

**Supervisor's Report on the Course of Study of Martin Pehal and his Thesis**

**„Ancient Egyptian Mythological Narratives. Structural Interpretation of the Tale of Two Brothers, Tale of the Doomed Prince, the Astarte Papyrus, the Osirian Cycle and the Anat Myth“**

**submitted in 2015 at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies,  
Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague**

I have known Martin since the very beginning of his study. In 2007 I supervised his B.A. thesis “Corporeality as a Criterion for Evaluating Rituals”, which has been one of the most interesting and original B.A. theses ever submitted at our department. For his M.A. thesis Martin decided to switch from ritual to myth. Inspired by one of my seminars, he embraced the innovative version of structuralism developed by Terence Turner and decided to apply it to the *Tale of Two Brothers*. The resulting thesis was strikingly original, applying to Egyptian myth methodological approaches which have so far been ignored not only by Egyptologists but by most scholars studying any religion. In Martin's hands the method became a highly efficient tool, helping him to make sense of myths that would normally just seem as a collection of random narrative fantasies. Moreover, the application was far from mechanical. While Martin followed Terence Turner in his theoretical premises, in the application he developed his own distinctive approach that was much more suitable for Egyptian narratives. The quality of his work was been confirmed by the fact that Dr. Michèle Broze from Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres, Université libre de Bruxelles, expressed great interest in publishing Martin's thesis. Originally it was meant to be published in the Peeters publishing house, with which Dr. Broze was associated at that time; later however, she started to cooperate with the EME publishing house, and it was here that the book was eventually published.

For his doctoral project, Martin decided to continue in the same direction, elaborating the topics introduced in his M.A. thesis, while covering a wider range of myths and striving for an even greater degree of methodological sophistication. His aim was to analyse the motif of the divine eye in various narratives and to trace the deeper structural logic behind its various appearances in Egyptian myths. This turned out to be an extremely ambitious task, requiring the analysis of huge quantities of material. Martin worked hard on this analysis, but he was being distracted by the fact that he also started to prepare his M.A. thesis for publication. This turned out to be a much more demanding task than he had expected, for instead of just slightly polishing the text up he ended up rewriting it completely, in the end retaining only about 25 % of the original thesis. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that it actually took 6 years for the book to come out. As this has greatly delayed his work on the original topic, and as the book was in fact a new work very much different from the original dissertation, I have persuaded him to change his original plans and to submit the published book as his dissertation – for it is really this book that he spent most of his doctoral study working on. Martin agreed, but since he found it slightly embarrassing, he insisted on writing at least a complementary chapter that would take account of latest publications on the subject. I expected this chapter to be but a brief addendum that Martin would write in two weeks, but in fact he spent two months working on it, in the end producing something that rather resembles a small thesis on its own, namely a full detailed analysis of another Egyptian myth, the *Tale of the Doomed Prince*, which he systematically compared with the *Tale of Two Brothers*.

For all these reasons I am happy to recommend the dissertation for the defence, having no doubt that it will be successful.

Prague, 10 November 2015

Doc. Radek Chlup, PhD.