The title of this dissertation is much promising. The reign of king Nyuserre is – as it seems – still underestimated; on the other hand the amount of available evidence, still increasing thanks to research of the Czech Institute of Egyptology, makes an overall vision very difficult. However, as declared humbly by the author: “The aim of this thesis is not to present a synthesis of existing historical facts concerning the person of Nyuserre and his reign, but rather to focus on the changes and their possible causes by means of analysis of non-royal tombs bearing testimony of the then period, based especially on officials’ titularies, offering formulae, false doors and other architectonic features related to more than 100 tomb owners and their relatives.” (p. 10)

In the Introduction (pp. 8-15) the author describes the Maat-base she created ten years ago, and its potential as a tool for analyses in her thesis. A “new approach”, so often declared by young scholars, can be a trap. Sometimes it is a bit too forced, and applying of sophisticated geophysical techniques in field archaeology or complicated digital models in theoretical work, offers relatively small results. However, in this case it is different. The meticulous work of Mgr. Dulíková and cooperation with a mathematician Radek Mařík gave excellent results. Not only the database provided an impressive amount of data forming a solid ground for the research, but the processing and presentation of the evidence was done with much care.

The dissertation is also well based on theoretical grounds. “The findings presented in this thesis are in harmony with Miroslav Bárt’s designation of N-userre’s reign as one of the five Multiplier Effect Periods during the Old Kingdom.”, which was inspired by the punctuated equilibrium theory applied by Bárt to the history of Egypt (Eldridge – Gold 1972). “Major development changes tend to happen in certain discrete periods of time divided by rather uneventful periods of stasis when no significant development takes place (Bárta
Max Weber’s theory of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* was applied as well for the analysis of the social setting of the marriages of royal daughters.

At the beginning the author offers a brief presentation of historical facts and architectural achievements of Nyuserre who not only constructed his own mortuary complex and the sun temple, but also finished complexes of Neferirkare, Khentkaus II and Raneferef, and built pyramids Lepsius XXIV and XXV for two queens. This presentation deserves two comments.

‘Nyuserre succeeded his untimely deceased brother Raneferef on the throne.’ (p. 8). However, according to Miroslav Verner, it is possible that Shepseskare (a supposed descendant of Sahure) followed (and not preceded) Raneferef, which might be an important factor in the discussion (suggested several times in the past, recently M. Verner, *Sons of the Sun. Rise and Decline of the Fifth Dynasty*, Prague 2014, p. 169). Certainly, there is much speculation in this issue, but one might consider, if such a scenario might have somehow affected the position and actions of Nyuserra, e.g. in the field of his legitimization and relations with the elite.

‘Nyuserre’s pyramid complex show four significant innovations of his mortuary temple: a large statue of recumbent lion placed in a transverse corridor (...)’ (p. 8)

The giant head of a lion found by Borchardt did not belong to a recumbent lion but might have come from a statue representing the goddess Bastet (maybe a dyad with the king, similar to the one in the Valley Temple of Khafra). On this issue see Do. Arnold, Royal Reliefs, in: *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*, p. 97, and A. Ćwiek, *Relief Decoration* (2003), n.489, p. 313 and n. 1291).

Touching the subject of the king’s achievements in architecture and art, one is rather impressed by them, which rises questions of their relation to the issues treated in Mgr. Duliková’s thesis. Although the overall quality of the pyramid construction in the Fifth Dynasty is inferior than in the Fourth Dynasty, one has to notice enormous blocks weighing some 90 tons, placed in the gable roofs in Nyuserre’s pyramid, as well 150 large blocks roofing the corridor in the base of the obeliskoid at Abu Ghurab. Also the amount and diversity of costly materials used for building Nyuserre’s temples are very impressive. Basalt flooring, granite and basalt orthostates, granite and quartzite doorjams, lintels and thresholds, granite columns and architraves, travertine altars and offering tables, as well as basalt waterspouts and quartzite draining basins (cf. Borchardt, *Ne-user-Re’*, pp. 141-156). Acres of relief decoration in the temples, where even the eyes of trampled enemies were inlaid with
semi-precious stones, are another area of potential research, also for the sake of arrangement and thematic complexity.

