–51.

³⁸ An inscription on the base of a statue of Ramesses II which was recently excavated in Akhmim mentions '(Ramesses) beloved of Horus, son of Isis; beloved of Min, who is in Akhmim; beloved of Horus, who is in Akhmim; beloved of Isis, mother of the god', Y. El-Masry, 'Further Evidence of a Temple of Ramesses II at Akhmim', *MDAIK* 59 (2003), 287.

The myths of Min and Horus were entangled; Min was assimilated with Horus since the Old Kingdom and worshipped as Min-Horus, *ÄRG*, 'Min', 465.; H. Junker, *Die Onourislegende, Die Stundenwachen in den Osirismysterien, Das Götterdekret über das Abaton III* (Wien 1917), 35–36.; H. Kees, *Der Götterglaube im alten Ägypten, Mitteilungen der vorderasiatischen ägyptischen Gesellschaft, E.V.* 45 (Leipzig 1941), 199–203. Hence, Min was both the son and husband of Isis in Panopolis.

³⁹ A. Scharff, 'Ein Denkstein der Römischen Kaiserzeit aus Achmim', *ZÄS* 62 (1927), 88.; Kees, *Rec. Trav.* 36, 35. This combination of Min-Re also appears in the temple of Hapu and other Graeco-Roman temples, H. Gauthier, *Les fêtes du dieu Min*, *RAPH* 2(Cairo 1931) 181–82.; Kees, *ZÄS* 57, 132.

⁴⁰ M. Depauw, 'The Late Funerary Material from Akhmim', in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 73.

⁴¹ *LD* II, 167.

⁴² *BM* 1215.; A. Budge, *A Guide to the Egyptian Galleries (Sculptures)* (London 1909), 287 no. 1036.

Panopolis in Upper Egypt⁴³. The main register has over 430 entries, although there is no direct evidence for the size of Panopolis. However, the register does add more details to the picture of the city, listing several houses owned by priests in addition to several temples⁴⁴ in a sort of street-by-street view. According to the register, houses were located along small alleys or at angles to each other. One house-by-house inventory of a quarter of the city was found to contain more than 300 entries of houses (one of which belonged to Petetriphis, the son of Petearbeschinis)⁴⁵. Some houses are recorded as being in ruins, while others have just been built. Each entry occupies one line and records the nature of the property and the property owner(s). Each individual plot (either a house, empty plot, workshop, or a combination of these) is recorded in a single entry, as a list. Borkowski charts 33 professions in Akhmim, as well as the number of people, the religious buildings, and the workspace for each⁴⁶. Personal names found on the papyrus include Greek, Egyptian, and Latin elements, with the Egyptian elements strongly predominating. This may suggest that the population was largely indigenous. However, the use of mixed Egyptian and Greek in words and in names suggests a level of Hellenisation, or at least of multi-culturalism⁴⁷.

Since the Roman period, Panopolis has been distinguished by occupational differentiation, housing a variety of workshops of different types, as well as a famous linen textile industry⁴⁸. Strabo⁴⁹ notes that Panopolis had the reputation of being an old centre of linen weavers, stonemasons, ship builders, and metal workers (particularly gold smiths), claiming 'and then (one comes) to Panopolis, an old settlement of linen workers and stone workers (*Πάνω ἔν πουλίς λινουργῶν και; λυκοῦργῶν κατοικία παλαία*)'⁵⁰. Inhabitants of the city are identified

as jewellers, carpenters, and others, and those practicing similar trades tended to live in the same neighbourhoods⁵¹. The Akhmim cemeteries have yielded an abundant trove of textiles such as linen, wool, and silk, dating especially to the Ptolemaic, Byzantine, and Islamic Periods. The P. Berl. Bork shows a considerable concentration of textile specialists living in the early fourth century: 22 men out of 61, or roughly 36% of all traders and craftsmen listed in the P. Berl. Bork are involved in textile manufacture and trade, with 13 different specialisations out of a total of 41 (roughly 32%) in Panopolis relating to its production, and about 13 out of 24 workshops (mainly linen weaving)⁵². Akhmim cemeteries, especially El-Hawawish A, housed a wealth of Roman and Coptic textiles⁵³. Today, Akhmim is not only a great archaeological city, but also a major location for the manufacture of modern Egyptian textiles⁵⁴.

Herodotus claims that a vast Greek community had settled at Akhmim as early as the mid-fifth century BC, and remarks that the Greek culture flourished in Panopolis during that period. He mentions that Chemmis (Panopolis) was the only city in Egypt to have adopted Greek customs⁵⁵.

took place both north of El-Salamuni and further away to the north and south, R. Klemm and D. Klemm, *Steine und Steinbrüche im alten Ägypten* (Berlin 1993), 168–83.

⁵¹ Willis and Maresch, *The Archive of Ammon (P. Ammon)*, 5.

⁵² C. Geens, *Panopolis, a Nome Capital in Egypt in the Roman and Byzantine Period (ca. AD 200–600)*, PhD thesis, (Leuven 2007), 290–91. Attempts at gathering the Akhmimic artefacts and materials dispersed throughout the world since Maspero's excavations were begun by H. Middleton-Jones in his thesis, titled *The Akhmim Project, the Analytical Catalogue of Material from the Late Period Cemeteries of Akhmim in Upper Egypt* (MPhil. thesis, Swansea University, (Swansea 1997). Later, in 2017, Marion Claude fulfilled her PhD thesis on 'La IXe province de Haute-Égypte (Akhmim), organisation culturelle et topographie religieuse de l'ancien Empire à l'époque romaine', (unpublished PhD thesis, Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3, (Montpellier 2017).

⁵³ On the Akhmimic textiles, see R. Forrer, *Über Steinzeit-Hockergräber zu Akhmim Naqada etc. in Oberägypten (Akhmim-Studien I)* (Strasbourg 1901), 10–12, 14, 17f, 33, pl. 16–22, fig. 2–4.; id., *Mein Besuch in El-Akhmim. Reisebriefe aus Ägypten* (Strasbourg 1895), 34–40.; R. Forrer, 'Antike Bucheinbände von Panopolis-Akhmim', *Zeitschrift für Bücherfreunde* 8 (1904–05), 311–15.; E. Wipszycka, *L'Industrie Textile* (Wrocław 1965), 44–46.; S. Schrenk, 'Spätromisch-frühislamische Textilien aus Ägypten', in S. Emmel, M. Klause, and S. Richter (eds.), *Ägypten und Nubien in spätantiker und christlicher Zeit, Akten des 6. Internationalen Koptologenkongresses Münster, 20.–26. Juli 1996. 1. Materielle Kultur, Kunst und religiöses Leben, Sprachen und Kulturen des christlichen Orients* 4 (Wiesbaden 1998), 339–78.; M. Rutschowskaya, *Tissues Coptes* (Paris 1990) (textiles from Akhmim are printed on 17(VI), 34(VII), 52(XI), 69(IV), 83–87(IV), 90(IV), 106(V–VI), and 132(VI)); R. Pillinger, 'Die Textilkunst der frühen Christen gezeigt am Beispiel der Funde aus Ägypten', in H. Harrauer and R. Pintaudi (eds.), *Gedenkschrift Ulrike Horak (P. Horak) 2 (Pap. Flor. XXXIV)* (Florence 2004), 429–35.

⁵⁴ D. Ammon, *Crafts of Egypt* (Cairo 1999), 28–31. In the 12th century conquest, Akhmim remained an important Coptic city and a centre of the textile industry. It exported its textiles via a well-travelled pilgrim and trade route to the Red Sea, Kuhlmann, *SDAIK* 11, 25 no. 101. Today, textiles from Akhmim can be seen in museums around the world. Between 2003 and 2010, the Canadian Aid in Egypt built 'Qaret El-Nasseg', which includes 174 textile houses in Akhmim. They gathered all of the local hand weaving practitioners to revive the textile craft. Unfortunately, the project failed, and the craft is nowadays a subject of extinction. According to the International Council of Museums (ICOM)'s Red List of Egyptian cultural treasures, issue 2011, the Coptic textiles are listed as endangered artifacts, M. Bruwier, 'Akhmim antique', in M. Jeanne Paule and M. Bruwier (eds.), *Akhmim, au fil des femmes, broderies et tissages de Haute-Égypte, 4000 ans d'art textile*, MUMAQ (Mariemont 2022), 15–16.

⁵⁵ Herodotus, II, 91.

⁴³ This document most likely dates to 315–30 AD (part of the period after the persecution against the Christians), Z. Borkowski, *Une description topographique des immeubles à Panopolis (=SB XVI 16000)* (Warsaw 1975), 13. Thomas dates it to after 298 AD, J. Thomas, 'Chronological Notes on Documentary Papyri', *ZPE* 6 (1970), 177–80, while Youtie dates it to between 299–441 AD, H. Youtie, 'P.Gen. inv. 108= SB VIII 9902', *ZPE* 7 (1971), 170–71. Part of the roll is now in Geneva (published in 1962 by Martin (=SB VIII 9902)), and part is in Berlin. Both sets of rolls were published together by Borkowski as P. Berl. Bork, Borkowski, *Une description topographique*, 24–26. In the Oxyrhynchite nome, about 30 temples were recorded for Greek gods, and were built in either an Egyptian or Greek form, J. Whitehorne, 'The Pagan Cults of Roman Oxyrhynchus', *ANRW* II.18.5 (1995), 3053.

⁴⁴ P. Van Minnen, 'The Letter (and other Papers) of Ammon: Panopolis in the Fourth Century AD', in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 179.

⁴⁵ W. Willis and K. Maresch, *The Archive of Ammon Scholasticus of Panopolis (P. Ammon), The Legacy of Harpocration, Texts from the Collections of Duke University and the Universität zu Köln, PC* 26/1 (Köln 1997), 5.

⁴⁶ Z. Borkowski, *Une description topographique*, 44–46.; McNally and Schrenk, *Excavations in Akhmim*, 9.

