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Macedonias and Other Toponyms from the Panopolite Nome

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- §1 This paper deals with a series of toponyms from the Panopolite nome written on a fragmentary papyrus, with a special focus on the previously unattested ‘Macedonias’. The papyrus, now kept in the Heidelberg University Papyrussammlung,¹ was acquired by K. Reinhardt, the first Dragoman of the German Imperial General Consulate in Cairo, who purchased it in 1896 among various other papyri, parchments, and wooden tablets, which he subsequently sold to Heidelberg University in 1897.²
- §2 The fragmentary light brown papyrus discussed here has eight partially preserved lines written in Greek along the fibers with black ink, which is slightly effaced. The top margin is the only margin preserved. Even if the right side seems to be cut in a rather straight line and the words in ll. 3 to 8 seem to be ending the line, the position of the words in the first line suggests that the original document was wider. The first line starts at a distance of roughly 3 cm from the top margin and introduces a series of toponyms through ἐ]ξῆς ὑποτεταγ[μέν–, followed by a large blank space of about 3 cm. Just beneath this line, on the left side of the papyrus, there are traces of ink, perhaps part of a stroke of a letter or, more likely, the tail of a descender from the line above. Judging by the available data, one can interpret the document perhaps as part of a tax register for the Panopolite nome or even as a partially preserved *itinerarium* of the nome. The verso of the papyrus is blank. Unfortunately, nothing else can be said about the width of the document nor about the position of the words in the original text.
- §3 Fragmentary as it may be, inv. G 508 provides new information regarding the toponymy of the Panopolite nome. It refers to settlements of the nome located on the left bank of the Nile which, in succession from north to south, were situated as follows: Psenbelochis / Psenpelochis – Psinabla (where the fort of the *ala II Herculia Dromedariorum* was located)³ – Bosochis – Bompae – Macedonias – Psiko (?) (Fig. 1).⁴ It is known that Psinabla was incorporated into the toparchy of Pakerke and Psinabla (Πακέρκη <καὶ> Ψινάβλα),⁵ located a little to the south of a northern toparchy of Toeto and Synoria (Συνορίας <καὶ> Τοετώ),⁶ but still north of the middle toparchy (Μέση), which incorporated the settlement of Bompae.⁷ Thus, it seems that this tax register or perhaps *itinerarium* of the Panopolite nome included a polis and six settlements from at least two different toparchies.

1 The entry of this papyrus on the web page of the papyrus collection in Heidelberg (link embedded in edition header) states the following: “Verzeichnis von Dörfern? 7. Z.; 1. Z.: ἐ]ξῆς ὑποτεταγ[, dann ein größeres Spatium, bevor in Z. 2 die Liste beginnt. Die vollständig erhaltenen Namen Psinabla, Psenpelochin und Bompae weisen auf den Panopolites. Letzte Zeile: Makedonia, danach hochgestelltes Delta?, falls ebenfalls Toponym (sic!), ist es bisher nicht bezeugt.”

2 See in more detail for the initial stages of the creation of the papyrus collection ↗ Seider 1964: passim. The papyrus and its content are mentioned in passing by K. Geens in her PhD thesis dealing with Panopolis and the Panopolite nome, as will be apparent later (↗ Geens 2014: passim).

3 T.C. Skeat adds that this settlement also “served as a μονή or mansio on the main highway down the left bank of the Nile” (cited from P.Panop.Beatty, page xxxvii). See also ↗ Adams 2007: 24, who locates both Psonis and Psinabla on the east bank of the Nile. However, the main road through the Nile Valley was located on the left bank of the river, as outlined by the same author (e.g. ↗ Adams 2007: xii, map 1).

4 There are very few rural settlements that can be identified on the ground in the Panopolite nome, as emphasized in ↗ Verreth 2013: 1155 and, especially, in ↗ Geens 2014: 115–129.

5 See the introduction by T.C. Skeat, P.Panop.Beatty, page xxxvii and also ↗ Gascou and Worp 1996: 163; ↗ Geens 2014: 114.

6 For the latest analysis of this toparchy, see ↗ Gascou and Worp 1996, and for its location in relation to the others, see ↗ Geens 2014: 114.

