Abstract

The present thesis deals with the reign of Nyuserre, one of great Old Kingdom rulers who ruled in the mid-Fifth Dynasty (2402–2374+25 BC). A transformation of whole society of ancient Egypt came to pass during his reign as a consequence of the events in the late Fourth and early Fifth Dynasties, when the highest posts in the administrative system had passed over from members of the royal family to dignitaries of non-royal origin. This fact had been reflected in whole society and started numerous rivulets of change, which merged in a single river in Nyuserre’s reign.

The gradual transformation of Egyptian society from a kingdom to a state took place during this crucial period, and a number of innovations came about in various spheres (religion, society, administration, tomb architecture, etc.), mirroring a change in the participation in power. This situation was reflected primarily in dignitaries’ tombs dated to the given period, which became indicators of the transformation of society. The research is focused on an analysis more than 100 tombs of high-ranking individuals and their family members, and particularly of their titulary, offering formulae, false doors (the central point of the funerary cult), etc.

The individual chapters of the present thesis exemplify the most noticeable changes in society. The first opening chapter provides an insight into the subject. The second chapter deals with a new offering pose which represents the king in a kneeling posture for the first time. The third chapter focuses on innovation in the social sphere, and especially on one of the significant features, the royal marriage policy. The fourth chapter concerns the reconstruction of the administration, i.e. of the management of the state. The emphasis is laid on elements that distinctively reflect the transformation of the distribution of power. The fifth chapter focuses on the transfer of professions from father to son, the so-called nepotism, which increased during this period. The sixth chapter deals with the religious sphere, especially with the introduction of the Osirian cult, which indicates a change of the concept of afterlife of high-ranking dignitaries. The seventh, final chapter summarizes the results of the thesis and sets them in a wider developmental framework.