⁴⁷ V. Martin, 'Relevé topographique des immeubles d'une métropole', *Recherches de Papyrologie* II (1962), 45–46.

⁴⁸ Ten linen weaving workshops (*λινουργεῖον*) are recorded in Panopolis' P. Berl. Bork II 28, IX 20, IX 33, X 2, XII 9, XII 15, XVI 21, XVIII 10, A II 3, and A IV 14. Also see B. Mcging, 'Lease of a Linen-weaving Workshop in Panopolis', *ZPE* 82 (1990), 115–21.

⁴⁹ Strabo, XVII.1.41 C813.; Martin, *Relevé topographique*, 37–73.

⁵⁰ P. Berl. Bork XII, 17. Akhmim was famous as a quarry from the New Kingdom until at least the second century. Quarrying by stone workers

Hellenistic-style games were organised there, the so-called Paneia for the local Greek god Perseus Ouranios, since the fifth century BC⁵⁶. During the Graeco-Roman Period, Panopolis continued to be a thriving Hellenised metropolis with several major ethnicities and a densely packed population; in this city, Greeks and Romans lived alongside the indigenous Egyptian population. The city was one of the most important strongholds of Greek culture in Upper Egypt, where the Egyptian and Hellenistic cultures intertwined in a productive way and where a Hellenised clientele thrived. Panopolis was a main spring of cultural diversity and is a paradigm for studying Graeco-Roman Egypt through the ‘double style’. Hybridisation and multiculturalism influenced the local religion, most notably in regards to local traditions, funerary beliefs, and burial customs⁵⁷.

In Roman Panopolis, the Hellenistic culture was fully established, with a Hellenised population and access to a Greek education and culture⁵⁸. Panopolis was a

hot-bed of Greek culture, with excellent libraries and educational opportunities⁵⁹. The multi-cultural society of Panopolis was a centre for the merging of classical and Egyptian funerary art and iconography, showing multi-directional influences between the Egyptians and the Greeks. Hellenism was its so-called ‘elite’ culture, and the members of wealthy families were encouraged to participate in and learn the Greek language and ways. Social stratification was partially caused by one’s ability to adapt to the Greek culture and language. The acquaintance with Greek culture became increasingly crucial as a means of obtaining status and prestige⁶⁰. In Late Antiquity, the Christian community in Panopolis included an urban elite marked by a Greek cultural tradition. The community was known as a town of scholars and a centre of learning. Besides a newly developing political elite, Upper Egyptian Panopolis produced the most well-known poets of the Greek language in the fifth century. It was a major centre of Greek culture, with poets such as Triphiodorus, Cyrus, Pamprepisus, and Nonnus, who wrote *Dionysiaca*. Nonnus is an extreme example of a Christian sharing in Greek culture. Besides famous poets being born in Panopolis, the alchemist Zosimus, a gnostic, became equally well-known⁶¹.

⁵⁶ A. Lloyd, ‘Perseus and Chemmis (Herodotus, II, 91)’, *JHS* 89 (1969), 79–86.; id., Herodotus II, *Commentary*: 1–98.; *EPRO* 43 (Leiden 1976), 367–70.

⁵⁷ L. Castiglione, *Dualité du style dans l’art sépulcral égyptien à l’époque romaine*, *AAASH* 9 (Budapest 1961), 209–30.

⁵⁸ For the Greek culture in Panopolis, see A. Martin and O. Primavesi, *L’Empédocle de Strasbourg (P. Strasb. gr. inv. 1665–1666)* (Berlin, Strasbourg 1999), 43–51.; J. Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt, Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden und Juden im Osten des römischen Reiches von Konstantin bis Theodosius II*, *Klio, Beiträge zur alten Geschichte, Beihefte N.F.* 8 (Berlin 2004), 243–46.; A. Cameron, ‘The Empress and the Poet, Paganism and Politics at the Court of Theodosius II’, *YCS* 27 (1984), 217–89.; G. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge 1990), 55–69. Although Panopolis was a centre of Greek education and culture, only nine copies of Greek classical literature indisputably come from Akhmim; the texts include P. Achm. 2–5 (LDAB 1269, 982, 2090, 10638), P. Ammon I.2 (LDAB 5626), II.26 (LDAB 1913), the Empedocles Papyrus published by Martin and Primavesi (*L’Empédocle de Strasbourg (P. Strasb. gr. inv. 1665–1666)* LDAB 824), and a mathematical exercise published by J. Baillet (*Le papyrus mathématique d’Akhmim*, *MMFAC* IX.1 (Paris 1892), 1–89 (LDAB 6240)). The number of Coptic papyri discovered from eastern Akhmim is still few, and they date to the fourth and the fifth centuries AD. Most are written in Greek and/or Coptic, and are bilingual. These papyri likely come from El-Hawawish A, which was a distinctive cemetery for Coptic burials, U. Bouriant, *Les Papyrus d’Akhmim*, *MMFAC* 1.2 (Paris 1885), 243–304.; id., *Rapport au Ministère de l’Instruction Publique sur une mission dans la Haute-Egypte (1884–1885)*, *MMFAC* 1.3 (Paris 1887).; U. Wilcken, ‘Die Achmim-Papyri in der Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris’ (Sitzungsber. Kgl. Preuss. Akad.) (1887) 807–20.; P. Lacau, ‘Textes coptes en dialectes akhmimique et sahidique’, *BIFAO* 8 (1993), 43–109.; J. Gascou, ‘Les codices documentaires égyptiens’, in A. Blanchard (ed.), *Les débuts du codex (Bibliologia 9)* (Turnhout 1989), 71–101.; K. Treu, ‘Christliche Papyri XIV’, *AJP* 35 (1989), 107–16. On the other hand, the Panopolite nome was home to a famous Coptic papyrus, known as the Bodmer Papyrus, which was acquired by Martin Bodmer, a learned Swiss bibliophile and merchant of Geneva in the years 1955–56. There, the so called ‘Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri’ were discovered, being now located in Dublin. They are written in Coptic and Latin, and were used by the family of Alopex to record tax receipts dating between 339 and 346 AD. For more on these manuscripts, see J. Robinson, *The Pachomian Monastic Library at the Chester Beatty Library and the Bibliothèque Bodmer, The Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, Occasional Paper* 19 (Claremont 1990), 11–16.; id., ‘The First Christian Monastic Library’, in W. Godlewski (ed.), *Coptic Studies, Acts of the Third International Congress of Coptic Studies, Warsaw, 20–25 August, 1984* (Warsaw 1990), xxv–vi.; W. Brashear et al., *The Chester Beatty Codex Ac. 1390 Mathematical School Exercises in Greek and John 10:8–13:38 in Sub-Achmimic*, *Chester Beatty Monographs* 13 (Leuven, Paris 1990). Furthermore, the White Monastery library became the largest single find of Coptic (Sahidic) manuscripts known to-date. About 3,500 papers and fragments are now in the Bibliothèque Nationale thanks to

Maspero, Bouriant, and Amélineau. See M. Foat, ‘Shenuti: Discourse in the Presence of Heraklammou’, *OLP* 24 (1993), 23–24. Large collections are now in the Cairo Museum, the IFAO, and the British Library, W. Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic Monuments in the British Museum* (London 1905). The Austrian National Library, the Bibliotheca Nazionale in Naples, and the Vatican Library also contain some manuscripts, S. Emmel and C. Römer, ‘The Library of the White Monastery in Upper Egypt’, in H. Froschauer and C. Römer (eds.), *Spätantike Bibliotheken, Leben und Leser in den frühen Klöstern Ägyptens (Nilus. Studien zur Kultur Ägyptens und des Vorderen Orients 14)* (Wien 2008), 5–14.

⁵⁹ J. Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites, the London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100–300CE)* (Leiden 2005), 291–93. Panopolis was a stronghold of revolts against the Ptolemies during the second century BC, and was once held captive after a prolonged siege which presumably occurred in 165 BC, Diod. Sic. XXXI fr. 17b.; A. Veisse, *Les ‘révoltes égyptiennes’, Recherches sur les troubles intérieurs en Égypte du règne de Ptolémée III à la conquête romaine*, *StudHell* 41 (Leuven, Paris, Dudleya, 2004), 39–43. A second revolt led to the exclusion of Panopolis from the amnesty of 118 BC, P. Tebt. 5, II.134–38= 147–54.; Veisse, *Les ‘révoltes égyptiennes’, 57, 63.*

⁶⁰ The Romanisation of the local elite was a means of consolidating their positions of power, as attested by a man named Ammon, who was the scion of an Egyptian priestly family, but acquainted with Greek language and Greek culture, see R. Criore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt, Am.Stud.* 36 (Atlanta 1996), 242. The urban elite Christian community in Panopolis was marked by a Greek cultural tradition, Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 249.

⁶¹ On the *Dionysiaca*, see G. Bowersock, ‘Dionysius as an Epic Hero’, in N. Hopkinson (ed.), *Studies in the Dionysiaca of Nonnus* (Cambridge 1994), 156–66.; id., ‘Selected Papers on Late Antiquity’ (Bari 2000), 109–20.; A. Hollis, ‘Some Allusions to Earlier Hellenistic Poetry in Nonnus’, *CQ* 26 (1976), 142–50.; W. Liebeschuetz, ‘The Use of Pagan Mythology in the Christian Empire with Particular Reference to the Dionysiaca of Nonnus’, in P. Allen and E. Jefferys (eds.), *The Sixth Century, End or Beginning?, Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, Byzantina Australiensia* 10 (Brisbane 1996), 75–91. On the alchemist Zosimus, see M. Mertens, ‘Alchemy, Hermeticism and Gnosticism at Panopolis c. 300 A.D.: The Evidence of Zosimus’, in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 165–75.; B. Hallum, *Zosimus Arabus, the Reception of Zosimus of Panopolis in the Arabic/ Islamic World*, PhD dissertation for Combined Historical Studies, Warburg Institute (London 2010).; J. Lindsay, *The Origins of Alchemy in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (New York 1970).; M. Mertens, *Les alchimistes grecs, Tome IV, Ire partie, Zosime de Panopolis, Mémoires authentiques (Collection des Universités de France)* (Paris 1995).

