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## NOTES ON THE CULT OF THE THEBAN GODS AT TANIS: A GENERAL OF PSUSENNES I

Alba María Villar Gómez  
(Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)

### **ABSTRACT**

*The General Wendjebaendjedet was a man of prominence at Psusennes I' court. Even though his origins are unknown, a possible family relationship with the royal family is being suggested in order to explain the unprecedented status that he attained: he was buried within the king's own tomb; his exceptionally rich tomb group consisted of the typical Eleventh-Tenth Centuries BC royal funerary goods; and his impressive titulary included high-ranking military, civil and priestly titles. Focusing the attention on his sacerdotal and administrative duties on behalf of Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep, we are going to have a closer look to the official cult of the Theban triad at Tanis and the role played by Wendjebaendjedet within the cult of the son and heir of Amun and Mut.*

### **RESUMEN**

*El General Wendjebaendjedet fue un hombre de vital importancia en la corte de Psusennes I. Aunque sus orígenes son desconocidos, se le ha vinculado con la familia real para explicar el estatus sin precedentes que adquirió: fue enterrado en la tumba del monarca, su excepcional ajuar funerario está compuesto por elementos propios de los ajuares reales de los siglos XI-X a. C. y, durante su carrera, ostentó una amplia titulación, que incluía tanto altos cargos civiles y militares como sacerdotales. Centrando la atención en sus funciones sacerdotales y administrativas vinculadas al dios Khonsu en Tebas Neferhotep, vamos a analizar algunos aspectos de la veneración a la tríada tebana en Tanis y a valorar el papel que pudo desempeñar Wendjebaendjedet en el culto oficial al hijo y heredero de Amón y Mut.*

### **KEYWORDS**

*21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, Theban triad, Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep, Tanis, Psusennes I, Wendjebaendjedet.*

### **PALABRAS CLAVE**

*Dinastía XXI, tríada tebana, Khonsu en Tebas Neferhotep, Tanis, Psusennes I, Wendjebaendjedet.*

Tanis, the capital of the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty and whose kings were devoted supporters of the Theban gods Amun, Mut and Khonsu, was perceived as the “Thebes of the North”. By this time, there existed an official cult of the gods of the Theban triad in this northern city, and their temples seem to have replicated the ones from Thebes<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, a well-established personnel for these deities is to be expected at Tanis, including Khonsu's servants.

Even though the available evidence is very limited and mainly restricted to the royal tombs, the prosopographical material documents a few servants of the two main manifestations of Khonsu –Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep and Khonsu the Child– in Tanis. Some members of the royal family and very few courtiers, all of them particularly connected to Psusennes I/Pasebkhanut I, performed sacerdotal and administrative duties on behalf of the god, being one of them the General Wendjebaendjedet. His case is particularly impressive and deserves further consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview of the cult of the Theban triad at Tanis: Kitchen 2004: 426-431. See also Loth 2014 for a recent outline of the Tanite temples.

The king Psusennes I was the head of the personnel of the Theban god Amun at Tanis, and adopted the title of High Priest of Amun<sup>2</sup> as a praenomen within a cartouche<sup>3</sup>. His wife and sister, Mutnedjemet, held the offices of Chief of Amun's Sacred Musical Troup and Second *ḥm-ntr* priest of Amun, in addition to the ones of Steward and *ḥm-ntr* priest of Mut, *ḥm-ntr* priest of Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep and God's Mother of Khonsu the Child; her panoply of benefits is recorded on her sarcophagus<sup>4</sup>, found in burial chamber 2 of Psusennes I's tomb (NRT III<sup>5</sup>) –a chamber contiguous to the one of her husband (chamber 1) and that was later on usurped by Amenemope, who adopted the title of High Priest of Amun too<sup>6</sup>. Their son, the General Ramesses-Ankhefenmut (C), buried in chamber 3, was also well established in the realm of the official cults as Chief Steward of Amun and Chief Steward of the cattle of the same god<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, Henuttawy (A) and Istemkheb (C) –Psusennes' mother and daughter respectively– were both remembered as God's Mothers of Khonsu the Child at Tanis on two inscribed bowls found in front of Psusennes' sarcophagus<sup>8</sup>.

As well as the other contemporary occupants of NRT III did, the General Wendjebaendjedet, who was interred alongside the king in chamber 4<sup>9</sup>, took part in the highest levels of the priestly and civil hierarchies for the gods of the triad at Tanis, in particular, at the service of Khonsu. Apart from being head administrator of the Domain of Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep –the exact same office performed by the prince Ankhefenmut (C) on behalf of Amun–, he held the positions of *ḥm-ntr* priest of Khonsu and *ḥm-ntr* priest of a syncretic form of the god, Khonsu-Ra, Lord of Thebes<sup>10</sup>. These titles are attested within the decoration of his burial chamber and by numerous objects of his extraordinary tomb group<sup>11</sup>, including his wooden and silver coffins, canopic jars and sets of ushabtis, as well as some silver and golden bowls and pieces of jewellery (figure 1).