7 See ↗ Geens 2014: 113 citing ↗ P.Ammon 2 50, ii, which is a declaration of temple land found at Panopolis and dated to 299. In total there were six toparchies in the Panopolite nome. For an overview see ↗ Geens 2014: 112–114.

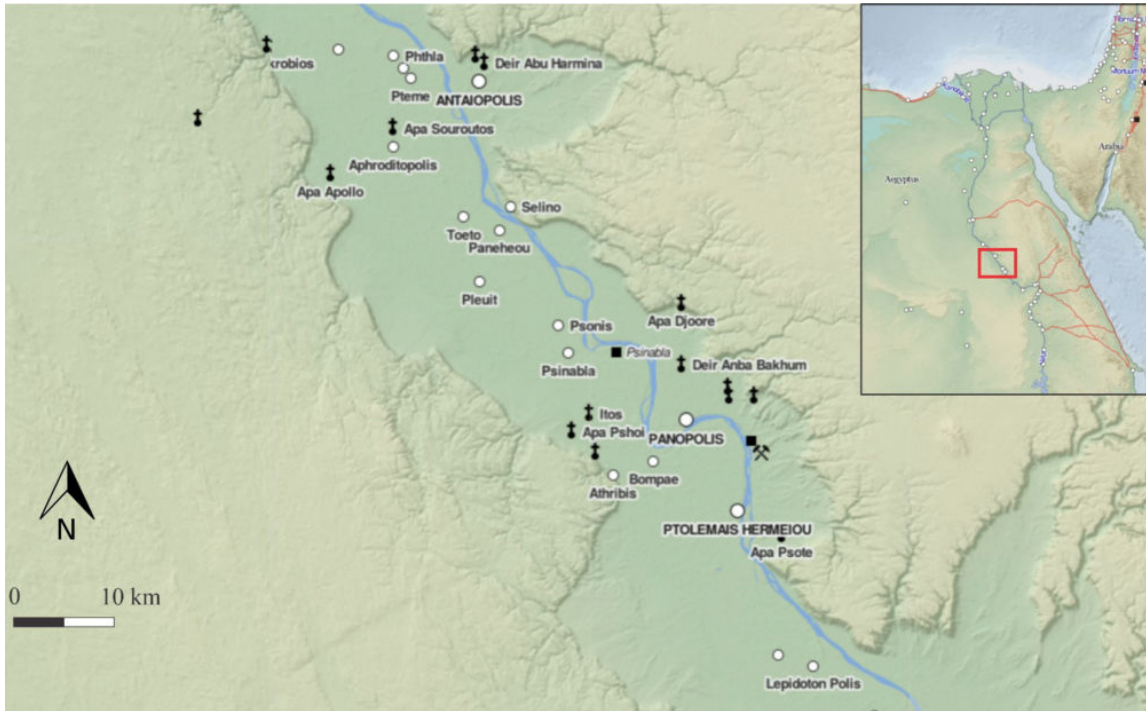


Fig. 1: Detail of a map of Egypt with the main toponyms of the Panopolite nome. In inset: map of Egypt with approximate location of the Panopolite nome (© Digital Atlas of the Ancient World – <https://dh.gu.se/dare/> – last accessed on December 22, 2023, modified by the author).

- §4 The toponym ‘Macedonias’ perhaps needs further enquiry. Starting with the reigns of Diocletian and Maximian, a *vexillatio legionis V Macedonicae* is attested in Egypt, part of the expeditionary force formed together with other Danubian detachments by Caesar Galerius around 293/294, being subsequently camped at Memphis and also operating in the Thebaid.⁸ The Coptic martyrdom of Panine and Paneu makes reference to a soldier in Panopolis, named Philemon, dubbed as a Macedoniarius, a term that Anna M. Kaiser interprets as an allusion to the *legio V Macedonica*, the unit in which Philemon must have fought. Other papyri, which possibly originate further north in Antinoopolis, designate soldiers from this legion as Macedones.⁹ In the neighboring northern nome, a part of the legion is attested possibly at Antaiopolis.¹⁰ Although it must be viewed with extreme caution, one way of interpreting this toponym is in connection with *legio V Macedonica*.¹¹
- §5 Regarding the date, the Heidelberg catalog proposes a date in the third or fourth century, which is also adopted by Karolien Geens.¹²

[P.Heid. Inv. G. 508](#)
[TM 999648](#)

15 (h) × 3.5 (w)

[Panopolite nome \(?\)](#)
 3rd – 4th cent.

