



***Taiyô no Ko Hols no Daiboken (Horus, Prince of the Sun) a.k.a. Little Norse Prince Valiant a.k.a. Prince of the Sun a.k.a. The Great Adventure of Little Prince Valiant a.k.a. Hols's Great Adventure*** is a November, 2024 dvd donation to the Hugh Stoupe Library of the Heritage Methodist Church of Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Below is Kino Ken's review of that dvd.

15 of a possible 20 points    \*\*\*1/2 of a possible \*\*\*\*\* = outstanding film

Key: \*indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance

Japan 1968 color 82 minutes subtitled feature animation fantasy

Producers: Hiroshi Okawa, Satoru Ainoda, Tôru Hara, Yû Saitô, Masajirô Seki

Toei Animation Know How Disc Distributors Co. Ltd. dvd

#### Points:

Direction: Isao Takahata

0 Editing: Yutaka Chikura

2 Cinematography: Jiro Yoshimura, Yukio Katayama

1 Lighting Colorists: Hiroko Kishimoto and Keiko Miyamoto

Special Effects: Chiaki Hirao

1 Written by: Kazuo Fukazawa from his puppet play "Chikisani no taiyô"

2 Music: Michio Mamiya\*

- 1 Animation Direction: Yasuo Otsuka  
Key Animation: Hayao Miyazaki
  - 2 Art Direction: Mataji Urata\*  
Scene Design: Hayao Miyazaki\*  
Backgrounds: Masahiro Ioka, Isamu Tsuchida, Fumihiko Uchikawa  
Xerography: Minoru Katô
  - 2 Sound  
Sound Effects: Kiyoshi Ôhira\*  
Sound Recording: Hiromi Kanbara\*
  - 2 Voices Acting
  - 2 Creativity
- 15 total points

Voices Cast: Mikijirô Hira (Grunwald, the Demon of Ice), Etsuko Ichihara\* (Hilda), Eijirô Tôno (Ganko the blacksmith), Masao Mishima (Village chief), Yashushi Nagata\* (Drago, deputy chief), Hisako Ôkata (Hols a.k.a. Horus), Hiroshi Kamiyama (Villager), Hisashi Yokomori\* (Father of Hols / Toto, the White Owl), Tadashi Yokouchi (Paul / Moog the Rock Giant), Asako Akazawa (Piria, Rusan's fiancée), Yuriko Abe (Young woman), Kazuo Tachibana (Villager), Taisaku Akino (Rusan), Yoko Miozugaki\* (Little girl Mauni), Noriko Ohara\* (Chiro the Squirrel), Yoshiko Asai (Coro, the bear cub), Janko Hori (Frep)

An early effort by Japanese animation master Isao Takahata, *Taiyô no Ko Hols no Daiboken* (*Horus, Prince of the Sun*) is more notable for its music than for either its story or visual embellishments. With a plot pitting “good” Viking humans versus a pair of supernatural “evil” siblings and their minions, this eighty-two-minute adventure saga travels mostly along deeply rutted pathways.

Hero Hols, also known as Horus, is first viewed attempting to elude devouring from a pack of savage silver wolves. Outrunning and outsmarting these, he ends up standing on top of a rock monster called Moog. That creature bears more than a slight resemblance to the Rock Biter character of *The NeverEnding Story* film. But Michael Ende's novel serving as its basis wasn't published until eleven years after *Horus, Prince of the Sun's* release. So it

certainly appears screenwriter Kazuo Fukuzawa influenced the more renowned German author rather than vice versa.

The plots of these two works also resemble one another. Both deal with expanding evil seeking to utterly annihilate the world of humanity. In each case, a boy hero is tasked with defeating malevolent powers of destruction and chaos.

Atreyu, in *The NeverEnding Story*, has an assortment of strange allies from various regions of an Empire, recalling the fellowship of J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Hols, though, must rely on goodwill and backing of a handful of local Viking villagers and an ultimately treasonous spellbound singer named Hilda.

Atreyu must save the territory of a child empress titled the Golden-eyed Commander of Wishes, a feeble and sickly monarch. To do this he has a single companion, the good-luck dragon named Falkor, and a powerful, enchanted amulet.

Hols, on the other hand, is merely concerned with insuring safety of a coastal village. His sole weapon, acquired from a helpful talking rockpile, is a rusted Sword of the Sun. The nearest approach to a dragon he encounters is a huge pike employed by wicked Grunwald, Demon of Ice, to attack and kill human fishermen. What it brings the lad is emphatically not propitious.

While *The NeverEnding Story* proceeds as a story within a story, eventually catapulting reader Bastien directly into the action, *Horus, Prince of the Sun* makes do with an omniscient anonymous bard. Its engaging liveliness comes from atmospheric music provided by Michio Mamiya, utilizing primitive folk melodies, driving percussion, and alternating orchestral crescendos and diminuendos to plunge auditors into a littoral world where myth, legend, and fantasy intermingle.

Since every respectable tale must have a central problem or conflict, Hols finds himself pitted against a number of variously potent foes. Besides transparently malevolent Grunwald, enemies to be defeated or neutralized include an envious community chief, his usurping lieutenant Drago, and an exotic singing maiden whose beauty masks satanic impulses. A less complicated personality than Ende's Bastien, Hols has no internal struggle to resolve. He's never tempted to abandon the quest to conquer forces of darkness. His story arc is predictable. There's no maturation apparent, merely a passage of time coupled with the climactic deus ex machina appearance by Moog to clinch

victory for the virtuous over a rampaging mastodon and its master, shape-shifting sorcerer Grunwald.

Already obvious here are Hayao Miyazaki's animal mascots. These consist of Coro the Bear Cub, Hols's hapless companion, and a pair of Hilda's tagalongs: white owl Toto and Chiro the Squirrel. Toto supplies bad advice of received wisdom from Grunwald, whereas Chiro offers benevolent scruples. Coro's merely an amiable bumbler. It seems likely this trio was either invented by Miyazaki or injected with traits suggested by him.

Although the animation present is by no means trailblazing, it's acceptably accomplished by 1968 non-Disney standards. Better work would come from both Miyazaki and Takahata in future outings as they matured and gained more experience.

Background art consists of credible Nordic designs created by Masahiro Ioka, Isamu Tsuchida, and Fumihiko Uchikawa.

Sound effects, sound recording, and voice acting are all first-rate, adding considerably to the film's impact. Etsuko Ichihara's Jekyll-and-Hyde performance in the role of Grunwald's enchanted younger sister Hilda is a highlight. Hisashi Yokomori as Hols's regret-laden dying father, Noriko Ohara's rebelliously conscientious Chiro, and Yoko Mizugaki's bubbly Mauni stand out prominently in supporting vocal roles.

The tandem of Jiro Yoshimura and Yukio Katayama handle cinematography chores adroitly despite having to contend with editing choppiness and indifferent lighting.

Thanks to Michio Mamiya's wonderfully varied polyrhythmic music, *Horus, Prince of the Sun* is a remarkable achievement. It's well worth auditing, if less than imposing visually.

Suitable for family viewing, this subtitled feature animation should be previewed first by parents due to considerable violent content and a moving final moments scene involving Hols and his dying dad.

Perhaps the drama here is best geared to youngsters ages ten to twelve.

Both the dvd itself and its compact disk soundtrack are currently available to borrow from the Hugh Stoupe Library of the Heritage Methodist Church.