In 298 AD, the Panopolite nome was subdivided into six administrative toparchies⁶². Two were located on the east bank. One was known as *Τοπαρχία Μητροπόλεως*, or the ‘Toparchy of the Metropolis’, corresponding to modern Akhmim. It comprised the fertile and productive river plain, and was bordered on the east and northeast by the high limestone ridges of the Eastern Desert, which taper towards the northern border near the Antaiopolite nome. The toparchy was also sometimes called *Τοπαρχία Μητροπόλεως και Αραβία*⁶³, or the ‘Toparchy of the Metropolis and Arabia’, the latter title being mentioned twice in papyri⁶⁴, and probably referring to the smaller fertile area of land bordering the Eastern Arabic Desert northwest of Akhmim. The second toparchy was called the ‘Upper Toparchy’. It encompassed the southern part of the nome, and was situated on the Panopolite east bank, opposite the southernmost toparchy on the west bank. Four toparchies were situated on the west bank. The northernmost toparchy was the *Τοπαρχία Συνορίας και Τοετώ*⁶⁵, or the ‘Toparchy of Synoria and Toeto’. It was situated on the northern border of the nome, on the west bank, corresponding to modern Tahta⁶⁶ (Toeto is undoubtedly the modern Tahta)⁶⁷. The name ‘Synoria’, meaning ‘borderland’, may suggest that this location was the boundary between the Panopolite and Antaiopolite nomes⁶⁸. Toeto and Synoria are occasionally mentioned in the papyri of Aphrodito and in texts from the Great Oasis⁶⁹. Additionally, *Τοπαρχία Πακέρκη-Ψινάβλα*, or the ‘Toparchy of Pakerke and Psinabla’⁷⁰, corresponds to modern Shandawil. Furthermore, *Μέση Τοπαρχία*, or the ‘Mese Toparchy’, was wrongly suggested by Skeat to have been situated on the east bank⁷¹, while a recently published text from the Ammon Archive mentions that Bompae (modern Sohag) was one of the main sources

of mummy labels from the west bank, situated within the Mese toparchy⁷². This would strongly imply that the Mese toparchy was located on the west bank, presumably opposite the metropolis of Panopolis. The sixth division was *Τοπαρχία Φενεβύθειας (εος)*, or the ‘Phenebythis Toparchy’. This was the southernmost toparchy on the Panopolite west bank⁷³, bordering the Thinite nome and including Athribis-with-Triphion⁷⁴. The toparchies of Pakerke and Phenebythis were the smaller ones⁷⁵. Later, in 307/308 AD, the six toparchies were replaced by an unknown number of *pagi*, only two of which were documented. The first *pagus* may have been near the nome capital, while the second one matches the middle toparchy, including Bompae and Nesos Apollinariados, as mentioned in the archive of Aurelius Heron (also known as Dionysodoro) (318-321 AD), who was the *praepositus* of the second *pagus* of the Panopolite nome⁷⁶. Most likely, the Panopolite toparchies and *pagi* were subdivided into *merides*, as was the case in the Oxyrhynchite nome⁷⁷.

By the third century BC, Hellenism reached its zenith in the region, resulting in a newly-cultivated multi-cultural urban identity. In 201 AD, Septimius Severus finally granted the metropolis a city council (*boulē*) through which Panopolis became a Greek *polis*, gaining full urban status, and developing from a town to a fully Greek city with elite Greek citizens⁷⁸. Due to the dramatic Romanisation and Hellenisation of the public architecture in the cities, by the second century AD, Panopolis possessed several civic buildings and had become larger and grander, with a theatre⁷⁹, at least three public baths (the windows of which

⁶² *P. Panop. Beatty*, xxxv–ii.

⁶³ *P. Panop. Beatty*, 1.329.

⁶⁴ One is in the P. Ammon (I 3, v, 28), while the second is in the P. Bodm. (I 1 recto).

⁶⁵ J. Gascou and K. Worp, ‘The Panopolitan Village Συνορία’, *ZPE* 112 (1996), 163–64.

⁶⁶ On Tahta, see S. Timm, *Das Christlich-Koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit, Teil A-Z* (Wiesbaden 1992), 2467–69.

⁶⁷ In 298 AD, one Roman camp was known as ‘the Camp of Toeto and Psinabla’. It was garrisoned by the Ala II Herculia Dromedariorum and served as a *mansio*, or ‘resting place’ on the main highway leading down the west bank. *P. Beatty. Panop.* 1.39, 87, 389, 406.

⁶⁸ Synoria relates to *ὄρος*, M. Lewuillon-Blume, ‘P. Giessen inv. 263’, *CdÉ* 52 (1978), 118–22. The noun *συνορία* derives from *ὄρια*, meaning ‘boundary’, C. Buck and W. Petersen, *Reverse Index of Greek Nouns and Adjectives* (Chicago 1945), 153. Husson connects it to *ὄρος*, meaning ‘gebel’, G. Husson, ‘L’hospitalité dans les papyrus byzantins’, in E. Kiessling and H. Rupprecht (eds.), *Akten des XIII. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses, Marburg/ Lahn, 2.–6. August 1971, Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte* 66 (München 1974), 175 no. 39.

⁶⁹ *P. Grenf.* II 73.; *P. Kell. Gr.* I 30.

⁷⁰ Its ancient name was *Pa-kerkê* (variant *Pa-grg*), meaning ‘the City of Foundation’, S. Sauneron, *Villes et légendes, Bibliothèque d’études* 90 (Cairo 1983), 108 (=BIFAO 66 (1968), 18); K. Worp, ‘Localisation d’un camp de l’armée romaine à Psinabla’, *Eirene* 52 (2016), 271–76.; H. Gauthier, ‘Nouvelles notes géographiques sur le nome Panopolite’ *BIFAO* 10 (1912), 120. Sauneron identifies *Psinabla* with modern Shandawil, Sauneron, *Villes et légendes*, 101–08.; K. Vanderpe, *Egyptische geografische elementen in Griekse transcriptie*, unpublished MA dissertation, KU Leuven (Leuven 1988), 146 no. 635, 156.

⁷¹ Skeat, introduction to *P. Beatty. Panop.*, xxxvi.

⁷² *P. Ammon* II 50, ii.

⁷³ Chauveau connects Phenebythis with the Egyptian name *Pr-nb-wt*, M. Chauveau, ‘Autour des étiquettes de momies de la Bibliothèque nationale de Vienne’, *BIFAO* 92 (1992), 108.; id., ‘Rive droite, rive gauche, Le nome Panopolite au IIe et IIIe siècles de notre ère’, in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 47 no.8.; K. Zauzich, ‘Verteidigung eines Mumienchildes’, *ZÄS* 114 (1987), 97, n. 6. Smith declares that the Papyrus Harkness does not come from Akhmim, but from the Antinopolite nome, as previously assumed by Chauveau (who argued that *Pr-nb-wt* was identical with Phenebythis in the Panopolite nome), M. Smith, *Papyrus Harkness*, *MMA* 31.9.7 (Oxford 2005), 15–16. In the name *Φεν-εβύθις*, *Φεν* could mean *P3 Hr n*, or ‘side of Abydos’, J. Quaegebeur, ‘Mummy Labels, An Orientation’, *P.L. Bat.* 19 (1978), 251. Furthermore, in the list of contributions in the P. Strasb. VI 587, Phenebythis is mentioned alongside villages in the Thinite nome, adding a further indication of its location as both south of the Panopolite nome, and beyond the Thinite nome.

⁷⁴ *P. Panop. Beatty*, xxxvii.; Chauveau, *BIFAO* 92, 108.; El-Sayed and El-Masry, *Athribis* I, 9.

⁷⁵ *P. Beatty. Panop.* 1.276–331.

⁷⁶ *SB* VI, 9544.

⁷⁷ J. Rowlandson, *Landowners and Tenants in Roman Egypt, The Social Relations of Agriculture in the Oxyrhynchite Nome* (Oxford 1996), 8.

⁷⁸ The earliest reference to the community of the Panopolites is a text dating to AD 288, *P. Oxy.* xxvii 2476.; *P. Beatty. Panop.* 1.60–62 (AD 298). The only attestations of *bouleutai* in Panopolis are from the following: P. Lips 45 r.6, 59.5 and 60.r.3 (371 AD), PSI xii 1233.2 (323/24 AD), and duplicate documents from the Ammon archive dated to 281 AD (P. Coll. Youtie II and 72), Willis and Maresch, *The Archive of Ammon (P. Ammon)*, 4–5.

⁷⁹ *P. Beatty. Panop.* 1.335–37.; G. Xanthaki-Karamanou, ‘Hellenistic Drama and Alexandrian Culture’, in C. Zerefos and M. Vardinoyannis (eds.), *Hellenistic Alexandria: Celebrating 24 Centuries: Papers Presented at the Conference Held on December 13–15 2017 at the Acropolis Museum, Athens, Archaeopress Archaeology (BAR Publishing)* (Oxford 2018), 139.

were glazed by the government)⁸⁰, a gymnasium with a bath⁸¹, a *Komasterion* (a kind of festive hall)⁸², a separate bath house, a *Paraetorium*, where the provincial governors would reside during their visits (and which also included a bath)⁸³, a *Logisterion*⁸⁴, and other public buildings⁸⁵. It even had a philosophical school, albeit no doubt private rather than public⁸⁶. Furthermore, the famous Panhellenic festivals were an important part of civic life from the third century onwards⁸⁷.

The language used in both the east and west banks of the nome may be employed as a general standard to measure the level of Hellenisation of the area. In this case, it reached its peak on the east bank, especially in the metropolis, in contrast to the west bank. Mummy labels⁸⁸ inscribed in Greek are common finds from Bompae and Nesos, located near the metropolis, while the proportion of discovered Demotic labels is generally remarkably low. In contrast,

⁸⁰ A. Bowman, 'Public Buildings in Roman Egypt', *JRA* 5 (1992), 500–02.

