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THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE OLD KINGDOM TITLE *ḥntj-š*

von

Ann Macy Roth

1. Introduction

Among the many Old Kingdom titles of uncertain meaning, the title *ḥntj-š* is especially perplexing. Its translation is uncertain, and it appears in a wide variety of seemingly unrelated contexts. For example, although it occurs among the titles of the vizier Mereruka in the early 6th dynasty¹, in a nearly contemporary decree of Pepi I people called *ḥntjw-š* seem to be farmers working the fields attached to the mortuary temple of Snefru at Dahshur². The use of this title to mean "gardener", implied by the later definition³, is too limited for the contexts in which the title occurs in the Old Kingdom. Translations such as "tenant"⁴ or "pyramid official"⁵, while apt in some cases, do not explain all the occurrences of the title.

Recently Stadelmann has proposed that *ḥntj-š* is not an office at all, but rather a designation of people who were born in the district attached to a royal mortuary temple and who were entitled to a share of the profits from the endowment lands⁶. He casts doubt upon the ex-

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- 1 The Saqqara Expedition, Mastaba of Mereruka, Chicago, 1938, pl.62.
 - 2 H.Goedicke, Königliche Dokumente aus dem Alten Reich, Wiesbaden, 1967, pp.55-77 and Abb. 5.
 - 3 Erman-Grapow, Wörterbuch III 310,11.
 - 4 E.Meyer and H.Kees, as cited in R.Stadelmann, Die *ḥntjw-š*, der Königsbezirk *š n pr*^{c3} und die Namen der Grabanlagen der Frühzeit, BIFAO 81 Supp., 1981 p.153. Also H.Fischer, Dendera, Glückstadt, 1968, p.236, reads the title "tenant landholder".
 - 5 L.Borchardt, Ein Königserlass aus Dahschur, ZÄS 42, 1905 p.4.
 - 6 Stadelmann, Die *ḥntjw-š*..., pp.153-164.

istence of a corresponding class attached to the palace, explaining the *hntjw-š pr c3* as people attached to the mortuary estate of the reigning king, an argument which was also put forward by Helck⁷.

The hypotheses that have been constructed about the *hntjw-š* may be evaluated by analyzing some patterns in the occurrence of the title, which, combined with other sources dealing with these people, yield a working description of what the title actually implied: the duties attached to it and its place in Old Kingdom society.

2. Distribution among Institutions

The first pattern to examine is that of the institutions to which the title could be attached. In every case, it is attached to a place rather than to a person: either the mortuary temple of a king or the palace (*pr-c3*).

Stadelmann's reading of *pr-c3* as "Pharaoh", i.e., king rather than palace, seems improbable during this period. Gardiner concluded that the earliest certain use of this circumlocution dated to the Amarna period⁸; but even if the extended usage occurred in the Old Kingdom, it is unlikely that it would have been used in a title, and still less likely in a title referring to a service that was rendered exclusively outside the palace⁹, if, as Stadelmann claims, *hntjw-š pr c3* were attached to the mortuary cult of the reigning king. The fact that the *hntjw-š* explicitly attached to mortuary cults were attached to a place and not the dead king himself also implies that *pr-c3* should be taken literally.

The further suggestion that the supervisory personnel with the adjunct *pr-c3* (e.g., *jmj-r hntjw-š pr-c3*, *shd hntjw-š pr-c3* and *jmj-ht hntjw-š pr-c3*) had no connection with the ordinary *hntjw-š pr-c3*, but instead exercised authority over the *hntjw-š* serving in the mortuary cults of dead kings, is also to be questioned. The supervisory titles using

7 W. Helck, *Untersuchung zu den Beamtentiteln*, Glückstadt, 1954, pp. 108-109.

8 A. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, Oxford, 1969, p. 75.

9 One might call a cook who prepared meals for the American president in the presidential mansion a "White House cook", but a cook attached to the presidential weekend retreat could not claim that title, regardless of how frequently the president ate there.

the same hierarchy are also known from the individual mortuary temples; it is exceedingly unlikely that two parallel sets of officials were needed to supervise the same people¹⁰. The most probable reconstruction seems to be the obvious one: *hntjw-š* served at the palace and at royal mortuary temples, each having their own supervisory personnel.