⁸ [Zuckermann 1988](#): 280–281 with references and [Kaiser 2015](#): 254–255 with references.
⁹ For an overview of the papyrological sources and other previous references, see [Kaiser 2015](#): 254, n. 86.
¹⁰ [Kaiser 2015](#): 251, n. 56 referring to [P.Cair.Masp. I 67005](#) which is a 6th c. petition from the Dioscoros archive.
¹¹ Perhaps soldiers and/or veterans with their families had founded or had an already existing settlement renamed as ‘Macedonias’, although it should be mentioned that since its arrival in Egypt and throughout the 4th c. the detachment of *legio V Macedonica* did not exceed more than about 400 men across Egypt at any given time ([Zuckermann 1988](#): 285–286). A settlement called ‘Macedonica’ is mentioned in the Anonymous of Ravenna’s cosmography (VII.40), located on the main imperial road of Dacia, north of Potaissa, the garrison of the *legio V Macedonica* from about 168 to the second half of the 3rd c. (for a detailed discussion, including a Latin transcript of the relevant section, see [Nemeti 2014](#): 67–77). However, it has been argued that this could have been a simple mistake by later copyists, who confused the name of the legion with that of a settlement, as emphasized in [Fodorean 2016](#): 86–87.
¹² [Geens 2014](#): passim.

Handwritten text on a fragment of papyrus, likely in Demotic script. The text is arranged in several lines, separated by horizontal lines. The characters are dark and appear to be ink on a light brown, fibrous background. The fragment is narrow and has irregular, torn edges.

Fig. 2: P.Heid. inv. G. 508. Photo: Elke Fuchs, © Institut für Papyrologie, Universität Heidelberg.

[-ca.?- ἐ]ξῆς ὑποτεταγ[μέν- -ca.?-]

[-ca.?-]

vac. 1 line(s)

[-ca.?-] οου πόλεως [-ca.?-]

[-ca.?- Ψιμπελώχεω[ς -ca.?-]

5 [-ca.?-] Ψινάβλα [-ca.?-]

[-ca.?-]υ Βοσώχεως [-ca.?-]

[-ca.?-]ου Βομπαή [-ca.?-]

[-ca.?-] Μακεδονιάδ(ος) [-ca.?-]

[-ca.?-] Ψικ[ὼ -ca.?-]

4 I. Ψενπελώχεω[ς]

§6 3 At first glance, the last three letters of the word before πόλεως read as omicron, iota and upsilon (the last letter being placed slightly above the line), while the letter before omicron could be, for instance, a gamma or a sigma, thus reading]σσιυ πόλεως or]γσιυ πόλεως. Either way, none of the readings would make sense in the context of known poleis of the Panopolite nome (cf. ☞ Verreth 2013: 1151–1155). One other possibility is that before upsilon there is not an iota but a narrow omicron, thus forcing a reading of the line as]οου πόλεως. In this case, the most readily available solution would be Ἄντι]γούου πόλεως (modern-day El-Sheik Ibada, ☞ TM Geo 2774), but the first two partially visible letters are hard to reconcile with -vo-; furthermore, this interpretation would not make sense given the presumed Panopolite context. Perhaps one should think about a toponym of Egyptian origin, indeclinable and previously unattested in Greek. For instance, if one interprets the first letter as the right side of an upsilon (given that this letter is rendered in different ways in l. 1 and ll. 3 and 7), one could read the name of the presumed polis of Kououou.¹³