One would wish the issues of the royal architecture and decoration to be explored more in depth... which obviously and rightly is out of scope of this work. However, one aspect of the king’s iconography is treated in the second chapter, ‘The earliest kneeling offering pose’ (pp. 16-18). Although it is a short, and might seem to be an almost artificially added chapter, in fact it introduces one of the most important issues, to be explored more in the future. The presentation is related strongly to Marsha Hill’s work on the kneeling pose in the Egyptian royal statuary. Mgr. Duliková stresses the meaning and importance of this attitude. She traced the examples in the foundation ceremony scenes in the sun temple at Abu Ghurab. According to her, concerning the king this suggests “...a clear emphasis on his inferior position in relation to the god Ra (Bárta – Duliková 2015: 33-34). Keeping in mind the fragmentary state of preservation of the relief decoration in the royal monuments it cannot be ruled out that the depiction of the kneeling king could reflect a new royal ideology hidden behind the decorative programme of Nyuserre’s sun temple at Abu Ghurab.” By chance the author of this review can add a serious contribution to this issue. As shown in the presentation at the Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2015 conference, and now also illustrated in the article for the proceedings (Ćwiek 2016, forthcoming), the scene in the Weltkammer (Chamber of Seasons) with the figure of Re and approaching personifications of nomes, included once a kneeling figure of the king, leading the procession. Thus not only in the foundation ceremony scenes, but also in the most important place in the temple, its real sanctuary, the king was shown in this attitude, which is indeed much significant.

Chapter 3. is concerned with marriages of king’s daughters to non-royal officials. “Classical” Max Weber’s treatise Wirtschaft und Gesselschaft is referred to, covering an interplay among wealth (the economic order), prestige (the social order) and power (the political order). Social status is analyzed in depth, but maybe more analysis of the economic power would be of value (how much these actions on behalf of the king were related also to transfer of means).

One should stress that the restrictions of the analysis are clear to the author and she does not force the assumptions. For example the scholars’ opinions (e.g. by Bettina Schmitz and Gae Callender) on the exact meaning of the titles z3t nswt and z3t nswt nt h.t.f are not unequivocal, so it is difficult to categorize the princesses as real or honorific royal daughters, unless the parents are known.
An important observation and further discussion concerns the \textit{nbty}-names of the women, which possibly “reflect a special favor granted by the king to them/their families or indicate a declaration of their loyalty to the king”. (p. 39)

Another important observation concerns the officials’ families: “It is obvious that the high-ranking posts of princesses’ future husbands were not always the sole reason behind the marriages of the princesses to these men and that the grooms’ families also played an important part. This idea is supported by the fact that in these cases the spouse of a princess was always \textit{zf šmsw}, i.e. the eldest son of a powerful family.” (p. 40).

The scheme as presented on table 3.6 (on pp. 54-55) is very clear: from Third through early Fifth Dynasty one may notice only intermarriages in the royal family, in the mid-Fifth Dynasty royal daughters were married to high-ranking officials, in the Sixth Dynasty also the king married daughters of nomarchs.

Chapter 4. is titled ‘Innovations in the administration of the land’. Selected examples make clear how the changes in the administration reflected transfer of the participation in power during the Fifth Dynasty. Among the analyzed phenomena are: stratification of titles, new elements in vizierial titulary, creation of office of “Overseer of Upper Egypt”, introduction of titles connected to the exploitation of mineral, animal and plant resources, as well as those related to human workforce, emergence of the class of \textit{meret}-people. An important observation concerns the close relation to the king of the officials governing the country, stressed by the epithets like “favourite of his lord”, etc. Much significant is the introduction of the title “\textit{hem-netjer}-priest of Maat” for those who, according to the author’s words “formed the backbone of the state”.

The so-called nepotism is the subject of the next chapter. It is especially interesting for the methodological side of the research. The Complex Network Analysis involved, enabled recognizing transfer of professions in the families of officials of the six “pillars” of the administration (though attested for viziers slightly after Nyuserre’s reign), as well as among those who were personally serving the king, occupied with body-care, adornment or entertainment. It is now clear from the analyses of the families and spheres of their activity, that the mid-Fifth Dynasty was a crucial period for the establishment of the practice of nepotism, which had so much impact on later history. Promising results of CNA caused that ‘interdisciplinary aimed Egyptological and cybernetic project team is going to interface the methods of systematic data collecting and Complex Network Analysis with the punctuated equilibrium theory’ (p. 133) which is wished with much hope.
Chapter 6. is devoted to religious issues, especially to the figure of Osiris, the date of his appearance and his role in the private mortuary sphere. The name of Osiris is attested for 60 individuals of the Fifth Dynasty in the time from Nyuserre to Unis (p. 136 + Table 6.1). An interesting analysis is made of territorial and gender distribution of the mentions of Osiris’ name in non-royal tombs (Saqqara 36 males and 3 females, Giza 11 males and 4 females, and Abusir 5 males and 1 female). Extremely informative and useful is Table 6.5 (pp. 146-148): ‘The most frequent titles and field of activity of individuals who invoked Osiris within epithets and offering formulae in the later part of the Fifth Dynasty.’