⁸¹ In the Hellenistic Period, the gymnasium and the bath were in two separate buildings, while in the Roman period, both institutions were typically placed inside one building, B. Mayer, 'Gymnase' et 'Thermes' dans l'Égypte romaine et byzantine', in B. Kramer, W. Luppe, H. Maehler, and G. Poethke (eds.), *Akten des 21. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses, Berlin, 13.–19.8. 1995, AfP* 3.II (Stuttgart, Leipzig 1997) 691–95.; Van Minnen, 'The Letter (and Other Papers) of Ammon', in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 179.

⁸² *P. Got.* 7. *Komasterion* is a Greek word referring to a religious building or sanctuary attributed to the god Dionysius. It was used as a meeting place for the procession of the sun and star gods, and festivals were made inside the building by the *komasteri*, see H. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford 1925), 973.; W. Gemoll, *Griechisch Deutsches Schulund Handwörterbuch* (Wien 1997), 461.; W. Martini, *Sachwörterbuch der Klassischen Archäologie* (Stuttgart 2003), 171.; H. Cancik and H. Schneider, *Der Neue Pauly Enzyklopädie der Antike, Band 6* (Stuttgart 1999), 706. Therefore, the *komasterion* of Panopolis may have been situated near the temple of Min/Pan.

⁸³ A temporary *palatium* was installed in the *Triphion* to serve as a place of accommodation for the visit of Diocletian to Panopolis in AD 298, instead of erecting a new building, *P. Beatty. Panop.* 1.260.; Van Minnen, 'The Letter (and Other Papers) of Ammon', in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 179.

⁸⁴ *P. Berl. Bork* 1.27.; *P. Beatty. Panop.* 1.228, 346, 350 (AD 298); *P. Panop.* 29, 1. 8 (AD 332). On the *Logisterion*, see A. Luckaszewicz, *Les édifices publics dans les villes de l'Égypte romaine. Problèmes administratifs et financiers* (Warsaw 1986), 46 no. 21.

⁸⁵ There is no known date for the initial erection of these Hellenistic buildings in Panopolis, but in 253 AD, a conservation contract was made between three glass workers, the *proedros* Aurelius Theon (alias Demetrios), and the council of Panopolis, for the re-glazing of several sets of public baths in the *gymnasium*, in the *praetorium*, near the *komasterion*, and in other city works, *P. Got.* 7, II. 5–6.

⁸⁶ Van Minnen, 'The Letter (and Other Papers) of Ammon', in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 179.

⁸⁷ Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 55–57.; id., *Later Roman Egypt, Society, Religion, Economy, and Administration, Variorum Collected Studies Series* 758 (Burlington 2003), 101.; A. Bowman, 'Landholding in the Hermopolite Nome in the Fourth Century AD', *JRS* 75 (1986), 69–72.; id., 'Urbanization in Roman Egypt', in E. Fentress (ed.), *Romanization and the City: Creation, Transformations and Failures, JRA* suppl. 38 (2000), 183.; E. Schönbauer, 'Die rechtliche Stellung der Metropoleis im römischen Ägypten', *Epigraphica* 11 (1949), 123.; Van Minnen, 'The Letter (and Other Papers) of Ammon', in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 179.; W. Van Regen, 'Les Jeux de Panopolis', *CdÉ* 46 (1971), 136–41.

⁸⁸ Mummy labels are tags or plaques made of wood or other materials. They have one or more holes through which a piece of string can be drawn to tie them to a mummy. They contain personal information about the deceased. The inscription relates to the mummy, its transport, and its burial. See Boyaval, 'Remarques sur la définition des étiquettes', *CRIPPEL* 7 (1985), 91–92.; id., 'Conclusions provisoires sur les étiquettes de momies en langue grecque', *BIFAO* 86 (1986), 37–40.

Demotic labels, many of which are still unpublished, are widely found in Psonis, which was located on the west bank, and further away from the metropolis⁸⁹. The evidence for the belief in the Osirian afterlife in the third century AD is thus well attested from the mummy labels from the west bank, but less attested on the east bank⁹⁰. Furthermore, the funerary culture also reflects the difference in Hellenisation between the city (on the east bank) and the west bank. On the west bank, the indigenous Egyptian religion remained generally more traditional, while the east bank it became more Hellenised.

The Egyptian cults were plugged into regional and national networks of culture and learning. From the fourth century onwards, the region of Panopolis became crowded with monasteries and nunneries, and Panopolis became home to some of the most well-known representatives of pagan literary culture. Members of leading families could look forward to a priesthood in the Pan/Min cult, and these priesthoods were often made hereditary, as exemplified by the archive of the aristocratic family of Aurelius Ammon (281–366 AD)⁹¹. However, around the first quarter of the fourth century AD, the traditional priesthood started to decline. In 325 AD, Ammon and his brother were still managing to preserve the priestly aristocracy and its hereditary rights to office and property, although with difficulty. This was combined with a devotion to the local cults⁹², and the association of the two brothers with Hellenistic culture, as members of the intellectual, Hellenised, urban elite of the metropolis⁹³.

⁸⁹ Almost 30% of the mummy labels from Bompae are in Greek (70 out of 256), whereas those of Psonis are almost exclusively bilingual or Demotic (58 out of 61). Chauveau's analysis of the mummy labels from the Louvre yield similar proportions; on 252 labels from Bompae, 68 are Greek, 178 bilingual, and 6 are Demotic; on 72 from Psonis, only 3 are Greek, 59 bilingual, and 10 Demotic, Chauveau, 'Rive droite, rive gauche', in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 53. The earliest known label from the Akhmim region with a precise date was written in year 13 of the reign of Domitian, on 07 December, 93 AD, Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels*, 810. The latest known mummy label of a precise date that records the afterlife beliefs of its owner was written in year 15 of Gallienus, on 24 February, 268 AD, Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels*, 476 no. 846. However, Arlt suggests that the label with the latest date was written around 275 AD, C. Arlt, *Deine Seele möge leben für immer und ewig: Die Mumtenschilder im British Museum* (Leuven 2011); M. Stadler, 'Funerary Religion: The Final Phase of Egyptian Religion', in C. Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, 386.

⁹⁰ M. Smith, *Following Osiris, Perspectives on the Osirian Afterlife from Four Millennia* (Oxford 2017), 430.

⁹¹ It was found in Akhmim in 1968, and was purchased via the antiquities market between 1968 and 1971. Currently, its rolls are divided, being held at Duke University, the University of Cologne, and the Vitelli Institute in Florence. It was written by Ammon in a rough, rapid 'draft-hand', W. Willis, 'Two Literary Papyri in an Archive from Panopolis', *ICS* 3 (1978), 140–42.; id., 'The Letter of Ammon of Panopolis to his Mother', *Actes du XVe Congrès international de papyrologie, Bruxelles-Louvain 29 août- 3 septembre 1977. II, Pap.Brux.* 17 (Brussels 1979), 98–115.

⁹² F. Feder, 'Ammon und seine Brüder, Eine ägyptische Familie aus Panopolis (Akhmim) im 4. Jh. zwischen ägyptisch-hellenistischer Kultur und Christentum', in M. Fitzenreiter (ed.), *Genealogie, Realität und Fiktion von Identität, Workshop am 04. und 05. Juni 2004 in Berlin, IBAES* 5 (London 2005), 105–06.

⁹³ L. Tacom, *Fragile Hierarchies, the Urban Elites of Third-Century Roman Egypt, Mnemosyne Supplements* 271 (Leiden 2006), 117. The cultivated Hellenism continued as a striking feature of Late Antique paganism in Panopolis during the early fourth century AD, especially within the pagan priestly family of Ammon, Van Minnen, 'The Letter

The pantheon of Panopolis was rich. The Panopolite nome housed not only Egyptian deities, but also Greek cults and divinities. Greek cultural icons such as Dionysius and Heracles were still being used by Christian members of the elite to express their ideas about God and the world⁹⁴. The study of onomastics provides useful indications of local cults and their topography⁹⁵. Personal names derived from Greek theophoric names such as those of Apollo, Dionysius, Artemis, Hermes, Aries, Kronos, and Herakles are found in the Panopolite nome⁹⁶. Some of these Greek gods were assimilated with Egyptian deities, and some Egyptian cults underwent Hellenisation. The P. Beatty

(and Other Papers) of Ammon', in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 451, as well as in the Horapollon family, D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt, Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton 1998), 223–24.; Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 245–46. The Christian and pagan elite in Panopolis still marked and related to the Greek cultural traditions, Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 249. In Roman Egypt, a priest who had a 'genuinely Hellenic culture' was regarded as a stoic ('a philosopher'), Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 54.

⁹⁴ Van Minnen, 'The Letter (and Other Papers) of Ammon', in: A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 181. Greek theophoric names known from the Panopolite nome were composed of or derived from the names of Greek cults and gods such as Apollo, Dionysius, Artemis, Hermes, Herakles, Apollonia/os (*P. Achm.* 9, ll. 39, 48, 53, 54, 120, 122, 130, 137, 138, 155, 156), Apollinarian (*P. Achm.* 9, l. 62), Apollinarios (*P. Achm.* 9, l. 52, 158), Artemis (*P. Achm.* 9, l. 142), Dionysios/arion (*P. Achm.* 9, ll. 68, 164, 165, 166), Herme(neu)s (*P. Achm.* 9, l. 44; *P. Bour.* 41a, l. 20), Hermion (*P. Achm.* 9, l. 169), Kronos (*P. Achm.* 9, l. 69, CEMG 1753, CEML 83, 94 and SB XX 14410), Herakleios (*P. Achm.* 9, ll. 180, 181?, 183, 184), and Herakleides (*P. Achm.* 9, l. 65).

