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## Menophres reconsidered

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Adam Łukaszewicz

### MENOPHRES RECONSIDERED

The era "from Menophres" has been a much discussed problem of the chronology of ancient Egypt.

A passage on Sothic heliacal rising, attributed to the Alexandrian mathematician Theon of the IVth century A.D., reads as follows in its initial part:

Περὶ τῆς τοῦ Κυνὸς ἐπιτολῆς ὑπόδειγμα.

Ἐπὶ τοῦ  $\bar{\rho}$  ἔτους Διοκλητιανοῦ περὶ τῆς τοῦ Κυνὸς ἐπιτολῆς ὑποδείγματος ἕνεκεν λαμβάνομεν τὰ ἀπὸ Μενόφρεως ἕως τῆς λήξεως Ἀυγούστου· ὁμοῦ τὰ ἐπισυναγόμενα ἔτη  $\bar{\alpha\chi\epsilon}$ · οἷς ἐπιπροστιθούμεν τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς Διοκλητιανοῦ ἔτη  $\bar{\rho}$ , γίνονται ὁμοῦ ἔτη  $\bar{\alpha\psi\epsilon}$ .<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The above quotation from Περὶ τῆς τοῦ Κυνὸς ἐπιτολῆς ὑπόδειγμα omits the beginning of the part concerning the counting technique, which is not relevant here.

A complete text (including the part after  $\bar{\alpha\psi\epsilon}$ ) may be found in J.-B. BIOT, *Mémoire sur divers points d'astronomie ancienne, et en particulier sur la période Sothiaque comprenant 1460 années juliennes*, Paris 1846, "note deuxième", 130; Biot, however, repeats  $\bar{\alpha\chi\epsilon}$  as the total after addition of 100 years to the time from Menophres to the λήξις Ἀυγούστου that is an obvious error of the manuscript.

We follow here the text published by C. Richard LEPSIUS, *Königsbuch der alten Ägypter*, Berlin 1858, 123: Lepsius gives ἐπισυναγόμενα, the correct  $\bar{\alpha\psi\epsilon}$  and ἐπιπροστιθούμεν (instead of συναγόμενα,  $\bar{\alpha\chi\epsilon}$  and ἐπιπροσθεθούμεν found in BIOT's *Mémoire*).

Quotations from Theon's Περὶ τῆς τοῦ Κυνὸς ἐπιτολῆς ὑπόδειγμα found in various works derive from the text published by Biot and Lepsius. Cf. F. K. GINZEL, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie. Das Zeitrechnungswesen der Völker*, I. Band, Leipzig 1906, 193 n. 1. (after J.-B. BIOT, *Recherches sur plusieurs points de l'astronomie égyptienne appliquées aux monumens trouvés en Égypte*, Paris 1823, 181, 303). A less extensive quotation: L. IDELER, *Handbuch der mathematischen*

J.-B. Biot proposed the following translation of that passage:

Règle pour le lever héliaque du Chien.

Par exemple, si nous voulons obtenir l'époque du lever héliaque du Chien pour la centième année de Dioclétien, nous comptons d'abord les années écoulées depuis Menophrès jusqu'à la fin d'Auguste: elles donnent pour somme 1605; et, leur ajoutant depuis le commencement de Dioclétien 100 années, on en aura, en tout, 1705.<sup>2</sup>

Theon's formula ἀπὸ Μενόφρεως ἕως τῆς λήξεως Αὐγούστου. ὁμοῦ τὰ ἐπι-  
συναγόμενα ἔτη ἀχέ is essential for the whole discussion. Theon does not give any further information about Menophres, who is otherwise unknown. We may, however, take for granted that an Egyptian king is meant.