According to the author ‘The scrutiny of the people who invokes Osiris (...) indicates that most of them were non-royal individuals (57 individuals) with female members of royal family forming a minority (3 individuals). All the men occupied important posts nor only within the state administration, but also in the spheres which were connected with activities in the close proximity of the king, i.e. the body care of the king personal adornment. The sources from non-royal tombs indicate that the concept of the Osirian cult was formed exclusively in the capital. Prior to the Sixth Dynasty there is no evidence on Osiris outside the Memphite region. In several decades, from the Sixth Dynasty onwards, the Osirian cult spread throughout Egypt and through all social classes.’ (p. 159) This conclusion goes against J. Gwyn Griffith’s statement on Osiris:’His origin was therefore ‘popular’ in the sense that he was a god of a privileged class. His popularity was a later achievement.’

The author is against Andrey Bolshakov’s dating of the earliest occurrence of Osiris (to the reign of Djedkare) based a.o. on his dating of Ty (following Miroslav Verner and Johannes Auenmüller she dates this official to Nyuserre). According to Dulíková, Osiris appeared first in the offering formulae, and next in the epithets of the deceased (imḥw lr Wsir). An important result of research is the statistics: in the Fifth Dynasty only 1% of epithets imḥw lr refers to Osiris; 36% invokes ntr-ꜣ3, 25% - nb.f, 10% - nswt, 6% - ntr, 6% - ntr.f, 1% - father, Anubis, Maat, Ptah, the names of the rulers, etc. (pp. 136-137).

Although it is an issue related to Osiris, Mgr. Duliková avoids discussion of the meaning of cryptonym ntr-ꜣ3 – perhaps rightly, since it is a tricky ground and the scrutiny might fill the rest of the chapter, without clear results.

An extremely interesting part of the work refers to non-textual sources: ‘Apart from the offering formulae and epithets, there seem to be non-epigraphic sources of the manifestation of the Osirian cult: a different appearance of the false doors in non-royal tombs (a torus moulding and a cornice), the transformation of the iconographic expression of the
funerary repast (breads into reeds) and, most probably, the usage of green colour in the fill of the hieroglyphic signs on the false door.’ (p.153) Two issues, at least, deserve some comment.

The author stated that: ‘The question is whether the absence of the name of Osiris in the royal monuments is caused by the current state of evidence from the mid-Fifth Dynasty. There is evidence in the form of the term śḥt-ḥtp, the Field of Offerings, connected with the concept of the afterlife and most likely referring to Osiris.’ (p. 180) Further on, an important observation is made that the ‘Field of Offerings’ (i.e. the reeds instead of bread) in the central panel of the false door is always related to the occurrence of the name of Osiris. However, a coincidence not necessarily means a connection. It seems that this issue should be explored more, referring to the wider question of the meaning of the Field of Offerings and Field of Reeds, including symbolic references to both of them in the offering table scene (cf. M. Heerma van Voss, Die Beiden Opfergefilde als Opfertisch, in: Studien Westendorf, pp. 805-807). From the Pyramid Texts it is clear that both Fields are related to the king, and one may suggest that in the cosmographic ‘reading’ of the pyramid complex, their roles were played by the eastern and northern sanctuaries (A. Ćwiek, Relief Decoration in the Royal Funerary Complexes of the Old Kingdom, Warsaw 2003, pp. 335-336). Thus the titles such as “overseer of the abundance of the Field of Offerings of the king” or “scribe of the Field of Offerings of the king” cited by the author, may refer to the concrete mundane structures and not the mythical places.

The occurrence of the green pigment as the fill of hieroglyphs is another interesting issue. An important factor is in this case the fact that it first occurred on the monuments painted red to resemble granite (e.g. the false doors of Ptahshepses and Meretites, referred to by the author). Green signs on red granite columns or architraves are attested in the royal monuments at the beginning of the Fifth Dynasty (e.g. in Sahure’s mortuary temple at Abusir), if not earlier (possibly already in Khafre’s complex at Giza). Of course, apart from an obvious simple contrast of red and green, some ideological meaning might be suggested. However, because of such an early dating, the royal green texts may be an argument against Osiris’ connections.

The author accepts, as it seems, that “It has been generally supposed that the introduction of the Osirian cult had a political background (...). The emergence of Osiris corresponds with a new conception of afterlife in non-royal tombs of the elite.” (pp. 159-160). An original thought, and a fascinating possibility is that Ptahshepses, the son-in-law of Userkaf, was ‘ideologist or “spiritual father” who stood behind the formation of the cult of Osiris.’ (p. 160).
A case study of the minor god Khentytjenenet at the end of the thesis is an example of the issue much underestimated till now. The author’s presentation makes clear that all the references to this deity in the tombs concentrate in the North Saqqara and Abusir area. One may consider if the character of enigmatic Khentytjenenet can be revealed from his name (“Foremost of Tjenenet”). This mythical locality is known a.o. from the Coffin Texts (meaning something like “The place that emerges”). One might even speculate if Tjenenet is not simply the Step Pyramid complex of Netjerykhet.