<sup>2</sup> I use the term “*ḥm-ntr* priest”, instead of “priest” or “prophet”, for the members of this temple hierarchy; however, when I refer to the head of Amun's *ḥm-ntr* hierarchy, i.e. the *ḥm-ntr tpy n 'Imn-R' nsw-ntrw*, I use the conventional designation “High Priest of Amun”.

<sup>3</sup> Kitchen 2004: 263.

<sup>4</sup> See Jansen-Winkel 2007: 96.

<sup>5</sup> For the publication of NRT III: Montet 1951. See also Goyon 2004: 193-201 and Lull 2002: 117-135.

<sup>6</sup> Kitchen 2004: 429 n. 29.

<sup>7</sup> See Jansen-Winkel 2007: 61-63.

<sup>8</sup> M 399 and M 403 (Jansen-Winkel 2007: 58 doc. 81 and 85). Following D. Aston's nomenclature for the funerary objects from the royal necropolis of Tanis, in this paper, the catalogue numbers given by P. Montet are prefixed by the letter M: Aston 2009: 41.

<sup>9</sup> While burial chamber 4 was part of NRT III, it was sealed and inaccessible from the other parts of the royal tomb.

<sup>10</sup> There are only a handful of servants of Khonsu-Ra for the whole Third Intermediate Period. Unfortunately, this single individual serving this manifestation of the god may not be enough evidence to talk about an independent cult of Khonsu-Ra at Tanis, although it gives rise to some doubts about the existence of a specific cult and separate shrine for this aspect of Khonsu at the northern capital. For this form of Khonsu: Degardin 1992 and 2000.

<sup>11</sup> In addition to P. Montet's publication (Montet 1951: 69-89), a list of Wendjebaendjedet's funerary objects found in NRT III is provided in: Aston 2009: 41-43.