The translation by Hase quoted above from Biot's work (Biot published his *Recherches* in 1823) contains an interpretation of the passage which became habitual. The gist of this interpretation has been thus summarized by Ideler: "Unter dem Ende — λήξις (*sic*) — des August kann, wie der Zusammenhang gleichfalls lehrt, nur das Ende der Aere des August oder der Anfang der Aere des Diocletian verstanden werden."<sup>3</sup>

The "era of Augustus" was certainly not in common use in Roman Egypt.<sup>4</sup> But the count of years from the beginning of Roman rule was certainly not unknown to learned people of Later Roman Egypt, even at the time when the era of Diocletian was already in use.

und technischen Chronologie, I, Berlin 1825, 136 n. 1; W. STRUVE, "Die Ära 'ἀπὸ Μενόφρεως' und die XIX. Dynastie Manethos", ZÄS 63, 1928, 45, quotes Theon according to LEPSIUS, *Königsbuch*, 123. On the basis of these shortened quotations the real duration of the era of Menophres cannot be demonstrated.

<sup>2</sup> "Traduction par M. Hase", [in:] BIOT, *Mémoire*, 130. Cf. LEPSIUS' translation, *Königsbuch*, 124: "Beispiel über den Aufgang des Sirius. Um beispielsweise für das 100ste Jahr der Diokletianischen Aere den (heliakischen) Aufgang des Sirius zu finden, nehmen wir die Jahre vom (Anfange der Aere des) Menophres bis zum Ausgange (der Aere) des August. Dieses sind in Summa 1605 Jahre. Zu diesen zählen wir die 100 Jahre vom Anfange des Diokletian hinzu, macht zusammen 1705 Jahre."

<sup>3</sup> IDELER, *Handbuch*, I, 136, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. W. LESCHORN, *Antike Ären. Zeitrechnung, Politik und Geschichte im Schwarzmeerraum und in Kleinasien nördlich des Tauros*, Stuttgart 1993 (= *Historia Einzelschriften* 81), 226: "die kurzfristige Zählung der Jahre der 'Herrschaft des Augustus', die man in Ägypten findet, von der Eroberung des Landes 30 v. Chr. ausging". In n. 11, p. 226, Leschhorn gives earlier literature.

The precise meaning of  $\lambda\eta\xi\iota\varsigma$  is important for the interpretation of the whole passage concerning the era of Menophres. One of the possible meanings of  $\lambda\eta\xi\iota\varsigma$  is "appointment, nomination". If  $\lambda\eta\xi\iota\varsigma$  could be understood as "appointment" (and not as "death", which is more common) and  $\text{A}\acute{\upsilon}\gamma\omicron\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$  as Diocletian (and not as Octavian), the meaning of Theon's original text would be "from Menophres to the appointment of Augustus (= Diocletian). Total 1605 years". However,  $\lambda\eta\xi\iota\varsigma$  may only mean "appointment by lot" and cannot be used to describe the beginning of the reign of a Roman emperor.  $\text{A}\acute{\upsilon}\gamma\omicron\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$  in this context is not likely to concern Diocletian. Diocletian is in the same sentence referred to as  $\text{D}\iota\omicron\kappa\lambda\eta\tau\iota\alpha\upsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ ; it is difficult to see why he should then reappear as Augustus *tout court*.  $\text{A}\acute{\upsilon}\gamma\omicron\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$  is therefore a reference to Octavian.

In Byzantine papyri  $\lambda\eta\xi\iota\varsigma$  means usually "end of life", "death". Theon who was an Alexandrian and lived in the IVth century A.D.<sup>5</sup> may indubitably be credited with a linguistic usage that agrees with the language found in papyrus documents. Also a review of examples of literary usage of  $\lambda\eta\xi\iota\varsigma$  shows a prevalence of the meaning "death", especially in authors of the IVth century A.D. or later. (The papyrus evidence comes from the Vth century onwards.)<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the *excessus divi Augusti* is not an unknown point of chronological reference.

