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# Case of the Prince and His Dog: Accommodating Ambiguity

Martin Pehal\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague (FFUK CUNI) – République tchèque

## Résumé

Many studies have been devoted to the analysis of the *Tale of the Doomed Prince*. However, none have sufficiently explained the choice of the three animals representing the Hero's fate (snake, crocodile, dog) and-more importantly-the sequence of plot episodes in which they interact with the main characters.

In my presentation I will argue that the "animal sequence" forms the conclusive part of a narrative process which mediates between a series of binary categories which are all in relation to the Hero in his capacity of the crown prince. I will show that the composition belongs to a broad category of mythological narratives-characteristic of the New Kingdom period-in which the issue of royal (il)legitimacy is developed through the interaction of "Egyptian" and "foreign" (i.e. Near-Eastern) motifs. It is in this context that the animals represent a mechanism through which the process of Hero's maturation and gradual development into a legitimate ruler can take place.

In case of the *Doomed Prince*, fate in the form of the three animals is primarily represented as something threatening, disruptive, and negative. I will therefore also present a brief survey into the associations of the three animals with categories of evil and subsequently also the god Seth who-even though not mentioned in the text itself-is traditionally associated with these categories. I will show how the conclusions of this survey corroborate the situation as presented by the narrative itself: the snake being on one end of the spectrum (completely evil), crocodile in between, and the dog on the opposite end (friend).

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\*Intervenant