Wendjebaendjedet's Documents	Titles related to Khonsu's Cult	Other Titles
<b>West wall of chamber 4</b> (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 64 doc. 114)	<i>-mr pr wr n Hnsw m W3st Nfr-htp</i> <i>-mr pr n Hnsw m W3st Nfr-htp</i> <i>-mr pr Hnsw</i> <i>-hm-ntr Hnsw-Rc nb W3st</i>	<i>iry-p<sup>t</sup> h3ty-<sup>c</sup>; it-ntr mry; sd3wty</i> <i>bity; mr smrw w<sup>c</sup>ty; mr mš<sup>c</sup> h3wty</i> <i>n3 pdtyw pr-<sup>c</sup>3 nh wđ3 snb; mr</i> <i>hmw-ntr n ntrw nbw; hm-ntr Wn-</i> <i>db3-n-Ddt n pr Wsir nb Ddt</i>
<b>East wall of chamber 4</b> (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 64 doc. 115)	None	<i>iry-p<sup>t</sup> h3ty-<sup>c</sup>; it-ntr mry; sd3wty</i> <i>bity; mr smrw w<sup>c</sup>ty; mr mš<sup>c</sup> h3wty</i> <i>n3 pdtyw pr-<sup>c</sup>3 nh wđ3 snb</i>
<b>South and North walls of chamber 4</b> (Lull 2002: 134-135)	None	None
<b>M 676-679:</b> 4 travertine canopic jars (chamber 4) (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 65 doc. 118)	<i>-mr pr n Hnsw m W3st Nfr-htp</i> <i>-hm-ntr Hnsw-Rc nb W3st</i>	<i>mr mš<sup>c</sup> h3wty n3 pdtyw pr-<sup>c</sup>3; mr</i> <i>hmw-ntr n ntrw nbw</i>
<b>M 680:</b> gilt wooden coffin (chamber 4) (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 65 doc. 117)	<i>-mr pr wr n Hnsw</i> <i>-hm-ntr Hnsw</i> <i>-[hm-ntr n Hnsw-Rc n W3s]t</i>	<i>mr mš<sup>c</sup> h3wty n3 [pdtyw pr-<sup>c</sup>3]; mr</i> <i>wr [...]</i>
<b>M 684:</b> silver coffin (chamber 4) (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 65 doc. 116)	<i>-mr pr wr n Hnsw m W3st Nfr-htp</i> <i>-hm-ntr Hnsw-Rc nb W3st</i>	<i>mr mš<sup>c</sup> h3wty n3 pdtyw pr-<sup>c</sup>3; mr</i> <i>hmw-ntr n ntrw nbw</i>
<b>M 715:</b> gold ring (chamber 4) (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 66 doc. 122)	<i>-mr pr Hnsw</i>	<i>mr mš<sup>c</sup> h3wty</i>
<b>M 719:</b> heart scarab from a necklance and pectoral (chamber 4) (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 66 doc. 123)	<i>-mr n pr Hnsw</i>	None
<b>M 720:</b> gold and carnelian necklace with a pectoral (chamber 4) (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 66 doc. 124)	None	None
<b>M 721:</b> gold and green stone necklace with gold, lapislazuli and inlaid pectoral (chamber 4) (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 66 doc. 125)	None	None
<b>M 763:</b> carnelian pendant (chamber 4) (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 66 doc. 126)	<i>-mr pr n Hnsw</i>	None
<b>M 772:</b> gold tube (chamber 4) (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 66 doc. 127)	<i>-mr pr n Hnsw m W3st Nfr-htp</i> <i>-hm-ntr Hnsw-Rc nb W3st</i>	None
<b>M 773:</b> silver and gold bowl (chamber 4) (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 67 doc. 129)	<i>-mr pr n Hnsw m W3st Nfr-htp</i> <i>-hm-ntr Hnsw</i>	<i>mr mš<sup>c</sup> h3wty n3 pdtyw pr-<sup>c</sup>3; mr</i> <i>hmw-ntr n ntrw nbw</i>
<b>M 774:</b> gold and inlaid bowl (chamber 4) (Montet 1951: 82-83 fig. 30)	<i>-mr pr n Hnsw</i> <i>-hm-ntr Hnsw</i>	None
<b>M 775:</b> silver and gold bowl ("swimmers' cup") (chamber 4) (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 67 doc. 129)	<i>-mr pr n Hnsw m W3st Nfr-htp</i> <i>-hm-ntr Hnsw</i>	<i>mr mš<sup>c</sup> h3wty n3 pdtyw pr-<sup>c</sup>3; mr</i> <i>hmw-ntr n ntrw nbw</i>
<b>M 262+260:</b> collection of faience ushabtis (ordinary and reis) (antechamber NRT III) (Montet 1951: 54 fig.17; de Cernival, J.-L. et al. 1987: 132-133 doc. 16; Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 65-66 doc. 119)	<i>-mr pr n Hnsw</i>	<i>mr mš<sup>c</sup></i>
<b>M 263+261:</b> collection of bronze ushabtis (ordinary and reis) (antechamber NRT III) (de Cernival, J.-L. et al. 1987: 132-133 doc. 15; Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 66 doc. 120)	<i>-mr pr n Hnsw</i> <i>-mr pr wr n Hnsw</i>	<i>mr mš<sup>c</sup></i>
<b>M 307:</b> alabaster jar (antechamber NRT III) (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 65 doc. 118)	<i>-mr pr n Hnsw m W3st Nfr-htp</i> <i>-hm-ntr Hnsw</i>	None
<b>M 471:</b> bronze sword blade fragment (chamber 1) (Jansen-Winkeln 2007: 67 doc. 128)	None	<i>mr pdtyw pr-<sup>c</sup>3</i>

Fig. 1. Inscribed documents from NRT III dedicated to Wendjebaendjedet.

Wendjebaendjedet's appointments as General and Army Leader of the Pharaoh and Superintendent of the *hm-ntr* priests of All the Gods are recurrent; however, it is revealing that his functions on behalf of Khonsu occur prominently within these funerary goods. They appear together with or instead of the one of General on inscriptions on small documents, where the space is very limited; for instance, he is identified as General, Chief Steward of Khonsu or simply Steward of Khonsu in his two sets of ushabtis (M 262+260 and M 263+261) and his golden ring (M 715). Furthermore, in some cases, his attachment to Khonsu's personnel is the only biographical information mentioned in the texts, as in a heart scarab from a necklace and pectoral (M 719), the carnelian pendant (M

763), the golden tube (MM 772), one of his bowls (M 774) and the alabaster jar found in the antechamber of NRT III (M 307). These facts demonstrate the importance of these functions in Wendjebaendjedet's career and the high status that he might have reached, to a certain extent, thanks to these offices.

P. Montet<sup>12</sup> pointed out that the god Khonsu was already worshipped at the region from the end of the Old Kingdom. For this scholar, the longstanding relevance of this god in the area may explain the prestige of a servant of Khonsu like Wendjebaendjedet. His high status was proved by the fact that Psusennes conceded him the office of Superintendent of the *ḥm-ntr* priests of All the Gods. This capacity might have probably entitled him to conduct the daily cult of Amun in the capital as the king's deputy; he was responsible for the personnel of all Tanite deities, a dignity that presumably seems more suitable for a Tanite High Priest of Amun than for a servant of the child god of the Theban triad<sup>13</sup>. However, and even though Khonsu's previous presence at Tanis must be taking into account, the increasing importance of the cult of the Theban triad and of Khonsu the Child by the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty and the correspondence between Tanis and Thebes are key elements for understanding the position in society of this individual. The institutionalised political fragmentation of the country, the Theban theocratic government and the development of the *mammisiac* religion –along with its consequent influence in cult practices– set the context<sup>14</sup>.