Yet, 1605 years counted back from the date of Augustus' death would give 1591 B.C. as the beginning of the era of Menophres. At that date we know of no Egyptian king whose name could give Menophres as a Greek version. The prenomen of *Nebpehtyre* (Ahmose), the founder of the New Kingdom, who ruled from c. 1543 B.C. could yield Mephres as a Greek version (as will be demonstrated below, in the study concerning Misphragmuthosis/Mephrammuthosis) but a confusion of Mephres/Miphres and Menophres in an important place of a learned text is not very likely.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> He was born c. A.D. 335 and his *acme*, according to the *Liber Suda*, falls into the times of Theodosius I (379–395); see M. DZIELSKA, *Hypatia z Aleksandrii*, Kraków 1993, (= *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego* MXCIX), p. 110 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Examples of  $\lambda\eta\xi\iota\varsigma$  = "death" with reference to emperors collected in F. PREISIGKE's *Wörterbuch* are all of the VIth century. *P. Oxy.* XVI 1899.1 may be cited as a Vth century example (A.D. 476). It is noteworthy that Preisigke has no reference at all to  $\lambda\eta\xi\iota\varsigma$  with a meaning other than "end", "cessation" or "death".

<sup>7</sup> However, *Menpehtyre* as prenomen of Ramesses I is evidently imitated from *Nebpehtyre*, the prenomen of the founder of the New Kingdom. Cf. Cl. VANDERSLEYEN, *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil* (2) Paris 1995 p. 496 n. 1; K. A. KITCHEN, 'Aspects of Ra-

All speculative doubts must disappear in view of the context which shows that the *ληξίς Αὐγούστου* falls in the same year as the *ἀρχὴ Διοκλητιανοῦ*. This is a decisive argument to prove that “the end of Augustus” means nothing else but the end of the era which began with the founder of the principate.

Therefore we have definitively to agree with the original interpretation by Biot, Ideler etc., which implies *ληξίς* as “cessation” or “end” in a general sense. Hase’s translation published by Biot must be considered as correct. Also Luft correctly describes Theon’s count as “1605 Jahre von der *apokatastasis* unter Menophris bis zum Beginn der diokletianischen Aera”.<sup>8</sup> The era of Augustus came to an end (*ληξίς*) 1605 years after Menophres and a new period *ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς Διοκλητιανοῦ* began.

There is no real necessity to repeat here the entire chronological discussion concerning that passage. The details of the counting method of the Sothic period may be found in earlier literature. Here suffice it to mention only the basic points.

The date of Menophres is a date of the beginning of a Sothic period. The date obtained when 1605 years are counted back from the beginning of Diocletian’s reign is identical with the date of a Sothic period of 1460 years counted back from A.D. 139, when a new period began (Censorinus, see below).

The importance of Sothic periods of about 1460 years each for the Egyptian chronology is common knowledge.<sup>9</sup> The precise astronomic count of the Sothic period combined with the data from Egyptian records is essential to the chronology of Egypt of the pharaohs.

Differences between scholars in the count of years of the “era of Menophres” are not very relevant. A count according to Theon (1605 years from Menophres to the beginning of the reign of Diocletian) gives the year 1322 B.C. (Julian) or 1321 B.C. (Egyptian)<sup>10</sup> as the beginning of the era of Menophres. That date approximately agrees with the estimated beginning of the XIXth Dynasty. This is one of the reasons why the old interpretation of Menophres as Merenptah,<sup>11</sup> successor of Ramesses II, has to be rejected.

messide Egypt’ [in:] *Acts of the First International Congress of Egyptology*, Berlin, 1979, 383.

<sup>8</sup> U. LUFT, “Sothisperiode”, *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* V, Wiesbaden 1984, 1119.

<sup>9</sup> A recent comprehensive discussion with a bibliography can be found in U. LUFT, “Sothisperiode”, *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* V, 1117–1124. See also R. A. PARKER, *The Calendars of Ancient Egypt*, Chicago 1950.

<sup>10</sup> LEPSIUS, *Königsbuch*, 122.

<sup>11</sup> LEPSIUS, *Königsbuch*, 128.

The above date of the beginning of a Sothic period under Menophres may be compared with the passage of Censorinus that confirms the beginning of a new Sothic period in (or about) A.D. 139: *abhinc annos centum imperatore Antonino Pio II Bruttio Praesente Romae consulibus idem dies fuerit ante diem XIII Kal. Aug.*<sup>12</sup> That fact is otherwise reflected by some Alexandrian coins of Antoninus Pius showing the phoenix, the solar bird connected with the Sothic period.<sup>13</sup>

We have already observed that a simple count based on the passage of Censorinus gives for the beginning of the precedent Sothic period the same date as the count according to Theon. Modern students of the problem tend to agree that the precedent Sothic period actually began towards the end of the XIVth century B.C. and that this astronomical phenomenon marks the beginning of Theon's era of Menophres.