⁹⁵ On the religious importance of onomastics, see R. Bagnall, 'Cults and Names of Ptolemais in Upper Egypt', in W. Clarysse, A. Schoors, and H. Willems (eds.), *Egyptian Religion, The Last Thousand Years, II, Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur, OLA 85* (Leuven 1998), 1093–101.; F. Colin, 'Onomastique et Société, Problèmes et méthodes à la lumière des documents de l'Égypte hellénistique et romaine', in M. Dondin-Payre and M. Th. Raepsathcharlier (eds.), *Noms. Identités culturelles et romanisation sous le haut-empire* (Brussels 2001), 3–15.; M. Abd El-Ghani, 'The Role of Ptolemais in Upper-Egypt Outside its Frontiers', in I. Andorlini (ed.), *Atti del XXII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia, Florence, 23–29 agosto 1998, I* (Florence 2001).

⁹⁶ Including Apollonia/os (*P. Achm.* 9, ll. 39, 48, 53, 54, 120, 122, 130, 137, 138, 155, 156), Apollinarian (*P. Achm.* 9, l. 62), Apollinarios (*P. Achm.* 9, l. 52, 158), Artemis (*P. Achm.* 9, l. 142), Dionysios/arion (*P. Achm.* 9, ll. 68, 164, 165, 166), Herme(neu)s (*P. Achm.* 9, l. 44; *P. Bour.* 41a, l. 20), Hermion (*P. Achm.* 9, l. 169), Aries 'Arios Apeios' (*P. Achm.* 9, l. 54; *P. Berl. Bork I 17*, X 32, XIV 27); Herakleios (*P. Achm.* 9, ll. 180, 181 ? 183, 184), and Herakleides (*P. Achm.* 9, l. 65). Local traditional names that were exclusively derived from the Panopolitan triad include Paniskos, Panodoros, Paniskion, Triphiodoros, Kolanthos, Hierakapollon, Perseus, Ouranios and Euodios, and the famous Petetripis derived from Triphis, Z. Borkowski, 'Local Cults and Resistance to Christianity', *JJP* 20 (1990), 30. Though the god Petbe was worshipped in Panopolis, he was equated to Kronos, as suggested in E. Amelineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi*, I (Paris 1907–14), 383–84. Although names such as 'Panetbeus' are absent from Panopolite onomastics, 'Petbe' is mentioned in both Demotic literature and Coptic magical texts. In the Demotic legend of the Seth and Horus-bird, as well as in P. Insinger from Akhmim, Petbe is 'the avenging daemon', appearing standing at the end of a scene in which one animal devours the other. Some scholars see the assimilation of Petbe as Min, J. Van der Vliet, 'Spätantikes Heidentum in Ägypten im Spiegel der koptischen Literatur', in D. Willers (ed.), *Begegnung von Heidentum und Christentum im spätantiken Ägypten, Riggisberger Berichte 1* (Riggisberg 1993), 114. Aufrère suggests that the name 'Petbe' is an imitation of Horus-imy-chénout, a local god in Panopolis who was depicted as a crocodile with a falcon head, S. Aufrère, 'Démonis vus par les premiers chrétiens', in M. Rassart-Debergh (ed.), *Études coptes V, Sixième journée d'études, Limoges 18–20 juin 1993 et Sixième journée d'études, Neuchâtel 18–20 mai 1995, CBC 10* (Leuven 1998), 81.; id., 'KRONOS, un crocodile justicier des marécages de la rive occidentale du Panopolite au temps de Chénouté?', in S. Aufrère et al. (eds.), *Encyclopédie religieuse de l'Univers végétal. Croyances phytoreligieuses de l'Égypte ancienne (ERUV III), OrMonsp 15* (Montpellier 2005), 77–93.

Panop.⁹⁷ and P. Berl. Bork⁹⁸ provide two very interesting topographical surveys of buildings in the city of Panopolis during the last part of the third and the early fourth centuries AD. They highlight the pagan and Christian religious transformations occurring during this period. They demonstrate how Egyptian, Graeco-Egyptian, and Greek gods appeared side by side in Panopolis, a city with significant inter-cultural interactions.

Temples known from the Panopolite nome which follow the Greek style and cult are considerably fewer, no doubt due to a lack of sources⁹⁹. Greek documentary texts such as P. Berl. Bork of the fourth century AD mention temples, priests, and priestesses at Akhmim. However, most of these served Greek cults rather than Egyptian ones¹⁰⁰. The P. Berl. Bork also mentions several houses owned by priests¹⁰¹. In fact, in the third century AD, the city register lists nine Greek *Hiera*, or 'sanctuaries'¹⁰² situated along the city streets. These include sanctuaries for:

- **Hermes:** God of knowledge, magic, and oracles. He had a special cult in Bompae, in the temple of 'Haryotes, Hermes, and Apollo'¹⁰³.
- **Chnoubis**¹⁰⁴: The Hellenised form of the ram-headed god Khnum from Elephantine, who was assimilated with Ammon-Zeus.
- **Ammon/Amon:** He was probably identical to Min-Amun¹⁰⁵.
- **Araus:** His name was mentioned in sources from Bompae as *Αραυς* and *ωγενταναραυς*¹⁰⁶. His identity is still obscure, being perhaps a shortened form of Inaraus.

⁹⁷ K. Skeat, 'P. Panop. Beatty, Papyri from Panopolis in the Chester Beatty Library', *Proceedings of the IX International Congress of Papyrology, Oslo, 19th–22nd August 1958* (Oslo 1961), 194–99. These two long rolls were acquired by Chester Beatty in 1956 together with a Greek grammar book, a biblical lexicon, and P. Bodm. II. The first roll records the correspondence of a *strategos* (probably Apollinarios) over the course of 13 days in September of 298 AD to his superior officials and to local officials and employees. The correspondence deals with the refurbishing of the Triphion and the preparation of accommodations(?) for the upcoming visit of Diocletian and his troops to Panopolis. The second roll shows the incoming correspondence received by the *strategos* Apollinarios from the procurator of the Lower Thebaid in January and March of 300 AD, Skeat, *P. Beatty. Panop.*, 122–23.

⁹⁸ See Borkowski, *Une description topographique*, 24–26.

⁹⁹ In the Oxyrhynchite nome, about 30 temples were recorded for Greek gods. They were built using either Egyptian and/or Greek forms, Whitehorne, 'The Pagan Cults', 3053.

¹⁰⁰ M. Smith, 'Osiris and the Deceased in Ancient Egypt, Perspectives from Four Millennia', *Journal of Publications of the École Pratique des Hautes Études* (2014), 97.

¹⁰¹ Van Minnen, 'The Letter (and Other Papers) of Ammon', in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 179.

¹⁰² They are mentioned respectively in P. Berl. Bork VIII 5, XV 27, XIV 27, IX 3, A II 5, A IV 12.; Borkowski, *Une description topographique*, 24–26.

¹⁰³ CEML 53.; J. Quaegebeur, 'Thot-Hermès, le dieu le plus grand', in *Hommages à François Daumas, II* (Montpellier 1986), 525–44. On Hermes Trismegistos, see Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 174.

¹⁰⁴ In the early fourth century, the people of Panopolis would still refer to the shrine of Chnoubis using the god's Egyptian name, Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Period*, 107.

¹⁰⁵ Kuhlmann, *SDAIK* 11, 48 no. 230.

¹⁰⁶ *SB XXVI 16764*.; CEMG 171, 1679, 1681, 1713, 1723, 1738, 1740, 1751, 1868.; B. Boyaval, *Corpus des étiquettes de momies grecques, Publications de l'Université de Lille III, Série 'Études archéologiques'* (Lille 1976).

• **Agathos Daimon:** The Egyptian Shai,¹⁰⁷ known as ‘the Good Fate’, and ‘the Beneficent Spirit of Alexandria’¹⁰⁸. A *laura* in Panopolis was named after this god or after his sanctuary¹⁰⁹. He was very popular in Panopolis and is still attested in the fourth and fifth centuries AD¹¹⁰. During the time of Saint Shenoute, Shai was apparently worshipped in local homes. Shenoute refers to ‘Shai of the Village’ or ‘Shai of the Home’, to whom lamps were burned and incense was offered¹¹¹. A local shrine and cult for Agathos Daimon was still maintained by the community in the fifth century in the north of Panopolis¹¹². Here, the locals maintained niches in their homes which housed an image of the god¹¹³. Furthermore, a special festival for Shai was still performed in Panopolis in the fifth century. During this festival, Shenoute once complained about homeowners who lit lamps in their houses to proclaim the festival of Shai¹¹⁴.

• **Persephone:** It is unknown whether she was venerated in Panopolis as a Greek goddess or rather worshipped through her Egyptian equivalent character, being either Triphis or Isis¹¹⁵. Both were associated with fertility. Thus, the cult of Persphone-Triphis shows how the classical and Egyptian cultures had intermingled within the domain of fertility¹¹⁶.

The syncretism of the Egyptian and Hellenistic practices and deities is significant in Panopolis during the Roman period. However, Smith has a ‘naïve and uncritical use of literary, often highly rhetorical, sources as historical evidence;[and an] ignorance of traditional Egyptian religion and the forms which it took in and around Akhmim during the Graeco-Roman Period, resulting in an inability to distinguish it from the Greek religion which co-existed alongside it there’¹¹⁷. He does not properly account for the religious syncretism of the area.