More interesting than the places where *hntjw-š* are attested are the places where they do not occur. In private (non-royal) mortuary cults, there is no counterpart to the *hntj-š* comparable to the *hm-k3* who fills the role of the *hm-ntr* in such cults. Even more surprisingly, *hntjw-š* were never attached to the cult places of gods or goddesses, not even at the sun temples of the 5th dynasty which were so closely tied to the cults of the kings who built them¹¹. This makes it clear that a *hntj-š* could only be attached to the household of a king, whether living or dead.

3. The Names of the *hntjw-š*

Another pattern to be noted is that of the personal names of the people who were designated *hntj-š*. Posener-Kriéger has already noted that the *hntjw-š* at the temple of Neferirkare-Kakai very frequently have names based on the name of that king, for example Kakai-ankh¹². The statistics that can be compiled from the index of her book are quite striking: of the 25 names formed on the name Kakai that occur with titles in the papyri from this temple, all but three occur at least once with the title *hntj-š*. These *hntjw-š* make up 41% of the *hntjw-š* attested in these papyri; and the real percentage of *hntjw-š* with such names may be even higher, since the honorific is often left off when a name is shortened (for example, Nakhti, a *hntj-š* attested in the papyri, may actually bear the name Kakai-nakht). In addition, there are 28 men attested in the papyri whose titles are not preserved, and it seems likely that

10 Stadelmann's suggestion (Die *hntjw-š*..., p.157) that the five *jmj-r hntjw-š pr-c3* whose jobs Weni consolidated were responsible for the five most important pyramid towns seems especially unlikely. More probably, this passage refers to the division of the *hntjw-š pr-c3* into five phyles, mirroring the organization of their counterparts at mortuary temples.

11 P. Posener-Kriéger, Les archives du temple funéraire de Neferirkaré-Kakai, (BdE 65) Cairo, 1976, p.519.

12 Ibid, p.579.

most of these also hold the title *hntjw-š*. By contrast, only one man with the title *hm-ntr* bears a name formed on Kakai, which may be a case of promotion; there are many references to a *hntj-š* of the same name¹³.

Equally interesting is the pattern shown in the titles of the functionaries in the same cult who have names formed on the names of kings other than Kakai. There are nine of these names attested, formed on the names of Menkaure, Izi, Izezi, Pepi, and Neferkare¹⁴. Not one of these names is attested with the title *hntj-š*. Thus almost all of the names based on the name Kakai are either *hntjw-š* or bear no title at all, whereas none of the names formed on the names of other kings occur with the title *hntj-š*. It may be suggested that this pattern is a result of grateful parents honoring the source of the family income, naming children after the dead king or even his mortuary estates¹⁵. However, this would not explain why other cult functionaries, with equal grounds for gratitude, should have had such a radically different naming pattern. The right to bear names formed on the name of the king who was served¹⁶ and the prohibition of names formed on the names of other kings was thus presumably a rule or tradition, connected with the nature of the function of *hntj-š*.

It will be interesting to see how these statistics compare with the evidence in the papyri from the neighbouring cult of Neferefre; the preliminary report suggests that the same pattern holds¹⁷. In the meantime, however, confirmation of the pattern can be seen in another kind of evidence: the titularies of officials. In figure 1 are collected the names of 39 *hntjw-š* attested in private tombs and other monuments¹⁸.

13 Ibid, p.649 (Index, under *cnh-K3k3i*). There are clearly at least two men of this name since the name occurs twice on the same document with different titles (*hntj-š* and *hm-ntr*). However, since it occurs so frequently with the title *hntj-š* and only once with the title *hm-ntr*, it seems likely that some of the occurrences with the lower title reflect the earlier stages of the career of the *hm-ntr* Ankh-Kakai.

14 Ibid, pp.648-57 (Index).

15 Ibid, p.579.

16 This "right", of course, was not limited to *hntjw-š*; but it may have been a controlled privilege.

17 P.Posener-Kriéger, *Les nouveaux papyrus d'Abousir*, JSSEA 13, 1983, p.56.

18 This list was collected from the indices of Porter and Moss, *A Topographical Bibliography 3*, 2nd edition, and augmented by references in K.Baer, *Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom*, Chicago 1960, pp.51-159. For simplicity, people holding supervisory titles are listed along with ordinary *hntjw-š*. The same method of collection was used for the *hmnw-ntr*, *w^abw* and *hntjw-š pr-c3* referred to (but not listed) below.