We do not intend to discuss here the precise astronomic date of the event. The actual point of these remarks is limited almost exclusively to the onomastic aspect of the problem.

Most students of the problem take for granted that the words ἀπὸ Μενόφρεως refer to an era named after an Egyptian king.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, there have always been scholars who believed in \*Μενόφρηης, \*Μενόφρις, or \*Μενοφρεύς = *Mn-nfr* i.e. Memphis ("the Memphite era").<sup>15</sup> That idea is certainly wrong for reasons adduced by Černý<sup>16</sup> and already known to earlier scholars.<sup>17</sup> Also Hornung agrees with Černý's conclusion as far as the rejection of the

<sup>12</sup> Censorinus, *De die natali liber ad Q. Caerellium*, 21.10, ed. C. A. RAPISSARDA, Bologna 1991, 53.

<sup>13</sup> J. VOGT, *Die alexandrinischen Münzen*, Stuttgart 1924, 113–116.

<sup>14</sup> However, R. KRAUSS, *Das Ende der Amarnazeit. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Chronologie des Neuen Reiches*, (= *Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge* 7), 2nd edition 1981, 264–273, denies any link between the era under discussion and a name of an Egyptian king.

<sup>15</sup> Earlier literature: W. STRUVE, *ZÄS* 63, 1928, 45 n. 3. More recently that point of view was defended by M. B. ROWTON, 'Mesopotamian Chronology and the »era of Menophres«', *Iraq* 8, 1946, 94–110 and H.\*STOCK, 'Der Hyksos Chian in Bogazköy', *MDOG* 94, 1963, 79 n. 36. Cf. Cl. VANDERSLEYEN, *L'Égypte*, 496 n. 1.

<sup>16</sup> J. ČERNÝ, 'Note on the supposed beginning of a Sothic period under Sethos I', *JEA* 47, 1961, 150–152.

<sup>17</sup> Already R. LEPSIUS recognized that fact, cf. his *Die Chronologie der Aegypter*, Berlin 1849, 173, quoted by STRUVE, *ZÄS* 63, 1928, 45 n. 6. Also K. SETHE shared that view, cf. 'Sethos I und die Erneuerung der Hundssternperiode', *ZÄS* 66, 1931, 1–7.

Memphite hypothesis is concerned.<sup>18</sup> Their arguments need not be reconsidered here.

The king Menophres is not mentioned in any of the extant excerpts of Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* and for that reason in the early stages of Egyptology there was no possibility of a positive identification.<sup>19</sup> Later research has not brought a decisive solution either. *Mrj-n-Pth*<sup>20</sup> and *Mn-phthj-Rc* have always been the foremost candidates. The idea of *Mrj-n-Ph* = \*Μενόφρησ came from Richard Lepsius. Lepsius was also the author of the theory of an error in the extant text of Theon: \*Μενόφρησ was to him a corrupted form of the original \*Μενόφθησ for Merentpah the successor of Ramesses II.<sup>21</sup>

After the rejection of Merentpah (for chronological reasons, as being too late to coincide with the beginning of the Sothic period), the attention of most scholars turned to his father Sethos I whose second cartouche also contains the epithet of *Mrj-n-Pth*.

The most zealous advocate of Sethos I Merentpah = Menophres was W. Struve.<sup>22</sup> Kurt Sethe agreed with him and published remarkable Egyptian texts that seemed to support the idea of a new age that began under Sethos I.<sup>23</sup> These inscriptions mention a "beginning of eternity" under Sethos I; to a reader familiar also with Greek texts, such a wording must evoke the Greek term *αἰών* which, as we know, was used in connexion with the Sothic period. Jaroslav Černý<sup>24</sup> contested the idea of Struve and Sethe. Černý, who at this point agrees with Rowton,<sup>25</sup> pointed to the fact that it is not very probable that the great king was remembered in late times as *Mrj-n-Pth*, a name that was only a secondary epithet. On the other hand Ramesses II was called *Miammoun* even as late as in the late excerpts of the Greek history of Mane-

<sup>18</sup> E. HORNING, *Untersuchungen zur Chronologie und Geschichte des Neuen Reiches*, Wiesbaden 1964, 61–62.