By the fourth century, the Greek divinities were still widely worshiped in Panopolis. Shenoute is known to have destroyed pagan idols in the domestic parts of the sanctuary of Atripe, as suggested by the fact that the idols confiscated from Gesios’ house were the same as those that were rescued from a temple¹¹⁸. It is highly likely that the sanctuary once contained images of Kronos, Hecate, Zeus, and other Greek deities. This emphasises the home’s traditional function as a site for religious practices, some of which were connected to local or regional temples and their festivals. In the Panopolite nome, the domestic cult, including the Eleusinian mysteries cult, was known, and its rites were likely performed in Panopolis, either in the houses or in the crypts of the temples of Min and Athripe. Frankfurter claims that religious practices ‘shifted centrifugally from temple cult to village and domestic rites’ in Roman period Egypt¹¹⁹. In one of his works, Shenoute criticizes the people who give thanks to daemons, saying ‘It is (the time for) worshipping the tutelary spirit (πυλαι) today’. Smith proposes that ‘the fact that he uses an Egyptian term to denote the tutelary spirits whose worship he castigates tells us nothing about their nature or that of the belief system to which they belong’¹²⁰. In the opinion of the author, a kind of mysteries cult was thus probably performed in the subterranean crypts of the temple of Athribis, and in the main temple of Min in Panopolis

¹⁰⁷ Amelineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi*, 379. Theophoric names in the Panopolite community sometimes derived from Shai (Ψαις, Ταλαιας(Σεν) πενταλαιας, and Σερεμλαιας), R. Bagnall, B. Frier, and I. Rutherford, *The Census Register P. Oxy.* 984.; *The Reverse of Pindar’s Paeans* (Pap. Brux. 29) (Brussels 1997), 114–24.; Bagnall, ‘Cults and Names’, 1093–101. One even finds Min-Shai (Πεταμλαιας) on Demotic mummy labels in the IFAO collection, D. Devauchelle and J. Quaegebeur, ‘Étiquettes de momies démotiques et bilingues de l’IFAO’, *BIFAO* 81 (1981), 366 no. 31. The local names ‘Agathos Daimon’ and ‘Hierakapollon’ were common among the Hellenised elite population of the fourth century, N. Litinas, ‘Hierakapollon, the Title of Panos Polis and the Names in-Apollon’, *AncSoc* 37 (2007), 97–106.

¹⁰⁸ Borkowski, *Une description topographique*, 24–26.

¹⁰⁹ CEMG 1962. Agathos Daemon was also associated with Dionysus (the god of wine). When Dionysus was

invoked or worshipped by the ancient Greeks for his command of the powers of discrimination, response, wisdom, healing, fertility, prophecy, and magic, he was considered Agathos Daemon, or ‘the good daemon’, R. Taylor-Perry, *The God who Comes: Dionysian Mysteries Revisited* 6. On Agathos Daimon, see D. Ogden, ‘Alexander, Agathos Daimon, and Ptolemy, The Alexandrian Foundation Myth in Dialogue’ in M. Sweeney (ed.), *Foundation Myths in Ancient Societies, Dialogues and Discourses* (Pennsylvania 2015), 129–50.

¹¹⁰ P. Berl. Bork A II 5. In Egypt, Agathos Daemon was assimilated as one of the traditional divinities who controlled individual fates and fortunes. This association explains the regular invocations of Agathos Daemon in prayers for wellbeing, favour, and worldly success, R. Gordan, D. Joly, and W. Van Andringa, ‘A Prayer For Blessings On Three Ritual Objects Discovered At Chartres-Autricum (France/Eure-Et Loir)’, in F. Simón and R. Gordon (eds.), *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers from the International Conference Held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept.- 1st Oct. 2005*, *EPRO* 168 (Leiden 2010), 515.

¹¹¹ J. Quaegebeur, *Le dieu égyptien Shai dans la religion et l’onomastique*, *OLA* 2 (Leuven 1975), 39, 160–66.; Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 63–64. Shenoute had a certain harshness towards the Panopolite pagan cults. Local religion shifted to the domestic sphere at the village level, and pagan cults and practices could still be maintained in private houses. Hence, Shai was still venerated at home, with the Panopolites continuing his worship in their household shrines, Van der Vliet, *Spätantikes Heidentum in Ägypten*, 114. Furthermore, in the Ammon Archive of the fourth century AD, the name of the local god Agathos Daimon (Egyptian Shai) was mentioned and indeed prominent in Panopolis, such as seen in *P. Ammon* II 37, l. 2; 41, l. 2; 46, l. 4. He sometimes occurred alongside Tyche and the *pronoia* of the gods (see *P. Ammon* II 37, l. [2]; 41, l. [2]).

¹¹² D. Frankfurter, ‘Religious Practice and Piety’, in C. Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt* (Oxford 2012), 332.

¹¹³ D. Frankfurter ‘Illuminating the Cult of Kothos, The Panegyric on Macarius and Local Religion in Fifth-Century Egypt’, in J. Goehring and J. Timbie (eds.), *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity: Language, Literature, and Social Context*. Washington, DC (Washington 2007), 179–82.

¹¹⁴ Frankfurter, ‘Religious Practice and Piety’, in C. Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, 323.

¹¹⁵ Martin, ‘Relevé topographique’, 65.; Kuhlmann, *SDAIK* 11, 48 no. 230.

¹¹⁶ A. Pelletier, ‘Note sur les mots ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗ, ΊΕΡΟΝ, ΔΙΑΘΗΣΙΣ dans P. Gen. Inv. 108’, *RechPap* 4 (1967), 186.

¹¹⁷ Smith, ‘Aspects of indigenous religious Traditions’, in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 245.

¹¹⁸ S. Emmel, ‘Shenoute of Atripe and the Christian Destruction of Temples in Egypt: Rhetoric and Reality’, in J. Hahn, S. Emmel, and U. Gotter (eds.), *From Temple to Church, Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity*, *EPRO* 163 (Leiden 2008), 197, lines 22–23.; D. Frankfurter, ‘Iconoclasm and Christianization in Late Antique Egypt: Christian Treatments of Space and Image’, in J. Hahn et al. (eds.), *From Temple to Church*, 142–43.

¹¹⁹ Frankfurter, ‘Religious Practice and Piety’, in C. Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, 319.

¹²⁰ On the domestic cults in Akhmim, see Smith, *Following Osiris*, 441–44.

as well. Then, when Shenoute started to complain, the villagers may have shifted their cult practices to take place inside of their homes instead, likely before the same ritual statues that were used for worship in the temples.

A Roman monument with an inscription reading ‘the Monument [of] Ptolemaios’, which is also known as the *Agrios*¹²¹, shows how the Egyptian and Greek cultures interacted in Panopolis, and reflects the fusion of the Egyptian and Hellenistic cultures and beliefs. It provides evidence of the milieu in which a well-to-do citizen of Panopolis lived. It is a square pillar monument that is 1.33m. high, tapering slightly towards the top, with Greek inscriptions running to the bottom of each of its four sides. This implies that the pillar originally stood on a base¹²². At the top of each side, in a bordered field, a bust of Ptolemaios as a bearded military man with a crested helmet appears. The image is the same on all four sides. There is a symbol placed below him on each side. Each symbol is different, symbolizing the four gods invoked in the four inscribed poems which accompany the bust. The symbols include an eagle (the personification of Zeus), a seahorse of Poseidon, a shield with a gorgon in the centre and crossed spears resembling Ares, and another animal, which is probably a dog (Kerberos?), and which is addressed to Hades¹²³. Below the panel, there are three or (on the wider sides) four canopic jars representing Egyptian gods and goddesses. In total, there are 14 jars on the sides. Each side also includes a complete Homeric poem corresponding to one of four gods; the poems are directed to Zeus and Ares on the wider sides, and Poseidon and probably Hades on the narrower¹²⁴.

Moreover, Egyptian gods of the Akhmim pantheon are also depicted on the monument’s four sides. The first side shows a row of deities, including Osiris with an *atef* crown, Horus with a *pschent* crown, Isis with her distinctive

emblem, and an unlabelled female head, which is probably Nephthys(?), although her emblem has disappeared. The second row shows the Ibis-headed god Thoth, crowned with a lunar disc, Amon, with a male human head and a helmet with double plumes, and Mut, who has a human female head, complete with a vulture and *pschent*. The third side depicts a damaged figure which is probably Shu or Maat judging from the appearance of a single feather. She is joined by Tefnout as a lioness, and Hathor or Sekhmet, who is depicted as a female with a lion’s head and a sun disc with horns. The fourth and final side of the monument probably depicts Ra or Atum with the crown of Lower Egypt, and a female head that is crowned with a vase, most likely representing Nut (Figure 1.1)¹²⁵.

Ptolemaios was an urban elite figure with a Roman military background, and combined Hellenism with his devotion to the traditional local cults¹²⁶. He dedicated a temple garden and honoured the main divinities of the Egyptian pantheon by means of their *canopoi*. He also had a Greek background, as indicated by the metrical inscription on the monument and its depiction of Greek gods. Ares may have been his patron due to his military career. The three other gods depicted on the monument represent the universe. The inscription on the monument refers to the banquets in honour of Phoibos in the present tense. Hence, its use as an epitaph seems unlikely. Instead, the monument is probably an honorary piece, erected in honour of Ptolemaios as a benefactor¹²⁷.

Akhmim has a rich collection of funerary materials and objects, especially from the Graeco-Roman Period. The religious beliefs and practices of the Graeco-Roman Panopolite nome are vibrant and distinctive. This is well attested through the vast amount of material discovered there, including temples, numerous funerary materials (such as stelae, coffins, and mummy labels), literary and documentary papyri, ostraca, graffiti, and inscriptions¹²⁸. Although the extensive funerary sources are scattered throughout many museums and collections¹²⁹, ancient Panopolis is still poorly documented. There are gaps in the documentation of its artefacts, which is partly due to the illicit or flawed excavations of its cemeteries during the late 19th century. Thus, it often happens that the true provenance and date of many artefacts and papyri cannot

¹²¹ This pillar entered the Cairo Museum in 1885 (inv. 26093) and was published by Milne in 1901. The first editor of these poems is J. Milne, ‘Greek Inscriptions from Egypt’, *JHS* 21 (1901), 287–90. Agrios was an important figure of Panopolis. Guéraud reconstructed the Ptolemaios monument with the missing lower part of the pillar found in a private house in Akhmim, O. Guéraud, ‘Notes gréco-romaines’, *ASAE* 35 (1935), 1–3.; id., ‘Le monument d’Agrios au Musée de Caire’, *ASAE* 39 (1939), 279–303. On the inscription, see L. Criscuolo, ‘Nuove riflessioni sul monumento di Ptolemaios Agrios a Panopolis’, in G. Paci and L. Gasperini (eds.), *Epigraphai. Miscellanea Epigrafica in onore di Lidio Gasperini 1* (Tivoli, 2000), 275–90.; E. Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques de l’Égypte gréco-romaine, recherches sur la poésie épigrammatique des Grecs en Égypte, Annales littéraires de l’Université de Besançon* 98 (Paris 1961) (= I. Métriques).