§7 4 Psenbelochis / Psenpelochis (☞ Verreth 2013: 637; ☞ Geens 2014: 127; ☞ TM Geo 2716) appears exclusively on mummy labels; see, e.g., ☞ Torallas-Tovar, Worp 2013: 266, no. 25 for the latest such discovery, where the text reads Ψενβελώχεως, citing other examples, namely ☞ SB 1 5208.4–5: Ψεν|βελλῶχιν; ☞ SB 1 5212.4: Ψενβελώχεως, (also ☞ Worp 2016: 274, n. 10) to which one adds ☞ SB 1 5203.4: Ψενβελώχεως; ☞ SB 3 7094.2–3: Ψιν|πελ(ῶ)χιος; ☞ SB 10 10660.3–4: Ψενπελώχε|ως and ☞ SB 12 11188.2–3: Ψιν|πελῶχ(εως). Note that in two instances the first vowel is an iota just as in the papyrus under analysis, while the third consonant is encountered as beta on four occasions and four times as pi, including in the papyrus edited here. Most of the mummy labels are undated or the date is proposed to span the second to the third centuries.¹⁴ It has been suggested that this settlement was located some 4 km north of Akhmim, at Kôm as-Saqaf, on the East bank of the Nile in the Metropolis toparchy (☞ Geens 2014: 127). Given the list on the papyrus under analysis, one would search for this settlement somewhere north or around Psinabla.

13 For this toponym, which is presumed to be located in the Panopolite nome, see ☞ Gauthier 1928: 128 with references; the author states: “Localité égyptienne consacrée à la déesse Triphis compagne de Min, située donc probablement dans le voisinage de Panopolis ou d’Athribis (IXe nome de Haut-Égypte)”;

14 Cf. ☞ Geens 2014: 127, who also cites the papyrus under analysis in this paper as one of the documents attesting this name.

- §8 5 In the *pars Oriens* of the *Notitia dignitatum*, dated ca. 400,¹⁵ one finds that the *ala II Herculia Dromedariorum* was garrisoned in an auxiliary fort at Psinabla (Not. Dig. Or. XXXI, 54).¹⁶ As recently stressed by Klaas A. Worp, this information is confirmed by papyri such as [P.Panop.Beatty 1](#), passim (298), where we find out that the auxiliary fort was located somewhere between Toeto and Pakerke, and especially by [P.Panop.Beatty 2.169](#) (300), where it is written that the location of the auxiliary fort is in close proximity to the villages of Toeto and Psinabla.¹⁷ K.A. Worp attempted to identify the auxiliary fort on the ground using Google Earth, some 20 km south of Tahta (possibly the ancient Toeto) and 40 km north of Girga (possibly ancient Pakerke).¹⁸ For more than a century, beginning with H. Gauthier, Ψινάβλα/Psinabla (see also [Verreth 2013](#): 641; [Geens 2014](#): 127–128; [TM Geo 8201](#)) has been associated with another toponym called Psenbelochis / Psenpelochis, discussed above; H. Gauthier noted that Psinabla could have been an earlier name of Psenbelochis / Psenpelochis,¹⁹ a view which has also been adopted recently by K.A. Worp.²⁰ Given the presence of both toponyms on the Heidelberg papyrus, it is quite clear now that we are dealing with two distinct settlements, finally ending a more than century-long dilemma.²¹ Before the name, traces of a letter are visible.
- §9 6 Bosochis ([Verreth 2013](#), 140–141 with references; [Geens 2014](#): 117; [TM Geo 3004](#)), just as Psenbelochis / Psenpelochis, was attested thus far in Greek exclusively on mummy labels, their proposed dating mostly spanning the second to the third centuries (cf. [Geens 2014](#): 117). Before the toponym, the previous letter, just like in the second line, seems to be placed a little above the line; it is most likely an upsilon. Perhaps this settlement was located somewhere between Psinabla and Bompae.
- §10 7 The village of Bompae, thought for more than a century to possibly be modern Sohag ([Verreth 2013](#): 139 with references; [Geens 2014](#): 116–117 with references; [TM Geo 3002](#)) is frequently attested in Greek documents, as early as the first century at Oxyrhynchus in an official letter ([P.Oxy. 49 3469.9](#)), and as late as August 24, 321 ([SB 6 9544.5](#)) in a “Liturgische Vorschlagsliste”.²² Before the toponym, the end of the previous word can be discerned $\text{I}\omega\upsilon$, with upsilon placed slightly above the line.
- §11 8 This toponym is previously unattested.²³ The raised delta at the end of the preserved line signals an abbreviation, thus the toponym is Μακεδονιάδ(ος), which thus stands as a feminine third declension in

¹⁵ See recently [Kaiser 2015](#): esp. 256, for an overview of the debate revolving around the date of Not. Dig. Or.

