

## A New List of the High Priests of Ptah in Memphis

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The high priests of Ptah in the great city of Memphis bore a professional title that is currently read as “*wr hrp hmw.wt*” or “*wr hrp.w hmw.wt*” which translates to “Chief of the Lead Craftsmen”. It is interesting to note that archaeological sources record this title being used by the Egyptian as a male name during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties.

Since the Third Dynasty the high priests of Ptah were distinguished by their special necklaces called “s'h” and by wearing the skins of cheetahs. They played a number of important roles, both in their city and in the rest of Egypt; serving religious, political, cultural, social, and even economic functions.

This article features the latest list of the high priests of Ptah in Memphis that the researcher has compiled. The study is limited to the period extending from the first appearance of the title referring to this position at the end of the Second Dynasty until the last high priest of Ptah in the Thirtieth Dynasty mentioned in sources before the conquest of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE.

### **The current study is a comprehensive revision of the following works:**

Dieter Wilding (1977) in his article in the second volume of the encyclopedia *Egyptology* (LA II, 1165-1256), which mentions eighty-three high priests from the period between the Second and Third Dynasties until the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty in addition to thirteen high priests from the Greco-Roman Period.

The doctoral thesis of Charles Maystre, entitled “High Priests of Ptah in Memphis” (1948). It was published in the 113<sup>th</sup> issue of the series *OBO* in 1992. It included only fifty-two high priests until the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty, in addition to ten high priests in the Ptolemaic Period and one in the Roman Period.

The Porter-Moss list (1981) from (PM III2, 916-918) which mentioned only forty-six high priests until the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty, three of whom are anonymous, as well as only seven high priests from the Ptolemaic Period.

The significance of the current study lies in that it has compiled a list of 104 high priests of Memphis from the Second Dynasty until the Thirtieth Dynasty at the end of ancient Egyptian history (332 BCE.) by relying on recent archeological sources and geneologies. The researcher has arranged them in a new chronological order that is more logical and consistent with recent studies and excavations than previous lists, especially since there are a number of high priests who have the same name from the same time periods (examples: *Pt<sup>c</sup>h-shp<sup>st</sup>*, *s<sup>c</sup>bw*, *pt<sup>c</sup>h-ms*, *sn-nfr*, *hry*,

*hy-m-w<sup>c</sup>st*) who should be either consolidated or distinguished from one another. Likewise, the periods of their rule should be re-dated and reordered based on the way that titles were written and ordered among other titles in the autobiographies. The researcher has also added to the new list names of high priests who were not previously mentioned (such as *h<sup>c</sup>ty<sup>c</sup>y*) that extend our knowledge of the high priests of Memphis from the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty, where all the priest lists mentioned above ended, until the Thirtieth Dynasty.