<sup>19</sup> "... diesen alten ägyptischen König finden wir sonst nirgends weiter genannt", IDELER, *Handbuch*, I, 136 n. 1.

<sup>20</sup> In the purely consonantal transliteration of proper names we follow the rules of J. VON BECKERATH, *Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen*, München–Berlin 1984, and of the *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*. In vocalized forms a greater latitude seemed permissible.

<sup>21</sup> LEPSIUS, *Königsbuch*, 128.

<sup>22</sup> STRUVE, *ZÄS* 63, 1928, 45–50.

<sup>23</sup> SETHE, *loc. cit.*

<sup>24</sup> *JEA* 47, 1961, 150–152.

<sup>25</sup> *Iraq* 8, 1946, 108–109.

tho.<sup>26</sup> Also *Mrj-n-Pḥ*, like *Mrj-Jmn*, could perhaps become a pharaoh's name for the Greeks. However, the typical Egyptian designation of Sethos I was his prenomen *Mn-M3<sup>c</sup> t-R<sup>c</sup>*. His nomen containing the appellation of the controversial deity was remembered by Greek historiography and the king appears in the epitomes of Manetho as Σέθως. There is no convincing reason to see why he should be called \*Μενόφθης instead.

Černý adduced important evidence to show that the expressions which in Sethos' inscriptions allegedly indicate a beginning of a new age, are in reality only pretentious wishes of a long reign ("perpetuity") to the king.<sup>27</sup> Černý was convinced that *Mn-ph(tj)-R<sup>c</sup>* (Ramesses I) is the correct interpretation of the Greek form Menophres. His opinion was shared or anticipated by other authors.<sup>28</sup> That point of view has been, however, rejected by some specialists. Thus Hornung says (1964): "...bleibt die alte Identifizierung mit *Mrj-n-Pḥ* = Sethos I. immer noch die wahrscheinlichste".<sup>29</sup> More recently (1984), U. Luft wrote: "Der Name Menophris ist entweder mit einem der Namen von König Sethos I. oder Ramses I. verglichen worden, ohne daß Einigkeit erzielt werden konnte, obwohl viele Anzeichen für Sethos I. sprechen".<sup>30</sup>

The decisive reason to eliminate the interpretation of Menophres as *Merenptah* (presumably for Sethos I rather than for the later king Merenptah) is the fact that Lepsius' and Struve's explanation presupposes a bizarre error \*Μενόφθης for \*Μενόφθης.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Παμέσσης Μιαμμού[ν], Theophilus, *Ad Autolyicum*, III, 20, [in:] Manetho, ed. W. G. WADDELL, *Loeb Classical Library*, London 1980, 108. Cf. also Syncellus: *Μιαμούς*, *ibidem*, 236.

<sup>27</sup> ČERNÝ, *JEA* 47, 1961, 150–151.

<sup>28</sup> P. MONTET, *CRAIBL* 1937, 418–426; idem, *Le drame d'Avaris. Essai sur la pénétration des Sémites en Egypte*, Paris 1941, 111–112; *L'Egypte et la Bible*, Paris 1959; cf. *C.A.H.* I.1 (3rd ed.), Cambridge 1970, 190; *C.A.H.* III.2 (3rd ed.) Cambridge 1975, 218.

<sup>29</sup> HORNUNG, *Untersuchungen*, 61–62; cf. A. GARDINER, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, London 1961, 249: "this royal name (i.e. Menophres) has been interpreted by Struve, followed by Sethe, to be a slightly corrupted form of the epithet *Mrj-n-Pḥ* 'beloved of Ptah' which normally stands at the beginning of Sethos's second cartouche. This clever conjecture may or may not be right".

