

= Thinis =

Thinis or This (Egyptian : Tjenu) was the capital city of the first dynasties of ancient Egypt . Thinis is , as yet , undiscovered but well attested to by ancient writers , including the classical historian Manetho , who cites it as the centre of the Thinite Confederacy , a tribal confederation whose leader , Menes (or Narmer) , united Egypt and was its first pharaoh . Thinis began a steep decline in importance from Dynasty III , when the capital was relocated to Memphis . Its location on the border of the competing Heracleopolitan and Theban dynasties of the First Intermediate Period , and its proximity to certain oases of possible military importance , ensured Thinis some continued significance in the Old and New Kingdoms . This was a brief respite and Thinis eventually lost its position as a regional administrative centre by the Roman period .

Due to its ancient heritage , Thinis remained a significant religious centre , housing the tomb and mummy of the regional deity . In ancient Egyptian religious cosmology , as seen (for example) in the Book of the Dead , Thinis played a role as a mythical place in heaven .

Although the precise location of Thinis is unknown , mainstream Egyptological consensus places it in the vicinity of ancient Abydos and modern Girga .

= = Name and location = =

The name Thinis is derived from Manetho 's use of the adjective Thinite to describe the pharaoh Menes . Although the corresponding Thinis does not appear in Greek , it is demanded by the Egyptian original and is the more popular name among Egyptologists . This is also suggested .

In correcting a passage of Hellanicus (b . 490 BCE) , Jörgen Zoega amended ?????? ????? to ??? ?? ?? ????? . Maspero (1903) found that this revealed the name Thinis and also , from the same passage , a key geographic indicator : ?????????? (English : on the river) . Maspero used this additional detail to support the theory , which included among its followers Jean @-@ François Champollion and Nestor L 'Hôte , locating Thinis at modern @-@ day Girga or a neighbouring town , possibly El @-@ Birba . Other proposals for Thinis ' location have lost favour at the expense of the Girga @-@ Birba theory : Auguste Mariette , founder director of the Egyptian Museum , suggested Kom el @-@ Sultan ; A. Schmidt , El @-@ Kherbeh ; and Heinrich Karl Brugsch , Johannes Dümichen and others supported El @-@ Tineh , near Berdis . Mainstream Egyptological consensus continues to locate Thinis at or near to either Girga , or El @-@ Birba (where an inscribed statue fragment mentioning Thinis is said to have been found) .

= = History = =

= = = Pre @-@ dynastic and Early Dynastic periods = = =

Although the archaeological site of Thinis has never been located , evidence of population concentration in the Abydos @-@ Thinis region dates from the fourth millennium BCE . Thinis is also cited as the earliest royal burial @-@ site in Egypt .

At an early point , the city of Abydos resigned its political rank to Thinis , and although Abydos would continue to enjoy supreme religious importance , its history and functions cannot be understood without reference to Thinis . The role of Thinis as centre of the Thinite Confederacy (or Dynasty 0) and into the Early Dynastic Period (specifically Dynasty I and Dynasty II) is taken from Manetho , and , according to Wilkinson (2000) , seems to be confirmed by Dynasty I and late Dynasty II royal tombs at Abydos , the principal regional necropolis .

= = = Old Kingdom = = =

Such importance seems to have been short @-@ lived : certainly , the national political role of Thinis ended at the beginning of Dynasty III (c . 2686 BCE) , when Memphis became the chief

religious and political centre . Nonetheless , Thinis retained its regional significance : during Dynasty V , it was the probable seat of the " Overseer of Upper Egypt " , an administrative official with responsibility for the Nile Valley south of the Delta , and throughout antiquity it was the eponymous capital of nome VIII of Upper Egypt and seat of its nomarch .

During the wars of the First Intermediate Period (c . 2181 ? c . 2055 BCE) , Ankhtifi , nomarch of Hierakonpolis , demanded recognition of his suzerainty from the " overseer of Upper Egypt " at Thinis , and although the city walls , cited in Ankhtifi 's autobiography , seem to have left Ankhtifi capable of only a show of force , he appears to have purchased Thinis ' neutrality with grain .

Following Ankhtifi 's death , Thinis was the northernmost nome to fall under the sway of Intef II , pharaoh of the Theban Dynasty XI (c . 2118 ? c . 2069 BCE) . Progress north by the Theban armies was halted by Kheti III , pharaoh of the Heracleopolitan Dynasty IX , in a battle at Thinis itself that is recorded in the Teaching for King Merykara , and , throughout Intef II 's later years , his war against the Heracleopolitans and their allies , the nomarchs of Assyut , was waged in the land between Thinis and Assyut .

As Thebes began to take the upper hand , Mentuhotep II (c . 2061 ? c . 2010 BCE) , on his campaign of reunification , brought Thinis , which had been in revolt , possibly at Heracleopolitan instigation and certainly with the support of an army under the command of the nomarch of Assyut , firmly under his control .

During the Second Intermediate Period (c . eighteenth century BCE) , Thinis may have experienced resurgent autonomy : Ryholt (1997) proposes that the Abydos dynasty of kings might better be called the " Thinite Dynasty " and that , in any event , their royal seat was likely at Thinis , already a nome capital .

= = = New Kingdom and Late Period = = =

The city 's steady decline appears to have halted briefly during Dynasty XVIII (c . 1550 ? c . 1292 BCE) , when Thinis enjoyed renewed prominence , based on its geographical connection to various oases of possible military importance . Certainly , the office of mayor of Thinis was occupied by several notable New Kingdom figures : Satepihu , who participated in the construction of an obelisk for Hatshepsut and was himself subject of an exemplary block statue ; the herald Intef , an indispensable member of the royal household and the travelling @-@ companion of Thutmose III ; and Min , tutor to the prince Amenhotep III .

Nonetheless , Thinis had declined to a settlement of little significance by the historic period . The misleading reference on a seventh @-@ century BCE Assyrian stele to " Nesamedu , king of Thinis " is nothing more than a reflection of Assyrian " ignorance of the subtlety of the Egyptian political hierarchy " .

Certainly , by the Roman period , Thinis had been supplanted as capital of its nome by Ptolemais , perhaps even as early as that city 's foundation by Ptolemy I .

= = Religion = =

As each nome was home to the tomb and mummy of its dead nome @-@ god , so at Thinis was the temple and last resting @-@ place of Anhur , whose epithets included " bull of Thinis " , worshipped after his death as Khenti @-@ Amentiu , and who , as nome @-@ god , was placed at the head of the local ennead .

The high priest of the temple of Anhur at Thinis was called the first prophet , or chief of seers , a title that Maspero (1903) suggests is a reflection of Thinis ' decline in status as a city .

One such chief of seers , Anhurmose , who died in the reign of Merneptah (c . 1213 ? c . 1203 BCE) , broke with the tradition of his New Kingdom predecessors , who were buried at Abydos , and was laid to rest at Thinis itself .

The lion @-@ goddess Mehit was also worshipped at Thinis , and the restoration of her temple there during Merneptah 's reign was probably overseen by Anhurmose .

There is evidence that succession to the office of chief of seers of Anhur at Thinis was familial : in

the Herakleopolitan period , one Hagi succeeded his elder brother , also called Hagi , and their father to the post ; and , in the New Kingdom , Wenennefer was succeeded in the priestly office by his son , Hori .

In ancient Egyptian religious cosmology , Thinis played a role as a mythical place in heaven . In particular , as set out in the Book of the Dead , its eschatological significance can be seen in certain rituals : when the god Osiris triumphs , " joy goeth its round in Thinis " , a reference to the celestial Thinis , rather than the earthly city .