

## Chief Stewards of Amon temple

*Imy-r pr n Imn*

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An unimportant title, connected with the financial power of Amon temple, was that *imy-r pr n Imn* chief steward of Amon. As the title itself implies this individual supervised and controlled the estates and holdings of the god and was the ecclesiastical counterpart to the chief steward of the king. Before considering this title further, however, we must ask the question whether there may not have been a higher steward, a *imy-r pr wr n Imn*. There were among the personal servants of the king both the *imy-r pr wr n nsu*, the chief steward of the king, who was the chief administrator of all the royal holdings, and numerous officials of a lower rank called *imy-r pr n nsu*, stewards of the king, each of whom supervised one residence or estate of the king. In the case of the estates of Amon, a seemingly higher version of the title is attested once, in the case of *šn-mwt* under Hatshepsut, who calls himself *imy-r pr wr n Imn*. An examination of the usage of this title by *šn-mwt* shows, however, that it is a variation of the title *imy-r pr n Imn* and not a different office of higher authority. On Cairo statue 579<sup>1</sup>, *šn-mwt* alternates the titles *imy-r pr wr n Imn* and *imy-r pr n Imn*, thus showing that he regarded them as interchangeable. That there was no separate higher office is further demonstrated by the fact that the seemingly higher variant never occurs again in Dynasty 18.

The following are the known datable Chief Stewards of Amon temple in the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty:

- 1- *Mry*<sup>2</sup>, High priest of Amon under Amenhotep II.
- 2- *Imn-m-ḥ3t*<sup>3</sup>, High priest of Amon under Amenhotep II and Thutmose IV.

<sup>1</sup>Urk. IV, 407-408.

<sup>2</sup>High priest of Amon, theban tomb 95, cf. Urk. IV, 1570-1571.

<sup>3</sup>Tomb 97 at Thebes, cf. Alan H. Gardiner, The tomb of Amenmhet, High-priest of Amon, ZÄS 47, 87-99.

- 3- *Pth-msw*<sup>4</sup>, High priest of Amon and southern Vizier under Thutmosis IV and Amenhotep III.
- 4- *K3-m-w3st*<sup>5</sup> served under Thutmosis IV.
- 5- *Imn-wsr*<sup>6</sup> Vizier under Hatshepsut.
- 6- *Rh-mi-r*<sup>7</sup> Vizier under Thutmosis III and Amenhotep II.
- 7- *sn-mwt*<sup>8</sup> chief Steward under Hatshepsut.
- 8- *sn-nfr*<sup>9</sup> Mayor of Thebes under Amenhotep II.
- 9- *sn-dhwtj*<sup>10</sup> Served under Thutmosis III.
- 10 *Nht-sbk*<sup>11</sup> Served under Amenhotep III.

The nature of such an office and the limited number of its holders make it quite certain that only one man at a given time served as Chief Steward of Amon temple. Our first task is therefore to place the ten above named individuals in the proper sequence. The earliest holders of the title are *sn-mwt* and *Imn-wsr*, both of whom date to the reign of Hatshepsut. *sn-mwt*, the queen's favorite and Chief Steward, probably was the first to hold the office and was followed after his disgrace by *Imn-wsr*, who was vizier in the last years of Hatshepsut and the early years of rule of Thutmosis III<sup>12</sup>. The fact that *Imn-wsr* only presents the

<sup>4</sup>Statue fragment, *Urk. IV 1916*, This title had originally been the property of the chief Steward of the King but had gone over to the vizierate in the reign of Thutmosis III.

<sup>5</sup>Stele, *Urk IV, 1633*.

<sup>6</sup>Helck *Zur Verwaltung*, p.437

<sup>7</sup>*Urk. IV 1072*

<sup>8</sup>*Urk. IV 403*

<sup>9</sup>*Urk 1437*

<sup>10</sup>*Urk. IV 1207*

<sup>11</sup>Under temple administration the other Chief Stewards of Amon temple *Imn-htp* and *dhwtj-msw*, probably belong to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, but their dates are uncertain.

<sup>12</sup>Helck, *Zur Verwaltung*, p.292. For *Sn-mwt*, see pp.356 ff.

title once, in his tomb<sup>13</sup>, is an indication that Helck is right and that he entered the office late in his career<sup>14</sup>. *Rh-mi-r<sup>c</sup>*, who followed *Imn-wsr* in office as vizier under Thutmosis III and served on into the reign of Amenhotep II, was doubtless the next Chief Steward of Amon temple, inheriting the office from his predecessor. In these years the post was obviously not yet in the hands of the High priests of Amon.