<sup>30</sup> "Sothisperiode" *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* V, 1119.

<sup>31</sup> In spite of STRUVE's assertion (*ZÄS* 63, 1928, 45–46 n. 1) such an error is palaeographically hardly possible.

Černý is undoubtedly correct in his assumption (in which he had predecessors recorded by Struve)<sup>32</sup> that *Mn-phtj-R<sup>c</sup>* i.e. Ramesses I is a much better candidate for \*Μενόφρης.

*Mn-phtj-R<sup>c</sup>*, especially in view of Černý's observation that the actual spelling was *Mn-ph-R<sup>c</sup>*, can in Greek be easily transformed into \*Μενόφρης.<sup>33</sup>

The only point that must be added to Černý's conclusive paper is an observation concerning the nominative form of that hellenized name, which we have only in genitive. \*Μενόφρης obviously cannot give Μενόφρεως in genitive. The alleged nominative \*Μενοφρεύς is difficult to accept. The form \*Μενόφρις is certainly the basis of the extant genitive Μενόφρεως. However, \*Μενόφρις cannot be considered as the authentic nominative form of the name. \*Μενόφρις is easy to explain as a banal misspelling of the original \*Μενόφρης. \*Μενόφρης that visibly contains the original ρη-element must have been the primitive version of the name.

*Mn-phtj-R<sup>c</sup>* (Ramesses I) is the only possible explanation of Menophres. There is, nevertheless, no real necessity to deny as categorically as Černý does, any probability to Sethe's hypothesis concerning the importance of the perpetuity formulae in Sethos' inscriptions. The repetition of such formulae in later times cannot surprise and is no hindrance to accept Sethe's interpretation. The same wording under different circumstances might be void of the original meaning (the inscription of year 9 of Ramesses II quoted by Černý<sup>34</sup> may indeed be only a *cliché*). Since the Sothic period actually started with the XIXth Dynasty, the words about the beginning of perpetuity may certainly bear a deeper significance. Both the reign of Ramesses I and the first years of Sethos I probably belong to the *tetraeteris* or 4-year period of the heliacal appearance of the rising Sothis. Sethos' renewal of births does not disagree with the "era of Menophres". It only strengthens the impression that the beginning of the new dynasty was considered by its founders as an initial point of a new era. Anyway, Sethe's interpretation remains hypothetical and cannot be used as a deci-

<sup>32</sup> STRUVE, *ibidem*, n. 5.

<sup>33</sup> Attested cases of a euphonic metathesis which led to a transformation of *-phtj* into *-πάθης* (cf. D. B. REDFORD, 'The Name Manetho' [in:] *Egyptological Studies in Honor of Richard A. Parker*, ed. L. H. LESKO, Hanover – London 1986, 119 n. 8, cf. J. QUAEGBEUR, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 6/7, 1976, 471 n. 77) do not exclude a possibility of a different development. In Bogazköi records *Mn-phtj-R'* gave *Min-pahitari-3a*, cf. H. RANKE, *Keilschriftliches Material zur altägyptischen Vokalisation*, Berlin 1910, 13. STRUVE suggested that *Mn-phtj-R<sup>c</sup>* would produce "etwa Μενπα-θηρης", *ZÄS* 63, 1928, 46.

<sup>34</sup> *JEA* 47, 1961, 151.

sive argument in this discussion, especially because of the complete lack of other and more explicit pharaonic evidence of a connexion between the Sothic rising and the idea of a new era (*whm mswt vel sim.*)<sup>35</sup> The idea of *whm mswt* appeared already under Amenemhat I and was to be used by Ramesses XI.