The people listed are probably on average wealthier than the *hntjw-š* at the cult of Neferirkare-Kakai, and a higher percentage of them hold supervisory titles, so that one might expect to find no relationship between their names and the comparatively minor office of *hntj-š*. In fact, however, 23% of these *hntjw-š* have names formed on royal names; and in every case the royal name used is that of the king in whose cult the *hntj-š* served¹⁹. By contrast, only 13% of the 46 *wcbw* collected bear names based on the names of kings, and only 4% have names based on the name of the king they served. Of the 147 *hmw-ntr* collected, 18 (12%) have names based on royal names, and only 7% based on the names of the king they served. In short, bearers of other titles related to mortuary cults were named after kings only half as often as *hntjw-š*; and those kings honored were equally likely to be kings not served as kings served, while the *hntjw-š* were never named after any king but the one they served²⁰.

It is interesting that of people bearing the title *hntj-š pr-c3*, the percentage of names formed on royal names is about the same as for *wcbw* and *hmw-ntr*, 9 out of 45, or about 12%. It is not so simple as with the mortuary cult titles to determine which king was served; however 5 of the 9 names are formed on names of 4th dynasty kings, and since the title *hntj-š* occurs only beginning in the 5th dynasty²¹, they, at least, cannot have served the kings for whom they were named.

A troubling anomaly in this category is Meru called Teti-seneb, Pepi-seneb and Meryre^c-seneb. Not only is he the only example of a person who served as *hntj-š* in both a mortuary cult (Teti's) and the palace,

 19 One possible exception to this rule is Meri-Teti, the son of Mereruka. Although on his false door he is given the titles of *shd hmw-ntr* and *hntj-š* of the mortuary temple of Teti (titles he probably inherited from his father), he is also twice given the title of *hntj-š* at the mortuary temple of Pepi I. Since he clearly bore the title of *shd hmw-ntr* at Pepi I's temple, it is possible that the title *hntj-š* was accidentally added by analogy. The matter is complicated by the fact that the tomb was usurped and then reclaimed by its original owner (see C.Nims, Some Notes on the Family of Mereruka, JAOS 58, 1938 pp.41-642) and that it has never been adequately published (I am indebted to Professor Nims for his copies of the titles and analysis of the recuttings). Because of the difficulties of interpretation, Meri-Teti has been omitted from the listing of *hntjw-š* in figure 1.

20 The case of Meru, who is named after both Teti and Pepi in secondary names, will be dealt with below.

21 Posener-Krieger, Les archives..., p.580 and n.2.

but he is the sole exception to the rule that a *hntj-š* is named after no king but the one he serves. One might assume that he served in the palace under Pepi I, but, interestingly, the title *hntj-š pr-ꜣ3* never occurs with the names honoring Pepi I²². It thus seems likely that Meru transferred from the palace to the mortuary cult of Teti at the latter's death, though this was clearly not the usual pattern; and, at the same time and for unknown reasons, he took two additional names honoring the reigning king.

hntjw-š pr-ꜣ3 in all other cases seem to have borne no relationship at all to their counterparts in the mortuary temples. Their naming pattern can probably be explained by the fact that the king they were to serve was not always known at their births (all *hntjw-š pr-ꜣ3* bearing names formed on the names of kings they might have served bore such honorific names as secondary names). The naming patterns of *wꜣbw* and *hmw-ntr* can have no such simple explanation, and remain clearly distinguished from the naming pattern of the *hntjw-š* with whom they served.

4. The Number of Kings Served

Another point distinguishing *hntjw-š* of mortuary cults from *wꜣbw* and *hmw-ntr* is the number of cults in which they were allowed to serve. Table 1 shows clearly that none of the *hntjw-š* held office in more than one mortuary cult; whereas *wꜣbw* and *hmw-ntr* could hold those titles in as many as four other cults²³. It is also clear that *hntjw-š pr-ꜣ3* could only serve one king at any given time, since none of them are attested in mortuary cults except Meru, and he seems to have given up his palace office in order to serve in Teti's cult. Serving several kings was possible, as can be seen from the career of Weni, who served Teti and Pepi I as *shd-* and *jmj-r hntjw-š* according to his biography²⁴; but such service must always have been sequential.

22 E. Drioton, Description sommaire des chapelles funéraires de la VI^e dynastie, ASAE 43, 1943 pp. 506-508. I have checked the facade, which corroborates Drioton's grouping of the names and titles.

23 See W. Helck, Bemerkungen zu den Pyramidenstädten im Alten Reich, MDAIK 15, 1957, pp. 95-100, for a discussion of these multiple priesthoods.