Our first problem regarding the succession of Chief Stewards of Amon temple occurs at this point. Although we know *Rh-mi-r<sup>c</sup>* continued to serve as southern Vizier into the reign of Amenhotep II, an official named *sn-dhwty* who was in office in year 43 of Thutmosis III<sup>15</sup> held the title chief Steward of Amon temple. Unless *sn-dhwty* lived and served under Amenhotep II as well as Thutmosis III, it appears that *Rh-m-r<sup>c</sup>* relinquished the title at some point while he was still alive. We must first consider the possibility that *sn-dhwty* held the post after the death of *Rh-mi-r<sup>c</sup>* in the reign of Amenhotep II. A number of facts make this seem highly unlikely. *sn-dhwty* had a son who served in high governmental offices under Thutmosis III, thus showing that the father was well advanced in years himself by the last years of that king. It is improbable that he could have served meaningfully under Amenhotep II. Nor is the later king mentioned in any of *sn-dhwty*'s inscriptions, thus strengthening our supposition that he was dead before the start of the reign of Amenhotep II. There are also, as will be shown below, already three-attested Chief Stewards of Amon temple for the twenty-five year reign of Amenhotep II. Another seems somewhat unlikely. Placement of *sn-dhwty* in the early years of Thutmosis III does not seem to be the solution either, since *Imn-wsr*, the temple steward at the death of Hatshepsut and into reign of Thutmosis III seems to have passed the title along with the southern vizierate directly to his kinsman and successor *Rh-mi-r<sup>c</sup>*. The only logical explanation is

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*,p.437.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*,p.295.

<sup>15</sup>*Urk.* IV, 1374. *sn-dhwty* was the father of *Nht-min*, the earliest attested Overseer of Horses.

that *Rh-mi-r<sup>c</sup>* gave up the title Chief Steward of Amon temple while continuing to serve as vizier, perhaps because of old age. Thus *sn-dhwty* appears to have served as Chief Steward in the last years of Thutmosis III.

A second problem for the reconstruction of the list of Chief temple Stewards appears in the reign of Amenhotep II. Three men held the title, *Mry* and *Imn-m-h3t*, both High priests of Amon, and *sn-nfr*, the celebrated Mayor of Thebes. *Imn-m-h3t* must have been the last of the three to hold the office, since his term as High Priest went on into the reign of Thutmosis IV. *Mry* was, undoubtedly, the predecessor of *Imn-m-h3t*, since his career fell into the middle years of Amenhotep II<sup>16</sup>. The best place for *sn-nfr* seems to be the early years of Amenhotep II, before the installation of *Mry* as High Priest of Amon.

The transfer of control of the estates of Amon from civil officials to the High Priests of the god during the reign of Amenhotep II may certainly be viewed as an ominous sign of growth of the power of the High Priesthood. The economic power of the Chief priests reached its highest with *Mry*, who held all three of the key religious administrative posts, Overseer of the cattle of Amon, overseer of all the priests of Upper and Lower Egypt, and now Chief Steward of the temple estates. *Imn-m-h3t* probably never became overseer of the cattle of Amon. It is conceivable that he was overseer of the Gods Cattle, but lost the title when Thutmosis IV ascended the throne, but it is doubtful that he held the post, since the title is nowhere attested.

In the reign of Thutmosis IV there are two-attested Chief Stewards of Amon temple, *Imn-m-h3t* the high priest and *k3-m w3st*<sup>17</sup>. *Imn-m-h3t*, appointed high priest in the last years of Amenhotep II, probably was Chief Steward of the temple in the early years of Thutmosis IV. It was at his death that the post evidently passed from the control of the High priests. Little is

<sup>16</sup>His predecessor as High Priest of Amon, *Mn-hpr-r<sup>c</sup>-snb*, served under both Thutmosis III and Amenhotep II. See Lefebvre, p. 234.

<sup>17</sup>*Pth-msw*, High Priest at the end of the reign, also held the title, but probably only under Amenhotep III. His only presenting it once evidences that he received the title late in his career.

known of *K3-m-w3st*, except that he had served as a scribe on one of the estates of Thutmose IV<sup>18</sup>. As a royal scribe, *K3-m-w3st* presumably came under the scrutiny of the pharaoh and his close advisors and was selected as a loyal and trustworthy royal servant. His promotion to the post of Chief Temple Steward is typical of the anti-clerical policy of Thutmose IV which we have already seen in relation to the two previously discussed titles. Thutmose IV removed the title Overseer of the Cattle of Amon from the High Priests and gave it to the king's Sons of Kush. He also took the title Overseer of Priests from the Amon Priesthood for the first time and gave it to a loyal and experienced soldier, *Hr-m-hb*.

Under Amenhotep III there are two-attested Chief Stewards of Amon temple, *Pth-msw* the vizier and high priest and *Nht-sbk*. The order of service of these two Chief Stewards is easy to establish, since *Pth-msw* was dead before year 20 of the king. He therefore preceded *Nht-sbk*, who is in fact mentioned as being Chief Steward on the statue of *Nb-nfr*, which names *Mry-pth*, the successor of *Pth-msw*<sup>19</sup>. With *Pth-msw* the title reverted temporarily to the High Priesthood, but to a pontiff loyal to the royal faction. *Nht-sbk* was once again a man with reason to be loyal to the crown. He was not a member of Theban family but was a northerner, and had served in his earlier days in the army, which was a constant bulwark of support for the kings against the priests. His appointments to be Chief Steward is proof that Amenhotep III followed the policy of his father.

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<sup>18</sup>This fact supports our conclusion that *K3-m-w3st* was Chief Temple Steward in the late years of Thutmose IV, since he must have served in his relatively minor scribal post in the early years in order to fit his entire career under that king.

<sup>19</sup>*Urk.* IV, 1886.