Beyond the fluid relationships and family connections between both halves of the country, there were strong political statements made from north and south. Just as Herihor, Pinudjem I or Menkheperra adopted, to different extents, royal prerogatives, the temples at Tanis seem to have emulated their southern counterparts, and the Tanite kings, queens and princes held the same offices than the members of the family of the High Priest of Amun in Upper Egypt. As A. Leahy suggests, this replication of Theban temples and cults at Tanis most likely “Provided an alternative venue for the continuation of the cult of Amun, and eliminated dependence on Thebes and its priesthood”<sup>15</sup>. Moreover, such parallelism in cults and titles between Thebes and Tanis may most likely indicate a similar organisation of their temple personnel.

At Thebes, the prosopographical data show that serving as a *ḥm-ntr* priest of Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep might have been restricted to a certain rank of dignitaries that were somehow connected to the southern rulers. There is no High Priest of Khonsu attested, neither a hierarchical organisation among the *ḥm-ntr* priests until the second half of the Dynasty, when political circumstances appear to have changed. Therefore, few *ḥm-ntr* priests constituted a major category among the servants of this god until Menkheperra's pontificate. On the other hand, Khonsu's administrative domain in Karnak was under the supervision of some of the wives of the High Priests of Amun, who were Stewards of this god as well as *ḥm-ntr* priestesses. Additionally, their functions on behalf of the other gods of the Theban triad were equivalent to the aforementioned status acquired by Mutnedjemet, which was also part of the *ḥm-ntr* hierarchy of Khonsu at Tanis<sup>16</sup>.

In spite of the reduced amount of data, we may be facing similar circumstances with regard to the clergy of Khonsu at Tanis. There is no evidence for High Priests of Khonsu or a *ḥm-ntr* priestly hierarchy, and high elite individuals such as Wendjebaendjedet –who

<sup>12</sup> Montet 1951: 187.

<sup>13</sup> Kitchen 2004: 265 and n. 127.

<sup>14</sup> For the contextualization of the importance gained by the cult of Khonsu during the Third Intermediate Period and the increase in number of Khonsu's servants at Thebes, see: Villar 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Leahy 1985: 52.

<sup>16</sup> I analyse these issues in a forthcoming article on the hierarchy of *ḥm-ntr* priests of Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep. See also Villar 2014.

was *hm-ntr* priest and Chief Steward of Khonsu's temple– or Mutnedjemet formed the uppermost levels of the religious and administrative authority at the temple of Khonsu. In this particular context, when looking at Wendjebaendjedet's burial equipment, the location of his tomb, the other individuals buried in NRT III and his titles, a connection between Wendjebaendjedet and the royal family becomes quite feasible.

No genealogical information is known for Wendjebaendjedet, neither an inscription that would link him with the royal lineage<sup>17</sup>. However, based on a combination of facts that includes the ones just mentioned before, G. P. F. Broekman proposed a possible family bond between him and the royal family: he suggests this individual's likely royal origin in relation to Smendes<sup>18</sup>. In this concern, his own name and his sacerdotal office of *hm-ntr* priest of Osiris at Mendes<sup>19</sup> would denote a connection with the ancient Djedet, from where Smendes also originated. Even though there is no conclusive evidence to prove this theory, it is true that the high status and influence of this individual would almost certainly go hand-in-hand with a prestigious background; all the funerary privileges that he received, as well as the titles that he held –taken particularly into account the ones related to Khonsu's cult–, might only be explained by the royal parentage.

The intact tomb of Psusennes testifies to the paramount importance of the devotion shown to Amun-Ra, Mut and Khonsu in the capital city. As in the southern milieu and the High Priests of Amun's entourage, the relatives of the king –both men and women– seem to be connected to the highest echelons of the hierarchies of Amun, Mut and Khonsu, at least during the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty. In the same way that Psusennes, Mutnedjemet and Ankhfenmut were celebrants of the cults of the Theban triad at Tanis, Wendjebaendjedet was in charge of the cult of Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep in the capital. Consequently, the nature and organisation of the priesthoods for the Theban gods in Thebes and Tanis appear to be similar. And as well as it happened at Thebes, it is not coincidental that the ruling family took part in the uppermost levels of Khonsu's hierarchy; fact that points to a form of connectedness playing a role in the acquisition of such positions.

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<sup>17</sup> P. Montet suggested that the two women mentioned on a golden bracelet from chamber 4 (M 710) might have been part of Wendjebaendjedet's family: Montet 1951: 73-74 and 87.

<sup>18</sup> See Broekman 1998 for the details of this hypothesis.

<sup>19</sup> This title was attested once on the west wall of his funerary chamber: see Figure 1.



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