24 Sethe, Urkunden I, p. 98 l. 14, and p. 100, l. 7.

5. Evidence for the Duties of *hntjw-š*

While the patterns in the names and other titles of *hntjw-š* reveal something about the nature of the relationship between a *hntj-š* and the king he served, the question of duties attached to the title must be answered from other sources.

The decree of Pepi I for the cult of Snefru at Dahshur²⁵ grants the *hntjw-š* of that cult the exclusive rights to the cultivation of the endowment lands. It states in conclusion that these protective measures have been taken in order that *w^ob*, *šdt-šbd* and *jrt-ht-ntrj* rituals might be carried out at Snefru's mortuary cult, presumably implying that the rituals were to be done by the *hntjw-š* who were benefitted by the decree. The cultivation of these lands was thus the payment for services rendered in the cult rather than the principal duty of the *hntjw-š* attached to the temple.

A much clearer idea of the duties of a *hntj-š* in a mortuary cult is given by the duty rosters in the Neferirkare papyri from Abu Sir, dating to the late 5th and early 6th dynasties²⁶. According to Posener-Kriéger's analysis of this archive, the *hntjw-š* shared most of the duties of the *hmw-ntr*: they performed the daily rituals and kept watch over the temple at night. The two offices differed principally in that the *hntjw-š* dressed, adorned and purified the statue in the ritual for the divine image, while the *hmw-ntr* fumigated it with incense²⁷; and in that the *hntjw-š* alone were responsible for the transportation of offerings to and from the temple²⁸. In all other cases, the temple staff seems to have been assigned duties without regard to title. The most extreme case of this may be seen in one table of service where the *hntjw-š* and *hmw-ntr* who were assigned the morning and evening rituals were listed in an indistinguishable clump, the scribe having completely ignored the rubrics at the top of the page and the ruled vertical lines which were supposed to divide holders of the two different titles²⁹.

25 Goedicke, *Königliche Dokumente...*, pp.55-77 and Abb. 5.

26 Posener-Kriéger, *Les archives...*

27 *Ibid*, Table 2, h.

28 *Ibid*, p.580.

29 *Ibid*, Table 2, b.

There is much less information regarding the duties of a *hntj-š* attached to the palace. Weni records that after his appointment as *jmj-r hntjw-š pr-ꜥ3* he served as bodyguard, made way for the king, and stood in attendance³⁰. But his duties also included dealing with a harem conspiracy and leading an army into southern Palestine³¹. Stadelmann cites the lack of any mention of *hntjw-š pr-ꜥ3* in this army as evidence that Weni had nothing to do with ordinary *hntjw-š*³². In fact, however, Weni only lists the higher-ranking people who were passed over when he was given the command; so the absence of lower offices is meaningless.

Weni's duties were, of course, different from those of his subordinates. In general, though, they seem to consist of personal attendance on the king; and it seems likely that ordinary *hntjw-š pr-ꜥ3* were basically royal servants, who protected, bathed and dressed the king, and served his meals. This idea is supported by the reference in the Pyramid Texts³³ where *hntjw-š* are compared to calf herders, presumably for their sheltering and care-taking qualities.

It is interesting that living kings were not served by *hmw-ntr* (except in rare, special circumstances³⁴), while gods were not served by *hntjw-š*. Both kinds of servants were necessary to a dead king, who had both human and divine needs. Though their duties were nearly identical, *hmw-ntr* and *hntjw-š* at royal mortuary cults differed in that the former served the dead king's divine, and the latter his human aspect. This distinction is clearly shown in the ritual of the divine statue³⁵, where the *hmw ntr* offer the incense appropriate to a god, while the *hntjw-š* perform services that might also be done for a living person; washing, dressing, and adorning with jewels.

The fact that the dead king needed the same services after death as during his lifetime can also be seen by the measures taken to obtain

30 Sethe, *Urkunden I*, p.100 ll. 9-10 (*jrt stp-z3, jrt wꜥt nswt, jrt cꜥ3w*).

31 Ibid, pp.100-105.

32 Stadelmann, *Die Hntj-š ...*, p.157.

33 Pyr. 1348 (Utt. 548).

34 At least in later periods, the king seems to have had a *hm ntr tpj* during his sed-festival. See E.Hornung et al., *Studien zum Sedfest (Aegyptiaca Helvetica I)*, Geneva, 1974, p.53.

