

## **Report of the dissertation supervisor**

**Mgr. František Válek, „Life, Society and Politics in Relation to Religion at Ugarit in the Late Bronze Age“**

**submitted at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague**

As a lecturer at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies (ÚFaR) I had the opportunity to observe the professional maturation of Mgr. František Válek since the first year of his undergraduate studies. His interest in the religious and cultural area of the Northwest Semites was confirmed by a careful study of primary (source) languages: first Ugaritic, later also Akkadian, necessary for tracing cultural changes and transmissions in the 2nd millennium B.C. He gradually expanded his study scope to the neighbouring areas of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. His master's thesis, „Foreign Influences in Religion of Ancient Syria,“ approached the parameters of a dissertation in its intent and method of preparation.

If I am to evaluate the course of his postgraduate studies, his exemplary fulfillment of all his duties deserves first place. He always handed in all assignments within the deadlines, often with admirable anticipation. He was the only one in the history of doctoral studies in religious studies at the ÚFaR to submit his dissertation within the standard period of study, i.e. after four years.

As far as F. Válek's academic activities are concerned, he actively presented his papers at several international Assyriology and Religious Studies conferences:

- 64th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale and the 12th Melammu Symposium (Innsbruck, 2018);
- 68th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (Leiden, 2023);
- 20th Annual Conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions: Religions and Technology (Vilnius, 2023).

He has published the results of his research activities in professional periodicals and conference proceedings, and has also diligently reviewed recent literature. As far as teaching activities are concerned, he enriched the teaching at the ÚFaR with his semester course „The Concept of Divinity in the Ancient Near East“ (2021). Since 2022, he has been an assistant professor at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Pardubice. Since 2023 he is a member of the research team of the grant project „Archaeology of Texts: Tradition, Transmission and Transformation in the Ancient Near East“ (GAČR 23-05181S).

F. Válek's work on his dissertation project „Life, Society and Politics in Relation to Religion at Ugarit in the Late Bronze Age“ was always carried out completely independently. From the beginning, he set himself clearly formulated research questions, had a precise goal, and developed a precise structure, which he only occasionally modified during the analysis of the chosen material. He was constantly expanding his academic skills in the philological and archaeological fields. He was then able to apply the theoretical foundations of religious studies convincingly to Ugaritic realities. From a methodological point of view, the dissertation is therefore of an excellent standard. The reader is confronted with a balanced combination of historical-philological and anthropological approaches. The writer's effort not to reduce the tangle of cultural relations analysed and to grasp them in their plasticity is quite evident. In short, the author has shown that he has an eye for detail and synthesis in his scientific work.

The supervisor congratulates F. Válek on his excellent performance and looks forward to the publication of the text in monographic form in the days to come.

Prague, 10 April 2024.

Doc. Dalibor Antalík, Dr.