¹²² Guéraud, *ASAE* 39, 281.

¹²³ Guéraud, *ASAE* 35, 1–3.; E. Schönbauer, ‘Die rechtliche Stellung der Metropoleis’, 126.

¹²⁴ A. Wilhelm, *Die Gedichte des Ptolemaios aus Panopolis*, *Anzeiger, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaft* (Wien 1948), 302–03. There is a problem with dating this monument. Milne relates it to the Augustan age, see Milne, *JHS* 21, 287–90. Bernand and Welles think it dates to the second or third century. Bernand bases this claim on the acclamations of the emperor, Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques*, no. 450. Welles presents his arguments in the following: B. Welles, ‘The Garden of Ptolemaios at Panopolis’, *TAPA* 77 (1946), 192–206. Criscuolo also suggests this date, L. Criscuolo ‘A Textual Survey of Greek Inscriptions from Panopolis and The Panopolite’, in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 63.

¹²⁵ Guéraud, *ASAE* 39, 282–84.

¹²⁶ D. Frankfurter, ‘“Things Unbefitting Christians”: Violence and Christianization in Fifth-Century Panopolis’, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000), 277.

¹²⁷ Wilhelm, ‘Die Gedichte des Ptolemaios aus Panopolis’, 306.

¹²⁸ M. Smith, ‘Aspects of the Preservation and Transmission of Indigenous Religious Traditions in Akhmim and its Environs during the Graeco-Roman Period’, in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 241–43.

¹²⁹ Petrie wrote about the situation of the cemetery of El-Hawawish A in 1886: He states that ‘at Akhmim there had been great expectations, two or three years before, of results from a large and undisturbed cemetery of all periods; but a French Consul was put there (without any subjects to represent him), and he raided and stripped the place under Consular seal, which could not be interfered with’, F. Petrie, *Seventy Years in Archaeology* (New York 1932), 80.; McNally and Schrank, *Excavations in Akhmim*, 2.

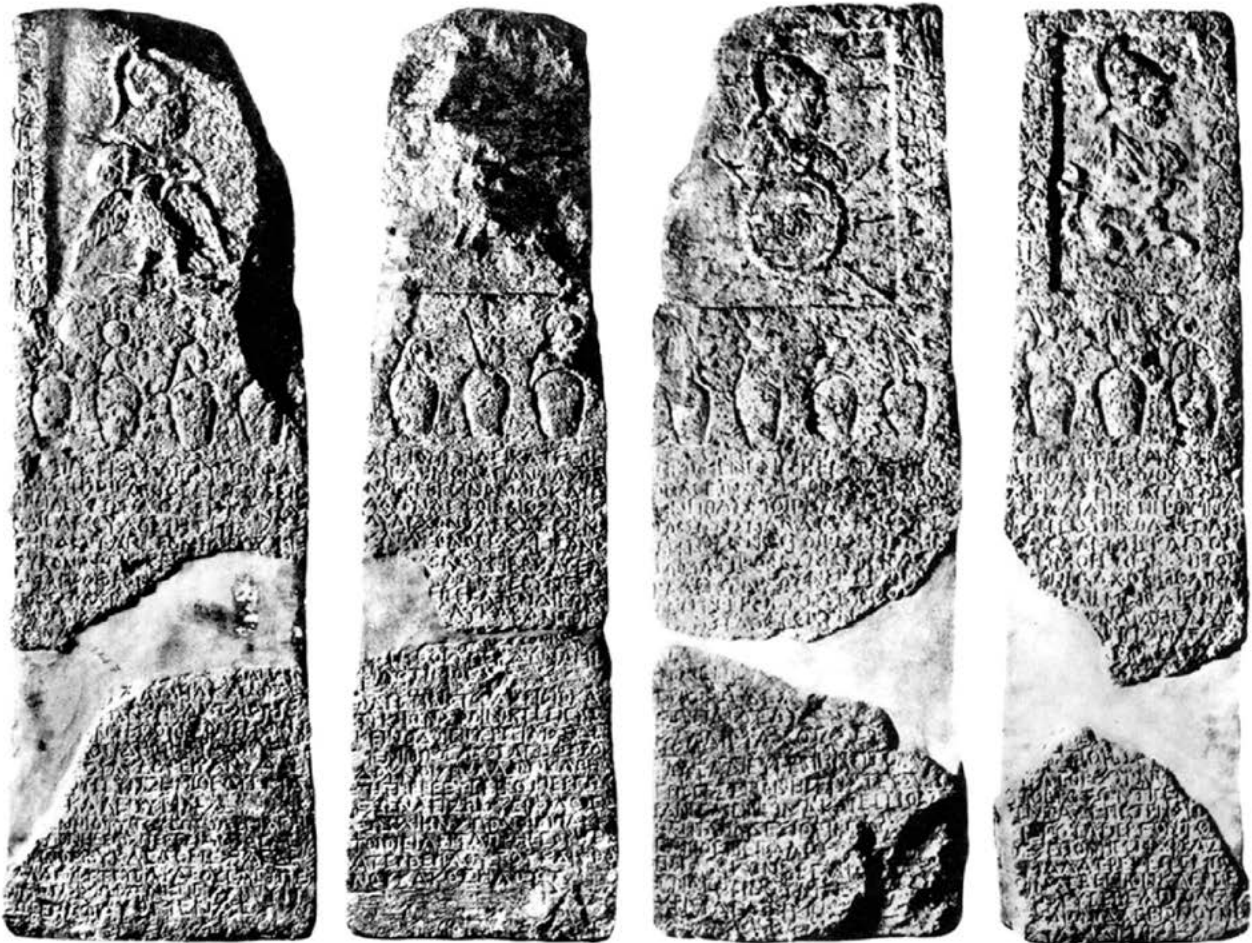


Figure 1.1. The *Ptolemaios* monument, the so-called ‘Agrios Pillar’ of Panopolis, the Cairo Museum (inv. 26093), Bernard, I. Métriques, 114.

be positively identified, except by their documentation in museum archives, their dates of purchase, their style, and their textual content (for example, mentions of local gods, onomastics, titles, and genealogical links). Thus, Smith states that ‘*Akhmim remained, in a sense, the older Egypt’s home of lost causes*’¹³⁰. He also states, however, that ‘it will become apparent that my own particular perspective on Akhmim or Panopolis is clouded to some extent by doubt and uncertainty’¹³¹. Van der Vliet notes that ‘*working on ancient Panopolis means working with fragments*’¹³². One of the main problems one faces in dealing with the different kinds of material and textual evidence is the issue of undated objects and manuscripts, as Smith highlights in his review of the religious traditions of Akhmim in the Graeco-Roman Period¹³³. The data collected here will be incorporated into the study and analyses of the cemetery of El-Salamuni below.

¹³⁰ M. Smith, ‘Dating Anthropoid Mummy Cases from Akhmim, the Evidence of the Demotic Inscriptions’, in M. Bierbrier (ed.), *Portraits and Mummies, Burial Customs in Roman Egypt* (London 1997), 70.

¹³¹ Smith, ‘Aspects of the Preservation and Transmission’, in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 234.

¹³² J. Van der Vliet, ‘Preface’, in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, XI.

¹³³ M. Smith, ‘Aspects of the Preservation and Transmission’, in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 238–41.

The clergy of Panopolis was rich, with the higher priestly orders receiving a share of temple revenues. This is why they had to make bids to be appointed for their position by the state¹³⁴. The Panopolite priests were qualified and professional in their knowledge of myths, rituals, wisdom, literature, medicine, astrology, and astronomy¹³⁵. The high-status priestly category included the *archiereus* (high priest), who was a kind of annually appointed chairman, selected from among the higher clergy. His function was administrative rather than religious. Meanwhile, other priests performed the traditional rites. In Egyptian documents, several priests are attested as serving Min. The *stolistai*, for instance, were charged with dressing the divine statues, and were also involved in giving hymns and offerings, along with inspecting sacrificial animals for their

¹³⁴ U. Wilken, ‘Kaiserliche Tempelverwaltung in Aegypten’, *Hermes* 23 (1888), 592–606.

¹³⁵ In Late Antique Panopolis, astrology was unaccepted, and the astrologers and casters of horoscopes were regarded as magicians, poisoners, and idol worshippers. However, this, was a rhetorical device rather than a historical reality. Shenoute denounces his opponents as ‘interpreters of hours’ who ‘make calculations on the basis of the stars of heaven,’ reacting against astrology being practiced in Roman Panopolis, Amelineau, *Oeuvres* 1, 379, 381.; D. Bell, *Besa: The Life of Shenoute*, CSS 73 (Kalamazoo 1983), 84–85.; M. Smith, ‘Aspects of the Preservation and Transmission’, in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 244.

purity. The *pterophoroi* were sacred scribes in charge of the calendar. As for the scribe of the divine scrolls (*zχ3 mD3. wt nTr:wt*)¹³⁶, he had a ritual function in the temple and the necropolis, and used specific magical spells which were recorded in divine scrolls¹³⁷. The *hierogrammateis* read and wrote the religious books, and evaluated potential new priests based on their capabilities, such as their cultic purity and writing skills. The lower-status categories included the *pastophoroi* (bearers of sacred objects), who carried the barque of the gods through the major ritual festivals and processions, and the *Θαλλοσότῃαι* (*Thallodoteoi*), who delivered branches to visitors of temples and shrines, and who were presumably also a kind of minor priest¹³⁸. The scribe of the oracle (*zX3 bj3.t*)¹³⁹ was another distinguished priestly position attested at Akhmim (it was one of the titles of the two brothers Hor and Hor-resnet/ Hor-nesu), as well as the ‘Reporting Prophet’, or *Hm-nTr wHm*, who may have conducted the secret religious ceremonies at Akhmim¹⁴⁰. Furthermore, the priestly titles *Hm nTr tpy/ 2-nw/3-nw/ 4-nw n Mn*, translating to mean the ‘first, second, third, and fourth prophet of Min’, as well as *Hm-nTr wHm n Mn*, or ‘Heralding Prophet of Min’, are also attested¹⁴¹. In funerary contexts, and especially on the east bank, Min is often accompanied by Horus and Isis. De Meulenaere suggests that the trinity Min-Horus-Isis is recorded by *Μενναρης* on three linen bandages of the mid-second century AD¹⁴².

