

## **A supervisor's review of the PhD thesis by Marie Peterková Hlouchová**

Doctoral thesis of Marie Peterková Hlouchová that bears the *title Gods with solar aspects during the Old Kingdom Atum, Shu, Kheprer, Nefertum and Weneg in the light of various evidence* represents the outcome of thorough research and detailed study that was supported by already successfully finished research grants with the author as their principal investigator.

The thesis itself is a very well-organized, well-structured and punctually prepared piece of scholarly work. Marie has proved to be able to define the research goals clearly, as well as the used methods and research paradigms. And – what is even more appreciable – she keeps with them during the whole process of research.

During the preparatory stage of her work, the author decided to limit her research interest only to several “minor” gods with solar aspects in the Old Kingdom (Atum, Shu, Kheprer, Nefertum and Weneg). Thus, other well-known “major” solar deities (as Ra, Horus or Harakhty) were left aside from focus, but by no means totally neglected from the scope of research. This decision itself represents a first minor achievement of the reviewed thesis, as it brings some usually neglected gods (like Weneg) to scholarly interest, and points towards solar aspects of gods, who are not always considered solar deities (like Shu or Nefertum).

The thesis is divided into 6 individual chapters (incl. the Introduction) with 3 more specialized excursi at the very end. The Introduction brings the reader nicely into the main topic by explaining the current scholarly view on sun-worship in ancient Egypt, by presenting the planned scope of research, as well as by formulating the structure of the thesis. The following chapter summarizes the state of research on the problem of the sun cult in the Old Kingdom, but, more importantly, also on the five individual gods. This part of the thesis, thus, represents a first from the several helpful research tools that would follow in the thesis. Chapter 3 acquaints the reader with the author's methodological approach and with the primary sources used to collect data on the presence, importance and meaning of five minor solar gods in the time of the Old Kingdom. These sources are primarily textual and the author divides them into several categories, from the Pyramid Texts and royal and personal names to administrative sources and titles.

The following chapters (4-6) represent the fundamental part of the thesis, as they deal with the characteristics of the five “minor” solar deities in focus (Atum, Shu, Kheprer, Nefertum and Weneg). They enumerate, list and analyse all attested evidence for all the five gods retrieved from the primary sources, and present a synthesis of this evidence. Here, Marie Peterková Hlouchová proves that she is an experienced and precise researcher and these chapters (when published in future) will serve as an efficient research tool to other scholars.

Marie had also included three special excursi at the very end of her thesis. These focus on the solar-god in his role of the creator-god and the divine Lord of cosmos as evidenced by the so-called Cannibal Hymn (Excursus I), on the so-called *wng*-plant connected with the above-

mentioned god of the same name (Weneg; Excursus II), and on the very origins of the sun cult in ancient Egypt (Excursus III).

As the thesis' supervisor I have to say that author approached her PhD thesis with a great research excitement but still very responsibly, and that Marie has proved her research abilities, which she will, as I very much hope, even expand and deepen in the future.

But not to only praise the thesis by Marie Peterková Hlouchová, I also have to admit that the synthesis of the evidence, the final interpretation and conclusions could have been prepared even better, for instance by focusing in more detail on the interpretation solar aspects of individual gods on the basis of the written evidence. General question of "How can we alter our understanding of Egyptian religion (mainly of solar gods in the Old Kingdom) after analysing the minor solar gods?" and similar important questions should have been asked and answered by the author as well.

However, the excursi (mainly Excursus II on the *wng*-plant) show that Marie is not only capable of collecting, sorting and interpreting a huge amount of textual, pictorial and material evidence, but also of asking and solving more general questions dealing with the very nature of Egyptian religion and the core characteristics of Egyptian gods. Unfortunately, mainly due to the lack of time, not all the "minor" five gods with solar aspects have been re-interpreted as extensively as Weneg in her thesis.

I recommend the submitted dissertation for accepting with the tentative grade of pass and I also recommend the work to be published in an up-dated form.

In Prague, on March 5th 2020



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