The prenomen of Ramesses I bears undoubtedly a reminiscence of Ahmose, with whom a new historical epoch began. It is also necessary to recall here the earlier form of the *Nebty* name of Ramesses I *whm rnpwt mj Jtm* ("Celui qui renouvelle les années comme Atoum").<sup>36</sup> That seems to be a really relevant wording and a possible allusion to the beginning of a new Sothic period during the reign of *Mn-phthj-R'* Ramesses I. That his *Nebty* name was later changed (to *h.c. j m nsw mj Jtm*) only strengthens that impression. This argument would perhaps not be valid, if the monument in question actually belonged to earlier times of a supposed co-regency of Horemheb and Ramesses.<sup>37</sup> Yet, that co-regency is not attested in the sources and Aldred's hypothesis as to the date of it seems to be erroneous. It is difficult to see, why it should be considered "extremely improbable that two versions of the *Nebty* name of Ramesses I would have been composed during the mere sixteen months of his reign".<sup>38</sup> The first version of the name could have been an attempt to commemorate the unusual event at the beginning of the new reign; that first version could have been soon changed. Sethos I also used *whm mswt* as his *Nebty* name, which shows that the idea of a new period of history was important to the founders of the XIXth Dynasty. That new era begins with Ramesses I. The astronomical

<sup>35</sup> *Αἰών* is indeed likely to correspond with some Egyptian notions of eternity (*nhh*), as SETHE tried to prove (ZÄS 66, 1931, 1-7.). In Roman times the enormous expansion of astrological beliefs contributed to special importance of events of that type. There is no doubt, in view of monetary legends from Egypt of year 2 of Antoninus Pius (cf. above, n. 13), that to the contemporaneous people the Sothic rising really marked the beginning of a new era, *αἰών*.

We would like here also to point to the inevitable numeric equivalent of an *αἰών* of 1460 years: *αυξ* (for that number of years of the period cf. e.g. Theon Alex., *Magn. Comm. in Ptol. Can.* I 7, *Le "Grand commentaire" de Théon d'Alexandrie aux Tables Faciles de Ptolémée* I, eds. J. MAGENET, A. TIHON, Città del Vaticano 1985, (= *Studi e Testi* 315), 113) bearing obvious associations with *αυξάνω*, *αυξω*, *αυξήσις*.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. A.-P. ZIVIE, "Ramses I", *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* I, Wiesbaden 1984, 103 n. 18. The name is known from a monument in the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh, no. 1965-318, cf. below, n. 37.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. C. ALDRED, "Two monuments of the reign of Horemheb", *JEA* 54, 1968, 100-103.

<sup>38</sup> ALDRED, *ibidem*, 101.

phenomenon was certainly only one of the reasons to commemorate a new epoch.

Finally, it must be stressed again that we do not intend to solve here the astronomical problem of the precise date of the Sothic period. We may take for granted that — as Erik Hornung says — the Theban dates of the actual beginning of the Sothic period are 1298–90 B.C. “... die neue Sothisperiode bei Memphis/Heliopolis als Bezugsort in der Regierung Haremhab's, bei Theben als Bezugsort in der Regierungszeit Sethos' I begonnen hat.”<sup>39</sup> Hornung who advocates Sethos I as Menophres (*Mrj-n-Pth*) agrees that “Eine sprachliche Gleichsetzung von \*Μενόφρηης und *Mn-ph(tj)-r<sup>c</sup>*, dem Thronnamen Ramses' I., bleibt trotzdem möglich, da man in römischer Zeit kaum noch gewußt haben wird, welcher König beim Beginn der Sothisperiode regiert hat.”<sup>40</sup>

It is possible that the name of the era of Menophres in Greek sources is not a continuation of a pharaonic tradition but a result of the application of a simplified count in Greco-Roman times: 1460 years counted back from 139 A.D. gave a date which was found to be the first year of king Menophres = *Mn-ph(tj)-R<sup>c</sup>*. Accordingly, the era could be given its name.

It is nevertheless also probable that different observations of Sothis' heliacal risings made both under Menophres = Ramesses I and under his son Sethos I gave reason to claim, under both successive rulers, that in their reigns the Sothic period began.

In any case, the name Menophres is a Greek equivalent of *Mn-ph(tj)-R<sup>c</sup>* and belongs to Ramesses I, *quod erat demonstrandum*.

[Warszawa]

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<sup>39</sup> HORNUNG, *Untersuchungen*, 61.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, 61, n. 39.