35 Posener-Kriéger, *Les archives...*, Table 2, h.

these services in earlier periods. In the cemeteries of the 1st dynasty kings, the tomb of a king was surrounded not by the graves of his highest officials, but by the burials of humble palace servants³⁶. Although they do not bear the title, these people were perhaps the first *hntjw-š*.

This comparison is, of course, only speculation, but the parallel seems apt. Both groups were composed of ordinary people serving in the palace, with no explicit power or great wealth, yet who had a special connection with the king. Such ties, especially to a living king, can always be used to gain power and wealth, which may explain the growth of importance and wealth of the people who served 6th dynasty kings, during a time when the *hntjw-š* of the kings of earlier dynasties were still plowing their own fields. It is perhaps significant that of the 39 *hntjw-š* of mortuary temples attested in monuments, only four were attached to the cults of kings who reigned before Djedkare-Izezi. The cults of 4th and early 5th dynasty kings had probably become quite poor by this period, while the servants of more recent kings were still benefitting from the royal favor which had brought them the office. Thus *hntjw-š*, whether wealthy or poor, whether serving a living or a dead king, were all performing the same function: personal service to a king.

36 G. Reisner, *The Development of the Egyptian Tomb*, Oxford, 1936, pp. 108-116.

Figure 1
Hntjw-š attached to royal cults

same cult as name?	name of functionary	cult(s) served	Reference
--	<i>3bbj</i>	1: Pepi I	CG 1406
--	<i>Jjj</i>	1: Pepi I	PM III 178
--	<i>Jwf.n.j</i>	1: Teti	PM III 545
--	<i>Jm3j</i>	1: Teti	PM III 567
--	<i>Jdw</i>	1: Pepi I	PM III 185
--	<i>Cnh-m^c-Hr</i>	1: Teti	PM III 512
--	<i>Wr-nw</i>	1: Teti	PM III 519
--	<i>Wt3</i>	1: Menkaure	PM III 311
yes	<i>Wd3-h3-Ttj/Nfr-sšm-Pth</i>	1: Teti	PM III 515
yes	<i>Ppj-Cnh/Hwj</i>	1: Pepi I	PM IV 125-6
yes	<i>Ppj-Cnh.n.s</i>	1: Pepi I	CG 1522
yes	<i>Ppj-nht/Hk3-jb</i>	1: Pepi II	Urk.I 131-5
--	<i>Pth-jw.f-n.j</i>	1: Pepi I	PM III 143
yes	<i>Mrj-R^c-nfr</i>	1: Pepi I	PM III 184
yes	<i>Mrw/Ttj-snb/Ppj-snb/ Mrj-R^c-snb</i>	1: Teti	PM III 520
--	<i>Mrrw-k3</i>	1: Teti	PM III 525
yes	<i>Nj-Cnh-Ppj/Nj-Cnh-Mrj-R^c</i>	1: Pepi I	PM III 630
yes	<i>Nj-Cnh-Ttj</i>	1: Teti	PM III 568
--	<i>Nj-Nhbt</i>	1: Khafre	PM III 292
yes	<i>Nbj-pw-Ppj/Nbj</i>	1: Pepi I	PM III 678
--	<i>Nbt/Bbj</i>	1: Pepi II	CG 1519
--	<i>Nfr-sšm-R^c/Ššj</i>	1: Teti	PM III 511
--	<i>Nhnsu</i>	1: Teti	PM III 496
--	<i>Hnnj</i>	1: Izezi	PM III 672
--	<i>Hrj-mrw/Mrrjj</i>	1: Unis	PM III 626
--	<i>Hzzj</i>	1: Pepi I	CG 1407
--	<i>Hwj</i>	1: Teti	PM III 519
--	<i>Hnw</i>	1: Unis	PM III 625
--	<i>Hnw</i>	1: Teti	PM III 526
--	<i>Zzj</i>	1: Pepi I	PM III 689
--	<i>Sbwtt</i>	1: Mernere	PM III 673
--	<i>Sbkj</i>	1: Pepi I	PM III 546
--	<i>Snj</i>	1: Pepi I	PM III 570
--	<i>Sfh-Pth/Nbj</i>	1: Izezi	PM III 424
--	<i>Šn-st</i>	1: Pepi I	CG 1730
--	<i>Gm.n.j</i>	1: Pepi I	PM III 544
--	<i>Ttw</i>	1: Pepi I	PM III 537
--	<i>Tjj</i>	1: Pepi I	CG 1522
--	<i>Dw3-R^c</i>	1: Userkaf	PM III 894