¹⁶ For the Not. Dig. Or., the *ala II Herculia Dromedariorum* and Psinabla, see [Worp 1994](#): esp. 465 and [Worp 2016](#): esp. 271 and [Alston 1995](#): 190. For Lower Egypt and the Not. Dig. Or., see [Worp 1991](#). For a recent overview of the Late Roman army in Egypt, with further readings, see [Fischer-Bovet and Sängler 2019](#).

¹⁷ See the discussion in [Worp 2016](#): 271–272.

¹⁸ [Worp 2016](#) with previous references and history of the subject. The author proposes the location of Psinabla some 3 km north-east of Jazirat Shandawil and about 2 km south of At Tawayil. The distances are measured as the crow flies. However, the hypothesis regarding the identification of Pakerke with Girga does not stand ground, as this would place Pakerke some 18 km south of Ptolemaïou Hermiou, modern-day Al-Minshah ([TM Geo 2023](#)), that is, in the Thinite nome. See also the discussion in [Geens 2014](#): 122 where the author places Pakerke possibly east of Psonis (modern-day Basuna; [TM Geo 3011](#)).

¹⁹ [Gauthier 1912](#): 94–95, 120 who states that Psinabla “[...] me paraît pouvoir être identifié avec la localité de Psoumbeledj [i.e. Psenbelochis / Psenpelochis] (...)” (cited from page 94). The author also suggests that this could have been a fortification where Nestorius died ([Gauthier 1905](#): 82–84, esp. 83; [Gauthier 1912](#): 120; [Geens 2014](#): 127, with references; [Worp 2016](#): 274, n. 9).

²⁰ [Worp 2016](#): esp. 274; the author states: “Ensuite, je serais assez enclin à confondre deux camps de l’armée romaine situés dans le nome Panopolite: celui de Psinabla précisément, qui est au centre de notre examen, avec celui qui est désigné, dans des textes coptes, sous le nom de Psoumbeledj.”

²¹ K. Geens is the first to note this: “It [i.e. Psenbelochis / Psenpelochis] is not identical with Psinabla (...) because Psenbelochis and Psinabla occur alongside each other in P.Heid. inv. 6 509 recto (sic!).” ([Geens 2014](#): 127).

²² See also [Sijpesteijn and Worp 1977](#): 275; [BL 7](#), 210 for the correct dating.

²³ This was already observed by K. Geens, while citing the papyrus under analysis in this paper, at the time unpublished: “Μακεδονία (sic!) is named only in the unpublished P.Heid. inv. G 508 recto (third or fourth century),” cited from [Geens 2014](#): 121.

the genitive;²⁴ for other similarly constructed toponyms, see e.g. Διονυσιάς/Διονυσιάδος (☞ *TM Geo* 565; ☞ *Verreth 2013*: 181); Ἀνουβιάς/Ἀνουβιάδος (☞ *TM Geo* 186; ☞ *Verreth 2013*: 69); Βαρχιάς/Βαρχιάδος (☞ *TM Geo* 932; ☞ *Verreth 2013*: 123).

§12 9 One can observe here traces of two letters and the left side of a kappa, which were possibly all part of another toponym. The first letter should be regarded as psi, of which the upper part of the long vertical stroke and the right horizontal can be discerned, while the second letter is a very effaced iota. Further, one can distinguish a kappa, with its vertical stroke missing in its lower part, and with part of its oblique upper stroke visible. Accordingly, we suggest reading the toponym Ψικ[ώ, previously attested exclusively on mummy labels; C. Arlt proposed that Psiko was located close to Psonis based on the fact that the Demotic hand of one mummy label was identical with the one on mummy labels discovered at Psonis (☞ *Arlt 2011*: 132, 134–135; ☞ *Verreth 2013*: 640; ☞ *Geens 2014*: 127; ☞ *TM Geo* 3010). In our view, one should seek both Macedonias and Psiko somewhere close to Bompae.

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24 It should be noted that Psenbelochis / Psenpelochis and Bosochis are also in the genitive, while Bompae and Psinabla are indeclinable in Greek.

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