Clear conclusions are summing-up each chapter. At the end of the work once more the multiplier effect in the reign of Nyuserre is stressed, following the scenario where the highest posts in the administration passed from royal family to dignitaries of non-royal origin, and changes in religion, society, administration, tomb architecture, etc., mirrored a change in the participation of power. “Non-royal individuals participated in the administration of the state by performing duties for the king, thus becoming responsible for maintaining maat, and the king endowed them with maat (...). In this way, these individuals formed the backbone of the Fifth Dynasty administration. Judging from the written sources, such integration into the mechanism of the maintenance of order started in the mid-Fifth Dynasty or slightly earlier, when the title hem-netjer of goddess Maat was added to the titulary of persons who were employed in high administrative positions, most frequently as viziers, or whose activity was connected with the department of justice.” (p. 175).

The author expressed hopes for further applying of developed methodology, especially the Complex Network Analysis that “...will allow the assessment of more complex combination of artefacts, for example tomb locations, tomb relations, and temporal (dynamic) aspects of the data.” (pp. 131-132). One may add hopes for a further development and vast accessibility of the Maat-base, which proved to be an extremely good tool.

The dissertation contains 180 pages of main text + 30 pages of Abbreviations and Bibliography (which includes 244 books and articles). The second half of the work consists of an enormous Appendix (pp. 212-457) with records from the database. The work is well illustrated with 52 figures and 19 tables. Bibliographic Harvard references in the text are supplemented with footnotes (not too numerous, which is, in this case, a merit).

The work is based on a vast bibliography and most of the relevant works are included. Among those which might be added there is a seminal work of John Baines on discourse between the king and the elite: J. Baines, Kingship before literature: the world of the king in the Old Kingdom, in: R. Gundlach, C. Raedler (eds), Selbstverständnis und Realität. Akten
The author concentrated mainly on textual sources, but maybe a reference should be made to scholarly concepts looking for Osirian motifs in tomb iconography e.g. fishing and fowling scenes as representing the tomb owner in the role of Osiris and his wife and daughter as Isis and Nephthys respectively (H. Altenmüller, Zur Ursprung von Isis und Nephthys, SAK 27 (1999), pp. 1-26, criticized by R. van Walsem, Iconography of Old Kingdom Elite Tombs. Analysis and Interpretation, Theoretical and Methodological Aspects, Leiden 2005, p. 74).

The language of the dissertation is not only correct, but also very clear and unequivocal, which should be appreciated. The presentation is well illustrated, though one would wish some of the figures (sophisticated graphs as e.g. 3.12, 3.13, 5.7) to be more readable, which fails, as it seems, for technical reasons. Probably the figures can be seen properly only as high-resolution images. It is obvious that some of them just illustrate the schemes or models, but one would like to have a possibility to look into details.

Very few typos occur, one of them ridiculously meaningful: the title of Chapter 3. (in the Table of contents as well as in the main text) is given as “Social changes: Legitimacy of dignitaries trough marriages”, which should be corrected to “through marriages”, otherwise it suggests bad things on the side of officials.

What should be especially appreciated is that the transliterations, which occur in a great number, are made extremely carefully and the mistakes are very rare (e.g. on p. 23 imi-r3 w3bt “overseer of the wabet-chamber” should be corrected to imi-r3 w3bt; on p. 157 n. 37 shd htmtyw should be changed to shd htmtyw).

There are passim inconsistencies concerning the name of the god Re, spelled sometimes Ra, also in royal and private names e.g. Hemetra, Rawer, Rakhef but Nykare, Nyuserre, etc. The same refers to the element hetep/hotep in private names (both versions – as Ptahhetep and Ptahhotep – even occur in one sentence on p. 133). Versions Unas and Rakhef occur in the main text, Venis and Rachef in the cards of the Appendix. Some unnecessary repetitions might have been avoided (e.g. info about Maat-base on pp. 12-13, repeated in n. 7 on p. 14).

One mistake, obviously coming from haste, is especially painful: in the Introduction (p.8), referring to the sun temples, the author stated: ‘Šzpw-ib-R’, “Delight of Ra” represents one of the six archaeologically attested monuments of this type (four more are known only from written sources) and at the same time, the best preserved sun temple. It was located only a few meters north of his pyramid (Bissing – Borchardt 1905).’ In fact not six, but only two
“monuments of this kind” are attested archaeologically (plus four known from texts, which makes six in total). And “a few meters” separating the pyramid of Nyuserre and his sun temple are in fact the distance of over a kilometer.

However, all these shortcomings are small points indeed, without a serious impact on the assessment of the work. The thesis of Mgr. Veronika Dulíková meets all the standards required for a doctoral dissertations and has to be graded as “Pass” and recommended for the public defense. It is an excellent piece of scientific work, showing the process of the gradual transformation of Egyptian society from a kingdom to a state. Its author deserves a Doctor of Philosophy title, with the best wishes of further and successful proceeding to the chosen direction.