Panopolis has not yet been recognised for its great significance as a cultural heritage site, both as a Graeco-Roman city, and as a centre of Egyptian and Hellenistic religion and culture. Archaeological remains in the city of Akhmim are rare because the ancient city is covered by modern buildings. An in-depth study of its history and the respective significance of its archaeological cultural heritage and sites is still needed. Key areas and limitations of research in this region include:

1. The modern town of Akhmim (*Kom al-Tawr*)¹⁴³ lies on top of the ancient one. Aside from the evidence of former temples, recorded in texts as ‘fields of ruins’, the city itself remains virtually unexplored. This is because Akhmim has been continuously occupied. As a result, Akhmim’s old temples, mansions, houses, palaces, workshops, granaries, markets, and other civic structures have been buried under the towering strata of the alluvial plain, and under the sprawling maze of the rapidly growing modern city. The remains of the temple of Min, located within modern Akhmim, are now buried under a public highway, extending under a modern Muslim cemetery. The highway and cemetery would need to be relocated in order to uncover the rest of the temple¹⁴⁴. Thus, the written sources and the great mass of funerary mummy cases are still the only clues to form an approximate understanding of the ancient city; new sources may still be revealed by new excavations (Figures 1.2a-c).
2. Ancient Akhmim was a great city with a highly significant political-administrative, socio-economic, religious, and cultural centre. Furthermore, Akhmim is one of the main necropoleis to have provided materials and objects for study. Sauneron describes it as ‘une region de toute façon passionnante, qu’il faudra un jour mieux étudier. L’abondance des matériaux historiques, à toutes les périodes, est étonnante. Et c’est aussi un secteur où les aventures spirituelles les plus remarquables ont été tenées’¹⁴⁵, which means ‘a fascinating region anyway, which one day will have to be better studied. The abundance of historical materials, from all periods, is astonishing. Also, it is an area where

¹³⁶ A. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica. Text. 1.* (Oxford 1947), 55–59.

¹³⁷ P. Derchain *Le papyrus Salt 825 (B.M. 10051), rituel pour la conservation de la vie en Égypte, Mémoires de l’Académie Royale de Belgique VIII/1a. collection in-8, 2^e série 58* (Brussels 1965), 73.

¹³⁸ A *thallodotes* from Psonis is mentioned in *CEML* 139 (=CEMG 2176); *P. Oxy.* XLIII, 3094, II., 40, 43.

¹³⁹ R. Parker, *A Saite Oracle Papyrus from Thebes in the Brooklyn Museum (Papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.3)*, *BESud* 4 (Providence 1962), 33–34.; J. Elias and T. Mekis, ‘The yellow-on-black coffin of the oracle scribe Hor in the Swansea Museum’, *CdÉ* 91, fasc. 182 (2016), 251–52.; M. Bruwier and T. Mekis, ‘Diversity of the Akhmimic Funerary Art in the 4th–3rd centuries BC, a Case Study on a Priestly Family, and a Study on Canopic Chests of Akhmim in the Graeco-Roman Period: a Survey in the Antiquity Collections’, in M. Mosher (ed.), *The Book of the Dead, Saite Through Ptolemaic Periods, Essays on Books of the Dead and Related Materials, SPBD Studies* (Prescott 2019), 6.

¹⁴⁰ J. Elias and T. Mekis, ‘Prophet-registers’ of Min-Horus-Isis at Akhmim’, *MDAIK* 76 77 (2020/2021), 83–112.

¹⁴¹ Depauw, ‘Late Funerary Material’, in A. Egberts et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, 73.

¹⁴² H. De Meulenaere, ‘Prophètes et danseurs panopolitains à la Basse Époque’, *BIFAO* 88 (1988), 41–49. The bandages are published in G. Wagner, ‘Bandelettes de momies et linges funéraires’, in J. Vercoutter (ed.), *Livre du Centenaire de l’IFAO 1880–1980, MIFAO* 104 (Cairo 1980), 330–33 (now SB XVI 12435–37).

¹⁴³ Kuhlmann, *SDAIK* 11, 14. The Arabic name ‘Karm al-Tawr’, meaning ‘Garden of the Bull’, might refer to the white bull, the sacred animal of the sky god Min. On the bull of Min, see G. Wainwright, ‘Some Celestial Associations of Min’, *JEA* 21 (1935), 158–70.

¹⁴⁴ In 1987, excavations carried out by the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) Inspectorate of Sohag unearthed a granite statue of Nakhtmin, the high priest of Min in the reign of Eje, along with a calcite statue of a Roman female, perhaps for Venus or Aphrodite, Y. El-Masry, ‘Seven Seasons of Excavations in Akhmim’, in C. J. Eyre (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3–9 September 1995, OLA* 82 (Leuven 1998), 761–62. In 1991, a queen statue and several fragments of a colossal, seated statue of Ramesses II were found roughly 45m. north of the Ramesside temple. The fragments included a base and were surrounded by mudbrick walls, El-Masry, *OLA* 82, 763–64.; id., *MDAIK* 59, 285–87. Illegal excavations in the Muslim cemetery situated about 100m. north of the area uncovered a huge head of another colossal statue of Ramesses II, El-Masry, *MDAIK* 59, 288. Later, in 2003, the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), supervised by Z. Hawass, found the seated statue itself. The statue measures about 13m. in height and weighs 700 tons, making it the largest seated limestone statue ever found, Hawass, *KMT* 16.1 (2005), 20–21. Hawass suggests that upon the conversion of the temple of Min into a monastery, the Copts attempted to destroy the colossal statue of Ramesses II, and incorporated the base into a screen wall, Hawass, *KMT* 16.1 (2005), 22. In 1995, the archaeological area was opened to the public as an open-air museum located several metres below the modern ground level, where the Local Sohag Inspectorate Office is also situated (in the southern part of the area). Between 1978 and 1982, the University of Minnesota worked at five open sites in Akhmim, including two inside the town and three on its northern edges. There, they studied the urban development of Akhmim in the Later Roman and Early Islamic Periods. The excavations were concentrated on one of the sites located near the church of Abu Seifein. There, they found the remains of two houses, as well as stores with pins and pottery. These buildings were destroyed and reused during the Fatimid Period, McNally and Schunk, *Excavations in Akhmim*, 45, 47, 48.

¹⁴⁵ Sauneron, *Villes et légendes*, 106–10.



Figure 1.2a. The ruined temple of Min in Akhmim.

the most remarkable spiritual adventures have been held. Current knowledge of the history of Panopolis as a Graeco-Roman town is based only on its various funerary artefacts, with unreliable information available about their descriptions, find circumstances, and dates. A colloquium on Panopolis, organised in 1998 in Leiden, was the most important study of the city. It was entitled ‘Perspectives on Panopolis’, and included discussions and the sharing of opinions and interdisciplinary approaches by Egyptologists, Classicists, Coptologists, Archaeologists, Papyrologists and Historians. In 2006, Peter van Minnen noted that ‘Panopolis has received some attention in recent times, but this material still needs to be put together meaningfully’¹⁴⁶. In all honesty, studying Akhmim during the Graeco-Roman period means entering the labyrinth of doubt and imperfection.

3. For a long time, the Akhmim necropoleis were the victims of unscientific excavations, illicit looting, and treasure hunts, leaving behind important heritage sites which are now in a poor state of preservation. Ever since the 19th and early 20th centuries, many Nile steamers have stopped at Akhmim, which once had a thriving market designed especially for mummies and coffins from the Akhmim cemeteries. As Akhmim became an important centre for the antiquities trade, sales were not limited to objects that were actually discovered there¹⁴⁷.

¹⁴⁶ As documented in PM V, 17–26.; K. Parlasca, *Mumienporträts und verwandte Denkmäler* (Wiesbaden 1966), 41–43.; G. Grimm, *Die römischen Mumienmasken aus Ägypten* (Wiesbaden 1974), 26–27, 96–100, 146–48.

¹⁴⁷ People like Budge and Wilbour, for instance, purchased many objects in Akhmim. Budge made purchases on behalf of the British Museum, and the Wilbour amassed a private collection that was later transferred to the collections of the Brooklyn Museum. E. Budge, *By Nile and Tigris, A Narrative of Journeys in Egypt and Mesopotamia on Behalf of the British Museum Between the Years 1886 and 1913, I–II* (London 1920), 87.



Figure 1.2b. A Roman calcite statue of Venus(?) in the Open-Air Museum.



Figure 1.2c. A Roman Period structure which may be a magazine.

4. The lack of systematic excavation techniques represents the most serious problem for understanding the main town of Panopolis and its necropoleis. The El-Salamuni cliffs as well as the El-Diabaat hill are honeycombed with tombs dating from the Old Kingdom to the Coptic Period, but few of these tombs have been systematically recorded. Some are not recorded at all, and many remain hidden. Doubtless, future excavations in El-Salamuni will uncover more hidden tombs and funerary materials, and the hill will hopefully be recognised as an important site for the study of funerary iconography in the Graeco-Roman Period. Hence more information on Panopolis may still be revealed from its main necropolis. Investigating and publishing the El-Salamuni tombs will be a starting-point for discovering one of the great necropoleis of the Graeco-Roman Period, as well as for elucidating the history of the funerary art and burial customs of Panopolis.